

SermonIndex Announcements :: 103 days until the Lilburn, GA, USA Revival Conference

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What an atmosphere! The presence of God had filled the people of God! Notice several things that you see in this revival atmosphere created in the early Church. A spirit of prayer and courage and boldness permeated that early Church. Peter, who had denied our Savior three times, stood and boldly proclaimed the message of Christ with power and courage. The disciples witnessed to the truth of the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There was a lack of selfishness. There was a spirit of unity within the body of Christ. They loved one another. If one person had need and another had sufficiency of supply, he gave to that other person out of what was given to him. Of that spirit of love among the brothers Jesus had told them, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one to another" (John 13:35).

"And great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). As people are broken, then great grace is applied to the heart of the humble, and the contrite. This was the atmosphere of that revival. This was the visitation of the Lord. This was God present in the midst of His people. Today we have tried to reproduce revival. We cannot do it. It is God visiting His people and presenting Himself among His people.

Barriers to a Revival Atmosphere

There are several reasons why we cannot produce revival. First of all, there are barriers to that kind of atmosphere in our world today. The first barrier is the cultural barrier. We live in a world that is totally opposed to real, genuine, God-sent revival. We cannot but see the immorality and the sinfulness and the lack of moral standards in the culture, all of which are totally opposed to the presence of a holy God. There are other things that are much more subtle in our culture that are totally opposed to any kind of revival. And many times what you see in the culture you see also in the Church. The Church is more conformed to the world than it is conformed to Christ.

There is a great hindrance to revival in our culture because we live in a culture of busyness, and busyness is a hindrance to revival. The Lord says, "Be still, and know that I am God, for I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in all the earth" (Psa. 46:10). I'm convinced that we've not seen revival because we have not been quiet; we have not stood quietly in the presence of an Almighty God to behold Him for who He is, to see what He wants to do, to hear from heaven. We're so busy telling Him what He ought to do and going here and there and running to and fro that God has not sent revival because we have not sat down to listen to what He wants to do in us. Busyness has stolen revival. It's a barrier in the culture in which we live.

And I am convinced that anger is a barrier. Broken homes and broken families contribute to a culture that is filled with anger. There are others who might be angry at one another, such as conservatives – liberals; Christians – non-Christians.

When people become Christians and come into the Church, if they do not deal with the anger in their hearts, that anger comes into the Church. I am embarrassed sometimes by the way pastors and church people deal with one another. Our God is a holy God; He is a God of amazing grace, wonderful grace, and yet many in the Church are filled with anger.

I could name other things in our world's culture, like darkness. We live in a day of darkness that is unprecedented in this country. So this is the culture in the world in which we live today – a culture of busyness, a culture of anger, a culture where it seems so much is opposed to things that are pure, holy, good, of good report and lovely.

Not only are there barriers in the culture of the world, but there are barriers in the Church's culture. We have developed an evangelical culture that is counter-productive to revival. We have all kinds of leadership seminars. They help us to develop ourselves and to make ourselves the best persons we can be intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and in every way. But it is not our resources that are going to bring revival. In our church conferences and in the various meetings we

have, what we are teaching our people is how to be great chief executive officers. You can learn how to lead an organization, but that will not teach you how to have revival.

Church growth in the United States and church growth in other parts of the world are two different kinds of church growth. We've got all kinds of methods and ideas and some of them are contrary to Scripture. People of a particular group will grow if they are with their group. The problem with that is that it is contrary to heaven. I grew up in the South where black people could not come into the church of the whites though it might be a great and a fast-growing, evangelistic church. That was contrary to revival. When revival comes, those things fall to the wayside. Revival looks more like heaven than it looks like our culture. The only thing that is going to change the world and change our culture is God Himself – God among His people.

A third barrier to revival is the philosophy that we can do it in our own power. We have become very skilled in what we do and in our oratory. Often conferences at which I am asked to speak are almost like preaching conventions. Revival does not come by the strong arm of the flesh. We have thought that we could produce revival, that we could work it up or preach it down. It is that very idea that is the barrier to revival itself. What we need to do is to humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways. It is then and only then that God will hear from heaven and forgive our sin and heal our land.

You may be saying that this is a negative message. I'm supposed to be talking about the atmosphere of revival and I'm telling us all the reasons we can't have revival. But we'll never see revival until we see the impossibility of our doing it ourselves. We face too many barriers. It is impossible for us humans to bring revival. God Himself must bring revival! -Sammy Tippit

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