

I. Revival in Biblical Perspective
Revive Us Again!
“The Portrait of a Revived Believer”
Psalm 1
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January 8, 2017 – Morning sermon

Let’s start by looking at Psalm 1. This is the Word of God. It’s the truth. Psalm 1:1-6 says [1] *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law^[b] of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

[3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. [4] The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

[5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; [6] for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I’ve been through some agonizing moments since Friday, knowing that when “snowmaggedons” arrive in Birmingham in every shape or form I knew there would be some issue of attendance of who would be able to be here and who would not. During my agonizing I thought of the retired quarterback Peyton Manning for every time he got over or behind the center the microphones would pick up him saying ‘Omaha, Omaha, Omaha.’ He would be asked ‘What does Omaha mean?’ He would say ‘Nothing, it just simply means I’m about to change the play.’ It is called an audible and I’m going to call an audible for this study. I began to pray through this last night and came to the conclusion early this morning. We are certainly aware of Providential hindrance to those who couldn’t make it today.

Our ministry theme this year is crucial. The theme verse this year is Psalm 85:6 which says [6] *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?* The study for today was going to be on Psalm 85 but I just sense that God wanted me to call the ‘audible’ and to move that to the next study. So I have my study ready for next week but then I went to work on what I can and should fit in for today’s study. It really was an easy call for me. I want to tell you why I decided on Psalm 1.

I will be developing Psalm 85 in general and verse 6 in particular as the prayer for revival, found by the sons of Korah. Then I will give you the reasons why I think we are in desperate need of a church revival. I believe this country is under the judgment of God because of what God says to nations in general and to this one in particular from His Word. In the book of Genesis there are three times that the sins of men that go up to heaven and bring God down in judgment upon nations and cultures, which permeate and saturate our culture and our nation. I will start this in the next study.

After that study I will develop the profile of revival from II Chronicles 7:14 and after that I am hoping to walk you through five revivals in the Bible. I have counted 21 recorded revivals in the Bible with some detail. I will preach on five of them to distill Biblically and historically, filling in the gaps with illustrations from revivals in history but the Biblical ones will teach us what God wants us to know and encourage us with. What is written in His Word is

written for our instruction and encouragement. Then I will take you through the study of the revived church in a hostile environment and that will be from I Peter. Peter says to the people of God, 'You are exiles but don't live like an exile. Here is the way you live an insider though the culture says you're an outsider.' That will be what this year will look like God willing.

During the Sunday evening studies I will give you the seven marks/distinctives of a revived church. I believe our nation under judgment is in need of a Gospel awakening. One of the reasons we're in need of a Gospel awakening is that this culture is indifferent, hostile and compromised in the matters of God because we have a church in this nation that is indifferent to the things of God. If believers are indifferent to the things of God with Biblical illiteracy and spiritual impotency then what would preserve a culture is now removed. In other words, there will be no Gospel awakening until there is a revived church. The church is the instrument God uses. We will see what that looks like through the seven distinctives from God's Word that God uses to usher forth the Gospel of the Kingdom to the nations of this world and bring nations into the Kingdom of God as it sweeps nations through a revived church.

The fact is there is no Gospel awakening without a revived church and there is no revived church without revived believers. What would a revived believer look like? In this study I will draw out three marks of revival in the life of a Christian and what it looks like from Psalm 1. That is my 'Omaha' today. The revived believer is referred to in the Bible as the blessed man, the truly happy man/woman of God. As I was trying to pick the five revivals out in the Bible I will eventually go over with you, I found that the first revival in the Bible is personal and it spread to God's people and then into the surrounding culture. You can see this revival as you go into the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis.

Adam lived 930 years and at the death of Abel he was given another son named Seth. Seth lived 912 years and he had a son who lived for 905 years. His name was Enosh. The interesting thing stated about Enosh is that when Enosh was born men began to call upon the name of the Lord – revival and awakening began to spread. Enosh's personal revival led to an awakening for men and women began to call upon the Lord. What does an Enosh life look like? What does a revived life look like? What does a life-changed life changing life look like? I believe Psalm 1 lays it out and includes three marks from it.

