

2 Chronicles 7

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner's sermon on 2 Chronicles 7 emphasizes the need for humility, prayer, and personal revival to heal both individuals and the church community.

Duration: 37:06

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of confessing sins rather than covering them up. He uses the analogy of a water wheel in an old mill to illustrate how trying to make things work on our own is futile, but when we allow God to work in our lives, things will flow smoothly. The preacher also highlights the need for personal conviction and taking responsibility for our actions. He then discusses the importance of seeking God's face and the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation. Finally, he emphasizes the four things necessary for revival: prayer, seeking God's face, turning from wicked ways, and humbling ourselves before God.

Transcript

The minute I announce it, some of the Saints will settle back rather comfortably into the pew as if to say, well, I've heard all that before. But I don't know of anything we need to do today so much as to familiarize ourselves with the familiar, yet better acquainted with what we think we already know. And this is 2 Chronicles 7, and the verses are the familiar 13 and 14.

I call them the if verses. God's if verse is the 13th, and our if comes in the 14th. If I shut up heaven if there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people.

Here's where we come in. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now, have you noticed how that last verse just oscillates back and forth between God and his people? Just look at that for a moment.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. It's back and forth all the way through. Marvelous, marvelous.

And this is just as timely as it ever was in the days of Solomon. Solomon was a strange character, supposed to be the wisest man. No man ever made a bigger fool out of himself than he did before it was all over.

And his career premiered in wisdom, peaked in wealth, and perished with women. That's the story of Solomon. In the very chapter that says he loved many strange women, I'm not surprised that it ends with an account of his funeral.

He just didn't make it through the chapter. So that's the way it went with Solomon. He still was the wisest man while he was wise, but he was a mighty big fool when he turned into a fool on this matter.

God was in the wisdom, and God gave him wealth, but he sure didn't give him all those women, I'm sure of that. But you notice here that this begins, God begins, he always does, with his people. And his people begin with themselves.

This is a very personal old book. Search me and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

See if there'll be any wicked way in me. And believe me in the way everlasting now. As a matter of fact, that wasn't passed in the book.

Personal all the way through. When David committed his terrible sin, he needed to do something besides grab a harp and start singing songs. He needed to get right with God against thee, thee only, if I sinned.

I used to wonder why he said that. I thought he'd sinned against Uriah, and Bathsheba, and everybody else. But he realized that the worst thing about sin is it's something between us and God.

Against thee, thee only. You don't hear many people today say, I've sinned against God. You hear them say, oh, I'm not as good as I ought to be, and I'm my worst enemy, and all those things.

But it takes the Holy Spirit to bring a man to the place where he says against thee, thee only, have I sinned. We sing it sometimes, Lord send a revival, let it begin in me. That's where it'll have to begin.

Not the preacher, nor the deacon, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. It doesn't take much religion to confess other people's sins. I heard of a woman who went to a psychiatrist some time ago.

She had a strip of bacon over each ear and a fried egg on top of her head. She said, I've come to see you about my brother. She said, I've come to see you about my brother.

She said, I've come to see you about my brother. The homiletics teachers, some of them, they used to call them homiletics, they said we ought never to do any negative preaching. Well, you'd have to throw away a lot of pages out of the Bible.

The righteous man walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, standeth not in the way of sinners, sitteth not in the seat of the scornful. Nehemiah said, so did not I because of the fear of God. Were to walk not as the Gentiles, be angry and sin not, steal no more, let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths, grieve not the Holy Spirit, no foolishness, foolish talking or jesting, no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, be not drunk with wine, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.

Maybe it's just one little thing. The shelf behind the door, the shelf behind the door. Carry it down and throw it out.

Don't use it anymore. For Jesus wants his temple clean from ceiling to the floor. He even wants that little shelf that's hidden behind the door.

Have you ever done anything about that little shelf? You think you're getting away with it, not in the sight of God. I preached in Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, years ago in a meeting. Gave the invitation, a young fellow came down the aisle, put a pack of cigarettes in my pocket.

Said, I realize they don't belong in the life of a Christian. Now he was taking the matter into his own hands. I hadn't preached a sermon on tobacco.

You think I'd waste a whole sermon on tobacco? I tell them, if you've got yours alone, kindly leave it on the steps, and I guarantee you no hog or dog will get it if you go out after me. I wouldn't want to preach a whole sermon on it. But he was convicted, and he did the thing he ought to do.

And that's the way God puts it, very plainly. Disposition. How about that? Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness from the fear of God.

