

# Holy Living Priority for Revival Praying

by Lou Sutera

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*Lou Sutera emphasizes that holy living is essential for effective revival praying and experiencing God's presence.*

**Topics:** "Revival Prayer", "Holy Living"

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## Description

Lou Sutera preaches on the importance of revival, emphasizing the need for God's people to humble themselves, pray, and seek His face. He highlights the significance of confessing and turning away from sin, making restitution, and being willing to forgive others. The sermon underscores the essential role of brokenness, sincere confession, and a longing for forgiveness in experiencing true revival. Through examples from past revivals and biblical figures like Job and Daniel, the message stresses the necessity of being thoroughly right with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal and cleanse any sin in our lives.

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## Transcript

II Chronicles 7:14, "If MY [emphasis added] people, which are called by my name..." God is not referring to the crooked politicians who do not know God and the world on the outside. "If MY PEOPLE [emphasis added]...shall humble themselves and pray..."--we must see a Holy God and then humble ourselves before Him. Then it says that God will revive.

The God who is the God of eternity; the God whose name is holy says, "I dwell in the high and holy place [the heavens] but I dwell with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." To do what? God dwells "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). God's purpose for your heart and mine is to be revived. He wants to have an abode in our hearts to be reviving us so we can be constantly revived by the God of the universe.

This is a truth all on its own. If only we could fully understand it. What does it really mean? What is the glory of it? What is the fullness of it? Let us make sure that we do not allow anything to stand in the way of our receiving it.

So, this represents God's people humbling themselves as they see Him in His holiness. Then God says that He can revive us. God says, "You are recognizing me as the Holy God of eternity. Humble yourself with a contrite, broken heart, a heart in which the kick has been taken out, contrite--crushed to powder, made into little pebbles. That is the heart I am going to revive. Then you can pray."

We are talking about praying for revival. We had a prayer meeting last night for revival after the meeting. We are going to have one tonight after the meeting. We announced one for tomorrow night after the meeting and who knows, the Lord might need another night. That is why we have a noon prayer meeting here and a prayer meeting before the evening service, and now one after the service so folks can get into one or the other. If some of you men want to start one in the morning at 6:00 and 7:00, just say the word, and spontaneously prayer meetings will start as we humble ourselves and call on God.

This is what it is about: first humbling, then praying, then seeking God's face--that is going after God. In the Old Testament God has promised to bless and to bring joy and rejoicing to the heart of those who are hungry in seeking after the face of God and then turn from their wicked ways. My people should turn from their wicked ways.

I believe that God is asking you, whether you are ready to do all that God is saying, even to the turn from your wicked ways. Then God says, "I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chron 7:14). Now God is ready to hear: "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place" (II Chron. 7:15). That means, it is not enough to say let us have a prayer meeting. We can pray and pray and pray and God's eye will not be open and his ear will not be attentive. I wonder how many prayer meetings you have attended in your church, how many years that you have been praying for God to send a revival. And the tragedy of the matter is that God's eye is not open, neither is His ear attentive. And you say, "Well, I am giving up. God will never send a revival. Look at the years we have prayed for a revival."

For all practical purposes, we could take all of those prayers and put them in a waste-paper basket. I hate to tell you that. I am not saying all of them, but many of them. I tell you that because if there is sin in your life, if there is a proud spirit, if there is contention among the brothers and sisters, God's eyes are not open and his ears are not attentive to hear the prayers. That is what God is telling us. Are we ready to get into a place when we pray that God's ears and eyes will be open and attentive? It is after verse 14 that God says, "Mine eyes shall be open and mine ears attentive unto the prayer made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever" (II Chron. 7:14-15). We see God coming to live with His people. "And mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (II Chron. 7:16). God is moving in. God is making residence with His people.

One of the great chapters of the Bible is Isaiah 12 where it says, "Great is the Holy One...in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:6). Great is God in the midst of his people. What a statement! The Holy One cannot come in the midst of us because holiness cannot mix with sin. Oh what a wonderful thing when God the Holy One can come and mix and be in the midst of His people. That is what we are reading here. He first says He will "heal their land," (vs. 14) then, "my heart shall be there perpetually" (vs. 15).

II Chronicles 7:17-20. Oh, what are the gods that we are serving which we end up worshipping? God is saying, "and this house...will I cast out of my sight." That sounds like he is saying "Ichabod" to his house. Ichabod means the "glory of God hath departed" (I Sam. 4:21). I wonder how many churches are just about there.

Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). But it does not mean there couldn't be some local scenes and local bodies of believers where "Ichabod" could even be written over those door posts.

