

Christ Church Clifton Sermon Notes & Questions



Series: Summer 2017 Psalm 85 Part 2

Passage: Psalm 85

Preacher: Tim Meathrel

Date of Sermon: 16th July 2017

Sermon Notes:

- Psalm contains a picture of the Kingdom of God
- Ends with the wonderful image of righteousness preparing the way for God to come. Preparing the way for the King to return and to claim his rightful place on the earth
- Psalm ends with a beautiful picture of what the Kingdom of God looks like with people living lives filled with love and faithfulness as righteousness and peace fill the land
- See in verse 11 Heaven and earth in partnership. Faithfulness in God's people is met by God's righteousness in a picture of perfect harmony.
- Result of this is peace and prosperity. OT concept of prosperity is rooted in the Israelite understanding of the promised land (v12) in a very materialistic & physical understanding of prosperity. In the NT prosperity means many different things. It can be material or financial prosperity (but there are no guarantees of this!!!) rather the emphasis is on prosperity being about spiritual health and well-being of soul.

The pathway to this future

- See an amazing progression through the psalm from V4 'Restore us' to 'V6 Revive us' to the result of the restoration and revival... V9 That His glory may dwell in our land
- Everything in that amazing picture of the kingdom flows from the glory of God dwelling in the land; the outpouring of God's Spirit in the land
- Psalm reveals a pathway to it through two cries of the heart for us to pray (Because none of this is possible without prayer!)

V4 *'Restore us again, God our Saviour'*

V6 *'Will you not revive us again'*

Talk today about the first of those cries and talk next Sunday about the second

'Will you not revive us again?'

- One of the most ancient but also deepest cries of the Christian heart through the generations
- It's the cry from the heart for God to act

Understanding Revival

- Revive – two parts to the word = To come alive again
- Revival = Spiritual reawakening from a state of stagnation that God does by his Holy Spirit reviving a person and community

Marks of revival

- **Deeper love for God** – one part of the Welsh revival was started when a young girl called Florrie Evans rose to her feet and simply prayed *'I love Jesus Christ with all my heart'*
- **Passionate worship**
- **Deep and constant prayer** – Evan Roberts = *'Let us pray'* – everyone prayed out loud for hours
- **Hunger for the word of God**
- **Openness to the Spirit of God**
- **An appreciation of God's holiness – and our sin**

- **Mass conversions**
- **Communities transformed**

I believe that God is calling Christ Church (along with other churches) to position yourselves for revival

- Not that we can make revival happen ourselves because revival is a sovereign outpouring of God's Spirit
- But we can position ourselves to be ready to receive it
- God is not a slot machine – we put our money in and get what we want out
- But I do believe that God's heart is the renewal of all things (Rev 21:5 *'He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'*) and Revival is key to that

Positioning ourselves for Revival

1. Position of Prayer

- Prayer is central to everything in the Christian life and revival is simply not possible without prayer
- Studying the history of revivals reveals that we simply cannot expect God to act unless we pray and that when God's people do pray, God will act

Heroes of the Hebridean Revival (1949-52 Island of Lewis in the Hebrides) = two ladies Peggy and Christine Smith. Peggy was 84 years old and blind and Christine 82 and they shared a cottage. They were unable to attend church and to the world they looked so insignificant but their cottage was place where they met with God. God gave them this promise from Isaiah 44:3 *'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods on the dry ground'* and they pleaded this promise day and night until the revival broke

Position of prayer = position of humility

- Prayer is so key because prayer puts us in the position of humility

Revd Seth Joshua prayed for many years that God would send an ordinary man from the coal mines or fields to lead a revival in Wales. When training for the ministry Evan Roberts attended a conference with Seth Joshua he came to the front and brokenly and fervently prayed...*'Oh God, bend me'*. That was the prayer that sparked the Welsh Revival

The battle for prayer

- There is so much power in prayer
- But I can't help but wonder as I meet many Christians from different nations have we lost our way with prayer? Have we lost confidence in prayer? Do we really believe that God hears and will act in response to our prayers?
- There is a battle over prayer in our personal lives and in our corporate life as a church
- This is a season for positioning ourselves in prayer, for positioning ourselves in humility, facing the battle and winning the battle as we press through in that place of prayer

Gypsy Smith on Revival

Gypsy Smith was a wonderful revivalist born in 1860 in a gypsy tent. He ended up being invited to the White House by two presidents. Forty five times he crossed the Atlantic to preach the gospel to millions of people on both sides seeing great fruit in his ministry. A delegation once came to him to enquire how they might experience personal and mass revival as he had. They wanted to be used the way Gypsy was. Without hesitating, he said:

"Go home. Lock yourself in your room. Kneel down in the middle of the floor, and with a piece of chalk draw a circle round yourself. There, on your knees, pray fervently and brokenly that God would start a revival within that chalk circle."

We need to position ourselves in the position of prayer

2. Position of Hunger

- To be hungry and thirsty is part of what it means to be human. When we are no longer hungry or thirsty it's a sign that something is physically wrong in our bodies
- What's true naturally is true supernaturally

- God has created humans to be hungry for his presence. When we are no longer hungry for God it's a sign that something is spiritually wrong
- What I've discovered is a law in the spiritual life; that hunger in the human heart draws the presence of God

"If you want men to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea"

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – French writer and poet

- In other words, if you create a longing in the heart for something then we will pursue it
- Reality is that we're all hungry for something and we're all pursuing different things in our lives
- The question is this what are we pursuing? What is the true longing of our hearts? But of what value are those things if we are not first and foremost seeking the kingdom of God? Because nothing else is of lasting value.

As Jesus said *'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'*

Questions

1. What do you think and feel when you read the words 'Will you not revive us again'?
2. What does the word 'Revival' mean to you?
3. Can you think of any examples of revivals? Can anyone share any examples with the group?
4. What are some of the marks or characteristics of revivals?
5. Do you have a longing in your heart to see revival in this nation? Why, why not?
6. What is the part that prayer has in revival?
7. Tim said that there is a battle for prayer individually but also corporately in our church. To what extent do you agree with that? Why?
8. How can we position ourselves in prayer?
9. Tim said "God has created humans to be hungry for his presence. When we are no longer hungry for God it's a sign that something is spiritually wrong" Do you agree?
10. What are you pursuing in life? How does this impact your relationship with God and your priorities in life?
11. How can we grow in hunger for God and for God to move in revival power?