

Need Personal Revival

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the concept of restoration as depicted in Psalms 23, emphasizing the need for personal revival and spiritual restoration. It explores the dangers of neglecting heavenly leadings, falling into spiritual slumps, and failing to discern the Shepherd's present care. The speaker urges the audience to seek God's restoration, be honest about their spiritual condition, and be open to revival in their lives.

Scripture: Psalms 23:3, Psalms 51:10, James 5:16, Job 42:10, Hebrews 3:13, Amos 5:4

Topics: "Restoration", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of restoration as depicted in Psalms 23, emphasizing the need for personal revival and spiritual restoration. It explores the dangers of neglecting heavenly leadings, falling into spiritual slumps, and failing to discern the Shepherd's present care. The speaker urges the audience to seek God's restoration, be honest about their spiritual condition, and be open to revival in their lives.

Transcript

Go ahead and open your Bibles to Psalm 23. This is going to be my third message out of this Psalm of David. We looked at the Lord is my Shepherd.

This is something the Christian can personally say. We looked at the Lord being the One who gets us to a state of saying, I shall not want. There's true contentment in Christ.

And He makes us lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside still waters. This is the type of Shepherd that you and I are being watched over by and guided by.

And right now, I want to look at that first phrase in v. 3. He restores my soul. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow, pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

So David, as we've looked at, is testifying and attesting to the reality of who his Shepherd is. This matters to you and I because we've got the same Shepherd. And as we hear David testifying to these realities, we

should find great comfort as Christians in these same realities that David here is finding comfort in and boasting in.

Restores. I don't know what comes to your mind when you hear that word, but let's just quickly hear a lexicon describing that word. It says it in this way.

To restore is to return to a point or area where one has been before. To return to. To go back to that point.

And if you search that word up, you find it in the Old Testament in places like 2 Kings when we hear about Naaman who had his leprosy. When he washed, it says his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean. So someone's over here.

Something significant has happened to them like leprosy, their restoration. They're being brought back to this point where they once were. In 2 Chronicles 24-13, we read that they restored the house of God to its proper condition and they strengthened it.

So these men are working on the house. There's a proper condition. We want to get it back to its proper condition and strengthen it.

And they were laboring to do that very thing. That's what Christ is doing over you and I. We've got a good shepherd. If you're a Christian, if you're in His flock, if you've trusted Christ for the remission of your sins, if you believe what you heard in the first hour that there's a serpent that was raised and that's ultimately pointing to Christ, and you've looked to that and you've trusted Him, this is what's true of the one who watches over you.

David is talking about being revived, restored, refreshed by the Lord. And David, when he says here, he restores my soul. This isn't just a one-time thing.

This is a continual reviving that you and I, I trust, are experiencing as Christians. And one of the main things that gets in the way of us being revived is our own unbelief at times. David says he restores my soul.

My soul. We're not talking about breaking a physical bone and needing that restored. We're talking about the soul.

We're talking about the spirit of a man. We're talking about what's going on inside of you in your own heart. And David, he cried out in Psalm 21, he said, let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

How many physical bones did David break right there? How many physical bones did he break? None. But he looks and sees God has broken him on the inside, even like we were just saying when I asked the Lord that I might grow. And he says, let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Something wasn't right in David's spiritual condition and he needed to be restored. He needed to be brought back to this place and have his spiritual bones set in place that they might heal.

So in Psalm 23, we consider, when did he write this? We can't prove if this is early in life or later in life. It seemed to be later in life. But what do you think was coming to David's mind when he said he restores my soul? Anything specific? Was it the time that he proudly did not go to war? When he should have and he ended up falling into adultery in the midst of his idleness? He definitely had to be restored there and put

back in his proper condition.

Or was it the time that his men were urging him to look, God's given Saul in this cave into your hand. Go and kill Saul. And David didn't kill Saul, but what did David do? He went and cut part of that garment.

And what happened? His conscience struck him. Even there, David needed to be restored. Proper condition was now left.

The conscience was not clear because this little infraction. So whether it's the adultery, whether it's the cutting of the garment, whether it's falling into unbelief and self-pity for a moment, all of those situations require restoration back to the proper condition. You know, you think about this in construction, right? Some houses take more work than others to get into their proper condition.

I'm sure Roell and Charlene are experiencing that with their home. I haven't been over there, but I've heard about it. It's not been easy.

I mean, what do you have in your spiritual realm? Do you have a minor water leak? Do we see some stain appearing on the drywall? Do we need to open that up and get that fixed? Is that what's happening? Or do you have just some hairline fracture in the drywall? Kind of like right there. You've got a hairline fracture. I mean, how important is that for us to fix it on the work day? You see that? You've got one over there? If that's in the spiritual realm, how important is that? Very.

