

How to Have a Revival (Joel 2:12-19)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

A spiritual awakening started the foreign missionary movement in America. The American missionary work actually began in a haystack during a thunderstorm! In 1806, during an awakening at Williams College in Western Massachusetts, Samuel Mills and four other students hid themselves in a haystack to avoid a summer thunderstorm.

While there in that haystack they united in prayer, and pledged themselves to go as missionaries wherever God might lead them. Out of this group went the first American missionaries.

Spiritual awakenings, whether in Biblical history or Church history, manifest patterns that are similar, often strikingly similar. While all of the following elements may not be present in each instance, for the most part awakenings progress through a cycle whose phases include these various aspects of God's working.

- 1) Awakenings are usually preceded by a time of spiritual depression, apathy and gross sin, in which a majority of nominal Christians are hardly different from the members of secular society, and the churches seem to be asleep.
- 2) An individual or small group of God's people becomes conscious of their sins and backslidden condition, and vows to forsake all that is displeasing to God.
- 3) As some Christians begin to yearn for a manifestation of God's power, a leader or leaders arise with insights into the causes and remedies of the problems, and a new awareness of the holy and pure character of the Lord is present.
- 4) The awakening of Christians occurs: many understand and take part in a higher spiritual life.
- 5) An awakening may be God's means of preparing and strengthening His people for future challenges or trials.

Revival occurs when people are deeply moved by God's presence and power so that their lives are profoundly and lastingly changed. Genuine revival occurs when people are taken over by God. This particular study is on the subject, "How to have a Revival." Dear friend, what we need these days is not some kind of self-made revival, but the kind of revival that is Heaven-sent and Heaven made.

It is the duty of the pastor not only to comfort the afflicted but also to afflict the comfortable. That is why we need to have studies on revival from time to time. Some of

God's people need to be distressed because they are too comfortable and complacent in life. They are no longer allowing the Lord to speak to their hearts and challenge their lives. They are no longer active in the service and work of the Lord the way they should be. Therefore, we all need to be challenged from time to time, so that we will move out for God, instead of playing with the world and putting Christ on the back seat of our lives.

Now I suppose that there have been as many definitions of revival as there is sand on the seashore. Everybody talks about revival but many times we don't really understand what revival is all about. Here is a working definition of revival. Revival is when God's people return to the Lord and experience times of refreshing in their lives.

Revival is not for the lost. The unsaved don't need revival. They need regeneration or new life (John 3:7). Someone that is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-2) needs to be regenerated - not revived. Revival is for God's people, who need to be awakened from a spiritual standpoint, so they might turn away from their sin, spiritual apathy, and selfish living.

Ephesians 5:14

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Romans 13:11 declares:

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Revival involves those times of refreshment, which come upon God's people, when they are lacking in their overall spiritual walk and commitment to Christ. Revival involves those times of refreshing that sweep over God's people and which brings them out of a state of spiritual inactivity for the Lord.

Psalm 85:6

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

D. M. Panton said:

"Revival is the inrush of the Spirit into a body that threatens to become a corpse."

Gypsy Smith was once asked how to start a revival. He answered: "Go home, lock yourself in your room, kneel down in the middle of your floor. Draw a chalk mark all around yourself and ask God to start the revival inside that chalk mark. When He has answered your prayer, the revival will be on." Revival begins with you. If you are in need of revival then let God have His way in your heart and life today.

A. The background

The people of God in the Old Testament (Israel) were under the chastening hand of God because of their sins. First, God would send a literal insect plague upon them and then a severe drought (Joel chapter 1). Second, he would send a northern nation (Assyria) to invade their land threatening to take them away into captivity (Joel chapter 2). God was threatening to take His people into Assyrian captivity because of their sins.

In the following verses we see the reason why God's people needed revival. It's because God was going to judge His people who were straying from Him.

Joel 1:4

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."

The prophet described an invasion of insects, which was a catastrophe greatly feared by those in the Old Testament. In any case, we see that God sends His judgment upon His people in the form of this insect plague. The children were to know what happens when His people stray from Him and go their own way.

Joel 1:3

"Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

The people were to place the fear of the Lord in their children. Let us remember that we are to pass down to our future generation the truth that sin always has a certain amount of consequences attached to it. We must let them know that sin does not go unnoticed and unchecked by God forever.

This insect invasion was then followed by a time of severe drought.

