

Monday #2 the Work of the Holy Spirit

by J. Edwin Orr

J. Edwin Orr's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in revival and the necessity of extraordinary prayer among believers.

Duration: 51:10

Scripture: Joel 2:28, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:6, Acts 2:15, Acts 2:17, Acts 2:42, Acts 2:46

Topics: "Revival Theology"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for the overwhelming and convicting power of the Holy Spirit in today's wicked generation. He compares the current state of society to the revival of the Eisenhower years in the 1950s, highlighting the gross immorality, profanity, pornography, and crime prevalent today. The preacher quotes Finney, stating that revival is the right use of appropriate means. He uses the analogy of drunkenness to explain the stages of revival, emphasizing that the disciples on the day of Pentecost were not drunk but filled with joy and celebration. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole body of Christ and the conviction of fellow citizens.

Transcript

And I pointed out that the word means to change. It's one of the forgotten doctrines of revival. I wondered what I should say in the way of follow-up, and last night as I prayed about it I felt that tonight I should speak to you on the first and second chapters of the Acts.

Just a key verse here and there. In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter one, verse six, So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? They had been told that when Messiah came, he would deliver the people of God from the tyranny of their enemies. Naturally, they said, are you going to deliver us now? Are you going to liberate us? He replied to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father has fixed by his own authority.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. He did not give them either a timetable or a blueprint. The world seems to want that today, I should say the Church seems to demand it.

They like to know timetables, they like to arrange things, they like to have a blueprint on how to proceed. But he said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has fixed by his own

authority. But you shall receive power.

What do we mean when we say you shall receive power? Well, it is agreed we mean the power of the Holy Spirit. But far too many people think of the power of the Holy Spirit as something for them to use, rather than as something that is going to use them. That seems to be the problem of today.

I was talking to a farmer in Iowa. I said, Are you all ready for harvest? He said, That's the best tractor that money can buy. Mechanical power.

The Canadian and American farmers grow ten times as much food as the people can eat. That's why Canada has supplied wheat to China, and that's why the United States has supplied wheat to Russia. But that was only a tractor.

It lay under tarpaulin. The farmer never consulted it once. He used it when he wanted to use it.

That's not a good illustration of the power of the Holy Spirit. I'd rather think of a different one. A migrant worker going from Kentucky up to the cherry harvest in Michigan, and when he gets beyond Traverse City, he heads for an orchard.

He doesn't ask the man working at the edge of the orchard, Can you give me a job? He says, Where is the boss? And the man says, You see the fellow with the straw hat? That's the boss. Nice fellow. Good luck to you.

So he approaches the boss. I'm looking for work. And the boss says, How much experience do you have? Well, he says, I've been coming up here 15 summers now running.

All right, we can use you. Now, you see that far field there? You see the man in the blue jeans working by himself? You go to him and tell him that you and he are to work that field. This is the boss of the harvest.

Now the Lord Jesus said, Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, and he will thrust forth laborers into his harvest. Who is the Lord of the harvest? Scripture answers its own question. Who was it that said to the church of Antioch, Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them? It was the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the Lord of the harvest. The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our salvation on the cross. Where is he now? In heaven interceding for us.

But the Holy Spirit is the Lord of the harvest down below. He's in charge of the work of God. Maybe I could change the illustration again.

I served for four years in the United States Air Force in World War II. I discovered that in every military organization there is a commanding officer. To paraphrase Harry Truman, the buck stops here.

His is the responsibility. But the commanding officer doesn't rush around doing everything. If you want to approach the commanding officer, you seek out his adjutant.

You say, Captain, it's important for me to talk to the colonel. He says, All right, come tomorrow morning at ten o'clock. Be on time.

The colonel is busy. The adjutant arranges for you to approach the commanding officer. But when the commanding officer wants something done, he doesn't give it to his adjutant.

