

# Objectives of a Revival-Oriented Ministry in the Local Church

by Ralph Sutera

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*Ralph Sutera emphasizes the essential objectives of a revival-oriented ministry to prepare the local church for genuine spiritual renewal.*

**Duration:** 1:23:11

**Scripture:** Psalm 126:5

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not missing out on the sessions of a series on revival in the local church. He encourages the audience to take action and not just passively listen to the message. The speaker highlights the need for repentance and prayer, urging believers to be more concerned about the lost and to reevaluate their priorities. He also criticizes the lack of enthusiasm and commitment in the American church compared to other countries.

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## Transcript

How is everybody tonight? How is your faith? And how is your God? Greater than your faith, I hope. So there's hope for the rest of us. I noticed that something I said this morning really registered.

Do you remember I talked about not sitting up in the balcony because the Bible warns against that, being there's spiritual wickedness in high places? And look at that. There are only three that are up there, and they are even in the darkness. They don't even want to be seen where the light is.

And everybody else is down here tonight. That's wonderful indeed. How many are with us? This is your first night in our session since last night.

Well, welcome. Welcome to International Falls, the Winnipeg of the United States. That means, what that means is the icebox of the United States.

These folks have come from Ray. All the folks from Ray, just wave your hand again so they see how many. Look at that.

See how many? Look at that. That deserves another clap. I'll tell you why they're here.

Because they did not want to listen to their pastor preach tonight. That's what someone told me. No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Not really. But it's a delight to have them from the Bible Church here. It's wonderful indeed.

But now, for some of the rest of you here for the first time, I feel bad about that, because we're already, this is the one, two, three, this is the fourth session already. Isn't it? One, two, three, yeah, fourth session. So you're three sessions behind.

What that means is you cannot afford to miss anything else. And that's the importance of what we're doing. See, it's line upon line, truth upon truth on the subject of what really is revival in the local church.

Lots of thoughts and ideas about it. And tonight, tonight we basically deal with the objectives of a revival-oriented ministry. Five objectives of a revival-oriented ministry, and you'll be glad that you're here.

Tomorrow night, hindrances to revival. Tuesday night, the true nature of revival, of personal revival. And Wednesday night, the results of revival.

So you can stay home if you want to, but I'm coming. Because I, you know, this is such a vast subject, it's such a vast subject, it's hard to package it. You could tell that, the speed that I have to go, and you have no idea how much I leave out, that I leave out purposely because of time.

But it's a vast subject, and it's a thrilling subject, and more than a subject, it's exciting when we enter into it. It really is, it really is. Now, as we get started, remember the handouts from this morning, two sessions, are on the table for those who did not receive it, and if you'd like to take more than one, feel free to do so.

And then there will be, we'll make sure, Mary, make sure the handouts for tonight's session will be on the table as well. So getting started, I just want to say, there is a paper called the Revival Fellowship News, the Revival News, which was born out of what happened in Canada in the 1970s. I have one copy here, being I fly, I did not, you know, I can't carry everything.

Already, the pastor said, oh, that suitcase is so heavy. Sure, it's 46 pounds, I'm allowed 50, so I felt bad that I didn't bring four more pounds. See? So I didn't carry it.

But here's one issue, this is one of the issues, and this one, Lou's picture's on the cover of this one, and it says, Lusiteria Leeds Prayer Ministry. By the way, that's where he is tonight. He's in Portage-le-Prairie, Manitoba tonight, starting.

I feel bad because he got the front page, so my ego was deeply affected. I'm on the second page. Next time I'm going to say, I'm on the first page, and he's on the last page.

But this is the paper that keeps you informed about what's happening in this ministry. And not only our ministry, but I can tell you that as a result of what happened in the prairies in the 70s, there are about 25 to 30 different teams that have been born out of that. And should we never have another crusade ourselves, there'd be no way of stopping what it is that God's done.

So if you would like to receive it, feel free to do so. It's basically, you just sign up for it. There's no fee for it.

It's supported by the gifts of God's people. So you can be informed to pray intelligently for us and to know where we are in the process. Also, there is another paper that you may not be familiar with, some may.

Here is a copy. Here's my copy. The Herald of His Coming.

No fanfare, no pictures, just plain print. This is probably the greatest revival-oriented paper in America. That is to say, that just gets right to what's happening in relation to revival.

There's no fee. I have these stacked in my drawers at home for years. The Herald of His Coming.

How many are familiar with it? See three of you. Look at that, four or five. See? That's all.

This issue, Pleading for Revival in Our Day by Martin Lloyd-Jones. That's the lead author here. Inside, Bearing Fruit Together for His Glory.

With every great revival, some tarried, some waited, some wrestled, and some travailed. Depleted spiritual power can be renewed by Wesley Duell. This is just one issue.

Let your light shine before the Lord. Unforeseen Fruit by Jim Cimbala from the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York. Okay? That's the kind of paper.

Prayer, faith, revival. Get on the mailing list. The reason I'm saying this, you can sign up for both of those out on the table tonight so that you can see to it, you can be informed accordingly.

Just some items to help you on the subject. Well, tonight when you leave, you'll receive the paper that says Objectives of Revival Ministry and How to Revive Our Churches. That's the handout for tonight.

We're talking tonight about Objectives of a Revival-Oriented Ministry. Now, these are not sermons. These are, this is an orientation on the subject of revival.

And it's my hope that God will use it to stimulate and stir a genuine hunger in the hearts of God's people for a biblical revival. And for those who were here last night and this morning, I'm not putting it up tonight to show the difference between evangelism, revival, and spiritual awakening. Evangelism primarily is when men by human means promote the gospel in a community.

By having an evangelist come, they advertise and so on, and it's wonderful. Spiritual awakening, I pronounced as God supernaturally coming on the scene with no human means calling people to repent, such as what happened in Wales in 1904. People were struck under conviction on their way to work and backs of trucks and on and on it goes.

But we're talking about revival. That is, cleansing and readjusting in the body of Christ to prepare the church, should there be a spiritual awakening, or for evangelism. What would happen? I said it last night or this morning.

