

Place: Lurgan 30:10:2005

Reading: Psalm 85

### **LORD, DO IT AGAIN**

A couple had two sons, ages eight and ten who were always getting into trouble. If anything went on at school or in the neighbourhood, the parents knew that their sons were in some way involved. The parents were at their wits end about what to do with their son's behaviour. Then they heard about a minister in the town who had been successful in helping unruly children. They set up an appointment for their two sons to meet with the minister. The minister agreed to meet with the boys but only if he could see them individually. The eight year old went in first. The minister sat the boy down in front of his desk and then very sternly asked, "**Where is God ?**" The boy made no response, so the minister repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "**Where is God ?**" Again the boy made no attempt to answer, so the minister raised his voice and shook his finger in the boy's face, "**Where is God ?**" At that time the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home and straight to his brother's room. His older brother asked, "**What happened ?**" The young boy replied, "**We are in big trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it.**"

The greatest tragedy of the church age is that "**God is missing.**" We have become more concerned with the affairs of men than with an awareness of God. We have become more concerned with our political programs

than with spiritual passion. We have become more committed to being a social clubhouse than a spiritual lighthouse. My .... I am convinced that what the church needs is not more programs, parties or politics, business, buildings or budgets, committees, conferences or charisma, but what we need is a visitation from heaven. *We need a heavenly invasion.* John Wesley said, "*if only the church would*

*catch on fire people would crowd in to see her burn.*" But then why is the church not on fire ? Why is the church in the state that it is today ? Well, I am inclined to believe with Ted Rendall former principal of Prairie Bible College when he says, "*Lets face the fact in honesty and humiliation .... the reason for the shut heaven is the sin of Gods people.*"

Now its not easy for us to admit to ourselves and to the Lord that we are not where we ought to be and that we are dissatisfied with ourselves. My .... I am going to ask you a question. *Are you going backward as a believer ? I am going to help you answer that question ! A Christian who is going backward is someone who is not as close to the Lord as he used to be. Was there ever a time in your life when you were more consecrated to the Lord than you are now ? Was there ever a period in your life when you felt the presence of God more than you feel it now ? Was there ever a moment in your life when your love for the Saviour was more real than it is this minute ?* If so, then you need a revival ! Now for some this word revival is synonymous with excessive emotionalism or mass hysteria. Others use this word to describe successful evangelistic campaigns. Now while revival and evangelism are closely linked they are

distinct. *Revival is an experience in the church, evangelism is an expression of the church.* The word comes from a Latin word ( *revivere* ) meaning “ *to live,*”

“ *to return to consciousness,*” “ *to reawaken.*” Martin Lloyd Jones said, “ *a revival means days of heaven on earth.*” Stephen Olford said “ *revival is an invasion from heaven that brings a conscious awareness of God.*” Vance Havner said, “ *revival is the church falling in love with Jesus all over again.*” Perhaps the best definition of revival is the one found in ( Acts 3:19 )

“ *times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*” Now in the opening verse's of ( Ps 85 ) the psalmist is looking back to a previous revival.

There is little doubt that this psalm was written after the remarkable return from Babylon. God had kept His pledged Word given through Jeremiah ( Jer 25:11 ) and the Jews had returned to their own land to rebuild the temple. But those that did return were quickly discouraged by the monumental task of reconstruction that faced them. Everywhere as far as the eye could see there was debris and desolation. Gladness soon turned to gloom and so the psalmist not only looked backward to the past but he looked forward to the future and the possibility of God again sending revival. His cry was, “ *Lord do it again.*” “ *Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee.*” Now I want you to notice here that,

### **(1) THE REASON FOR REVIVAL IS CERTAINLY IMPLIED**

Why do we need revival ? The psalmist answers ! To restrain the righteous anger of God. Is this not a strand of Biblical teaching that the church has lost sight of today ? Is God not angry with a sinful, lukewarm and complacent church ? Is the Lord not indignant when He contemplates the sins of his people ? It is obvious from the context that,

### ***(a) Unholy Saints Provoke the Righteous Anger Of God:***

For in ( 85:3 ) the psalmist says, “ *Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath ....,*” and the reason for this is given in

( 85:2 ) You see, when sin is set aside God's anger is removed, conversely when sin is un-renounced God's anger is revealed. My .... let us not try to convince ourselves by any application or misapplication of prophetic teaching that God is indifferent to the sins of His people today. We recognise that in ( Ps 85 ) its the nation of Israel that is primarily represented but does that mean that there is no application of the principles set forth in this psalm for the church today ? *The church has not replaced Israel, but we suggest that the church's experience is reflected in Israel's history.* Here they were living in an un-revived state and this state is vividly described to us in three words. Look at them.