Joel 1:15-20

"Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

The drought is described in the imagery of having "no pasture" for the animals and when the "rivers of water are dried up." Food and water were scarce. Times were tough. When we stray from the Lord the day normally catches up with us. Times become

difficult and hard when we stray from the Lord. Proverbs 13:15 says: “the way of transgressors is hard.”

The drought was followed by the invasion of the Assyrian army.

Joel 2:1-2 says:

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.”

Please note that the Assyrian army was “his army.” This means God can use other people and various circumstances to get our attention in life (Rom. 8:28). For Jonah he used a great fish. For Peter He used a rooster. What has God used to get your attention? Perhaps there was a trying circumstance that brought to your knees. Maybe it was just the Lord’s inner conviction that brought you to the place of repentance and revival.

It has always been true that God must lovingly chasten His people, at certain times in their lives, in order to get their attention. The Bible says, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteth" (Heb. 12:6). God must sometimes send the insect plagues and times of drought into the lives of His own people to get their attention! This is what He was doing in Joel's day. We sometimes wonder why our lives are filled with difficulty. Perhaps it's because God has been trying to get our attention by some difficult circumstances that He sends our way. He is calling us to a place of repentance and revival so that we will do the work of the Lord once again. However, we must remember that even when God responds in discipline, He is responding in love. The Lord chastens only those whom He loves. On the other hand, we must fear God and live to please Him.

Hebrews 10:31

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Look to the hills my friend! If you hear the insects and see the armies coming, if you have entered a time of drought in your life, then it may be that God is trying to awaken you. God is trying to get your attention. It’s time to rend your heart, as we will see in this text. It’s time to repent of your sins, your pathetic lack of commitment to the Lord and His house, and return to Him, so that He might spare you the plague. Many times we bring God’s chastening hand upon our lives and experience hardships in life due to our lack of revival.

B. Basic Outline

We now come to the outline of this study in Joel chapter two. After recognizing God's chastening hand was upon them, the people needed to repent of their sins and gather together to pray for His mercy and forgiveness. There needed to be repentance, rallying together, and revival so that God would once again rain His blessing upon them. The point is this. If we want the true blessing, we must get rid of the sin in our lives, and come together with a revived and renewed spirit.

With all of these events taking place (the invasion of the insects, drought, and marching army) the people knew that God was chastening them because of their wayward living. Therefore, a call went up by the prophet Joel for repentance, revival, and renewal. It is the same call that God is sending up today to all of us who are God's people.

How do we have a revival? There are three instructions given for revival. In these instructions, given by Joel, we find the secret on how to have a revival.

1. Rend the heart.

Joel 2:12-14

“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?”

The word “rend” speaks of tearing or cutting out. The rending of the heart in verse 13 speaks of repentance in the lives of God's people, when His people become inwardly disturbed, or torn apart over their sins. Repentance is when God's people are torn apart on the inside because of their sins, when they change their mind and heart about their sins, when they see their sins as utterly despicable and degrading in God's sight, and when they are willing to abandon their sins.

Joel 2:12

“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.”

Joel is saying that the people needed to turn back to God with all of their hearts (their inner wills and desires) which would be demonstrated by their fasting, weeping, and mourning. These are the outward signs that the inner heart has repented and turned back to God and His ways.

W.K. Price said that this verse “contains one of the finest examples of repentance in all of the Bible.” Repentance, a rending (tearing) of the heart, is always accompanied by a feeling of regret and sorrow over a person's sinful patterns of life and their neglect in the

service of the Lord. Joel repeatedly calls God's wayward people to "lament" and "be ye ashamed" because of their sins (Joel 1:8, 11, 13).

James 4:8-9

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness."

James is describing the same thing as Joel. The people are to become broken over their sins. Their hearts must be rent or torn apart with inner conviction because of their sins. Their repentance must be evidenced by their deep sorrow and regret for their sins. There must be mourning and weeping for their failure to please God and for offending His holiness. When the fire of revival comes down, there is a deep, heart conviction and grief over sin. A casual attitude toward sin is replaced by brokenness and genuine repentance. There comes a time when we need to stop laughing and start mourning over our sin and mean business with God. There comes a time when God must break through and do a new work in our hearts.

A. W. Tozer once said:

"God rescues us by breaking us, by shattering our strength and wiping out our resistance."

Oswald Chambers

"If God is going to bless me, he must condemn and blast out of my being what he cannot bless."