Because it takes a little crack in your soul to begin a subtle drift away from Christ. That's what we're thinking about here. What is not set in place in the spiritual realm? Maybe you've got foundation issues.

No one wants to get a home and find out that they've got foundational problems. But you know what? Many have that in the spiritual realm. Their whole perception of who God is, it's wrong.

Maybe you've even been coming here and you're starting to recognize my idea of what the Gospel is and how a man is saved and it's through Christ alone. I grew up, it was my works that saved me. Or it was some experience that I had.

And all of a sudden, you realize you've got foundational problems spiritually. You've got to rip it all apart and lay a new foundation. Does your sickness require a six-month remodel? Is it a total tear-down of false doctrine and receiving the truth? Or is this just some one-day fix of something that happened in your conscience and some unconfessed sin? Or is this just a reviving that takes place in one hour of drinking of the still waters and being refreshed in Christ after a long day of exhaustion and serving other Christians? No matter what degree of reviving is required, David says there's One who can handle it.

This is no contractor with questionable spam reviews on the Yelp page. This is someone who front to back in this book, you see time and time again, He is faithful and equipped to meet your very need in whatever it is and whatever type of restoration needs to happen. And you've got to be able to believe that because the devil wants you to think that whatever you've fallen into, whether big or small, he wants you to think your case is unique and the Lord is unable to help you in that situation.

Don't believe that lie. Even many, I realize Hebrews talks about it's impossible to restore some to repentance and we got the same word there, restore. But many people think that applies to them when it doesn't apply to them.

And they get deceived by the devil to think there's some hopeless case and that Christ is unable to rescue them from the pit that they have fallen into. There is One, whom when you survey that wondrous cross, and you see such divine love, that's the greatest restoration that's ever happened is taking you and me, being enemies of God, and reconciling us to the Holy God. If He's done the greatest restoration possible, then what are those little tiny drywall fractures in your spiritual heart? What is the plumbing issue if God's done the greatest thing and completely restored us and made us sons of God? If you believed Him for the greater, can't you believe Him for the lesser restoration that you might find yourself needing this morning? I mean, look, if I said in my first message the Lord is my Shepherd, and you said that, and you believe that, good.

What about the second one? I shall not want. Maybe you left here, you're thinking, I can say that I shall not want. You're going to have to believe this text today as well.

You can't just pick or choose in Psalm 23, will five of these apply to me as a sheep? No, it's a package deal. Every one of these things is a reality. Whether you feel like you're experiencing it or not, you've got to believe it.

You've got to believe that whatever I'm in, whatever's not right, whatever reviving I need, whatever restoration I need, whatever refreshing I need, Christ my Shepherd, He's able to do it. And I thought, we're just saying revive us again. And someone might say to you, they might say, when we sang that song, what were you feeling? Do you feel like you need to be revived? That's not the question.

It's not what were you feeling? The question is what are you believing? Doesn't matter how you feel, whether you feel like you need to be revived or not, what are you believing? Are you believing the Lord despite whatever subjective feelings you have? Are you trusting Him that He is a God who is able to do and give that which you need right now in your life? So, remember what's behind this Shepherd's fulfilling these realities for His flock. What does the text say? Why is He doing all of this? The conjunction's right there. For, and what reason does He give? Psalm 23, He restores my soul, leads me in paths of righteousness.

What's His reason? What's the motivating factor behind God doing all of this? For His namesake. We don't want to forget that as I try to work through Psalm 23. This is about God being committed to God.

And so you can guarantee all the more these realities being true because the Lord is committed to Himself. He's committed to His character and this is for His own namesake. So again, don't let the enemy try to deceive you and make you think you can't trust the Lord for whatever restoration and refreshing you need in your own soul this morning.

Did you hear what David's saying? He's saying you and I have a watchful Shepherd who comes and assists the downcast and revives those who need reviving and brings back the wanderer. Are you cast down? David said, why are you cast down on my soul? Have you fallen over in the spiritual realm? Do you need to get picked up by the Shepherd? Let me illustrate this. Think of this, a certain sheep, he slowly started to wander away from the green pastures.

Flashes of conviction on his conscience failed to turn him back. Each step put more distance between him and the flock. Everywhere he turned, trouble kept arising.

As the days went on, more distance came between him and the flock. He looked around and he saw nothing familiar except things from his past prior to being bought by the Shepherd. He began to have a sense of panic when he heard the howl of a wolf.

He darted to and fro and he fell down. And having had no Shepherd for these last days, his wool was rather large and the wool was not cut. And he laid on his back, stuck like a sheep, unable to turn itself over.

