

## Classic Christian Writings:

Edited from a message delivered at the "Heart-Cry for Revival" Conference near Asheville, North Carolina, May 23-27, 2000

Scripture reading: 2 Chronicles 26:1-5

Our Scripture reading is the story of king Uzziah. But first, consider Isaiah, chapter six, where we are told Isaiah had a vision. He saw the glory of God; he saw God seated upon His throne. The Scripture says in Isaiah 6:1, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord..." Why is it mentioned that Uzziah died before the glory of God came to Isaiah? On occasion you will find in the Scriptures that before the glory of God comes to the people of God, someone has to die, or a particular group of people have to die.

One illustration of this would be the children of Israel. They had been in bondage and slavery for four hundred years. God wanted to set them free. God raised up Moses. Moses went and stood before the Pharaoh and told him, "Let my people go!" By signs and wonders and miracles, God delivered the children of Israel. The Red Sea parted and they came out of their bondage. They were set free by the glory of God. But you also remember for forty years they wandered in the wilderness. God's intention was never simply that they be set free from their bondage. God's intention was that they should go back into the land that He had promised them. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness until an entire generation died off. You can read in 1 Corinthians, chapter ten, of those who had to die off before a new generation could rise up in faith and go in and take the land.

So it was with Uzziah. It was only after his death that Isaiah had a vision of God and His glory. Our Scripture reading gives us a little indication of who Uzziah was and why he had to die before the glory of God came back to God's people.

"Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2 Chronicles 26:1-5).

Notice that in verse one and in verse three the Bible says that Uzziah was sixteen years old when he was made king. How could a sixteen-year-old rule and reign as king? He had the responsibility of the kingdom. He was the person with responsibility for the people, for the justice system, for the economy. Uzziah knew nothing about justice; he knew nothing about legal matters; he knew nothing about the economy; he knew nothing about the welfare of the people. Yet he had the responsibility for all the people. How would a sixteen-year-old boy handle such responsibility?

The Bible tells us how he handled it. The Bible says, "...and he sought God in the days of Zechariah...as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (verse 5).

Uzziah didn't know much, but he knew God. He didn't have a lot of learning, and a lot of education, but he knew the One who had all understanding. The Bible says he sought the face of God, and as long as he sought the face of God, God blessed him. God gave him success. God anointed and used him. Uzziah was a man of prayer. Prayer was a priority in the early years of his life.

Go to the New Testament church, and you find that prayer was a priority in the life of the New Testament church. In those early days, they would seek the blessings of God and there would be the glory of God; there would be the presence of God. Because prayer took the place of priority in the life of Uzziah, and in the life of the New Testament church, we see the blessings of God.

## Desperate Prayer For Desperate Needs

I am convinced that prayer is not the only thing, but it is the first thing, if we're going to have revival in our day. If we're going to see the Church be what the Church ought to be, it's not going to come by our might, our strength, our ability--but it's going to come as we seek the face of God. Uzziah sought the face of God.

I believe it is going to take the kind of praying in America that Brother Al Whittinghill talked about--desperate prayer, with tears flowing from our face to the throne of God. God bottles up those tears, and as those tears are bottled up, one day He will release His glory.

There is a prayer movement in this country, for which I praise God. We are praying, but I don't believe there is that sense of desperation yet. I don't believe we have seen our wickedness yet as God wants us to see our wickedness in the light of His holiness. I don't believe we have seen how lost and how far away we really are. I believe there must be a desperate seeking of the face of God.

I was in Romania ministering during those years of difficulty, and one day I was interviewed by a radio announcer here in the United States. We were talking about the situation in Romania and in the Christian Church, and I was sharing about the revival that was taking place there. He asked me the question, "What is the most basic difference between the American church and the Romanian church?" I thought about that question. There are a lot of obvious differences. They're poor; we're rich. We have nice comfortable, air-conditioned, carpeted buildings; they don't. There are a lot of differences between us.

But I answered, "The most basic difference between the Romanian church and the American church is this: they are a needy people, and they know it. We are a needy people; we just don't know it."

I am convinced that the American church is needier than probably any other church in the world. We are desperately in need of God, but we are like that Laodicean Church (Revelation 3:14-22). We say, I am clothed with riches; I have lots of things.... But go into the average church in America and you'll find people who are hurting; you'll find people in desperate situations. Our families are being ripped apart. Our lives are being torn apart; our young people are being destroyed. It's not just outside the church; it's inside the church.

