

# 'Let the Reign Begin'

by Mark D. Partin

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*The sermon tells the story of a revival experience where God's presence was felt in a powerful way, leading to the transformation of lives and a new sense of purpose and direction for the church.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 28:12, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 64:1, Joel 2:28, Matthew 5:6, Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Acts 3:19, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Divine Encounters"

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## Description

Mark D. Partin recounts a powerful revival experience where God unexpectedly poured out His love and Spirit, leading to a profound transformation within the church. Despite initial setbacks and uncertainties, God orchestrated divine encounters and deep repentance, igniting a spiritual awakening that touched many lives. The revival extended beyond scheduled dates, with people experiencing supernatural signs and wonders, leading to a renewed commitment to prayer, worship, and spreading the Word of God. Through this extraordinary encounter, the church received a fresh vision of purpose, emphasizing the importance of prayer, healing, discipleship, and obedience to fulfill God's promises and blessings.

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## Transcript

And oh, how the heavens were rended! Initially, only small glimpses of light from heaven could be seen. His presence could be felt only at moments. Then without expectation it seemed as if the heavens completely burst open and God poured out His sweet, sweet love and Spirit; saturating all in attendance. The outpouring was magnificent and we were awed at His presence. It was unlike anything we had ever experienced.

We have a Fall revival about every other year at our church. It was to be no different in 2006 (or so we thought). The revival was planned for October 13 with Mark Douglas serving as guest revivalist. I know that Mark is Spirit-filled and stands upon the Truth, the Word of God. His life is a testimony of one that is "sold-out" to God; and therefore leads by the Spirit's calling and direction.

Mark arrived in LaFollette on Saturday night prior to revival beginning the next morning. He and I went to the church to prepare ourselves in prayer. We prayed at the altar uniting with our Father, seeking His wisdom and His will. Immediately following our prayer, His will was done . . . the much anticipated revival was postponed!

After praying, Mark Douglas received a devastating phone call that the Chief Police Officer (Sheriff) of his county in Florida had been killed in the line of duty. This man was a faithful servant of Mark's church. Mark desperately needed to retrace the 800 miles that he had just driven. He needed to tend to his flock; to lead the funeral services of this man that had gone to be with his Savior; and to witness to those who loved this man but didn't know his heavenly Father. So, I did what I had never done before. I postponed the revival and joined Mark on his crusade back to Florida. The decision, even though necessary, was made very reluctantly because our church was scheduled to move into a new worship center during the following week. This meant that the revival would now take place in a new building in which nothing had been tested: the sound system; video projections; lighting; heating and cooling; etc. People would not even be able to sit in their "regular seats" in which they had assumed a sense of false ownership for years. Everything would be hinging on a feeling of uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and newness. At the time only God knew how critically necessary this would be to bring our church to the revival that He intended. He was masterfully orchestrating His people to meet at His time, in His place, and under His circumstances. And so it was!

On October 20, 2006 our revival - actually God's revival - began. Mark Douglas preached that first Sunday morning. During the invitation a young lady came to the altar, prayed, and returned to her seat. That was it! Nothing else happened! Where was the "magnificent" that we had so eagerly anticipated; that we were longing for? We faithfully returned for Sunday evening service. After singing only two songs, God gently began blowing His sweet breath throughout the congregation. His presence became so strong and so real. Streams of people began flowing from their seats directly to the altar. They begged for the opportunity to confess sin. No one had even been asked to confess sin. The Word of God had not even been preached. But God was extending the offer for His people to come before Him; to purify them; to be cleansed; to be set free. People were responding to God.

Pride and fear of self-humiliation were overcome by a greater desire to draw close to God, to feast upon His presence. Fear of judgment was replaced with obedience. It was as if a dam had burst and the living waters of God were being released with a compelling force unleashing God's Spirit; cleansing souls; purifying hearts and changing lives forever. I remember on several nights of the revival, the only sound that could be heard was torrential rainstorms being cast down. You could hear the magnificent pressure of the water as it was physically pounding down. Spiritually, you could feel it pushing through the roof boring through souls uncovering and cleansing the deepest, darkest sins.