He sends for his executive officer and he says, Major, we're moving on Tuesday. Make sure the men are fully equipped and ready to move. Now using this only as an analogy, and all analogies break down at some point, God the Father is still on the throne.

He is in command. Our Lord Jesus is our adjutant through whom we approach him. We approach him in his name.

We approach God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But when God wants something done, he gives it to his executive, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in charge of the work of God.

I wish people could realize this. The secret of revival, the secret of awakening, is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These outpourings of the Holy Spirit which result in revival and awakening are times of recruitment, when God the Holy Spirit chooses men for their life work and sets in motion a new era of Christian advance.

Let's look further down this chapter. We come to verse 14. After naming the disciples who were in the upper room, it says, All these continued with one accord in prayer, together with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

A.T. Pearson, the great missionary advocate, stated once there has never been a great revival in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer. It must be united prayer. Last night I quoted the title of one of Jonathan Edwards' greatest books, A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for Revival of Religion.

What do you mean by extraordinary prayer? Ask yourself the question, what is ordinary prayer? Do you pray before you eat? That's ordinary prayer. Do you pray before you go to bed? Do you pray when you get up in the morning? That's ordinary prayer. Does your minister lead the congregation in prayer on Sunday morning? That's ordinary prayer.

Do you meet once during the week to remember the needs of the congregation? That is also ordinary prayer. Then what is extraordinary prayer? When you hear of people giving up their lunchtime to pray, or having a half-night of prayer, or praying all night, or meeting regularly, or engaging in what has been called a concert of prayer--people all praying at a certain time, or setting up a round of prayer that people may pray sometimes, someone is praying for twenty-four hours, that's extraordinary prayer. And it's a need of extraordinary prayer that brings revival.

They all with one accord. Now there was unity. You have heard perhaps of the Scotsman that prayed, O God, bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four, and no more.

Amen. Well that sounds very crude. Yet so often we pray for our own interests.

If you were to ask me the difference between conditions in the United States and conditions in some countries where there is revival, I would say that's the very point. When you get so concerned about a not pouring of God's Holy Spirit that you're willing to pray for the other man down the street, for the man with whom you have little in common even, then there's some hope of God answering, because that becomes unselfish prayer, and it becomes extraordinary. Let us turn to the second chapter of the Acts.

When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all together in one place. We are so familiar with the words of Scripture, we sometimes forget what they mean. I was having supper one evening with a pastor of the First Baptist Church of Moscow.

He was telling me about conditions in the Soviet Union. He said that the Lutherans were strongest in the West due to German influence, the Baptists were strongest in the South, chiefly in the Ukraine, but scattered all over the USSR. He said that the Evangelical Christians who were followers of Lord Radstock, who had united with the Baptists, were stronger in the North around Leningrad, which used to be St. Petersburg.

He mentioned the Seventh-day Adventists and said that they were proscribed, they were forbidden to meet in some places. And then he mentioned the Fifty-Day Christians. Now, I had heard of the Molokans, I had heard of the Dukhobors, but I had never heard of any Fifty-Day Christians, so I said, who are the Fifty-Day Christians? Oh, he said, don't you know? I thought they were very strong in the States, but I couldn't think of them.

He said, one of their denominations has its headquarters in Springfield, Missouri. I said, you mean the Pentecostals? That's the word, Fifty-Day Christians. That's what Pentecost means, fifty days.

That's what the Russians called Pentecostals, Fifty-Day Christians. Now, fifty days, seven weeks and one day after the Passover, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Now we come into the realm of phenomena. Perhaps you could call it signs and wonders, but could I ask the question, was there actually a tornado in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? Were any roofs blown off? Were any doors blown in? Were any pedestrians blown off their feet? Apparently not. Well, was there a tornado on the day of Pentecost? No, it doesn't say so.

It says there was a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind. It resembled it. One of my students at Fuller Theological Seminary raised his hand and said, you mean that this was a subjective experience rather than an objective experience? It takes some theological student to put it that way.

