

LESSONS FROM THE REVIVAL AT MIZPEH

TEXT: I SAMUEL 7:1-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. In two weeks we will have our annual revival meetings. The word "revival" is familiar to most Baptists, but sadly we are a generation that only knows about revival from what we read from the past because America has not seen a genuine, heaven-sent revival in a long time.
2. The First Great Awakening swept the American colonies in the 1730's and 1740's, leaving a permanent impact on our young nation.
3. I was reading a history book recently and the author stated that whereas the French Revolution was anti-Christian, the American Revolution was based on Christian principles because it followed the First Great Awakening.
4. There were many preachers involved in the First Great Awakening. Two of the prominent leaders were Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.
5. God sent the Second Great Awakening in the early part of the 19th century (1800–1840's), and the most prominent leader was Charles Finney.
6. Later, a great revival broke out right here in NYC in 1857-58. It is often referred to as "the Layman's Prayer Revival" because there were businessmen and workers (laymen) rather than preachers who were leading. One instrumental lay preacher was Jeremiah Lanphier.
7. Religious fervor had declined from its peak during the long-lasting, Second Great Awakening. Church growth was no longer keeping pace with America's booming population.
8. And the country was slowly but surely heading toward the Civil War.
9. Jeremiah Lanphier was working for the Dutch Reformed Church on Fulton Street in downtown Manhattan. His ministry was passing out tracts and soulwinning.
10. Mr. Lanphier was led by the Lord to call for a noon-time prayer meeting, and on September 23, 1857, at 12 noon, six people showed up to pray.
11. Day after day, more people started attending these daily noon-time prayer meetings, and soon prayer meetings were going on all over New York City. Thousands of businessmen spent their lunch hours singing hymns, reading Scripture, and praying for God to intercede.

- Ten thousand souls were getting saved every week in here New York City alone, and soon the revival spread to other cities.
12. Bars and taverns closed down. The crime rate went down. Churches were packed. It is reported that here in America over a million souls were saved in two years.
 13. J. Edwin Orr, a scholar who has written many books on revival, said the Baptists had so many people to baptize that they went down to the river, cut a big hole in the ice, and baptized them in the cold water. Orr said, "When Baptists do that they are really on fire!"
 14. Then it spread across the Atlantic Ocean where another million souls were won to Christ by 1865 -- in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.
 15. Evangelistic, missionary and philanthropic enterprises blossomed on every hand.
 16. Some of the men who were influenced by this great revival include D.L. Moody, William Booth, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, George Muller, David Livingstone, Mary Slessor, and many other preachers and missionaries.
 17. I heard about a preacher from the USA who was visiting London. Someone showed him the spot where William Booth began his work with the Salvation Army.
 18. From there this American went to see the Salvation Army headquarters. At the Salvation Army headquarters there is a statue of General Booth. There the American preacher was heard crying and praying, "Oh Lord, do it again! Oh Lord, do it again!"
 19. The man's prayer was Scriptural, for Psalm 85:6 says, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

I. THE NEED FOR BROKENNESS ("lamented" -- 7:2)

1. The book of Judges, and the first six chapters of I Samuel reveal a period of spiritual and moral decline, confusion, and anarchy brought about by the disobedience of God's people.
2. Wouldn't you agree we are in a similar situation today? We can criticize the politicians, and the IRS, and the news media, etc. but the big problem today is the backslidden and worldly condition of the churches.
3. God used the Philistines to chasten backslidden Israel. And I Samuel chapter 7 tells us the people finally repented and got right with God, and God sent them revival.

4. First Samuel 7:2 says, "all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD." The word "lament" means "to wail and to cry out."
5. Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."
6. Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."
7. This process of brokenness begins before we are saved. The Holy Spirit gets our attention in various ways, and He begins convicting us of sin.
8. The LORD used the Philistines to get Israel's attention. For forty years, the LORD allowed the Philistines to vex the Israelites. In Scripture, the number forty represents testing.
9. Jonah cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4).
10. The Philistines stole the ark from Israel, but the LORD sent the Philistines plagues until they gave the ark back (cf. I Sam. 5:8, 9; 6:20, 21; 7:1).
11. However, although they returned the ark, the Philistines kept on fighting the Israelites (7:7).
12. It was during this difficult time that the people of Israel said to Samuel, their judge and their prophet, "Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines" (7:8, 9).
13. The last words of Eli's daughter-in-law are recorded in I Samuel 4:22 -- "And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."
14. The glory of the LORD and the ark of God represent the presence of God. The presence of God is missing in many churches today, but very few people seem broken over it.
15. God wants to revive His people. And when God's people pray, and seek His face, and cry out, "O LORD, revive thy work" (Hab. 3:2), God will start to move.
16. The Psalmist said, "It is time for thee, LORD, to work" (Psalm 119:126).
17. But first of all, if we do expect to see revival, there must be brokenness.

II. THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE (7:3, 6)

1. The word "return" means "repent" (7:3).

2. Isaiah 55:7 says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."
3. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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."
4. J. Edwin Orr said, "The best definition of 'revival' is the phrase, 'Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord' (Acts 3:19)."
5. According to the Bible, these times of refreshing come in response to repentance. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
6. All of the elements for revival are found here in I Samuel 7.

* "Return unto the LORD with all your hearts" (7:3).

* "Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you" (7:3).

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne
And worship only thee." -- William Cowper

* "Prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only" (7:3). A church member once said to his pastor, "If Christians served their earthly employers with the same carelessness and incompetence they serve God, they would have gotten fired long ago." Think about that!

* The people obeyed (7:4). (I'll say more about that in a few minutes.)

* Samuel called for a prayer meeting (7:5) at Mizpeh. Samuel is one of the great men of prayer in Scripture. Psalm 99:6 says Samuel is among them that call upon God's name. "They called upon the LORD, and he answered them."

* The people got right with God, and they confessed their sins (7:6).

7. J. Edwin Orr said, "Confession of sins is a neglected doctrine. It only comes into its rightful place in times of revival, when the Holy Spirit comes in doubly-convicting power and makes it impossible for the erring

believer to have any peace of mind until the wrong is confessed whenever necessary.”

8. First Samuel 7:6 says, "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD."
9. "We have sinned against the LORD" -- this is genuine repentance.
10. They "drew water, and poured it out before the LORD," symbolizing their repentance. In II Samuel 14:14, the woman of Tekoah said to King David, "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again."
11. F.B. Meyer said, "The pouring forth of water may have implied that they poured forth from their full hearts floods of penitence and tears; that they desired by the heaviness of their grief to wash their land free from the accumulated evil of the past years; or that the people realized their utter helplessness, so that they were as water spilt on the ground, which could not be gathered up."

III. THE NEED FOR OBEDIENCE (7:4)

1. The LORD sent a wonderful revival to Israel, and the LORD gave them a great victory over the Philistines, but first they had to obey the LORD.
2. Applying this principle to God's people today, J. Edwin Orr said, "If any congregation of God's people were to obey the light that they presently have, they would enjoy a measure of a revival."
3. Are you obeying the light you presently have?
4. Clinging to some known sin, while pretending to seek revival is a waste of time and energy. Don't expect the windows of heaven to open up if you are double-minded or half-hearted.
5. F.B. Meyer said, "If only the Church of God would put away the evils that grieve his Holy Spirit, if only we would ourselves come out and be separate, not touching the unclean thing, and cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, the Spirit would interpose for us too. The Lord would deliver us, fighting on our behalf against our foes."
6. Charles G. Finney defined revival as: "Nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God."

CONCLUSION:

1. After the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, "Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (7:11, 12).
2. Robert Robinson wrote: *Here I raise my Ebenezer; Hither by Thy help I'm come; And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.*
3. R.A. Torrey gave a prescription for revival: "I can give a prescription that will bring a revival to any church or community or any city on earth."
 - First, let a few Christians (they need not be many) get thoroughly right with God themselves. This is the prime essential. If this is not done, the rest that I am to say will come to nothing.
 - Second, let them bind themselves together in a prayer group to pray for a revival until God opens the heavens and comes down.
 - Third, let them put themselves at the disposal of God for Him to use as He sees fit in winning others to Christ. That is all!
"This is sure to bring a revival to any church or community. I have given this prescription around the world. It has been taken by many churches and many communities, and in no instance has it ever failed; and it cannot fail!"