

REVIVAL - A seven day devotional

by: Reid Ferguson - Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Fairport, Fairport NY
copyright 1997 -- rights granted to distribute with credits

----- Day 1 -----

2 Chronicles 7:12

"And Jehovah appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. 13 If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Revisit this familiar passage with me won't you? When last we looked at it, we noted that this great promise of God is in response to a prayer of Solomon. Upon the occasion of dedicating the Temple in Jerusalem, he had asked God for special blessings. The substance of that prayer had to do with God's willingness to forgive Israel at times of disobedience. As the text clearly demonstrates, God did not agree to overlook Israel's transgressions when they strayed. Instead, He provided the means whereby they might be restored. Thus He explains, that when Israel find's itself suffering under God's chastening hand, there is a remedy. O the mercy and grace of our God.

Now it is good to note first, what amazing grace God provides for His own. He is not a quick tempered despot. Nor does He impetuously cut off His people in the heat of anger. He is a God who deals with His them. How the portions of the passage leading up to this point spell out in agonizing detail, the lengths He is willing to go to in order to keep and correct them. It is in His mercy that He afflicts. In His grace that He chastens. In His love that He does not vanquish with a single righteous blow. No, He promises to confront, rebuke, chide, chasten and crush with all faithfulness. Not to destroy, but to save. Such is the steadfast love of our God! Though we seem so often bent on our own destruction, yet for the Christian, He is constantly rescuing us from ourselves. O Christian, He is so good.

Also, as we noted last time, we must remember that this promise is NOT distinctly "American". Though many today have interpreted it as such, because America is supposed to be a "Christian" nation. In truth, the promise is first and foremost to Israel. And by the widening of God's covenant (Eph. 2:14-22), to the Church. No other nation, people or group is ever implied. It is to "the people called by my name". To Isra-EL, and to CHRIST-ians.

Now the sum and total of what he so graciously gives here is - not the formula for true revival, but its marks. And it is to this that I would call your attention for the next several days. For revival is a topic of great interest to the Church in all ages. We hear much talk of it all around us. But how precious little of what is spelled out for us here, is associated with what is termed "revival" in popular Christianity. Yet how desperately we need it! We have a church that has succumbed to the dictates, styles, values and methods of the world. We have lost the ability to impact society for righteousness. Worldliness and sin are prevailing in the Church as never before, NOT because sin is stronger, but because we have so little of God. From the pulpit to the pew, we are infected with compromise, self-will, man centered religion and an abandonment of the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures. If ever there was a generation that needed revival, it is this one.

In the text, and in God's opinion, revival consists in these 5 things:

- a. "If my people, who are called by my name,"
- b. "shall humble themselves,"
- c. "and pray,"
- d. "and seek my face,"
- e. "and turn from their wicked ways;"

Then - He promises to "hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Beloved, let me ask you - has your spiritual life become dry and arid? Is there a staleness? Is there little progress? Little vitality? Spurts, but not a stream of passion for God? As you look around, does your lifestyle and attitudes reflect more of the world than of Christ? Have you lost your appetite for the Word? Is prayer a painful exercise, if and when you pray? Are there sins dominating you that once you walked in victory over? Christian, you need revival. You need that sweet wind of God's Spirit sweeping over the chords of your soul again. You need the fullness and reality of His reigning presence once more. And He is pleased to do it. For "if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

----- Day 2 -----

For the next few days, we are looking at the topic of revival out of the text above. As we noted yesterday there is a crying need for true revival in the Church today. And we must mark the difference between things often called revival, and revival as it is posited in the Word. It is no small problem that we often loosely employ terms so as to obscure them. We attach the word revival to evangelistic campaigns, special groups of meetings or even popular trends or movements in the Church. These all have their place, but have little or nothing to do with revival as it is described in the Bible. Revival in its strictest sense is the mercy and grace of God being poured out in an especial manner, so as to restore His people. It is a divine visitation that breathes the fresh life of Christ's presence into dry and arid souls, rendered parched and emaciated by spiritual compromise, and the resultant chastening hand of God. It is the Ark of the Covenant and the shekinah glory of God being brought back into the Holy of Holies.