But you know what we've done? We've filled ourselves with conferences, and we've made ourselves so comfortable that we somewhat ease the pain. But we're desperately hurting. Our young people are committing suicide. Our young people are shooting each other. We are in desperation! Still we fill ourselves and we clothe ourselves with all kind of riches and we don't know that we are a needy people.

We can pull off some things that are just good enough to satisfy everybody and give us a little temporary fix. Then when we get a temporary fix, we don't think we need God. That's why we don't pray. Prayer is the outward expression of a heart that says, "O God, I need You! I can't do anything without You!" Where you find a prayerless people, it is because we don't really feel that. We think we can do it ourselves.

We can have our conferences and our evangelistic meetings and our sessions. We can plan and we can program and we know how to organize, and we know how to put it all together. But we make very little impact on the culture, because the lives of the people are not being transformed. We've got to desperately say, "O God, I need You!"

Uzziah, a sixteen-year-old boy, didn't know how to reign in the kingdom. He didn't know what to do. But he had sense to know this: "I need God! I can't do this alone. I need God!"

The kingdom of God is not by might; it's not by power; it's not by the eloquence of a man's speech; it's by the Spirit of the Lord (Zechariah 4:6). God moves, and God works as He finds His people praying.

I'm afraid in our day we have too many people who have been baptized in our churches and who have become members of our churches -- but they have never met Christ. We've had all the ways to manipulate people. We've had all the ways to "draw the net." In the human flesh we've done much to try to bring people into the Kingdom of God, and it's not been a work of God. I had a great lesson to learn and it took me many years to learn that lesson. But now in our meetings I pray, "O God, I pray that it would be You. If it's not You, I don't want to be a part of it. Let it be you!"

Success in the eyes of God is not how many people we have. Success in the eyes of God is simply, have we been obedient to Him? The early Church obeyed the command in Luke, chapter 24. They began that Church in a prayer meeting. The Church was birthed in a prayer meeting; the Church was sustained in a prayer meeting, and if we're going to have revival birthed in this country, it's going to be birthed in the hearts of praying people. It's going to be birthed in the prayer meeting. We must be a people of prayer!

I go other places around the world and see God moving in a mighty, mighty way. You will always find in those places where God is moving, a people of prayer. Some are places of the hidden people, where nobody else

knows about them, but God is mightily at work sending revival to His Church.

### Revival in Nagaland

In the northeastern part of India, in a place called Nagaland, is the most evangelical area of the world. Ninety-five percent of the people have been born again. They've had two major revivals to take place in Nagaland in the last fifty years. God has moved in a mighty way.

Missionaries went there a hundred years ago and took the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Nagaland. But Christians were persecuted. You go to the Nagaland city and outside the city you will see a little community where the first Christians were because they were persecuted and run out of the city. You go to a village and outside the village is a small village. The people who were Christians were persecuted and they went out.

But in the 1950's God brought them to the end of themselves and they began to pray, and they began to seek the face of God and to ask God to send a mighty revival and to move and work. God sent a mighty, sweeping revival. Then in the 1970's God moved again in Nagaland in a tremendous way.

In 1987 I was with two young people from Nagaland and I said, "Tell me about the revival. What's the characteristic of the revival?"

And they said, "Sammy, our churches are different than your churches."

I said, "In what way?"

They said, "We have a sanctuary like you have a sanctuary. Next to our sanctuary is a small building. In that room, 24 hours a day you will find people praying and fasting and seeking the face of God there."

### In Hyderabad

Hyderabad is a Muslim city in the center of India. I have a pastor friend in Hyderabad. His name is Pastor Samuel, pastor of the Hyderabad Baptist Church. I preached at the 25th anniversary of the church which he started in this Muslim city. You may know that to work in a Muslim city is difficult.

When Pastor Samuel and his wife were married and before they started the church, they went to Nagaland and spent a year of internship in Nagaland. They learned the way of the Nagas. When they came to start the church in Hyderabad, they decided that prayer would be a priority, the way it was in Nagaland. They would build not just a people, but a people of prayer. So they made prayer a priority.

In twenty-five years, the church they started in this very difficult area of India, grew to 6000 members. They had sixty missions and there were up to 500 people in those missions. God was moving and working in that church.

I'll never forget preaching that 25th anniversary. The church is a huge facility. Before you walk into the church there is a tower. The top of the tower is glassed in all around and from there you can see every point of the city. When you go into the tower you see Indian men and women on their faces, weeping over the city, seeking God to move in the city. I said to myself, "This is the secret of this church."