But I had to say, yes, it was subjective rather than objective. But that doesn't mean it wasn't real to them. May I illustrate? Supposing you had an operation to your brain.

The doctor, first of all, trepans the skull. He lifts a little piece of skull off to expose the quivering gray matter underneath. The brain doesn't have as many pain cells or endings that continue the operation.

If the doctor takes a needle with a low electric discharge and touches part of your brain, suddenly before your eyes you see your old Sunday school teacher, dead and gone these many years. What has the doctor done? He has stimulated your memory. It's not a fine art yet.

It would be very useful in a murder trial, wouldn't it? It's not a fine art yet, but this is well known. The doctor can stimulate your memory. Can God stimulate the memory? Can the Holy Spirit bring things to remembrance? Of course he can.

Could the doctor perhaps touch another part of your brain, your imagination? You might see something you'd never thought you'd ever see. Can God do that? That's why you find occasionally, especially at the beginning of a new movement of the Spirit of God, dreams, visions, trances, and things like that. The

trouble is some people make far too much of these subjective experiences.

They forget the word of God and the solid teaching of the word to check against. I had a great friend, he's dead and gone, who wrote a book called *For Sinners Only*. This man was editor of the *Sunday Times* in London, one of the big Sunday papers.

He was wonderfully converted and became an evangelist. He traveled around Britain with me. One day he asked me, have you ever seen the Lord Jesus? I said, what do you mean, seen him? I've seen him with the eye of faith.

But he said, you've never really seen him. I said, why do you ask? Well, he said, I was speaking in a Church of England parish church in Devonshire when I saw the Lord Jesus come in and stand at the back. And he spoke so reverently of this vision that he had.

I was touched. But then I said to him quickly, do you tell many people about this? He said, why do you ask? I said, well, some people would be casting pearls before swine. There are such things as visions, but they're always private.

Now the important thing was this, A.J. Russell didn't get a big magnifying glass and go around the church looking among the flower beds for footprints to see if Jesus had really been there. That's what's wrong with some people today. You find that sort of thing in a book describing the Indonesian revival.

Sometimes they carry it far too far. You don't materialize these things. They're revelations to you, but they're always private and they're not binding on any other person.

I mention this because we live in an era where people are interested. We live in a time when people are interested in signs and wonders. A Church of England missionary in my class raised her hand the other day and said, Sir, were there many healings in the ministry of John Wesley? And I threw my mind over John Wesley's journal as much as I could remember.

And I said, I don't remember one. Oh, I said, let me check. And when I checked, I found there was one.

He prayed for the healing of his horse, and his horse was healed. My missionary friend, who was a charismatic Anglican, was disappointed. She said, was it a real revival? I said, was it a real revival? Of course it was.

But I said, do you realize that before 1830, hardly anyone ever mentioned the Second Coming? Before the days of A. B. Simpson, scarcely anyone mentioned divine healing. And it's really only in the 20th century that there's been a recovery of interest in such a thing as glossolalia, speaking in tongues. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit.

But I have to say that take the greatest awakening ever swept this country, 1858. There wasn't one case of speaking in tongues. When it reached Britain in 1859, there wasn't one case recorded of speaking in tongues.

But when it reached India, it broke out in Tenevelle among the Episcopalians. There were dreams, visions, trances, healings, tongues, everything, just enough to keep you from forming a theory. I say that sincerely.

Now, I mention this because some people tie in revival with signs and wonders. But the abiding thing that you find from generation to generation that marks out a time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is first of

all an extraordinary spirit of prayer, then an intense conviction of sin, then confession, restitution, reconciliation, and then a burden to try and reach people near at hand or far away. That marks every revival.

Now, as we continue on through chapter 2, Peter stood up before this multitude who had been brought together by these strange things. He said, these men are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing as it's only nine o'clock in the morning. I was once preaching in Kerala in India when a man belonging to a way-out group came up to me and said, you know nothing about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

He said, if you knew something about it, you'd act as if you were drunk. I said, why is that? Well, the disciples on the day of Pentecost acted as if they were drunk. I said, I served as a chaplain for four years and I've seen men drunk.