The Bible names a lot of these sins of the spirit. Carnality, ending, strife, divisions, whisperings, swellings, tumours, schisms, various debates, contentions, oh, so many of them. We have some people today who wrap themselves up in the rags of their pharisaic self-righteousness.

Now they're the other way, they're the other extreme on this separation. I mean, they only get half of it. I don't drink, and I don't play cards, and I don't smoke, and so on.

Of course they ought not, I agree with them. But you feel like saying, well, neither does a gate post. What are you doing? Let's get the other side of the koan.

One of the great problems in our church today, we don't see both sides of the koan. Every koan in God's collection has two sides. You never saw a one-sided quarter in your life.

And whether it be the sovereignty of God and man's free will, or whether it be Calvary and the resurrection, or whether it be Jesus, Son of God, Jesus, the Son of Man, faith and worship, always. Some folks get one side of the koan, and they go through life lopsided. They don't get balanced.

They need to see both. So the Pharisees were the most separated crowd you ever heard of. They wouldn't even eat an egg that had been laid on the Sabbath.

Now that's going after it with a vengeance, if you ask me. But they didn't know the Lord. Why were you predestinated? Never mind about trying to figure it all out.

You were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. God saved you to make you like Jesus. Are you any more like Jesus now than you were ten years ago? Don't you think you ought to be? Does anybody notice any improvement? Does your wife, does your husband, do the children, do the parents? Any improvement? We ought to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Too many folks are covering their sins instead of confessing their sins. My dad used to take me to an old mill when I was a little boy. They operated it by water wheel.

And I loved to watch that big thing go around, stream and pour on the pockets of that wheel. Now suppose some morning the water was low and it wouldn't turn. How ridiculous it would be if that miller tried to turn the wheel himself.

Or call in all the neighbors and try to make it go around. But I'll tell you what he could do. He could go up the creek, dig out the channel, and the water would flow.

And the wheel would turn. I go to all kinds of meetings of Baptists and others too. Churches, deacons' meetings, meetings of all kinds of groups.

And I tell them they're sweating and foaming at the mouth. Some of them are trying to make the wheels go around. And they're not going around.

I say we need to go up the creek and get sin out of the way. Nobody wants to hear about that. It's not pleasant.

What do you think God thinks of it? Whether it's personal sin or sin in the church. Allowed to go and grow unnoticed, unmentioned. You need to go up the creek and clear the channel if you do.

From within you shall flow rivers of living water. Because there'll be the inflow and the outflow of the Spirit of God. But it must be a clean channel.

That's what it says. And that's all I know to say. But if I could only get somebody to do it.

I want to ask you one thing before we stop tonight. I've asked it all over this country. I'd like for the folks who at present have positions in this church, you have some special responsibility in the church.

Deacons, Sunday school teachers, choir singers, all officers. Not because you're any better, but at present you represent the leadership of the church. And I'm sure it's you.

You look like honest people. And I thank you all. How many of you could say tonight, Now, I don't want to stage one of these bad desire parades that don't amount to anything.

We've just about rededicated ourselves to death, I think, sometimes. Everybody comes down and says it all over and does nothing. But what else are you going to do? Give them a chance and pray, dear Lord, make somebody mean business here tonight.

How many of you, for a change, would be willing, not going to have any singing even, Why do we have to sing them down there? If you mean it, how many of you could honestly, now, not make me feel good, but please don't think of that. Would you be willing just to get up voluntarily, walk down here and stand in front of the pulpit for a word of prayer. You pray quietly and I'll pray out loud.

But say in your heart, I know there's a price for revival and it's not cheap. God's not running a fire saver and a bargain counter. Costs.

I am willing by the grace of God to humble myself and pray and seek God's face and turn from any wicked way, start doing what I've not been doing, and vice versa. I'm willing to go up the creek and deal with whatever's wrong. If I'm at odds with somebody, I'll make the move.

I'll call them up, I'll write to them, I'll go to see them. No matter whose phone it is. There is no easy road to this thing.

Now I know there'll be folks who'll come because, well, I know folks thinking, now what's the matter with him, he doesn't go down there. And so we let pride cause us to go where we don't need to. Can I trust you tonight, you've listened so well.

Nobody here but us and Jesus. Or two or three together, my name, my name. Wonder what he thinks of us tonight.

Doesn't matter about me much. How many of you would be willing? And please now, if we all get up just easily, everybody just marches down, well you've done that many times before. But if in your heart it's going to be hard because that person you want to straighten things out with or that thing you ought to start doing you don't want to do, or quit what you ought to do, it isn't easy.