II Chronicles 7:20-22, "Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them." We see here that they have a low view of the character of God. They didn't fear God, but served other gods. They laid hold of their own gods. They grabbed hold of three other gods. What are the gods in our lives? And they "worshipped them and they served them." This is always what happens in idolatry. We end up serving them. "Therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them" (7:22). What a message God is speaking in the Old Testament to you and to me through Solomon!

Dr. A.W. Tozer said, "To receive answers to prayer we must meet God on God's terms." Dr. Simpson said, "The secret of revival will always be the same, no short cut, no modern way to open heaven and the flood gate of God's blessing." Dr. Stuart Watt said, "One ounce of obedience will do more to loosen the bolts of the windows of heaven than tons of our fundamental theorizing."

God touched Dr. Sherwood Wirt, former Decision Magazine editor, in revival in Canada when he came up from Minneapolis and flew into Winnipeg. He sat for three nights on the third row under Bill McLeod's preaching to hear from God. He went back to Minneapolis to Dr. Graham's office of Decision Magazine. He was so touched by God those three nights by what he heard that he called back to Winnipeg asking for some laymen to come down to Minneapolis to give their testimonies because he said, "I have got the people in the Graham organization together and some churches around here who want to hear." Some laymen went down, and revival broke out, with Dr. Sherwood Wirt being the first one God touched. He said, "Here I am working for the world's leading evangelist and who was working for me." His heart was so bitter against his wife. He has put his story in a book entitled After Glow.

If you were to go to Dr. Graham's pastors' schools, he brings Dr. Wirt in on the excitement of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Dr. Wirt tells the story of how he and his wife could not get along for years. God set him free in that situation. Dr. Wirt said, "Not everybody who is talking and praying about revival is ready to pay the price to be revived themselves."

What thrills me in the first week of our meetings is to sense that God gives a nucleus that stays with it through heavy preaching and says, "I want to hear God. Pour it on me, Lord." Are you ready to pay the price for revival yourself and not just talk about it? Revival and evangelism come only when we are on praying ground and pleading terms.

"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). What does our Lord say about the situation preceding the matter of praying for revival? Holy living has to become a priority. And what does that mean to us? In verse 30 are interesting words concerning a man who was touched by Jesus. We do not even know where he came from or much about him. But we know one thing. God opened his eyes.

Verse 31 talks about people who call themselves Christians. "God heareth not sinners." Now if we were true worshippers of God, what is the essence of it? We do His will. Then it says, God heareth him. It is just not enough to say, "I am a worshipper of God" or "I am in the family of God." You and I need to know that we are worshippers of God and we are in the family of God. In the church of Jesus Christ we need to know

it anew and afresh. Now we know that God heareth not sinners. It does not mean just the unsaved. It says sinners. It includes Christians as sinners. But it says if we are doing God's will, God heareth us. So that means there is no use praying if we know there is sin in our lives. We pray and then wonder why God does not hear.

One night in the Regina, Saskatchewan crusade there was a man who got up after God touched him and gave a testimony something like this. He said, "I was mad at God the second night of the crusade. Why? Because after the first night I thought this was so good and I knew a friend who needed it. So I went and got him and I brought him to the revival because I knew my friend needed to be saved. I prayed all day long for God to save him when he said he would come. I said, 'I am bringing that man to the meeting. God save him, God save him.' When Lou was preaching, I prayed, 'God save him; get him.' When the invitation was given he did not go forward for prayer. He went home and acted so very uninterested. I got mad at God. I said, 'God what is wrong? Don't you answer prayer? Aren't you a prayer-hearing-and-answering God?'"

How do you like that? What is wrong? God showed him what was wrong. That man was praying with such sinfulness in his own life. There was no way that God could hear his prayer. He said this in his testimony after God set him free. This applies to Christians as well as sinners. God heareth not sinners. Do you know that nine out of ten verses in the Bible that talk about sin generally are speaking to God's people and not to the unconverted world. We need to remember that.

Dr. Oswald Smith said, "Sin is the barrier to revival in the church. That barrier must be removed at all cost. God's people must get right with God."

Churches must get right with God. Do you represent a church that is ready to hear the painful statement that God might be calling you as a church to make restitution and get right with God about some previous actions? "As soon as they do," says Dr. Smith, "they will be on their way to revival. For the stones will be gathered out of the way and the channel will be cleared and the way will be opened for the outpouring of the Spirit of God."

God will not hear our prayers nor will He bless our lives if we have sin in our hearts. If now we will humble ourselves to God and give ourselves to prayer, allow the Spirit of God to search us and try us and let Him reveal everything in our lives that is not right. Give Him the privilege. He will show us the wrongs that will have to be made right, the sins that must be forsaken. Dr. Smith said that it is a common experience to find souls kneeling at the altar of prayer, calling upon God with apparently great anguish of heart and yet fail to receive anything from God. It is just as common for Christians to get together for nights of prayer for revival and yet never have their prayers answered. What is the trouble?

