

Praying Saints and the Glory of God

by Sammy Tippit

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in initiating and sustaining revival, highlighting the correlation between prayer and spiritual awakening throughout church history.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Matthew 18:19, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:4, Acts 2:42, Acts 4:31, Acts 17:6, Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer And Revival", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Sammy Tippit preaches about the powerful correlation between prayer and spiritual awakening, emphasizing how the Holy Spirit stirs individuals to pray during times of darkness, leading to the manifestation of God's presence and the rise of mighty preachers. The early church and historical awakenings demonstrate that revival is birthed through prayer, resulting in phenomenal growth and conversions. Examples from the Early Church, the First Great Awakening, the Great Awakening of 1857, and the Welsh Revival highlight the transformative impact of prayer on individuals, communities, and nations, ultimately leading to the spread of revival fires around the world.

Transcript

During those times of spiritual apathy and darkness, the Holy Spirit would quietly stir in the heart of an individual or in the hearts of a small group of people. He would call them to prayer. The brightness of the glory of God would begin to dispel the darkness in the days that followed. Mighty preachers would be raised out of nowhere. The Word of God would thunder forth in mighty power. Souls would be set aflame for the glory of God. Prayer initiated revival, and revival initiated prayer.

An apparent correlation exists between a movement of prayer and spiritual awakening. In some instances it is difficult to tell which came first. That is because spiritual awakening and prayer have the same focus: God. Revival is simply the manifest presence of God among His people. It is a special visitation of the Holy Spirit to His church.

True prayer is the method by which the Christian comes before the presence of God. Consequently, a praying Christian will be a revived Christian, and a church that seeks the face of God will be one that knows the glory of God.

We have much to learn from the history of God's dealings with His people. Prayer will always be found at the root of those dealings. As a result, it would benefit us to look at the importance of prayer in historical

awakenings. Although this is not an exhaustive study of spiritual awakenings, it will serve to remind us that God has not changed. The God of Paul, Peter, Whitefield, Wesley, Finney, and Moody is the God of our generation. He is looking for men and women who will take hold of Him in prayer and not let go until His glory comes.

Early Church

The priority of spiritual awakening was so important that the Holy Spirit breathed on Luke to record His dealings with the early church. That first church was initiated and sustained by a prayer movement. The glory of God covered that early church.

Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. The first call upon the New Testament church was prayer. Intense praying resulted in the powerful proclamation of Christ. In Acts 1:14 the church is found seeking the face of God: "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer." In Acts 2:4-41 the church is empowered to proclaim the resurrection of Christ. Three thousand people were converted in this mighty visitation of God.

This incited the church to move forward in prayer. Acts 2:42 says, "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." The results were phenomenal. People came to know Christ daily. Peter and John are on their way to a prayer meeting in Acts 3, and five thousand are converted before they even arrive. The church continues to pray in Acts 4, which results in an even more powerful proclamation of the gospel. In Acts 5:14 they stop counting those who are being saved, simply stating, "All the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number."

This should be ample evidence of the relationship between prayer and the phenomenal growth of the New Testament church. But we should also look at the apostle Paul. Paul's ministry grew out of a prayer meeting. All of Europe and North America should be grateful for five humble men of prayer. The history of both continents would never be the same because of that prayer meeting, where a ministry was born that would ultimately shape much of Western civilization. The early church's motto was "pray and proclaim." It was said of them that they were "men who have up-set the world" (Acts 17:6).

The First Great Awakening

Two Britons and two North Americans were used of God during the first Great Awakening. George Whitefield began preaching outside the four walls of the church in England to the multitudes. John Wesley later joined Whitefield in this unique method of ministry. Thus, they became known as Methodists. Wesley and Whitefield had a profound impact on Britain and America. Untold thousands were converted to Christ, and the social and moral climates of both countries were greatly affected.

John Wesley was converted after attempting to be a missionary in America. He wrote in his diary on Tuesday, January 24, 1738, "I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh! who shall convert me?"¹ The answer to his question was found in a praying group of Germans called Moravians.

The leader of the Moravians was Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. He stated, "My joy until I die . . . [is] to win souls for the Lamb."² Zinzendorf established a community called Herrnhut ("The Lord's Watch"), located in eastern Germany. A prayer meeting began and had far-reaching effects. These Moravians sought the Lord and cried unto Him for His power and presence. That prayer meeting lasted one hundred years, and

out of it grew a missionary movement. The hearts of the Moravians were touched by the heart of God, which resulted in them developing a heart for the world.