Pastor Samuel asked me to come back two years later and preach a crusade in the stadium. He met me at the airport, and I said, "Pastor, how are things going at the church? Are you still having 6000 people?"

"O no, Sammy," he said, "we don't have 6000. We have 10,000 members. Our sixty missions are no longer missions. They're full-fledged churches and each one of them has at least five missions of their own."

They don't have a lot of wealth. They're in a community that is hostile. Their place is dark. There are millions of gods being worshiped. The Muslim cry to Allah goes up day and night there. But God has found a people who need Him, and they know they need Him. They are desperate for Him. They built that church on the basis of prayer.

### God's Sovereign Ways

I don't necessarily believe that when we pray for revival it's going to happen in our generation. God is

sovereign, and He will move when He decides to move. And when He decides to move He will move among those whose hearts are longing after Him. There are dear saints we have never read about whom we are going to meet in heaven. They are people who walked with God in ways we have never even considered.

When the Romanian revolution took place, one of the burdens I and several of the Romanians had was that the revival we were experiencing in the northwest part of Romania, needed to move east. We went to Moldova. Then we said that we needed to continue to go east, and we went to Ukraine, and from Ukraine we continued to go east and started going to Siberia.

There was a group of Moldovans who said, "We need to go to a place called Noril'sk, Siberia." Noril'sk is in the far most northern region of Siberia. You go to the center of the Arctic Circle. This city was built by slave labor under Stalin's regime. So we went there, and we found there were maybe two or three Christians in the whole city.

They said, "Will you come and hold a crusade here?" How are you going to hold a crusade with two or three people?

We sent the Moldovan young people who were studying at the Bible Institute to Noril'sk a month ahead of us. They passed out tracts. They witnessed to every person. They knocked on the door of every home in that city and told them about Jesus and invited them to come to the stadium and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When I arrived there with my wife, we were staying in the home of a lady who was an atheist, since there were almost no Christians in the city. When we got up the morning of the day I was to preach the crusade in the afternoon, the lady said to us, "Your crusade will be a failure."

I said, "What do you mean? Why do you say that?"

She said, "Well, it's raining outside. Your crusade will be a failure. It will not work."

I looked at her and said, "No, Ma'am, our crusade will not be a failure. The crusade will be a success."

She looked at me and said, "How can you say that? What if no one comes?"

I said, "For the Christian, for the follower of Jesus Christ, our success is not dependent on how many people come to our meetings. Our success is dependent on our obedience to God. God told me to come and stand in that stadium and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and if nobody comes to that stadium, I'm going to stand and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so it will be successful because I will have done what God said to do." She didn't understand and just shook her head.

I gathered our team of Moldovans and Ukrainians and Romanians and Americans, and we got on our faces and spent the rest of the day praying and seeking the face of God. An hour before I was to preach, the wind began to blow, and the clouds blew away, and the sun came out, and it was the largest attendance ever in the history of that stadium.

I stood and preached the Gospel. We couldn't have singing like we do in this country, because no one knew any songs. It was all from the platform, and it was just preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I came to the close of my message and I said, "If you are willing to forsake your sins, if you are willing to repent and to follow Christ, and put your trust in the Resurrected Christ alone to save you, I want you to join me at the front of the platform."

I've never had another experience like this in my preaching. Ninety-five percent of the people in that stadium got up and started to come down. I was so shocked. I stopped them halfway and I said, "Stop. I don't think you understand." I went back and I explained as in depth as I could what it meant to repent and then I talked about faith in who Christ was and I said, "Now, if you're willing to turn from your sins and put your faith in Christ, you come," and they continued to come.

We ended up leaving a group of the Moldovans there to follow up and then two of them started churches there with those who had come to know Christ. Literally overnight two large churches were birthed. God moved in a tremendous way.

At the close of the service a journalist came to me and said, "Mr. Tippit, many people believe our city is under a curse, because the pavement was laid by slave labor under Stalin's regime. Our apartments where we sleep were built by slave labor under Stalin's regime. The offices where we work were built by slave labor under Stalin's regime." And then she said, "Do you believe that our city is under a curse?"

I looked at her and I said, "No, Ma'am, I don't believe your city is under a curse. I believe your city is under a blessing."

She looked at me and said, "What do you mean? Why can you say that?"

I said, "I can't prove it, and I won't be able to prove it until I get to heaven, but I know that many of the people who were in these labor camps were Christians who were sent here because of their faith. I am convinced that as they laid the pavement on these streets they prayed, 'O God, I pray for the people who one day walk on these streets, that they will hear the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ and repent and give their hearts to Christ.' I am convinced that as they laid the bricks in your apartments, they prayed, 'O Lord, I pray that the people who sleep in these apartments will one day hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.' As they laid the bricks for the offices, they prayed, 'O God, I pray that one day the people who work here will hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ....'"