There are few who would argue that there is a dreadful lack among us. Christianity is no longer a threat to worldly systems or philosophies. We have so watered down our doctrines, politicized our convictions and struggled for societal acceptance, that we represent little more than one of a myriad of alternatives. People no longer fear to join the Church because the sacred and the holy are all but gone from us. It is no longer a question of fallen men being for us or against us, they ignore us! They respond to our preaching and teaching with an apathetic tepidness that is commensurate with the spirit in which it is given. How many of us can lay claim to being "eaten up" by "the zeal of the Lord"? The spirit of sacrifice has been replaced by a fear of discomfort. Burning passion for Christ is looked upon as "new believer's disease". Where are compassion for the lost, insatiable hunger for the Word, the needful compulsion to worship, or genuine brokenness over sin? We give lip service to the authority of The Word, but ignore its sufficiency in practice. More often than not we pray out of habit, ritual, guilt or because we "should" - if at all. Truth no longer stirs, warms or inflames our hearts. So we stir, warm and inflame the senses in an effort to mask the emptiness. *O God, our God, dear God - give us revival!*

So it is then that we see the very first element of true revival - it is that which belongs to "my people, who are called by my name". It is not a move from the outside, it is God reclaiming and restoring from the inside. It is not God dealing with lost souls, but lost children. It is, in its very first motions, the prodigal coming "to his senses" - to himself. It is a lifting up of the eyes from a far off place, in the waste and poverty of God's endowments recklessly squandered. It is a heart that begins to long for home, and the face of the Father again. It is the ache of spiritual decline that at last awakens the compromise dulled mind with the shock of where we've come. *O God, our God, precious God - give us revival!*

Prayer

Father - our hearts awake to thee once more. We look down to see ourselves mired and covered in the muck and filth of our own undoing. We have thrown off your sweet yoke, to be bound in chains of sin. We have taken all your treasures and spent them on ourselves. We are cold, and filthy - naked and hungry. We are so very far from you. It has been so long since we've heard the music of your voice, the gentle weight of your hand on our shoulders. O for the smell of your robes when we used to embrace. For the laughter in your smile, the assurance of your presence, the quiet and safety of our own beds, in our own rooms, in your house. O Father - dear Father, we long for thee once more. We seek no more an identity of our own - we come to ourselves, and we are yours. Father, we want to come home.

This is the beginning of revival.

----- Day 3 -----

We are continuing to look at the topic of revival from our text. We have seen first of all that revival is a work of God among His own people, the Church. "If MY people" reads the text. And we have noted that it is needed whenever the Church lapses from its fidelity to Christ. Such revival may be personal, within a small group or local congregation, regional, national or global. Whenever and wherever God's people have become lukewarm. When we cease to be cold and hard against sin, and lose the searing heat of passionate hearts inflamed after Christ. When in such tepidness we become so distasteful to our God and King that we are dangerously near being "spit out of [His] mouth" (Rev. 3:16). This then is when the Church must begin to make its application to Him. To seek Him out. To press into Heaven's gates that we might know the breath of God upon us afresh.

We see then in the second place, that this whole matter is connected with humility in the saints. "If my people, who are called by my name, SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES". While there is no doubt that this humbling is connected to the next concept so as to be read - "shall humble themselves and pray", yet we do well to look at it alone. For it is an inviolable rule of God that "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble". (James 4:6b) The Scripture repeats this idea a multitude of times. It does so because pride always and without variation leads to self-government as opposed to God's. Pride ever pits the human will against the divine. It is man usurping God's solitary and divine right to determine right and wrong for himself. All evil springs from this. We see this in the Garden with Satan's challenge of God's law, and man's assault upon it by trying to contravene it, and that without impunity. Every compromise with sin that you and I undertake is prideful rebellion against God's absolutes, and an attempt to reshape them according to our own will. "There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him" - and the one that heads the list is "a proud look". (Prov. 6) "Pride (always) goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling". (Prov. 16:18)

Now pride shows itself chiefly in four ways: 1 - Valuing the sense of personal superiority over others. 2 - Thirst for reputation. 3 - Self-determination against God's authority (and thus all others). 4 - Self-reliance and self-sufficiency in all things. So it is, that when the Church begins to indulge in spiritual elitism, especially when one portion of the Body takes such a view or position

over any other portion of the Body: When individual Churches, Ministers and ministries gorge themselves on self-promotion and public advancement: When individual Christians and denominations alike throw Biblical worship to the wind in order to become creative, expressive or whatever else strikes our fancy: When we turn to pragmatism, schemes and techniques to accomplish OUR vision for the Church - we have fallen. Beloved, if this isn't a picture of modern evangelicalism in America, I don't know what is! Revival is never the product of such an atmosphere. It is its antithesis. Revival is its cure.