In fact, I've put both officers and men to bed drunk rather than to see them get hurt. But I've noticed that drunkenness occurs in four stages. The first stage is exuberance.

When a man is first intoxicated, he'll do anything for you. He'll say, buddy, old buddy, what can I do for you? That's the time to ask him for a loan. He'll lend you anything he has.

The second stage of drunkenness is belligerence. He wants to pick a fight. He says, you insulted me.

I didn't say a word. You insulted me by not saying a word. And he's ready to fight you.

The third stage of drunkenness is disgusting. He's an exhibitionist. Misbehaves.

Makes you feel ashamed. The fourth stage of drunkenness is unconscious. He's out-cooled, as we say.

Now, I said to my Indian friend, how do you think the disciples behaved on the day of Pentecost? Were they unconscious? No. Were they disgusting? No. Were they belligerent? No.

They were just so happy they were like people celebrating at a wedding. They were full of joy. Now, these men were not drunk, as you suppose.

It's only nine o'clock in the morning. But this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel. In the last days it shall be, God declares, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

The mark of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit is that it's a work of generality. The Holy Spirit is poured out upon the whole body of Christ. I think I mentioned yesterday that I was talking to the dean of a very famous college, and I mentioned I was researching the 1858 revival.

He said, who started that, Moody? No, it wasn't Moody that started it. It was during that revival that God called Moody. People don't seem to understand that these great revivals are not the work of great revivalists.

They produce great men of God. The outpouring comes upon the whole body of Christ, your sons and your daughters, especially upon the young people. Your young men shall see visions.

They suddenly get a vision of what God wants them to do. And your old men shall dream dreams. There are old men today who say, Oh, I'd love to see it happen again.

They're dreaming dreams. They want to see them fulfilled again. Now, you say, but Peter preached.

If you read the rest of the chapter, it was Peter that preached. If Peter said, this is that which is spoken of by the prophet Joel, your sons and your daughters for prophecy, then the sons and daughters had to be prophesying for him to say that. He couldn't have said, this is that, unless it was actually being fulfilled.

That which was happening, not merely the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the upper room, the tongues of fire, but these people suddenly endowed with holy boldness to witness so that they were themselves the prophets of the Lord. I think I mentioned to you that before this time, the Holy Spirit had come upon individuals only. We call them prophets, overflowing ones.

But the difference to mark out the beginning of the Christian era is that the Holy Spirit has promised to come upon the whole body of Christ. It ends with the phrase, they that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, which shows that the outreach is not only to the church, but to the unchurched. Now, the apostle Peter preached Christ crucified, Christ raised from the dead.

Now we come to the climax of that great meeting. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart. What a feeble translation.

Pricked? I remember as a boy in school, taking a pin from my lapel and sticking it in the wrong end of a boy sitting in front of me. He turned around and said, who did that? Of course, no one would tell him. Come on, he said, I'm going to find out.

But boys don't tell on each other. He never did find out. I've forgotten who the boy was, or even write to him now and tell him I was the one that did it.

What did I do to him? I pricked him. Did he scream? No, he didn't scream. Well, did he yell? No, he didn't yell either.

Did he faint? Not at all. Did he collapse? No. Did he bleed? No.

If he had been cheering at a football game, he wouldn't even have felt it. What did I do to him? I just made him pay attention. That was all.

Now, is that the translation? When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart? I used to imagine for myself this great crowd standing before the Apostle Peter. And after he had preached, one raised his hand and said, That's all very interesting. Now, what do you advise us to do? And Peter said, Well, if you come forward and wait behind, we'll give you some navigator material and help you on your way.

Oh, no. A.T. Robertson, that great Greek scholar from Louisville, Kentucky, said this is a very poor translation. There's a Greek verb used here which was first used in the writings of Homer, the first Greek poet.