The first mark is the revived life in Christ and for Christ is a prioritized life. We see it in Psalm 1:1-2. When you are reading Psalms or prophecies in your Bible, the Psalms are written in Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry has an amazing feature called parallelisms where lines are related to each other. There are three kinds of parallelisms but the two major ones that show up in this Psalm are synthetic and antithetical parallelisms. In other words, synthetic parallelisms would be line upon line that build to teach you something. Antithetical parallelism provides an antithesis, or contrast. A verse containing antithetical parallelism will bring together opposing ideas in marked contrast to teach you something. Psalm 1 has both of them.

Psalm 1:1-3 gives statements about the blessed man. Psalm 1:1-3 says [1] *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. [3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.* The wicked are not so.

In contrast and in antithesis to the blessed man comes the condemned man in Psalm 1:4-6 which says [4] *The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. [5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;*

[6] for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Yet in the midst of this Psalm are synthetic parallelisms that are building with each other.

Let's start by looking at Psalm 1:1 which says *[1] Blessed is the man who (1) walks not in the counsel of the wicked, (2) nor stands in the way of sinners, (3) nor sits in the seat of scoffers.* In contrast to that we have Psalm 1:2 which says *[2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.* We see two synthetic parallelisms and an antithetical one here. So the blessed man doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked and not only that he doesn't stand in the way of sinners and not only that he doesn't sit in the seat of scoffers. So instead of this life he has that life but in contrast to that his delight is in the law of the Lord. He not only delights in it but meditates in it day and night.

He is teaching us that the Spirit-filled, revived Christian who has God within to overflowing and who is loving and seeking the Lord, is someone with a prioritized life. He give five priorities here. Three are negative and two are positive. One is he intentionally does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Two he does not stand in the path of sinners and three he does not sit in the seat of the scoffer, scorner, mocker, or blasphemer. Then fourthly he does delight in the law of the Lord and fifthly he meditates on it day and night.

I know we all want Christianity to be wonderfully positive and let's just talk about the good and positive stuff. Here is the problem with that. The Good News is only good news when you understand the bad news. In fact when you understand the bad news it gets to be great news. Here are two pieces of bad news. One we sin because we're born into this world as sinners. We are helpless and hopeless. There is no one to help us, we can't help ourselves and we have no hope because we are dead in our sins. We need the grace and power of God to save us. We don't need to be simply helped but we need to be saved. The Good News is that God has sent a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Here is a second bad news piece. After you are saved the old remnant of that sin nature is still left within you and if leave it alone it is greater than your intentions in life. The Bible shows us this pattern in life in Romans 7:18-20 which says *[18] For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. [19] For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. [20] Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.* The reason is because we didn't kill the old man. Every day you have to kill the old man. That is why when the Bible teaches us about the Christian life it doesn't start with the positive but the negative. It says 'do not...' and then it says 'now do...'

Perhaps an illustration of this starts with how you got up this morning. Most get up having their pajamas on and before one would come to church they would have to take their pajamas off. As Christians without the thorough work of mortification we try to do vivification. To live you have to die and one of the things you have to kill every day is the old man. You also have to kill what feeds the old man every day. So when you got up this morning you had an old man who is greater than your good will and you have to kill him to get your eyes on Jesus every single day.

So the happy man wakes up every day to say this; 'I have 3 negative priorities to not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, not stand in the path of the sinner and not sit in the path of the scorner.' The first priority is to be careful who your counselors/teachers/preachers are. Jesus said when all is said and done in Luke 6:40 that *[40] A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.* What are you reading and who are you listening to? Jesus said in Luke 8:18 that we need to be careful who we listen to and in Mark

4:24 Jesus told us to be careful what we listen to. This is why John says in I John 4:1, *[1] Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.* False teaching has an effect even on believers. Do not pattern your life with teaching that is ungodly or inaccurate or blasphemous or is misusing the Scripture.

Secondly, do not stand in the path of sinners. Paul would say 'flee temptation.' There is a pathway of sin that leads to sin. Don't try to resist temptation for you flee it. We have an old man within us and the world outside of us. Satan through the world brings the temptation to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. Inside of us is an old man that can't wait to get joined to that. If that temptation and old man get joined together, according to the book of James they produce a child and the child is sin. Then sin produces a child which is called death. So you can be saved and your marriage dies, your witness dies and your career dies. Why? It is because of sin. You're forgiven and saved but it still has consequences. The reason it was there is because you let the old man live and you didn't flee temptation.

