

The Revival Prayer

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Pastor E. Keith Hassell

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) “If My people who are called by My name will 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.”

This is my third article in a series entitled, “God’s Prescription for a Troubled Nation”. America is a troubled nation. America is sick with sin. She is blinded by pride and deaf to the truth. America is dying and in need of a cure. God has the prescription for what ails America. The prophet Jeremiah lamented, *“Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?”*¹ Is there hope for America? Is there a cure for what ails America? Yes there is. God’s prescription for a troubled nation is not a change in Washington or Wall Street. God’s prescription for America is revival in the church.

The church in America needs revival. The first ingredient in God’s prescription for revival is a remnant, a revival core. A revival core is a godly remnant of people who see the desperate condition of the church and the nation and who understand that returning to God is their only hope. The second ingredient in God’s prescription is humility. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.² Humility is the revival attitude that unlocks the grace needed for revival.

The next ingredient in God’s prescription for revival is prayer. Prayer is indispensable in revival. In fact, there is a direct connection between prayer and revival. Dr. J. Wilburn Chapman once said, “Revivals are born in prayer. When Wesley prayed, England was revived; when Knox prayed, Scotland was refreshed; when the Sunday school teachers of Tannybrook prayed, eleven thousand young people were added to the church in a year. Whole nights of prayer have always been succeeded by whole days of soulwinning.” E. M. Bounds said, “All true revivals have been born in prayer. When God’s people become so concerned about the state of religion that they lie on their faces day and night in earnest supplication, the blessings will be sure to fall.” Revival will not come without prayer.

Revival prayer is acceptable only when offered by a people whose heart is turned toward God. When people continue in sin, God will not hear their prayer: *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.”*² *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”*³ Revival prayer is the only effective prayer that God will hear from a backslidden people.

Because of the degenerate spiritual condition among His people, the grace of revival prayer must be initiated by God, Dr. J. Edwin Orr said, “Whenever God gets ready to move, He always sets His people to praying.” The LORD spoke through the prophet Zechariah saying: *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”*⁴ God spoke through the prophet Joel saying, *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand.”*⁵ While in captivity, the prophet Daniel was drawn to study the prophecies of Jeremiah regarding the return of time of restoration of Jerusalem. Through this God stirred his heart with the need to pray: “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the

¹ Jeremiah 8:22 (NKJV)

² James 4:6

³ Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV)

⁴ Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

⁵ Joel 2:1 (NKJV)

number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”⁶ God reveals His desire to bring revival when He stirs His people to pray for revival.

Backslidden people have a low view of God. Therefore revival prayer begins with the restoration of a high view of God. A high view of God comes through a revelation of God’s holiness and man’s sinfulness. The prophet Isaiah was transformed with a high view of God when he encountered God’s holy presence in a vision: *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’”*⁷

Revival prayer involves identification with and confession of the sins of present and former generations. Revival prayer identifies personally with the sins of present and former generations which have led to the present condition and need for revival. Revival prayer does not say, “They have sinned” but “We have sinned”. The prayer in Daniel 9:3–7 (NKJV) is a prime example of revival prayer: *“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.”*

Revival prayer is accepting personal and corporate responsibility for the consequences of sin. God will wait until His people admit their own guilt before He will respond in revival. God spoke through the prophet Hosea, *“For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. 15 I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”*⁸ Daniel prayed, *“O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem: 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!”*⁹ Revival prayer is a humble admission that the consequences of sin are our fault rather than God’s.

⁶ Daniel 9:1–2 (NKJV)

⁷ Isaiah 6:1–5 (NKJV)

⁸ Hosea 5:14–15 (NKJV)

⁹ Daniel 9:8–15 (NKJV)

Revival prayer is not a demand on God but a plea for His mercy and grace. The prophet Habakkuk prayed, *“O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.”*¹⁰ In the same way Daniel prayed, *“O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.”*¹⁷ Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.¹⁸ *O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.”*¹⁹ *O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”*²¹ God does not send revival because we deserve it but because we need it. Revival is God choosing mercy rather than judgment.

Revival prayer is the means through which a breakthrough in heaven comes. Daniel experienced this kind of breakthrough: *“Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,”*²¹ *yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.”*²² *And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.”*²² The doors of heaven that were closed tight were now opened. Revival prayer brought about a change in the relationship between heaven and earth.

Through revival prayer God reveals what He is doing and what He wants to do. God partners with us in prayer and shows us how to pray when previously we did not know how. God reveals His plan in revival through the agency of His Holy Spirit: *“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’”*¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”*¹³ Through the help of the Holy Spirit we are able to pray, *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*¹⁴ Not only does the Holy Spirit help us to know what we need to pray but He also helps us as we pray: *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*¹⁵

Revival will come as God’s people set themselves to prayer. Prayer is not the ministry of a few. Prayer is open to all. Consider the following poem entitled “The Ministry of Prayer”

There’s a holy high vocation
Needing workers everywhere;
Tis the highest form of service—
Tis the ministry of prayer

None need stand idly longing
For a place in which to share
Active service for the Master—
There’s always room in prayer.

In these wicked days of tribulation,
Wickedness pervades the air;
And the battles we engage in

¹⁰ Habakkuk 3:2 (NKJV)

¹¹ Daniel 9:16–19 (NKJV)

¹² Daniel 9:20–22 (NKJV)

¹³ 1 Corinthians 2:9–10 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Matthew 6:10 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

Must be won by fervent prayer.

There's no weapon half so mighty
As what the intercessors bear;
Nor a broader field of service
Than the ministry of prayer.

God is looking for a revival core of humble people who will set their hearts to pray for revival. Will you be among this godly core? Will you wear the garment of humility? Will you set your heart to pray for revival? God does nothing until He sets His people to praying. May God raise up an army of prayer so that revival may come in our day! In the midst of wrath, may He remember mercy by sending revival!

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Grace Fellowship
P.O. Box 260
Rusk, Texas 75785
(903) 683-6550
www.gracefellowshiprusk.com