

Recipe For Revival (1 of 7)
Series: Recipe for Revival
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2 Chronicles 7:14
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Well this morning if you have your Bible I want you to turn to II Chronicles 7:14, a verse that many of you know by heart. I want to start a new series of messages today and I want to speak today on "Recipe for Revival". That verse says "If my people who are called by my name will 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."

Now most Bible scholars would say that II Chronicles 7:14, although the word revival is not used, is the defining scripture about what the requirements of revival involve. The word revival comes from a Latin word and its two parts: re means again and vive means to live. So, revival means to live again. It means that the Spirit of God must bring out of a dormant state a person's faith. It may bring out of a person's walk that has become dull and routine and boring into a revived state, a state that is living and overflowing and abounding with good work with the fruit of the Holy Spirit and with a walk in a way that sets the example for the world to follow.

Now this was put in context. When Solomon was dedicating the temple to God and God said, "Solomon, there are going to come times in your nation when things don't go right. Right now the economy is booming. Right now you are in a time of rejoicing." But he said, "You'll have those valley times in the life of Israel, when spiritually, even economically your country is going to be depressed." He said, "I'm going to send judgments. I'm going to send things upon this earth that will cause people to look to me, that will cause people to stop and think." I think we as a nation had a wake up call and things have been different in our thinking. God says that when times like that come if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. I don't think any of us would debate the fact that America needs revival, that the church needs revival, that many of us in our individual lives need revival.

Someone has said if there ever was a time when you were closer to God than you are today, then you are in need of revival. So in the next few weeks we're going to break down this passage. We're going to see what the Holy Spirit had in mind. We're going to see if we're willing to meet the conditions of revival, what those conditions are. Now the first part of this verse says - "if my people." You know, today, if I were to say for everyone

in the Coffey family to meet me in the foyer in the back of the church, you wouldn't be looking around and saying, "Am I a member of the Coffey family? What family am I a member of?" Everybody who's a member of the Coffey family would instinctively know that I'm talking to them.

Now, if God has a people on this earth, if God has a people who are to call on His name, are you one of those people? Do you instinctively know that you are a part of the family of God? Do you know if God says this morning, "If my people will seek my face", do you know that God is speaking to you and He's speaking to you exclusively and speaking to you individually? God has a people who are called by His name. Are you a part of that group of people that God says, "If they will call on me I will send revival."? If I announce today, "All of those who are a part of the family of God come to the front of the church." Would you know for sure that you are a part of God's family? You see, contrary to what our world has taught us, not everybody is a member of God's family. God is the creator of all men, but He's only the Father of those who have been born into His family by faith in Jesus Christ. The Devil has a family and God has a family. God puts all the world in two classes: you are either in Christ or in Adam. If you're in Adam you're not in Christ. If you're in Christ you're not in Adam.

And so do you know this morning that you are a part of God's family? That's very important for revival to come because if you do not know that you are a part of God's family then you do not know that you can be a part of a move of God called revival. In fact, Paul said to the church in Corinth "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith." We are called by God periodically to examine ourselves, to do a self examination, to ask a question, "Am I a part of God's family, are there signs, are there evidences in my life that unmistakably tell me that I'm part of the family of God, that I can be a part of bringing revival to America, that I can be a part of bringing revival to my church?" Again, in I Corinthians 11:28 Paul said "But let a man examine himself." Now, when Christians, listen to me, and churches fall into prolonged periods of time when they do not examine themselves spiritually as to whether they are with God they fall into a state of deadness, a state of dormancy, a state of being in a spiritual rut, a state where they are in mighty need of revival. God said "let a man examine himself and see whether or not he be in the faith."

In his book, AMERICA ON THE EDGE, Tom Ellif suggests there are three ways that any person can know 100% whether or not he is a part of the family of God. It's those three things I want to briefly share with you this morning. First of all, ask yourself this question, "Am I on an upward path?" One way you can know if you are a part of God's family for sure - am I on an upward path? When Jesus comes into your life you have a personal

relationship with Him that changes the direction of your life. It changes the desires of your life. It changes the destination of your life. You begin on an upward path. That path continues until the day you die or the day that Jesus comes again. Many people mistakenly put themselves in the category of "backslidden believer" to say that they are still a part of the family of God even though their life is not on an upward path. Their life is on a path away from God, away from the will of God, away from the word of God, away from the worship of God. Yet, they say they are a part of God's family. The Bible says no. The Bible says, "are you on an upward path?"

You see, there are several scriptures that tell us about this. Romans 8:14 the Bible says that "those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. For as many are led by the Spirit of God those are the sons of God." God's Spirit will lead you if you are a part of God's family. So let me ask you this morning, "Are you led by God's Spirit? Are you on an upward path?" You know the Bible says in Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says unto me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'" What did Jesus say? Not everyone who professes to know me knows me. Not everyone who makes a profession has a possession of Christ. Not every one who walks the aisle is saved. Not every one who says, "I'm a believer" is a believer, but it's the one who does the will of the Father.