And a cast down sheep is a pitiful sight. As one of the pastors who was a Shepherd wrote, W. Keller, he said this, lying on its back, its feet in the air, frantically struggling to stand, it lashes about unsuccessfully. While thrashing in frustration and occasionally bleating, gases begin to build and expand in the rumen, rapidly retarding and cutting off the blood in circulation to the extremities of the sheep's body, especially the sheep's legs.

In the hot and sunny weather, a cast down sheep can die within an hour. While the weather is cool and cloudy, the sheep might be able to live for a day or two. So let's think of the sheep again.

There he is, lying on his back. His eyes look up. And you know what he sees? He sees vultures.

They've already gathered around him to come and devour him the moment that his subtle bleeding stops. Meh, meh, just when that stops, his legs stop kicking, those vultures are ready to devour him. The wolf whose howl was once far off is now strangely closer.

You know what the sheep is thinking? He's shocked. How did I get here? I didn't realize my wandering just a little bit away from the flock, I would end up here. Just neglecting a few meetings of the brethren.

I had no idea where I was going to end up. He was now struggling to stay awake. He was losing his consciousness and beginning to fade, to pass out and die.

And as he struggled to keep his eyes open, he turned his head and he saw the wolf only feet away, and he thought all hope is lost. You know what? He wasn't the first sheep to think all hope was lost. Listen to David in Psalm 31.

I've been forgotten like one who is dead. I have become like a broken vessel, for I hear the whispering of many, terror on every side, as they scheme together against me as they plot to take my life. But is that how the psalm ends? No.

Verse 14 in Psalm 31, But I trust in You, O Lord. I say, You are my God. For a moment, he's thinking, I've been forgotten.

I'm despairing. And then he says, I trust in You. You are my God.

My times are in Your hand. Rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors. Make Your face shine on Your servant and save me in Your steadfast love.

You know what? Some of you, you're stuck in verses 12-13. You need to get to verses 14, 15, and 16. You've got to add that statement, but, but in contrast to being forgotten as if dead, I will trust in the Lord.

And so this sheep too, in my little illustration, this sheep too, he's got a glimmer of hope. All of a sudden, this glimmer of hope, it comes into his mind that the Lord must be near, because the Lord said He would

lose none of those who are His. And indeed, His shepherd, having taken great care of His sheep, knew the sheep was gone.

He was already out there searching and watching and observing this lamb who had strayed. And right as he thought that wolf was going to bite him, he heard that wolf with a loud yelp. And that shepherd's rod, it came down on that wolf's head.

And that shepherd, he tenderly took that sheep, and he knew the sheep wouldn't get its equilibrium back. It wouldn't be able to walk. So that shepherd, he picked up that sheep and he began to take it back to the fold.

And what was that shepherd doing while he took the sheep back to the fold? Was he angrily chewing out the sheep in disgust like some parents do to their children? Was that what he was doing? No. The shepherd actually brought the sheep back in joy. Not frustrated, disgusted, or fed up with the sheep, but rather showing compassion.

You see, if you're cast down, brethren, you and I were sheep. And we have a shepherd who will restore you. He will take you from whatever condition it is in the spiritual realm that is not proper, that is not right, and He is able to revive and refresh you and bring you not just back to where you were, but He can set your feet on higher ground.

Are you in need of a personal revival of restoration of returning to a spiritual condition that you previously were in? Do you need that? Do you feel that? Maybe you need it and you don't recognize it. Maybe your turmoil comes about subtly. It's just after a long day.

You're exhausted from serving the brethren or your children as a mother and you sit down. And you know what? Rather than open the Word, rather than as Psalm 19 says, be revived by Thy law, you open your phone and you scroll on to Facebook. And you don't get revived.

You don't get the refreshing that the shepherd promises because you don't use the means. Or maybe you do. You take up that Word.

You're exhausted. And you just open the Word and you read three verses. And God in His love, He feeds your soul and revives you in that moment in a way you didn't even expect could happen.

And He comforts you with some truth you never even saw before. You find those verses to be still waters for you to drink in the midst of all the busyness you had throughout the day. I hope many of you mothers are finding that to be a true reality, because your shepherd says he's there to restore you.

It's an expectation. You're exhausted through serving your little flock. You should expect you have a shepherd who wants to revive your soul.

And you might not be far off to the degree David was in adultery. It might be just far off in a little sorrow and upsetness and grumbling over the trials of the family. Even there, your shepherd is able to revive your soul.

You know, here three things are as we contemplate this statement. First, this is a confusing statement. Secondly, it is a heart-breaking statement.

Thirdly, it is an encouraging statement. So first, this is a confusing word. Why? Why would I even dare to say it's a confusing word that He restores my soul? Why would that be confusing? You know why it should be confusing? To you, to some degree.