What would happen? Should there be a genuine spiritual awakening where thousands of people would be swept into the kingdom of God in a short period of time? Where are the churches prepared to handle that? And that's why we're dealing with the objectives of a revival-oriented ministry. Why is it important? Well, here are the objectives. We start in.

Operation cleansing or the inward direction of revival. Now, operation restoration and fellowship, the sideward direction. Operation intercession, the upward direction of revival.

Operation discipleship, the onward direction. And then operation outreach, the outward direction of revival. Now when you take a look at those five objectives, operations and objectives, which of those five does the average church want to have happen the most and long to have happen the most? Which is the one that basically churches seek to go after the most? Which one? Number what? Five.

We're here to reach this community. How are we going to do it? So we do everything possible to learn how to do it. Well, some of the ways in which we try to learn how to do it is we hear that down in Florida, there is a church down there that they have a wonderful way of reaching people.

So we are going to send our pastor and two or three deacons or church leaders with him to find out what that's all about so they can come back and tell us how we can reach people in our community here the way they do it there. Well, we spend the money, send the people down from, especially from International Falls to Florida, way down South Florida, it's quite a trip. And so they go.

Or they can send them someplace else, but this is one that seems quite popular. There's nothing wrong with what they do in Florida, it works. So what happens is they come back and now they're going to tell us about this great program which works in Florida.

How we do it? Well, the best way to start is to have a banquet, a meal for everybody to hear how it happens. So they plan the Friday night, everybody come, everybody come, special meals, spaghetti and meatballs and lasagna for dessert. That should do it.

Okay, so let's say a hundred people show up because we're going to hear about this great program of outreach and especially the fact that we have a meal. At the end of the program, everybody's excited about it, at the end of the evening, they announce, next Friday night we start the program. No spaghetti and meatballs and lasagna, only coffee and doughnuts.

How many do you think show up if we're going to start this program? Everybody got excited to come the week before. How many? Somebody give me a guess, how many would you say? How many? 20? 12? 10? 10? 10? Oh my, I want to be really liberal this time, this morning not so much, but this time, liberal. Fifty people, let's say 50 show up, boom, they're going to start, 50, because there's coffee and doughnuts.

The next week, no doughnuts, just coffee. How many show up? How many? Well, if you keep with me, 20, I heard 25 over here, 25. See? Cut it in half, 25.

The following week, the word got around the church that the coffee didn't taste right, it tasted as if it had dirt in it. Of course, it was just ground that morning. Some of you didn't get that, but it'll come later.

How many show up? Tell me, how many? 12 and a half, who said that? You are right, because one of them was pregnant. You give that about six weeks, and you know how many will show up? The pastor, the two deacons went to Florida, and maybe, maybe one other that might have caught the vision. What was wrong? Is there something wrong with the program? Not at all.

It works down there. Do you know what's wrong? Do you know what's wrong? We started at the wrong end. We started at the result.

So you know what it says? Well, it didn't work. It didn't work. Somebody gets excited about that, says, well, you know what? Maybe we started wrong.

Let's see. Operation outreach didn't work. Well, let's just cut that off.

Maybe we'll go, watch how backwards we go. Well, maybe our problem is in our churches. We just have too many fringe people.

We need to disciple some people that are just fringe. You know the kind that come once in a while? In my files, I have a cartoon picture of a man getting dressed up for church. He's tying his bow tie, and she is combing her hair, getting ready to go to church.

And he says to her, honey, I wish they would put Christmas and Easter on the same day. This constant running to church is getting me down. So you know, every church has people like that, fringe people.

If there's a concert, they'll come. If their children are involved in a program, they'll come. If there's a meal and something exciting, they may show up.

Fringe people. Once in a while, they'll show up in church. Sure, they have to, because if one of their family goes to the hospital, they have to have some name of a church to put down in the hospital records, because they don't want anybody to think they're heathen or unchurched.

But that doesn't seem to work. Fringe people. And by the way, pastor says, why don't you go after those people, those people.

No, pastor, look, I've had some run-ins with those people. I know them. I have the idea that if you can't get people to go for people they don't know, you may have a harder time getting them to go after some people.

People they already know, because of run-ins in the past, the way they've had to deal with them. Well, that doesn't seem to work. You know, when somebody says, you know what our problem is? We just don't pray enough.

Watch how backwards we are. We just don't pray enough. How can we ever expect God to bless if we don't pray? By the way, do you know why people do not come to prayer meeting, why many people do not come to prayer meeting? Because they read their Bible.

What? Sure. They read their Bible. And there's a verse in the Bible, I quoted it this morning, Psalm 66, 18.

It says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. And they know that they are not on speaking terms with God, they're on spanking terms with God because of unconfessed sin. So, they have enough sense then to come to prayer meeting because it's a waste of their time because God's not going to hear them anyhow.

At least they understand the Scripture. So why show up? More important, cleaning the basement. God's not going to hear them.

Now, they would never whisper that to anybody. That's like understanding the gunpowder plot. No, no, I'm not going to talk about that.

But unconsciously, why waste time going to prayer when I'm not willing to be honest with God about sin? God's not going to hear me. So the pastor will do everything to try to promote a prayer meeting. By the way, I just learned today that you do not have a prayer meeting here in the church.

Is that right? Midweek prayer meeting, you don't have one here? Hmm. Well, that's food for thought, isn't it? Who knows what God will say as a result of our being together, even tonight. So by the way, so the pastors will do everything, I mean where they do have a prayer meeting, they do everything to try to get people to come.

One pastor, here's one, now I made this one up, this is not real, but here's a good one the pastor can try sometime. He says, I promise you that if there are 50 people that show up in prayer meeting, I'll do something you've never seen before. I will stand on my head and stack BBs with boxing gloves on.

That should be exciting enough, shouldn't it? Do you know why he says that? Because he's safe, he knows that 50 people won't show up. So he doesn't have to worry about that. You know what I'm saying? Isn't it a tragedy to think what pastors have to do to try to urge people to come to meet God in the place of prayer? What a tragedy.

