

# Revival - Normal Christian Living

by Lou Sutera

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*Lou Sutera's sermon emphasizes the critical relationship between revival and authentic Christian living, highlighting the need for true conversion and active faith in the church.*

**Duration:** 50:00

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:13, John 5:37

**Topics:** "Revival", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon from January 1971, Dr. Bob Cook predicts that America has three years to experience a genuine awakening among God's people. If this doesn't happen, he warns that a wave of occultism will sweep across from Europe and the Orient, causing heartbreak. Dr. Cook describes the current state of the church as being on the fence, with a lack of movement and commitment to God. He emphasizes the need for pastors to challenge their congregations and for Christians to experience revival through the power of the blood of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

Tonight I want to speak as a backdrop to what Bill McLeod will be saying. I want to speak on the subject, how does revival relate to normal Christianity? How does revival relate to normal Christianity? We have a little trouble putting these two together, and I'm going to use some scripture, I'm going to use some quotes from what other men have said about revival that we can put in perspective and then to see that which God did in Bill McLeod's heart and in the life of his church and in whatever God would lead him to share in picking up some of the thoughts that we would present to you tonight. So let's just ask God that this will be a night as a real beginning for these days.

God will focus our attention on what revival is all about and how important it is, how serious it is, and that will not be a sidelight in our life. You and I sit in this meeting tonight and know there are two basic major problems in the average evangelical church. If you don't have it in your evangelical church, thank the Lord, but we don't have to drive very far from yours to find another one down the road that has it.

There are these problems, two basic major serious problems. One problem is simply this, the problem of the unconverted Christians in our churches. And all the people said, ah, you don't know what I'm saying now.

The unconverted Christians in our churches. That's like a paradox of a statement. Preacher friend of mine, whose wife now I say widow lives here in this Jackson area.

When Ralph and I started the ministry, we started preaching with this dear brother. And just in this past year, he went to be with the Lord and we were just made aware of it recently. And his widow lives here in the Jackson area and we trust we'll get to see her.

But this dear friend of ours, quite an interesting man, and he was so used of God to impress us as young preachers. One time he said, I've just come back from preaching a sermon, said, what did you preach? He said, I preached on the subject, the unconverted Christians in the church. I thought to myself, what a title.

And then he started to explain and simply means this. Dr. A. W. Tozer of the Christian Missionary Alliance organization said that he believes that no more than 20% of the people in the constituency of the Christian Missionary Alliance worldwide, or let's say North America, know what it is to be true Christian. No more than 20%.

When you say that's something for a man as a prophet speaking for his denomination. Well, R. G. Lee of the big Southern Baptist denomination went on to say he did not believe more than 10% of the people of that constituency knew what it was to be true Christian. What a statement.

And yet, if you'd go to the average person in the average evangelical church said, are you a Christian? He turned up and say, what do you think? I mean, even the average evangelical church tonight has the desperate problem of the so-called unconverted Christian, so-called Christian in the church. Jesus said it so clearly when he said, many are going to come to me in that day and they're going to say, Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils in my name and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting flames.

I never knew you. Now, it's an interesting thing. Jesus is going to talk like that to religious people who are going to be working in his name.

The thing that's interesting to me is when Jesus said, broad is the way that leads to destruction. Many go in there at, but narrow is the way that leads to life and few there be which find it. You know, somehow we think that there are many are going to find the way of life.

He says, few are going to find it. He said, many are going to say, Lord, Lord, we got our many and few mixed up. And I say it's tragic when we have people in our churches who think they have faith in God and in that day are going to find out they're not saved.

When God was working the Saskatoon revival with Bill McLeod and Walter Bolt and the other brethren there, in seven or eight weeks of those meetings, I think we only preached three sermons to the unsaved. Three sermons to let's say the unconverted as we know them. And yet I don't know the figures, but if memory serves me, there was somewhere near five hundred people that were converted to Jesus Christ in a crusade that had only two or three gospel sermons in seven weeks.

You say it doesn't happen that way, but I tell you men and women, there must have been a lot of unconverted Christians in the churches that God showed them what true Christianity was and brought them to true conversion. The average evangelical church is plagued with the problem of those. Wear the name, but not the nature.

Make public profession of Christ in the Christian life. Baptize like others. Support with whatever and whenever they please.

Attend some services, ignore others as the notion takes them. Act out of enthusiasm, but no conviction. No compassionate grip on Christ at all in their life.