I mean, it makes sense. But for a moment there, it should have you pause. In view of how great our shepherd is, we see everything David is saying about him.

We see him even saying, only goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life. How could David possibly need his soul restored in the first place? If the shepherd is who he is, how is this sheep get that far away to commit adultery and have a man murdered? I mean, why would the shepherd allow that to even take place and to happen? That could be a little confusing because you would think that the shepherd would have prevented it who says only goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Well, what does the text say we are? Does the text say the Lord is my robotics manufacturer and I am His robot? Is that what it says? Are we robots? The Lord is my shepherd.

David says we're like sheep. We have the ability to make our own personal decisions on how we will respond to His voice. You have that before you today.

You're not being forced into some action. You've got to determine to follow the Lord and hear His voice and not reject His voice. The psalmist said in 119-176, I've gone astray like a lost sheep.

I mean, we're like a dumb sheep who shepherd after shepherd will say as I already illustrated, when they fall on their back when their wool is not cut, they can't get up. In Marfa, Texas, three weeks ago, we visited a sheep farm. The Bases' parents have one.

I wish I would have asked the dad for permission. There's this one big sheep that had all this wool. I would have loved to have pushed them over and saw what happened.

I regret I didn't do that. But you know what? I keep reading it again and again from people who are shepherds. Are they lying? No, I don't think they're lying about it to just make a more exaggerated illustration.

But we're that helpless, brethren. So no, it shouldn't confuse us. We need restoration because God in His infinite plan has not made us robots.

There's man's responsibility and God's sovereignty and it's all working together. And even in God's sovereignty, all that happened in David's life. Even as we sang in that one psalm, asking the Lord that you might grow and the Lord sending trials upon you.

Maybe you wonder in the midst of the trial. Even that, though, the Lord's working for your ultimate good when it's all been said and done. Secondly, this is a heartbreaking word.

When you read this psalm, He Restores My Soul, something there should break your heart. Should break your heart. Remember, the fact David even said it implies and indicates at certain times this man, a man after God's own heart, the man who killed Goliath, this man was careless and departed from the shepherd to even need restoration to begin.

Isn't that sad? It should break our hearts. This teaches us we are susceptible to neglect heavenly leadings. And if you're honest, you look at your life, you've seen it.

How many people in my 15 years of a Christian, they have expressed to me how God is dealing with some idol in their life and He's convicting them of it, and then it sounds like they're going to cut the right arm off that's causing them to sin, and then I find out months later it never got amputated. Was that not a heavenly leading? Was that the Spirit of God convicting you? Was that what the great shepherd's saying to get rid of that? And then it never happened. Do we just chalk it up to the voice of the devil? Or do we find reasons to minimize it is not that big of a thing.

It's just a little drywall fracture on the wall. You know what? It's not that bad. It's okay to have a little blemish on the conscience.

No, no, it's not. Brethren, David and Peter's sin is heartbreaking. And God records it all in His Word for us.

And it's not there to encourage us that we can sin and be forgiven. But you know what? When you've fallen into some sin, you should find encouragement that there the compassion of God was merciful towards these men. Even like Peter, in all of his pride, denying Christ, this is the kindness and the lovingness of our Lord.

He didn't cast these people off. The third thing here, we have an encouraging word, restores. It doesn't say throw the sheep into the butcher's shop.

Rather, there is one with the skill and the ability to restore our condition of soul. You know, there's many people out in the world, they claim that they've got the cure for your soul. I'm here to tell you, all of them are wrong.

There's one person with the cure for your soul and it's the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great Physician. There's no other Physician who truly has a cure to pay for your sin.

And He's accomplished that redemption on the cross and He freely gives forgiveness to all who will call upon His name and be saved. He restores. This speaks about the Lord being the one active in the restoring.

We wouldn't be saved if it wasn't for the Lord. He's the one who sought us out. He's the one who bought us.

We can look back and praise the sovereignty of God in our salvation. And that should cause us to also praise the Lord for the security of our salvation. John 10, they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

I mean, He restores me. He's actively pursuing you to restore and revive your soul because He's promised according to His character that He will lose none. And so He's going to do all sorts of things to get you there all the way to the end.

All the way my Savior leads me, as that one hymn says. That's true. That's what the text says.

Our Shepherd has no problems counting His sheep. He's not overwhelmed with everyone whom He has saved and has been bought with His precious blood. Not one of them gets lost on His radar or buried in the commotion or forgotten about.

I mean, if you need restoring in some way, brethren, there's great hope. You can be revived. Whether your degree of strain is severe or whether it's very minute, we have a Shepherd here who wants to revive you.