### **(1) Iniquity: ( 85:2 ) That denotes Wickedness:**

Iniquity is that form of evil in our hearts which try's to

explain away Gods demands upon our lives in order that we may continue to sin. The psalmist says, “ *If I regard iniquity ... me.*” ( Ps 66:18 ) Does this explain why our prayers are not heard, our service is not blessed, our lives are not fruitful ? We're marked by wickedness and this wickedness or iniquity in turn leads to,

(2) Sin: ( 85:2 ) That denotes Lawlessness:

For “ *sin is lawlessness.*” ( 1 Jn 3:4 ) My .... explain away the divine demands on your life and its an easy step to disobey them. Is this sin not prevalent in the church today ? Think of the sin of non-attendance at church gatherings. ( Heb 10:25 ) The sin of unreliability in Christian service. ( 1 Cor 4:2 ) The sin of impurity in every day living. ( 1 Thess 4:7 ) My .... are you guilty of violating the will and Word of God ? (1) (2) and this leads,

(3) Folly: ( 85:8 ) That denotes Carelessness:

Have you ever heard this expression from a believer ? “ *I couldn't care less.*” Is that what you are saying ? “ *I couldn't care less about the Word of God, the place of prayer, a holy life, coming to the services, a passion for the lost, I don't care.*” Well maybe you'll care if you wake up in hell someday resting on an empty profession.

For God cannot condemn sin in the sinner and condone it in the saint. This is what Peter means when he says, “ *for the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.*” ( 1 Pet 4:17 ) We talk about the judgment of an evil world, but we forget that the Risen

Lord is Judge of His own church. As He walks among the candlesticks His eyes burn as flames of fire when He sees iniquity, sin, and folly abounding. My .... have you forgotten that God has a high standard for His church and for His people ? Listen to these words, “ *Thy testimonies are very sure, holiness becometh Thine house O Lord for ever.*” ( Ps 93:5 ) “ *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*” ( 1 Pet 1:16 ) “ *Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.*” ( Heb 12:14 ) We need revival because (a) and,

**(b) Unforsaken Sin Provokes the Righteous Anger of God:**

For in ( 85:4 ) the psalmist says “ *turn us O God of our salvation.*” Its one thing to be unrevived but it is worse to be unrepentant. For too long now we have thought of the message of repentance only in terms of the sinner, but we must remember that God calls His own people to repentance. If you have any doubt about this, then read solemnly what the Risen Lord says to the churches in Revelation. To the church at Ephesus He says, “ *I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*” To the church at Sardis He says, “ *Remember ... how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.*” ( Rev 3:3 ) To the church at Laodicea He says, “ *be zealous therefore and repent.*” ( 3:19 ) My .... is this what the church of Jesus Christ wants to hear today ? No ! Is this what she needs to hear today ? Yes ! For the reason we need revival is your sin and mine ! (1)

## (2) THE REQUEST FOR REVIVAL IS CONSCIOUSLY EXPRESSED

Look if you will at ( 85:6 Ezra 9:8-9 ) My .... The church desperately needs revival but its not going to come by quick and easy methods. Evan Roberts prayed for eleven years before the welsh Revival broke out, and his ministry during that remarkable time broke him physically. More than one hundred thousand people were converted to Christ during that mighty awakening, but it was not the result of manufactured meetings or manmade promotions. True revival goes deeper than that. Indeed if you look at this request it will help us to understand the,

### (a) **TRUE ANTECEDENT OF REVIVAL:**

That is, that which precedes revival. What is it that always precedes revival ? Prayer ! Its not difficult to see that this first part of this psalm is in the form of a prayer.

( 85:1-7 ) Here is the psalmist approaching the mercy seat with his plea. He is crying to God for the reviving of his people. “ *Wilt Thou not .... Thee.*” ( 85:6 ) ***The reason for unrevived churches is prayerlessness.*** The reason for spiritual deadness in the average congregation is prayerlessness. There has never been a revival without

prayer. The revival in the days of Samuel was born in the

heart of a burdened mother. ( 1 Sam 7:9 ) The revival in the days of the post-captivity was born in the heart of a burdened layman called Nehemiah. ( Neh 1:3 ) The revival in the time of Pentecost was born in an upper-

room prayer meeting where a group of believers meant business with God. And the revival in Ulster in 1859 was born in the old school house at Kells when a group of men met to do business with God ! What God had done for George Muller through prayer they became convinced He could and would do for them if they learned the secret of true praying. This burning conviction drove them to their knees in travailing and eventually prevailing prayer. The revival in Ulster was conceived and born in prayer.

The simple statement of John Wesley “ *God does nothing but in answer to prayer,*” they proved abundantly true. I tell you if we really began to pray in this church not praying to impress others, not dead, cold, mechanical, formal prayers but really laying hold off God, God will move in ! But notice this request also helps to understand the,

### (b) **TRUE AUTHOR OF REVIVAL:**

“ *Wilt Thou not revive us again ?*” It is Jehovah ( 85:1 ) the God of our salvation ( 85:4 ) God the Lord ( 85:8 ) who is the author of revival. The book of Habakkuk has a prayer like this, “ *O Lord revive Thy work in the midst of the years.*” ( Hab 3:2 ) Isaiah prayed, “ *O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence.*” ( Is 64:1 ) My .... when revival comes, it is something which God has to do. David Matthews summarised the truth well, “ *Divine movements have their birthplace in the heart of Deity.*” Some of you have watched the video of the revival in the Hebrides,

some years ago, and Duncan Campbell whom God used in that revival said this, “ *God is the God of revival. He is sovereign in the affairs of men, but we must not believe in any conception of God’s sovereignty that nullifies man’s responsibility.*” My .... in stating that God is sovereign in revival .... we must not come to the conclusion that’s it not necessary to preach the Word.

