

XI. Revival in Biblical Perspective
Revive Us Again!
“The Jehoshaphat Revival—Seeking the Face of God”
II Chronicles 20
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We are in II Chronicles 20 for this study which is the rule and reign of King Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat’s entire reign is covered in II Chronicles 17 through chapter 20 but we will just be focusing on chapter 20 for this study. II Chronicles 20:1–12 says [1] *After this (referring to the hand of blessing from God recorded in chapter 19) the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. [2] Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi). [3] Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. [4] And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*

[5] And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, [6] and said, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. [7] Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? [8] And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, [9] ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’ [10] And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— [11] behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. [12] O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

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

The year was 1857, an ordinary man John Girardeau, in an ordinary place Charleston, South Carolina, was called to use the ordinary means of preaching, evangelism and prayer to an evangelistic task by a church that still stands to this day, Second Presbyterian Church. They called this young theological student who was of no reputation at the time, although he will become a man of reputation. In fact, he will be offered some of the greatest pulpits to preach throughout this country including Atlanta, New York, New Orleans and in other places but he never would leave. He grew up on a plantation in the midst of chattel slavery of the African Americans and his heart began to reach out to them. He never took these extraordinary pulpits of privilege in order to give his life in pastoral ministry, evangelism and discipleship among what was called the ‘low country’ slaves in South Carolina. Word had gotten out about him.

In these younger years when Girardeau was not known at all this church called him to ask him to do a work of evangelism among the African Americans in Charleston and the surrounding areas. He was not meeting with much success at all so he decided that they needed to pray. He had a little church called Mount Zion Presbyterian church and it’s still there to this day. He was

the first pastor in the Presbyterian Church to ordain and serve with ruling elders who were African Americans. He began to meet with his elders once a week for prayer. It then went to everyday and after a while his elders asked him 'is it not time for you to preach?' He would say 'no, not yet. The Lord is hearing us but He hasn't come to us. Let's wait on Him. Let's seek Him.' This happened day after day and week after week. Then as the time moved into 1858 they were in a worship service when he turned to one of his elders who he had grown very close to and said 'now is the time.'

John Girardeau got up and preached. The Spirit of God came upon that place and men and women flocked to Christ. The word went out throughout Charleston. Day after day they would assemble as the revival continued and it began to sweep in hundreds and thousands into the Kingdom of God in Charleston, both black and white. It was such an unusual site for in those days there would be segregated seating. There would be white parishioners sitting on the floor of the worship room and the black congregation would be sitting in the balcony but that's not the way it was at Mount Zion. The black congregation sat on the floor and all of the white seekers who were coming to find out what was going on were seated in the balcony. They might as well been seated together because they all began to join one another in great joy to the Lord. Hundreds were being ushered into the Kingdom of God and out of this revival came a great Gospel harvest in Charleston but it didn't stop there.

Before I tell you what happened there I want to take you up to New York City in 1857. There was a businessman who had been brought to Christ and following Christ. His name was Jeremiah Lanphier. J. Edwin Orr records these events in great detail in some of the books he wrote on the revivals in America. Lanphier had become a Christian at the 19th Presbyterian Church and was encouraged to leave his business world to go to work for his church. He started a ministry of evangelism. In the 1850s thousands of immigrants began to come into the New York Harbor and settle in New York. It had become very coarse in all of this immigration movement there. This was a great fishing pool for the Gospel and was able to get Mr. Lanphier to reach out in evangelism but he was meeting with no success. In the same year (1857) John Girardeau went to prayer, Lanphier said the same thing with the people he was with, 'let's go to prayer and seek the Lord.'

Lanphier called a prayer meeting on September 17, 1857 and seven people showed up for prayer. The next week 15 showed up. The next week it was 30. By the summer of 1858 there were thousands of people piling into, swarming, filling up to overflowing, everyday churches throughout New York City and then came a Gospel harvest where J. Edwin Orr has recorded conservatively speaking that there were over 500,000 professions of faith in 1858 and 1859 in New York City. New York and Charleston are shipping seaports and because of the exchange between the two cities the revivals and the Gospel harvest began to coincide and the synergy of both of them began to work together but it didn't stop there. It began to overflow where there ships would go out to those who were being converted and disciplined.

There were 50,000 conversions in Ulster where the ships would dock from New York and Charleston. There were over 100,000 in Wales and London. Then the seaports of America began to be blessed with the overflow of what was happening in New York and Charleston as great outbreaks of the Gospel began around the docks and wharfs of New Orleans. It also hit Baltimore as well. This all began with concentrated, persistent, patient, persevering, protracted prayer. There is no Gospel harvest without a revived church. There is no revived church without prayer. Look at all the revivals in history.