What I did not know when I told the lady that, was something I found out a few months later when I received the Romanian Missionary Society magazine. The magazine had a report on this crusade. They told the story of those young people from Moldova who had gone ahead of me, and who were the first ones to enter the city, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ. Several of those young people gave testimonies that their grandparents had been sent to those prison camps.

Friend, God does laugh (Psalm 2:4). He knew what was coming. God reached down and raised up their grandchildren, and if the grandchildren had not been raised up, He would have raised up the stones to cry out. Those grandchildren were the first ones to go in and proclaim the name of Jesus Christ! Those grandparents never saw the answers to their prayers, but God came and God moved in mighty glory. The power we experienced at the stadium I'm convinced, was because of the prayers of those Christians in those prisons.

About three years ago I preached in Oradea, and the president of the Bible Institute was on the platform. He was about to introduce me, when he said, "Sammy, do you see that young man over there?" and I said, "Yes."

He said, "Do you know his testimony?" and I said, "No."

He said, "You need to know his testimony. He was one of those in the stadium in Siberia, and he gave his heart to Jesus, and he's studying here at the Bible Institute now. He was not from the city of Noril'sk. He was from a village just outside the city. He happened to be in the city that day that you were preaching, and he came to the stadium and he heard the Gospel and he gave his heart to Jesus Christ.

"When he gave his heart to Christ, he went back to his village and he began to tell the people what he had heard, what he had experienced, how Christ had come into his life and what had taken place in his heart. All the old people began to weep, and they began to sob and sob. He asked them, 'Why are you weeping? Why are you sobbing?'"

"They said, 'The last Christian in this village many years ago was killed in the center of the village. When they brought him to the center of the village and they shot him and killed him, the last thing he did was get on his knees. He knelt and he cried out to God, 'O God, I pray that one day you will raise up a new generation who would bring the message of Christ back to this village!' Then they killed him.'"

When that young man came back and started telling what Jesus had done for him, the old people knew that God was still on His throne, and God answers prayer!

### Uzziah's Costly Failure

Uzziah was a young man who sought the face of God. As long as he sought the face of God, according to the Word of God, God made him to prosper. I wish the story ended there, but it doesn't end there.

In 2 Chronicles 27:16 we read: "But when he [Uzziah] was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the



altar of incense."

Notice this: "...when he was strong..." Who made Uzziah strong? God! When he became powerful, who was it who raised him up? God! When he was strong and became a great military leader, who was it who gave him understanding of what military strategy to have? It was God! But when he became strong, he began to think, "Look what I've accomplished. Look what I've done."

The greatest danger that you and I face is when we are blessed, when we are used of God, when God puts His hand upon us. The greatest danger we will face is when we are prospered by God, because there is a subtle temptation and you begin to transfer your thinking from "See what God did!" to "See what I can do."

There are many of us in the revival movement who have seen God move and work, and we have become "experts" on revival. But friends, there are no "experts." We must be a simple, humble, holy, praying man or woman, saying, "I need You, God!" If you ever come to the place where you think you know it and you've done it, and you know how to do it, you're in trouble.

We quote 2 Chronicles 7:14 often: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves...." The first step on the road to revival is a heart of humility. It's a biblical principle. If you humble yourself, God will exalt you; if you exalt yourself, God will humble you. It is a biblical principle whether we like it or not (Luke 14:11; 18:14).

There is a time in our Christian lives, a time in our walk with God when we know we need God. We come to God and we cry out to God. God allows things to touch our lives and to touch our hearts and to come across our path, and we say, "God, You must work! God, I need You!" We're so dependent on the Lord.

But unless we are humble, as we see the blessings of God and see God give us success and prosperity, we begin to think, "Look what I've done. I'm okay." The greatest danger that we face is the deceitfulness of a heart that makes us think we've done it and we become proud in our hearts.

I am afraid for North America. I am afraid for Western Europe and for the industrialized nations. We have become proud and arrogant and no longer need God. We don't pray. We have a prayer-less pew and a powerless pulpit because we are not a people of prayer.

If we're to have revival, it's not going to come to a proud, arrogant people. We must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. The Bible tells us that God hates every kind of pride. And He gives grace to the humble.

