

Intro: Psalm 119 & how the Word revived my heart this week. How prone we are to just go through the motions when we read our Bibles & pray. And by God's grace, He awoke in me a true love & therefore hunger for His Word.

- ⇒ E.g. of when a love-struck teen falls in love: all he can think about...
- ⇒ The more he gets to know her, the more he wants to be w/ her & loves her.
- ⇒ Even when he is not w/ her, he is consumed for her & meditates on her.
- ⇒ Why we need to spend time w/ the Word. Not a negative or bad thing (i.e. like bad medicine that is good but tastes bad).

This evening I want to look at another revival initiated by the Word of God.

Israel went into exile b/c they forsook God's Word to them. In fact, they became more wicked than even their pagan neighbors & God eventually punished them for their sins. By His grace, they return into the land to reestablish themselves as a nation. But any outward reform & growth w/o the foundation of the Word is useless.

It is not incidental that prayer is a major theme in Nehemiah as well. Before the Word brings revival, prayer must till the ground so that the seed will take root & bear much fruit in the kingdom (the need for prayer before we come to hear the Word). Before the Word brought revival, Nehemiah is littered w/ instances of prayer.

Are we idolaters when we place so much emphasis on the Word? Only if we read it irrespective of J.C. & His fulfillment of it. We must interpret Christocentrically!

- ⇒ Many believe they preach biblically if they cover a passage w/o Christ
- ⇒ John 1:1; 5:46 (cf. 6:32 – X the true manna); Luke 24:44-45; Rev. 19:13
- ⇒ The Law was given primarily to show us who God was. Only secondarily is it a list of dos & don'ts. God shows us Himself & ourselves via His Word

Nehemiah 7:73b-10:39 (Ezra's Preaching & the Outbreak of Revival)

1. The backdrop of God's sovereignty guiding all things according to His will.
  - ⇒ He moved the hearts of the Persian emperors; He moved the hearts of the remnant to return home; He raised up prophets to prod & support the repatriots; He protected them on the way & delivered them from their opponents; He stirred up Ezra & Nehemiah in their respective ministries; He prospered the rebuilding of the temple & Jerusalem.
2. The backdrop of prayer → 1:4,6,11; 2:4; 4:4-5, 9; 5:19; 6:9,14; [13:14,22,29,31]

Here we see the fine balance of God's sovereignty & man's responsibility. Revival does not require prayer. But no revival will come w/o it (cf. Haykin).

- ⇒ John Ryland Jr., Andrew Fuller, John Sutcliffe (cf. Edwards' 'A Humble Attempt' that inspired their first concert of prayer in 1784
- ⇒ B/c revival could not be concocted by mere zeal, they cried out for the Holy Spirit to be poured down upon the ministers, that sinners would be converted, the saints edified, the interest of religion revived & the name of God glorified.
- ⇒ Key text: Eze: 36:37, where God promises to increase the house of Israel when they sincerely & earnestly inquire of Him.

What Revival Looks Like:

### 1. The Word of God is Read & Expounded (7:73b-8:12)

- ⇒ Their Unity in the Word (8:1)
- ⇒ Their Hunger for the Word (8:3a)
- ⇒ Their Attentiveness to the Word (8:3b)
- ⇒ Their Reverence to the Word (8:5)
- ⇒ Their Response to the Word (8:6)
- ⇒ Their need to Understand the Word (8:7-8)
- ⇒ Their Joy in the Word (8:9-12)

### 2. Obedience is Provoked (8:13-18)

- ⇒ Hunger for the Word produces heart-felt obedience (no obedience, no love for the Word, cf. John 14:15)
- ⇒ Saw Yahweh commanded Feast of Tabernacles → no questions: obeyed
- ⇒ 'And their joy was very great' (8:17)
- ⇒ The cycle of hearing & doing the Word (8:18)

### 3. Contrition & Confession of Sin Evoked (9:1-2)

- ⇒ Thy Word is a Lamp not only to our feet, but an exposor of our sin!  
→ Scripture is our plumb line that keeps us on the straight & narrow  
→ Cf. Heb. 4:12-13

### 4. Gathering for Worship Inspired (9:3-4)

- ⇒ After reading the Word, they confessed their sins & worshipped God  
→ cf. Matt. 5:23-24

### 5. God Praised for His Covenant Faithfulness (9:5-37)

- ⇒ His worthiness (9:5b)
- ⇒ His creation (9:6)
- ⇒ His election of & covenant to His chosen people (9:7-8)
- ⇒ His deliverance of Israel from Egypt (redemption) (9:9-12)
- ⇒ His giving of the Law (9:13-15)
- ⇒ His longsuffering & mercy in Israel's desert wanderings (9:16-21)
- ⇒ His giving of kings to rule them (9:22-25)
- ⇒ His longsuffering & mercy despite their apostasy (9:26-31)
- ⇒ His justice in punishing them for their sins followed by mercy (9:32-37)

### 6. Covenants of Faithfulness Made by the People (9:38; 10:29-39)

- ⇒ In view of God's covenant faithfulness, they make a covenant to serve Him once again, according to the Law of Moses (including maintenance of the Temple & Jerusalem).
- ⇒ I pray that God's Spirit would show you His infinite mercy & faithfulness, and that you would glorify Him by responding in a pledge of obedience. He will give you grace to do this → Cf. Psa. 119:32.
- ⇒ This is how the Word brings about personal & corporate revival → **PLEAD**