We have looked at the revival with Nehemiah, at Pentecost, in Ezekiel 37, the valley of dry bones, and every time there is a revival, an awakening, an ingathering of men and women into the Kingdom of God it is always preceded by prayer. There is the prayer in Daniel 9, Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9, the prayer meeting of the 120 in the Upper Room in Acts 2 which all took place before revivals broke out in those areas. Not only in the Bible but in church history you will search in vain for a true heaven-sent revival that did not start with prayer.

To pray you have to humble yourself. Arrogance won't send you to your knees. Self-confidence won't send you to your knees. Only humility will send us to our knees. We humble ourselves to seek His face and to turn from our wicked ways. That certainly sounds familiar doesn't it? That is why II Chronicles was written by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Israel had been in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. They had come home but they were no longer under a Davidic King for now they were under the foreign rule of the Medo-Persian Empire. In this time it is recorded that there was pestilence, famine, and drought happening in Israel. So the writer of Chronicles goes back to rewrite the history of Israel. It is already recorded in I and II Samuel and I and II Kings but he rewrites it in order to bring an emphasis.

In I Chronicles he gives the foundation of God's blessing and God's sovereign hand working through the Davidic king through which He'll bring a Messiah. In II Chronicles He allows the son of David, Solomon, to build the house of God, the Solomonic Temple and the shekinah glory that was poured out on that temple. Then God spoke this at the dedication service '**when I send** pestilence, famine and drought then if My people...for in the days of prosperity you have forgotten Me so I only bring you back in the days of adversity. Then if **My people** who are called by My name will humble themselves, pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear them, forgive them and heal them.' Our God makes very clear that revivals are God-sent and not worked up by us. The same God who does this give us the design that He has ordained. In other words, a divinely sent revival is brought through the Divine design. The roadmap of revival is humble yourself, pray, seek His face and turn from your wicked ways. Then He hears, forgives and heals. So that is what is laid out for us in II Chronicles.

After giving us the divine design in II Chronicles, the writer then records the history of the kings after Solomon and in it the writer highlights five revivals. All five of those revivals fit the Biblical definition of revival. The Biblical definition of revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory. What are the two extraordinary consequences? They are God-centered worship and Gospel harvests. It is not worship-centered worship or worship feelings even though there are many feelings with it. There is the vertical of worship and the horizontal of people being swept into the Kingdom of God.

In Charleston with Girardeau there was the gathering of worship. From that worship comes the Gospel harvest that spills through the sea and shipping lanes. The same happens in New York from a gathering of worship and out comes a Gospel harvest. In the midst of both of them is prayer. Why is prayer there? It is because God brings harvest through a revived church and there is no revived church without prayer. We arrive at prayer when we humble ourselves, seek His face and then we pray while we're turning from our wicked ways to follow and love Him. He outlines this for us in II Chronicles 7:14.

Then He gives us illustrations. We have already looked at one revival under Rehoboam. All five of the revivals in II Chronicles contain all four of these Divine design marks of revival but each revival emphasizes one of those elements. The first one under Rehoboam and the last

one which will get to in a couple of studies under Josiah are the revivals that emphasize humbling ourselves. In our last study we looked at the revival under King Asa and we saw a king who would seek the face of God. This week we are looking at the revival under Jehoshaphat and the emphasis is on prayer. In the prayer life of King Jehoshaphat there are some things we cannot miss.

Before I outline what we need to see from his prayer life I want you to see something about Jehoshaphat. Think of ordinary people. Jehoshaphat is of the line of David. He is an imperfect man, a sinner saved by grace. There is a statement repeated in II Chronicles 17 through 20 which says 'Jehoshaphat followed the ways of his father David' and that is code language in the book of Chronicles that he is a good king but he was far from perfect. Normally every time something bad is about to happen with King Jehoshaphat he goes and makes an alliance with other kings. He looks to them instead of the Lord.

Here is one of those alliances. The king of the northern kingdom is named King Ahab. He is not a good king. Jehoshaphat takes his son Jehoram and gives him to Ahab's daughter to marry. How dumb can you be but he wants the help of the northern kingdom. When she becomes queen mother she almost destroys the entire Davidic line. When problems came for Jehoshaphat his normal tendency was to personally solve them by creating an alliance with another king. So God has to deal with him by sending him four preachers who have to deal with Jehoshaphat. Four different preachers at four different times come to challenge him concerning what he is doing – 'this is not good.'