So we are brought to this conclusion: That for revival to be among us, there must be a humbling within us. O Church - listen! While such is the case, while we raise our heads in impudent self-delight, the Church is powerless, ineffective, crass, worldly and a blight on the name of Christ. The call to us is to throw these all off! The pressing need of the hour is not to glorify our organizations, churches, ministries or selves, but to fall at the foot of the cross and glorify Him! "If my people... will HUMBLE themselves" is the cry, not if they will promote themselves and gain the ascendancy. The Church never conquers the world unless the Church is conquered by Christ. When He came, He "made Himself of no reputation". He cared not one wit how He was perceived, but only that He did the will of the Father.

Revival is found in people who have abandoned themselves that they might win Him. It is in a casting aside of person to person comparisons, despising reputation that Christ might be preeminent, yielding up all to the authority of His Word and the indwelling Spirit, and falling on our faces in prayer for Him to do what can never be done by the arm of flesh. It is in those for whom the watchword has become - "apart from Christ, I can do nothing". It is in the hearts of those who say - all other things aside - give me Christ! Until you and I care nothing for position, status, authority or accomplishment in order to be at His disposal, we'll know nothing of true revival. We have left our first love.

Prayer

O God, our God, give us nothing at all if you give us not more of Christ! Our hearts plead with you today. We cast off all these other things. We hate and abhor them. We plead your cleansing that ever our hearts were so inclined. O how we have sinned against Thee. We repent O Lord, we turn from this our wickedness. Will you not be gracious to us once more and pour out upon us with fountains of divine favor? O let it be. For we are Thine, and you are ours. O God, revive us!

----- Day 4 -----

So far we have seen two central ideas connected with true revival.

1 - That revival (however it may eventually spread) is at its core, something concerning God's people.

2 - That revival is inextricably linked with God's people humbling themselves. We might note here that the text says "humble yourselves". This speaks of hearts willfully casting aside their pride, arrogance and self-interest. It is not merely being humbled from the outside, but following Christ's example and making ourselves of no reputation. Our self-love is our bosom child. It is our Isaac. And we are more loth to offer it up on the altar of sacrifice than Abraham was his son. Yet that is precisely what is implied. We respond the way we think Abraham should have: "Lord, I cannot, you must do it. I cannot bear to see this son, this only beloved son offered so. But if it must be so, yet let it not be at my own hand! Take him in his sleep. Let him be overcome by a fever or a plague. Let some tragic accident befall him rather than I should raise my hand to him myself!", But pride is offered up only by our own hand. We ourselves must bow the knee. We must plunge the knife into our own hearts. "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble THEMSELVES".

We move on then to the third idea spread before us in the text: "if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, AND PRAY". Mark it well, revival, true revival, is always, without exception marked by great and fervent prayer. We could easily point to history as a reference. Read the accounts of the Welsh Revival, The Great Awakening or The Second Great Awakening. Examine The Reformation. Look at the histories of revivals in any generation or any culture and you will always see this as a fixed feature. And you may put it down as well, that false revivals are sorely lacking in a spirit of prayer. There may be fervor and excitement. But the agonizing, heart wrenching labor of beseeching prayer is seldom if ever present, and certainly not a distinguishing characteristic. History aside, our text marks it out as so and thus it must be. When the Spirit of the Living God begins to move mightily upon His people, they begin to cry out to Him. O that God would so ignite our hearts today! In the midst of God's people "coming to themselves"; in the terror of sin exposed to the heart and the sad spiritual state of the Church pressed upon the soul; in that hour when at last we see that the whole of our religion has been wrapped up in us instead of Him; men and women fall on their faces and cry out to God! It is unavoidable! Helpless, sin-stained, convicted hearts seek out God knowing that He alone can turn the tide and revive them. Self-satisfied, tepid hearts that persist in their own agendas make prayer an ornament on the mantle of their spiritual pride.

There is always the question of whether revival brings the spirit of prayer, or if it is prayer that brings down the spirit of revival. Friend, I do not know. But this much is sure: There is no such thing worthy of the name revival, apart from the people of God driven to their knees in a desperate cry to draw near to God, to be cleansed from their sin, and to plead for His blessing. We may as well try to separate the heat from the flame. As cold, formal, and ritualistic as our prayers are, so far are we from revival.