Wesley had a "divine appointment" with some of those Moravians on board a ship for America. A great storm overtook them while they were at sea. The water split the mainsail in pieces and covered the ship. The English began to scream for their lives. However, the Moravians quietly worshiped God in the face of death. Wesley asked one afterward, "Were you not afraid?" He simply responded, "I thank God, no."³

John Wesley saw God on the faces of those dear praying people, and he never forgot what he saw. When he returned to England, he visited the Moravians and had discussions with some of them. He attended a prayer meeting that the Moravians held at Aldersgate Street in London. Martin Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans was read during that prayer meeting. Wesley described what transpired. He wrote, "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."⁴ That group of praying Germans lit a fire in Wesley that spread throughout Britain and extends today around the world. The forerunners of the revival in the 1700's were a band of praying men and women in Germany. They waited for the Lord at Herrnhut, and He visited His people.

The Great Awakening of 1857

The Great Awakening of 1857 was so profoundly affected by prayer that it was known to many as the revival of the prayer meeting. During 1857 financial panic occurred in America. Spiritual and moral decline had been on the rise for approximately seventeen years. God had used Charles Finney in years previous to the decline; however, economic greed and speculation had grown since that time.

Jeremiah Lanphier began a noonday prayer meeting for laymen in downtown New York City on September 23, 1857. He sat alone for the first twenty-five minutes, but by 12:30 there were six men present. The following week twenty men attended. Within six months, more than ten thousand businessmen were attending. The Holy Spirit began to call people to pray. Many people were converted in the prayer meetings, and others found victory in their walk with God. It has been estimated that in America, "In just two years, over a million converts were added to the churches of all denominations. Over a million converts were added to the churches of Great Britain."⁵

God wanted to bless His church, and the wind of the Spirit blew across the hearts of the people of God, calling them to prayer. Out of the prayer meetings grew a great harvest, and following the harvest grew great ministries. God raised up a shoe salesman, D. L. Moody, who would become one of the great evangelists of the world. Hudson Taylor, who would lead a great missionary movement, was ultimately affected by the revival. Men sought the Lord, He set them aflame, and nations were affected by the flames of revival.

The Welsh Revival

A young man named Evan Roberts was used as a mighty weapon of God during the Welsh Revival. But the instruments had to be broken, melted, and molded in order to be used of God. Seth Joshua told twenty-six-year-old Roberts not to miss the prayer meeting. During the spring of 1904, Roberts was awakened by the Holy Spirit at 1:00 a.m., and he communed with God for four hours. This continued steadily for approximately three months. God was desiring to bless the tiny nation of Wales, and He

sought for a man who would yield himself to Him.

Not long after, young Roberts heard Seth Joshua pray in a meeting, "Bend us, Lord." He stated that as he left, "I went out and I prayed, 'Oh, Lord, bend me.'"6 God broke Evan Roberts. And He gave him a vision and a broken heart for his nation. Roberts began to ask God for one hundred thousand souls.

The Spirit of God descended upon the coal-mining country of Wales. J. Edwin Orr wrote of the impact that was made on the nation. He wrote, "Stocks of Welsh and English Bibles were sold out. Prayer meetings were held in coal mines, in trains and trams and places of business The magistrates in several places were presented with white gloves, signifying that there were utterly no cases to try Cursing and profanity were so diminished that several slowdowns were reported in the coal mines, for so many men gave up the usual foul language that the pit ponies dragging the coal trucks in the mine tunnels did not understand what was being said to them and stood still, confused."7

Not only did God answer Roberts' prayer for one hundred thousand souls, but He multiplied the influence of the revival around the world. Men such as G. Campbell Morgan, Gipsy Smith, and F. B. Meyer were influenced by the revival. R. A. Torrey wrote an encouraging letter to Roberts stating his joy from hearing the reports of the movement of God. Reports of the revival spread throughout Europe, India, Asia, Australia, Africa, and North America. Evangelical Christianity would enter the twentieth century with the fires of revival spreading from Wales around the world. God found a young man who refused to miss the prayer meeting and cried unto the Lord, "Bend me, O God!"

A Final Note

The many other awakenings in church history have a common thread that runs throughout. Praying men and women have been used by God to ignite the flames of revival. God visited the Hebrides Islands three decades ago, which resulted in a great harvest. It began with two separate groups that prayed. And the story continues. When God gets ready to move, He calls men and women to prayer. The wind of God moves across the pages of the history of the church through praying saints.

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