Someone else remarked:

"Human beings are only bearable when the last defenses of their egos are down; when they stand, helpless and humbled, before the awful circumstances of their being."

Friend, there are times we must weep over our sins, and our sinful neglect of the Lord, and His work. We must possess a deep heart of sorrow and mourning over our lack of commitment to God and His will for our lives. When we come to this place of repentance we will have revival in our lives, where we come back to the Lord, and recommit our lives afresh and anew to God, and experience times of refreshing.

Joel says there are times when you must "rend your heart" (Joel 2:13) and allow God to do His cutting or convicting work. God wants to get to your heart today! God wants you to cut your heart! He wants you to do some surgery on your heart, so you might repent before Him, and return to the place of blessing. The point Joel is making is that our inner heart must be torn to pieces over our sins and our neglect of the Lord's work and service. Our hearts must become broken or shattered when we remember how we have placed our own ambitions, personal sins, and many other things before God and His house. This is what Joel is reminding the people about in these verses.

Joel 2:13

“And rend your heart, and not your garments ...”

Joel then adds how the people were to their hearts but “not your garments” Tearing or rending the outward garment was a sign of repentance (Joshua 7:6). However, this outward display of tearing the garments, can easily lead to a superficial outward display, which lacks real inner change of mind or heart about one’s sin. When we truly and honestly repent of our sinful ways, including our own lack of commitment to the Lord, it’s only then that we can have revival. There must be a genuine rending (tearing) of the heart that is free from all hypocrisy and outward show. This is what Joel is conveying when he talks about the people rending their hearts and not their garments. It is possible to rend the garments without rending the heart! We can put on an outward show, walk down a sawdust trail, and weep in front of a congregation, but not have real inner contrition and repentance over sin. What God is looking for is genuineness. God is not impressed with the outward show (the rending of the garments) but the inward rending of the heart! You see, when God gets the heart, He gets everything.

God is saying, "Keep your garments on and stop playing games of hypocrisy with Me! Stop playing church with Me! I see you when you tear your garments. I see you when you go to church and put your money in the offering plate. I see when you go through the outward motions and rituals, but what I don't see is your heart torn and broken over sin, your heart crushed over your unfaithfulness and lack of commitment to Me!"

Joel 2:17

Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

This is real repentance and brokenness over sin. Many people walk down the aisle of a church, and rend their garments in front of others, outwardly displaying what seems to be repentance, but they soon fall by the wayside once again, into carnality and uncommitted living. Do you know why? It's because their heart was never torn over their sin and their lack of commitment to the Lord. God may have had their mouth but not their heart!

Isaiah 29:13 records:

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.”

Jesus said something similar in Matthew 15:8:

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me..”

God may have your garments but not your heart. God may have your fancy dress but not your torn heart. Rend your heart and not your garments! God wants the real thing instead of the outward show. Don't play church with God. If God is going to do something, He is going to begin to do it in your heart. God wants to get to the heart of the problem!

John Calvin said:

"Let everyone search himself and he will find that he labors under this evil--that he would rather rend his garment than his heart."

Why should we rend our hearts? It's because God is gracious, compassionate, and wants to bless our lives once again.

Joel 2:13 reminds us that God loves us.

"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

What a loving God we have today! God is willing and ready to pardon us and give us His blessing once again, if we will just get our heart right, and turn back to Him. You see, God chastens us at certain times in life, so we will rend our hearts!! God loves us too much to allow us to live the way we are living.

Joel 2:14 reminds us that God wants to bless our lives once again.

"Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?"

God's agricultural blessings upon the people would mark a reversal of the curse that had come upon them due to their sins. God would "return" to bless them agriculturally, so they could present to Him grain and drink offerings once again. If we rend our hearts and return to Him, we will discover God's true blessing once again, within our own personal lives and church ministry. God will bless in a greater way. Our prayer should be, "Oh Lord, return and bless my life once again. Oh Lord, I need You to manifest Your presence and blessing in my life afresh and anew. Oh bless me now my Savior, I come to Thee."

God is ready to repent (Joel 2:13) and bless our lives once again. Of course, God does not repent over sin, since He has no sin. This verse is teaching that God repents or changes His mind about sending His disciplinary judgment upon the lives of His people, when they rend their hearts and repent. This means that God might repent or change His mind about sending calamity into our lives, when His people truly repent, and get right with God. Dear friend, if you will just repent of your sin, God will repent and be gracious to you!! He will shine His face upon you once again! If we get right with God, then God will once again visit our lives, marriages, and churches in a wonderful way!

