

Restoration Revival

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I trust this message will help you gain a greater awareness of the need of the hour we live in — an hour when God is wanting to *restore* and *revive* His people — that they may be found watching and waiting, ready at the coming of the Bridegroom for His Bride.

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Before going further into this message, let's take a look at what the dictionary would tell us about the words *restoration* and *revival*:

RESTORATION

bringing back to former condition;
restore; renew;
put again in possession of something;
replacing damaged or decayed parts

REVIVAL

renewed attention or interest in;
restore from a depressed, inactive, or unused state;
restoration of force, validity, or effect

These definitions all point out something in common about restoration: bring back; begin again; renewed interest in; restore from a depressed, inactive, or unused state. Restoration is being brought *back* to a place where you once were or where you should have been all along!

We have misconceptions about restoration. The church is filled with many myths and misconceptions about a true revival from on high. This is because many are not looking to go *back* to the old paths; not looking to go *back* to the book of Acts — to the place where the church once stood in her former glory.

We should be desiring true restoration, not some modernistic thing that comes down the road and soon changes to something else that's new.

The Lord established what He wanted, and it's up to us to follow His path. He gave us the Word to show us the way, and His Word is right up to date. It stands to show us what God has spoken

and what He has prepared for us. And it behooves all of us to walk in those old ways which God has given us to walk in.

Remember this: God never departs from us — we depart from God. Realize that God doesn't take away from us the way of blessing: We walk away from it, forsaking it. We forsake our heritage. We forsake doing what we are called to do.

Know this: Restoration will always bring you back.

Remember the Israelites

Do you remember the generation that came out of Egypt? They went across the Red Sea, where God divided the waters so they could cross over on dry land. They were the generation that wouldn't take up the challenge to go in and conquer the land, the generation that had no confidence in God, turning back because of the giants in the land. And they were the generation that felt they just couldn't do it!

And, thus, they were turned back into the wilderness to perish there.

Numbers 14:28-32

Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

Yes, that previous generation lost the blessing that was available to them. They never got to enter into the Promised Land. They never got to see or taste the blessings of that land. No, they never got it!

They had believed the evil report of the ten faithless spies, rather than believing Joshua's and Caleb's good report of faith: *Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it* (see Numbers 13:30).

Numbers 13:27,28

And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

God turned them back into the wilderness and brought forth a new church.

And, once again in our day, the church that will stand in faith to see restoration may have to be brought forth into the wilderness; it may have to get dry before some folks will cry out effectively for revival.

A Time for Desperation

It may have to get desperate in many churches before people will get alarmed enough to cry out.

Let's not wait that long, but get on our knees now to seek God with our whole heart. Why wait for things to become more desperate than they already are?

It may get to be where the church will be serving breakfast, lunch, and supper right in the sanctuary before some will realize that the church has become nothing more than a restaurant! Then they might realize they'd do better if they did like the children of Israel and entered the house of God three times a day to PRAY, rather than to eat.

Yes, it may take a desert (a wilderness) to get back to that rightful place with the Lord. It may take a desert condition, a terrible falling away — where we see multitudes deny Jesus — before some will get alarmed enough to get on their faces to cry out for mercy: "Lord, do something before we ALL wind up over there!"

Psalm 107:6,7

Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

We don't want to live in the desert, but it may take that to open our eyes to the need of restoration in our day.

That generation perished in the wilderness, and in the wilderness God raised up a new generation. He raised up a faithful generation. Of all the generations of the children of Israel, the generation that came out of the wilderness and took the Promised Land was one of their greatest generations.

They had more of the power and anointing and blessing of God with them, and they saw some wonderful and mighty and marvelous miracles of God when they came out.

They're the generation that saw General Joshua put his foot on the neck of the enemy and tell them, "Look, this is what GOD is going to do to all your enemies . . ." (see Joshua 10:24,25). Joshua was encouraging them to go on and conquer the land.

They had the blessing and the power of God with them. They were a restored generation. And there in the wilderness is where they got the blessing they needed.

Don't Despise God's Manna

Remember, now, it was in the wilderness where the multitude had murmured and complained: "We don't like it out here! You only brought us here to die!"

But that was the former generation. That was the generation that was fed manna straight from heaven and, yet, declared they didn't like it! This was all the thanks they had for the way in which God had fed them from heaven. "We don't like the old way. We don't like Your manna, God. We loathe your light bread." And they let Him know they were tired of what He gave them.

And God said, "OK, I'll give you meat to eat. Yes, I'll give you so much meat that it will stick right out of your nostrils." And He caused the quail to fly through their camp till you could pull them in left and right. And just as He had said, they had quail until it came out their noses! (See Numbers 11:18-20).

And they still weren't satisfied!

