

PRAYER COMES BEFORE REVIVAL

In the same way that *John 3: 16* says almost all there is to say about the way to salvation, *2 Chronicles 7: 14* says almost everything that needs to be said about revival. So we turn to this verse of scripture to grasp an understanding of the importance of prayer and the need for revival.

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

If we think of scripture as running on the two lines of a railway track we can see that we have God’s sovereignty on one track and human responsibility on the other.

If you do away with human responsibility you have nothing to save; if you do away with God’s sovereignty you have nothing to save with. The Bible will not make sense unless we are prepared to run on these two parallel lines.

If we apply this to the subject of revival then we recognise that God, in His sovereignty, takes action when He sees fit and answers our prayers at His own speed and in His own good time. BUT He is looking for us to play our part by praying.

We provide the willingness; He provides the power.

Divine sovereignty does not relieve us of our human responsibility.

Christmas Evans, one of our Welsh revivalists, put it well when he said, **“Revival comes from God but is borne to earth on the wings of fervent, believing prayer”.**

Being part of a team means being dependant on each other and working together. **We are in God’s team. We could not experience revival without Him - and He won’t bring it about without us.**

Therefore, this little word ‘IF’, **at the beginning of *2 Chronicles 7: 14*, is clearly a word of condition.** The bible is full of texts where God implies that if we will do something He will respond, and vice-versa.

“But IF you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins”

“IF” is a conditional word.

One of the lessons that we learn from Genesis is that God has appointed humanity to be responsible for ruling, governing, the earth. Right from the creation of the world God has declared that we share the responsibility for what happens in our world. This helps us, in some way, to begin to understand why an almighty, all-powerful God wants His people to pray - it is our God given responsibility.

It is OUR responsibility. Not the politician’s or even just the church leader’s - but our responsibility to pray. We so often complain about the state of our nation and communities and yet, could it be said, that God might well be pointing His finger at us, the church, and saying, **“It’s up to you. You can change this nation and bring it back to Me. If only you will humble yourselves and pray to Me.”**

A preacher tells the story of his mother who was in the habit of losing her keys quite frequently. Everyone was called upon to join in the search and the whole house would be turned upside down until the keys were found. I believe that when the people of God will make prayer their first priority and persevere with such fervency THEN, and maybe then, we will begin to see revival.

We need to show God that revival is so important that we can’t - and we won’t - live without it.

What if we do all that God asks?

Listen again; **“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND.**

God will hear, He will forgive and He will heal.

He will forgive our sins. Isn’t this a most amazing thing? Even though we have impeded His grace and quenched His Spirit for years, the moment we turn and ask for forgiveness He gives it to us, fully and freely.

He will heal our land.

Stories abound about the effects of the great 1904 Welsh revival last century. The pit ponies became confused and refused to obey the miners instructions. Why? Because the miners no longer shouted at them using blasphemies.

One man is said to have commented, “I’ve ran and I’ve ran but I cannot escape this awesome, holy presence all around, so I’m giving in and following Jesus Christ.”

That’s revival! When men and woman encounter the living, holy, awesome presence of God and He turns their lives around to live for Him.

“Revival is God bending down to the dying embers of a fire just about to go out and breathing into it until it bursts again into flame”
(Christmas Evans)

Maybe now, at this point in history, when many people speak of the church as possibly being like those “dying embers of a fire just about to go out”, we need God to send revival?

“Revival is the church returning to Pentecost” Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

PRAYER precedes Pentecost!

How much do we want to see a move of God across our nation? Then how serious are we about seeking His face and once again becoming completely dependant upon Him?

Recommended reading:

“Why Revival Waits” by Selwyn Hughes, published by CWR