When was the last time you cried out with the prophet - "where is the God of Elijah?" Is there no heartfelt need for His presence, His moving, His operations upon the soul to fill us up with holy passion for Christ? O that we might be a praying people again! Not merely people who pray, but praying people - marked by it, characterized by it. Steeped in it. Devoted to it. The heart of the Church in revival knows this if nothing else - apart from Him we can do nothing. And so it incessantly and painstakingly seeks Him.

Prayer

Loving Father - how far we have come from this. How glibly we let the words slide past our lips. How we have forsaken the closet for entertainments and leisure. How we loathe the discomfort of such a heavenly thing - though it brings us right to your very throne. We give lip service to prayer as well as in it. We have deluded ourselves into thinking all is well. We have grown dull in apathy and satisfied with the status quo. O quicken us again. Ignite us once more. Let the spirit of prayer so fall upon us as to make us a people who above all things - seek the face of our God. We are so cold. So trite. So full of self. We would be full of Christ. Give again we plead, Thine own sweet Spirit in prayer. O God, our God, Living and True God, revive us!

----- Day 5 -----

We have been examining the topic of revival from this familiar Old Testament text. We have seen that revival is a move of God in restoration among His own people, and that it always includes humbling and great prayer. So we come to the next element, seeking the face of God. Many observe this phrase as merely an enlargement of the concept of prayer. Certainly, prayer has that aspect to it. In prayer we are indeed seeking God. But the text separates them one from the other that we might make special note of it, and we would do well to do so.

Throughout the Scripture, the idea of "the face of God" always implies one of two things - communion, fellowship or relationship to God, and/or the favor of God. When David is troubled over the result of his sin, he expresses it these words: "How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? forever? how long wilt thou HIDE THEIR FACE from me?" (Psalm 13:1) The loss of intimacy and fellowship with God grieved the heart of David more than anything else. He could endure anything but this. In this state he mourns. His strength ebbs and his hope is dim. His heart flags easily for he knows the loss of the sense of God's immediacy.

Likewise, when we pronounce the benediction we most often quote Numbers 6:23b-26: "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his FACE SHINE upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. What is such a blessing but this: That we might live before Him in constant communion, and thus in the confidence of His favor. So it is that in true revival, there is a realization among God's people that such an intimacy with Him as could be described as being before His face, has left. That His nearness, His dearness, is but a cold doctrine, and not a living reality.

Now it is true that we are often insensible of God's favor when it is strong and undisturbed. Feelings are not meant to be barometers of the truth. Natural tempers, stress, strain and a host of other things effect our perceptions. Feeling goose bumps is not the litmus test of God's moving. This gives way to fanaticism and sensuality of all sorts. Yet at the same time, when we are confronted with truth, it does have an accordant response. Guilt should produce shame and a sense of impending judgement, and forgiveness, joy and relief. Being far from constant communion with God should produce sadness and dis-ease. Being restored to Him, confidence and peace. The Holy Spirit both convicts of sin bringing shame, and sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God.

So the question before us today is: Are we a people who are jealously seeking the face of God? Is there any sense of need within us to do so? What is our communion with Him like? Are we truly walking in divine favor, or looking over our shoulder hoping the "lucky streak" will hang on? Is there unconfessed sin that we know has hidden the face of God from us, but we are just "going on" anyway? Are we drawing near to Him? Do we sense any need to draw close? Are our hearts truly full to overflowing because of His blessed nearness, or have we long since left off even thinking about it any more? Is God real? REALLY real. Or if the truth be known, is our relationship with Him more like a passing acquaintance? We smile and say "hi" at the services. We shed a tear of ambiguous emotion at the sacrament. But the depth of our communion is on the level of courteous salutations to the local police officer. He's there to protect our very lives, but we hardly know him except by his uniform. O dear one - how much then we need revival!

