

## Revivals And Church History :: Revival Time is a needed Time

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Revival Time Is A Needed Time

By Roger Ellsworth

Revival time is heart time. It is when believers are drawn away from their absorption with the things of this world to give the Lord priority. It is a time when the Church ceases merely going through the motions. It is a time when people realize that God is very real and near, that eternity is coming and spiritual matters are of vital and pressing importance.

It is a time when the worship of God becomes sheer delight, when living for eternity becomes the major business of each day. It is a time when God's people throw down their sins in horror and disbelief that they could have ever embraced them. It is a time when fractured relationships are restored, when alienated Christians are reconciled. It is a time when the gospel becomes exceedingly precious. It is a time when the Church casts aside its fascination with the latest trend and gets back to the business of preaching the gospel.

We sorely need such a time, and the good news is that God is more than sufficient for sending such a time upon His Church. He has done so in the past, and He can do so again.

"My God Shall Supply All Your Need" (Philippians 4:19)

The first of our texts assures us of the complete sufficiency of the Lord for every need of His people. This certainly includes their need for spiritual renewal. The Church of today seems to have lost sight of this elementary but vital principle: God is her resource!

We live in very dark and challenging times. There is widespread apathy to genuine, biblical Christianity even among the Lord's people. These are days in which professing Christians will put anything and everything above the work of the Lord no matter how trivial and inconsequential it may be. There is so little of real sacrifice among God's people these days that one could never come to the conclusion that the spirit of sacrifice is essential to Christianity.

In addition to the apathy of God's people is the apathy and indifference of unbelievers. In many cases that apathy has crossed over into outright disdain and hostility. Society in general, with its addictions to drugs, sex, gambling and material wealth, tells us that the times are very serious.

The leaders of the Church are left with this piercing question: how are we to go about ministering in such a time? To put it another way: what is our resource for this situation?

Many Christian leaders think it is all a matter of being trendy, contemporary and, as some put it, "user-friendly." These leaders concern themselves with what their attendees want and do not want. They are finding that they must not preach about sacrifice and commitment because people do not want to hear it. They must not preach about sin or repentance or judgment for the same reason. They must omit any reference to the blood of Christ because that doesn't go over well either.

I get the impression from many these days that if we could just get rid of pews, hymnals, the choir and the order of worship in the bulletin, all our problems would be over. A new day of unusual power and blessing would descend upon us, and apathy and hostility would disintegrate. How can we be so naïve and undiscerning? The problem is in the hearts of men and women. There is only one resource adequate for dealing with the human heart, and that is the Lord God Himself.

The answer for the challenges of this hour lies not in the Church giving herself to more entertaining services. It lies not in throwing the message of the Bible out the window and soft-pedaling sin. It lies not in pastors donning casual wear in the pulpit. The answer lies in God! He is our resource. He has promised to supply all of the needs of His people and He can

an supply the power and the blessing His Church needs for this desperate hour.

The question the Church must face these days is this: what must she be doing if she wants to make her God her resource? When does the Lord delight to bless His people? The Bible's answer to that question is exceedingly plain. God delights to be a resource to His people when they recognize their desperate need for Him, throw down their dependence upon themselves and their cleverness and cry to Him. In other words, the appropriate response to God's promise to supply our needs is to recognize the seriousness of our needs and confess them to the Lord.

"I Have Need Of Nothing..." (Revelation 3:17)

But this is precisely what the Church seems to be unwilling to do. The spirit of the church of Laodicea, reflected in the second of our texts, is "alive and well" "in need of nothing."

There is no reference here to the church having to face persecution. There is no mention of a destructive heresy cropping up in their midst. Their problem was lukewarmness. They were neither cold nor hot. Like so very many today, they could not abide having no religion, but neither could they abide one that had vitality.

This church could not see herself. She could not see her lukewarmness. Everything was going okay. Her circumstances were good. People were attending. The money was coming in. The church was saying: "I have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17).

Is The Lord Satisfied?

But the Lord Jesus had a far different diagnosis. He says His church was anything but the way they imagined. She was, in fact, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17). This shows us that there is only one evaluation of the Church that counts. It is not a matter of whether church members are satisfied with their church or whether their leaders are. Is the Lord satisfied?

The church of Laodicea needed a true spiritual revival. And the Lord Jesus Christ was well able to meet that need. He offered them gold refined in the fire, white garments for clothing and salve for their eyes (Rev. 3:18). The gold refined by fire told them that He could take the sinful dross and impurities out of their lives. The white garments told them that Christ could enable them to walk with Him in a holy and righteous way. The eyesalve told them that the Lord could cure them of their spiritual blindness. He could open their eyes to their true condition and to His sufficiency for their condition. All of the things they so needed were available to them, but they had to stop saying "I have need of nothing."

It is no different with the Church of today. True spiritual renewal has already begun when we stop trusting ourselves, our cleverness, our ability to entertain and promote, and recognize that we need God. It is sadly possible for things to go along smoothly enough in our churches that we become complacent and satisfied. Before we realize it we are merely going through the motions. We have nice buildings, nice services and nice programs, but we have lost the reason for all these things, namely, to proclaim the gospel of Christ. It is possible for us to fall into the rut of merely having church without having hearts aflame with love and devotion to Christ and concern for the unsaved.

As long as we are content to merely have things the way they are, we shall never see a mighty moving of God's Spirit and the changed lives that such a moving produces. But when we get fed up with going through the motions and begin to cry urgently and fervently unto God, we open the door to seeing marvelous things indeed. May God help us to begin to cry!

Search

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