The word sacrifice, inconvenience, these are repulsive in their mind. Contribution of time, effort, money is seldom that which involves sacrifice. The church, the Bible, worship has very little compulsion over their life.

The devil is so very willing to let them profess Christianity as long as they don't possess it, as long as they don't practice it. This is a tragedy in many evangelical churches. What's the problem? They have faith.

If you ask them, do you believe? They say yes. We talk about faith. The Bible says the devil believes, he also trembles.

Do you believe in God? You do well. The devil doesn't, he trembles. So you're put in pretty good company, aren't you? So there's something between having a mental ascent and true belief.

You remember that nobleman who had a son that needed to be healed? And it says in John 4, 47, when he heard that Jesus was come. Now here's a man who believed that Jesus could do something for his son because he had faith in the reputation of Christ. He had heard that Jesus could perform these miracles, and so he had faith in the reputation of Jesus.

But then, secondly, it says he rushed to Jesus, and when he saw the works of Jesus, when he asked Jesus, he said, Lord, come and heal my son. When he saw the works of Jesus, it says in John 4, 50, and the man believed the word of Jesus, for Jesus did works, and then Jesus said, go your way, your son will be whole. And this man believed in the word of Jesus.

Thank the Lord for a twin brother. And he believed in the words of Jesus. And how many people, if you said you believe in Jesus, they believe yes, in what? They've heard about him and they believe in his reputation.

They have faith in Christ through his reputation. They believe in him because they've even heard his words. They've heard it in the word of God.

They've heard it preached. And they say, I choose to believe those words, the words of Jesus. But, oh, you go a little further.

When he went back home and he found his son was well, it says in John 4, 53, and himself believed in his whole house. That's a different thing. First, he believed because he heard of the works.

Secondly, he believed because he heard the very words of Jesus. But thirdly, it says he himself believed in Jesus and his whole house. That's the picture of a commitment of himself to Christ.

And I would challenge you men and women that we have people who think they are true Christian and they believe in the, they have a faith based on the reputation of Jesus, a faith based on the, on the words of Jesus. But, oh, it needs to be a faith based on a revelation, a revelation of Jesus to their life. Therefore, they're going to be in that group where he's going to say, depart from me, I never knew you.

Now, that's in John chapter 4, but turn with me to John chapter 5. No sooner get that kind of a story finished where we see the real picture of faith. And then look at what Jesus says to some very religious people in John chapter 5, verse 37. And the Father himself which hath sent me, said Jesus, he's talking to the Pharisees, these great religious men, these men who were so-called, if I can put in 20th century language, Christian.

Jesus said to them, and the Father himself which hath sent me hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice. You read the Bible, you study the Bible, but you haven't heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

You don't really know him. And ye have not his word abiding in you. You have it in the head, but not in you.

For whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. You believe the words perhaps, you study the theology, but you don't really know him. Now look at verse 39.

Search the Scriptures. And the real meaning of that word there is ye search the Scriptures. It's not primarily command, search the Scriptures, but he says you're busy searching the Scriptures.

That's a way of life with you, Pharisees. For in them ye think ye have eternal life. You think because you know the Scriptures, you have eternal life.

Because there they which testify of me. And just because you study about me, you think you have eternal life. Look at verse 40.

And ye will not come to me that ye might have life. I receive not honor from men, but I know you will not do that you have not the love of God in you. What a picture of those who have heads so full, but hearts so empty.

And I just give it as Jesus speaks to those who had truly all of that. This is one of the tragedies of the average evangelical church. And pastors are pulling out their hair, if I can say it that way.

And churches are saying, what can we do to somehow bring these paths, a mental ascent of theology into a real hard commitment relationship to Christ? And I would challenge every listener in this meeting tonight, do the words of the Apostle Paul, examine yourselves to see whether you be in the faith, lest you also be a reprobate. Make sure it's real. And not in the category of only 10% are true Christians, so many professing, but only that few true, or 20% so many professing, but that few true.

That's the first big tragedy. And we could spend much time on that. I want to move to the second big basic tragedy in the average evangelical church today.

And it's simply this. The converted Christian in the church, who is not moving into the real essence of true Christianity. The converted Christian in the church, who is not moving into the true, real essence of Christianity.

But he's living in defeat in the three basic areas that comprise true Christianity. He's living in total defeat in the true essence of Christianity. He's been converted.

