

Prayer – The Fuse that Ignites Revival

“When God intends a great mercy for His people, the first thing He does is to set them praying.”
(Matthew Henry’s Commentary on The Bible)

The great Moravian revival of the 1700s was preceded and followed by most extraordinary praying. Nicholas van Zinzendorf, who was the leader of the Moravian community, was a young man 27 years old. He was discouraged and deeply burdened by the lack of spiritual life in his followers. They were troubled by disunity, criticisms and deep divisions.

What a picture!

A gifted, wealthy young German nobleman on his knees agonising in prayer for the divided community of believers.

Soon he was spending hours every day and night in earnest intercession. Often his prayers were accompanied with floods of tears as he poured out his heart to God.

This prayer produced extraordinary results as the Holy Spirit began to work in a new way.

It was not long before many others began to pray as never before in their lives.

A group of about 12 or 14 covenanted together of their own accord to meet and pray with von Zinzendorf.

On 5th August 1727 they spent the whole night in prayer and prayed with great passion.

On 13th August 1727, when 300 had assembled for a Communion service, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, bringing deep conviction, repentance and reconciliation.

The need for prayer

A passion for God’s presence begins in the place of prayer.

No Christian can expect to know God intimately without seeking Him in prayer.

No Church can expect revival unless it is praying for it passionately.

Prayer is the avenue through which God works

All revivals in the past and present are closely connected with powerful, believing, intercessory prayer.

When God’s people give themselves over to prayer, God works in and through them.

When God’s people do **not** pray for this society with intercessory prayer, **nothing** much happens.

What will bring us to our knees?

Proud Christians do **not** want to pray intercessory prayers, they find it too humbling.

Complacent Christians do **not** see the need to pray, they are happy with the way things are.

Revelation 3:17 [NIV] *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”*

Self-confident Christians are **too busy** to pray, they feel confident that God will do His work in His own way in His own time.

Revelation 3:20-22 [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Jesus Christ is knocking at the church door wanting to come in and over a communion meal offer us a part in His Work in bringing reconciliation and salvation to all people.

What will then bring us to our knees in humble intercessory prayer for Christ to enter our fellowship and fulfil His Work in our community through us?

1 A sense of crisis

Isaiah 6:1-8 [NIV] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

When Isaiah saw the glory and holiness of God, he realised his own unclean sinful condition.

Before every revival Christians are made aware by God of their wretched spiritual condition.

The increase of lawlessness and fear in their society or the hopeless moral, political or spiritual depths to which their country has fallen.

It may also be a realisation of the spiritual decline and weakness of the Christian fellowship in their nation.

John 15:5 [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

When we believe this statement, only then will we begin to see the desperate need for earnest prayer.

2 The burden to pray

When God sees that His people need revival, He lays a burden on the hearts of maybe only a few, to seek His face and pray.

The amazing thing is that God will only do some things when His people are involved.

Two of these areas are revival and evangelism.

God first lays a burden to pray upon the hearts of those who are open to Him.

2 Chronicles 16:9 [NIV] *“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him...”*

God is looking for people in our fellowship who are committed to Him and the work He is doing in this society today.

The first sign then of coming revival is a stirring up of the prayer life of God’s people.

A worldwide prayer movement

When we see God stirring up His people to pray, we can be sure He is about to do an amazing thing in this world.

This is happening right now.

Across the world Christians are feeling a burden to pray and focus on revival as never before.

Some have estimated as many as 170,000,000 worldwide are involved in praying every day for spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelisation.

Revelation 3:20-22 [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Christ is knocking at the door of our fellowship, inviting us to overcome Satan’s attempt to blind us to the need for revival right here.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him [Satan and his influence] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

This is the “overcoming” that Christ is speaking about to the apostle John.

Romans 14:8 [NIV] *“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”*

Really we do **not** have a choice for whether spiritually alive or dead, we all belong to Christ.

Romans 14:9-12 [NIV] *“For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’” So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”*

Every Christian will in the future stand before Jesus Christ and give an answer to the question, “Why did you not answer MY knocking at the door of your fellowship and invite me in?”

God is up to something big

He is calling each one of us to be a part of what He is about to do and has already begun in parts of His body worldwide.

Are we willing to be a part of this worldwide revival?

What must we do now?

Ask God to reveal to us our true spiritual condition, to realise the crisis we are in personally.

Ask God to reveal His holiness and glory to us to help us to clearly see our pitiful spiritual condition and **not** to be still blinded by Satan into complacency.

Isaiah 6:5-7 [NIV] *“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”*

Having been shown through earnest prayer our true condition, accept the cleaning power of Christ’s blood sacrifice, and ask for some of His righteousness to be credited to us, so we are acceptable in God’s presence, [**Romans 3:21-26**].

Isaiah 6:8 [NIV] *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Listen in a time of solitude and quietness for God to speak to us, then respond as Isaiah did.

The task ahead that Christ will be asking us to join will **not** be easy or may **not** be visibly fruitful at this time.

Isaiah 6:9-10 [NIV] *“He said, “Go and tell this people: “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”*

Not many will respond to our message.

Isaiah 9:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. **But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.**”*

We may even have to be a martyr [cut-down] in spite of being “*terebinth*” a tall upright tree or “*oak*” a long enduring tree.

We will however have left behind a “*holy seed*” or “*stump*” that will spring to life again with new growth in the future.

The challenge God is offering is **not** for the weak-hearted, only those who are very close to God by the powerful indwelling of the Holy Spirit will survive the course.

Now is the time for us to seek that intimate relationship with God, starting with humble prayer to our Saviour.