



October 2, 2022 ~ The Flame of Revival

OPEN



Have you seen this warning sign online? At the bottom, in rather small letters it says, “*Also, the bridge is out ahead.*” Now, what would we think of someone who created an obscure warning when very real danger was present!?

Ezekiel was a prophet who warned Jerusalem of danger. Having been deported to Babylon in 597 BC, he was an “exilic prophet”. His older contemporary, Jeremiah, had warned that Jerusalem would fall and there would be seventy years of captivity. Ezekiel was already living and serving in that exile, called to warn God’s rebellious people (see his call in Ezekiel 2).

Ezekiel communicated God’s message through incredible visions and elaborate object lessons (valley of dry bones, Ezekiel 37). Even the death of his wife marked Ezekiel as a warning sign to Israel (Ezekiel 24:15-27). But he also proclaimed the hope of restoration.

Over the last number of weeks, we have been considering what it means to live **ablaze for God** in our current series of sermons - *Ignite*. The question about being “on fire for God” was not hard to answer for Ezekiel! He was diligently available for God as a courageous prophet. Today we will explore Ezekiel 36:22-32 which captures a snapshot of the hope which Ezekiel declared to people in captivity.

It is not hard to connect the image of fire to the topic of revival – we use the phrase “revival fire”. But we also admire God’s work of revival in the past but fail to believe that He can do the same today.

There are the **Biblical revivals** such as Jonah’s visit to Nineveh or when the Church was birthed in Jerusalem. There are many **historic revivals** – Radical Reformation, Great Awakening, Welsh Revival, Jesus Movement.

Yet God desires to ignite our hearts with greater passion for Him than we ever thought possible. We have seen this in the life of *Abraham (friendship)*; *Moses (commission)*; *Joshua (courage)*; *Hannah (dependence)*; *Elijah (stillness)*. Last Sunday our guest speaker shared a deeper look at the value of stillness in the life of Elijah.

When we feel burned out in our spiritual journey we need revival, renewal. But before we look at the prophecy of Ezekiel, consider the essential conditions for revival, as summarized by Robert Coleman in his book ***The Spark that Ignites*** (World Wide Publications, 1989).

- ✓ **Submission to God’s Word**
- ✓ **Confession of Sin**
- ✓ **Prevailing in Prayer**
- ✓ **Reaching the Lost**

About prevailing prayer in particular, this has been a feature the has led to many historical revivals. You can read a powerful excerpt below from ***Why Revival Tarries*** by Leonard Ravenhill. Also, you will find the helpful card, [Prayers The Birth Revival](#) to guide you in praying II Chronicles 7:14.

DIG

What is the reason for revival?

Ezekiel 36:22-23a

What is the primary reason for revival? Verse 22 explains that it is for the sake of His name (see also 20:9,14,22)! More than fifty times Ezekiel’s prophecies declared, “That you might know that I am the Lord.” The rebellion and sin of God’s people had been well documented and displayed. Thus shame had come upon the name of God. This situation required revival – God’s work of purifying His people for the sake of His glory. Even the desolation of Jerusalem declared God’s glory (see 33:28-29). Tim Keller has written about the decline of the mainline and evangelical churches in America. In his second two articles, he outlines a [Path for Renewal](#) and a [Strategy for Renewal](#). About the purpose of God’s work of reviving, Keller comments,

The purpose of a revival is always, supremely, to please, enjoy, honor, and glorify God. It is to become the church God wants us to be. And when that happens even to a small degree, there is always an impact on non-believers and society.

Psalm 80 is a prayer for revival. The psalmist envisions God as Shepherd and Vine-keeper of Israel. In verse 7 we read, “*Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven’s Armies. Make your face shine down upon us. Only then will we be saved.*” (NLT). Is this the prayer of our hearts?

