

# Can We See Revival Today?

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“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”

**Jonah 3:4-10**

## **What is revival?**

New Webster’s Dictionary defines revival as, “To come back to health or consciousness; to recover strength or vigour; an awakening of religious fervour.” A Christian revival may be defined as a vital renewal of spiritual life among Christians and a widespread reception of the Gospel among the unsaved. Sleeping churches are awakened, and many souls are born into the family of God. The evangelist Charles G. Finney, after decades of preaching, experiencing, and studying great revivals, made these observations concerning revival:

1. A revival always includes conviction of sin on the part of the church.
2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to repentance.
3. Christians will have their faith renewed.
4. A revival breaks the power of the world and of sin over Christians.
5. When the churches are thus awakened and reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow...

(“Finney Lives On” by V. Raymond Edman, 1951)

## **When do we need revival?**

In one sense, a church is in constant need of spiritual revival. But, generally speaking, there are symptoms that show a great need of revival. For example, we need revival when:

- Christians care more about their bankbook than God’s Book.
- Church services sound more like a rock concert than a revival meeting.
- Pastors spend more time on the golf course than in the prayer closet.
- Christians are happy to talk about rugby or cricket, but are embarrassed to mention the name of Jesus.
- Churches enjoy ten minutes in prayer and two hours in fellowship.

- Pastors spend more time surfing the Internet than they do knocking on doors.
- Christians watch television for hours a day, but fall asleep reading their Bible after 5 minutes.
- Churches have fund-raising programs, working bees, and barbecues, but they've forgotten prayer meetings and soul-winning campaigns.

When sinners scoff at the Gospel of Jesus Christ, make a joke of sin, and sink into Hell unconcerned, we need revival.

### **Can we see revival today?**

In the ninth century B.C., the Lord God sent Jonah to preach His Word to the wicked people of Nineveh. Nineveh was a very wealthy and influential city, the capital of the giant Assyrian Empire. Nineveh was a very large city, perhaps with a population of six hundred thousand people. It was a city of rampant immorality, idolatry, cruelty, and injustice. God was sick of the terrible sin of the Ninevites, and had decided to destroy the city if the people did not get right with Him. Nineveh's last hope lay in the preaching of the Word of God by the mouth of His prophet, Jonah. To the eyes of man, Nineveh did not look to be fertile ground for the seed of the God's Word. The hearts of the people had been hardened by generations of sin, and they had no concern for their eternal souls.

If we had been watching Jonah walk into Nineveh on that famous day, we would have predicted failure. We would have expected the Ninevites to scorn Jonah's preaching, persecute the prophet, and be destroyed in forty days according to the Word of the Lord. Yet the astounding events that followed the simple, pointed preaching of the runaway prophet are recorded indelibly for us in Jonah chapter three. The entire city, from the king in his palace to the beggar on the street, believed the Word of God and got right with Him. They humbled themselves before the God who had pronounced certain judgment upon them, and set their hearts to obey Him. What a great revival! Can you picture hundreds of thousands of wicked, immoral, ungodly heathen getting right with the Lord? It seems incredible to us, but it happened.

Was the instrument of revival a great man of God? No - just a backslidden prophet. Was the sermon polished and impressive? No - just plain and simple. Were the hearts of the hearers tender and contrite? No - they were hard and cold. Yet, God brought revival. If the great God of Heaven brought revival to the wicked city of Nineveh using a simple sermon preached by a backslidden prophet, surely He can bring revival to us today!

The Word of God records many instances of spiritual revival. For example,

- The family-wide revival that happened when Jacob ordered his family to get right with God and put away their idols.
- The revival under Samuel when he ordered the people to put away their false gods and prepare their hearts before God.
- The revival under King Asa, when he removed the sodomites out of the land and even deposed his own grandmother because of her idolatry.
- The revival under King Jehoshaphat when he ordered the cleansing of the temple and the sanctification of the priests.
- The revival under King Hezekiah when he broke down the high places, cleansed the temple and re-instituted the feasts.
- The revival under John the Baptist when many believed and were baptised with the baptism of repentance.
- The citywide revival in Samaria that was sparked when a sinful woman was converted by the Lord Jesus Himself.
- The citywide revival in Jerusalem when Peter preached at Pentecost and 3,000 Jews got saved and baptised.
- The citywide revival in Ephesus when many got right with God and brought their pagan books, etc and burned them together.