If you kill the parents (temptation & old man) the child (sin) can't be produced. Put to death the old man, mortification. Then you can do vivification, you can live. I'm not going to feed the old man with ungodly teaching nor tempt the old man by careless living. You are not proving the power of grace by living a careless Christian life. God's grace causes believers to walk carefully. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:15-16 to look carefully as to how you walk. So do not want to stand in the path of sinners.

I want to be practical here. I am not a legalist. I don't believe movies or movie theaters are sinful. In fact that is a date night for my wife and me if we can find one worth going to, but don't think that movie doesn't have a message. Don't think that movie isn't trying to mainstream pornification or fornication in your life. Don't think its message is having an effect on you. What you look at (the eyegate) and what you listen to (the eargate) go to the soul and to the heart. Be careful how you walk, not as unwise but as wise. Do not stand in the path of the sinner.

There was a man I ministered to in Chattanooga, Tennessee that had an unbelievable issue with pornography. We dealt with it, prayed together, hugged together and loved on one another. We would get victory for about a month or two and then he would be back and say 'Pastor I need to talk with you again.' We would memorize Scripture and work on it. We took all kinds of steps that I won't go into but one day when we were talking I asked him where he worked and he told me. At that time I knew that part of Chattanooga but it's not like that today. Then I asked him where he parked when he went to work and he told me. The street that he would have to walk down from where he parked to get to his work was a street that had many "Adult Bookstores." What a stupid name because there is nothing adult at all about it. It is juvenile sinfulness. I asked him if he ever visited those stores and he said 'Yes and it's usually about two to three weeks after we have prayed together and talked together.'

I asked him if there was another parking deck to park in and he said 'yes but then it would be a six block walk rather than a three block walk.' I said 'It's worth it. You need the exercise.' Did you know that he never had to come see me again after that? Instead of resisting temptation every day walking by those stores he fled it. So one of the parents (of temptation & the old man) was gone and he killed the other one. Be careful who you listen to. Be careful in your conduct, where you find yourself. Flee temptation.

The third priority is do not assemble with the cynic, the scorner, the mocker. These priorities are so crucial in the heart of a revived man that maintains revival in his life. This is a

man or woman of God. It is very important that you and I do not make fellowship with critical cynics. I wish I could tell you that you only find them in the world but you will find them in the professing church. There are many people who think the only way they can be somebody is to run other people down and it draws us in because it makes us feel a little better. They are what I call “crab Christians.” When you go crabbing, you catch crabs, throw them in the bucket and they try to get out and some will get up to the top until the crab underneath grabs it and pulls it down. Sadly, that is the way a lot of Christians are because as you start to get up and out, they pull you back in.

I love the way Evelyn Christianson put it. I’m paraphrasing but she said ‘I know all of you Christians think the grass is always greener on the other side and it is because it is on a septic tank.’ She also said ‘You need balcony people in your life for those who live in the balcony pull you up and not basement people that pull you down.’ You be a balcony people to pull others up but don’t fellowship with the mocker and the cynic. While you sit with them pointing out the faults of everyone else to feel better about yourself, when you leave they work on you. There is no true fellowship there. I’m not talking about naivety but you want to be about people who deal with sin through the positive message of grace that kills sin and promotes Jesus.

So do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Seek Godly counsel. Do not stand in the path of sinners. This deals with conduct, so flee temptation. Do not sit in the seat of the scorner. Surround yourself with people that pull you forward in and for Christ. Now his delight is in the law of the Lord. There are many who try to get into the Bible but are over here with the wrong counsel. They are not putting off and therefore they are not putting on. You have to put off to put on. You put off the counsel of the ungodly, the path of the sinner, and the seat of the scoffer and now you begin to wrap yourself up with and put on two things – delighting in the law of the Lord and meditating on it day and night. You develop an emotional obsession with the Bible. You eat it alive. Eat so much of the Bible that if you were cut open you would bleed Bible.