Again, Jesus said in Luke 6:46 "And why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things that I say?" If your life doesn't reflect a change, if your life doesn't reflect a new direction, if your life doesn't reflect a path toward God then you cannot say you are a part of God's family. Therefore, you can't even be a part of bringing revival. That doesn't mean your life won't have some stumbles, your life won't have some falterings, your life won't have some failures. It doesn't mean your life will always be perfect, but it's like the Mississippi River. When you look at the Mississippi River on a map you'll notice the Mississippi River makes many twists and turns, but it is always going one direction. It is going from north to south. There is no doubt about the direction even though sometimes it may seem to veer off for a little while, it always comes back to that same direction. If you really are a part of the family of God your life will continually be on an upward path. Let me share one other passage with you. I John 3:6-9 - watch this, "Whoever abides in him does not sin." Wow. "Whoever sins has neither seen him or known him. Little children let no one deceive you. He who practiced righteousness is righteous just as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he has been born of God."

Now when we study this passage we know he's not talking about individual acts of sin, but he's talking about the habitual practice of sin. Whoever is born of God does not sin in a continual sense, but he's on an upward path. His life has a different direction. He doesn't continue to walk in an old way of life. There's one other passage, I John 2:19. Let's look at this passage. This passage tells us that people who go out from God's people are not backslidden, but they were never saved in the first place. It tells us that the faith that falters before the finish had a flaw from the first. Here it is - "They went out from us but they were not of us. For if they had been of us they would have continued with us. But they went out that it might be made manifest that none of them were of us."

What is he saying? He's saying that being a part of the family of God means godly behavior. It means a godly life style. It means a godly walk and a godly talk. It means that your life is in an upward path. You can know if you are a part of God's people if you're on an upward path. Number two, you can know that you are a part of God's family if you've made an outward profession, Romans 8:15. "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear but you have received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'" Abba is a term of endearment, not a formal term like the word Father, but the term daddy. It's saying here that there is a constant confession of faith in your life. If you are a part of the family of God, that you love to confess God as your daddy, that God is not only your heavenly Father, but He's your tender, loving, caring Father. Have you made an outward profession?

You know, the Bible says Jesus said these words "If any man does not confess me, I'll not confess him before the Father who is in heaven." He said, "if any man confesses me I'll confess him, but if any man denies me I'll deny him" - Matthew 10:32-33. You know there are many people who play mind games with their salvation. They say, "Well, if I wasn't really saved I'll pray right now and I'll be saved." Well such a prayer is meaningless. It's not accompanied by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. My friend, if you're not saved God's going to let you know you're not saved. You may rebel against it and you may not want to confess it. Some people are going to go to hell simply because they had too much pride to come and say openly and publicly, "I've never been a child of God and I need to be saved this morning." You know, people want to be secret disciples. People make a profession of faith and are baptized and later on they come to know that they were lost. Then they make a decision for Jesus Christ, they profess it publicly, but they never follow the Lord in baptism. Why? Because their flesh rebels against it and yet they live a life that's less than the victorious life God wants them to live because they haven't been obedient to God.

It's interesting that Jesus made baptism a part of the great commission. We're not only to make disciples, we're to mark disciples by baptizing them. My friend, if you've not been baptized since you were saved you are not right with God and you need to be baptized and make an open confession of your faith in Jesus Christ. Am I on an upward path? Have I made an open confession? Number three, do I have an inward peace? Romans 8:16 says "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Listen to me this morning. The final, inescapable evidence that you are a child of God is the Holy Spirit. One young lady in a revival I preached in, a teenaged girl went home after the service and she asked her father, "Was I saved? I knelt down with you and I asked Jesus to come into my heart. Was I saved?" He said, "Honey, I heard what you said. You said the right thing, but only God knows your heart."

He says here it is the Spirit Himself who bears witness that you are a child of God. Only the Holy Spirit can affirm you. Only the Holy Spirit can give you inward peace that you are part of the family of God. When God says "if my people," he's talking about you because you are a part of God's family. That's confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Listen to I John 4:13 "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." One time I had a staff member who lived a very good life, who was a very good person, who was a hard working staff member, who was by every obvious, outward sign, a believer in Jesus Christ. Yet he came to me and he said, "Brother Stan, the Holy Spirit has convicted me that I've never been saved." He said, "The thing that convicted me is that I have never had that peace that only the Holy Spirit can give in my heart." He said, "I don't believe that I'd ever been convicted that I was lost." He said, "I was taught to believe about Jesus. I was taught to say the right words and the right things, and I said them." He said, "I did all the right things but still did not have God's Holy Spirit in my heart." He said, "I want to confess Jesus as my Savior and invite Him in my heart." When he did that God gave him a peace that he had never known before.