Like Samson, has the Spirit of God left you and you don't even know it? He didn't know it. He went in thinking the power of God was on him and it wasn't. Are you having a midlife crisis spiritually? I've used the term midlife, but it is amazing how many people kind of at a halfway point, they fall into some real slump spiritually where they no longer can discern their thoughts directly about reality in the spiritual realm.

I'm going to apply this on a personal level. We all have a danger known from the Lord Himself that we might slide into some spiritual slump and some slumber and drowsiness. I mean, maybe your week or month or the last year has just been flat-out discouraging.

Maybe you need to be restored from a state of jealousy back into a state of rejoicing with those who rejoice. Or restored from a state of lacking self-control and discipline in real subtle ways to having a spirit of self-control like you did years earlier. I mean, whatever it is, you've got to believe that He will restore you to the proper condition.

Believe that rather than in the clouds of darkness, think that your case is unique and hopeless. In Ezekiel 34, He says, as a shepherd seeks out his flock, when he's among the sheep that have been scattered, so I will seek out My sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered.

Listen to this. Scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of clouds come.

Thick darkness. And you just find people kind of getting spread out. You think, what happened there? I didn't expect all these people to get shaken by the clouds and the darkness.

The shepherd, he's going after them. He's finding them. I will feed them with good pasture on the mountains of heights that will be their grazing.

They shall lie down in good grazing and on rich pastures they shall feed on the mountains. I Myself will be the shepherd of My sheep. I Myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord.

I will seek the lost. I will bring back the strayed. I will bind up the injured.

Lord, I've got an injury. I broke my leg spiritually. Heal me! And I will strengthen the weak.

And then he says something rather terrifying. The fat and the strong I will destroy. Boy, you know what you think about the Pharisees? Their heads were fat with knowledge.

We heard about it in the first hour. Nicodemus had all this knowledge. When Christ comes, it did not go well for most of those Jews and those Pharisees.

So what are some cases needing restoring? I mean, there's obvious ones, right? I'm trying to think of you all, brethren, what in your life, maybe it's not as obvious. Obviously, the greatest restoration as has already been emphasized is your salvation. If you don't know Christ here today, if you've never been confronted with the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death on that cross, listen to what Acts 3 says.

If you turn, therefore, and you turn back, your sins will be blotted out. And listen to this, you will have times of refreshing that will come from the presence of the Lord. You've got a Christ who says I can refresh your soul.

This world, it will not satisfy, but I will satisfy your soul. You know what I think for most of us? We're more in an area of needing some spiritual reviving in our own walk. You know, personal revival.

Here's something to think about. Here, first category is, you've got people who don't recognize they need restoration. So if you're sitting there thinking, I don't need restoration anywhere in my life, I would hope you would reconsider that thought in your mind and take that thought and put it in the trash bin over here and bring in the thought of, you know what, maybe there's something in my life right now that needs restoring, that I'm ignorant of.

Matthew 5.13, you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown and trampled under people's feet. Am I losing my saltiness? Or like in Revelation, you've got people who are blind and they cannot discern their true state of themselves or their church. Am I as salty as I was? You know what some of us need? We need our restoration detector meter restored.

Meaning, we go to some meter here and we're trying to see, do I need restoration anywhere? And you hit the button and the thing says, nope, everything's perfectly fine in your life spiritually. Well, what if the machine is broke? What if your discernment is off? And you don't really see something that's trying to be shown to you by the Lord, but you comfort yourself. Well, there's nothing there.

I mean, is it possible that I could be deceiving myself in some area? Is it possible that I reflect on the last decade as a Christian? Maybe there's been some subtle shift in my life and I've not even picked up on that reality? That I don't take the Lord as serious as I used to? I mean, where does the person who doesn't realize something often fail? Like Uzziah. How many people went to rebuke Uzziah for his pride? How many? Who knows? Eighty-one. Eighty-one men of valor came to correct a man who was famous and used of God in his later years.

And you know what? He didn't hear them. He basically said, don't you know who I am? That doesn't apply to me. Right? Pride.

Pride keeps us from growing. Here, another thing is, this is more subtle. You know what's going to keep you and I from getting restored in areas we need to be restored from? Is we fail to forget our past success as a Christian.

What do you mean? I should forget the past success I've had as a Christian? Where do you get that idea? Where's that in the Bible? Where's that in the Bible? You tell me, where's that at? The same man who said, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain, he says it. The man who says it's his eager expectation and hope that he will not at all be ashamed. That man, the Apostle Paul, he makes that statement in Philippians, that famous confession where he says, forgetting what lies behind.

And he's not talking about sin. He forgets what lies behind. He's talking about all his past successes.