He knows what it's all about. But as he sits in the church, he's living in defeat in the three basic areas that comprise the essence of Christianity. What are these three areas? Could I name them as such?

Fellowship, secondly, holiness, thirdly, challenge.

Three simple words. Fellowship, holiness, and challenge. These words comprise the basic essence of Christianity.

You know, that's interesting to me that these three words make the difference between Christianity being a religion or not a religion. It's interesting to me that these three words separate Christianity from the religions of the world. And I take exception when a man puts Christianity in the category of one of the other religions of the world.

No, when Jesus Christ came on the scene of fallen bankrupt humanity, there were already four basic religions on the world. And that man was adhering to. Jesus Christ didn't come to start religion number five.

He said, I am come to do something and bring something to you that religion has not been able to do. I am come that you might have life and have it abundantly. Religion couldn't do it.

So why dare we categorize Christianity with one of the religions of the world? And these three words separate Christianity from religion. One, fellowship. Two, holiness.

Three, challenge. Some interesting observations about these three words, and that's this. These are the three areas that are breaking the hearts of the average evangelical pastor.

The heart of the average evangelical pastor in relation to how little of this going on in the church. What do I say? Christians not enjoying fellowship with God. Christians but not enjoying fellowship with God.

How many have I heard say, if there isn't more to Christianity than what I am experiencing, I am about to give up. And our pastors know that our churches have many people in that category, and the only reason why they don't give up on Christianity is because it's the religion they've chosen, and it's respectable to identify with the church. But I tell you, in the days of revival and honesty, people start to address themselves to the fact of whether or not they're that desperate that they've got to have something more.

Thank God for that honesty. Andrew Murray said, the first and chief need of a Christian life is fellowship with God. Now, few of us have it.

Adam and Eve were made for fellowship with God. The sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the planets were not, but Adam and Eve were made for fellowship with God. So if Christianity is back to God, it is how is your fellowship with God? Secondly, Christians don't crave holiness before their Lord.

The average evangelical pastor doesn't know what to do with the worldliness that's crept in the church. Samuel Chadwick, a man of old, said, worldliness is the blight that has cursed the church of our day and every generation. Neither the individual heart nor the church is big enough to accommodate Christ and the world.

Worldliness is coming into the home today, chilling and paralyzing our souls until our minds are given to things of the world instead of God. We're being withered by lust. Duncan Campbell, that man of the great Hebrides revival, said a baptism of holiness and a demonstration of Godly living is the crying need of our day.

And all God's people said, and yet the average evangelical church and evangelical pastor doesn't know how to grab the handle to this problem of the worldliness and the lack of crave and desire amongst God's people for true Bible holiness. The essence of Christianity, I said to you, is first of all fellowship and second, holiness. And thirdly, I said challenge.

What do I mean by this? Christians don't want to get in action for God. They don't want to get excited for God. They want to get on fire for God.

We like more of the idea of retire and Ralph says, flat tire, a lot less than Goodyear tire. Don't want the challenge of Christ. The average evangelical church is filled with willing workers, 100% willing workers, 20% willing to work and 80% willing to let them work.

Nobody wants the challenge of Christ anymore. Oh, thank God for that 20%. Somebody called him that faithful few in every church and every climb.

When there's some work to do, it's very likely it will be done by just the faithful few. While many folks will help to sing and some of them will talk when it comes down to doing things, a lot of them will walk. We can't do this.

We can't do that. Excuse us, please. This time we'd be so glad to help you out, but it's not in our line.

So when the leader cast about to find someone who will do, although he's done it off before he asks the faithful few, of course, they're very busy too and always hard at work, but well, he knows they'll not refuse nor any duty. Shirk. They never stopped to make excuse, but promptly do try to do the very, very best they can to smooth away for you.

God bless. I pray the faithful few and may their tribe increase. They must be very precious to the blessed Prince of Peace.

The average evangelical pastor in this meeting tonight, thanks God for that faithful through a few. But the tragedy of it is the very essence of Christianity spells the word challenge. But in the average evangelical church, we don't know what to do to get God's people moving.

That's before World War Two. An American pastor was visiting Poland. They heard a statement by a newly converted Polish army officer.

This American pastor heard this communist officer who was converted to Christ. He said the communists are trying to take Poland and the Christians are trying to take Poland. Whichever side, he said, will make his message a flame of fire will take Poland.