R.A. Torrey said, "A great deal is said about prayer as a means to promote revival, but we can not say too much along this line; we must always bear in mind that prayer has not power if the life of the one who prays is not right. There is no use in our praying to God to save others until we ourselves are right with God. If we are holding on to any known sin, if we are harboring bitterness in our heart to anyone who has wronged us or whom we have wronged, or are keeping back any absolute surrender of our lives, the time we put in prayer is wasted." I am not the only one who says this. R.A. Torrey said it years ago. When we listen to God to learn His will, and when we worship God and do His will, He heareth us. When we listen to Him and we do His will in our daily lives, God will listen to our prayers. That is John 9:31.

Bruce Larson said, "The most important single factor in effective prayer is that the person praying be in right relationship with God." Prayer must be honest. We need to learn that God is not concerned about saying the right things as much as our saying the real things.

D.L. Moody said, "I sometimes tremble when I hear people quote promises from the Bible, and they say that God is bound to fulfill those promises to them, when all the time there is something in their lives that they are not willing to give up." It is well to search our own hearts to find out why our prayers are not being answered.

One man said after he got right with God in revival, "God has answered more prayers in three weeks in my life than he has in all of my Christian life put together." Phil Hogben said, "It is pathetic to pour forth on all sides, hundreds of prayers to which God is unable by the very nature of things to respond, prayers full of agony and desire. The heart is there, the desire is there. Prayers for the choicest gifts that God is to bestow, prayers offered in the name of Jesus, all right the way they are prayed, prayers even based upon the Word of God, but which God cannot answer because the way is blocked in the heart of the man who prays. How should the Spirit of Pentecost be poured out upon the one who has never been willing to walk in humiliation to Calvary? The common prayer is, 'Fill me, lift me up.' The divine answer comes from God: be empty and go down, then God is ready to work."

Revival praying must begin with the prayer of Psalm 139:23,24. Would you dare pray this painful prayer? "See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Revival praying can be effective. Psalm 10:17 is the picture of the praying that is going to change things. It sounds like II Chronicles 7:14--when they humble themselves and pray, in that kind of praying God is going to do a work on their hearts. There is going to be an operation on their hearts. That is the same as II Chronicles 7:14 where it says they will seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways. That is going to be God preparing their hearts. Then it says, "Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." II Chronicles 7:14 says, "Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." What a beautiful way! It is not enough just to pray. There has to be the humbling of hearts so that God will hear and be allowed to operate on our hearts. Then God says he will cause His ear to hear.

Psalm 17:1, "Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips." This prayer is coming out of pure lips. In verse 2 he is saying, "O God, You tell me what I am like. O God, show me what my heart is like. Tell me the right things about my life." In verse 3 God has searched David's heart like in Psalm 139:23,24. The prayer of David put this in another way so clearly in 17:6,7, "Would to God that God would raise up an army of people that would say, 'I have called upon Thee and we know thou wilt hear us. Our prayers are going through.'" What a way to address God! What a confidence in his God! What an assurance that his God was hearing and that his God was alive! What an assurance that his God was an active God in the affairs of men! What an assurance that his God was not the God of the pantheist who could not care about men! Here is the Psalmist who said, "O, Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee from those that rise up against them" (17:7).

God can be found in your heart and in your church these days. But how? Ps. 32:6, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." The godly have assurance that God hears and answers prayer in the most difficult of circumstances.

Psalm 145:17,18, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Do you know what that word "truth" is? It is the context of "mental honesty." It is the word "sincerity" in the New Testament, sincerity and truth. All them that call upon him in mental honesty, God will hear. Look what it will do in verse 19: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them."

Proverbs 15:29, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." We have just come through verses that tell us where God is near. Now we find out where he is far. We know that God heareth not sinners, but why? Because "the Lord is far from the wicked."

The Bible records so many magnificent answers to prayer. Hannah asked God for a child and Samuel was born. Daniel prayed for protection from the mouths of hungry lions and their mouths were closed. Elijah petitioned heaven and for three years the weather conditions were changed in Israel. He prayed again and weather conditions were changed. God hears the prayers of the righteous.