And he says, I press on. I mean, that aged Apostle, he looked at his life and he kept considering himself as a newborn Christian. He had more ground to take as a Christian.

You know, someone mentioned the illustration of rock climbing. I mean, you've got this massive mountain, right? And you've got a guy who's made it this high, but the top is all the way up there. I mean, you've got more ground to take.

Right? You can't... look how high I am. Forget about it. Keep going up.

Get higher up there. Don't fall into some contentment. Does not matter that I've climbed so well or so high.

I'm still not there. You're still not there. What's going to keep us from ending up like Uzziah? Some famous person who's proud and arrogant, unable to receive correction at the end of our days.

You know what many of us, I think, are in what you might call the middle years of our Christian journey. I want to read something that Bob Jennings wrote that I feel like there's some impact here. He's reading Habakkuk 3.2. It says, O Lord, I've heard the report of You and Your work, O Lord, do I fear.

In the midst of Your years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy.

And Bob goes on to say this, There is a particular danger in the middle years. Most marriages break up, not immediately and not late, but in the middle of the year, love grows cold. It's in the middle of the ballgame, in the middle of the race, that momentum is lost.

It's during the middle age that we began to get out of shape and get overweight. And it's generally in the middle of growing season that the drought ends up coming on the crop. So also in our spiritual careers, there's a danger of falling into a slump and being in need of revival.

That early zeal for the Lord, that sense of adventure in the pursuit of God, that simple childlike faith still willing to risk it all, that sense of freshness in reading the Bible, it's gone. The long haul and the heat of the day is upon us. And we're in danger of cooling off and settling into a lukewarm attitude.

We're tempted to be content with our spiritual attainments and to feel that we have pretty well discovered all that God would have to say to us. There's a danger of the sacred becoming commonplace, forgetting the glory of so great a salvation, forgetting the manner of love that has been bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. The prophet prays, Revive thy work.

The Christian is God's workmanship. Do you need to pray that prayer? Maybe you need another Pentecost. Maybe you need the regrowth of your hair of consecration and the old power to return like Samson.

Maybe you need the gift of God in you rekindled afresh, as 2 Timothy 1.6 says. Maybe your church formerly had a manual written on its walls, but now Ichabod, the glory having departed. May God revive His work in our hearts that we run well to the end.

May God revive His church in our sick land. That is my prayer. End of the quote.

Lamentations restore us to Yourself, O Lord. Secondly, this type of person, you've got the first person, they don't realize what they need. But here's the second one.

You've got the person who wrongly thinks he needs to get to some time past. You really think some big change has got to happen, but he's discerning it incorrectly. There are some who based upon influence conclude something in the present is wrong with them or their church, and yet it's not the case.

They've actually fallen to an attack of the devil to get them to act fast and change things up and make a decision that in the end they're going to regret. They wrongly interpret a trial in their life as indicating something is wrong, or they neglect the Lord's discipline being used to train them and they just find fault

with others. And I get this thought from Job.

Last week in my devotional reading, I had Job 29. If you know, Job was the most blameless man in all of the earth, right? God's the one who put it in the devil's mind to go after Job. Listen to what he says in chapter 29.

"...Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days of old when God watched over me. When His lamp shone upon my head and by His light I walked through darkness, as I was in my prime." Do you hear that? Take me back to my prime. Get me back to my prime.

"...When the friendship of God was upon my tent, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were all around me, when my steps were washed with butter and the rock poured out for me streams of oil." Now, is Job right in what he desires and says here? I mean, if you look at all of Job, and you look at the rebuke that the Lord delivers to him shortly later, listen, Job, you're presently saying God is not watching over you. Is that a true statement? Is Job right here to say that God is not watching over him as he goes through all of this? He's dead wrong. I mean, it was God's idea.

God allowed it all to happen. Job, you're not discerning things correctly here. Job, you said the friendship of God is not upon your tent.

Really, why does it say in James, when you look at Job, you see the steadfast compassion of the Lord? I mean, we're supposed to see compassion here in what's happened with Job? Job doesn't see this as very compassionate. Were Job's children not around? Yeah, they weren't. But just because his children all died, does that indicate any disfavor of God? It does not.

And that's where discernment comes in. Something is not as it used to be, and we can automatically assume it's something that is not the favor of God. When that's not true, it's actually God brought this here for our own good, just as He did for Job.

Job said, I want to be in my prime. Really, Job? You want to go back? Is that really what you need, Job? Is it to go back? Here, I think, we have an example of a man caught up in severe trials, having bad counselors speak to him who are affecting his mind. We see that.