Now having said that, praise the Lord Jehoshaphat would listen and he would repent. Here he gets word that all of these blood thirsty enemies are on their way. When Jehoshaphat sees this he doesn't go to make an alliance with one of the kings. He goes directly to the King of Kings. Four different times in the text it says he sought the face of God. Then it says he prayed and then doubled down on the prayer by proclaiming a fast with the prayer. It is this revival prayer that has for us some basic lessons. I'm not talking about just prayer because I know all of us are going to pray, even atheists pray. When their hand gets hit with a hammer there is a prayer that will come right out. We were made to pray and we're going to pray. We may not pray rightly, effectively or God honoring that God hears but everybody prays.

The outline for us to pray is given to us in what we call the Lord's Prayer but more precisely the Disciples prayer when it teaches us how to pray but I'm not talking about the general life of prayer. I am talking about in this study specifically revival prayer. What are the marks of revival prayer? What does revival prayer look like? Jehoshaphat gives us some insight on this and I want to give you five of them.

One, is revival prayer is need-generated and desperate. It's not just checking off a box that you did it. This is calling out to God. There has been a quick assessment where the need is greater than my resources I bring to it. Therefore there is a calling out upon God in desperation. Here is an illustration. One day I was walking out in the lobby between services and I saw my doctor who had a heart episode where his heart just flat-lined four different times. I will never forget how the people of this church began to rally around him doing what they were equipped to do. It was wonderful to see the nurses and doctors here in this church zero in on this dear brother. I was the one holding his legs up in the air. I remember seeing a wife, three staff pastors and scores of members calling out to God in desperation, 'Please save him!' We were doing what we were supposed to do but our eyes were on the Lord. We were calling out to Him in God's kind providence at 2pm that afternoon and I had the privilege to sit in a hospital room to talk to him as God answered those calls out of desperation.

Most of us actually think we can pull this Christian life off. The text says when Jehoshaphat saw all of his enemies lined up he was afraid. He called out to God, 'In the face of our enemies we are powerless, will You not deliver us, O God of glory?' Until you get there you are not going to pray but I want to try and get you there. Do you want your children to be saved or do you want a nice youth group for them to be a part of so they won't embarrass you? You do realize they are dead and you can't save them. No one can save them but only God can save them so are you calling out in desperation to God to save your children? I'm all for learning parental principles and fulfilling our vows to our children but are we calling out in desperation to God who will give you the wisdom, courage, and ability to speak truth in love to them and those in that classroom, in your job, and your neighborhood? You can't pull this thing off for we don't have the resources to do it. Look at those who would target you. Most of them are a lot smarter than us. We're almost powerless when we look at them except our eyes are on the Lord. The need is beyond us. The problems and adversity cannot be solved by us for it is greater than us and our abilities so we call out to the Lord.

Do you want your marriage to be all that it was meant to be Biblically for you two to enjoy intimacy, to walk together and have that oneness then you need to call upon the Lord because the answer isn't in your spouse? The answer is to have God in your marriage. God comes when you call but most of us don't call because we think we can handle it. It's just a little technique adjustment I need to make. The reality is that God is the only one who can come and meet this need that we face. We are in a nation that desperately needs the work of the Gospel. We are in a city that needs the work of the Gospel and that work of the Gospel awaits that work of the Gospel in us as a church and as individuals. This only comes from God's people calling out in prayer because the need is greater than us and we call out to the Lord in desperation because without Him we cannot deal with it.

Number two is that revival prayer is personal and pervasive. Jehoshaphat was afraid and he called upon the Lord but it said three times in the text that all Israel including the women and children came together with him in prayer. It is personal for you don't wait for a program in the church. You start praying personally and that pervades the entire population of God's people.

Number three is revival prayer is God-focused and God-confident. Jehoshaphat prayed 'God You are the King of all the nations. God You're the One who is sovereign over all. God, You're the One who drove out the nations to give us this land as a permanent inheritance that we are to possess. You are the One who will keep us here because You gave us the ability to do it. You told us not to destroy these nations on our way up here but now they have come to destroy us, O God will You not deliver Your people as You always have?' You can't have confidence to face the issues of life with the power of God until you know the power of God and you can't know that without knowing who God is. You can't know the God of the Word without knowing the Word of God and when you know the Word of God then you know who God is and what He has done. This God who did this in the days of Jehoshaphat can revive you because that God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). When you are God-focused you become God-confident and then you see the power of the presence of God at work.

We're not doing great things for God because we don't know how great God is. Many don't do great things for God we just try to do great things for ourselves in the name of God. The Bible says seek great things for yourselves, seek them not but to do great things for God requires knowing who God is and not knowing who you are. You need to know that you are not sufficient for this. I want to tell you how great this God is who lives within me. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and all the nations bow to Him. When you get a big God and know a

big God then you do great things for God. When we humble ourselves God will entrust big things to us because we're doing it by Him and for Him.