I want you to answer which side won. Dr. Bob Cook said in January of 1971 in the Moody Founders Week in Chicago, he said, now I'll tell you something. I'll give America three years.

Now this is 1971. He said, I'll give America three years. And if we don't have a genuine awakening among God's people so that this kind of miracle, what kind of miracle, Dr. Cook, this kind of holy excitement becomes the norm amongst God's people becomes normal in the church.

He said, I give you three years that if it doesn't become the norm, he said, a wave of old cultism will sweep across from Europe and from the Orient and you will see things that will break your heart. We're up against it already in a mild way. He said in 1971, unless God's people, people like you and me manifest by

the thousands and by the millions in our country, the reality of God, we're in for some dreadful days.

What do you think has happened since 1971? WMBI said in 1977 on the radio, one out of five Americans now believes in astrology. 1971, Bob Cook says, it's just a mild thing. 1977, WMBI said one out of five Americans now in astrology.

And you and I know what the Bible says about that damn, damnable issue. In the book *Beyond Conformity* on page 89 by Mavis, he said there's a very unique relevance for the Christian church in Edward Gibbons' oft-quoted words of the greedy philosophers in a philosophical decadent age. He said we in the church ought to listen to those words.

Hear the words. They held in their lifeless hands the riches of their fathers without inheriting the spirit that had created and improved that sacred patrimony. They read, and we do.

They praised, and we do. They compiled, and we do. But their languid souls seemed alike incapable of thought and action, even though they inherited all of this from their fathers.

Dr. A. W. Tozer says the tragedy of the 20th century evangelical church is we've exchanged a smug interpretation of scripture for the heart theology of the New Testament. And you men and women sitting in this meeting and pastors sitting in this meeting, if you're not saying it out loud, you're saying in your heart, amen, this is where we are. And I'm laying it out before you tonight, men and women, to get to the issue of how does revival relate to normal Christianity, because God knows we've got to get back to normal.

When Pastor in Ohio said to me just two weeks ago, he said to me, I give up. He said I'm about to quit. He said there is nothing happening in our church.

There is nothing moving. We are on dead center, and he emphasized dead. Time magazine wrote a report of the man who quit the ministry.

Nineteen seventy said my departure from the Protestant parish ministry made many wonder if I'd given up on God. Reverend W. Smith and Time magazine. My friends thought maybe I've given up on God because I left the parish ministry.

He said quite the contrary. Listen to this statement. I simply wanted to go where the action is and not remain where it used to be.

And that's why I left the ministry. I'm giving you the commentary of where we find ourselves in the evangelical church. There was a man in the Burlington revival who had even a resentment against the Christians of that church because he'd come in that church week in and week out and because he had seen action and activity and where the action was in some other worldly movements, he resented the Christians in the church because there was no action and there was nothing there that looked dynamic.

And when the revival came along, God caught his attention and that man hardly missed a meeting for four weeks and God turned him upside down and inside out. But it's the same spirit. I was looking for the action and I don't want to be where it was.

I want to be where it is. God worked in Abbotsford, British Columbia eighteen months before we came here to rise way back in nineteen seventy, I believe. And God worked out there.

I remember a young couple that God so mightily touching the young young man said it like this. He said, I have been just sitting on the fence. Well, that was interesting.

We hear that people sitting on the fence, but he went on to describe. He said like this on the one side of the fence, they're dead and already buried. He was thinking of those in liberal theology.

He thought they were dead and already buried. That's the way he described it. But he said on the other side of the fence, we're just dead, but just not buried.

And here we are sitting on the fence just about to go over on the other side, even with our fundamental theology, men and women, I'm talking to you about the three areas that are breaking the hearts of pastors because there's no movement and they don't know what to do to get God's people moving in fellowship with God in a life of holiness before God and in commitment to the cause of Jesus with a world crying for help. I've described you where the church is. Have some very other wonderful, interesting observations about these three words.

I observed that Jesus Christ himself prayed about these three things for his church. It was such a thing in the heart of my Lord that he prayed about them for us and about us in these three years. Turn to John 17 and look at the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

Jesus prayed about these three things and thank the Lord if he prayed about it, we can believe that the prayers of our Savior can be expected to be answered. John 17, verse 13. And now come I to thee and these things I speak in the world that they, my people, might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

What's that a picture of? That's a picture of a fellowship, a joy, a relationship with Jesus. And Jesus said, I pray that my people might have my joy, a relationship, a fellowship fulfilled in themselves. Now look in verse 15.