It's a strong verb. Today, if someone wants to kill prisoners, they line them up and just pull the trigger of a tommy gun and they're all dead. It doesn't require much muscular effort.

But in those days, killing prisoners was difficult. So what the Greeks did was they tied up their prisoners hand and foot, threw them on the pavement, and tramped the horses over them until they were dead. It was a cruel death.

It speaks of irresistible force on the one hand and utter helplessness on the other. So A.T. Robertson says that's the verb that's used here. Irresistible force, utter helplessness, in conviction of sin.

And the best translation he says is, when they heard this, they were stabbed to the heart. If tonight, God forbid, you were walking home and someone came behind you and stuck a knife between your shoulder blades, you wouldn't turn around and say, who did that, I'm going to find out, come on now. No, you'd scream.

You'd try to run, but you'd collapse in a heap and you'd bleed to death unless an ambulance got to you. That's the word that's used here. And in times of revival, there is irresistible conviction of sin.

It's one of the marks of these outpourings. Do you realize how difficult it is to convict someone of sin? You speak to them and they get very angry with you. They say, well I'm at least better than some of the hypocrites in your church, and they'll argue with you.

Why is it in times of revival there is such conviction of sin? In the 1858 revival, they started a prayer meeting in Kalamazoo in Michigan. It was led by an Episcopal layman. He said, I don't know much about this type of prayer meeting, but we'll follow the instructions we have in the New York papers.

I see our rector is here. We'll ask him if he will open the meeting with prayer. I see the Methodist minister is here.

Perhaps he will read the scripture. But he said, there are so many people here, I doubt if you'll get a chance to pray. Will you write your request on a slip of paper, pass it up to me, and I will read it and someone will pray for you.

The purpose of this meeting is to pray. The first request passed forward was, a praying woman asks the prayers of this company for her conversion of her husband, who is far from God. Immediately, a blacksmith in his apron stood up and said, my wife prays for me, I'm far from God, could somebody help me? A lawyer got up and said, I'm sure it was my wife that wrote that, because I know she prays for me and I need your help.

Five husbands converted immediately. In evangelism, the evangelist seeks the sinner. In these times of spiritual awakening, the sinners come running to God.

They were cut to the heart, they were stabbed to the heart. They said, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then comes that word that I preached on last night, the missing word in times of awakening. He said, repent.

That means change. Change. Change your attitude.

Can we illustrate this from happenings? I think it's fair. The Welsh Revival broke out in 1904. The missionaries in Korea were chiefly Presbyterian and Methodist.

In the north, they were Presbyterian. But they said, well, it's one thing to see a revival in a country like Wales. It would be totally different in a heathen country like Korea.

So they didn't expect, but they prayed, oh God, do something for us here. They started prayer meetings, but a Presbyterian minister, Howard Agnew Johnson, arrived from Chicago. He told them that he had visited the revival in Wales, and coming on around the world, had visited the outbreak of revival in India.

It began in the Cassia Hills. And he told the Korean missionaries about it. They said, well, if it can happen in India, it can happen here.

North Korea has a very cold climate, a bit like Saskatchewan. The ground frozen three months of the year. The farmers can't work outside, it's so cold.

The Presbyterian missionaries had a wonderful idea. Why not use the worst week of the winter for a Bible school? Bring the farmers to town. Let them stay with relatives.

If they don't have relatives, some church people, some friends will put them up. It became so successful that in January 1907, the Central Presbyterian Church was filled with men, and the Southgate Church was filled with women, about 1,500 in each. One evening, Dr. Graham Lee, an American, was leading the meeting.

He said briskly, before we have our Bible study, let's have a short season of prayer. Mr. Kim, would you care to open with prayer? Mr. Young, would you conclude? One or two others, but Mr. Young be ready to conclude. What he meant was, let's have a little prayer, but not too much.

