

2017 Global Ministries Conference
“Revive the Nations”
Malachi 1:11–14
Pastor Bryan Wintersteen
March 5, 2017 • Evening Sermon

This has been an extraordinary week here at Briarwood Church as the Global Ministries Conference comes to a close. It has certainly brought a lot of joy to my heart to meet with our missionaries. It is a pretty intimidating thing to be the new mission’s pastor when the former mission’s pastor is quite a legend. We thank the Lord for Reverend Cheely and those who have gone before him but they brought on all the missionaries. We have over 320 missionaries and as the new mission’s pastor I know only about 45 to 50 of them so this mission’s conference was phenomenal for me because I was able to meet 30 more missionaries. I praise the Lord for that. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Thank You Lord, for Your Word and thank You that it’s true, reliable and useful to teach, train, correct, rebuke, instruct and to cheer our hearts. I pray that Your Word would do that in this study through the power of Your Holy Spirit, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Our theme for this week has been Revive the Nations. It is really much more than a theme, it’s a prayer of our church. This year our church’s theme is ‘Revive us again, O Lord.’ We have been told that revival must start with the church, God’s children, those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. It is our prayer that God would use us to be ‘sent ones’ out to revive the nations. As He does this work of reviving the nations I want to draw our attention in this study to three particular ways God revives the nations. I’d like to start by reading the text for this study and our theme for the Global Mission’s Conference from Malachi 1.

Malachi 1:11–14 says [11] *For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. [12] But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. [13] But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. [14] Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.*

The Lord is very protective of His Name. He is a great King with a great Name and in this passage it indicates that the worship of God’s people had shifted so significantly that the way in which the priests and the children of God were bringing their offerings and worship to God was less than half-hearted. They were bringing bad offerings. They were bringing offerings that had been stolen from someone else that they didn’t even do anything for. It wasn’t costing them anything. They weren’t even bringing offerings prescribed as a holy offering that the Lord had instituted. They were bringing the lame sheep, the ones that weren’t pure as offerings and not bringing the first born male sheep. They were bringing a troubled offering or an offering that they were sort of happy to get rid of. This is of great concern to God.

What is at stake when our worship does not exalt the holy Lord of Hosts? It is His Name. He is jealous for His Name because His Name is representative of who He is. This is an indication that the people of God had forgotten the holiness of God. They had forgotten His exalted status as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May it not be so at Briarwood church. May we be gripped by the Name of God. May the Name of God be something you want to honor and cherish in your own hearts. May you set apart Christ in your own heart as Lord, as holy, as honorable and may His Name cause you to reflect on your own life.

Some 500 years before Christ, the Israelites had wandered. They were coming to the synagogues and going about the motions but their motions indicated a desperate need for revival in their hearts. God's Name was not being magnified by their half-hearted worship. May it never be so for us. May the Name of God mean more to us at Briarwood than that. In this study I want to highlight three aspects of how we might exalt the Name of God and rightfully worship Him in worship through three "C's". God's plan for reviving the nation is evident in these three "C's."

The first C is Communion. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper after this study. At great cost and sacrifice He laid down His life as the Great Shepherd of the flock. He gave Himself willingly. His love compelled Him. His obedience to the Father drove Him to the cross. That is why we have the bread and the wine that we will partake together in as the family of God. The body of Christ was broken for you and the sins of the world. The wine represents the shed blood when Jesus hung on that cross. As He hung on that cross He cried out and gave up His Spirit on that last word. He bled and died for us and that is represented in the wine that we'll take in fellowship.

Revival cost Jesus something significant and we represent that as we come to the Lord's Table. What a great meal that God would gather the family together. This is a worshipping community here at Briarwood Church and He is gathering us together. May revival start because we're going to remember that great sacrifice that Jesus did on our behalf. May a revival begin in your hearts this night as you take those elements and you feed on Him in your heart with thanksgiving. May that cause the Name of God to be magnified through Communion.

The second C is Commission. We know this as the Great Commission found in Matthew 28. The commission of Christ causes of to need and experience revival because we cannot go out in our own strength. In John 15 Jesus teaches that apart from Him you can do nothing. The Great Commission wasn't just given to us as a raw command from Jesus but He also empowered us through His Spirit.

