

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting
September 15, 2013
4 Steps to Prepare for Revival
Don James

The last few months, God has been moving me to think and pray about revival. To understand what he does during a revival, what he desires to bring about a revival. A revival is a sovereign act of God, where he pours out a spirit of conviction upon people that leads to a deep surrender to Him. As on the day of Pentecost, people are cut to the heart with an understanding of who God is as well as their true state before God. They therefore see their desperate need for his mercy and desire to repent and live a new life devoted to God. It is their wholehearted abandonment to God that allows the Spirit to heal them, change them, and work through them. This is what our faith is all about.

This is true in our own lives as well – when God “revives” us, he awakens us (a) to who he is, (b) to who we are, (c) to what he calls us to, and (d) to how we must respond to him. We often pray for more faith, or more of the Holy Spirit, and we need to do so... but I believe **God is asking us for more of us.**

We’ve all heard of the scripture that says: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, I will forgive their sins and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Do you believe this scripture? This is the question of our faith – **if we believe this, are we acting on it?** Are we getting on our knees in repentance, in intercession for the world? There are so many promises in scripture, but I think we often fail to **act** on them, and this is why we don’t see the Spirit working to the degree that I think he wants to. He will use what we give him, but isn’t he worthy of so much more?

I think there are 4 things that God would like us to bring into our walk with him each day. These points led to the 1904 revival in Wales and I believe they can truly lead to a revival in our own walk of faith and to a much greater revival in the world around us. **They are quite simple, but I guarantee you, if you put these into practice each day, you will see God work wonders in your life.** I’ll mention them, and then I’ll go through them. As I go through them, please write down anything that God impresses upon your heart. These provide a framework for helping us to live/act in faith.

1. Confess all known sin.
2. Remove anything that is doubtful in our lives. (Grey areas)
3. Be prepared to obey the Holy Spirit immediately
4. Confess Christ publically

Let’s break them out.

1. **Confess all known sin.**

We all know it is important to confess our sin to God. But I think God wants to give us a greater hatred for sin. I wanted to give us 4 attitudes to help us examine ourselves before God. This is not meant to condemn anyone or to make anyone wallow in self-pity. It is meant to help us see when we are not living by faith in our God so that we can turn from it and embrace the great love and mercy he holds out to us. We were made for freedom. When the Spirit convicts us of sin, it isn’t to

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make us unhappy, but rather to help us turn from something dangerous so that we can be free and full of life.

- a. **Indifference** – if we get content with our current state, we’ve lost sight of how much more God has for us. Signs of indifference could be lack of a daily prayer life or falling to the same sin patterns over and over again.

Indifference breeds inaction, and inaction breeds a dead faith. In Galatians 5, St. Paul talks about the war between the spirit and the flesh. Do we see this war in our lives? If we do not notice this fight in us, we are either perfected in Christ or we’ve stopped paying attention to the Holy Spirit’s movement in our life. If we see this battle, we are in a good position because we see the Spirit moving in us. We also see the things God is asking of us and the things our flesh would rather do – it is time to do what God wants. This is how we turn from indifference.

- b. **Discouragement** – with all that is going on in the world around us, or even in our own lives, it can be easy to get discouraged. But God is a God of hope. He has a plan for us, not to destroy us but to free us and make us his own. Everything we go through, whether good or bad, is an opportunity for us to persevere in trusting God.

Difficulty in prayer – we can get discouraged if we don’t see much fruit in our prayer. We might lack the motivation to pray, we might get distracted. But persevere! Prayer is so much more than whether we heard God or not, or whether we felt his presence. Prayer also has to do with our being available to God. It is an offering of ourselves to God, and when we persevere in that, we **are** bearing fruit in our character. *Love is love when one offers oneself to the beloved especially in difficult times.* So persevere. Learn to be quiet before the Lord, learn to meditate on him and he will bless you.