We've got to get to the Bible study. While Mr. Kim was praying, six other men were waiting their turn, standing on their feet, waiting their turn. When the second man prayed, there were a dozen.

When the third man prayed, there were more than a score. After five men had prayed, Mr. Young thought it was his duty to conclude the season of prayer. He got up to thank God for the time of prayer, but someone beat him to it every time and prayed him down.

Mr. Young continued praying until finally Graham Lee shouted, Stop! Until he got silence. He said, well, apparently you want to pray. All right then, you may pray.

What happened next, he didn't expect. All fifteen hundred men stood to their feet and began to pray audibly, simultaneously. I knew a man who was there.

He died a few years ago in the Presbyterian retirement home in Duarte in California. His name was William Newton Blair. He said the effect was not confusion, but a vast harmony of sound and spirit like the ocean on a beach.

Everyone praying. And as the prayer continued, an intense conviction of sin settled in the meeting. A Korean elder stood to his feet and confessed a grudge against an American missionary.

I found out afterwards it was my friend William Newton Blair. This was his Korean co-worker. He didn't know that the man had a grudge against him.

But there are often tensions that come because of transcultural conflict and so on. People don't understand each other or do things differently. Blair wanted to offer forgiveness.

He thought he might do it in prayer. So he stood up and he was going to pray, Heavenly Father, bless our dear brother who so courageously has confessed his fault. But he got no further than saying, Apogee, Father.

When, according to those who were there, it seemed as if the roof were lifted and a great power fell upon the whole audience. Now there was an Englishman there, Lord William Cecil, a nobleman. I have no idea

what he was doing in Korea.

Never been able to find that out. But this was such a startling experience. He did what an Englishman does when he's excited.

He wrote a letter to the London Times. And if you want to read of the Korean revival, you can find it in the London Times. He said, before everyone's eyes, his sins were rising in condemnation of his life.

That's what marks revival. Now when I go to a Billy Graham crusade, I'm there as a supporter. It's not that I say, give it to them, Billy, or anything like that, but I'm with him in spirit, especially when he gives his invitation.

I pray, O Lord, grant that some may respond. But I'm there as a supporter. In times of revival, the Holy Spirit speaks to everyone, including the chairman and the speaker and everyone else, about the things that are wrong in their lives.

There were some terrible confessions made. The meeting went on, absolutely out of the control of the missionaries. The missionaries, because it was a new field, were trying to keep control of things, but they had no control of that meeting.

At two o'clock in the morning, there was a pause from sheer exhaustion, and they succeeded in pronouncing the benediction and getting to sing something and go home. Some went home to pray, some went home to sleep. The missionaries the next morning called an emergency meeting.

They said, we were praying for revival, but we didn't expect this storm. However, one Presbyterian missionary said, after the storm there's always a calm, and tonight we'll bind up their wounds with the balm of Gilead. Well, his plans were not fulfilled, because that evening it broke out again, and next night again and again.

I asked William Newton Blair, were there any holdouts? Oh yes. He said there was one man, a Presbyterian elder, who got up and mumbled some kind of confession, but never seemed to get to the point, until a woman's confession exposed him, and they had to remove him from the eldership. He said the last thing they heard of him, he was running a brothel, commercializing his vice.

Do you know that in that movement, there were 79,000, 79,221 converts added to the churches? John Wesley died after 50 years of noble work in Britain, and left 70,000 Methodists in his societies. But that was a great visitation, experienced by Korea. You know that the biggest gospel meetings in the world have been held in Seoul.

Billy Graham spoke to over a million there. Two summers ago, they had two and a half million people meeting on an airfield. So many attending, they had to ask the Korean army to help them feed the crowd.

Korea is bursting at the seams. Now, it has had several recessions and several renewals of revival, but you can trace the growth of the church in Korea back to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which came really in three stages. 1903 was the prayer movement.

1905, a great in-gathering of heathen. 1907, the cleansing of the church. By the way, in 1910, there was a recession.

