

The Need For Revival

March 1, 2009 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Psalms 85:6 *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

All of us who are of much age have seen changes in churches. Many of us have gone to large churches at one time, and some of us have always gone to smaller churches, but we have seen the changes in our kind of churches as time has progressed. We have seen the ebb and flow of revival as we have lived our lives, and we all know that there is a need now for revival in our land.

In this message I am going to ask three questions: (1) What Is Revival?, (2) Why “Revival Us Again”?, and (3) When Do We Rejoice In God? These questions will be answered in regard to Psalm 85:6, *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

I. What Is Revival?

The dictionary definition of **Revival** is: 1: an act or instance of reviving : the state of being revived: as a: renewed attention to or interest in something b: a new presentation or publication of something old c (1): a period of renewed religious interest (2): an often highly emotional evangelistic meeting or series of meetings¹

The Hebrew word in Psalm 85:6 means "to live, have life, remain alive, sustain life, live prosperously, live for ever, be quickened, be alive, be restored to life or health—to restore. I would for

¹Marriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2/25/2009

us today to consider the last two words in the definition “**to restore.**”

When you were saved by God’s grace, you were brought to life to live forever. John 3:14-15 tell us: *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

We are saved that we “should not perish, but have eternal life.” This is salvation, not revival. Revival comes after we have lived as believers for a while and have backslidden into the world and have become complacent with God’s work and his word. Then we need to be revived—restored to the love we had for the Lord in the beginning of our salvation.

Now that we have all gone back from our original love for the Lord and have sinned and become more like the world than ever before, is it not time for us to be restored? Those of us who have fallen in love with the world must be renewed to a love and a surrender to the will of God in Jesus Christ.

In the broad and modern meaning of the word revival, we understand that it includes the preaching of the Gospel and bringing to Christ those who are lost and in need of redemption in their lives. It is the preaching of the Gospel to our friends, neighbors, and family. It is the publishing of the Gospel through tracts and the invitation of lost sinners to the house of God so they can hear the Gospel. This is revival in the modern meaning of the term, and that meaning is a good one.

Now if you profess to be saved and are thinking that you are simply closer to God than you were at one time, or that you have come close to God for the first time, then your salvation may not be genuine. Salvation is not just coming closer to God or realizing more about God; it is a transformation that happens to you instantly. It is the regeneration of the soul from death to

life. It is an experience with the Holy Spirit that brings you alive unto God. Romans 6:11

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When you go into the drugstore to have a prescription filled, you must walk by seemingly miles of products before reaching the back-in-the-corner pharmacy. I have gone into several pharmacies for a first-time visit and needed to ask someone where the pharmacy counter was, because there were so many products that a person had a hard time finding the pharmacy. It should not be this way with the Gospel, but it is many times. There are so many things in the way of the Gospel taking our attention that it is hard to see the little message back in the corner “Gospel Given Here.”

We need to move the “Gospel Given Here” sign from the back corner and get it out where people can see it, and we as God’s children need to enlist ourselves in his service to make that Gospel corner as active and as perfect as possible, giving the right Gospel to those who will listen and following through with the prescription that is needed for this day and time.

II. Why “Revive Us Again”?

Our text says, “Wilt thou not revive us again?” Why is the word again used in this text? It is because we are revived many times in our lifetimes. We are revived many times, because we backslide many times in our lives. Backsliding does not mean that a person loses his salvation; it simply means that he has gone back from the nearness he did at one time have with the Lord Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 8:5 *Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.* -Hosea 11:7 *bent to backsliding.*

We are much like Peter the Apostle as he warmed his hands at the fire with the enemies of Christ and denied the Lord, his Savior. We are just like Peter, who denied the Lord three times. But when the Lord looked at Peter, his countenance fell, and he went out and wept bitterly because of his backslidden condition. He had said that he would never backslide, which is the attitude of most every Christian at the beginning of his Christian life; but then it took only a little nudge from the Devil for him to deny the Lord. We have done this many times, and we need revival AGAIN.

Repentance at the time of salvation is wonderful, but we must remember that repentance, or turning from our sins, happens, not simply at the point of salvation, but also all during the Christian life. Luke 22:31-32 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* We need to be converted from our present backslidden condition to a new condition with the Lord where we are completely sold out to him.

Again and again the Lord will revive us, but we must be willing to be converted. We must, rather, stay faithful to the Lord so that he will not need to revive us so often. We must read the Scriptures and talk about Jesus, read good inspirational books, and learn more about the Lord. Matthew 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

III. When Do We Rejoice in God?

Our text says, Psalms 85:6 *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in*

thee? We will rejoice, then, when we have been revived.

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Luke 15:6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together [his] friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

John 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. Now if you have forgotten that you were purged from your old sins, you cannot rejoice in this.

Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Philippians 1:18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

1 Peter 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

1 Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Philippians 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always: [and] again I say, Rejoice.*

When we are revived, then we shall rejoice in all the things that have just been mentioned in all of these Scriptures. Until you are revived, you will not have the joy that you have longed for in Jesus Christ. You will not be satisfied with his eternal salvation and rejoice in his presence with you. You will not rejoice in his ability to supply all your need according to his riches in heaven. You will remain stagnant in the world and serve the world rather than Christ.

David said in Psalms 51:12 *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit.* Is it time for you to return to the Lord and be revived again? Revival must come from the Lord: “Wilt thou not revive us again?”

We here at the church must pray for revival, that God will touch hearts and lives to be revived. This is what we are looking for even today.

A man by the name of Harry Poll wrote the following:

Too large a segment of society, including too many church members, regards the gospel as a tranquilizer, a sedative to cushion the bumps of life. In a day of shortcuts, labor-saving devices, automation, and the push button, we want our religion in capsule form. The less it demands, the more we like it. The less it disturbs, the more adequate we consider it to be. If it is convenient, then it is good. If it can be covered by a check without other requirements, it is acceptable.

The church is in danger of becoming a body of flabby softies. We find ourselves compromising when we should be contending. We temporize with sin when we should be tearing it apart. Instead of accepting the status quo, we should be blazing new trails. The gospel is a stimulant, not a sedative. It drives and projects rather than shelters those who accept it. Never since our Lord set forth the principles of His kingdom has the gospel been needed so much as just now. We need to be militant, urgent, almost fanatical in our projection of the claims of Christ. Certainly we do not need a tranquilizer.

–Harry Poll