This last week I went in for a heart catheterization and I thank all of you for your prayers and encouragement this past week. I’m also grateful for the good report. I remember while I was sitting there as he was going into a main artery I remembered what Charles Spurgeon said about John Bunyan. Someone asked Spurgeon why he read Bunyan’s sermons and Spurgeon said “Because I believe if I had John Bunyan in front of me and I cut him open he would bleed Bible.” So I asked the doctor if I was bleeding Bible and he said ‘No, it’s red.’ You want to bleed the Bible in your life, you want to delight in the law of the Lord. God’s authoritative Word becomes your life line to heaven as you receive it.

You also meditate in it day and night. What I’m about to say may be controversial but meditation that is not Biblically framed is counterproductive to the Christian life. I don’t care if there is an exercise program called ‘yoga’ around it. Transcendental meditation is in opposition to the Biblical concept of meditation. In Biblical meditation you don’t empty your mind you fill it. You meditate in His Word day and night. Another word for meditation in the Hebrew and Greek is called rumination. Brown cow, green grass, white milk – isn’t that amazing? This happens when the brown cow eats green grass, chews it and swallows it. After a while if you’re sitting close when this happens you’ll hear some strange noises because the cow didn’t swallow it all the way, just part of the way and then they regurgitate it back up. They do this several times because that cow is going to ruminate on that green grass to get all the ‘goody’ he can out of it. He didn’t get all the goody the first time so that is why he does it several times and that’s how you get into your Bible.

There is a time to just read through your Bible but then there is a time to really meditate on it. That's why I love great songs and hymns because the music helps me meditate on Biblical concepts and texts. Bible memorization also helps me meditate on Scripture. Emphasize the subjects, the verbs and clauses as you recite the Word. You just work your way through it. Thy Word have I HID in my heart that I may not SIN against THEE. You delight in the Word, the law of the Lord.

What is the result? Number two, is that the revived Christian will have a productive life. Then we are given a picture of this. Psalm 1:3 says *[3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.* So what is a believer like who says 'no' to the counsel of the ungodly, 'no' to the path of the sinner, 'no' to the seat of the scoffer and 'yes' to the Word of God with a passionate day and night absorbing of it? You are a tree that is planted by streams of water and the water keeps nourishing the roots. The roots keep putting out fruit where you bear fruit in season and then its leaf doesn't wither. The believer is always in season. The believer is an evergreen so revival is not seasonal for it's a way of life. Revival is not the objective but the corrective to bring life – seasons unending.

In whatever he does he prospers but that doesn't mean the prosperity of health and wealth. Believers get sick, lose money, lose jobs and all of that stuff but God sustains you. The prosperity of the believer is the matters of eternity are gloriously triumphant in their heart and from their lives. It is the success of the Kingdom that begins to flow from their lives. That is what the revived believer looks like with those streams of water. The streams go back to the Word of God and the Spirit of God that feed and nurture you. If you ignore God's Word then you are ignoring God. It is that simple. If you ignore the preaching of God's Word you are ignoring Jesus. I'm not saying that to keep my job, I'm telling you that because it's my job, regardless of whether it's me or someone else. When God's Word is preached faithfully and His Spirit is upon it, it is no longer the preacher but Jesus Himself speaks to His people.

Jesus says in John 10:27, *[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* Romans 10:13-17 says *[13] For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Acts 2:21, Joel 2:32) [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" [16] But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" [17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* Forget the preacher. I Corinthians 1:21 says *[21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*

The streams of water flow in His Word as it is sung, confessed, meditated, taught, read and preached. Feed and drink deeply. The root is seen in the fruit. I love the fact that Christianity is always invisible to become visible. It is internal to become external. I don't see the root because it's under the ground but I see the fruit. We are salt and light. Have you ever noticed how putting salt and butter on corn makes it taste so good? You don't say that was wonderful salt and butter but you say it was wonderful corn. By the way, when the salt is working you don't even see it. It has an effect far beyond its size. In the Kingdom parables we see how the little seed becomes the tree and the leaven in the lump leavens the whole lump. There is the seed that bears fruit thirty, sixty and hundred fold. God does work invisible and

when He works invisible it becomes visible. God works internally and when He works internally it becomes external.