The Bible tells us, "...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16b). It goes on to speak of Elijah who had such power, yet was a man of like passions as we are, and just as human as you and I. We think of the men of the Bible as supermen spiritually, that they had some kind of spiritual power that we can never hope to have. No. The Bible states: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are..." So God is saying that Elijah is one of you; he walks among you. He is made of the same stuff. But that man prayed. He had something about his life that was so right with God that he could shut up the heavens by the space of three years and six months and pray again and open them. So, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

When King Solomon spread out his hands before God in that newly built temple in Chronicles, he asked God to hear every man's prayer. He said, "Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers" (II Chron. 6:30-31).

What do you mean, Solomon? He said, "Hear every man's prayer according to his heart." How would you like your pastor to pray to God like Solomon in his Sunday morning prayer? I wonder if you would allow him to pray like Solomon.

No wonder Jesus reminded the money changers in Matthew 21:13 when he said, "It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer." And he "drove" (kicked) them out (Jn. 2:14-16). My house is a house of prayer.

In the temple that was built, Solomon prayed, "Reward these men according to their hearts." As they pray, answer these men according to their hearts. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our body is the temple of God. Solomon built the temple of God. Our body is the temple of God. Then our body as the temple of God should be the house of prayer. No wonder the praying is not going through, because God is rewarding us in our prayers according to our own hearts. The Holy Spirit is looking for cleansed houses of prayer through whom He can carry on His intercession with groanings that cannot even be uttered to the heart of God for the needs of mankind round about us.

Under what conditions is prayer effectual? Paul said, "I will therefore that men pray every where" (I Tim. 2:8), and "Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). Paul said, not only pray without ceasing, but that men

should pray everywhere.

How do we pray? "Lifting up holy hands..." How? "...without wrath and doubting." This means believing prayer. Perhaps the reason why we are not exercising believing prayer is because the hands are not holy. When the hands are not holy our faith is shattered, because the unholy hands make it impossible for our prayers to get through, and we doubt God hears and answers. The key to prayers that are without doubting is related to how clean our hands are.

Paul says to Timothy, Follow "them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Tim. 2:22). But not of a perfect heart. You say, "It sounds as if we all have to be perfect before we can pray." No. God is not calling for perfection of action. He is calling for a pure heart. He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). For us to pray, we must be able to see God.

What does it mean to be able to have a pure heart to see God? We must see Him in all of His character, in all of His beauty, a God who can do the impossible, a God we can believe in. It means that we must see God right here in this life. It does not mean when I die I will see Him, but right here in my daily living I need to see God. Are you seeing God in your Spirit?

What does it mean to have a pure heart? It means no preplans for sin, no programming to sin in your life. It is not saying, "Well, after all, you know we all must sin every day in word, thought and deed. What can you expect? We all do it." You'll do it if you have such a negative mentality like that. You are planning sin and programming it right into your mind.

The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (I Jn. 1:9). Thank God for that. But then the Bible goes on to say, "Little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not" (I Jn. 2:1). This is a command of God--"that ye sin not." One's heart's desire, if it is pure before God, is a determination, a will that says I choose to sin not. I choose to obey a Holy God. And I go on record to say that I have made a choice to "sin not." Have you made this the obsession of your soul? You will not if you do not see God in His character and His holiness. We play lightly with sin. Seeing God we say, "I choose, O God, to sin not." Then it goes on to say, "But if any man sin..."--that is a pure heart. With a pure heart I refuse to program sin into my life. "But if I slip on a banana peel in a moment of weakness and temptation, and yield, it breaks my heart and I am sorry for it. God says that when your heart is pure before God, not programming sinning, and you do sin, you don't have to whip yourself. You don't have to be defeated. You don't have to give up. You don't have to say it doesn't work. Instead, you can revel in the character of God.

God is saying, "If you sin in that condition, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." You don't have to whip yourself. You get a new view of Me. You get a picture of My grace. You get a picture that I am your loving heavenly Father. Just like a child slips and sins and a father has to discipline that one and put his arm around and love that one, so I want you to know that I see you didn't mean it. I see that it wasn't intentional. You didn't program it in your mind. You had a pure heart before me, even though the action wasn't perfect, your intention was perfect. Don't whip yourself. Come to Me, have an advocate with the Father, and revel in the grace of God." And that is a way to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then you get to love Him more, even in that simple situation.

I am not talking about perfection of life. I am talking about perfection of intention, that I live to the best of my knowledge in a heart attitude that I know my heart is clean at this moment to all the light that God has given me. I am not programming sin; therefore, I have the right to pray. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much--not the perfect man. That is the context of the word "righteous."

"Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another..." (James 5:16). Now we are first of all confessing our faults one to another, and then praying. The word "fault" is the Greek word "harmatia." It is the word for sin. It is not just faults or weaknesses, it is sin. We confess our sin one to another and we "pray one for another that ye may be healed." The context is primarily of spiritual healing, but then it says, "the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

First, there is the confession of our faults and our sins one to another. There must be an inter-relationship and a cleansing of inter-relationships that are wrong. We cannot pray and believe God is going to hear our prayers when we know that in the church there is a brother or a sister we cannot talk to with whom we have a broken relationship. "The prayer of the upright is God's delight" (Prov. 15:8). God tells you to get up off your knees and stop praying. Some prayer meetings should be stopped. There is such a thing as untimely prayer. Solomon said, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law [of God], even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

The Psalmist prays in Psalm 80:4, "How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?" That represents another prayer meeting that needed to be stopped. "How long," the Psalmist says, "wilt thou be angry?" God is angry against what? The sin of the people? Against the prayers of the people!

Prayer meetings need to be stopped. God stopped one prayer meeting in the Bible and it was in the day of Joshua. Joshua 7:10-13, "The Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up..." God stopped the prayer meeting. "...Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face" and praying? Why are you on your face? Israel had sinned. "Get up Joshua, sanctify the people." God stopped the prayer meeting! I am wondering how many Wednesday night prayer meetings ought to be stopped around town because God is crying, "Get up. There is sin in the camp."

Joshua's need at that time was more than praying. It was obedience to deal with sin. One hesitates to say anything that would stop anyone from praying, but praying is not effective if we are not willing to be honest with that which God shows us about our hearts. There is no use in praying for victory when we should be dealing with sin. As long as there are wrongs that need to be cleaned up, it is our duty to face that which is not right in our life.

Achan, in Israel, did thorough housecleaning. This was Achan's sin. And when Achan came and confessed, what did the leaders of Israel do? They went back. They sent messengers back to Achan's tent. Remember, Achan said, "I have sinned and confess. I have stolen this and this and that." He confessed all he did. What did Israel do when they heard his confession? They went right back to his tent and searched it. They wanted to make sure that even when he came and confessed his sin he wasn't lying. How do you like that for thoroughness? They sent messengers back to make sure his report was accurate.

Throughout Scripture it enforces this great principle--victory in prayer. One man, Achan, hindered the ministry of God in the entire congregation. In the context of Achan, think of the defeat he brought to the entire nation. Oh, what pain Joshua had to go through because of one man's sin and how many lives were destroyed because of one man's sin.

God came to Abraham when Abraham was pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18. Abraham said, "God, if you can find 100 righteous in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, would you spare the cities?" And then Abraham said, "What about 50?" He came down more and said, "God, if you can find 10 righteous people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would you spare it?" (See Gen. 18:26-33). And

God said, "Yes." Can you imagine that all it would take was 10 righteous people who were on praying ground in Sodom and Gomorrah to spare those cities from the destruction of fire and brimstone. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" (Jas. 5:16)--if 10 had qualified as righteous people, 10 could have saved the city. It was not quantity God was looking for, but quality. It is the quality that has to be right before we can even talk about the quantity.

I know a church that went through a drought for at least seven years, and that church called just about every great preacher they could get, one pastor after another. They thought if they could get the best preacher they could get their hands on, a man who was known to be a pulpiter, called a prince of preachers, things would go well. That man just about died of a broken heart in that church because of the weight of the cloud that hung over the church, such heaviness that could not be penetrated in that church. The man preached his heart out and cried out to God but there was nothing he could do until that church was willing to deal with something they had done to a previous pastor.

This illustration shows us what God thinks about sin, that it is a painful thing. If we want to mean business with God, make sure we are not instruments that could in any way hold back the power of God in a church (Lam. 3:40-44).

In Isaiah's day the lament was this. They were crying out, as God's people were hurting. They lamented unto God. Isaiah, the prophet of God, cried out to God and then gave the people His message. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). That was when they were praying and they were saying, "Isaiah, why doesn't God hear?"

Lamentations 3:40, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

I find there have been times when God Almighty has held back his power from the whole church because of one person's sin. Was it not in Moses' day when his sister Miriam rebelled, and because of it millions of people were held back for days. She was able to keep back millions of people who could not move in the wilderness because of one woman's rebellion. What a price they had to pay! I am not saying that because of one person's sin a revival could be held back from a whole church, but here is an example of that in the Old Testament. One person's sin held back the power of God and many people had to suffer for one person's sin.

One lady in Washington state said, "I have been trying to pray around it but it doesn't seem to work. It has really hindered me in my prayers." What did she mean? It was her feelings of revenge toward a sister-in-law. She said, "I get on my knees and I try to pray around it, but it doesn't seem to work." God is saying that sin clips the wings of our petitions. The very heavens have turned to brass and God remains silent when we pray because things are not right in our life. God is saying that one disconnected wire, one dead tube, one improper switch can silence the finest radio in the world. Sin causes our prayer to go unanswered.