Prayer

Blessed Father, forgive us. We seldom think of "pressing into" Thee. Give us the heart of David when he cried "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek." O God, we join our voices with his today and plead: "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O

God of my salvation." If ever there were a time, a generation, a season within the Church when we need to seek your face O Lord it is now! Our nation slides daily deeper into sin and rebellion. Our churches compromise your truth, ignore your Word, blaspheme the sacraments and worship the creature. Hear us O God! We need Thee! Our programs have failed, the arm of flesh is broken, our prayer closets are empty and our knees unsoiled. Revive us! Revives Lord! Revive us Father! Make Thy face to shine upon us once more. Make our hearts so hungry and thirsty for Thee, that we will stop at nothing to come before you again. O God, our God, precious God - give us revival!

----- Day 6 -----

So far we have seen that revival consists in four things, and this morning we will add the fifth. Whenever and wherever there is true revival, it always involves God's people who are called by His name, humbling themselves, praying, seeking His face and - turning from their wicked ways. Now this last aspect is of such a critical nature that there can be no true revival apart from it. Yet all around us, that which is commonly heralded as revival most often lacks this crucial feature.

Please hear me beloved, there is no substitute for this. There is no getting around it. Revival springs up among a people who are deadly serious about throwing off sin. The ache, the cry, the very beat of their hearts revolves around an exquisite sense of their own sin, and the estrangement from God it has brought. This phrase before us, "turn from their wicked ways" is a powerful one. For the word used for "wickedness" is one that at its root implies anything that is wrong in regard to God's original and on going intention. It is the word used to describe the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden. What made that fruit corrupting and deadly was not its physical nature, but that partaking of it violated God's intent or will. We are so quick to excuse our sin, especially that which bears no overt or external harm against another. "Its not hurting anyone" is our justification. Adam would have been hard pressed to argue against

God's sentence by declaring - "well, its not like I burned down the other trees, they're still intact. I didn't root out the remainder of the plants. I didn't neglect their care or cultivation, I simply ate some of THIS fruit." Yet this is how we think to justify our own sin. I've not neglected your Word, or worship or the Lord's table. I'm not out killing or raping or robbing. I give my tithes, visit the sick, sing in the choir and sit on the Board - so what's the harm if I want a little of this over here? O the blasphemous deceptions of our fallen hearts!

The word carries with it yet some other connotations. It implies the rejection of God in regard to individual acts, that grow into habits, and grip at last as compulsions. There is an insidious, progressive nature to sin. We think we can keep it on one level, but like yeast in dough it ultimately infects every part. It begins in speech, moves on to practice and ultimately results in offering profane sacrifice. Thus it mushrooms into full blown idolatry, though we've never vacated the pew or forsaken the House of God. It is the Christian, the Church accommodating any compromise whatsoever. John Owen has well said that "the root of the unmortified course, is the digestion of sin without bitterness." Look around you. What do you tolerate today that 5 or 10 years ago would have made you blush with shame? What do we let in under the umbrellas of entertainment, art, literature or sophistication? Friend, don't you recognize it in your own life? Would to God our hearts could tolerate it no longer. This is why we need revival. We are bound and fettered by our own consent, yielding up to those things we know full well are not compatible with our consecration to a holy God.

How then are the scales taken from our eyes? How do we begin to feel the need for revival again? How do we shake off the dullness and the fog to yearn and cry after God in such a way once more? This beloved, this is what we must be about.

First is to begin to cry after God to open our eyes, make us fully aware of our state, and place and insatiable hunger for Him within us. This is why prayer and revival are inseparable. If our sin is not overt and evident, yet we know Him only at a distance - if our hearts don't burn within us to know Him more, if our worship and religious duty has become matter of fact or optional - we are far gone into captivity already and need His reviving touch! "Search me O God" is the cry. "You try me, You examine me, You test me - and if there be ANY wicked way in me, O God declare it that it might be purged!" The need for revival comes from our getting His assessment of things, not ours.