II Chronicles 20:13–23 says [13] *Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. [14] And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. [15] And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. [16] Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. [17] You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."* (This is the same thing the people of Israel heard when they left Egypt and saw the parting of the Red Sea.)

[18] *Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. [19] And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.*

[20] *And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." [21] And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."*

[22] *And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. [23] For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.*

The fourth thing about revival prayer is revival prayer trusts God and obeys God. God tells Jehoshaphat to take them out to stand firm against the enemy. 'How am I to do that Lord?' "Send the choir out first." How many of you think that at West Point training they are taught to send the Navy choir out first? The Lord is going to handle this battle so just send the choir out first. I don't know He did but the enemy ends up fighting each other. You can count on this; all the enemies you see out there are probably greater than us but greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Because of every inconsistency of every world view that raises itself up against God they end up destroying themselves. So they did and the rest of the time they just went around picking up the plunder from the victory that the Lord had given them.

So in revival prayer we're going to send out the preachers. They are fools and that's okay because God uses fools. We're going to use preaching and the world says that's foolishness. God says that it is through the foolishness of preaching that He saves. We're going to have an army that marches on its knees and loves the enemies to win them to Christ. We have an army that is going to trust God and obey His commands. His strategy will be our strategy. We'll use the armor of Christ and the weapons of the Spirit.

Number five, revival prayer is doxological because it comes from worship and leads to worship. The prayer starts when they do worship. The prayer calls for worship and it sends

them out. They go out worshipping into the battle. Revival prayer comes out of worship and it leads to worship because only the Lord is to be glorified.

So here's your takeaway. Revival awaits revival prayer and will not come without it but revival does come when His people "humble themselves and seek the Lord." Ladies, I can't imagine what it must be to be a mother but I know some mothers. I know my grandmother used to pray for me at 5:30 every morning and my own mother. I know of a Susanna Wesley. She was the mother of John and Charles Wesley and from them came a great awakening. Samuel and Susanna Wesley had 19 children and these were just two of them. Her number one priority is prayer. Every morning the 19 kids sat in one room and they couldn't say a word while momma put the apron over her head to look only to the Lord. When she took the apron down they could talk but until then they couldn't. From that came John Wesley and Charles Wesley and from the great awakening that came from them came the Gospel throughout Europe and all of America and spilled into a missionary movement. It is that great movement of God's grace that takes place when God's people call upon the Lord.

Why don't we call upon the Lord? Do you think it's until I get smarter that God can't understand me? When a baby is born it breathes. When someone gets born again they pray. They call upon the name of the Lord. A mother doesn't need a lot of insight to know what the baby is saying. The Lord can hear you. The Lord can understand you. Don't wait, just call upon Him. The only thing that keeps us from praying is that we still have the arrogance to think we can do it ourselves. We don't pray when we're indifferent or we're arrogant enough to think that we follow this. Would you pray, worship, listen for God moves as His people humble themselves, pray and seek His face.

I am paraphrasing my dear brother Sandy Wilson here; fear is transformed into faith abounding. When you call upon the Lord and your eyes are only on Him ranker is replaced by rejoicing and gloom is replaced with gladness. Call upon Him. O Lord, my eyes are on You. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. We would place our heart in Your hands and our eyes on You. Lord, we have made You far too small. Forgive us. Be magnified O Lord. Our eyes are on You. We have prayer teams that are praying for revival all over this church and maybe you want to begin one, maybe you want to begin a prayer time in your marriage, with your children then just start it. I'll be glad to be available to help you. Call upon Him. Humble yourself. Lord, to whom else will I go? My eyes are on You. I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

REVIVAL

Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory.

GOD-SENT REVIVAL EVIDENCES

1. God-centered worship
2. Gospel Harvests

GOD'S DESIGN FOR REVIVAL – II Chronicles 7:14 (The Temple Prayer)

1. Humble themselves–*Revival comes down to lift God's people up when they bow down to lift Him up.*
2. Pray
3. Seek My face–*A revival relationship with God is a real relationship—a reciprocal relationship.*
4. Turn from their wicked ways

JEHOSHAPHAT REVIVAL & REVIVAL PRAYER

- I. Revival Prayer is need-generated and desperate
- II. Revival Prayer is Personal and Pervasive
- III. Revival Prayer is God-focused and God-confident
- IV. Revival Prayer trusts God and obeys God
- V. Revival Prayer comes from worship and leads to worship

LIFE TAKEWAY

Revival awaits Revival prayer and will not come without it, but revival does come when His people “humble themselves and seek the Lord.”

O, LORD OUR EYES ARE ON YOU