You would think that would be, you know, I did not make this statement up, I don't know who made it up, but listen to it. They say the people who love the church come on Sunday mornings. Those who love the pastor come back on Sunday night, that's where the churches still have Sunday night service.

But only those who love the Lord show up on prayer meeting night. Now don't punch me because I didn't make that up, but just think of that. Why is it the place of prayer seems to be the lacking place? Well, that doesn't work.

So somebody says, you know what our problem is? We just don't have enough fellowship in this church. I mean we need some times where we have fellowship gatherings in the church where we get to know each other better. Maybe that's our problem.

So what do we do? Well here's one way they do. They have little slips of paper in an offering plate, numbers one to five on those little slips. And everybody takes one as the offering plate is passed through the rows.

Take one of those. And all those who get number one after the service tonight, you are to go to Mr. James' home for fellowship. See, we're going to develop fellowship.

And those that get number two, you go to Mr. Joshua's house for fellowship. And those who get number three, you go to Mr. Jehoshaphat's home for fellowship. And those who get number four, you go to Mr. Joseph's house for fellowship.

And then number five, go to Mr. Jeremiah's house for fellowship. See, you cannot open your home if your husband's name does not begin with J. So here's what happens. Here's a man, picks out number one, Mr. James' home.

So on the way, oh, now we're a good church, people. We're loyal. We always do what we're supposed to do.

And we picked out number one, Mr. James' home. So on the way there, father says to the family, children. Now, children, you know what we think of the James' don't you, children? Yes, dad, we've had roast James' many Sundays for dinner, where you took them apart at dinner table.

But we're supposed to go there. Well if we have to go there, children, when we get there, you know where we sit, don't you, children? Yes, dad, as far away from any James' as possible. And be careful what you drink.

Who knows what they'll put in our coffee. You know what I'm saying? We talk about having Christian fellowship with people that can't stand each other, have all kinds of bitternesses and resentments and grudges and inhibitions towards each other. Yes, I said you can have fellowship with Christians, but you'll never have Christian fellowship.

That's the tragedy of a church and people thinking that you're going to solve the problems by some cosmetic way of producing a fellowship ministry, and you have people who have difficult problems with each other and are not willing to be honest and deal with them. Do you know there have been some times I've even encouraged some churches not to have communion? So much bitterness and resentment, one towards another in some congregations, I've even encouraged some congregations, I say, you better not have communion, you better not, because I don't want your pastor to have to be rushing to the hospital or having more funerals than he already has. Does not your Bible say that those who do not discern the Lord's body properly for this cause, some are weak, some sickly, some even sleep, that means they never wake up.

Oh, we say, oh, everybody will live as long as God wants them to live, you won't die before your time, no, no, don't believe that for a moment, there are several instances in the Scripture where people died before time, and that's one of them, because they did not discern the Lord's body properly. Could happen. Well, what's the last thing we're willing to admit we need? Cleansing.

Meet God at the cross, meet Him there, and do you know what a cross is? Here's a cross, boom, one direction goes this way, and the other one goes this way, that's a cross. You see, you cannot say that you have come to the cross and you have met God at the cross and that you are right with God, between you and God, this vertical relationship is right between you and God, you cannot say that, and be wrong with your fellow man this way, this is the horizontal relationship, one with another. If you honestly meet God at the cross, and if you're living that kind of a life, I can tell you that immediately what happens is, you get up off of your knees and God begins to speak to you about going to Mr. James.

God dealt with you at the cross, on your knees, before Him, about that bitterness, about that resentment, whatever, it's not a matter of who's right and who's wrong, it's a matter of it's a broken relationship. And you've already, if you've met God at the cross, the cross says to you that Christ was willing to surrender His all at the cross, and to surrender His rights, even the right to live, and if you've met God at the cross, then you are surrendering your rights to be even proven right. And so you make it over to Mr. James, oh, but he didn't, no, no, no, no, you're the one you say you met God at the cross.

And now, Mr. James, forgive me for my attitude, for the spirit in which I've had towards you. It's not a matter of who's right and wrong, it's a matter of that we're not in right relationship with God and with each other, and I'm asking you to forgive me, and I want to be restored into fellowship. Watch it now.

Oh, this is before I get that, look what Lou said. Lou, you're in Manitoba, you're not supposed to be speaking here. Look what he said, as the holiness and character of God confront us, a spirit of conviction becomes more intense, leading to genuine repentance.

He went on to say, God's grace then functions in both demanding and enabling men to turn from their sin, to cause a departure from paths of failure and sinfulness, and to embrace the highway of holiness. God's character, exalted through the authority of his word, supersedes man's feelings and experiences. So, what happens is, when we meet God genuinely, then we go to be restored into fellowship with the Jameses.

And when that happens, all at once, oh, before I get on, look at this, Leonardo da Vinci, why the rest, why is this important? Look at this, Leonardo da Vinci. Here he is, had a quarrel with a fellow while he was trying to paint the face of Jesus in Rome, and look, only to find that he could not properly express what he felt Christ looked like until he got right with his friend. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that amazing? And if Leonardo da Vinci had that kind of problem, trying to express the face of Christ, here we as believers, how do we ever expect to be in right relationship with God if we are not in right relationship one with another? So, when that finally happens, then guess what happens? Then we can go to pray.

Why? Because now we're on speaking terms with God. We've dealt with the sin. Now, we can believe God in intercession.

Now, I want to spend a little time here, because I just related to the subject of prayer meeting. A minister asked Leonard Ravenhill, a man that God, I quoted him this morning, a man that we knew personally, a man who's now in heaven, a man who's written books on revival, tapes on revival. The man said, I wish revival would come to my church like it did in the Hebrides Islands in 1949.

He said, I wish revival would come to my church. And Leonard Ravenhill answered. Here it is.

The revival did not come as a result of wishing, but of praying. We can wish all we want, but unless we come God's way, it's just wishful thinking, and it will never happen. Well, let me get to this.