God told Joshua to get up and get things right in Israel. What a perplexity that was to Joshua the leader! He did not even know about Achan's sin. He thought everything was well in the camp. He proceeded to go after the little town called Ai. He sent his men up to assault the town. He expected to win just like they were winning battle after battle. He went, not knowing there was sin in the camp. He suffered such a bitter defeat, with so many being killed. What a situation! So he prayed out of utter perplexity, crying out to God

in bewilderment and discouragement. He sank down in the utter despair of discouragement.

How many pastors in their offices are in utter despair of discouragement? They have wept before God and said, "God, what is it in my life? What is wrong, God? Why don't the heavens open upon us?" And they are weeping and are broken hearted. Joshua didn't even know about the sin that was in the people.

Before the Saskatoon revival, Walter Boldt, pastor of the University Drive Alliance Church, and Bill McLeod, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, were walking down a street in Saskatoon talking to each other six months before the revival. Walter said to Bill, "You know, I believe if God would come to visit any one of our churches on any given Sunday, and if He would lift the lid, it would look like hell itself inside." What words!

The revival took place and on the third week the crusade had to be moved to the Alliance Church. We sent teams to Walter Boldt's church on Sunday morning. Some of the Baptists went to give their testimonies to the Alliance Church. What an amazing thing--a revival going on at the Baptist church with 300 people and they sent some of their people to the Alliance Church with 1000 people to give testimonies on Sunday morning. Some of the brothers in the Baptist Church went because of bitterness against the Alliance Church. They used to be members, but held bitterness. They had to go back and ask the whole church to forgive them. It also went the other way, with Alliance people going to the Baptist church. People began to go all ways in that revival. They had to go to ask forgiveness. God started a work in that meeting.

I still remember Walter Boldt sitting on the platform as pastor of the church, and the meeting that started at 11:00 in the morning did not conclude until 4:00 in the afternoon, with seven invitations in that meeting. Seven times we called people to go to the room of prayer to meet God. I remember how he sat on the platform, with people coming down the aisle with such openness and brokenness. Heaven truly broke in on that place.

With such brokenness people would come to the platform to ask Pastor Boldt for forgiveness. How many kisses he got that morning! He got caught up on a lot of years he had missed them. It was a marvellous, marvellous sight to behold! Some people went home at 1:00 and some went at 2:00 to have dinner. I saw the doors of the church later swing open and I saw them coming back in again. They heard the meeting wasn't over, so they had their dinner and went back again.

The next week Walter Boldt said the meeting went to 2:30 or 3:00 and the next Sunday morning it went to about 1:00. He said, "The meetings were getting shorter and shorter again because we were getting cleaner and cleaner." You read about this in the book, *Flames of Freedom*.

Walter and Bill got together after the revival and reminded each other of their walk down the road when they said, "What would happen if God would lift the lid off either of our churches on any given Sunday?" Walter said, "God did come to his people, did lift the lid and it looked like we suggested. And you wonder why our prayers are not going through."

I suggest that many of God's preachers are in defeat, discouragement and despair and do not know what to do next. We need the lid to be lifted to save their hearts and lives and minds and most of all for the glory of God to come in the church. Sin is the cause of many mysterious failures and we don't know the reason for the failures. It is nothing but sin. Some say, "Let's get rid of our pastor and get another one." How many have you railroaded in the past 20 years? We always look for a scapegoat, don't we? I know that sometimes people are guilty and pastors need to move on. But I am telling you that sin is the cause for

many mysterious failures where there should not have been a failure. We learn much about sin when we talk about stories like this. Prayer sometimes is simply mockery. Can God get this message through to us?

Prayer is a mockery and mere babbling in the sight of God when sin holds its sway in our lives and we are not willing to do anything about it.

Dr. Oswald J. Smith said, "Sectarianism, the lack of Christian love, worldliness, these things are blasting the work of God on every side." Oh that God would enable us to confess these sins of criticism and gossip. I wonder, do you have a "Critical Christian Club" in your church? What about bitterness, gossip, hatred, backbiting, jealousy, spiritual pride, sectarian prejudice and aloofness? We need to confess our lack of Christian love and get all these sins out. "Together," said Dr. Smith, "let us unite in earnest travelling prayer for a mighty, spiritual sweeping revival. It is to this I would call the people of God."

I am reading this to you so you can get the heartbeat of a man you have heard much about. I am not saying he was perfect. I am talking about the heartbeat, the underlying drive of the man's life. "For I am persuaded that the hour has struck. It is for this that I would bleed. Come, my brethren. Let us unite our forces, our prayers, our aims and no longer keep the Christless masses from the salvation that God longs to send them and the Church from the revival He waits to give. Let's be those who get together to see God come down amongst his people."

The Psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18). Don't pray. The word "regard" means "if I wilfully harbor it." It means "to have compassion on and respect for" the sin and iniquity of my heart. It means that I am not going to deal harshly with the sin. It means that I have slackness concerning the sin in my heart. It means that I make loopholes of excuses for the sin in MY heart. I vindicate myself for the sin in my heart. It is so natural to do so. It means that I make compromises with the sin in my heart. It means that I don't name "sin" sin, but give it every other name than what God calls it. "O God, give us people who will be like Daniel of old who refused to compromise.

In Daniel 1:8 it says, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat." That is what we need--purposing in our heart like that. "If I regard sin in my heart the Lord will not hear me;" instead, let us purpose the other way in our hearts and lives. We are so merciful to sin that we excuse it. Somebody said, "An excuse is a sin wrapped up in a lie." We say, "It is part of my personality, just the way I am. I am a chip off the old block. My dad was like this."

You know that bitter, angry, critical spirit and all the rest of it. Are you saying, "Well, I am just like my father. What can you expect? I was born this way. He went to his grave that way and what can you expect from me?" So you are expecting to go to the grave the same way. Because he did not see victory over it, does that mean you have a right to go on without victory?

Sin is not part of your personality. Sin is what is defiling your personality. Sin is part of your fallen nature and God wants you to be free from it. Name it for what it is and refuse to accept it, and be free from it. Then you can pray and God will hear. One layman said, "Don't let your sins look like strawberry shortcake." That's our problem, sin looking like strawberry shortcake.

In Henry Teichrob's book, , he said,

What does it mean to be right with God? It means to allow the redemptive Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to become effective in your life. It is not just to say I was saved, but for the Gospel to become effective in

your daily life. The things that those young people in Springside, Saskatchewan, that night were condemning as sin, I wasn't anxious to be around all this. I was looking on when God started a revival in some young people. I was not very anxious to be involved in what I was seeing going on because there were things in my life that I knew I would have to get right with God.

If I have heard it once, I've heard it hundreds of times. All of that squeaming, all of that running away from the voice of God, and all that criticizing is because we are all made of the same stuff. If the revival goes on, what happens is God takes that and puts it right back on us and tells us, "Why did you act like that? Why did they trouble you so?" And God gets us to the issue. I reasoned, "If other people have forgotten about my sin because it happened so long ago, I should forget about it myself."

"Don't worry about yourself," God said. "Henry Teichrob, stop praying for your daughter. Get up from your knees and stop praying. Stop praying for your daughter if you won't make it right with that college about which you cheated on your papers, even as you can see the college in view of your house. If you won't make it right with that college about those papers, get up off your knees and stop praying for your daughter." Here is God stopping a prayer meeting. He says we are too proud to call sin sin and it is the pride of our hearts that keeps us from being touched by God and being the instruments of God's blessings to any Community.

God speaking to Jeremiah said, "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men..." (Jer. 5:25-26). God says that He is far from the wicked. We now find out why God doesn't hear the prayer of his people. He is far from the wicked. God was speaking through Jeremiah the prophet and Jeremiah was delivering God's message to the people: "...among my people are found wicked men."

A man in Grand Rapids, Michigan said, "I see why I never had faith to believe for answers to prayer, because I was not committed." Another man said, "Three hours after I yielded my life to the Lord I had three answers to prayer. They were people I loved so much and have had the same problems as I've had for years, and three hours after I had met God I had three answers to prayer." A school teacher in Grand Rapids said, "I prayed for my relatives with intensity during the invitation of the meeting and then I sneaked a peak to see out of the corner of my eye. They were not there any more. They had gone to meet God in the prayer room. God is really answering prayer for me now. I have had answers to prayer every day since making a total commitment to Christ, and not only once a day, more than once a day. Now that sounds like an exciting life, doesn't it!"

"For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer," says the Psalmist in 6:8-9. "O thou that hearest prayer..." (65:2). Wouldn't it be wonderful to start a prayer to God like that? Have you gone to a prayer meeting recently when some dear brother got up and started praying, "Oh thou that hearest prayer." Would you be the one to pray like that? Oh that we would have such fellowship with God that we could talk like that. "...unto thee shall all flesh come. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away" (Ps. 65:2-3). The first thing is, "O thou that hearest prayer. O God, I bring my sin to You--cleanse me." No wonder he could say, "O thou that hearest prayer," because the first thing he is going to do is humble himself. He says, "purge my sins away."

