

Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord!
 Oh, to be lost in Thee!
 Oh, that it might be no more I,
 But Christ that lives in me!

Not I, but Christ, to gently soothe in sorrow,
 Not I, but Christ, to wipe the falling tear;
 Not I, but Christ, to lift the weary burden,
 Not I, but Christ, to hush away all fear.

Christ, only Christ! no idle words e'er falling,
 Christ, only Christ; no needless bustling sound;
 Christ, only Christ; no self important bearing,
 Christ, only Christ; no trace of "I" be found.

Not I, but Christ, my every need supplying,
 Not I, but Christ, my strength and health to be;
 Not I, but Christ, for body, soul, and spirit,
 Christ, only Christ, here and eternally.

Christ, only Christ ere long will fill my vision;
 Glory excelling soon, full soon I'll see
 Christ, only Christ my every wish fulfilling
 Christ, only Christ my all and all to be.

THE REFRESHMENT OF A REVIVAL

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,
 except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

JOHN 15:4

Perhaps the greatest result of living the crucified life is that periodically it brings us to places of great spiritual victory. Throughout history, these periods have been referred to as revivals. Nothing is more needed right now in the contemporary Church than a revival.

A revival can occur on one of three levels. It can occur on a personal level, when an individual is revived. It can occur on a church level, when the whole church comes under a new spiritual impetus. It can occur on a community level, when a church overflows and the spiritual impetus in the church extends into the community.

A solitary person can enter into revival and have a revitalization of his spiritual life; a surge of power and an infilling of grace that causes him to enter into an experience so wonderful that words cannot describe it. Yet it would not affect the church that he happens to be attending. Within pretty cold churches, there have been greatly revived individuals, yet those churches did not experience revival because the churches opposed, neglected or considered these revived people fanatics or extremists and basically froze them out.

An individual church may experience an awakening, and such a revival impacts all of the individuals in the congregation and might even increase the number of individuals attending the church. People are lifted up and refreshed, and out of the frozen streams the ice breaks and the water begins to flow. Yet it often fails to extend beyond the local church. Many local churches have awakenings and refreshings, but these revivals do not get beyond the church walls into the community.

Then there is such a thing as a community revival where the Word does get into the community, going from one church to another, from one neighborhood to another, until the whole city is revived.

A community revival can start with an individual, extend to the church and extend out to include the community, but it can never occur in the reverse order. It can never begin in the community, unless there has been a church that has been revived, and no churches have ever been revived until individuals in the church have been revived.

Personal Revival

What do I mean by a "personal" revival? The best way I can describe it is that it is like a sick man returning to abundant health. Suppose a man has a blood count that is so low he is hardly able to get out of bed and can only stay up an hour at a time. Then, suddenly, he gets to a place where he is able to do a hard day's work, play on a baseball team and do anything else he wants because he has been restored to abundant health. Or imagine a weak battery that will barely turn a car engine over. Once that battery is recharged, it is filled with power and a spark will fly out from it and start the engine. That is what it means to be revived as a Christian. It is a new, refreshing rush of power from God.

This not only can happen to the individual but also to a church. But it must first happen to individuals in that church. I want to make this very clear, because it is important that we think right about this. There is no abstract idea here. We like to pray, "Oh, Lord, fall on Thy Church." Somehow, we imagine an abstract church somewhere and the Holy Spirit comes down and fills the church without the individuals inside being affected. But the Holy Spirit can only fall on individuals. There is no such thing as a church being blessed without having the members of the church touched. We pray, "Lord, bless Thy abstract Church," and we imagine a church detached from individuals, some sort of ideal church for which Christ died. But God cannot pour His Spirit out on His church unless He first pours it on the individuals within the church. The Holy Spirit "sat upon each of them," and so He will sit upon each of us (Acts 2:3).

Every local church is only as good as the individual members are, not one bit better. If God had some IQ test whereby He could test our faith or He had some way of taking our spiritual pulse, then we might add up all our membership and get the average, and the Church would be whatever the average is. Always remember, though, that the average does not make up the Church, for the Church is composed of individuals.