Second is to avail ourselves of what is termed "the means of grace". One cannot truly and intensely study the Word of God without it turning the searchlight of holiness upon the soul. If when looking into this divine mirror, you see no blemishes, you are lying to yourself. For the image within it is that of the perfect and righteous holy One of God. Will you be so bold and impudent as to think yourself as having already attained? Will you keep your heart from being broken over the sin that so mars that blessed visage within you? How hard and callous we are! Preaching too is a means of grace. Are you submitting to the exposition of the Word of God so as to have your heart and mind renewed? Or do you seek a minister and a ministry that cares more that you feel good, than that you obtain Heaven, and grow in holiness now? Are you seeking out a doctor who can diagnose with accuracy, or one who will pat you on the head and tell you everything's OK, while you faint fast in the grips of a deadly disease? And the Lord's table, this too is a mighty means of grace. Can you come to it dispassionately? Does not the broken body and the spilled blood break your heart too? If not - why not? Is it just a custom? Just a ritual? Beautiful yes, but efficacious no? O God forbid we ever approach that holy ordinance with apathetic and common hearts. This is His blood, spilled for MY sin. This is His body, beaten, wracked and broken for MY iniquities. And can I come then with little more than cheap sentimentality? O how we need revival!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we are like Samson, gifted and mighty in you, but unaware that the Spirit of God has left us because we will not forsake our sin. We are happier with the remembrances of your smile, than with the thought of seeking it yet again. We are cold and indifferent. We excuse all manner of sin lest we be discomforted in any way. We regard the most sacred and holy of things as our just due. We have altogether left off hearts

that burn with a passion to seek out and please our God. We have begun to imagine that you exist for our pleasure, rather than we for yours. We are black and sin-stained. We are weak and undone. We have worshipped at the idol of self, and sacrificed our lame and blemished goats to you. O God forgive us! Mighty living God forgive us! Blessed Loving Lord, forgive us - and send us a reviving.

O how we need your revival!

----- Day 7 -----

We come now to the end of our look at this wonderful passage. We have seen the constituent essentials of true revival. It is a move of God among His own people restoring and renewing them to spiritual vitality and fidelity. We have seen that it involves deliberate humbling on our behalf, a devotion to prayer, a pursuit after the face of God and turning not merely from sinful acts, but sinful ways. Habits and tendencies of sin and sinful mindedness that have grow up imperceptibly over time. Such things are like weeds within that block out the sunshine of His countenance, sucking and choking the life out of us by draining off our resources in Christ. Such is the Christian, the Church that needs revival. Such is the Evangelical Church in America today. Bound up, drained, misdirected and languishing in the aftermath of lives uncommitted to holiness, and content with some (any) form of religion.

But look at these last few phrases, will you? What begins with "if My people", ends with, " then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." O the mercy and grace of God! He is not one who throws off His own. But look how He prepares the way with gracious instruction, then seals it with the word of His promise. He is not a God who leaves us in our sins. Though we deserve nothing but His scorn, His rage, His justice - yet righteousness and peace still kiss in Christ, and hope is ever laid out before us! God hears! God forgives! God restores! O what a precious Lord we serve.

Now to Israel were given the promises as they pertain to a physical and geographic location. So the text reads, that He will heal their land. Bring them back to their inheritance after suffering its loss due to their compromise and sin. This promise was to all of Israel - except, the Levites. The Levites were to inherit no property. They never received any originally, nor would they in the restoration. Numbers 18:20 reads: "Then The Lord said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them; I AM YOUR PORTION AND YOUR INHERITANCE AMONG THE SONS OF ISRAEL." " What a type of the Church this is. We are guaranteed no "promised land" here. Indeed, we are a "royal priesthood". This is born out by the nature of the foretaste of what we are to receive. The earnest of our inheritance is the blessed presence of The Holy Spirit Himself. And if He is the down payment - what must the whole of it be? It can only be this alone - the unveiled presence of God for eternity! O glorious, wondrous inheritance! This too then is what we are exiled from when walking in sin and disobedience - nothing more or less than the glory of His presence. And this is what He brings His Church back to in revival - Himself.

Christian, we can talk of signs and wonders and spiritual gifts. We can speak of great movements and spiritual experiences. But when it is all said and done, the whole of true Christianity is wrapped up in this: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) And is it not so, that the reality of such a thing is more often than not, far from us? How many can say with Paul "to live is Christ"? Is He that near? That dear? Is the hour of prayer still "sweet"? Or has it been relegated to the pile of other failed fancies? Revival restores God's people to Himself. Let no one deceive into searching or following after any other thing, however externally attractive it may seem. Hearts blazing with passion for Christ, not for the bread He might be able to break to fill our earthly appetites. This is the fire of revival. Let foolishness, emotionalism, fanaticism and garish displays of fleshly enthusiasm all be gone. Revival brings us weeping before the face of God. The prodigal didn't skip home and demand lunch before he went off to play with His friends. He came remorseful over his sin. He came humbly rejecting the son's place for the servant's. He came seeking out His Father. He came begging forgiveness - and found favor.

This is His promise.

This is revival.