Matthew 28:18–20 says [18] *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always, to the end of the age.**"* We see the empowerment of His Spirit in verse 20 which allows us to fulfill the Great Commission and see it being done. God is empowering His church and this is where revival begins. It is when God's Spirit is in you and He sends you out to make disciples. The commission of Christ is a starting point for us to take the message of Hope to the nations.

This past week we have had about 30 missionaries with us and it's hard to say 'goodbye' especially as we have built relationships with them. There is a sense of loss but also a sense of joy as we are sending them back out with this Great Commission. We are so thankful we have this opportunity but I'd be lying if I didn't say there is a part of my heart that hurts to say goodbye and realize that this week is over. But these missionaries go with our love and support

of this church. They are commissioned by the power of the Holy Spirit to be sent out to the nations and may it serve as a reminder to you as revival. May you be fueled and encouraged by the pledges made to support you as Briarwood Sent Ones to the nations.

The final C I'd like to point out is one we are eagerly waiting for and it will happen for this day will come. This C is the Consummation of the Age, the second coming of Christ. Jesus is coming again. His commission in Matthew 28 is clear. Just as we are saying goodbye to our missionaries now, our hearts stirred with mixed emotions, Jesus has that same experience as He was leading up to the day on the cross. This is outlined for us in Matthew 24 through Matthew 28, closing with the Great Commission.

I'd like to read for you some of the chapter headings that show us what was on the mind and heart of Christ during the time leading up to the cross. Headings in Matthew 24; 'signs of the end of the age', 'the coming of the Son of Man', 'the day and hour are unknown.' Headings in Matthew 25; 'the parable of the ten virgins' which teach us as the church to watch and be prepared, 'the parable of the talents' which teach us to invest to please our Master and 'the final judgment' which talks about the Son of Man coming in glory with all of the heavenly hosts. Headings in Matthew 26; 'the plot to kill Jesus,' 'Jesus anointed at Bethany' by the woman and when the disciples rebuked her for pouring out such expensive perfume Jesus said 'She is doing a beautiful thing because she is preparing Me for burial.' Another heading in that chapter is 'Judas betrays Jesus,' 'the Passover with the Disciples', 'Jesus prays in Gethsemane', 'Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus', 'Jesus Before Caiaphas and the Council' and 'Peter denies Jesus.'

The headings in Matthew 27; 'Jesus is delivered to Pilot', 'Judas hangs himself', 'the Crowd chooses Barabbas over Jesus', 'Pilot delivers Jesus to be crucified', 'Jesus is mocked', 'the crucifixion', 'the death of Jesus', 'Jesus is buried' and 'the guard at the tomb.' The headings in Matthew 28; 'The resurrection' and we praise the Lord He conquered death and rose from the grave, 'the report of the guard' and 'the Great Commission.' These headings are clearly important for us to get us ready and to understand the marching orders we would have. Even when Jesus brought the Great Commission to the Disciples, this is what brings revival – reflecting and remembering on what Jesus has accomplished, what He has done for me and you so that the name of God would be magnified. May it always be so at this church.

May we testify and always be prepared for the coming of Christ. This is not a false myth. He is coming back. Will we be ready? The Scripture challenges us. Matthew 25 tells us there will be many who will not be prepared for His return. May it not be so of us at Briarwood. May He find us serving Him faithfully, praying diligently, giving sacrificially, and cheerfully giving, going and serving. May this be the testimony of Briarwood Church and in our own hearts. May God truly revive the nations! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this opportunity to open Your Word. Lord, may You magnify Your Name. God, I pray that You would bring repentance to our hearts if the Name of Jesus has been lowered in our esteem of it, in our worship, may we not bring half-hearted offerings to You. Lord Jesus, may we worship You as Your Name requires, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings. May You truly be exalted and elevated. May the Name of God matter in our speech, actions and behaviors and may the Name of God be magnified among the nations. Revive the nations O Lord Jesus, in Christ's Name, Amen.