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To Revival Or Not to Revival, is That the Question We Need To Ask that is the question. If you've grown up in evangelicalism, especially in a Pentecostal or Charismatic Church, you've heard sermons about revival. The longing for revival is likely born out of an awareness of historical awakenings where people experienced God in powerful and personal ways. This one of the main ways American Christians have experienced Christianity. No incense. No statues. No liturgical calendar. Just Jesus, worship, sermons, and revival. Today many long for a revival that (1) restores fiery faith to the lukewarm, (2) saves the sinner from sin, (3) cleanses the Bride of Christ, and (4) hastens the return of Jesus. This is revival. It is amazing when it comes. It is an experience of God's power. But how does revival come? Some say it comes through prayer, fasting, and seeking God's face for years, if that's how long it takes. Others say that revival is a sovereign move of God, that isn't dependent on our desires, requests, or actions. Neither extreme can be exclusively true. I've heard family members and ministers comment on the Brownsville Revival. Some have said it was a sovereign act of God that began in Pensacola, Florida on Father's Day, June 18th, 1995. The revival went on for six years with people from all over the world experiencing it. Because of its dramatic beginning and end, many have surmised that it must have occurred only as a sovereign act of God. But Pastor John Kilpatrick, who led the church during the revival, has also attested that years of prayer preceded the awakening. I'm not certain why God brings that kind of awakening to one church, while other churches seem to pray with similar consistency, passion, and longing, but fail to see a revival of that scope and scale. The question I want to present in this post is, can human beings live in a constant state of revival? Can we exist in a continual state of dramatic, authentic, overwhelming, divine encounter? Anyone who has allowed the Spirit of God to touch him or her in a deep way will testify that it's joy beyond words. Honestly, I would love to live in a state of divine encounter. I remember having experienced the Lord in my early teens and praying for quite some time to experience God the same way every day. Revival is critical for the church. But what do we do next? After the revival? Does there have to be an "after"? Interestingly, Jesus didn't live in a state of constant overwhelming encounters with God when He was on earth, even though He literally was God. He wasn't so overwhelmed by the Spirit that He couldn't function. Even though He said He didn't do anything without the Father's leadership and guidance (John 5:19). Just before His arrest, Jesus prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). Jesus willingly laid down the glory of God, the divine expression of unlimited ecstasy, joy, and peace, that He shared with God the Father, to become fully human, while still being fully God (Philippians 2:7). Isaiah 53:3 declares that Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..." Jesus even reminded us that in this world we would have trouble or tribulation (John 16:33). What does this mean? At the very least it means that if Jesus willingly laid down the glory He had with the Father before the world began to come and not be served, but to serve others and give His life as a ransom (Mark 10:45), there may be a need for us to willingly lay down opportunities to experience His glory so we can selflessly serve others, as well. One of Paul's main messages to the "Charismatic church" at Corinth was that they stop seeking experiences meant to bless themselves alone and start deploying the gifts of the Holy Spirit to bless and lift others. Perhaps God's heart for the church is that believers use the fire of revival to cultivate a "long-term burn" in our lives that will transform our marriages, families, churches, and communities. Maybe God wants us to create a culture that stewards the love He pours into our hearts and shares it with others, instead of creating a culture that only seeks an experience without any responsibility for "bearing fruit" in our world. Maybe the big issue with the way we define revival in 2024 isn't that God doesn't want us to experience one, but that He is asking us what we will do with that experience. Will we cultivate a "long-term burn" and become proactive in reaching, loving, and ministering to others, or are we content to have an experience while the world around us needs a church empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the hope of the Gospel with them?Revival begins with a fractured community coming together in unity and love, transcending denominational lines and racial barriers. Similarly, the Welsh Revival brought people from different backgrounds to worship together. Revival often follows believers who humble themselves, forgive one another, and commit to unity. Psalm 133:1 reminds us that "it is good for brothers to dwell together in unity." Spirit-filled preaching played a pivotal role in nearly every revival, including Jonathan Edwards' sermons in Northampton and Charles Finney's bold messages during the Second Great Awakening. Persistent prayer and the sovereignty of God are also crucial elements of revival. As Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19, believers