I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil. What's that? He's praying for the holiness of his people. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. He's praying for our holiness.

Now verse 18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Now he's telling his father, I've commissioned them.

I've challenged them. And he's telling his father about the challenge he's given to his church. They're the three words, fellowship, holiness, and challenge.

I find an interesting subject in the fact that Jesus Christ has three ministries to my life as a believer. What are they? There are three things in the Bible that the Bible says Jesus Christ is greater than. Do you know that? Three things that Christ is greater than.

One, greater than the prophet Jonah. Two, greater than the temple. Three, greater than King Solomon.

You find that in the word of God. Those are interesting observations, aren't they? Jesus is greater than the prophet Jonah, greater than the temple, and greater than Solomon. What is the significance? Greater than the prophet means my Lord is, first of all, prophet.

Greater than the temple, my Lord is priest. Greater than Solomon, my Lord is king. And we sing in the song, praise him, praise him, prophet and priest and king.

Those are the three relationships that Jesus Christ, those are the three activities that Christ has performed on my behalf. He is a prophet for me and he is a priest on my behalf and king for me. Interesting, isn't it, when I tell you when the word of God tells me that Jesus is prophet, that lets me in on who God is.

That gives me fellowship with God because a prophet speaks to me the mind of God. A prophet lets me share and have a contact and a conversation with God. A prophet tells me what God is thinking and that gives me fellowship with God, Jesus the prophet.

And then he's priest and oh how I need it. And that's for my holiness that I can come, little children, says John, these things I write unto you that ye sin not. But if any man sin, he have an advocate with the Father, even Christ.

And so as priest, he stands there to make intercession on my behalf and my holiness can be affected because of his priestly ministry. And thirdly, as king, as king, and that is the challenge where he's called me to be his servant and to be his ambassador and get involved in his cause and to be in his army and he'd be the captain of the army and I'd be one of his servants and one of his soldiers. Holiness and there the lordship and challenge for my life and yours.

I find another interesting observation about these three things. These are the three areas for which Jesus Christ specifically died on the cross for me, for these three things. It says in Titus 2, 14, who gave himself for us.

Why did Jesus give himself for us? Why? One, to redeem me from my iniquity, two, to purify unto himself a peculiar people, three, zealous of good works, three ministries. Jesus died on the cross to what? Redeem me from my iniquities. And that's what has to happen before I can have fellowship with God.

It's sin that separates between me and God. Your sins separate between. And so he has to take my sins away so I can have fellowship.

And there it is. He died on the cross to purify unto himself a peculiar people. And there is my holiness, my sanctification to purify me unto his very heart.

And then he died on the cross to make me zealous unto good works. And that's the challenge of the world to get my life involved in his very cause and be committed in his army and go for his very cause. And so I see in the very reason why Jesus died, the essence of his death, these great words, fellowship, holiness and challenge.

You know what I find? These are the same three areas that make up and comprise the essence of what is the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul says it like this. He says, for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink.

In Romans 14, 17, 18, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but was righteousness one. But the kingdom of God is to peace. Kingdom of God is three joy in the Holy Ghost.

He that serves God in these things in these was righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost says he shall be accepted of men, accepted of God, the father and approved of men. Men are going to like it and

God's going to accept it. The kingdom of God, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, righteousness, dealing with my sins so I can have fellowship with God.

Peace. The war is over. I give myself totally to God that I'm his and his alone.

And the war is over. And that's the picture of holiness. The word holiness gives you the picture and sanctification of singleness of mind, of purity of thought, pure gold in the context.

My life is singled out unto God and the war is over. It's not me and him. It's him alone.

Peace. The struggle is over. I've turned over the rights of my life to him.

And then the joy of the Holy Ghost. And you don't think of anything else but the ministry of God relates to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The challenge of the cross has to be done in the joy of the Holy Spirit.

And there we have the three words again, fellowship, holiness and challenge. Interesting thing to observe. And when I study in the Bible, I look for the word Christian.

Everybody calls himself a Christian. I look for the word Christian. I tell you, I find it in Bible only three times, only three times in all the Bible.

Yet everybody calls himself a Christian. And you know that in these three times that you find the word Christian, we find the same essence of Christianity. It's fellowship, holiness and challenge.