So the believer is not only productive from the inside out and the invisible made visible but thirdly the believer therefore stands in contrast to the unbeliever, the wicked are not so. The wicked are not trees, they are chaff. They are always moving from one idol the next one. Maybe this or that will help. It is just chaff being blown around into all the idols of the age and none can satisfy but the heart undealt with is as Calvin says 'an unstoppable idol factory.' The chaff is driven all over the place but the believer is a tree in contrast, firmly planted, growing and bearing fruit always in season. The Kingdom prosperity is at work through you.

What is the result of the wicked? Psalm 1:4-6 says [4] *The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.* [5] *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;* [6] *for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.* What does it mean for the believer to stand in the judgment and how do we stand in the judgment? It is because the Lord knows the way of the righteous. The wicked will not stand in the judgment and they will perish.

There is a way and that way is through His Son Jesus. I invite you to Him and I want you to live in Him. In revival God comes down and praise goes up and the Gospel goes out then sin gets killed and life is seen. Watch what happens in a revived man or woman to a church. Then watch what happens to a church to a nation.

When I was a student pastor I was preaching on the book of Philippians and I had two experiences I will never forget. One had to do when I was preaching from chapter 3 to chapter 4 and I made the comment 'I will go from chapter 3 right into chapter 4 but just know that 4 is not inspired.' I had an elder afterwards ask me what I meant by that and I said 'I meant the heading' and he said 'you better say it the way you mean it next time or you won't have a job.' I had a Bible lesson that day on preaching so that was very helpful.

The second time when preaching in Philippians happened on Mother's Day. This congregation had started from revival that happened in 17 people that had grown to a couple of hundred and God was beginning to do something that was spilling over into the families. There was a dear lady named Ruth who was a saint in this church and her husband had started coming which was wonderful to see what was happening in his life. She had two sons that had gone away – one into drugs and one into the idolatry of sports. He was an all-American high school player, a man's man and he was absolutely opposed to Christianity. His mother asked him to come with her to church on Mother's Day and so she came to me and said 'Randy is coming. You have a shot preacher. Don't waste it.' No pressure there.

We didn't have a building so our church met in a house in a living room. My pulpit was a television. This was in 1974 so the TVs had tubes coming out of the back of them. When you preach in polyester pants behind a television with tubes coming out the back the pants would get picked, snagged and eventually ruined them. We had already started, having prayerful meditation, getting ready for worship and we hear this full throated Harley pull up in the front yard. Randy burst in the door, grabs a dining room chair, turns it backwards, sits down, puts his arms on the back of the chair and looks at me. I was motivated to preach the Gospel to him and I was hoping that motivation was mostly of the Lord but God was so gracious.

Randy wouldn't shake my hand afterwards but briskly walked by and left on his motorcycle. I hugged his mom Ruth and said 'I shared the Gospel, just pray.' She left crying. It was almost 2pm that afternoon and Cindy and I are eating our meal and I hear this Harley Davidson in a full throated roar coming up into my front yard. I looked out the window and

there is Randy jumping off his motorcycle coming to my front door with his black leather jacket on. He had the reddest face I have ever seen in my life and it looks like he was going to explode. I said to my wife, 'honey, I'll get the door but I may not be back.' I opened the door and Randy said 'Preacher, do you believe that stuff you said today?' 'I sure do Randy.' He said 'I need to come back home, would you pray with me?'

It wasn't a picture of a broken and contrite heart but it was amazing what God did with that young man. This young man began to spread the Gospel throughout his high school and baseball team and brought so many to church with him that I was able to preach the Gospel to. It was the awakening from a revival. He was a revived man of the Lord, an Enosh, prioritized, productive and different. Now there was an awakening. Revive us again O Lord. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Perhaps you want to pray with someone today about coming to Christ or your walk with Christ and if you want to do that please contact us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. O God, our God, hear us as we walk into this year. Teach us of the revival of Your church but revive me, revive us again O Lord for this is Your work in us that will enable us to work for You but most of all to rejoice in You. Revive us again O Lord that Your people may rejoice in You, Amen.

Power Point

LIFE TAKEAWAY

I. The revived Christian lives a Christ-centered, prioritized life.

- A. Pay close attention to the counsel you receive in life
- B. Flee temptation
- C. Do not be cynical---watch the company you keep
- D. Delight in God's Word
- E. Meditate on God's Word

II. What's inside will be seen outside.

III. The believer stands in contrast to the unbeliever.