You say, why? A missionary came back from the States with a wonderful idea, let's try and win one million souls to Christ. It was called the Million Souls Movement. They divided up the country and they said, now you Methodists in this province, you win 200,000.

The Presbyterians in this province, you aim for 300,000. Over here, quarter of a million, and they divided up the country. They had Chapman and Alexander come and start the crusade for them.

The total number of decisions was 15,000 some. Thank God for 15,000 some. But if you're aiming for a million, it's a bitter disappointment.

It seemed as if the Holy Spirit would not give up his prerogative to a committee or to an organization. And there was a recession for several years. Now I use this story from Korea to illustrate my text.

What we need today is the overwhelming convicting power of the Holy Spirit. We live in a wicked generation. When I think of 1950, just think of 30 years ago, what Martin Marty called the revival of the Eisenhower years.

Do you remember when Top of the Hit Parade was a song called It is No Secret What God Can Do? When the most popular film was A Man Called Peter? And then look at conditions today with the gross immorality, the profanity, the pornography, the crime. Just as I left Los Angeles, they condemned a man who not only murdered a number of young women, but committed abominable acts upon their dead bodies. What kind of a world are we living in? The churches seem to be helpless in the face of this.

It's time for God to work. Therefore, it's time for us to pray. I quoted Finney saying, Revival is nothing more than the right use of the appropriate means.

Do we have appropriate means? Everyone has a plan to do something in church growth or evangelism explosion or something. All these techniques are good, but the country is not being reached. I've been asked by my charismatic friends, don't you think the charismatic renewal is the great revival of today? It hasn't reached the people yet.

It may have deepened the life of so many Christians, especially in the historic denominations, but the world is still ungodly. When you think of what has happened in the great awakenings of the past, it is time for God to work. Therefore, it's time for us to pray.

You say, can we do anything? Yes, we can pray. But in order to pray, we have to plead the promises of God. There are so many here.

I will pour out water upon him that is thirsty. I'll pour out floods on the dry ground. We plead the promises of God.

That's the secret. Therefore, we have to have vision. Evan Roberts, whom God used so mightily in the Welsh revival, told me once, always pray for vision to match your faith.

When I came to the United States first in 1935, nearly everyone believed that Mussolini was the Antichrist. Do any of you remember that? Any of you older folks? Mussolini was the Antichrist. By the way, somebody asked me if Kissinger wasn't the Antichrist.

I said, certainly not. Well, why not? Well, it says Antichrist will have no regard for women. He certainly admires the opposite sex.

But isn't it funny how they're always bringing some Antichrist forward or saying he's alive right now. It's going to be somebody here or there. But in those days, it was taught that revival was impossible in our day.

That was a common teaching in days of discouragement. Well, we've got to have vision. I believe that while we have the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the people of God, we may enjoy revival.

But it's up to God to choose the time. And one thing we can do is to pray. It puts us right in His will.

Now this isn't an easy subject to preach. I find it so new to some. So I'm going to suggest just five minutes for questions on the subject.

Thank you. Regarding visible unity. As I study the revivals, for instance, the greatest revival this country ever experienced was 1858.

And you find Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, every denomination working together, just like the good morale we had in this country during World War II, speaking in a military sense, find a perfect unity. But they didn't disband and all join in one organization. So the unity that we must recognize is the unity that's already there.

To recognize those who are born again. My ecumenism is a very simple one. I want to have fellowship on earth with all those with whom I'm going to have fellowship in heaven.

Some people think in black and white terms. The way I look at it is this. I can unite with people with whom I can identify in all my doctrines.

But I can cooperate with other Christians with whom I disagree in non-essentials. And I can fellowship with other Christians with whom I have more serious disagreements. And I can dialogue with non-Christians.

I can dialogue with a Buddhist. Or a Muslim. Or a Hindu.

I certainly can't unite with him. So if we think of it in concentric circles, remember, in winning people to Christ we can always cooperate. And in fellowship we can go beyond that.