For this to be an authentic call for revival, we must recognize the need for God's name to be glorified once again in us. How do we make this practical? It is about surrender, dependence, and obedience! Writing about the 1904 Welsh Revival, G. Campbell Morgan (*Glory Filled the Land*, Int. Awakening Press, 1989) says,

It is a divine visitation in which God...is saying to us, "See what I can do without the things you are depending on. See what I can do in answer to a praying people. See what I can do through the simplest who are ready to fall in line and depend wholly and absolutely upon Me."

What are the results of revival?

Ezekiel 36:23b-32

1. **Witness – v. 23b** True revival allows the world to discover God by the purity of the Church.
2. **Fullness – vv. 24,30** To walk in the blessing of life in God is His desire for us (vv.33-36; 11:16-17).
3. **Purity – vv. 25, 29a** God calls us to holiness and separation; He does the cleansing (Titus 3:3-7).
4. **Vitality – v. 26** We need revival, not "rearrangement". The Holy Spirit gives life (Rom 8:11)!
5. **Obedience – v. 27** The revival described here is the fruit and action of repentance for sin.
6. **Intimacy – v. 28** Revival brings us into restored, deeper, meaningful relationship with God.

Are these not the realities we long to see in our lives, families, and church? We need the revival fire of the Holy Spirit! In his book *Ablaze For God* (Zondervan, 1989), Wesley Duewel tells the story of Duncan Campbell (read from pages 68-69). Duncan Campbell went on to be a key leader in the Hebrides revival (1949). Duewel comments,

The Holy Spirit is a holy Person, not a holy emotion. Yet as this holy Person works within us He imparts His holy power, His divine adequacy, to us in such a way that we feel new inner strength, new enablement above our own resources, a sense of special spiritual authority and faith, and we recognize a new effectiveness which we must credit entirely to the Spirit, not to ourselves.

REFLECT

Does the flame of revival burn within you? Consider this video challenge from the revival ministry of Leonard Ravenhill, "[Our Need Of Revival](#)".

Here is an excerpt from *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill (Bethany House, 1959).

No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shop window to display one's talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off. Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere. The two prerequisites to successful Christian living are vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to few; the ministry of prayer-the highest ministry of all human offices-is open to all. Spiritual adolescents say, "I'll not go tonight, it's only the prayer meeting." It may be that Satan has little cause to fear most preaching. Yet past experiences sting him to rally all his infernal army to fight against God's people praying. Modern Christians know little of "binding and loosing," though the onus is on us-"Whatsoever ye shall bind..." Have you done any of this lately? God is not prodigal with His power; but to be much for God, we must be much with God. This world hits the trail for hell with a speed that makes our fastest plane look like a tortoise; yet alas, few of us can remember the last time we missed our bed for a night of waiting upon God for a world-shaking revival. Our compassions are not moved. We mistake the scaffolding for the building. Present-day preaching, with its pale interpretation of divine truths, causes us to mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A sinning man will stop praying, and a praying man will stop sinning. We are beggared and bankrupt, but not broken, nor even bent. Prayer is profoundly simple and simply profound. "Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try," and yet so sublime that it outranges all speech and exhausts man's vocabulary. A Niagara of burning words does not mean that God is either impressed or moved. One of the most profound of Old Testament intercessors had no language "Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." No linguist here! There are groanings which cannot be uttered." Are we so substandard to New Testament Christianity that we know not the historical faith of our fathers (with its implications and operations), but only the hysterical faith of our fellows? Prayer is to the believer what capital is to the business man. Can any deny that in the modern church setup the main cause of anxiety is money? Yet that which tries the modern churches the most, troubled the New Testament Church the least. Our accent is on paying, theirs was on praying. When we have paid, the place is taken; when they had prayed, the place was shaken! In the matter of New Testament, Spirit-inspired, hell-shaking, world-breaking prayer, never has so much been left by so many to so few. For this kind of prayer there is no substitute. We do it--or die!

If you want to really dig further into the history of revivals, you can check out a ten part video series by J. Edwin Orr, [The History of Revival and Spiritual Awakenings](#).