The lone soul can be revived. I am glad to be able to tell you that. God can send waves of glory, a new quickening to the lone individual. As a solitary individual, whether anyone else in your church receives revival or not, you do not have to wait around and say, "I'd like to see our church blessed," and then hope that when it is blessed you will also be blessed. The church can never be blessed until you or other individuals in your church are blessed. Whether the church gets any further on out or backslides and turns liberal, you can be blessed as an individual, and not all the rest of us put together can prevent

that. You alone can be blessed whether or not your pastor personally knows about it.

When I was about 18 years of age, God came on me in a wonderful way and did wonderful things for me, but my church did not approve of it. In fact, they as good as told me that I was a bit extreme and that the church would be better without my company. I was not thrown out; I was just invited not to be long, and I left and went to a Christian and Missionary Alliance church. Whether the church believes or not, you *can* have all that God has for you as an individual. Whether your wife or your husband or father or mother or friend will agree or not does not make a bit of difference. God always is ready to help the lone individual.

The history of the Old Testament is filled with stories of lone individuals—men and women—meeting God. The story of revivals throughout the ages has been the story of lone men meeting God, of going out and finding God all alone. Sometimes they went down to the church basement, sometimes to caves, sometimes out under trees, sometimes by haystacks, but they went alone to meet God, and then the revival went out from there. I say that you, personally, can be blessed and yet not have a revival in your church. If you are attending a church that is suffering a spiritual malaise, a low level of or even a dead spirituality, never lower yourself to match that level. Instead, say to yourself, *By the grace of God, I'm going to be what I should be regardless.*

How to Have a Personal Revival

The big question then is, how can we experience a personal revival? In order to see a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives, there are four things that must be set in order. The work of the Holy Spirit is not capricious; rather, there are some well-defined spiritual rules that govern His work in our lives.

Set Your Face Like Flint

First, if you are going to have a personal revival, you must “set [your] face like a flint” (Isa. 50:7). A plow that is going to be used on sod must have a sharp point. Likewise, if you want a personal revival, you have to have a hard-nose because of all of the schemes and tricks of the world. You must set your face like flint and say, “I go by the grace of God. I want all that the New Testament has for me.”

Set Your Heart on Jesus

Second, you must set your heart on Jesus Christ. Wherever He takes you, go with Him. Whatever He takes you away from, listen to Him and follow what He says. Whomever you must ignore, move away from. If you want to be all that God wants you to be, set your face like flint and go straight to Jesus.

I will always thank God that the Bible includes the passage where the blind man said, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:47). His disciples went out and said to the man, “Be quiet. This is not done in church. Just keep still.” Instead of their words discouraging him, it fired him to cry out more, until Jesus turned around and said, “What do you want?”

“I want to be healed.”

And Jesus said, “Okay, here’s your healing.” The man received his eyesight because he paid no attention to the “timekeepers and referees” who served only to keep people away from Jesus.

I recently looked again at John Bunyan’s book *Pilgrim’s Progress* and read a page or two, more or less for the style than anything else. But you cannot read Bunyan very long just for the style, because the story of Christian and how he got into trouble on his journey is so fascinating.

Early on, Christian says, “I find by this book [the Bible] that I am in great distress. I must leave my hometown of Destruction and journey to a heavenly home.” So he plans to start out for

that heavenly home. He is in terrible stress before he begins, and he finally breaks down before his children and says, "Oh, my dear wife and children, I've gotten into an awful condition. Just awful."

His family basically replies, "We know what's wrong with you. You're just tired." So they put him to bed, and the next morning he got up and they said to him, "How are you feeling, Father?"

"I didn't sleep a wink. I couldn't forget that we're living in the city of Destruction."

Bunyan says that when Christian's family found that they could not quiet and console him, when they could not pat him on the back and say, "Go back to sleep and sleep it off," they started being harsh toward him and derided him. Then, when he would not give up because of their scorn, they ignored him.

I thought as I read it, First they soothe you, then they pat you on your back and hope you'll quiet down. After that, they use harsh words, accusing you of thinking you are better than other people. And when that doesn't work, they deride you and start making fun of you. And when that doesn't work, they ignore you.