C.T. Studge, the past missionary, how little chance the Holy Ghost has nowadays. The churches and missionary societies have so bound him in red tape that they practically ask him to sit in a corner while they do the work themselves. That's amazing.

See? We don't need to talk to God. God, you just sit in the corner while we just do the work ourselves. Well, you know the story of the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

I'm not going to elaborate on it, but the Decision magazine ran an article on the front that said, the caption on the cover said, the turning point of Symbolist Church came when prayer became the engine that would drive the church. And the Christian Reader, several years back, had an article. Look at it on the bottom.

It says, Let the children pray. Let the children pray. See that? Brooklyn Tabernacle's best-kept secret.

Brooklyn Tabernacle's best-kept secret. The children's prayer meeting. It's interesting when I tell you that.

It went on to say, it went on to say, oh by the way, what ages are these children? Before they got into that new building, they were in a downtown building in Brooklyn, and the prayer meeting would start at 7 o'clock for the adults on Tuesday nights, and the children would have prayer meetings. And it is said that mothers would be on the sidewalk in Brooklyn, New York at 6 o'clock one hour early, holding their children by their hands, waiting for the doors to open, because there was only a certain amount of room for the children's prayer meeting, and they wanted to make sure their children got in. Do you want to know what age? Here it goes.

Are you ready for this? 4 to 7, and 8 to 11. Two separate groups. I'll guarantee you that when those children become adults, you will not have to beg them to go to a church prayer meeting.

When 9-11, which just happened yesterday, when that took place, those children went to praying for all those families. Right up of what happened. I can tell you that the Sunday after 9-11, at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, as a result of people praying, they had 700 decisions for Christ that one day alone in that church.

Shock treatment. Shock treatment. Well, you say, how does that relate to my church? There's a picture of my church.

There's a picture of my pastor. How does Brooklyn Tabernacle relate? Prayer. Prayer.

When my wife and I went to Georgia to live, we spent a whole year looking for a church. And we've got churches all over the place. In the Atlanta area.

I'd get on the telephone. I'm looking for a church. I'd say, we're new in town.

We're looking for a church to attend. I said, do you have a midweek prayer meeting? Well, no. You and your girls and boys brigade.

And we have a Bible study. I said, no. I said, do you have a prayer meeting? Well, no.

I said, thank you. Goodbye. And I can tell you that it took us one solid year to find a church that we were content with that had a prayer meeting.

Big city. Big churches. What a shock treatment.

See that? And so, how did you find the church? I called one place. I looked in the Yellow Pages, the Christian Yellow Page book. My wife, after a year, said, you know, we've got to settle on some place.

So I looked in the Christian Yellow Page book and said, First Baptist Church. I said, well, I don't even know where this is. I called the church.

I said, do you have a midweek prayer meeting? Yes, we do. Old-fashioned prayer meeting from 6.30 to 7.10. So we got in the car in the middle of the afternoon to drive around to see where this place was. And I met a man there.

He said, yes, we have a prayer meeting. Oh, this is a wonderful church. It's been such a help to me.

I said, well, we'll come and see what it's all about. I was excited. 6 to 7.10. Old-fashioned prayer meeting.

Well, it was old-fashioned. Yes. They had a few songs.

The pastor gave it devotional. And then he said, all right, any prayer requests? Took the prayer request. And then they went to pray.

And they prayed for about 10 minutes. And it was all over. Well, you say, well, why are you there? Because even though that was no old-fashioned prayer meeting, I could sense, we could sense something there.

We could sense a spirit of love that was flowing there. That was very real. We showed up on Sunday to listen to the pastor preach.

Wow. Went to Sunday school class. Wow, they were interested in us.

Put my wife's name on the board. Mine, they couldn't spell. No, no, no, no, no.

And people greeting us. And I could sense. And we sensed the spirit of love.

And found out that the motto of the church is, the church that loves. And if you see the church buses, and you'll see, the church that loves. And the emblem of the church is a cross with a heart around it.

Cross and a heart around it. It's etched right into the pulpit. It's on all the buses.

The name of the church is small. But what is big is the emblem and the church that loves. Those words are big.

And the name of the church is small. We have had over 120 people in our home from the church for different gatherings since we've been there. And I can tell you, and some more than once, I can tell you that we have yet to hear the first negative word about anybody in that church.

Do you know it's interesting when I say that to you? When we get together and say, how can we pray for our pastors? Wasn't it wonderful what God said to us today? Let's praise God and thank God for it. Now, don't you talk about other things? Sure we do. But that's not all.

I can tell you, we were in a church in Ohio for 25 years. And we had been, Lou and I had been going away for three weeks at a time, generally for a number of years, in a crusade for three weeks. And one Sunday I'm home and I'm in the Sunday school class and the leader of the class says to me, in front of the class, said, well, Ralph, nice to see you home.

Where have you been? I said, I've been gone in a crusade. He said, well, how long have you been gone? I said, for three weeks. He said, three weeks? Who ever heard of a crusade going three weeks? It's going on like this? And it went on like that.

And he talked a little bit about it. And we had been in the church for years and in that class for years and he didn't know, and I've been doing it for years, and he didn't know. Now I'm in a church where when I go home, they'll say, we think we should give you a visitor slip.

You've been gone too long. They say, we've been praying for you. How did the meetings go? One day an elderly lady sat next to me.

She leaned over Sunday morning. She leaned over. She said, when are you leaving for ministry? I said, Friday.

She leaned over and said, I'm going to be praying for you every day. You're gone. And then a moment later, she leaned over a second time and she said this.

Listen to this. She said, I believe I would be sinning against Almighty God if I didn't pray for you every day. Oh! 25 years in a former church.

I've never heard talk like that. I'm in a church that loves but loving spiritually. And you should see how many hugs I get when I go home.

My wife gets. Love. Is it a perfect church? No, it's not perfect.

My wife joined it. And if you think that's bad, so did her husband join it. I'll tell you something else while I'm at this.

By the way, we have no place else to go tonight. So just relax. I'll tell you something else.

When we joined the church, standing in front of the church, my wife and I are standing there. People are coming to greet us. And a little man, short man, comes along and he greets my wife.