God wants to “leave a blessing behind him” (Joel 2:14) or a trail of blessing as He moves to once again bless the lives of His children. God’s blessing is the result of all true revival! When God’s people rend their hearts and truly repent, it’s then that He truly blesses their lives. The hearts of God’s people will overflow with joy and His true blessing when they rend their hearts. Of course, sometimes we mistake God’s blessing, when we are not doing God’s will. We sometimes think God is blessing us, but in reality, it’s not the blessing of God, it’s simply the fruit of our own doings (Prov. 14:12). We can erect our own golden calves and claim to have God’s blessing (Exodus 32:5-6). Sadly, the work is the result of our own hands, and is nothing more than man-made manipulations.

Isaiah 5:21

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”

What we need to do is repent of our wayward ways, and then we will be able to receive God’s true blessing, upon our lives. God’s true blessing can only come when we are willing to rend our hearts, repent of our sins, and obey God.

John Bunyan wrote:

“The difference between true and false repentance lies in this: the man who truly repents cries out against his heart; but the other, as Eve, against the serpent, or something else.”

Rend your heart and not your garments! At the turn of the century, James Burns wrote the book “Revivals: The Laws and Leaders.” In the opening chapter he discusses “laws” of revival, as well as the “laws” of the absence of revival. “The first tendency,” he writes, “is for the doctrine of the church to lose its power of convicting the conscience, convincing the mind, or moving the heart.”

2. Blow the trumpet.

Joel 2:15

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.”

I remember when I was dating my wife. I used to take my trumpet to the basketball games for the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music. It was my job to blow the trumpet, as loud as I could, to motivate the players. My fiancé’s younger sister was at one of the games. She said to my fiancée, “I wanted to stuff that trumpet down his throat because he was blowing it so loud.”

The trumpet must sound if we want to have personal and corporate revival. Blow the trumpet! Trumpets were blown to summon people together for meetings that were of vital importance and significance. This is what Joel 2:15 reveals. The trumpet was being blown to sanctify the people and bring them together for a sacred assembly. The

trumpet sound was to be a summons for the people to change the course and direction of their lives. Trumpets were also blown to warn of impending danger.

Joel 2:1 states:

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.”

The Assyrian army was marching down to Jerusalem and the trumpet needed to be sounded, the alarm needed to be heard! The people needed to know they have sinned and that God’s judgment was going to come upon them. Therefore, the trumpet had to sound. The alarm needed to go off. I live beside a fire station. When the alarm goes off early in the morning, it wakes me up. It sends a clear message that there is a problem somewhere that needs attention. My friend, we must sound the alarm, or trumpet today! Someone needs to sound the alarm, or blow the whistle on worldly Christians today, so they will be convicted of their sins and change their lives.

As preachers, we must sound the alarm against the enemy, against sin, and the disobedience of God’s people.

Isaiah 58:1

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

Today many preachers go with the crowds, but the true preacher of God, must go against it. The great problem with many preachers today is that they no longer have a trumpet. They have sold their trumpet when the doctrine of separation went out of the church. Many preachers no longer want to blow the trumpet on God’s people for their worldly living and rocky music, their lack of commitment to the Lord, and their disobedience. Most people just want only encouraging messages from the pulpit but they don’t want messages that make them feel guilty and sinful. They are afraid of being put on a guilt trip and damaging their self-esteem. Many modern Christians are more concerned about their self-image instead of God’s image.

God is also blowing His trumpet today. His summoning and sound is clear. It is time to wake up from our dormant state, repent of our sinful living, our lack of commitment to the Lord, and turn our lives around. God’s trumpet is sounding. Get out of bed. Wake up!

Ephesians 5:14 commands:

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

This verse is teaching that God’s people need to wake up, get up, and light up! This is a verse that deals with personal revival! Stop living for yourself. Stop pitying yourself. Stop

running from God's work. Stop doing nothing and start doing something. You either want to live for the Lord or live for the devil. Stop riding the fence. Either you want to serve the Lord, or you don't! Paul is saying, "Get with it. Wake up and smell the coffee."

