

The Christian Fellowship Church 3/25/06

What is a revival?

Over the years I have been heard saying, "we are in revival." I truly believe that we have experienced times of revival in our Church, however it seems as soon as it starts, it comes to a screeching halt. So, either I have been wrong, or something interrupted the flow of the Holy Spirit in the Church. I may have been wrong sometimes, but I feel that when a revival begins to be seen, it is our responsibility to be sure that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit that is speaking to the hearts of the people. What is a revival?

John the Baptist said, "One will come after me Who will baptize you with fire and the Holy Spirit." The upper room experience was described as "tongues of fire" hovering over those who had been in prayer as Jesus instructed them to do, as they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The judgment of God is described with the eyes of Jesus when He returns to judge. *Rev 1:14 "His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire."* So fire is used as a sign and symbol of the power and judgment of God."



We all know that fire and water do not mix. So our job is to fuel and fan the flames of revival, and not pour cold water on, or quench, what God is trying to do.

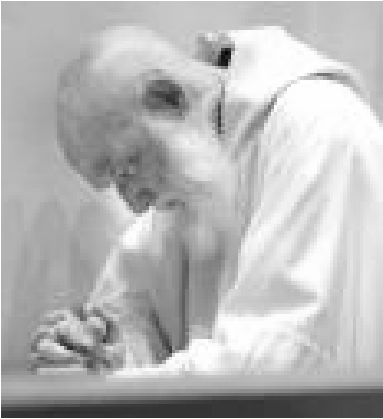
As I look back, I think we have hindered the move of the Holy Spirit by a number of things, either by omission or commission, that we need to be cautious not to repeat as we see God move in these days. But before I mention these things, let me give Webster's definition of a revival. "*A bringing up or coming back to life or consciousness.*" In a revival, God is bringing back to life and consciousness, all who have not been right with Him. In addition, He stirs up the hearts of all who are in the midst of this wonderful move, to get serious with those things in the Kingdom of God.

So how can we quench the fire of God for revival? Here are a number of things to avoid.

- Avoid allowing pride to rise up, and begin to think that we are individually or corporately responsible for the revival. We have our part to play, but God sends the fire.
- Avoid going beyond our measure in the faith. No matter how large or small you may see your role, do it for God and not for self glory or for imposing authority for the sake of personal control.
- Avoid expecting others to do all the heavy lifting. Give a hand up and not a putdown. God's army is all volunteer and not drafted.
- Avoid dieting from the word of God six days a week and only eat the word on Sunday.
- Avoid improper behavior during church services. Joy and reverence go hand in glove, but bad behavior and ignoring what is going on during services, quenches the Spirit of God.
- Avoid an attitude that puts you and your opinions above the rest of the Church and God.
- Avoid thinking that you have arrived at the zenith of spiritually, and everyone else is far behind you spiritually.
- Avoid ignoring your own sins by comparing yourself to someone who you think is worse than you.
- Avoid not entering into praise and worship by keeping silent because you think it is beneath you or phony. The people in the upper room were accused of being drunk. Remember?
- Avoid coming to Church with a "*what will I get out of it,*" attitude. Give and it shall be given!
- Avoid thinking of how it used to be and concentrate on how God wants it today.

What else should we avoid? Anything that contradicts the commandments and the Word of God. Ignorance is not bliss, it is deadly to the soul. So if you don't know what God has commanded, or what He expects of you, revival produces an inner desire to seek the things of the Kingdom of God. You might say, I don't have this inner desire. OK. You personally need to be revived, but ask God to revive you and send His revival fire for others as well. When the fire breaks out in your heart share it with others, and don't try to hide what God has done. God looks at the heart. He does not look at religious labels. He is looking for all hearts to receive His Son, and remain in the Christian faith until His Son returns.

Do not judge other Christians by their denominational labels. God knows those that know Him and are saved. There are saints everywhere in the wonderful Body of Christ. Remember God looks upon the hearts and not the clothes or buildings. As a Church we should be praying for a world wide revival and not one limited to just our Church.



God looks upon the hearts!

Revival starts when the Word is preached and not watered down. Let sin be preached as sin, and righteousness as righteousness. I believe we see revivals when the scriptures are preached and we let them do the work God has designed by the power of the Holy Spirit and not trying to force feed unbelievers, or those coming for the first time, or returning to God.

What does revival do?

It points out sin and makes a way for the sinner to repent and return to the loving arms of Father God. It reminds people that the wages of sin is death, and that the free gift of God is eternal life. Revival draws people together as a family, without respect to a persons position in life. People in a revival realize that the Fire and Power of God is dependent on His ongoing grace and mercy, and that without Him it is all noise and flesh.

So we all have a part in whether we fan the flames of a revival or quench them by our attitudes, actions, and selfish motives. Well what about the Pastors, Teachers, Evangelist, Apostles, and Prophets? All of God's ministers have undergone attacks throughout history. Some to the point of death, and others to the point of death of the ministry God had called them to, because of back-biting, gossip, complaining, and lack of support.

Others have fallen because of their own sins. In a recent poll of how people ranked careers, ministers were almost at the bottom of the list, but a couple of numbers above prostitutes. Is it any wonder? In a world that says to God, "I will do it, You approve it, and don't bother me with Your Commandments." Or still others that say, I am my own god, and have no responsibilities other than to myself.

The scripture states, **Heb 13:17** "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." And yet with this in view, ministers in Christian churches, have lost respect, allegiance, and have been reduced to a making "God suggestions" rather than "enforcing the rule of God, through a spirit of love." You know John the Baptist lost his head for pointing out the sin of Herod marrying his brothers wife. Today a minister would be sued by the ACLU for such a comment and Herod and his adulteress wife would be heralded as victims of the religious right. Revivals may come, but they won't last, unless the people consider how far they have fallen.

Rev 2:5 "Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent."

Psalm 119:25 "My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your statutes. Make me understand the way of Your precepts. So I will meditate on Your wonders. My soul weeps because of grief; Strengthen me according to Your word. Remove the false way from me. And graciously grant me Your law. I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances before me. I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame." These are the grounds for revival!