Listen, if you're struggling with doubt, if you're playing mind games, "Did I say the right thing? Did I pray the right prayer? Did I have the same kind of conversion experience that Paul did or that someone else did or some evangelist did?" Just ask yourself the question, "When I say I'm a part of the family of God does God's Spirit bear witness and give me an inward peace?" That's what God says He will do. All the assurance, all the discipling, all the Bible reading, all the prayer in all the world that any man can do will never give you assurance unless God's Spirit gives you that assurance. There is a very popular preacher. He preaches on many different networks on television. All of you would know him if I called his

name. He's preached in this pulpit. When I preached for him in his church, his wife came forward in that revival crusade and she said to her pastor husband, "Husband you know me. You know I grew up in a pastor's home. You know I grew up knowing about Jesus, talking about Jesus, believing in Jesus. You know all these things about me. I've been married to you. I've been a pastor's wife. We've been involved in building great churches. There's that one percent of doubt. I just don't have that inward peace that I'm part of the family of God. I want to settle that doubt and ask Jesus to come into my life."

You see, God has to bring you to that point of conviction. Were you saved? I don't have that peace. I don't have that assurance. I'm not sure that I've truly been saved. When he brings you to that point you will gladly run down this aisle and accept His Son as your Savior and invite Christ into your life no matter if you may have been a member of a church and no matter how many revival meetings you've been to. Revival starts with a self examination. "If my people." If we are not God's people then we cannot pray for revival and we can not be a part of bringing revival. Let's pray together. Father I know the devil has fought this service because there are some right now who know in their heart they don't have an inward peace. Father you wanted them to come and be saved this morning. Maybe some teenagers, some adults, Father, some you know have been struggling with this question, "Am I a part of God's family?" for a long time. God I pray that they will struggle with it no longer, that they will come today and say, "Regardless of what I've done in the past, today I come to finally and fully give my life to Jesus Christ that I might be on an upward path." God there are some today who claim to be believers. They claim to be part of your family, but their life is not going towards heaven, it's not going toward your will, it's not fruitful, it's not producing the fruit that you said it ought to produce. God, there are people here who need to come and say, "My life is not on an upward path. I need to be saved and get on that narrow path that leads to salvation." Father I pray you will convict hearts and lives for Jesus' sake.

As heads are bowed and eyes are closed I'm going to ask a question, no one looking this morning. I'm going to ask every head be bowed and every eye be closed and I want you to think about that promise that we know Him because He's given us of His Spirit. Do you know that God's Spirit gives you an inward peace, that no matter what happens you are going to heaven, you are a child of God? If you can say you have that inward peace, while no one looks, just raise your hand, all over this building. Thank you so much, you may lower your hands. Heads are still bowed. Eyes are still closed. There are several of you who could not lift your hands this morning. You don't have that inward peace. I wonder how many of you would be

willing to say right now, "Bro. Stan, I want that peace in my life. Pray for me. I want that peace in my life. Pray for me." While no one looks. If you want me to include you in this prayer, just raise your hand. Would you? Lift it up. All over this building. Lift it up high. All over this building. Yes. Thanks. How many others? Include me in that prayer. I want that inward peace. I'm not sure. Pray for me. Anyone else? God bless you. Thank you. Thank you for being honest.

Anyone else who'd be honest and say, "I don't have that inward peace. God knows it and I know it. People may not know it, but I don't have it. Pray for me." We have adult men and women as well as young people who have raised their hands. Listen to me, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed and no one is looking, I want those of you who raised your hands to look right up here at me just for a moment. No one else is looking but those who raised their hands. I want to talk to you as if I came to your home and sat down on your couch with you. The Bible says Jesus has the power to come into our life and save us eternally. Do you believe Jesus has that power? If you do would you nod your head yes if you believe that? Does He have that power. The Bible says no matter what else has happened in your life, if today you'll ask Him, He'll save you. Do you believe He'll keep His promise if you ask Him? Do you believe that? Would you nod your head yes? You believe that? If you believe that would you nod your head yes?

So listen, you believe He has the power to do it. You believe He'll do it if you ask Him. What you've got to do is ask Him. I'm going to give you opportunity this morning to ask Him. If you'll ask Him to give you that peace, come in your life, once and for all. I want you to just stand where you are where your hand went up. Will you ask Him? You said He'll do it if you ask Him. Just stand there where your hand went up. He'll do it if you ask Him. That's right. How many others in the balcony? How many others on the floor? In a moment I'm going to ask those who are standing to come. Our counselors are going to be right here, our pastors along with me. I want you to come because we want to pray with you and help you in that decision. In a moment we're going to stand and I'm going to ask every person that God has spoken to, I'm going to ask you to come. I'm going to ask those who need a church home to come.

Father, in Jesus' name I pray right now and thank you for those who had the honesty to raise their hand. I pray for them. I pray this morning would be the day they nail this down once and for all. God, I pray they will come and let you do that work in their heart and life. Father, I pray for others who didn't raise their hands, but they need to come, God that you'll speak to their hearts. Father, give them the courage to step out for Jesus Christ this

morning. We ask it in His name. Amen.

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