A lady was praying for her grandson in Grand Rapids, Michigan who had gotten into trouble with the law. The Lord said, "Why don't you stop praying for your grandson." What about that set of stainless steel that

you stole a long time ago? Quit praying for your grandson, until you are ready to do something about that." God had stopped another prayer.

We hear about the Hebrides Revival in 1950. It started when a layman made confession before God, and other brothers, after they were having prayer meetings for revival. In the middle of one prayer meeting this brother got up and said, "Brethren, it is just so much sentimental humbug to be praying as we are, to be waiting for this as we are, night after night, month after month, if we ourselves are not rightly related to God." Then he went on to pray, "I ask myself, is my heart pure, are my hands clean?" In that prayer meeting revival in the Hebrides began to break out.

A pastor in Michigan said, "The revival in Grand Rapids began months and years ago, with pastors and people who have prayed and prayed for revival to come. Some of our pastors began to meet together for prayer in the summer of 1972 and this group began to be broken for their own sin and their own coldness and their own lack of spiritual power. And God moved in. Evidence of God's answer was seen in churches almost immediately because of the brokenness of pastors one with another. Some saw large groups getting right with God in their churches even before any crusade was scheduled."

We were in a crusade 200 miles from Grand Rapids and these pastors heard what God was doing. One night four pastors came as a delegation representing the pastors of Grand Rapids saying, "We have been praying all of this time and broken before God. When can you come to Grand Rapids? Come just as soon as you are finished here." We didn't have any schedule in those days. We would be in one crusade and didn't know where and when the next one was going to start. We would pray, "Lord, tell us where to go next when finished here." Then God sends four pastors saying, "We are ready in Grand Rapids. We went there and stayed for seven weeks. But this was the why of revival--the brokenness and the prayer.

Dr. Frank Logsdon said, "Spiritual revival comes when there is a willing waiting upon God, with a sincere confession of sin, a longing to be forgiven, and a readiness to make restitution. There must be a willingness to forgive others and an attempt to correct every strained relationship."

The real prayer of revival is seen from Job in 13:23, "How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin." Job is saying, "How many are they, Lord? Make me to know them." Would you pray that prayer in sincerity?

I saw a tract entitled, Don't Waste Time Begging God for Revival. When I read that title I had to read the tract. It went on to suggest that it is absurd to spend time praying for revival in your community unless you are willing to be submitted to God, willing to obey God on every instruction of His Word.

Revival must begin in you, and if you really want revival, let your will be dead indeed unto sin and self desire, but very much alive to do the will of God through the indwelling Christ. Give the Spirit of God permission and the Word of God opportunity to reveal any sin and any wickedness in your life. Let it happen.

A.C. Stanley said, "The way of revival is costly and humiliating and leaders above all, (and it starts with pastors and it starts with church leaders, board members and elders) must not shrink from paying the price. The world can not be expected to be conscious of its sins unless the church is willing to be conscious of hers." We want the world to come to God and deal with her sins but we are not conscious of our own.

Samuel Chadwick said that it was going to be a holy minority that would move this age for God, far better than a crowd with a divided heart.

Rev. Cliff Dietrich once said, "This is a very vital part of any moving of God, a few of God's people thoroughly right with God so that God can make them channels in a prayer ministry that will force Satan to let go of people who then can respond to God because God's people have become channels of such a prayer ministry to release the unsaved from the power of Satan. And God can come to them when the Word of God is brought to them." One preacher in Michigan said, "This generation could easily evangelize this generation if the Church got right with God."

Isn't it tragic when a Jewish scientist by the name of Albert Einstein, a man of nuclear energy, said, "If we could change the religion of the world; if we could change the Christianity of the world, if we could get the Christianity that is in the world today to be like the Christianity that Jesus Christ taught, we then would have the religion that would change the world."

I close with the words of John Fletcher, one of the saints of another generation.

We ought to grieve that our hearts that should be like flesh, have become partly stone, that our soul that should be only a temple of the Holy Ghost have become nests for a brook of vipers for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, carnal confidence, self righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions and any more.

Through grace detect these evils and by deep confession drag out all these abominations. By faith, place them in the light of God's countenance, and that light and warmth of God's love will kill them as the light of the sun kills the worms which the plow turns up to the open air in the dry summer day. As the plow goes in and turns the worms up to air in the sun and kills them, will you allow the plow of the Holy Ghost to come into your heart and turn and break up the fallow ground.

It is time to break up the fallow ground and seek the Lord. Turn up the worms to the sun. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses and sets us free so that the effectual fervent prayer which we will be praying like we have never prayed, of the righteous man will avail much, to set men and women free from the shackles of self and hell itself.

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