Some say that the hearts of men are too cold for us to see sweeping revival today. These sceptics claim that "the field is too hard." Is it really?

Let us look back in history and consider the state of the city of London at the time of the fiery evangelist, John Wesley:

“The condition of England when Methodism appeared has been described by all writers in the most sombre colours. Southey says, “There never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet, and awakened those who slept.” In 1732 the Weekly Miscellany states that zeal for godliness looked as odd upon a man as the dress of his great-grandfather. Freethinkers’ clubs flourished...Dr. Watts called upon every one to use all efforts “for the recovery of dying religion in the world.” Archbishop Seeker, then Bishop of Oxford, asserts “that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation, and is daily spreading through every part of it.” It had already brought in, he says, “such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of iniquity stop not, become absolutely fatal.” ...In 1736 every sixth house in London was a grogshop, and the ginsellers hung out boards announcing that they would make a man drunk for a penny, dead-drunk for twopence, and find him straw to lie on till he recovered from his carouse...Robbers often defied all attempts to seize them, and kept the city in terror by day as well as by night.

The great awakening was now to begin. Isaac Taylor says, “No such harvest of souls is recorded to have been gathered by any body of contemporary men since the first century...” (“The Life of John Wesley” by John Telford, 1886)

It was in such a hopeless setting that the Holy Spirit fanned a flame of revival that swept across England and over to the new American continent. Whitefield and Wesley preached to tens of thousands in the fields, and multitudes were saved and added to churches. The Lord certainly was able to bring great revival to this “hard field.”

You see, the question is not, “Is this a hard field?” but rather “Is our God able?” Let God answer for Himself:

**Jeremiah 32:27** “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: **is there any thing too hard for me?**”

**Mark 10:25-27** “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: **for with God all things are possible.**”

**Ephesians 3:20** “Now unto him that is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

If we will take the time to delve into church history, God has brought revival in the most unlikely places through the most unlikely instruments. For example, remember the Welsh revival, the Fulton Street prayer revival, the Great Awakening, and the Second Awakening. There were periods during these revivals that it was estimated that **over ten thousand souls were converted in just one week**. Remember, too, the great ministries that God gave to men of the past, such as,

- R.A. Torrey
- Jonathan Edwards
- George Whitefield
- Sam Jones
- Billy Sunday
- John Wesley
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon
- Gypsy Smith, who saw **80,000 souls saved in Australia in 7 months**.

For example, heed the testimony of evangelist Charles G. Finney (1792-1875),

“So it has been during the last ten years, in which there have been such remarkable revivals through the length and breadth of the land. These revivals have been very great and powerful, and extensive. It has been estimated that over **two hundred thousand persons have been converted to God** in that time.”

(“Finney Lives On” by V. Raymond Edman, 1951)

Therefore, the question to be asked is not, “Can we see revival today,” but rather,

### **Why don't we see revival today?**

Let it be emphatically and plainly stated that the fault for spiritual decline and apostasy lies not with the world, but with those who name the name of Christ. We do not enjoy revival today because of many reasons, including,

- **Laziness.**  
**Proverbs 13:4**, “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.”
- **Prayerlessness.**  
**Jeremiah 33:3**, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”
- **Worldliness and sin.**  
**Isaiah 59:1-2**, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”
- **Wrong theology** (such as hyper-dispensationalism and hyper-Calvinism.).  
**1 Timothy 2:3,4**, “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
- **Unbelief.**  
**Matthew 13:58**, “And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”
- **Lack of compassion.**  
**Jude 1:22**, “And of some have compassion, making a difference:”
- **Lack of desire.**  
**Psalms 37:4**, “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”
- **Lack of personal soul winning.**  
**Mark 16:15**, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
- **Not being filled with the Holy Spirit.**  
**Ephesians 5:18**, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

### **How can we see revival today?**

Knowing that God is able to bring revival today, and that He desires to bring revival today, how then may we see revival in such a day as this? V. Raymond Edman, who made an intense study of the life and methods of evangelist Charles G. Finney, made the following conclusion concerning the price to be paid for revival,

“Revival, as we have seen, is the coming of the inexpressibly sweet and tender Spirit of God into the midst of His people, with convicting and transforming power. The outpouring of God’s Spirit is the divine aspect of revival, **the preparation of heart for revival is our part**. Many of the promises of

God given in the Scriptures are made conditional upon our preparation of heart to receive them, or our lack of preparation.”