Welcome to the church. Welcome. Nice to have you as a member of the church.

He did that to my wife. Then I'm next standing here. He never invited me, welcomed me.

He didn't know me from anybody. He didn't know me. He didn't say welcome to church.

You know what he did? He grabbed my hand. And he came up real close to me and he looked me straight in the eye. And he said, now that you're a member of this church, tell me, how are you going to exercise your spiritual gift to minister to this congregation? How are you going to exercise your spiritual gift to minister to this congregation? He didn't know who I was.

And he didn't stop there. I wish he would have. He said, and he's looking me straight in the eye.

He said, and I'm praying that you're going to join the men who meet every Thursday morning at 6 o'clock from 6 to 7.30 to pray. And now you know where I am at 6 o'clock every Thursday morning at 6 to 7.30. You know what he did? He provoked me to love and good works. And you want to know something? Those men pray for me while I'm here.

Is the church perfect? No. Some things I don't like. No.

But I'm not the pastor. And I let our pastors know that Lou and I, and in our ministry and our churches wherever we've been, we have never been problematic and we're just members to be blessed. And if my pastor, that man you see up there, if he were here right now, you know what he would probably do? He would probably come up here.

He'd put his arm around me. And if my wife were here, he'd put his arm around her as well. And you know what he'd say? He'd say, folks, let me introduce you to two of my greatest encouragers.

Ah, what a blessing to be in an atmosphere like that, in a sense where you know that you're loved and you can love and not allow the enemy to destroy the unity of the body. Wonderful. See, it happened.

Now, I got way off the subject. What does that do with the Brooklyn Tabernacle? Here's how. We had Jim Cimbala as one of the speakers at one of our conferences.

And he talked about the prayer ministry, the church, that by the way now has over 3,000 people that come on Tuesday nights to pray. Our pastors and their spouses, one of the men in church chartered a plane, flew up to Brooklyn on a Tuesday, spent some time with the staff, and took in the Tuesday night prayer meeting and then flew back to Atlanta on Wednesday morning. But why is that important? Because this

church that loves, when we joined it, we'd have Bible study.

This was before this pastor was there. We had a Bible study. 50, 60 people would stay for the Bible study on Wednesday night.

Then the man leading it would announce 10 minutes from now we're going to start prayer meeting. Guess what we saw? We saw the second book of Exodus. And only six to eight of us stayed for the prayer meeting.

That's all. And when this pastor came and God began to burden him that this church was going to become a praying church, I can tell you what has happened. We now say if you want to come to the exciting service of our church, come to the Wednesday night prayer meeting.

We have anywhere from 75 to 125 people. The church is about 500 people. It's not what it ought to be.

Come to the Wednesday night prayer meeting. Oh, what am I talking about? Here's the whole story. Look at that.

I wasted my breath. Look at this. See, here it is.

See? Before that visit, the Brooklyn Tabernacle. See? After, now we have 75 to 125 regularly attending. Now it's said come Wednesday night, most powerful service of the week.

What happens in the prayer meeting? Well, we're ministering to each other. We're praying for each other. Bearing each other's burdens.

We have Bible study as well. All the midst of it. We sing, worship.

It's marvelous indeed. But, what is significant about it? Not, here's the significance. Not until our church became a praying church did God see fit to draw to our congregation all kinds of various ethnic groups.

We're in an area where we've got all kinds of ethnic groups. Not until we became a praying church. See? Now we see, in fact, today, this very day, is missionary conference at our church and all the ethnic groups are joining together.

Today's service is in my church. And, we now have says seven, now there are eight ethnic congregations that God has just drawn to us without our even trying that are a part of our congregation. And they have their own separate meetings.

And they're winning all kinds of people in this ethnic community. Well, if you don't believe it, there are the pictures of the pastors. There they go.

An Arabic church, Korean church, Hispanic, Asian, Indian, Vietnamese, Ethiopian, and Chinese. And I forget what the last one is. And there are the pastors for each of these churches.

And that did not happen, did you get it again? Until the church became a praying church. And now on our Sunday night services, right in the middle of the service, that's all right, it's time for us to pray. Getting groups of two or three or four, we want to pray about these three or four things.

Right in the middle of the service, on Sunday nights. And it's wonderful to see God answering prayer. Well, I could go on and on, but I just want to take you to a quick trip to Peru as well.

I'm there with about 200 pastors and spouses and church leaders for a conference on prayer and ministry. I just want you to just see what struck me the most. Just kind of watch what struck me the most.

I've cut out most of these, but I'll just show you a few. I've been there twice in the last couple of years. I anticipate going back this year, the fall, ministering to each other.

Do you know one place I was? Eighteen people got on a river boat. It took them five days on a river boat to come to the sessions. Five days.

Going back, they had a, it was wonderful, it only took four days because the current changed on the way back. I would be there to speak at 1030 in the morning at this conference ground where, not this one, but where I'm talking about, the other place. I'd be there about 1030 in the morning.

By the time I got there at 1030 in the morning and I walked into the auditorium, all kinds of people on their knees praying. And this group of people, as a result of it, they've sent all the missionaries home. The missionaries are out of a job in this group of people.

Why? It's a totally indigenous church. In the city of Lima, Peru alone, they have 60 churches of that one denomination. Some of them run several thousand people praying.

Well, here's one of the pastors and his wife. When we got to this place, I said to the pastor, what do you want God to do for your congregation in this prayer conference? Well, the church was about 450, almost 500 people. I said, Pastor, what do you want God to do in this conference, two half days together? And here's his answer.

I want God to make my congregation a praying church. So I asked him, I said, Pastor, how many, how much praying is already going on in your church? He said, I want God to make this a praying church. Well, how much is going on? Are you ready for the reply? Here we go.

Here's the reply. I had him write it down so I didn't miss any figures. You're not taking my word, it's his word.

Okay? From Wednesday night, Wednesday morning, 6 to 8 p.m., 8 a.m., approximately 30 people come to pray. Two hours. And then from 5 to 7 in the evening, approximately 30 to 40 people come to pray.