Isn't that about the thing? Would you be willing to come? Just stand here and let me have a prayer from up here while you don't listen to me but tell God what you've come for and that you mean it and that you are putting it all into his keeping. You're willing to humble yourself even to the point of embarrassment and pray as long as it takes. It won't take long if you mean business.

Seek God's face. You young people, I'd rather have God's smile than the grin of this world. Then you promise.

Now that's a big order. And if you can't come, I'm not going to take advantage of my position in the pulpit and say anything that's out of the way of the preacher. You've got no business doing that.

I'm not your judge. But you can. If you don't mean it, don't come.

I'm going to add one more transgression to the ones you already have. But if you mean business. Everyone who has a position at present in the church that I have mentioned, or if I haven't named one of them, would you be willing just quietly to come now and stand? If you mean it.

And let's not lose any time in either. You can be the judge of whether you really mean this thing or not. And as you stand here, dear friend, and say, well, God knows what it is, yes, but tell Him that the best way you know how you mean business about this.

Maybe it's something that you've been hanging on to or something you ought to have been doing years ago and haven't. Maybe it's your disposition that doesn't please God, makes it difficult sometimes for others. Oh, I don't know.

I shouldn't name anything. You know what it is. God will show you.

Father, we haven't come down now for the walk, Lord. I believe these people are sincere. Help us to mean it from our hearts.

And then we've taken the step. Now help us to take the walk. It takes more than one step, Lord.

Help us just keep stepping. Walking in the life. But begin with the first thing, whether it's the vertical relationship to God or the horizontal relationship to somebody else.

Help us to face the cross. And make it your ambition to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Now, that's not sinless perfection, but it is the goal of Paul and ought to be the goal of every Christian.

Make that your goal now. You cannot be faultless, but you can be blameless. A little child writes a letter, the best way he can.

It's not faultless, but it's blameless. And we can, we like to argue about it instead of going as far as we can go. Lord, I present to these dear people as they present themselves to thee.

And while our heads are bound, are there other members of this church who do not hold maybe a position in it at present, but you'd like to stand and say, Preacher Abner, I want to do that too. From my heart now, I'm not standing for the looks of it. God knows he sees me and he knows if I'm just playing games here tonight, but I mean it.

I want to be one of them. Would you kindly stand if you remember this church and want to do that? May God bless you, yes. All over the place, if you're willing to do this.

I like the way you're getting up deliberately, thinking about it. But I'm not trying to beg you to stand, because if you're a Christian, you ought to be up and just wait a moment. If you're a visitor here tonight, I'm sure your church needs a revival.

I don't know of one that doesn't. Would you like to say, maybe I came over here for God to give me some, a kindling wood to start something over in my place. I need it tonight.

Would you stand with us if you're a visitor from somewhere else? God bless you. Yes. My meetings so often, we have a lot of visitors from other churches and other denominations.

I like that. Maybe we can start something somewhere else we didn't have any dream about, if they got a touch of the message. Now what does the rest of this mean? Am I to understand that you don't think you need to stand? I wish I could believe we're all in such good condition.

Or that you won't stand? Search your heart. Are there others who would be honest enough to do this one thing more? Would you say in your heart, preacher, your sermon did not go in one ear and out the other. It takes me more than I look like right now, but I believe you preach the Bible.

Pray for me that I get to the place where I will do what I ought to do, because I know I ought to do this. I acknowledge at least my need. Pray for me because God spoke to me in the sermon.

And pray that I may get to where I will say one great big yes to Jesus. Anybody want to stand on that? Yes. Yes.

It shows you've been listening. God bless you. God spoke to you.

Oh, bless your heart. Anybody here the reason you couldn't stand is you're not a Christian, or you're not sure you're a Christian. I've been talking to professing Christians tonight.

Would you by standing say, Brother Havener, I'm not happy about the way I feel about being saved. Sometimes I don't know if I'd die now or I'd go to heaven or not. And that's too important to play with.

I need to know that I know that I know that I know that I'm a child of God. And I'm interested. Pray for me that I may get to where I know whom I believe.

Anybody in that category? Would you just quietly stand? Pray for me. If I don't see you, the Lord will. This is for everybody.

There couldn't be somebody wandering in here tonight without the slightest idea of doing anything about it. But the Holy Spirit, not Havener, but the Holy Spirit spoke in your heart. Would you acknowledge, I've heard the word of God tonight.

I believe you're right. I need what you're talking about. Pray for me.

That I may get the blessing God has for me. Anyone else? The Holy Spirit. God has spoken to a lot of hearts tonight.

Brother Pastor, so many of these, these people are mostly your people. I won't give you a clue in the way the Lord leads you, but thank God for this response.

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