(“Finney Lives On” by V. Raymond Edman, 1951)

The responsibility of bringing about revival lies squarely on our shoulders. The true secret of revival is Christians getting right with God, whatever may be the cost to them. As we meet God’s conditions, He will send revival.

**2 Chronicles 7:14** “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.”

There are several steps that we must follow if we will see God bring a great revival among us. These steps are given in the Word of God and have been tried and tested by great revivalists of years gone by.

### 1) **Humble Yourself.**

Look into the Word of God and see yourself as you really are: a cold-hearted, proud, selfish, disobedient Christian. Confess your sins to God, forsake them, and ask for mercy. Be very thorough, and very specific. If the sin has been public, then public confession and restitution must be made. Be sure to ask God to search your heart and expose every sin of omission and commission. Let nothing or no one stop you from being absolutely and completely right with your God, and with your fellow man.

**1 Peter 5:6**, “**Humble yourselves** therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”

### 2) **Pray.**

Pray for a definite object. Pray according to the revealed will of God. Pray with complete submission to the will of God. Pray with intense desire for that object. Pray with right motives. Pray in the Spirit. Pray with great perseverance. Pray a very great deal. Pray in the name of Christ. Pray with fasting. Pray with expectancy and faith.

**James 5:16**, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**”

### 3) **Be Filled With the Holy Spirit.**

Have you been filled with self rather than with the Spirit? Then give up the throne of your heart and offer it whole-heartedly to Him. Have you grieved the Holy Spirit? Confess your sin, and forsake your selfish desires. Have you quenched the Holy Spirit? Then confess your sin, and yield to His leading. Make absolutely certain that you have yielded your every right, every decision, every desire and every possession to God. Ask for the Holy Spirit to control you, empower you, fill you, and lead you. Remember that God does not take the throne of your heart by force. He is a gentle Lord, and waits patiently for you to yield your sovereignty to Him. Ask in faith for the filling of God’s Spirit, and do not rest until you know that He has filled you.

**Zechariah 4:6**, “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, **but by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts.”

### 4) **Labour.**

Labour in private prayer, prayer meetings, and all-night prayer. Labour as you witness on the streets and from house-to-house, as the early churches did. Labour as you serve in your church and fulfil the role that God has given you in that local body. Let no job be too small, too difficult, too menial, or too humble for you. Pastors and preachers, labour in the ministry of the Word. Let your preaching be powerful, Scriptural, pointed, simple, practical, spiritual, and profitable. Preach not for the praise of men, neither for fear of them, but preach to please your Master and to bring revival. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with

all long-suffering and doctrine. It is no good for Christians to ask God to bring revival when they are too selfish and lazy to put feet to their prayers. The prayer of a lazy man is a hypocritical prayer, and an ineffectual prayer.

**1 Corinthians 15:10**, “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but **I laboured more abundantly than they all**: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

### **Christian, do you care?**

Do you care about the churches full of sleeping Christians? Do you care about the moral and spiritual state of Australia? Do you care about the generation that will come after us? Do you care about the millions of people who will soon pass unconcerned into a Christless eternity? Do you care about the kind of church that your grandchildren will grow up in? Do you care?

**There is no doubt that God is able to bring great revival today, and is willing to bring it.** Christian, stop blaming God for the sorry state of our churches, and for the hardness of sinners. It is time that we Christians took the blame for the condition of our country, and did something about it. The truth is, we can have revival today if we really want it. But, we don't have revival today because, very simply, we don't care. We limit God by our sinfulness and our hardness of heart. One day it may be said of our wicked generation,

**“Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” (Psalm 78:41)**

Will you get right with God? Will you earnestly pray? Will you fast? Will you be filled with the Holy Spirit? Will you labour? Will you cause God to bring revival to our nation?

Come, Holy Spirit, come!  
Let Thy bright beams arise;  
Dispel the darkness from our minds,  
And open all our eyes.

Revive our drooping faith,  
Our doubts and fears remove,  
And kindle in our breasts the flame  
Of never-dying love.

Convince us of our sin;  
Then lead to Jesus' blood;  
And to our wondering view reveal  
The secret love of God.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,  
To sanctify the soul,  
To pour fresh life on every part,  
And new create the whole.

Dwell therefore in our hearts;  
Our minds from bondage free;  
Then shall we know, and Praise, and love  
The Father, Son, and Thee.