

Preparing For Revival

Isaiah 40:3-5 [NIV] *“A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

Revival is a sovereign act of God, but God does **not** send revival blessings on a people unprepared for it.

God will **not** pour out His Holy Spirit on stony hearts, **nor** will He send His rain for growth on those who are unready or unwilling to receive it.

In ancient times, when a king was to visit a city, a messenger would go before him telling the people to get ready for his visit. The people of that city would then get busy preparing the road along which he would travel.

They would remove rocks and stones on the road, fill in potholes and make the road wide and smooth.

We all know what great preparations are made today for a royal visit of our sovereign queen.

How much more is the need for us to prepare for the Holy Spirit to come in power to work in and through us to fulfil the Mission of God. In **Isaiah 40:3-5** we are told three things we must do to prepare for a divine visitation, for the glory of God to be revealed.

Raise up the valleys

There are some parts of our Christian life which are now low spots, the result of neglect.

These are areas we must examine on our knees asking God to show us where we have neglected the growth He expects us to make, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit He expects to see in our lives.

Luke 13:6-9 [NIV] *“Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig-tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig-tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig round it and fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”*

We have a limited time to bear the fruit that God is expecting to use to fulfil His Mission.

Remember the fruit that any tree produces is **not** for the tree that produces it. Fruit is for those who come to that tree to benefit from what it is producing.

Also within each piece of fruit there is a seed which, if nurtured, will give birth to another fruit-producing tree.

Level the hills

Mountains and hills in our lives are the **hard resistant areas such as pride, unbelief, resistance to the work of the Holy Spirit, a critical attitude or self-righteousness.**

All such obstacles in our life must be broken down before God can bring revival through us.

Make the rough places smooth

The inconsistencies in our lives, the ups and downs, the hot and cold attitudes.

Are we harsh in our relationships with others?

Are we impatient, irritable, unkind or unfair in our dealings with others?

Only the Holy Spirit working in us can empower us to smooth out these rough places in our lives.

Then the Glory of the Lord will be revealed

God wants to come in these last days with a mighty out-pouring of His Spirit and a fresh revelation of His Glory before all humanity.

But this must begin with those who call themselves Christians.

Only when we are living holy lives will the world be confronted with the Holiness of God.

Ezekiel 36:23 [NIV] *“I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned [disgraced] among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.”*

Originally spoken to the Jewish people who failed to be the example nation God wanted them to be.

Matthew 5:14-16 [NIV] *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

But now spoken to us under the New Covenant, we are given the same task that the Israelites failed to accomplish.

All people will see God’s holiness in us, both believers and unbelievers, will be deeply affected by this witness.

Are we ready to be this exhibit for all humanity to see?

Or do we have low places, obstacles and rough areas in our lives that need to be dealt with?

Now is the time to prepare the way for revival so that God does not have to pass us by as a fellowship who call themselves Christians, and bring revival to another group who are prepared for Him to use in His Mission to reconcile all human beings to Him?

What then are the conditions of revival?

One scripture in the Christian Bible, clearly tells us that there are divine conditions that must be met before God will send revival and bring healing to our land.

Revival will **not** happen as a result of our way of seeking to bring it.

Revival **only** happens God's way, when we fulfil His conditions first.

2 Chronicles 7:14 [NIV] *“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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**”*

Notice the covenant-type promise that God makes to “*His people*”, and today that means Christians.

Our side of the Covenant

- 1 Humble ourselves [brokenness]
- 2 Pray [realise our dependency]
- 3 Seek God's Face [an intimate relationship]
- 4 Turn from our wicked ways [repentance]

Then God will respond

- 1 Hear our prayers
- 2 Forgive our sins
- 3 Heal our land [that is much needed today]

Humble ourselves

This first condition of revival is often passed over by those longing for revival, for God to heal this sick society in which we live.

Pride in its many forms is the first and greatest blockage to revival.

Pride is the chief sin that spoils our relationship with God and with other human beings.

Pride shows itself in independence and self-centredness, stops us from recognising our total dependence on God.

We may be proud of our abilities, our gifts or achievements.

We may be proud of **our** church or **our** denomination. Before revival can come, God has to deal with this corporate pride within us.

All Christians are equally dependent on the cleansing power of Christ's blood, no-one can claim to be superior to other Christians.

God cannot use the Christian who has begun to look down on other Christians

The person who has a consciousness of his own superiority in the things of the spirit is a powerless Christian.

The answer to all this pride is brokenness

Hard stony ground has to be broken up, stones cleared away and ploughed in readiness to receive seed and rain.

Only this kind of preparation will make the soil deep and soft so able to produce a bountiful harvest.

The same is true of our lives.

Brokenness is when we realise that everything we have or are is the result of God's mercy and grace.

There is nothing we can claim as of ourselves.

We all are unworthy and unfit to be loved and used by God

God cannot fully use us until there is this kind of brokenness in our lives.

Psalms 51:17 [NIV] *"The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit**; a **broken and contrite heart**, O God, you will not despise."*

Isaiah 66:1-2 [NIV] *"This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: **he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.**"*

1 Peter 5:5-6 [NIV] *"Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, **clothe yourselves with humility** towards one another, because, "**God opposes the proud** but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*

Pray to God using the words of:-

Ezekiel 36:25-27 [NIV] *"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.**"*

Asking God to remove all stony areas and to give us a heart of flesh.

If we start right now to humble ourselves before God, He will respond.

If we draw near to God in prayer, He will draw near to us.

All this change has to come from the heart, not just the intellect.

Only then will God consider using us in His Mission of reconciliation.

Only then when we stand before Christ at that time of judgement will He say to us *"Well done good and faithful servant, enter into My joy, enter into My eternal rest, My eternal kingdom."*