must "go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Revivals that last emphasize personal holiness and ongoing repentance, with leaders who point people to God rather than themselves. William J. Seymour and Duncan Campbell were examples of humble leaders who emphasized the sovereignty of God. A common thread among historical revivals is the importance of continuous prayer and intercession. The Moravian Revival's 100-year prayer chain illustrates this perfectly. Prayer keeps hearts tender and focused on God's mission, and revival fades when God's people stop seeking Him. Revivals that turn inward or become self-serving will fade. Division quenches revival, but unity among believers fosters a strong missionary impulse. The Azusa Street Revival sent missionaries worldwide, and sustained revival requires believers to maintain humility, love, and unity. Ephesians 4:3 reminds us to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Persistent, fervent prayer is essential for revival. God-centered leadership that depends on the Spirit is crucial for revivals. Revival fades when leaders seek personal glory or rely on human strategies rather than the Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." As we look to past movements of God, may we be inspired to seek His face and pray for a fresh outpouring of His Spirit in our time. Heavenly Father, we come before You with humble hearts, seeking Your face. We long for Your presence to fill our lives, our churches, and our communities. Forgive us, Lord, for the sins that have kept us from You—cleanse our hearts and make us holy. Stir within us a deep hunger to know You more and to walk in Your ways. Unite us as Your people, casting aside divisions, so that we may glorify You together. We ask for a fresh outpouring of Your Spirit, Lord. Please come and move among us as You have in the past. Let Your glory fall, and may revival begin in our hearts today. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen. Revival's roots lie not in grand gatherings or external stimuli, but rather in individual hearts seeking restoration. The psalmist in Psalm 85 reminds us that revival is personal, stemming from an admission of desperation and need for spiritual renewal.2. Recognizing the possibility of RevivalIn the face of overwhelming evidence – past revivals and God's promises – we must acknowledge that revival can occur again. This isn't about blind optimism but rather a grounded conviction rooted in Scripture (2 Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 33:3; Malachi 3:10).3. The Source of RevivalRevival originates from the divine, as Psalm 62:1 affirms, "You have prepared their heart; you hast given me an heart." We must shift our gaze away from human efforts and look to God for revival's catalyst.4. The Means for Securing RevivalPrayer is the secret to sparking revival – passionate, believing, urgent prayer that seeks to tap into God's power (Psalm 62:6). History bears witness to revivals preceded by fervent intercession (Pentecost, the Moravian Revival, and others).5. Providing Channels for RevivalGod desires to send revival but requires willing vessels – believers who are receptive to His outpouring (John 7:38-39). We must be ready to receive the fullness of God's blessing and serve as conduits for it.6. Removing Obstacles to RevivalThe psalmist prays for revival, indicating fellowship with God and agreement in our hearts (Amos 3:3). Sin stands as a significant barrier; we must confront this reality and align ourselves with God.7. Enjoying the Results of RevivalRevival brings about salvation, peace, glory, harmony, increase, provision, and more (Psalm 85). It's a transformative experience that awakens us to our innermost thoughts and desires, as Hebrews 4:12 describes. Unity is a word that's often thrown around without much thought or context. Many groups view unity as working together on a project or discussing differences in beliefs, while others believe it means ignoring differences and only focusing on commonalities. However, believers have always struggled with unity, even in the early Christian church. A thorough study of the New Testament reveals that unity was a significant challenge for believers, even back then. It's true that all denominations share some commonalities and differences. If we focus solely on these differences, it's impossible to achieve unity. The purpose of revival is not just about bringing people together, but also about reviving aspects of our spiritual lives that have become stale or dry. As Ephesians 4:4-6 reminds us, there is one body, one Spirit, and one God, who is the source of both natural and spiritual life. Unity recognizes that we can't be one without the Spirit's guidance and presence. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential for bringing people together in unity, so we can discover new spiritual life. If revival happens without the Spirit's involvement, it will never be successful. It demands a price, and not everyone who claims to lead a renewal movement truly understands what it takes. Most churches seek revival but fail to do so because they're unwilling to pay the price. Revival requires inward effort: self-discipline, self-control, and spiritual maturity. It's not just about mass conversions or large crowds attending church services; rather, it's about personal spiritual growth and commitment. As Philippians 3:8 reminds us, knowing Christ Jesus is more valuable than anything else. Revival can happen in small ways every day, whenever someone finds Jesus in their life or experiences a spiritual breakthrough. It can also occur on a larger scale, but even then, it's not something that can be scheduled or planned. The Holy Spirit works according to His own timing and will. Removing Obstacles to RevivalThe psalmist prays for revival, indicating fellowship with God and agreement in our hearts (Amos 3:3). Sin stands as a significant barrier; we must confront this reality and align ourselves with God.7. 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(Hosea 10:12 NKJV, emphasis mine) Or, as I like to put it, we need to take time to make time for the One who made time—otherwise, we could end up squandering the time God has entrusted to us. It's interesting to note that Paul records over 500 eyewitnesses who saw the resurrected Christ at once, but only 120 gathered in the upper room at Pentecost. The other 380-plus individuals did not take time to join the disciples. The Bible does not explain why, but it's a thought-provoking point to consider. As I write this, I hear thunderous sounds emanating from the ceiling of my office in New Jersey. Although I When rain pounds against our church building, I'm grateful to be sheltered indoors. Yet, I often ponder: Am I genuinely involved in revival or simply observing from a distance? Leonard Ravenhill once stated, "The only reason we don't have revival is because we are willing to live without it." This prompts me to examine my own heart's readiness for the outpouring of the Spirit. Perhaps many people today are like spectators, merely commenting on the events unfolding outside. It's prudent to ask ourselves if we're prepared to welcome the rains of revival within our own lives. As critics or skeptics, it's essential to strike a balance between caution and openness. We must test the spirits, examine all things, and hold fast to what is good. The Bereans are commended in Scripture for their eagerness to receive God's word and their diligence in searching the Scriptures daily. This approach enables us to discern whether revival measures up to biblical standards and aligns with God's revealed character. So, what does revival mean from a biblical perspective? It's the ongoing outpouring of the Spirit, symbolizing the new life that Christ offers through faith and repentance. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones emphasizes that true revival is when the church returns to its roots in Acts 2, experiencing a fresh pouring out of the Spirit. The Hebrew word for revival, "nilyha," describes the preserving or quickening of life, as seen in Leviticus. We must be cautious not to overlook false revivals but rather examine them prayerfully and discerningly. The biblical concept of revival is also linked to God's promise to preserve and save lives, as demonstrated by Joseph's identity revelation to his brothers. Similarly, Jonah's story illustrates how God can accomplish His purposes despite human stubbornness. When we submit to God's will and exhibit true repentance, times of refreshment often come from His presence. Revival is not limited to geographical locations but is available to those hungry for more of God. Paul's example at Mars Hill serves as a starting point: seeking the Lord amidst idolatry and acknowledging our need for spiritual renewal.Revival is a powerful work of the Holy Spirit that brings restoration, renewal, and transformation to individuals, communities, and churches. It is characterized by an outpouring of God's presence, leading people to turn from sin to righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the driving force behind revival, working to stir us to action in our Christian lives. However, without obedience, revival will soon die down. The Bible foretells a period of spiritual awakening that could be misinterpreted as a worldwide revival. However, in biblical terms, the end times are defined by Jesus' ascension and return. The Church Age has seen an influx of people into the kingdom of God, with evangelism reaching every nation. Yet, the Bible warns against apostasy and the man of lawlessness before the Antichrist's revelation. The Tribulation period may bring a revival among Jews/Israel, as indicated by Romans 11:25 and Revelation 7. However, this would be followed by a global period of tribulation and ultimately, the Millennium, where Jesus will reign from Jerusalem, ushering in an era of justice, peace, and safety. The Bible speaks of a future time when many nations will turn to God, but this is not the same as the worldwide revival described in Revelation 19:11-16, which will occur at the end of the millennium. During that era, former enemies will put aside their differences and come together to worship Jesus Christ. However, before this great event, it is believed by some that we are experiencing a period of spiritual awakening, but the scripture indicates that this may not be the case. Instead, the final days will be marked by unrest and fear, but Christians have hope because Jesus has already overcome the world. We focus on our Lord and let His presence guide us, trusting in Him to bring glory to God until He returns.

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