And then from 7 to 8.30, approximately 40 to 50 people come to pray. And you know, when I total that up, those figures, 30, 40, and 50, guess what that comes to? 120. Look at that, the upper room number.

It's intriguing to me. Well, that was nice. So he's got 450, 500, he's got 120 on Wednesday.

I thought it was finished. No. Saturday mornings, from 6 to 8 a.m., 35 young people come to pray for two hours, Saturday morning.

Oh. Then, first Friday night of every month, the first Friday of every month, they have all-night prayer from 10 p.m. till 6 o'clock in the morning. And I said, how many people come in? Look at that number! 80 to 100, all night long, one night a month.

Are you still with me? Are you shocked? That's not all. Second Sunday, the whole church prays all day. And the second Wednesday, all the prayer groups come together to pray.

He said, I said, what do you want God to do for your church in this conference? I want God to make this a praying church. Well, that wasn't all. See? Talk about a shock treatment.

That wasn't all. After we got finished, at the end of the conference, the young people, about 80 of them, asked if I would spend two hours with them that evening, the night before I left to come home. They wanted more.

Two hours that night, after two and a half days, and they were there. High school, college age, young people. So, they gave me about 25 questions.

They wrote them out. They wrote out about 25 questions. I only got to six or seven of them.

And when we got done, you know what one of the young people said? What is your email address? They wanted the answers to the rest. Well, let's see. No, I didn't put it up here.

I should have. I left it out for time. You should have seen the questions.

I still have the little slips in Spanish, and they interpret for me. How will I know if it's the right girl for me to date? What is the right age to start dating? What if my parents don't like the girl that I want to date? Nothing doing. How can I better serve the church? How can I find what is God's will for the place of ministry in the church? What if I find that my studies take so much time that I don't have enough time to serve God in the church? On and on it goes.

Shock treatment. High school students. College students.

When we got finished that time, they said, can we pray for you? They sang a song, a dedicated song to me, and then prayed for me. Well, I thought that was finished. Then they did something else.

Now can we take a picture? Take a picture. Okay, there's most of the group. Some of them had to leave.

Take a picture. And I thought that was finished. And then, the next thing I find out is that it's time to pray for the next half hour before closing.

Two hours already, all the rest of the fanfare, and now it's time to pray. And you begin to catch the intensity Look at this. And I come home and I'm saying to myself, when, oh when, are those Peruvians going to start sending missionaries to us? What am I doing here? And I come home to the American church, and we can hardly get a corporal's guard when you announce a prayer meeting.

You say you want God to answer your prayers? You say you've got problems that you can't solve humanly, and we expect God to answer prayer when we treat God like that? What a tragedy. Well, I got carried away, didn't I? See? Now what happens is, when we get up off our knees, oh, by the way, Mr. James and the other man, they now can go to pray together because they're on terms with each other. And you know what happens when they pray? God begins to burden them for some of those fringe people.

If God could do this for us, He certainly can do it for them. And I believe it's only a matter of time, only a matter of time, when people go with God that far, it's only a matter of time God begins to break their hearts. For those who are one heartbeat away from everything, the Bible calls eternal damnation.

Why? Because a little bit of the heart of God becomes our heart. And now we become burdened for the lost. And it begins to happen.

God's way. Well, you say, look, Evan Roberts from the Hebrides says, when the churches are aroused to their duty, men of the world will be swept into the kingdom. A whole church on its knees is irresistible.

Now the Scripture. Psalm 53, verse 6. Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion. When God brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall be sad and Israel shall be mad.

Is that what it says? When God brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad. Now, when you think in terms of that, well, when you think in terms of that, what does it say? It's saying, when God can bring His people out of bondage, out of captivity, then there'll be the joy and rejoicing in the church. When God's, get the picture, get the premise, when God's people come out of their bondages, then watch the joy and rejoicing come back to their lives and to the church.

Well, what was that captivity like? What was the captivity like? Turn. Psalm 137. Psalm 137.

What was that captivity like when they were in bondage? By the rivers of Babylon. You know where that is? That's Iraq. There we sat down.

Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps on the willows in the midst thereof. What are they doing in Babylon? You know where they are? In captivity.

God's people in captivity. They're weeping. We hanged our harps.

Oh, we can't play. For they that carried us away, captive, verse 3, required of us a song. And they said, and they that wasted us, who required us mercy, said, come on, come on, sing, sing one of the songs of Zion.

Get the picture. God's people are in captivity and their captors are saying to them, come on, you Israelites, come on, you people who believe in God, come on, come on, come on, come on, sing, sing. Why, why, come on, sing us one of your songs.

They're in captivity. And look at verse 4. The answer. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? You know what they're saying? Our song is gone.

We're in bondage. Can't sing. No joy.

No rejoicing. That sometimes looks like Sunday morning services in some places. I look out of a congregation sometimes and I look and I see dehydrated, disintegrated, refrigerated, evaporated looks on people's faces and they try to sing I'm glad I'm a Christian to the tune of Old Smokey and wonder why nobody can believe them.

And for some people, going to church as if it's a penal institution in Jesus Christ's boring company. That's where we are in many places in America. Why? God's people in bondages.

Bondages. And during a revival crusade when we come for a longer period of time that's what we deal with. We deal with those bondages and how we find freedom in Christ through bondages.

Dealing with the bondages. Okay? How are we going to sing? And then look what the Israelites say. If I forget thee verse 5 O Jerusalem let my right hand forget how to operate her cunning.

If I do not remember Jerusalem verse 6 let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Now what I say if I forget what it was like to be free in Jerusalem if I ever forget that let my right hand forget how to function properly and if I forget what it's like to be free let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth and if that happens you'll never be able to eat spaghetti and meatballs punishing yourself if you forget what freedom what freedom is like. What is Jerusalem? The homeland.

Liberty. True worship of their God. And here they are in bondage.