The first one. What is it? Oh, most not persuaded me to be a Christian, said King Agrippa to Paul when he pointed his finger in his face. You've almost persuaded me to be Christian.

What is the meaning? Simply this. Paul wasn't asking Agrippa for a mental center, Christian theology. You better believe the kind of Christianity Paul talked about wasn't that he was asking Agrippa to get on the side of Jesus.

He was asking King Agrippa to choose to follow Jesus. He was asking King Agrippa to get in the company of Jesus. He was asking King Agrippa the very challenge of all the New Testament Christianity wrapped up in those words.

Follow me, follow me, follow me. That's the kind he was talking about. So he was saying, Agrippa, I'm asking you, will you choose to walk in fellowship with this Christ? The second word Christian.

They were called Christians first at Antioch. That's the second word Christian. Oh, that's Acts 11, 26.

They were called Christian first at Antioch. Why? Why were they called Christian? They didn't give themselves the name. They got the name from somebody else.

When were they called Christian? And what was the reason? Who called them? The godless, wicked society gave them the name. When were they called Christian? After the witness was established in Antioch and the church had been going for approximately 12 years, then they received the name Christian from the wicked, godless, licentious city of Antioch. Why would the wicked people call them Christian? Why? Because they were trying to give them a name that identified them with what they look like and how they acted.

And they said these people are looking and acting something like someone we call Jesus Christ or we heard about Jesus Christ. And they look like they're the same ones. They act the same way.

They talk the same way. And they must be Christians. What's the word? They were living a life of holiness that Jesus Christ was recognized in the life of the believers.

That was early Christianity. And that's the second word Christian in the New Testament. Then there's a third one, and that's in 1 Peter 4, 16.

If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. Suffer as a Christian. What is it? That's those who are willing to get into the program of God.

Those who are willing to take the stand and go outside the camp and bear Jesus' reproach like he did. Those that are willing to take the reproach of Jesus, to stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross, and suffer as a Christian. And there's the word challenge.

Do you know what's interesting, men and women? You don't find the fourth word Christian in your Bible. That's all you find. Isn't it interesting? Three, and that's it.

I find another interesting observation in this truth, and that is the very scripture that we quote so much about the new birth. Not John 3, but 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away, and all things become new. In that very scripture passage, we see the essence of Christianity bears out fellowship, bears out holiness, and bears out challenge. What is it? Back up two verses.

And that Jesus Christ died for all that they which live. There's fellowship. I was dead, and I live.

And the essence of living is knowing God and having fellowship with God, should not henceforth live unto themselves. There is the life of holiness, as it were, living supremely for Jesus. Live unto him who died for them and rose again.

And then, 2 Corinthians 5, 17, a new creature in Christ. There is the sin problem. Now I can have that fellowship with God.

And then immediately it says, now ye are in Christ, and in Christ ye are in God, and God has reconciled us to himself. God has reconciled us. That means fellowship has been restored to himself.

He wants us right near his very heart. He's pulling us to his very heart, to himself. Not a casual word, a big word.

Reconciles us to himself. And then he's given to us the ministry of reconciliation. That's the challenge.

You see it? There's holiness. Reconcile me to God. There's fellowship.

And there's holiness to God's self, to his very heart. There is the challenge. He's given me a ministry of reconciliation.

What a ministry to be ambassador for Jesus. And that's all in 2 Corinthians 5, when we use 2 Corinthians 5, 17, but the chapter is so full. Oh, on and on you could go.

It's interesting to me, and we're not going to take the time to read, but you do when you go home. You read every one of Paul's basic prayers. You read his first chapter to the Corinthians, and you read that this is the kind of thing he talks about in the essence of Christianity.

You turn to Philipians. You turn to Colossians. You turn to Ephesians, and you pick up Paul's prayers.

And you find in Thessalonians as well, 2 Thessalonians, you find in each one of these leading parts of the book, you'll find prayers that are based on his praying just like Jesus has prayed. Paul is praying that our fellowship with God is real, and that our life is a life of holiness, and that our life is involved in the challenge of Jesus. It's full in the Word.

What am I saying to you tonight, men and women? I'm simply telling you tonight that this is normal Christianity. And yet the average evangelical church is chafing at the bits, saying, how can we get some of this to come back to us? Well, that gets us to the real issue. How does revival relate to the essence of what normal Christianity is all about? Charles G. Finney said revival should be the normal state of the church.