There are a lot of people just like that. They're not satisfied with the blessings of God. They want something different.

But if we want the blessings of God to abide in our lives, we have to walk with Him in that straight and narrow way. We have to go *back* to the old paths, not always wanting something different.

Back to What?

Where will restoration bring you? Back to Pentecost, back to the basic foundation, back to the place of getting into those Scriptures that were given us of the apostles.

This is what we need to give our mind and thought to in this day: wanting God's blessing and, thus, wanting *restoration*.

I hope I've laid enough of a premise here to leave this thought with you: *There is a going back needed in this last day!*

Being restored to fellowship with God: that's going backwards. And it brings you ahead while going backwards to something that God has already done.

And when it comes to restoration and bringing back the blessing, God wants to restore *ALL*. He doesn't want to bring the blessing to just one church, to just one assembly. He doesn't want to bring it to just one area of the world.

No, He wants the whole Body to be restored! God, in His greatness, wants to bring a blessing of restoration to His church throughout the world.

Zechariah 10:1

Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

In your seeking God for revival, in seeking God carefully to move in this house, you should do so expecting an answer.

Prayer Is the Key

But if no prayer is taking place, how can you expect God to move? You wouldn't have any right to expect Him to send revival. And there are a lot of folks who have no right to expect any good thing to come: After all, they're not asking!

James 4:2

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Without asking, you have no right to expect. If you feel dry and miserable inside (where you're not happy or joyous in your experience) and you've not prayed, don't blame anybody but yourself. *You're* the one that's not seeking God!

You've got no right to expect something from God if you put nothing into it. On the other hand if you pray and pray in faith, you've got every right to expect God to hear and to answer.

We need God's blessings in our lives. Just think about the blessings that are available to us.

When His blessings are on us, we feel our best. We know God's touch is on our life; we know He hears our prayers; we know His presence is near. And that's what brings the joy of the Lord into our vessel.

When you lose the joy of your salvation, it seems you've lost everything . . . you feel so empty.

Now, one of the great blessings of walking with the Lord is His accompanying joy. It always has been a blessing to be saved, to really walk with God. But in this walk when you lose that joy by negligence, you find it hard to attend to spiritual things. You find it hard to get around and go to church, hard to take time to pray or read the Word.

If you're finding it difficult to go to church and are more prone to find something else to do when it's time to get ready for service, realize that you've lost the joy of your salvation.

People who lose that joy are on their way to backsliding. You may see them for a season, but, eventually, they'll be gone because they backslid. They don't want to serve Jesus any more.

Listen, we all ought to do our part! It's required of preachers to do their part: and some do, but some don't. And it's required of God's people to do their part: to set their priorities and pray for revival until it comes!

The Curse of Busyness

One of the major problems in the church world of our day is that the church has become too busy. Why are they so busy? What are they doing?

Well, there is one thing you won't find in many service schedules: prayer meetings. And where you do find prayer meetings, you won't find many people who bother to attend them. You won't find God's people having much concern about having church prayer meetings: They don't seem to see any real need to gather together for prayer.

They may have a large attendance in the Sunday services, yet the church is mostly empty when it comes to prayer meetings. Hardly anyone sees the need to attend. Out of hundreds, and even thousands, who attend Sunday services, you find a mere handful who feel it's necessary to pray.

Is prayer something of the past? The house of God was always the place for God's people to assemble together to seek the Lord. Has God done away with it in our day, or is the lack of prayer purely neglect on the part of God's people due to their indifference?

Is that the reason so many of God's people are dry and thirsty? Is that the reason so many churches need revival and restoration?

Before restoration will come, there will be those who find the altar again and start to pray.

Isaiah 55:6,7

Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

You will always find that when there's a lot of trouble brewing, when it looks like there's nothing else we can do in ourselves, there might be a call for a national day of prayer.

But we need more than one day of prayer!

Why is it that God's people have no real interest to pray? That's the question the church world ought to be pondering! Why is it that nobody's interested in praying? Why is it that so many are too busy to pray?

Do you want to know why? Because they feel that going to church on Sunday is enough: and if they go twice on Sunday, they've done a lot! The rest of the week they'll be busy with other things, such as watching the tube, going online, talking on their cell phones. There's plenty of time for those things, yet no time to pray.

And then they wonder why their soul is dry and thirsty! They wonder why God doesn't bless any more! They wonder why they don't see the power of God being manifest!

Oh, they may question and wonder . . . yet they take no action.

Yes, they've got the fire — but it's in the church kitchen! Listen, they need to get the fire in the prayer closet and begin to earnestly pray and seek the face of God.

The church is so taken up with its many, many, many divers activities, so engrossed in all their busyness, that they just have no time left for prayer. There is just no time for seeking the Lord! and then they wonder why the church is in such a sad state!