The trumpet has sounded! God is blowing His own trumpet today. Do you hear the trumpet call of God? When you hear the trumpet sounding in your own heart, God is trying to speak to you. He is sending His message of warning and conviction to your heart. He is saying, "I'm summoning you to stop playing around with sin and putting Me in the back seat of your life. I'm bowing the trumpet loud and clear today, so you will hear it, and respond to me in repentance and mourning, over your sins, and the neglect of my Word and House. Do you hear the trumpet sounding?"

Joel 2:15

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."

When God's people sense the trumpet call of His inner conviction, they will know that He wants to do a great work in their hearts and lives. They will realize that God's wakeup call is designed to bring new changes and blessings into their lives. Don't turn a deaf ear to God's trumpet call upon your life. What is God asking you to do? What new course of direction does He want you to take? What does He want you to change in your life? The trumpet is blowing. Will you hear God's call upon your life?

Revelation 2:29

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The fasting of God's people demonstrated their true heart of repentance and the solemn assembly (Joel 2:15) refers to the sacred assembly of God's people that have come together to respond to God's holiness through repentance, brokenness, and obedience. This is a sacred meeting. God's people have not come together to listen to the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:19) put to "rock and roll" music. This is a travesty or mockery! God is looking for repentance today, when we hear the truth, and are challenged to forsake our sinful ways. We should repent of all our wicked ways which we know violate God's holiness.

Dear friend, if you hear the trumpet blowing, or sense the inner conviction of God's Spirit upon your heart, then you must respond to God and repent of those sins in your life, which are keeping you from serving the Lord and doing what He wants you to do. Stop giving excuses! Start obeying.

God is blowing the trumpet! This trumpet of God's conviction and awakening is summoning you to put away your sins and stop compromising with sin! It is summoning you to give up your sins of jealousy, unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, lack of interest in God's House and prayer, greed, gambling, drugs, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, rock and Christian rock music, carnal dressing, cursing, long hair of rebellion on men,

women leading the home, and pornographic viewing over the Internet and TV. The trumpet call of God's conviction is summoning you to recommit your life to the Lord, turn your heart totally over to Him, honor His holiness, and obey God without reservation. God is summoning His people to repentance and obedience.

Don't tell me that you are going to have revival without obedience! Disobedience is the graveyard of personal revival. There can be no true repentance or revival without obedience. Repentance and obedience is the price we must pay for revival. Remember that repentance is not only saying, "I'm sorry." It is also saying, "I'm through!" Have you ever waved the white flag of surrender to the Lord Jesus? Don't fool yourself. Stop living the "religious merry-go-round." God has drawn the line, now obey Him! "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21). It's your move. God has always been where He is at!

When you sense the trumpet of God's conviction is blowing, you will rend your heart, obey what God wants you to do, and then you will have revival in your life. Revival is that spiritual renewal and reawakening that occurs only when God's people repent and surrender to Him afresh.

Psalm 119:145 says:

"I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes."

True revival radically changes our values, commitments, priorities, attitudes, and relationships to God, His Word, and others. When the heart is truly rent and repentant, it will seek obedience in every area. It will want to move in the direction of God's commands. It will cry out and say what the Psalmist did in Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The Psalmist places himself under the purifying and purging presence of God. This brought revival into his heart and life. Revival increases our awareness of the presence of God. It also results in a new love for God, a new hatred for sin, and a hunger for His Word. A magazine clipping advertised a set of labels that could be used in billing customers. One of them read, "Neither of us can afford to let this account grow any older. Why not send a check today and get it off our minds?" Today you need to hear God's trumpet and repent of your sinful ways. There are many of us today who have been trying to avoid God's trumpet, which is summoning us to repentance, and a change of living. We are playing around with sexual sins of lust. We are under the power and control of substances other than the Holy Spirit. We are uncommitted to God's House and are putting other things before God. We are compromising with worldliness and fellowshiping or advocating those things, which are not pleasing to God, whether it's carnal music, ecumenical practices, Freemasonry, and other religious associations that are connected to paganism and the enemy.

Many Christians try and hide from God! They try and avoid God's trumpet blast which is intended to redirect the course of their lives. But when we sense the call of God we will want to change our lives. We will want to move in a different direction. Dear friend, rend your heart, when you hear the trumpet blowing! Let God finally have His way in your life. It's not your way, but God's way! This is all that really matters in life.

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

“If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to repented of, and his conversion is a fiction.”