And he fell into this thinking. And I'd say it's wrong thinking that Job fell into. Notice? Bad counselors affect the mind? Your perception on reality? We need it in the prime.

We need to get back to the prime. No, no, Job. All of this, I've done it.

Say, I will not want, Job. That's what the shepherd is saying to him. Job, he keeps saying in that passage, I was, I was, I was, I was.

Look into the past. Look into some past era. He's at a crisis point.

Yet, ironically, he's there in a valley and guess who's with him? The Lord. But he can't see it. He can't see it right there.

And in the end, you know what happened to Job in chapter 42? The Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends and the Lord gave Job what? Twice as much as he had before. I mean, Job, forget going back to your prime. Your actual prime is ahead of you.

I'm going to give you twice more. And I realize that's focused on the physical realm. So much of the Old Testament does focus on the physical realm.

But you know what? You and I need to believe the same thing in our own trials. We're going to come out like gold and God can make us twice more like Christ than we ever were. Rather than going back, our restoration can be one of going forward and being revived in that way.

I mean, why not pray, Lord, restore my spiritual stand among the reality of knowing You, not just what it was, but twice more than it's ever been? I mean, what if you're like Job, moaning and groaning about wanting to be in your prime and in the months of old and you fail to recognize the shepherd's present care? Or what if you're like the person over here who thinks they don't need any change? They need no restoration and they absolutely do. And I feel like we have those two. Those are two of the categories.

Blind to the need for being revived and then blind to the need of, I don't need to be revived. God's at work in all of this. Sometimes it's hard to discern which one are you in.

You know what? Thankfully, the Lord sees it. And we can go to Him. We can pray to Him.

He sees it all. And I can find great comfort in that. And He knows that people are going to grow weary and faint, and He gives power to the faint.

To him who has no might, He increases their strength. So, this restoration, let's think for a moment here. The restoration is the Lord doing it, but there are means, right? You've got to believe the shepherd.

You've got to have faith. As one brother said, do not wait for days or weeks to elapse to apply for His restoring grace, but just as you are, dare to trust Him to do it now. And as I mentioned, are you in the Word? Psalm 19, He says He will revive you through His law, through His Word.

Are you in the Word? Or another thing, are you in fellowship with other believers? Brethren, as you see people not here and inconsistent in the meetings, we're all needing to be going after them because they might be in need of restoration. And God uses a means. God used Nathan to confront David.

God says in James 5 that we are to restore the wanderers. That's all of our responsibility as I talked on years ago. When you're around Christians, you're being exhorted in your heart.

It can't get hardened by the deceitfulness of sin because there's too much hitting at that hardness of rock forming. It just crumbles. Being in fellowship with believers is like being in one of those hot coals, right? All the hot coals together, they're feeding off each other and all the heat.

You take one of those hot coals and you settle over there by itself, it will initially have heat, but that heat is going to fade a whole lot quicker because it's neglecting the meeting together and the stirring up with the saints. You need restoration? Are you asking the Lord for it? Are you crying out to Him? Listen to that Psalm 119 again. I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

Seek Your servant. You hear what he's saying? Lord, come fetch me. I'm laying over there stuck on a rock.

Broke my leg. Fetch me, Lord. I mean, do you pray that? You should.

Pray Psalm 41. I said, O Lord, be gracious to me. Heal me.

For I have sinned against You. He acknowledges His sin. Do you want your Shepherd to lead you in paths of righteousness for His namesake? Just ask Him to.

You want to be more righteous? You want to be more on a path that's honoring God? Ask Him. He'll make it happen. If you really want that, well, in closing here, I just want to read something before I read this.

One other thought on restoration. There's a final restoration coming. Jesus is going to come back, restore the universe to perfect righteousness.

I want every one of you to be a part of that. Every child to be a part of that. You don't want to miss out on that.

If you're not in that final restoration, you're going to a final damnation and condemnation. And it will be your fault for rejecting Christ. It will be your fault for rejecting even to be restored.

If one of you here is going to fall away in the next six months, and you're going to neglect this shepherd who's very willing to care for you, and you say, well, if I'm really a sheep, He'll come after me. No, you don't want to have that attitude. If you're a sheep, you'll cry to Him and not just point at Him and find fault with God.

I was listening to a sermon by Pat Horner who had pastored out a community, and he had a sermon on this text. I want to quote something he shared in this text. This is in 1989.

He says this, he said, I don't know if you've ever had the privilege of God coming alongside you and reviving you or God meeting you in the church service and reviving you with a devotion and just stirring the soul where you felt like God just came and blew on the members. And it just flamed up. Maybe I'm talking to someone who doesn't know what I'm talking about.

But if you're a Christian and you know a little about Christianity, you know a little bit about God working in your life. And it's unexpected. The Lord just comes along and He just blesses.