And they say Lord help us not to forget what that freedom was like. And if I can paraphrase it right some of us have almost forgotten what it's like to genuinely walk in the power in the fullness of God's spirit functioning in our lives. We've been so bound in our self-centeredness dictating the terms having our own way demanding our rights.

That's our problem. Well and it says if I let any other joy be greater than the joy of freedom God don't allow that to happen. Now that's what it was like.

They're in bondage they can't sing. Well then what then was it like when they come out of that bondage? Psalm 126. When they come out of that bondage here's the picture.

When the Lord turns again the captivity of Zion we're like then to dream. Ah it's like a dream to be free. God bringing them out of captivity.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue was saying oh that's what your captors wanted you to do sing. No, no now when you're out of bondage in captivity now your mouth is filled with laughter and your tongue was singing and then said they among the heathen oh now they're talking to the heathen. Isn't that what your pastor wants you to do? Witness to Christ to the lost.

Then they have something to say to the heathen. What are you saying to the heathen? Verse 2. The Lord has done great things for you heathen. Now they've got a testimony and the heathen say and I'm reading into this the heathen say how do you know it? How do you know it? How do you know it? Verse 3. The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad.

You know what they're saying? They're giving their testimony. We were in bondage. We couldn't sing.

We were bound in ourselves. No liberty, no freedom. Now we've got something to say to you.

Here's what the Lord has done. He's done great things for us where we're glad. You see? Now their tongues are open.

Now they can sing. Now the joy and rejoicing comes because they're out of bondage. And the rest of that psalm.

The rest of that psalm. Verse 4. Turn again in our captivity. Look at verse 5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

That's a picture of personal reviving. Brokenness to joy. And guess where the psalm ends.

Verse 6. He that goeth forth and weeping and weepeth bearing precious seed. Oh, what's happened now? Outreach. Outreach.

You see? It starts from God's people coming out of bondage. Having something now to say to the heathen. God has done something for us that we're delighted to talk about.

Now it says, He that goeth forth and weepeth. You know what? You better get out there and witness. Because if you're a Christian and you say the Lord's in your heart, you better do it.

No, no, no. Now it's none of that. You know what it is? I get a picture of spontaneity.

He that goeth forth. You can hardly hold him back. He that goeth forth.

He's going forth. But now he's going forth weeping. Now he's going forth with a broken heart for the lost.

It's not just the letter of the law, but it's a broken heart for the lost. Now it's a burden for the lost. By the way, if anybody wants to develop this further, I see in this whole story three weepings and three rejoicings.

They were weeping in bondage and they're rejoicing in verse 1 coming out of bondage. They're weeping in verse 5. They that sow in tears. That's personal brokenness.

To reap in joy. The joy of the Lord. There's the second weeping and rejoicing.

And the third one. Verse 6. He that goeth forth and weepeth. Now that's a broken heart for the lost.

Bearing the seed. Shall, look at this. Doubtless.

No doubt about it. Come again with rejoicing. There's the third rejoicing.

The weeping and rejoicing. Shall doubtless, no doubt, come again with rejoicing. Bringing in the sheaves.

Bringing in the sheaves. What's the matter with you folks? Don't you know that song? There it is. The harvest.

As a result of going God's way. Meeting God at the cross. Getting on praying terms with God.

And then God breaks our hearts. For the lost. That's it.

That's the pattern. Well, having said that, let's see. Evangelism without revival is like putting a newborn baby to the breast of a corpse.

You don't put a newborn baby into the refrigerator. That's where you put dead chickens. See? And God does not put live chicks under dead hands.

Trying to bring life to a dead church through more programs is like trying to bring a dead dog back to life by wagging its tail. See, our problem is we've had it all backwards. The truth is, the revival needs to be the experience of the church before continuing evangelism can become the expression of that church.

We want to intrigue people with our methods before we impress them with our lives. Too many places. Oh, look at this one.

A new believer must first backslide in order to feel at home with most of the rest of us. I know a Christian when he leads somebody to the Lord, he does not even take him to an evangelical church for at least three months, from three to six months according to the person. He has to prepare him, prepare the person for the shock treatment.

For the shock. Make sure they're ready to sit in a place of people who make a lot of profession and very little action. Just think of that.

Just think of that. I think I mentioned last night Vance Havner talked about leading a man to the Lord in Chicago. Did I mention that last night? Yes.

But just imagine it. Imagine it. Here's a new believer coming to church, all excited, sitting up front.

Between him and the rest of the congregation is a great gulf fix, three or four empty rows. And then the rest of the congregation and everybody back there say isn't it wonderful to see how excited that new believer is up there. Just give him a few months and he'll be back here with the rest of us.

We were in a camp meeting a number of years ago in Indiana. We were having meetings at night and then the following day we would have afterglow sessions where we'd sit together in the afternoon relating to each other what God did the night before. And I'll never forget one day a husband and wife had just met the Lord the night before so excited what God did for them.

We were sitting in a group and the lady was sharing the joy of the Lord that came into her life. And a lady on the other side of that circle, I'll never forget it, she turned to her when she got finished and said, Oh it's wonderful to see you. That's the way I was 29 years ago when I gave my heart to the Lord.

That's the way I was. And the lady who just met the Lord the night before turned to that woman and said to her, Are you trying to say to me that it doesn't get better as I go from here? Are you trying to say to me that you used to be like this and you're not like this now? And she said, If that's what you're saying, I'll get off the ship right now. I'll never forget it.

I'll tell you what happened. Before that afternoon session was over, that 29 year old Christian was on her knees in the middle of that room weeping, repenting of her backslidden heart. That's the problem.

We want more people? Like what? Like us? Fill the pews with more people who think that Christian experience is just what we get out of it for our good instead of the glory of God? That's why we need revival. That's why. Oh, here it is.

Here she is. Oh, I'm so happy in the Lord. I'm so happy in the Lord.

I'm so happy in the Lord. She's so excited. This looks like the lady, right? So happy in the Lord.

You won't always feel this way. Soon you'll be as cold as we are. See, this is a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

And you know, you know what I did to that picture? I put something on it. I put some words on it. You ready? Here it goes.