That is exactly how it happens when you set your heart on Jesus and seek personal revival. If you decide to seek a deeper relationship with God and meet Him on your own and have a refreshing from God to get rid of the old barnacles and the weights and hindrances and get back a new spirit within you, you will find that some people will say, "Well, you're just excited. You've just allowed that man Tozer to stir you up." John Bunyan said that when Christian was treated like that, he went to be by himself and pray.

Set Yourself Up for Examination

The third thing you must do in order to experience personal revival is expose your life to God's examination. The trouble is

that we keep ourselves and cover our hearts. Scripture says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Out of habit, we cover ourselves and try to hide our sins. If you want revival, you must allow the Scriptures to be the Scriptures in your life.

Expose your whole life to Jesus Christ. Expose yourself in prayer. Expose yourself in Scriptures. Expose your heart in obedience. Expose it by confession and by restitution. "Restitution" is a forgotten word today that nobody uses anymore. But it *is* in the Bible. "Restitution" means to get straightened out with people. When you make restitution, you will be amazed at how wonderful you will feel.

Set for Yourself Holy Affirmations

The fourth thing you must do for personal revival is to make some holy affirmations. Several affirmations that I have had to make before God have significantly changed my walk as a Christian. Let me share them with you, and then you take it from there.

Declare before God never to own anything. I do not mean for you to get rid of anything that you can use. I mean you should get rid of that bunch of trash you have in your life. Too many Christians are a bunch of pack rats, gathering everything, going out and bringing everything they can. If you were to find a magpie nest, you would find a variety of things: a mirror, a coat hanger, a piece of glass, maybe a dime. The magpie cannot use those things; the bird just likes them, so it collects them. Similarly, because of a coveting spirit, many Christians collect all around them things that they really cannot use.

Keep in mind that if you feel you own something, it is actually dragging you down. Cut loose from the ownership of that

item, and then God will let you have it. Cut loose from inside yourself, and God will let you have the thing on the outside of yourself. This has to do with your automobiles, property, clothes and everything you have collected throughout your life. Take everything and say that God has it. Do not imagine for a minute that if you give God 10 percent, you are okay and you can keep the remaining 90 percent. God must have 100 percent. Once you give it all to Him, then He will make sure you have enough to look after yourself and your family.

If there is anything you own that God cannot have, you never will have a revival. If there is anything that you own that God cannot have, you cannot have God. God has a right to command whatever He wants the moment He wants it. The moment God knows that He can have whatever you have anytime He wants it, then the Lord will probably let you keep it, and it will be a blessing for you instead of a curse. It will help lift you up instead of being an anchor to weigh you down.

Another affirmation that has been important to me is to never defend myself. This is a tough one, particularly for Americans. Through the years, I have taken a great many people to the twenty-third chapter of Exodus to teach them how to trust God and not worry about enemies. If you try to fight people, you will only get bloody and bruised, and you'll feel miserable. You will stay an immature Christian and never have a revival. But if you let God do your fighting for you, you will come out all right.

Another affirmation that has been important to me is to never defame a fellow Christian. By this, I mean never believe evil about him or speak an evil report about him. Remember your past and your own tendency to give in to temptation. I think sometimes the Spirit of God shuts Himself up tight and cannot come on us because we have defamed a brother or sister Christian. Such an evil report becomes a weapon in the devil's hand.

As a pastor and a member of an executive committee, I am forced under God that if I hear charges against a man's life, I am obligated to protect the Church of God from that man. But this does not mean that I will defame that man or any other man by believing gossip or by spreading it.

Another important affirmation is never to receive or accept any glory. Oh, how we love glory. We just want to take a little of it for ourselves. We sing songs attributing glory to God and giving Him all the glory, but sometimes we do not really mean it. We want God to get *most* of the glory, but we would like to reserve just a little bit for ourselves. After all, we believe we have earned it.