Backsliding, carnality, barrenness, and sinfulness are abnormal. I get the words. He's already used normal.

He's used abnormal. He said revival is not a two-week campaign. It should be the daily life of the church.

Anything less is subnormal, so he's used normal and abnormal and subnormal about revival. W.B. Reilly said it remains true that the revival state is the only state for the church. Dr. Reilly, one of the great pulpiteers of America in Minneapolis for years, Christians ought to so live that a revival will be coming down from heaven like snow and rains through the entire season.

How does revival relate to normal Christianity? Bill Leiner said God means for us to live revived. Revival should be our normal experience. Our concept of revival may be the cause for our not living in revival.

T.S. Rendell said revival is not a luxury. It is a lifeline. That sounds like a necessity, not just a necessary evil.

Oh, we have our revival next week. Well, we had ours last week. We're glad it's passed.

He said it's a lifeline, not a luxury. Well, simply saying this, our deduction is this. Normal Christianity relates to my fellowship with God.

It relates to my holiness before God. It relates to my accepting the challenge of God in this world. And if revival then relates to normal Christianity, revival has to relate to those three areas.

Does it? Does it? And if it does, we've come for the right purpose tonight. Our fellowship with God, how does revival relate to it? Simple as this. God in revival is bringing us to a place of honesty about our sin.

God is getting us to name sin, sin and not call it a mistake. And when you do that, God is ready to minister to you. And then the line can be opened between you and God and fellowship can be restored.

God is bringing us to Psalm 129, 139, 23, 24. God's people are praying, search me, oh God, and know me and try me and see if there'd be any wicked way in me. Lead me in the path everlasting.

Know my heart and my mind. Try me. That's the essence.

To bring us back into fellowship with God, it's got to be that kind of praying. Nothing else will do. We'll go on as we've been going on in church after church, spinning wheels with one program after another and not seemingly taxing down the runway and never taking off unless we'll come to the issue of Psalm 139 and we come down to this kind of honesty and then the fellowship between us and God will be restored.

Painful, isn't it? Yes, but what a blessed experience when that fellowship is restored. You were made for fellowship. What a blessed experience when it's restored.

Two years ago, right here in this conference, some of you folks don't see and hear all the side stories, but there was a dear pastor brother who for 20 years had held a bitterness, a Baptist pastor who'd come in from out of the Lyng area in Michigan and he'd come into the conference and he sat here on a Sunday morning and Brother Siplely preached on depression, its cause and cure, and he sat in the meeting and God showed him the sin of his heart. For 20 years, he'd been holding a bitterness against the church where he went and took that church and there were two factions that had split and there were two little groups. He went into town and because of his good graces and his ability and his personality and so forth, he was able to get these two split factions, brought them together, put them under the same roof and they just sort of swept everything under the rug and organizationally they came together, but organically they never did.

You know the difference? They swept it under the rug. They swept it under the rug, but they didn't settle the bitterness. And I tell you what happened.

This dear brother felt good. He brought these two parties together and then bring them together. They then turned around and took out their bitterness on him.

They didn't get rid of it. They got together with people but took out their bitterness on him. And the man who led the fight against that pastor to kick him out was a retired missionary and this pastor felt that he should have known better, if anybody should have known, this man should have known better.

And for 20 years, that dear brother, when he came to this conference two years ago, he sat in the meeting for 20 years. He carried that bitterness. Imagine him preaching and preaching and preaching for 20 years and having these years of sin and that bitterness, that weight on him.

But thank God for the honesty that got a hold of his heart and he broke before God and that man got up in front of the men's meeting here and shared with the men and he was just as free as a bird. I would have loved to have been in his church that next day when he was going to preach in that Baptist church in Michigan. 20 years, the weight, but now the fellowship between him and God was restored.

And the last, he came back on Monday after preaching on Sunday and he emptied his pockets into the offering baskets. He saw Bob's meetings and he said, the last penny I have, every dollar I have, he gave it all. And Bob said, aren't you staying for the last meeting? He said, I can't, I'm so full.

I'm right up there. I can't take another bit. I think I'll burst.

He said, I can't take another meeting. I'll burst. And he went home.

But he emptied every penny he had. He said, I wish, I feel like going down to the bank and taking a loan and put so much more into this. But God's done to him.

Oh, that's just one. These two brothers that have been fighting for all of those years in the book, Claims of Freedom. Now they're free.

