

Psalm 85 • Revive us, O Lord!

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Psalm 85; another Psalm of the Sons of Korah. This is a prayer for revival. Do you ever pray for a revival?

It says,

"1 LORD, you were favorable to your land; (And he's remembering the past here now.) you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin.

3 You withdrew all your wrath; (He says,) you turned from your hot anger.

So he's looking back and saying, "you did these things." You brought revival. You blessed us." (ESV)

But now he wants to see it again. And so he prays here in verse 4 saying,

"Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!

5 Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

6 Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

7 Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.

8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

11 Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.

12 Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way." Or as the New American Standard Bible says, "make his footsteps into a way" which is probably better.

This is a cry for revival. It's a cry that is common among God's people. They cried it in the nation of Israel. Well, the church cries it today. As Christians, we often, we hear the word, revival being thrown around.

I don't know if you've ever done any study of past revivals. Fascinating study. Even if you just focus on American revivals over the last 250 years or whatever. But it is a common cry. And we often think about the big revivals when we hear the word revival. Yeah, the big...

In America, we think of the Great Awakening which took place in the early 1700s. And gave us men like George Whitfield, and Jonathan Edwards, and the Wesley Brothers, and so forth. Or we think about the Second Great Awakening, which was a little bit later on, starting around 1820. And the fiery preaching of Charles Finney, and the number of people that got saved as a result of that revival.

Then there's the Third Great Awakening later on in the 1800s, which was centered primarily around Chicago. And the ministry of D.L. Moody, and the vast numbers of people that came to the Lord during that time. Even though D. L. Moody was an uneducated man who loved the Lord and wanted to preach His Word.

And then, in a little bit more recent history I guess, we think of the Azusa Street Revival, which took place down in Los Angeles at 312 Azusa Street. And you can actually look at that address on Google maps. You'll probably be disappointed but Azusa Street doesn't even run as far as it used to back in the early 1900s.

But from the Azusa Street Revival, it was really the birth and growth of Pentecostalism in the United States of America. The Azusa Street Revival gave birth to the denominations: the Assemblies of God, and the Four Square, just came out of that particular revival and some other things as well.

And then of course later on in the 1960s and 70s, we had the Jesus People Revival, from which grew our own Calvary Chapel Movement. For, I mean, Calvary Chapel was started with a bunch of hippies just asking questions and looking for Jesus. And the incredible growth that came from that.

But the one thing about revivals, the one thing they have in common, are how they changed society. How they changed the people who lived in and around those areas. They had huge impacts. And you could probably point to any of the great revivals and say, here's what came out of it.

But just taking one of them, which is the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s, the Temperance Movement came out of that revival. And if you're aware of what that means, temperance was the idea of, basically, the prohibition against alcohol. The drinking of alcohol came out of that movement.

The Anti-Slavery Movement grew out of the Second Great Awakening. And also the Underground Railroad, where people, where slaves were being transported to places of safety. That came out of a revival.

Now, history is not going to want to paint that picture. They'll talk about the Anti-Slavery Movement. But they won't tell you, your kids in secular schools, are not going to hear how it was Christians who got saved. And who believed that slavery was unconscionable and had to do something about it. But those are some of the things that grew out of that.

Women's rights grew out of the Second Great Awakening. The YMCA got started because of the Second Great Awakening. The Salvation Army got started because of the Second Great Awakening. The Methodist Church and the Baptist denominations swelled their numbers greatly because of the Second Great Awakening. So that's what we see when you study the revivals in America.

And if you look at even the revivals that have gone on abroad at Britain and so forth, you will see that there was powerful societal changes there. During one of the awakenings over in Britain, crime became so scarce the police began to put together quartets and go around and sing for money. There was no crime. The crime was almost completely taken away from some of these communities where these revivals took place and so forth. So, that's the thing about revivals. There's always a profound change in people's attitudes and hearts and so forth.

Well, today you hear the word revival, if you see... Sometimes you'll hear about a church having revival services. We're having revival services next week all

week long. Monday through Friday we're going to be doing a revival. And what that means is they're going to bring in a fiery evangelist who's going to preach all, every night and get people stirred up. Who knows, they might even put up a tent and stuff like that.

There's only one problem with that. Usually those revival services are not attended by revival. Because you can't have revival just by starting a revival service or having a revival service. That's not how revival happens. You don't just put it on the calendar. We're going to have a revival, by the way, next month. We've just decided.

If you study the revivals of the past, you will see that there is one consistency prior to the revival actually taking hold. And that is an undercurrent of intercessory prayer. People begin to pray. And there's just a spirit of prayer. And that is usually attended then later on with a spirit of repentance. And that gives way to revival. But it begins with prayer. With Christians having a burden for the lost and praying. And crying out to God on their face before God, Lord, revive us, revive our hearts, and so forth.

One of the inmates from the prison that attends our prison group there, wrote me this last week, asking how to respond to the talk that's going on among the inmates about a revival that they believe is coming to the prison. And he was expressing his discomfort. Not with the idea of revival at all. But with the fact that the others are so confidently declaring this coming revival. Almost as if they're speaking prophetically when he himself has no personal knowledge or conviction of its arrival.

I mean, what he's basically saying is, okay, great. God hasn't told me... And that's the way I feel sometimes when people say things. They'll say, such and such is going to happen. I go, oh, interesting! It's cause I don't personally have the conviction of it or whatever.

So, he wondered in this note. He wrote to me how to respond. He says, pastor, how do you respond to people when they say, hey, revival's coming?

And so forth. And I told him that, when anyone ever speaks to me about their belief in revival or frankly, any other thing that they feel like is coming, that the Lord is bringing, I always respond by saying, amen. Let it come to pass. That's my heart. And I think that's the way. Say, hey, I really believe that we're going to have another great revival before the Lord returns, amen. May it be so!

That's what amen means. May it be so. It's fine to just say, amen. God may not have spoken to you personally about that coming revival. But it's like, I sure hope it comes!

In my heart, I always know that times and seasons are in God's hands. And that whether those things are going to happen, it's going to be according to God's plan. And Him raising up the people, the prayer support, and then a spirit of repentance. And it's a work that the Lord does. It is in His hands. And He will do it as He sees fit for each time.

I say that in connection with the announcement I made at the beginning, about the fact that Harvest Crusade is coming to the Boise area. And we desire to see people getting saved. Whether it eventuates into a full blown revival - that's yet to be seen. But there's nothing wrong with praying that that's the case.

Meanwhile, let's just pray that many people hear the Word. And that many people get saved, amen.