

The Next Great Revival

by

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“If My people, who are called by My name, will 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.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Last week, in my shuffling to go out of town for a few days, I accidentally left my backpack at my office. It held my Bible and my journal. It was SO unsettling to be without “my sword and my shield”. It reminded me of the power of His Word and how It really is a weapon in the hands of a spiritual warrior. I woke up early the next morning, asking the Lord how I should spend my quiet time with Him. At first, I thought I would just fill my time with Prayer, but then, God guided me to a little book I didn’t realize I owned. It is called, “Why Revival Waits” by the late Selwyn Hughes, my favorite devotional writer. I was drawn to read it, and it dovetailed into some thoughts I had been pondering.

In this little book, he breaks down the 2 Chronicles verse above, believing it to be the secret to Revival. Selwyn was an Englishman, so he was praying for revival for the U.K., but I know many in the U.S. have been praying for Revival in this country for years. Most would say the last great Revival in America goes back to “The Great Awakening” back in the 1700’s, led by Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, although there have been many great movements of God like Promise Keepers or The Brownsville Revival in recent times. “Revival” is one of those churchy words which may be lost on this generation, but I believe it is a concept worthy of exploration. I like the way Selwyn explains it in his book. First, he explains what is NOT:

- Revival is NOT a great evangelical thrust
- Revival is NOT the restoration of large numbers of backslidden Christians
- Revival is NOT unusually powerful and exciting meetings

So, what is Revival? Selwyn borrows some definitions from Christian leaders:

Revival is the inrush of divine life into a body threatening to become a corpse. D.M. Panton

Revival is God bending down to the dying embers of a fire just about to go out and breathing into it until it bursts again into flame. Christmas Evans

Revival is waking up to the fact that you are asleep. David Thomas

Revival is the Church returning to Pentecost. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Selwyn references the Welsh Revival in 1904 and the three great characteristics that theologians say are indicative of true Revival:

- An intense palpable and extraordinary sense of God's presence
- A deep desire to be rid of all sin.
- A powerful impact on the wider community

He talks about coal miners in that time who were so struck by God's presence that they no longer wanted to cuss. This posed a problem for those who directed the horses in the mines and had trained them with swear words. Following their conversion, they had teach the horses a new language. He also emphasizes that a deep conviction of sin accompanies spiritual revival. He quotes Jim Packer, *"No upsurge of religious interest or excitement merits the name...if there is no deep sense of sin at its heart. God's coming and the consequent impact of His Word makes Christians more sensitive to sin than they previously were; consciences become tender and a profound humbling takes place."* Most importantly, in all revivals, a profound impact was made on the communities. True change occurred in society. In a sermon preached in the mid-1950's by Dr. W.E. Sangster, he preached about the benefits of Revival, as learned from the Welsh Revival:

1. Old debts are repaid
2. Sexual Immorality is reduced
3. Theater and Press are disinfected
4. The Divorce Rate is cut
5. Juvenile Crime goes down
6. The Prison Population is reduced
7. There is increase in the quality and output of work
8. The nation is restored to a sense of high destiny
9. The nation is invincible in the war of ideas
10. The people will live in happiness and peace

If we desire this kind of change in our country, Selwyn believes 2 Chronicles 7:14 is God's call to us who know Christ, and are "called by His name." He is telling us:

- **To Humble ourselves**
- **To Pray**
- **To Seek His Face**

- To Turn from Sin

Then, He will hear us, forgive us and heal our land. He will bring blessings upon our country. This word is for US believers, not for non-believers. We spend so much time lamenting the state of affairs in our country and arguing politics and policies, expecting change to come from government. God says change comes when we, The Church, get on our knees!

My wife and I recently saw “The War Room” the latest movie by the Kendrick Brothers. It is a great movie which emphasizes the power of intentional Prayer in the life of a family. An older woman challenges a younger woman to spend long periods of time in God’s Word and in Prayer and to even set up a sacred place within her house to do this. As I watched this movie, I thought about Influencers. This is what we are all about. We challenge men to carve out time to feast on God’s Word, to chew on It and digest It through journaling, to Pray about It and to let It transform the way they live. We have seen thousands of men changed as they have developed this lifestyle of Seeking God, Spending Time in Prayer and Following the Spirit. I have personally witnessed this impact on individuals in the 8 Journey Groups I’ve led. I have actually seen evidence of “Revival”, as described by the Welsh theologians, through “The Journey”:

- An intense palpable and extraordinary sense of God’s presence
- A deep desire to be rid of all sin.
- A powerful impact on the wider community

Legend has it that Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch Christian who was famous for helping many Jews escape the Holocaust during World War II, had a vision of a legion of angels with swords drawn as she flew over the state of Arkansas. She was quoted as saying, “The next great Revival in America is going to come out of Arkansas.” Isn’t it interesting that 30 years ago, God would call Rocky Fleming to Arkansas, and he would be given the vision of Influencers. Furthermore, the largest retailer in the world (Wal-Mart), the largest meat producer in the world (Tyson Foods) and the largest Transportation company in America (J.B.Hunt) all reside in this small corner of N.W. Arkansas. Each of these companies is beginning to be filled with Influencers, and each of these companies has tentacles that reach around the world.

Brothers, I am beginning to believe God wants to use Influencers to revive this country and even this world. We are part of something much bigger than we ever imagined. Now, more than ever, we must be humbling ourselves, praying, seeking His face and

turning from our sin and challenging our Journey brothers to do the same. If we do, God has already said what He will do.