They're free. Painfully, yes. Revival is the moment the blood of Christ cleanses your heart with the Holy Spirit entering, making the presence and person of the Lord Jesus real to you.

That's fellowship. Thus, revival is realizing the power of the blood of Jesus in my daily life, knowing the necessity of repenting and letting the Holy Spirit minister to my heart, revealing my sin. So I am a repenting and praising child of God.

Doesn't sound like it's bad. You end up praising, repenting and praising because you're set free. Edmund said, Revival always includes that conviction of sin on the part of Christians, along with deep searching of heart.

The fountain of tears and penitence is broken up. It's unspeakable searching, melting of God's Holy Spirit among his people. The presence of the Holy Spirit is personal and immediate goes to the individual.

He's at the same time convicting of sin and comforting the penitent who bows. He's convicting and breaking, but then he comforts that one. That heart can praise God all over again.

Dear Brother Owen Lutzer wrote, and he said, The painful experience of acknowledging pride and hypocrisy or making restitution for the past offenses cannot compare with the joy and freedom that comes to those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's what happens. Then the inner life is dealt with.

The area of holiness before God, all the inner life can be dealt with. My self-life, that which is the base of my problem. I identify with crucifixion.

I identify with Christ on his cross by faith. I identify that I am there on that cross with him. And this old self has no room to live and no room to exist.

It identifies with the cross. And it's not just do better next time and do better next time. But it's by faith.

You live the life of a dead man by identifying with crucifixion. I am crucified with Christ. So there the inner man, the inner life and the self is identified with crucifixion.

Dr. Havner put it so beautifully, said one of our problems in the average evangelical church is that all over this country, we've just about rededicated ourselves to death, rededicate. We're running down. We're running an old Adam Improvement Society in entirely too many churches.

He said the unsanctified flesh that has never died to sin and risen to walk in the newness of life of Jesus is running down church aisle after church aisle to rededicate. And God wouldn't use it if it were rededicated 1000 times. It's not rededication, it's death.

Self wants to be crowned and God wants it crucified. And there's what the message of revival is doing, giving us not only the fact that we can be freed from the sin when we said, Lord, forgive me for the sin, but all that we can be set free from the shackles of the self life. It's not that the self is dead, but I can be free from the shackles of that self life.

I can be released to serve God in liberty and in truth. Every my life then given over to God, when a young man is converted, he then should be asked now, will you dare to pray, Lord Jesus, what are your plans for my life? Oh, I'm planning to be a school teacher. I'm planning to be a lawyer.

Does he go right on and continue to be a lawyer or school teacher because that's what he planned before you say, oh, no, he brings his future to God. He says death. He puts the cross over every single area of his life.

And he says, I want to identify every area of my life with crucifixion, that it's no more I, but Christ. And from the moment I become a Christian, I could say my will, not my will, but thine be done is the prayer. And then I say, I delight, oh God, to do thy will.

As Christ said, have you ever realized that great prayer of the Lord's prayer when he said, when you say thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that single Lord, will you do in my life your will and work your will out through me on earth just like you're doing it up in heaven. That's true into God. That's crucifixion of self and say no more I, but Christ.

Thank the Lord. From there, the ministry of the Holy Spirit's possible. And that's the point when the fruit is real fruit.

Paul says fruitful unto every good work, get it? Fruitful unto every good work. We have a lot of people with a lot of good works and working and working and working in the average evangelical church, but for it to be fruitful unto every good work. Andrew Murray said about that, he said this, it is only when our good works come through the indwelling Holy Spirit, that they will be acceptable to God under the compulsion of law and conscience or the influence or inclination of zeal from men.

We may be diligent in good works and we may find that there is very little spiritual result that will last. We'll get a lot of works and see results, but very little last. Their works are men's efforts instead of being the fruit of the spirit, the restful, natural outcome of the spirit's operation within us and through us and out of us to a world that needs to be touched by almighty God.

This is what revival is all about, that I shall have fellowship with God, that I shall know what it is to be freed from that self that wants to be Lord and Master, and I shall live a life of holiness. And that's a picture of separated unto the very heart of Jesus. And I shall not live by the dictates of this self-life that wants to dictate and call the shots.

And then I shall see the spontaneity of the life of God flowing through me because the Holy Spirit now is free to operate and minister through me. And the works that I do become fruitful unto good works because they're the works of God himself through the Holy Spirit.

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