All who recognize our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the unity that we need in times of revival is just to recognize what is already there if we're children of the same Father, born again of the same Spirit, saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. We include them all in our prayers.

That's the kind of unity that comes in times of revival. Well, if there are no other questions, I'm going to ask you a question. What do you think you should do about this? You say, what can I do? You can give yourself to prayer.

Find some like-minded person with whom to pray. If there's a group in your church that prays for a spiritual awakening, meet with them. Encourage them.

But remember, you need to pray pretty widely. Not for some specific object or campaign. And I'll close with an illustration.

A young man came to see me about three years ago. He said, I have questions to ask you. He sat on a tape recorder and he pushed a microphone in front of me.

I thought I'm on the spot. I wonder what he's going to ask me about. Now he said, in one of your books it says that a man called Jeremiah Lanphier started a prayer meeting in New York which grew and grew and prayer meetings multiplied throughout the country.

The result was a great awakening in which more than a million people were converted. That's right. Now he said, I directed a crusade in New York.

We didn't start with one prayer meeting. We had one thousand prayer meetings organized. He said, we spent one million dollars promoting that campaign.

We didn't only have a bumper sticker. He said, we had a plane riding in the sky. Well, he said, we had a good campaign as far as campaigns went.

He said, I was back in Florida when the great blackout occurred in the northeast. And three hundred thousand New Yorkers tried to loot the city. He said, I felt sick.

I thought, why can't we do something that will last and will affect the community? That's what I'm asking you. No, I wasn't prepared to answer, so I said, well, I'll just tell you what comes to my mind. It was my privilege to be close to Billy Grain in 1949.

Billy came into a new experience with God up at Forest Home, first in September 1949, and then in October had that great Los Angeles crusade. But there was revival in Southern California. About a thousand revived pastors who were praying for revival poured their young people into that big tent.

Now I went with Billy Grain to Minneapolis and I went with him to Portland. In Portland, the campaign was organized by Dr. Frank Phillips, a veterinary surgeon, a fine man of God. They had one thousand prayer meetings.

Billy Grain came and preached in his inimitable style. Frank Phillips told the pastors, we stand on the verge of revival here in Portland. Billy turned over several thousand inquirers to the churches.

They went back to their pulpits, thinking they were on the edge of a new day. They went back to the usual routine, plus the problem of integrating these converts. My friend said, that's what I'm asking about.

Why? I said, I'll tell you the first thing that occurs to me. The day that Billy Grain left town, the thousand prayer meetings were disbanded. He looked at me and then he said, what you're telling me is that God does not send general revival in answer to target-oriented prayer.

I said, those are not my words, but they're my sentiments. Now, I'm a Baptist minister by ordination. The Baptists decide to have a youth rally.

Is that a good thing? Of course it is. Get the young people together once in a while. It strengthens them.

They decide to have a youth rally. So they choose a good auditorium. They find a good city in which to have it.

They have a good speaker, a good song leader, good music, good transportation, good publicity. Someone says we must have prayer, so they have prayer meetings. And then some warm-hearted person says, and Lord, send a revival.

But all they get is a good Baptist youth rally. Because you can't tie such an important thing as the revival of the whole work of God, like the tail of a kite, to some local project. It has to be a prayer for the greatest need.

And the greatest need in the United States today, without exception, is a need of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole body of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in conviction upon the multitude of our fellow citizens. That's the greatest need. And that must have priority.

Let us stand for prayer. O God, we pray thee, help us to remember the word, for he satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness. Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

O God, give us a hunger and thirst for another movement of thy Holy Spirit throughout this country to check the inroads of Satan, to lay siege to the citadel of sin. Lord, we pray thee, move thy Church once again. Give us a spirit of prayer and intercession, and grant that our prayers may be answered in short time, not as we ask, but as it may be most expedient for us.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from Father, Son, and Spirit be our portion, now and forevermore. Amen.

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