

New Year's Resolutions:

- To clean all the mirrors in the house... that's something I could really see myself doing.
- To sell my vacuum cleaner...it's just been collecting dust.
- To order a chicken and an egg online... to find out which comes first.

1st gathering of the new year- while I often preach, I don't often preach the 1st Sunday

Next week start the gospel of Mark

Today I wanted to bring a message that not only feel I need, but I feel is needed

TITLE: **We Need Revival**

REMINDER for some, REVELATION for others; Foundational reality we must wrestle with:

The natural flow of the human soul is away from God, not towards Him

The Drift (when you do nothing, you drift away not towards)

Case Study- The Ephesian Church ("the crown of Paul's letters" "The Switzerland of the NT"???)

The Ephesians are those Xtians you look at and go "*man, they're really xtians*" (ever do that?)

Ephesians 1:15-16 This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

Contrast how he talks to the church at Galatia **Galatians 3:1** You foolish Galatians!...

Last verse, **Ephesians 6:24** Grace be with all who have **undying love** for our Lord Jesus Christ.

The natural flow of the human soul is away from God, not towards Him

Revelation 2:1-3 "Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus: Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands: ²I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. ³I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary.

Revelation 2:4 But I have this against you: You have **abandoned the love** you had at first.

Isn't that tragic? And isn't it soberingly frightening, that if it could happen to the Ephesians.....me?

Alexander Strauch-

"Jesus doesn't say, 'You have no love.' He says, 'You have abandoned the love you had at first.' Their love was not what it used to be....

Their love for Christ and for one another had once motivated all they did. It brought joy, creativity, freshness, spontaneity, and energy to their life and work. But now their energy source was depleted. Their work had become mundane, mechanical, and routine, and their lives the picture of self-satisfaction....

They can't blame anyone else for this loss. They have had every advantage provided by years of good teaching, access to almost all of the New Testament Scriptures, and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. No wonder Christ expresses extreme displeasure with the situation in Ephesus. Their loss of love is their fault. They have failed to "keep" themselves in the love of God (Jude 21). "

Question: Who will you be in 5 years?

Who you are today is directly connected to *what* you chose to chase "yesterday"

Choose the right chase

I propose that what the world needs most is for revival to sweep the church.

What is Revival?

“A true Holy Spirit revival is a remarkable increase in the spiritual life of a large number of God's people, accompanied by an awesome awareness of the presence of sin with a passionate longing for holiness and unusual effectiveness in evangelism, leading to the salvation of many unbelievers.”

- Brian Edwards

IOW: Revival is an observable move of God among His church that results in a deeper awareness of sin, a higher view of God, and a mass shift of lost people from unbelievers to disciples

What it looks like-

I love reading of revivals of old, here are some commonalities I find:

***a reawakening of personal faith, a reigniting of congregational fervor,
a return to holy consecration, a restoration of divine joy***

Can you picture it?

a reawakening of personal faith-

imagine you are so deeply rooted in your faith that nothing can shake you (X,Y,Z)

imagine having such a faith that you see life in a new filter

a reigniting of congregational fervor

imagine a church so passionate about caring for one another that none of us have any physical needs

imagine a church so on fire for the lost that every week we are forced to add chairs bcus they want to come

a return to holy consecration

imagine yourself being so displeased with the sin you now love that you can't even recognize who you were

imagine diving so absolutely into God's presence, you don't need to tell others you've been w Jesus, the C it

a restoration of divine joy

imagine being so engulfed with the joy of the Lord that a bad day just an opportunity to encounter God's joy

imagine being so complete in Jesus, that you don't crave those things which pull you away

This is important to understand:

We can't make revival happen.

Collectively or individually; We don't have the spiritual stamina to pull it off

Revival is something that happens to the church, not something the church plans and does.

We can't make revival happen;

We can plead for God to send it & prepare ourselves for when it comes.

“We cannot organize revival, but we can set our sails to catch the wind from Heaven when God chooses to blow upon His people once again.” — G. Campbell Morgan

I want to highlight 4 things we can do to “set our sails” this year.

But let me preface with an encouragement:

“One of the greatest mistakes we can make as followers of Jesus this year is to think that spirituality and practice are at odds with one another. You will not blink and wake up more mature overnight. God isn't in the habit of zapping people into Christ likeness and maturity. Don't fall for the lie that discipline, faithfulness and consistency are any less spiritual and effective than some mystical experiences.

God does miracles in the mundane. God does His work in your work. His presence fills your practice.

Make a plan, Be consistent. Operate in grace. When you fall, get up and keep going. The Lord is with you.”

-Pastor Christopher Sites

Setting our sails-

1. For revival we need to be feasting on The Bible

Psalm 19:7-8 (ESV) The law of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making **wise** the simple;
⁸the precepts of the Lord are right, **rejoicing** the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, **enlightening** the eyes

Mr. Kambarami, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Zimbabwe, tried to give a New Testament to a very belligerent man. The man insisted he would roll the pages and use them to make cigarettes. Mr. Kambarami said, *“at least promise to read the page of the New Testament before you smoke it.”* The man agreed, and the two went their separate ways. Fifteen years later, the two men met at a convention in Zimbabwe. The man had become a full-time evangelist. He told the audience, *“I smoked Matthew, and I smoked Mark, and I smoked Luke. But when I got to John 3:16, I couldn’t smoke anymore. My life was changed from that moment.”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Allow God’s word to shape you: TEACHING- what to believe; REBUKING- what *not* to believe;
CORRECTING- what *not* to do; TRAINING- what to do

Men have died to make it possible for you to have a copy of the Bible in a language you can understand

2. For revival we need to be fervent in Prayer & Fasting

Jeremiah 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and incomprehensible things you do not know.

"Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours.
God thirsts that we may thirst for him." - St. Augustine

Mary, Queen of Scots (bloody Mary), is reputed to have said, *“I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”*

Let me encourage you: You LEARN to love prayer. And when you do, you will go deeper with fasting.

Ezra 8:21, 23 I proclaimed a fast by the Ahava River, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us, our dependents, and all our possessions...

²³ So we fasted and pleaded with our God about this, and he was receptive to our prayer.

“Fasting is an offering of emptiness to show where fullness can be found. It is a sacrifice of need and hunger.”
-John Piper

“We are a culture of abundance that indulges and abuses—fasting is a means of God’s grace to embrace someone greater than our appetites.”

3. For revival we need to become familiar Repentance

Repentance is not only feeling sorry for your sin; not just regret, not even just remorse; it is turning away *from* sin and *to* God

This doesn't feel natural!!! We seek to **hide** from God and hide our sin.

To our delight, we find that biblical repentance doesn't make you feel less, it allows you to feel God's grace more

Isaiah 57:15

For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy, says this: (WHO God is)

"I live in a high and holy place, and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit, (WHERE God is)

to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the oppressed. (WHAT God does)

'oppressed' / 'contrite' = "dakka"-

In ancient Israelite culture, the concept of being "crushed/ oppressed" or "contrite" was closely associated with repentance and humility before God. The Israelites understood that a broken and contrite heart was essential for true worship and relationship with God. This idea is rooted in the sacrificial system, where offerings were made to atone for sin, but the true sacrifice God desired was a humble and repentant spirit.

He revives the repentant heart

4. For revival we need to seek the face of God

Psalm 14:2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God.

This may sound redundant, but here's what I mean:

we often seek what God can do for us/ what we want from Him- but how often do we just seek Him?

God's nearness is my good

Psalm 27:8 My heart says this about you: "Seek his face." Lord, I will seek your face.

We need to be feasting on The Bible, fervent in Prayer & Fasting, familiar Repentance, and seek the face of God

Some final encouragements-

Revival is God's heart for us...for you

Psalm 85:6 Will you not revive us again so that your people may rejoice in you?

Norm- "A revival from the Presence of the Lord begins today, IF YOU DESIRE IT."

I sing to my daughters every night; often Kumbaya....what does it mean?

"Kumbaya" translates to "**come by here**" in the Gullah language (said to be a hymn of the African slaves)

May we sing also: Come by here Lord, come by here, Oh Lord, come by here

****CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

Challenge:

- **Have a Bible reading plan** (I have some available: The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan)
- **Sign up for '21 for 25'** (QR Code- Next Steps- Subject line '21 for 25')
- **Assign an accountability partner** (if not yet have one)
- **Commit to attending every Sunday gathering possible**

BULPEN-

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Psalms 119:92-95 If your instruction had not been my delight, I would have died in my affliction.

⁹³ I will never forget your precepts, for you have given me life through them.

⁹⁴ I am yours; save me, for I have studied your precepts.

⁹⁵ The wicked hope to destroy me, but I contemplate your decrees.

Proverbs 4:13 Hold on to instruction; don't let go. Guard it, for it is your life.

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV) if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

For revival we need the church

For revival we need evangelism

Conviction of sin, conversion to life, communing with Christ, connecting with other disciples

4 Elements of Revival (Dr. Fred Smith)

Ezekiel 37:1-3 The **Work** of the Lord

The hand of the Lord (positive in this case)

He brought me, led me, set me...where?

The middle of a valley, not the mt top

Full of dry bones (not even a cemetery, more like a mass dump site)

Q: *Can these bones live?*

No one is so far gone that God cannot breathe life into them...No person, no church

Ezekiel 37:4-8 The **Word** of the Lord

Prophecy to them? They don't have ears!

God's word is powerful and effective

Prophecy/ Say...did God really need Ezekiel for this? No. Does He use Ezekiel? Yes.

And He can use us also- though it may seem at times futile, keep keeping on. What is God asking you to do?

Ezekiel obeys and God moves- God commands, we obey, God works

Ezekiel 37:9-10 The **Wind** of the Lord

Ruah (spirit, wind breath- 7 times in 14 verses)

V9 *Breath* not *breath*

The Holy Spirit gives life

Ezekiel 37:11-14 The **Will** of the Lord

They feel hopeless- God bases His promise on His reputation (Then you will know I am...)

If God withdrew His indwelling Spirit from you, would you even notice?

Psalms 11:3 When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Proverbs 30:12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filth.

"when a true movement of God takes place, people will want others to experience what they have seen. And those who have been touched by revival will come back to invest in the environment (Acts 11:25-26)."-Kyle Lance Martin