Why Is Prayer So Important?

What is the importance of prayer? Do you have any idea why prayer is so important? Is it to tell God how to do things, to direct Him in doing His business? Is prayer where we become God's counselors, telling Him how to run His kingdom?

Is that the object of prayer?

Listen, prayer is intercession. Prayer is taking the time to seek the face of God, taking the time to move the hand of God. It is taking time to stir the heart of God, letting Him know that there are those who care, those who desire the things of God, and that they are earnest in wanting the blessings of God in their lives and in their church.

But prayer is also a place of communication. We not only talk to God and commune with Him, but it is a place where He can commune with us. Yes, prayer is a two-way communication.

We pray and seek God and expect from Him that, somewhere along the line, there will be some answers. The answer may be *yes* and it may be *no*. Either way, the answer will come.

Where are we going to find answers? Will we find them by running around looking for someone to prophesy to us, or will they come when we wait on God and get our answers from above?

A Sad Story of Prayerlessness

I can't absorb into my heart how easy it is for some to get off the track. I remember meeting a minister who told me something about prayer that really grieved my soul. The day previous to our talk he had been in a conference with a whole group of full-gospel ministers, many of whom were pastors of very large churches. One of the speakers related how he ministered in a large church and because he was so busy, it had been more than two years since he had prayed! Two years!!! He said he had no time to pray any more because he was just too busy — he had too much work to do in his large church!

What does that mean? I'm not the brightest man by any means, but I do know how to add things up. I can add some things up real fast.

What that man was saying was really this: He had been running that large church for two years on his own, without God's help, running it without one answer from God as far as instruction or direction was concerned. He hadn't taken one problem of one person in his congregation to the Lord in prayer in two years!

I wonder what kind of spiritual state that church was in? If the pastor hadn't been concerned to pray for two years, I wonder if anyone else in his church had prayed.

Think of it. If that had been your pastor, it would mean he hadn't prayed for you in two years. My, you'd begin to note the reason why his church was in the state it was in. No wonder! He was shepherding that large flock without any direction from God, without any communication with God for His sheep.

I wonder where he got his sermons from if he never prayed. In two years he must have gotten all his sermons from stale messages he had read from books. The people in that church never got a fresh message from the throne of God, never got the food they needed for their souls.

There was no time to seek the Lord around the altar in that pastor's church. They were too busy rushing through the service so they could dismiss and go home, or have a time of donuts and fellowship.

No anointing — nothing taking place — no power. Without prayer, that's just how things would be run!

The Need for Restoration in the Pulpit

Can we go without prayer? Stop and realize that this isn't an isolated case of one pastor not having time to pray. No doubt, this is the story of many across this land who have no time to really talk with God. Many times there would be true revival in many a church if only God could find a humble preacher who'd start to preach the Bible and declare the whole counsel of God.

If He could get a preacher who would get filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the fire of God, someone who would start declaring it like it is, then there would be something happening in that church.

But as long as there's a preacher who's filled with complicity and compromise (not seeing any need to bear down and deal with the sins of the people, not seeing any need of putting aside his compromising ways), he holds the church at bay, preventing them from receiving the full blessing of God.

If there's going to be restoration in such a church, it will have to start by restoring the pulpit, getting down to the business of cleaning up the ministry. God intends to clean up His house, and first He has to clean up the ministry.

It's a shame that men will put themselves in the position of not wanting to get cleaned up for God and then standing in the door to hinder others who should be having revival.

Realize one thing as we look at this great need for revival and blessing from on high: If you can't get people awakened that there is a need to pray and intercede, you're not going to waken the church to want revival.

Joel 2:15-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O LORD, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

Is it necessary to talk with God? Prayer is pretty important. It is important for you as an individual to pray, and it is important for the church as a body to pray. And it's vital for the pastor to pray!

If we don't pray, we don't communicate with God and we don't receive from God.

Away with Programs

People want a fancy program. They want something to entertain them. There are a lot of cunningly devised programs people follow to the letter. You hear pastors referring, time and again, to their programs. They're programmed to death!

Saints of God, we don't need a program. We need the Holy Ghost! This is why we pray and intercede. The church of our day needs the moving of the Holy Ghost, the direction of God.

These programs put the church in a state where they are bound to their programs, and if God wanted to do anything in their midst, He would have to tear up the program or disrupt their fixed schedule.

But how does God deal and get to the pastor when he's not listening, when he's too busy running his program to find any time for prayer? After all, he doesn't need God to help run his program, and, besides, he's too busy to get in touch with God!

Busy doing what?

Set Your Priorities

There certainly are a lot of legitimate things in the ministry that will keep one busy — but there are a lot of unnecessary things in many ministries that keep the pastor too busy to pray, too busy to hear from God.