Why You Should Seek a Personal Revival

Do not wait for tragedy to drive you to God. Some Christians start to get cold in their hearts and then some tragedy strikes, either to themselves or to their families, and out of that grief they say, "Forgive me, God." They want to start over. But must it always be like that? Must we always wait around for God to chastise us? Must we always come to God with bleeding backs? Determine before God that you will not wait for tragedy to drive you to Him. Take your cross voluntarily.

Many years ago when I was a very young preacher, I preached in a town called Despard, West Virginia. It was commonly called Tinplate because a great tinplate factory was there, but it was also a coal-mining area. I and some others went into that area and had some gospel meetings. The meetings were not exactly what some people thought they should be, and some began to feel burdened by the fact that no revival was taking place. At the meeting one night was a tall, handsome, blond coal miner. He said to his wife, "You know, our people need God. They need God, and this thing isn't going well. Honey, if it's all right

with you, I'm going to take tomorrow off and wait on God and pray and fast all day long. I want to wait on God for revival for this town."

Instead of going to work the next day, he got down on his knees and waited on God with an open Bible all day long. The next day he went back to his work on the tipple. (The tipple is where the cars carrying coal are emptied out.) He was working on that tipple and suddenly something went wrong. The car jumped the track, crashed and broke apart. The cars at this mine were old-fashioned wooden ones, and this one broke into splinters sharp as daggers, and one ripped through this man's thigh. It pierced an artery, and this 47-year-old man bled to death on the dirt floor.

Remember, the day before he had spent with God. That struck me as a message from heaven above, and I thought ever since, *Dear God, how wonderful it would be to spend my last day with Thee alone in prayer.*

Now, the coal miner could not take every day off to pray, for he had to work and support his family. But I think it was a wonderful thing that he was so near to God the day before he died. He had unburdened himself to God the night before. You cannot spend all day with God and not be ready to go to heaven the next day.

Do not ask me why God took the dear man away. I will never know that. God never has let me in on all His secret plans. I only know that in the course of things, the man could have died anywhere any day. But the Spirit of God urged him to spend a day in prayer for his own soul and for his church. Suppose he had been too cold to listen or had been too far away to hear? Suppose he had been like someone running on automatic, not listening for God's call? He would have died on the tipple the next day all right, but oh, what a difference.

Maybe God is calling you to do something extraordinary, something that does not appear on your calendar or agenda,

something to revive your own soul. Maybe God is calling you to do something radical and extreme for your soul. I hope and pray that the world and the pleasures of it are not so great that you are unable to hear Him. The biggest thing in the world is not whether you live to be 100 years old; the biggest thing in the world is whether you can hear God speaking to you now. That is what counts.

Is God saying anything to you? You can have a revival whether anybody else ever gets one or not. There is no reason why you personally cannot set your face like flint and determine to go wherever Jesus takes you. When you find Him, you will find the floodgates of mercy. You will find fresh oil. You will find a wonderful new revival life for yourself.

Old-Time Power

Paul Rader (1878-1938)

We are gathered for Thy blessing,
We will wait upon our God;
We will trust in Him Who loved us,
And Who bought us with His blood.

Spirit, now melt and move
All of our hearts with love,
Breathe on us from above
With old time power.

We will glory in Thy power,
We will sing of wondrous grace;
In our midst, as Thou has promised,
Come, O come, and take Thy place.

Bring us low in prayer before Thee,
And with faith our souls inspire,
Till we claim, by faith, the promise
Of the Holy Ghost and fire.

THE EVERLASTING REWARDS OF LIVING THE CRUCIFIED LIFE

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren
to dwell together in unity!*

PSALM 133:1

The worth of any journey can always be measured by the difficulties encountered along the way. The more difficult the journey, the more satisfying the destination. I have been thinking of the crucified life as a journey. It has a beginning, of course, but the end is never this side of glory. I am reminded of this thought in a hymn called "The King's Business":

I am a stranger here within a foreign land;
My home is far away upon a golden strand;
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.

Not many Christians consider themselves strangers "within a foreign land." But that is exactly what we are if we are Christians. If we have begun the journey and are living the crucified life, this world certainly is not our home. That is why we should never get too comfortable in this life.