

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 51:1-19 – New Testament Reading: 1 John 1:1-10

God's Pattern for Revival
"If My People Humble Themselves"
2 Chronicles 7:14

Christians will never be able to change the world through political reformation or through Christian education.

The only hope for our decaying and dying society is a spiritual transformation, beginning with a true, Holy Spirit revival of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. To express that desire for revival, the Church must:

- **Humble itself before a Holy God** – removing all the elements of pride and pretenses.
- **Pray** – acknowledging its weakness and yielding to God's power.
- **Seek God's Face** – abandoning its selfish goals and returning to its pursuit of God.
- **Turn from its wicked ways** – repenting from sinful behavior and turning again to the Savior.

While this activity would express *our* desire to see a genuine revival of the Church in our day, a true, Holy Spirit Revival is *within the will of our Sovereign Lord.*

"Revival is a work of God, in the heart of the people of God, to draw them back to God! And just as it was in our salvation, it is God who takes the initiative in revival!"

The main characteristic of the Church today is Apostasy. Remember there are two forms of Apostasy that we see:

1. "Falling away" from Biblical truths and theology. We see this especially today in the American church where no one speaks of sin, bad behavior, and Biblical truth is exchanged for a "feel good" message of happy, happy, happy. These churches have shallow, non Biblical teachings, and psycho-babble preaching. Concern is for financial stability and growth instead of Biblical fidelity.

2. The second type of Apostasy is the deliberate abandonment of key precepts of the church, like abortion, same sex marriage, gay ministers, and Biblical Truth and sufficiency. This is in the cults and the modern churches that see multiple ways to Salvation other than belief in Jesus Christ. We call this the “Departing” form of Apostasy

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Apostasy is the inward rebellion against God as the final authority of life, and an outward rejection of the Word of God as absolute truth regarding the issues of life. The Apostle Paul said there would be a “great apostasy” in the last days of the church age, just before the rapture of the Church and the revealing of the Antichrist.

In the last four decades, the American society moved from “Christian” to “Post-Christian” and now “Anti-Christian” – with Christians being the most persecuted religious group in the world today.

The Apostasy is here, and the Antichrist is waiting in the shadows for the removal of the Church, so he can be revealed as the leader of the New World Order.

When God’s judgment falls, it will begin with the Church – 1 Peter 4:17:

Jesus commissioned the Church to be the “Pillar and Ground of Truth”, as well as the place where the proclamation of that truth could be heard regularly.

In Revelation 3:14-21, John called the church of the last days “Laodicea”, which means “man-ruled” or based upon the “rights of the people”!

This is the Church that Paul said would not endure sound doctrine but would turn to fables and myths.

This is the Church that Christ said was lukewarm, indifferent, unconcerned and apathetic toward the serious issues of the day.

“The measure of an effective church is the amount of biblical truth being preached from the pulpit. Therefore, the primary reason to choose a church is the character and content of the preaching of the Word of God!”

2 Chronicles 7:13-14, was never intended to be a PROMISE from God to send revival, but a PATTERN for man to follow for God to see that his heart's desire for revival was sincere.

When God spoke these words to Solomon, in answer to his prayer, He was testing the heart of His people to see if they were truly repentant of their sins – i.e., these four characteristics would indicate their readiness for revival.

1. “If My People Will Humble Themselves”.

“If then their hearts be humbled and they accept the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember My covenant.” Leviticus 26:41

To “humble themselves” beneath the rod of God’s discipline would mean they would stop asking God why He had allowed this suffering in their life, but rather they would realize, apart from the grace of God, they would have suffered even more.

To “humble ourselves” before a Holy God is to finally see our sin as God sees it, and to submit to His divine discipline. James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6, Isaiah 45:23.

When a Christian humbles himself before God, he is bringing himself under God’s authority and power, and that “humbling” should be a daily practice.

2. “If My People will Pray!”

Until we have humbled ourselves before God, there can be no “true prayer” to God. *Motion and no meaning*

Prayer is humility in action – surrendering before Him.

Prayer is humility in word – admitting our need of Him.

Prayer comes natural once the person respects God.

- 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 – in regards to partaking of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner.
- James 5: 14-15 – in regards to praying for the healing of the sick.

Prayer is a constant conversation with God.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – Paul said Christians are to pray without ceasing.

3. “If My People will Seek My Face”... *Question: In your prayers do you seek his Hand or his Face?*

Prayer is asking something of Him; Seeking God’s face is drawing near to Him.

Prayer is interceding for others: Seeking God’s face is to become intimate with Him.

- To see His Holiness –
- To see His mercy –

Prayer is claiming the promises of God: Seeking God's face is becoming one with the Person of God.

There are two groups of Christians that we need to look at here:

Those who are *satisfied* with their "saving knowledge" of God and are still attached to the things of this world.

Those who *are seeking to know* the fullness of God and have forsaken the world and all its allurements.

Sadly, the majority of Christians will never experience the true knowledge of God, or even think of pursuing it, not only because of the draw of the world, but because they have learned to be content to live without it!

Question: If the Holy Spirit was not in our worship service...would you notice? Or would it make a difference?

4. "If My People will Turn from their Wicked Ways"

Repentance is a change of mind and heart about God, about our sin, and about our purpose in life.

Repentance is more than being sorry for our past sins.

True repentance includes a resolution that there will not be a repetition of our past sins, for we have turned from those sins, and we have no desire to return to them.

Question: Are you broken over your sin and willing to change your life to get rid of it?

Which of these four steps have you experienced in your personal walk with the Lord?

Humbling – brings grief over our sin as well as the sin of our society.

Praying – reveals that we realize there are no human solutions to the problem of sin.

Seeking Him – shows that we truly want to know Him in all of His fullness.

Turning from sin – the evidence that we have truly surrendered our lives unto the Lordship of Christ.

2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV

¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, **then** I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

As we approach a time of Revival, we need to focus on the fact that the choice to send a Holy Spirit Revival is God's and God's alone. Our opportunity is to demonstrate that WE ARE READY by doing the 4 steps above, not as tasks but as pure reflections of our brokenness from our Sin and recognition that He is the ONLY way to renewal. We must walk away from our personal sin and earnestly pray for Him to respond.