( 1 Sam 3:19 ) We must not become complacent and slumber on in our indifference. We must stir ourselves. We must not imagine that there is no need to humble ourselves and seek God’s face ( 2 Chron 7:14 ) The truth of the matter is this. We must pray, preach, work, witness, and love with a clear recognition that these things in themselves cannot produce revival, but they are the appointed means of securing such a fresh movement of the Spirit of God in the sovereign plan of God. (a) (b)

### **(c) *TRUE AIM OF REVIVAL:***

“ *That Thy people may rejoice in Thee,*” you see, God is not only the **Source of** “ *wilt Thou,*” but He is also the **End of revival** .... “ *that Thy .... Thee.*” Revival comes from God and leads to God, that He may be all in all and that man may learn that of himself he is nothing. My ....

here is the effect of all revival, “ *the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*” ( Is 2:17 ) Surely, if we have a jealous desire for the glory of God, should we not all be thirsting for revival ? (1) (2)

### **(3) THE RESULT OF REVIVAL IS CLEARLY REVEALED**

You see in ( 85:8 ) the psalmist speaks to himself in tones of hopefulness. Then in ( 85:9-13 ) he spells out the answer which God gives to his prayer and in so doing he reveals the results of revival. He talks about, (a) ***GOD’S SAVING ACTIVITY:***

Look if you will at ( 85:9 ) God is saving men and women all over the world but in proportion to the need it may seem like a little trickle, but when revival comes the droppings become showers ! Do what the beauty of the 1859 revival in Ulster was ? It was the work of regeneration ! Addressing the conference of the Evangelical Alliance in 1859 Mr. Noel a Baptist pastor stated that the figure of 100,000 converts from the revival was probably under the mark ! My .... when revival comes, the work of God that may be a trickle now will then become an over-flooding river. Once there was a little village with a reservoir right up above it. A little stream trickled down to the village. But one day the reservoir became so full that the dam, not able to hold back the water anymore, burst. The water came flooding and pouring down upon that village, sweeping aside everything in its path. People came from miles around to a little, neglected village because all they had ever seen before was a trickle, and now they saw an overpowering, moving flood of water pouring through that place. Is that not a picture of revival ? The trickle becoming a flood.

***“ Oh, for the floods on a thirsty land***

*Oh, for a mighty revival.”*

**(b) GOD'S SANCTIFYING ACTIVITY:**

This is seen in three ways.

(1) In Personal Life:

( 85:10 ) Oswald Chambers used to say, “ *sanctification is allowing the perfections of the Lord Jesus to express themselves in human personality.*” You see the Lord wants men and women in whom are married mercy, truth, righteousness and peace. ( Rom 14:17 ) My .... are these perfections of the Saviour expressing themselves through your personality ?

(2) In General Life:

Look if you at will ( 85:11 ) Did you know that every major social and political reform that ever came about, came as a result of revival ? The abolition of slavery was a result of revival. The end of the ninety hour week came because of revival. The removal of child labour resulted from revival in the days of John Wesley. The Y.M.C.A. the Salvation Army, and the Sunday School movement .... all of those movements came as a result of revival.

(a) in (1) (2) and,

(3) In Material Life:

( 85:12 ) This was especially true of Old Testament Israel. It is also true of any land which experiences a great movement of the Spirit of God. Now material

prosperity is not unconditionally guaranteed in this age for those who live in the joy of God's salvation, but it often follows. Indeed the Scriptures say, “ *righteousness*

*exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people.*”

( Prov 14:34 ) Evan Roberts, who was so greatly used in the 1904 revival in Wales, bowed himself over a church pew and prayed, “ *O God bend me, bend me, bend me,*” and God answered his longing heart and met him in such revival blessing as influenced the whole of Wales. What about you personally ? Do you need to pray this prayer ? Do you need to be revived in your own

soul ? David Dodge was in conversation with a devout Quaker who, like Dodge was eager to see a fresh move of the Spirit of God. The Quaker agreed with Dodge concerning the need of more zeal, more prayer, more consecration. Finally the Quaker broke in with these words, “ *Friend Dodge, suppose thee and I make a beginning.*” That's it ! Suppose this .... “ *thee and I,*” make a beginning. Remembering that “ *I,*” is central to the word Revival !

“ *Lord do it again*

*Lord do it again*

*Send us a mighty revival*

*Lord do it again.”*