We had a time of refreshing in the church in Elmendorf in 1989. We had a weekend meeting. It was their spring conference.

And at the last sermon of the spring conference, a brother preached that Sunday evening. He said here, it started Wednesday. It went through Sunday.

And eight weeks later, it was over. I said, what do you mean? What is he talking about? Eight weeks? They just had a spring conference that lasted eight weeks? And you talk like that today and people say, eight weeks? I've got a life. Yeah, you're missing something in that life of yours.

And yeah, we took it down. The meetings, we would meet every day. Seven days a week.

Eventually, we met five days a week. Then three days. And then eight weeks later, we closed the meeting.

God did something in our church that stayed with that church and it changed us dramatically. I was talking to Brother Leo. Him and Rick, they were there.

And Leo shared about what Pat is sharing about. He said we had been praying for the Lord to come and to meet with us, but we didn't know what we were praying for. God just settled down like dew on mown grass

in that Sunday morning.

You know, we had 120-135 people in there in the assembly. Probably 40 children. Newborns two years old and three years old.

We had probably 50 children from newborn to 12 sitting in a pew. Mothers nursing. When the meeting ended, no one moved.

You know what happens when Sunday school is over? People jump up, run to the restroom, right? Nobody moved. It was weeping going on. God settled down.

God helped us. God revived us. God stirred our souls.

People were confessing sin. There were relationships put back in place. There was something that God did that only God can do.

That's part of this restoration here in Psalm 23. That's part of what David knows something about. That David knows something about being afraid of his enemy and God coming along and bringing him some comfort.

David knows something about saying there's just a step between me and death and I'm just going to give up. And God comes along and tells David, now you've got a lot of years ahead of you, young man. You've still got to rule the nation.

And God came and ministered to David. F.B. Meyer, he said this, Neglect of some known command will also soon pull down the strongest... Let me read this again. Neglect of some known command will also soon pull down the strongest spiritual health into the weakest of disease and decline.

If only all Christians who are now fencing with some known command of Christ, if they would dare to obey it, there would be one of the greatest revivals that we've ever seen. If you're honest with your own soul, is there something in your life? Is there something in my life that we're not getting rid of? And maybe you're in one of those two categories I already described. You're someone not seeing your desperate need to be revived because you're too proud.

Or maybe you're someone who thinks everything's got to change and you don't recognize God's work. Maybe you're in a third category, I don't know. But I'm telling you, secret sin, especially in the middle years, things start to creep in.

You justify it, you hide it. It grieves the Spirit of God. It prevents God from meeting with us.

That sin, it could be all number of things. Some brother shared that after one of our services ended, his lost daughter looked and saw a guy sitting in front looking at a dating website on his phone and a wicked image of a woman. That happened when one of our services ended.

You think God is pleased with stuff like that? You think God is pleased with a critical spirit? You think God is pleased with bitterness in the heart and unforgiveness? He's not. We need to be honest with the Lord. I'm seeking to be honest with the Lord all the time in my life.

You know, we have people leave our church. They give all these reasons. They mention these different things.

We don't bury our heads in the sand. We pray with David, search me, oh God, and try my heart and see if there's any grievous way. And Jeff, Craig, John, and I, and if there is, lead us in the way everlasting.

We all want the Lord. We want His nearness. We want His power.

But so often we're looking externally. We need to look inside and see what does God need to do in my life? Let's pray. Father, Lord, I thank You that we have You, the Great Shepherd.

Lord, I feel it in my own life. There's so much I don't know, so much I don't see, so much I don't understand, so much I do not discern, so much that I'm ignorant of. Lord, it's like Edgar prayed that we were just dumb like an animal.

And yet, Lord, You are not dumb like an animal. You're the all-seeing, all-knowing God. Lord, You know exactly what I need in my life.

You know exactly what all my brothers and sisters need in their life. And Lord, our prayer is that You would indeed do that. Whatever that is, that You'd work in our hearts and our souls, that You'd revive us again, that You'd make us more like Christ.

Lord, that You'd give clarity where clarity is not. Please, Lord, our days are just passing by so fast. Lord, help us.

Please, Lord, help us. Father, show us what we need to see in our own lives. Lord, show me, Lord, what I'm not seeing.

Lord, if I am blind, if I am too proud to see something that's not right in my own heart and life, Lord, I pray that You'd show that to me. You'd drive it home like a dagger. Lord, I don't want to be not restored.

If there's something You need to restore in me and any of us, Lord, I pray that You'd do that very thing. Please, Lord, we thank You for Your goodness and pray all these things in Christ's name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/BsLBCcx6TzM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/need-personal-revival/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net