- c. **Poor Relationships** – we were created for relationship. But often, in our sin, we can hurt, even insult those around us. This can be in how we say things, what we say, or even in our lack of action. Sometimes people can feel insulted or at least, unloved, unwanted when we don’t spend time being Christ to them. Whether at prayer meeting or during your day, are there people you see who are isolated, who need to know God’s love. Go talk to them! Is there someone you need to repent to? Go repent!
- d. **Lack of Urgency** – if anything, we should have a sense of urgency about spreading the gospel message. The world is dying in its corruption. I read that **over 56 million people die every year**, whether through war, famine, old age, accidents, ... that translates to about **1.8 people every second**. We know that Jesus said few take the narrow path, so we could assume that about **1 person literally goes to hell every second**. How do we feel about that? Does that move us to want to talk to everyone we know? At the very least, we should spend much more time interceding. But this world needs more than words... it needs a witness of Christians living their faith in a very visible way.

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2. Remove anything that is doubtful in our lives. (Grey areas)

- a. What I mean by this is that there are a lot of areas that we simply do not take before God. They may not be “bad” things in and of themselves, but they may not be what God wants us to pour our time and effort into either.
- b. *This really gets down to who we living for.* Do we belong to God or, do we want to live like the prodigal son at least part of the time. For example: my computer died, so I needed a new computer. I have a Mac, and Apple is coming out with some amazing new Macs this Fall and I really wanted one. But as I thought about it, I knew God wanted me to take this before him. I didn't want to because I had a feeling he'd tell me I don't really need the latest and greatest thing. ***But I had to bring it before him, because he is doing something in me and I don't want to lose that.*** So I brought it before him and he said – I don't need the latest and greatest thing. Get what you need, but not what your flesh wants. So that is what I did, and I did it before the new Macs came out because I knew if I delayed, I might just find some way to justify doing what my flesh wants. This leads to the next point – don't delay obeying the Spirit.

3. Be prepared to obey the Holy Spirit immediately

- a. Every time the Lord speaks to us, it is important. We need to take it seriously. We also need to take the timing of what he says seriously. There is a reason he tells us **what** he does and there is a reason he tells us **when** he does.
- b. St. John Vianney – one day God told him to go up to a particular man and hear his confession because that man was going to die that day. So he did and later that day, the man died in an accident. **We can't assume that tomorrow will be like today** – when God wants us to take action, that is when we need to take action. There may not be a tomorrow, we need to act today.
- c. When we delay obeying the Holy Spirit, we can miss the window of opportunity that was open, and we can grow dull to the voice of the Holy Spirit. I know if I don't act on what God asks of me right away, a few days later I'll say “Oh, I forgot about this, I really need to do this.” A week later, I'll say “what was it God wanted me to do?” When I am quick to obey the Holy Spirit, I find I am more alert to his voice and better able to hear him the next time. God wants obedience more than sacrifice, and part of obedience is not doing it reluctantly.

4. Confess Christ publicly

- a. We are not called to live a private faith. We are called to be a light to the nations, not to hide our light under a basket. How can we live in the boldness of the Spirit if we are ashamed of him when we are in public?
- b. *If we are bringing our lives before God as an offering, being quick to repent and quick to obey, we will become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit.* Often we aren't sure what to tell others

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because we don't have recent examples of something God did in or through us. People need to see that God speaks to us, that he leads us, and that we are happiest when following him. If they don't see this in us, how will our words have any effect for them?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, help us to surrender to you. We repent for the ways that we have turned from you or have been slow to obey you.

Please, convict us deeply. Convict us of your glory. Convict us of our sin. Convict us of how you want us to use our time. Convict us of your desire to love others through us.

Bend us Holy Spirit. May we care less about our lives and more about your kingdom.

Bend us.

May we see our lives as an offering of love.

May we join in the offering of Christ. As he laid down his life for this world, may we do the same.

Increase our faith oh Lord. Help us to *ACT* in faith. Help us to move the mountains of doubt (in our hearts and in the lives around us) through our obedience to you.

Put your fire in our hearts Lord. Speak to each person here Lord. Remind us of your great promises. Remind us of all you've done. Remind us of what you've saved us from. Speak oh Lord.

I encourage everyone this week, to make this a real part of your prayer – ***Lord, bend me to your will.***