God wants us to repent of the sins that we are doing and make things right. He wants us to rededicate our lives to Him and make a decision to live for Him in a greater way. God wants us to abandon our worldliness and lack of zeal for His work. When we are willing to repent and break with our sins, it's then God will forgive us, and we will have personal revival in our lives and church ministry. Blow the trumpet. The people need to be summoned by God to repent of their sins. Sound the alarm! It's time for you to listen to God! You have listened to everybody else and to those who are tooting a different horn! It's a horn that has uncertain sound as 1 Corinthians 14:7-8 says: “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

We have many strange sounds being heard today across the airwaves of the church. We hear the trumpet call to New Evangelicalism (modern and comprised evangelicalism) today and the call to compromise our stand for the Lord. We are called upon by modern evangelicalism to compromise Biblical standards regarding separation, music, dress, and abandon the clear road markers that God's people have traveled upon for many years. This is the unsure sound of our present generation today. We hear the trumpet call to take the easy road and the path of least resistance. But God's trumpet is a trumpet call for repentance and total surrender to His will! It's a trumpet call to separate from every sin and hate every false way (Ps. 119:128). There is no unsure or uncertain sound connected to God's trumpet! It's a clear sound ringing Blow the trumpet! Let the people hear the summons to repentance, and let them get convicted about their sins, and their lack of commitment before God!

3. Gather the people.

Joel 2:16-19

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send

you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.”

Gather the people! If we are going to have corporate revival the people must assemble together to receive it. The people are now commanded to come together for repentance, renewal, and revival. Gather the people! All the people! Verse sixteen mentions the older people (“elders”) and the young people (“children”). Why must children attend? It’s because children need to know what it is to humble themselves before God in repentance and surrender. The problem with the young Christian generation today is they don’t know what it is to cry out to God in repentance over their sins, hate their sins, and follow God wholeheartedly. They don’t really think that they need God and they don’t want to die to themselves and give up their opinions and own feelings. To our Christian forefathers (ancestors) the doctrine of separation was a *conviction*. To many of our Christian grandfathers the doctrine of separation was received as an *inheritance*. To the fundamental Christian parents of these grandfathers the doctrine of separation has grown to be a *convenience*. To many children of these same Christian parents the doctrine of separation has become a *nuisance*.

Bring the children! They need to learn what it is to repent of sin and get right with God. Gather all the people so there can be a group mourning, humiliation, and repentance over sin and a return to the Lord. Let there be a corporate return to the Lord, and rallying together, where all the people decide to get right with God and turn their lives over to Him fully and completely.

It’s hard to even gather all the saints together today for the lack of commitment to God’s House! We ought to be ashamed of ourselves! We can’t all gather together on Sunday or prayer meeting night to pray as a body of believers because we are many times simply uncommitted to God and we are putting other things before the gathering of His people. Where are your priorities? What will the priorities of our children be, if we fail to gather together, and repent of our lack of commitment to the Lord? Gather the people! Gather the children! Gather all the people! No one was left out of this meeting, which once again was called a “solemn assembly” or sacred meeting of God’s people (Joel 2:15). They were not playing jazz and jive music at this meeting! It was a holy meeting where God and true conviction was cutting into the hearts of His people. Everybody was to be at the meeting! You are not to be left out of this meeting! The trumpet has sounded and you are to be in God’s House! Friend, it’s time to examine ourselves and make a decision to be faithful to God and serve the Lord. Let go, and let God work in your heart today. Let God give you revival and remake your life.

Joel also states that the nursing mothers should also bring the babies (“those that suck the breasts” – vs. 16). Not only are the elders and younger children to be part of this sacred assemble, but also those mothers, who are nursing babies! Bring the babies to church! Ladies, don’t use your babies as an excuse to stay home from church. Mothers also need to repent over their sinful neglect before God. When you bring your children

and babies to church you are sending the message that you want to be part of something that is good, right, and eternal. You send the message of your support and belief in ministry and the messages being presented. An elderly blind lady was once asked why she came to church. Her answer was simple and straightforward. "I come to church because I want to be with God's saints, support the minister and ministry, and be part of something that is eternal."

Bring the honeymooners to church as well ("let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet" – vs. 16). You may say, "Now wait a minute, God, after all, this is my honeymoon! Surely you can wait until after my honeymoon! No! There is no time to wait. The enemy is coming, your sin is before you, and God's chastisement is going to fall! You can have your wife the rest of your life, but God says, I want to have you right now!

