

SCARCITY OF GENUINE REVIVAL

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"If my people which are called by my name, shall 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" II Chronicles 7:14.

A number of years ago I shared the speaker's cabin with Dr. John R. Rice as he dictated his book, "WE CAN HAVE REVIVAL NOW". Over and over during the week, that phrase pounded into my heart. I believe it! We certainly have a great need for the old time moving of the power of God on the lives of today's believers. The term revival is often used in advertising a meeting but the reality of it seldom is experienced. After much experience, thought and prayer, I am sure there are a number of hindrances to revival I must mention.

First, there is tragic **LETHARGY AND SELF-SATISFACTION** among most of the people of God. Actually few believers are willing to pay the price for genuine revival to break out. True revival does not come without personal cost. It is born in the crucible of self examination, with much searching of the heart, the confession of failure and hunger to see revival take place. A great enemy of the soul is pride. As a young evangelist I remember great throngs that would gather at the altar to confess sin and often to pray all night for the outpouring of God. This seldom occurs today. In church after church, tears are seldom seen and the invitation has absolutely no affect on the majority of Christians standing there. The Bible warns, *"pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall"* Prov. 16:18.

We tend to wrap hungry hearts and defeated spirits in an outward layer of respectability in our own eyes and those of others around us. Are we not satisfied in the "status quo", failing to see ourselves in the eyes of God? The song writer well put it in the words "but the question comes to me, as I think of Calvary, is my Saviour satisfied with me?" Our nation is rushing down the path to hell while most believers play church. We rush about in our own paths of selfish fulfillment with little or no compassion for the lost around us. We must awaken to the responsibility commanded us in John 15:16. Anyone's life falls short if we do not *"go and bring forth fruit."* Our knees need to bend and our hearts need to be tendered and tearfully cry out for personal revival in our souls.

It is frightful that most believers manifest a **TOTAL ABSENCE OF DESIRE FOR REVIVAL**. Most are unwilling to pay the price for the revival we so badly need to see. What has happened to our hunger for Godliness? Where is our desire to be like Jesus? How can we possibly find satisfaction in the perishing things of this life while we neglect the lasting things of the spirit? Is it not puzzling? Jesus often wept over the multitudes and desired them to come to Him *"but ye would not"* Matt.23:37. Must it be the same for even His own children? Most teens care more for the rock stars and their own amusement than pleasing Christ. They are often the product of like-minded parents who themselves bury self and family in perishing things while ignoring their true condition before God. I am trying to say this tenderly but the fact remains, the majority of believers really have little hunger to be like Jesus. In Mark 7:6 Jesus said *"this people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."* We must not ignore the admonition *"set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* Col. 3:2. Demas left Paul because he loved the present

world. Millions of believers will live a lifetime without realizing the glory of what things God desired them to accomplish. I hope you will not be one of these. We must echo the words of the song, "I would be like Jesus." Dear believer, please work to cultivate a desire for the closer walk the Lord wants you to manifest. Stop tiptoeing through the shallows when you could launch out into the deep of eternal usefulness.

There is further an **ABSENCE OF PRAYERFUL PETITIONING FOR REVIVAL**. My memory is filled with many times we Christians cried out for revival. As a boy I can remember our church crying out through many a night tearfully. It was a part of every crusade that ever accomplished anything. Sometimes our church folk would decide to set aside a time to pray for revival with no meeting in view. So much of today's praying is so routine as prayer meetings are abandoned and fasting and prayer seem a thing of the past. We are promised "*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" James 5:16. We are to "*pray without ceasing*" I Thess. 5:17. Our nation has never been in such a need for revival. It is time for all of God's people, living in these last days, to get on our faces before God.

Our whole religious world suffers from the **BLIGHT OF WORLDLINESS**. Today's believers seem to hunger more for worldly things than the holy lives the Lord offers us. We are clearly commanded to "*love not the world neither the things that are in the world*" and warned "*the world passeth away and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever*" I John 2:15-17. Most believers have love directed toward the wrong things. Sin is not only loved but hidden in spite of the warning "*he that covereth his sin shall not prosper*" Prov. 28:13. There is so much bitterness toward others while a key word for revival is "*forgive if ye have ought against any*" Mark 11:25. When Lot ended up as gate

keeper of Sodom, we are told he "*vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds*" II Pet. 2:8. The constant seeing and hearing of worldly things, like dripping water, erodes our base of holy desire. Worldly believers love worldly things. Standards are broken down and the hunger for God lessens. Love of worldly things is always an enemy to revival. When we are at ease in the world it is hard to get people to see the need for crying out for God. Our love cannot be divided but must be centered on God.