Yes, there's plenty to do as a pastor, but the most important thing is to be sure to find time to communicate with God. That should be their priority. But many have the problem of never stopping to arrange their priorities because they *have* no priorities!

Now, I've noticed something about clocks. Every one of them seems to use the same number system as the rest: 1 to 12 every day, and 1 to 12 every night.

Is that how your clock is? They all are. They all have the same amount of time on them, right to the very second. Is it like that at your house? Do you have the same 24 hours given to you each day? the same 7 days a week? the same 12 months a year?

Everybody only has so much time. No way do you find 26 hours in anyone's day. That's what makes it so important to get our priorities in line. There's a lot of things I'd like to do, but I don't do many of those things because they're not a priority, and I have no time left for them.

I have 24 hours a day, but I don't have time to do some things because other things are weightier and more important, and I have to choose which is the priority with the time that is given me.

At the job you have around 8 hours a day, 5 days a week — and that certainly is a priority if you want to get your paycheck! No work, no food.

Your priorities take some of the prime time of your life. Eight hours is a large portion of time from your day, yet it's a priority that you earn a living.

Sure, there are a lot of other things you'd like to do with those 8 hours besides punching a time clock, but you have to choose the priority.

It takes time to sleep each night too. Just think of what you could do with those hours you take to sleep! Yet sleep is a priority. Sleep is necessary.

Now, add up the 8 hours you work and the 8 hours you sleep: a total of 16 hours taken from your given 24! That only leaves you with 8 hours for other priorities. And to whittle it down even more, you have to take time to eat, to clean up, to shop.

You can see that the time you do have left is quite precious, so why waste it? For every hour of time you're not working or sleeping, there are a dozen or more things that demand to be your priority: "Do me! Why don't you do this or do that?!!"

You have to determine for yourself that you don't have much time, and that you'd best order your priorities pretty carefully: being sure to find time for church, time for prayer, time to read God's Word.

Should those things be priorities in your life?

Seeking God Must Be Your Priority

Proverbs 13:4

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Those who have made spiritual things a priority in their lives find they are blessed as the result. They'd have to be flat on their back to miss church, or prayer meeting, or time digging into God's Word. They realize Sunday is the Lord's Day and they devote that day to Him! They know it is the only day they don't have to be rushing around working, and they make it a priority to attend the house of the Lord.

Should you find time to pray each day? Should that be a priority? Listen, prayer is an important word in the Christian's life. And you need to allow prime time for that: at home and in church.

Prayer is important to those who esteem it to be important. It is important to those who are spiritually minded, who see the need to pray.

Have you noticed that when it's time to stop what you're doing to have time for such a priority, you suddenly get another signal? "Why don't you go shopping? Why don't you call someone on the phone? Why don't you take time to lean back and relax? You can go to church another time! Stay home and rest today."

Listen, you've got to order your priorities!

When it comes time to get ready for work, you find the time. Why? Because you made that a priority (even setting the alarm to be sure you get up on time).

And when it comes lunch time, you make time to eat. Work stops, and lunch has priority over all else.

You must take time to stop and order your other priorities — and prayer is one of the prime priorities that should be in your life.

Yes, prayer is important. If the church in this last day wants revival, it's going to have to order some of its priorities and esteem that seeking God is more important than preparing a tasty church supper.

There are women who are dedicated to the cause of putting on a good church supper. They'll cook and cook over that hot stove for hours. They're dedicated to that. But if you call them to the church prayer meeting, they would see no need to come: Fry chicken, yes! Pray, no!

You've got to order priorities. You've got to set your foot down, just like you do in the morning when it's time to go to work.

But it's so easy to just glide along and be negligent. You may have a desire to do what's important; you may know you should . . . *but!*

"I know I should, but I'm spiritually poor, spiritually dry and empty. I've lost the joy of my salvation all because I had no important priorities in my life!"

Revival Comes by Prayer and Brokenness

The church in the last day is going to have to start getting some priorities for prayer if they want to see revival. And if you have been praying for revival, don't get weary in well-doing; don't slack off. Keep that as a priority.

Keep praying, and one day what you're praying for will come! We don't like to have to wait for an answer, but the history of revival teaches us that revival has always come by prayer and brokenness. Those who prayed for revival in the past found themselves earnestly praying with tears and repentance before it came.

Hosea 10:12

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.

What revival did you ever read about that just happened? All at once it just happened to come — with no one praying and interceding for it to come, nobody getting stirred or seeing the need, no one really caring whether it came or not?

If God moved like that, He'd have to move upon the pews, for the people wouldn't be ready. So, we see that if we are to expect revival to come in this last day, we must do our part:

II Chronicles 7:14

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.

PRAY! IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!