### Humility--the Essence of the Life of Jesus

Humility is the essence of the life of Jesus. If you want to know what it means to become like Jesus, read Philippians chapter two. Although He was God and existed as God in eternity past, present and future, there was a moment in history when he emptied himself, and He took upon Himself human flesh, born of a virgin, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and He lived on this earth as a perfect, holy, sinless man, and He humbled Himself to the point of obedience unto death. God, the glorious, Almighty God who created the universe, the holy, holy, holy God became a man like you and me. Friends, that's humility. The essence of the life of Christ is humility! When He comes, He comes to the humble of heart.

I asked two Romanian friends, "If this is so important, how do we get humility? Where does it come from?"

One of my young Romanian friends, a physicist, said to me, "Sammy, humility is a strange thing. The moment that I think I have apprehended it, it's in that moment that I've lost it." If you think you're humble, you're probably not humble. Humility is not something you wear on the outside. That was the fault of the scribes and the Pharisees. They would stand on the street corners and would pray and try to look humble. When they'd fast, they wanted everybody to know they were fasting, and they tried to look humble. Humility is not something on the outside. Humility is an inward attitude of the heart.

My other Romanian friend said to me, "Sammy, humility comes from seeing God." When I see God, how great He is, when I see Him in all of His majesty, and all of His splendor and all of His power, and all of His glory--as I behold Him for who He is, I see how small I am. When I see Him and how holy He is, how absolutely pure He is, I see how unholy I am, and I'm driven to my knees, as Isaiah was driven to His knees, and cried out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips. O God, have mercy upon me!"

Isaiah had seen the Lord Almighty, the King of hosts.

The great problem we have in our conferences and our conventions and our denominational meetings today, is that we go there and we're always comparing to somebody else. "How are you doing?"

"Well, relatively speaking, we're doing pretty good." If you look at others you can always find somebody that you're a little bit better than they are. You're doing okay.

But I want to tell you what to do: you look unto Jesus, and you see Him, and you behold the Lamb of God, and you'll fall on your face and you'll cry out, "O God, have mercy on me! It's me! I'm the chiefest of sinners. It's me, O God. I've failed you. I'm so unlike Christ. It's not my brother, not my sister, it's not the preacher, not the deacon, but it's me, O God, so unlike Christ. Have mercy on me!"

In Hebrews 12 it speaks of fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. That is set in the context of Hebrews, chapter 11. In Hebrews, chapter 11, there is the great hall of fame, for all the great men and women of times past are listed there, and it tells how they trusted God and looked unto God. By faith they conquered, by faith they overcame. Then the writer says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

Just imagine yourself in a huge stadium, holding 150,000 people. It is packed full with people gathered there for one reason--to watch you run a race. As you walk into the stadium and look around and see the multitudes of people who have come to watch you run in a race, you tremble and you think, "I can't do this. I can't run in front of all these people. I just can't do it."

As you look up into the stands you begin to recognize some people. Why, there's old Abraham, the father of our faith. There's the man of God, Moses, and there's young Joshua, and there's King David, and there's Paul, and there's Peter and there's John. There's Spurgeon and there's Whitfield. There are the great men and women of all ages and they've all gathered to watch you. You tremble before them.

All of a sudden there's silence in the stadium. Abraham stands up in this great crowd of witnesses, and says to you, "Look unto Jesus." Then Moses echoes what Abraham has said and he says, "Look unto Jesus." Then Joshua and David and Paul and Peter and Thomas and John say, "Look unto Jesus." Suddenly there's a great roar coming from this great crowd of witnesses and they're all saying, "Look unto Jesus! Look unto Jesus!"

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to say to you, that's what revival is; that's what victory is. It's looking unto Jesus, the perfect, holy Lamb of God. When you see Him, when you behold Him, there's no room for pride, or arrogance. You will be broken. You will say with Paul, "In my flesh dwells no good thing. Jesus, You are my only hope."

Revival begins when we see Him, and we see ourselves in the light of Him, and we are broken. Why did Evan Roberts find himself on his face crying out, "Bend me, bend me"? He was a broken young man. Why did Paul say, "O wretched man that I am!"? Why did Isaiah say, "Woe is me!"? They had seen Jesus.

#### Prayer

"Father, O Father, our Father! The only reason we can say to you, 'Our Father...' is because of Jesus. Thank you for the Saviour. Lord, open our eyes, that we might behold Him. Lord, get our eyes off ourselves. Get our eyes off of others, and give us a fresh glimpse of Jesus....O God, strip from us anything that is of self and fill us with Yourself. Make us a people of prayer. Bend us and break us and melt us and consume us until we are nothing and You are everything!"