Luke 14:20

"And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

But God says, "Come anyway! The trumpet has sounded!" Let the preachers or ministers come to the meeting ("let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep" - vs. 17). Some of the preachers had better weep over God's word if they want to see God work. They also need to repent of their compromises with the people (2 Tim. 4:2-4) instead of standing up and preaching against their sins. The leaders need to repent as well! Gather the people! Let them know what God expects from them, so they will return to God with a repentant and rededicated heart.

Do you get the picture? Something is very wrong, terribly wrong! Drastic action is needed! The situation is so critical that everyone is to stop whatever they are doing, even nursing mothers, and couples on their honeymoons! We are often too busy to listen to God. God does not fit into our plans, schedules, and timetables. Therefore, we must stop everything, and cry out to the Lord in repentance, so God might revive our hearts and lives. This is the kind of urgency and intensity that we need today in our own personal lives, and in the church, if we are going to have real revival. What is your choice? Do you really want revival? Can you say what the songwriter said?

"Yes, I really want revival!
Yes, I really want God's pow'r.
And I really want His Spirit
To control my life this hour!
Oh, I'm looking not to Jesus,
I will seek His face and pray;
For I really want revival!
I am willing to obey!"

Isaiah 44:3 declares:

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground..."

Dear friend, we cannot become so cozy in our friendships, fellowships, and ivory towers, that we lose the challenge to repent, get right with the Lord, and dedicate ourselves fully to Him. Revival comes at a price. We must repent of our sins, open our hearts fully to the Lord, and do the first works that God has called us to do!

Revelation 2:5

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Rend your heart! Blow the trumpet! Gather the people! This is how we have revival. There are no shortcuts to revival. My friend, the greatest days await your personal life and the church ministry where you attend, when you sell out for God! If we will rend our hearts, hear God's trumpet call to repentance and faithfulness, and gather together to place ourselves at His disposal, then the blessings will come!

Joel 2:18-19

"Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen."

When we repent and experience revival in our personal lives and ministries, then the blessing comes! God will pity us and send us the harvest. He will bless our lives abundantly and beyond measure ("pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" - Luke 6:38).

Robert Coleman said:

"Revival is that sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing."

The blessing of God's life upon us is a wonderful thing. We will receive God's true blessing when do God's work in God's way, at God's time, and with God's power. But let us beware! When God wants to bless us, the devil wants to curse us, and stop the revival taking place in our hearts and lives.

Leonard Ravenhill once remarked:

"When God opens the windows of heaven to bless us, the devil will open the door of hell to blast us."

Rochester, New York, was dramatically transformed by Charles Finney's revival work there in 1830-31. This has been called the greatest year of spiritual awakening in

American history. Shops were closed so people could attend his meetings, and as a result of the changed hearts, the town taverns went out of business. The truth of the matter is this, when God gets a hold of our heart, we will close shop, and obey God. We will give up our own personal goals and dreams and replace them with God's will and purpose for our lives.

Today many Christians have lost sight of the fact that some things are always right and some things are always wrong. We've lost our spiritual reference point and equilibrium. Because of this we are in serious jeopardy of losing our families and future reward unless something happens. What needs to happen is a spiritual awakening or revival in our hearts and lives. It only takes a spark to get a fire going!

Newspapermen went down from London to report firsthand the marvelous happenings of the great Welsh revival at the turn of the last century. On their arrival in Wales one of them asked a policeman where the Welsh revival was. Drawing himself to his full height he laid his hand over his heart and proudly proclaimed: "Gentlemen, the Welsh revival is inside this uniform!" He had caught the holy fire!

Revival is not cheap. The rich fruits of revival will only come to those who pay the price in humility, prayer, purity, repentance, and obedience (2 Chronicles 7:14). When we meet these conditions, and allow God to do spiritual surgery upon our hearts, it's then that He can bring personal revival into our lives and to entire church ministries.

Do you sense God's call or summons upon your life today? Do you hear the trumpet blowing? If so, let God rend your heart and bring revival into your life. Pick up the torch and run with it! Rend your heart, blow the trumpet, and gather the people! This is how to have a revival.

"Revive us again –
Fill each heart with Thy love;
May each soul be rekindled
With fire from above.

Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Hallelujah, Amen!
Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Revive us again."