Shame on them! Shame on them! Shame on them. And some of us may not put it in words, but we think it. Somebody gets a little too excited about things of God, all of us, oh, be careful, be careful.

Dr. Vance Hafner, and I quoted, he said, that evangelism alone is not the answer. Evangelism merely reproduces whatever brand of Christianity the folks who are doing the evangelizing happen to have. Converts, look at that statement.

Converts don't usually rise above the converters. If it's a degenerate Christianity that's being preached, evangelism will produce more of the same. We must improve the quality before we increase the quantity.

If we had better Christians, we could have more. It goes on to say, It goes on to say, God's original plan was not to arouse indifferent churches to occasional endeavors, but to develop a fellowship of spirit-filled Christians who would be evangelistic and missionary all the time. Our main business right now is not even to evangelize, but to get ready to evangelize.

First the cause, then the effect. First the tree, and then the fruit. First the spring, and then the stream.

See, we had it all backwards. And until we get it in order, look at that. Did you get that statement? He said, Converts don't usually rise above the converters.

And if it's a weak, anemic brand of Christianity that's being purported by our lifestyle, well, all we'll do is reproduce the same in most cases. Thank God there's some exceptions. That's the story.

Look at this. Charles G. Finney, that preached to thousands of people, had thousands convert. Look what he said.

If I had the strength to go through the churches again, instead of preaching to convert sinners, I would preach to bring churches up to the gospel standard of holy living. Charles G. Finney. Finney.

A dead church can only do one thing, preserve those who are already dead and help in the embalming process. If you have a revived church, you end up with a church full of evangelists. Ha, that's great.

If you evangelize the world without a revived church, you end up with some new believers in a dead church. You know what I call it? You know what I call it? Here's what I call it. The problem, dead batteries trying to jumpstart batteries.

Look at this picture. Where there is no revival, the world strongly influences the church. Now what is significant about that picture to you? What is significant about that picture? What is significant about that picture? Can anybody pick it up? What's significant? What is it? They're doing their own thing? But what is significant about the picture itself? The tug of war? There it is, look.

Everything else is big and the church is shriveled, tiny. That's it. No revival, the world strongly influences the church.

The church shrivels. And just the opposite takes place now. Where there is revival, the church greatly impacts the world and everything else begins to shrivel.

Amen? I'm finished. Yeah, I know what you did. You clapped because I'm finished.

Actually, I got finished quicker than I thought. Maybe there's something more. Let me see.

No, no, there isn't. Okay? But when we hear something like this, what are we going to do about it? That's the question. What are we going to do about it? Just go home and say, oh, we heard a different sort of

approach.

I'm not used to seeing a sermon on PowerPoint like that all night. Somehow we get the message a little better when we can see it as well. But what are we going to do about it? Go out and say, well, I hope somebody does something about it.

Is that what we do? Do you know what we really need to do? What we ask unsaved people to do, repent. Do you know if I were to call people to start praying, do you know the way we would start praying? I dare say we'd say, dear Lord, help me to be a better witness. Dear Lord, help me to be more concerned about the lost.

Dear Lord, help me to reevaluate my time. That's not it. We need to repent.

It's not asking God to help you do a little better. It's asking God to have mercy on us for the sin of being all wrapped up in ourselves and repenting of it and accepting the blood of Jesus Christ to forgive us and to cleanse us from our sin and to go home knowing that we've been cleansed and forgiven. And then we make a commitment, by God's grace, it's going to be different because it's not going to be in my strength, but I'm going to now move in the power of the Spirit of God as a result of that repentant heart.

And repentance means turn around the opposite direction. That's what we need to do. We need to repent of our self-centeredness and how backwards we've been in relation to God's plan, wanting the results.

Oh, we'll do anything. Let's see if we can get a pastor in here who can fill this place and reach more people. Let's see what new technique he has.

No, no. We don't need a new technique. You know what we need? Back to the cross with a sob in our hearts and let God break our hearts.

Recognize the joylessness of our Christian life as a result of all the bondages that we've allowed, all the self-centeredness that we've allowed, and deal with it, repent of it, and then claim that joy. Wilt Thou not revive us again, Thy people may rejoice, rejoice, rejoice. The truest essence of revival is a rejoicing in God, a whole new God concept and a God consciousness in our lives.

Well, I am not exactly sure how to close tonight. Tomorrow night we're going to relate to the hindrances to revival. Make sure you come back.

Make sure you bring someone else with you. And if you know some church people that were here this morning and are not here tonight, get on your phones. Encourage them not to miss these nights.

This is not casual. This is not a performance. This is a passion.

I covet for every congregation to pay the price to be set free from the bondages and the nonsense that we allow to keep God from doing what he wants to do in our lives and in the church. Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Thou art the potter, Thou art the potter.

I am the clay, I am the clay. Mold me, make me, mold me and make me. After Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Search me and try me. Master, whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now as in Thy presence.

As in Thy presence. Humbly I bow. Humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Wounded and weary. Wounded and weary.

Have me, I pray. Have me, I pray. Power, all power.

Power, all power. Surely is Thine. Surely is Thine.

Touch me and heal me. Touch me and heal me. Master Divine.

Master Divine. And you see, when we pray all those prayers, we're ready for the last verse. Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way.

Fill with Thy Spirit. Hold o'er my being absolute sway. Fill with Thy Spirit.

Till all shall see Christ only, always living in me. There's the result. The world to see it.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Hold o'er my being absolute sway. Hold o'er my being.

Absolute sway. Fill with Thy Spirit. Till all shall see.

Christ only, always. Living in me. Living in me.

Lord, I thank you that you have not bypassed us, but you love us enough to speak to us and give us enough sense to have listening ears, open hearts, and responsive wills so that we will never want to be the same again. And Lord, I'm just going to praise you for what you're going to continue to do in this week. I pray that you'll just keep on creating such a hunger in our hearts that all the imps in hell or out of hell will not be able to stop what it is you want to do among this group of people and those who come.

And we're going to thank you for it. Praise you. Christ's name we ask it.

Amen. Amen.

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