Revival is further hindered by our **FAST PACE OF TODAY'S LIVING**. Col.3:2 urges us to "*set your affection on things above not on things on the earth.*" Never in history have Christians been so busy. We have surrounded ourselves with extra jobs and the scramble of everyday living. We are overworked, over anxious and constantly on the go. Even good things overdone cause such a gridlock in time investment that the Lord is often set aside. A one hour Sunday attendance is all our overworked schedule will allow. Many churches no longer try to hold revival meetings saying they cannot get their people to set aside time to come. The teens are engulfed in sports, dad is swamped in work responsibilities and mom labors through home chores plus another job. In the light of eternity we are all too much focused on earthly things. We are simply too busy! How glibly we break the commandment "*seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness*" Matt. 6:33. Would it not be better to slow up, measure up, and fire up to a new fervency of spiritual desire? Remember "*no one who warreth (cares) entangleth himself in the affairs of this world*" II Tim. 2:4. You must slow down physically to speed up spiritually. Time must be set aside to pray and seek a closer relationship that will prepare our hearts for revival. There is a price to pay but it will result in the revival we need.

SOME PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND TEACHINGS PREVENT REVIVAL.

I am tired of hearing the experts say the old time ways no longer will work. They are usually not even given a chance. Somewhere many ministers started giving people not what they needed but what they wanted. All of our time saving gadgets may make life easier but repentance and restitution, confession and redirection, take time. We cannot expect instant revival in the "Super Sunday" mentality of many church leaders. When will we learn that the Bible is a timeless book. It was a long time ago when God gave Solomon the instructions for heavenly revival. *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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"* II Chron. 7:14. They will still work today if we could just get people to come together, clean up their lives and with real hunger cry for God to pour out His blessings. The "If" at the beginning is a small word but points out it is up to us to meet the God given conditions for revival. Since God "changes never" we must be sensitive to prepare ourselves for what He desires to do. We can and must have revival but only on God's terms without the intellectual chatter of modern ideas. His way has always been the best way!

My heart further tells me **MANY LACK A FULL SURRENDER TO CHRIST.** I prayed with a fine young man who walked the aisle to accept Christ. Three nights later he came again and I asked him why? He said, "I came the first night sort of like a ticket to stay out of hell, but tonight I came to give my whole life to God" Oh yes, the wisdom of babes. A deeper surrender would heighten our desire for God. God gives His best to those who give Him the most. Jesus told His disciples there must be a hating, (Luke 14:26): a cross bearing, (Luke 14:27): a forsaking, (Luke 14:33): A denial of

self, (Mark 8:34) and a following, (Mark 8:34). A true soldier must recognize the validity of the claim Christ makes. If we do not give Him our all He will not use us at all! The hours and days spent in heart searching desire for revival will increase the surrender we make. We seem to forget we are to die to self and be alive to the wishes of the Master. "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live." Oh, that you could honestly say, I surrender all. Lastly, I see a great failure among many. **THEY DO NOT CLAIM THE PROMISES OF GOD.** He encourages us to *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"* Matt. 7:7-8. How can we fail to be thrilled with the potential of such promises? We must stop groveling in the dust of earthly efforts when His omnipotent power is so offered. The Lord warns *"where there is no vision the people perish"* Prov. 29:18. We must have a holy vision of what the Lord offers those who will walk closely with Him. Without such a vision we cannot develop a faith that will move mountains. As a kid I used to sing, "Every promise in the book is mine. Every chapter, every verse and every line." How sad to live as frantic paupers when eternal blessings are a prayer away. Start underlining the promises of your Bible and claim them for your walk and daily growth. Why be hungry when the table is set with heavenly goodies? Then rise and serve with new zeal and dedication. Then work with others to spread your new relationship and joy to others. Let us all remember His promise, *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"* Jer. 33:3.