

No Repentance – No Revival

In times of revival, when the Holy Spirit is moving powerfully, people are often overcome with deep grief over things that in normal times seem small and unimportant.

That is what the presence of God does to us.

A.W. Tozer, the man who was even in his lifetime called “A 20th Century Prophet”, and the author of 41 books on practical Christian living, said “*There can be no revival without re-formation.*”

Romans 12:2 [NIV] “*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.*”

Repentance means a change of heart, which must lead to a change of behaviour [re-formation] both must go together if we are to “*turn from our wicked ways.*”

Tozer goes on to say:-

“Unless we intend to re-form, we may as well not pray. Unless praying people have an insight and faith to amend their whole way of life to conform to the New Testament pattern, there can be no true revival.

We must have re-formation within the church. To beg for a flood of blessing to come upon a disobedient church is to waste time and effort. A new wave of religious interest will do no more than add numbers to the churches who have no intention to own the lordship of Jesus in their lives and come under obedience to His commandments. God is not interested in increasing church attendance unless those who attend amend their ways and begin to live holy lives.

Prayer for revival will prevail only when it is accompanied by radical amendment of life, and not before.

All night prayer meetings that are not preceded by practical repentance may actually be displeasing to God.” [“Gems from Tozer” page 84]

Repentance, therefore, is the key to revival, for it is both a preparation for revival and an ongoing part of revival.

If repentance dies, so does revival.

We cannot experience revival without repentance.

What leads us to repentance?

The awareness of the holiness that leads us to an awareness of the depth of our sin.

A shallow understanding of who God is and what He requires will only lead to shallow repentance.

A deep awareness of God’s Holiness and our sin will lead to a deep repentance.

Isaiah 6:1-5 [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."

Note the dramatic response to Isaiah seeing the glory and holiness of God's throne.

Isaiah when standing before God's throne, in the light of God's Holiness, realised he was guilty and accountable.

The absence of godly fear will ruin one generation and be reflected in the next.

The proclamation of God's Word

In the Old Testament stories of revival, the clear proclamation of the Word of God began the whole process.

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5, 9 [NIV] *"all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. **He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.**" ... "Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up." ... "Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." **For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.**"*

The beginning of a great revival that led Israel to return to true worship of God.

At the time the protestant reformation in Europe [1517] Martin Luther's study of the scriptures brought him to see the depth of his own sin and his need for spiritual renewal.

It also brought him to realise that crucial truths of scripture had been lost in the teaching of the church and must be reclaimed and reapplied.

This in turn stirred Luther to preach with great conviction and **this led to the start of the protestant reformation, a major revival.**

We can entertain no hope of revival without there being a "back to the Bible" movement in the churches.

Individual repentance

We must all repent as individuals.

Psalms 24:3-4, 6 [NIV] *"Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**, who **does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.**" ... "Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah"*

This psalm tells us what is required of all who seek God and draw near to His holy presence.

Charles Finney was a revival preacher in the 19th century [1825 – 1860]. He prepared a list of possible sins for people to check their lives against, as he believed it was no use just talking about sin in a general way, for we can so easily excuse ourselves.

Repentance must be specific

With this in mind carefully work through these lists and ask God to reveal any of the things which may be affecting our lives, even in a smallest way.

Be honest with ourselves and before God.

Don't put it off! That will only make things worse.

Confess all these revealed sins before God.

Just as little termites eat out of the core of a post, weakening it and causing it to finally collapse, so little sins in our lives have the same effect if they are not dealt with.

Outwardly we may appear to other people to be good strong Christians.

But what are we really like inside?

Matthew 23:23-28 [NIV] *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices, mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law, justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."*

God looks on the inside and is not fooled by outward appearance.

Little sins can eat out our spiritual strength and vitality without our realising it.

Ask the question, *"Am I prepared to pay the price of having our sins exposed by God?"*

For this is where personal revival begins.

Wrong actions (unclean hands?)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of integrity with finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair treatment of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishonest/wrong practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Dishonouring your parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking what is not yours | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad temper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not doing your work well | <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive or secret habits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Careless, lazy | <input type="checkbox"/> Living in an immoral relationship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect of your family | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong sexual activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inflicting physical or emotional hurt | |

Wrong attitudes (an impure heart?)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unbelief | <input type="checkbox"/> Resentful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent and rebellious spirit | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to get along with |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical of others | <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiving |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-centred | <input type="checkbox"/> Proud spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Envious or jealous of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selfish | <input type="checkbox"/> Ungrateful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little concern for needs of others | <input type="checkbox"/> Complaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little concern for unsaved | <input type="checkbox"/> Unwilling to confess or apologise |

Wrong affections (idolatry?)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impure thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Little hunger for God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual fantasies or imaginations | <input type="checkbox"/> Little time alone with God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/watching immoral books/movies | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting another person before God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viewing pornographic materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting work (business) before God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love of money and material Possessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting sports (interests) before God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire for wealth – lotteries, gambling | <input type="checkbox"/> Robbing God of time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tight and controlling | <input type="checkbox"/> Robbing God of money (not tithing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking a generous, giving spirit | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect of prayer and God’s Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-centred interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect of Christian fellowship |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Trusting in lucky charms, horoscope |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Life controlled by financial concerns |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Little love or passion for Jesus |

Wrong words (falsehood?)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tendency to lie or exaggerate | <input type="checkbox"/> Using verbal abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Putting others down | <input type="checkbox"/> Swearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking against others | <input type="checkbox"/> Unkind or harsh words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical of others | <input type="checkbox"/> Untrue words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tendency to gossip/slander | <input type="checkbox"/> Promises not kept |

Now we need to read –

Psalms 51:1-17 [NIV] *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. **For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.** Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. **Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.** Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. **Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.** Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**”*

God heard King David, He will hear such a prayer of repentance from us.