Days passed. Mark Douglas continued to deliver God's messages. People continued to respond. We were days past the "scheduled" revival, unaware of where we were going but confident that God was leading. God afforded Mark Douglas the opportunity to steward the ship for two weeks. But the time had come for Mark to return to Bay Street Baptist Church to assume the position of his calling. He was grateful for his involvement in our revival; for he knew that God had used it to strengthen him and provide direction for his own church.

When Mark Douglas returned to Florida after two weeks, I assumed the helm alone. I was now the only one delivering God's messages. There was fear and anxiety as to whether this transition would disrupt God's presence. It didn't! I was awed and filled with humility as night after night people continued to confess their sins. Following the delivery of God's Word and message, complete silence would fall upon the congregation like a veil. Amazingly, in spite of so many people being present, not a sound could be heard . . . no rustling of papers; no movement of bodies shifting; not even the sighs of people breathing . . . nothing! And then breaking through the silence you would hear footsteps: footsteps that clicked with force

and determination to reach the altar; footsteps that were driven by purpose; footsteps that were being guided by the hand of God.

People were drawn together at the altar to pray. It was comforting to hear the murmurs of prayer and witness God's Body coming together as one. Then in a burst of joy someone would shout, "Brandon just accepted the Lord as his Savior! Lakin received Christ!" The news would send chills throughout your body. Adults that were well-versed in biblical knowledge and attended church faithfully would crumble to their knees with the realization that apart from their beliefs, they had never accepted Christ as Lord of their lives.

We quickly realized that we were in the midst of something extraordinary. We were experiencing the signs and wonders of the supernatural. We knew lives were being changed forever. Our church was being called to expand its borders. The heavens were being opened over our church. Services lasted three to four hours. At the conclusion of each night people didn't want to leave. They stayed at church embracing others and continuing to pray and worship. When families did leave, they often went home and continued to pray and read the Bible. Worldly concerns such as jobs, school, social activities, and sports fell to the wayside for 40 consecutive days. God impressed His fingerprints upon our hearts. At times His fingers squeezed with pain in order to cleanse and purify. And then at other times they gently and lovingly massaged our hearts bringing His life back within us.

The entire experience was surreal. Why would God allow us, an obscure church, with a nameless preacher to experience an open heaven? We can liken it to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28. Jacob saw a stairway resting on earth, with its top reaching heaven. Angels of God were ascending and descending. The Lord stood at the top of the stairway and spoke to Jacob. He told Jacob his purpose, his promise and his blessings. The same was true for us. God opened the heavens in our church and we could sense with distinct clarity what He was intending for our purpose, our promises and our blessings.

The revival experience has given me a fresh vision of the purpose for our church. We are to steadfastly and universally proclaim the Word of God and the testimony of revival that He has given us: in our families; our community; our Nation and worldwide. Prayer is to be a priority. Healing should be directed both spiritually and physically. We are to be a church that disciples and brings forth men to be mighty vessels. God has extended an invitation of great purpose to our church. It is now up to us to claim His promises and fulfill those purposes through sensitivity to the Spirit accompanied with obedience.

God also made clear His promises and blessings. He promised us our lives would be different forever; that our lives would be consecrated with Him. If we appropriately handled His glory, His presence would stay with us and He would pour out immeasurable blessings. We could have His best! It is our responsibility to allow the revival experience to transcend into all areas of our lives. And like the apostles, God will use us ordinary folks to turn His world upside down. The "mountains will shake and the nations will tremble" - all because of His presence. Oh, it is amazing what can happen all because of God's presence! Desire His presence! Ask for an open heaven revealing His presence! Prepare yourselves to stand in the Gateway of His Glory! Let His Reign begin within you and all around you!

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