

2/28/6
Bible
AM
"The Recovered Rapture"

Scripture Lesson:- Psalm 85: 1 - 13.

psalm 85: 6. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee."

Introduction:- My text this morning is a prayer.

It is taken out of one of the most beautifully spiritual Psalms of the Bible. Here is a saint presenting before God a petition that he believes to be of vital importance both to himself and to his people. Devout souls through all the centuries have caught his voice and have appreciated the worthwhileness ~~of his cause~~, of his request.

As they have listened to his prayer they have been convinced that he was voicing the deepest hungers as well as the deepest needs of their hearts ~~of their hearts~~, and they have earnestly made his prayer their own. This morning, I am

wondering how many of you, as we hear his voice, feel constrained to mingle our voices with his.

Frankly, I am afraid that the number will not be too large; for the prayer that this saint is presenting is not vastly popular today. There are multitudes today, even in the church, who no longer say, "Amen", to this prayer. The Psalmist

is praying for a revival. The subject of my sermon is "The Recovered Rapture." In naming the sermon, I had in mind the rapture that once was the churches. This church has had its thrilling days. It has had the days of a revival. Souls were born into the family of God. The church

was built up in the faith. Enough money was raised to pay its budget in full. There was a spiritual atmosphere that made it easy to win souls to God. But what is the atmosphere now? Is it easy to win souls to God? I am convinced that every Sunday some lost soul sits in the seats here and goes away, their hearts strangely moved, but yet they did not yield to God. Why is this? Have we lost something? Have we lost the winning power of the early church? Really, it should not be so. It has not always been so. The word "revival" was once a winsome word, a thrilling word. It was radiant with life and beauty. But such is not the case anymore. Why? why? why?

*my heart cries out with
I. I. I.*

Show Revival us again

It is not because the idea of a revival has fallen into disrepute in every department of life. It is only true in the realm of religion. For instance, nobody objects to a revival in nature. All thrill at the coming of spring. How delightful when the first violet appears. How thrilling when the buds begin to swell; when the winter-stripped trees begin to deck themselves in their soft garments; when the apple blossoms begin to appear; when the robin comes back from his sojourn in the southland; when spring comes we do not protest against its coming because it does not last all year. We do not reject it because it is a climactic experience that will not abide. We are glad to welcome it, in spite of this, because it means the coming of new life.

We do not object to revivals in these physical bodies of ours. Were you ever desperately ill, so

ill that even ~~the~~ to whisper was like lifting a heavy load, so ill that the most dainty dish nauseated you, so ill that life lost its thrill, and became a burden to you. And then did you experience the joy of returning health, the passing of pain, the coming of new strength to your body, and the return of the zest for living? Did you ever witness and rejoice over such a revival in one that you loved?

Suppose I could tell you with authority that revival in business was on the way; that it was just over the rim of the horizon and would be upon us tomorrow. Suppose I could say, with authority, "Your assets will be double tomorrow; tomorrow you will get your old job back; tomorrow you will receive an increase in salary. What enthusiasm that would create. You could not keep it, it, you would have to tell it. But when we begin to speak of a revival of religion our interest seems to wander, and we slip into sort of a comatose state and wonder how soon the tiresome ordeal will be over. Why are many so indifferent to a revival of religion? Why are so many even antagonistic? There are many reasons, but I will mention just two.

1. The revival has been rendered unattractive and even odious to some because they have seen only its counterfeit. They do not distinguish the real from the spurious. ~~They do not distinguish the real from the spurious.~~ We confess that there have been many so-called revivals which have not really revived. There are those who put the entire weight of responsibility on the pro-

essional evangelist. But he is not the only one to blame. Part of it rests upon the church. We have undertaken to reap a spiritual harvest. We have expected the harvest without the necessary cultivation.

But it is neither fair nor reasonable to discredit a reality because that reality is sometimes discredited. By a revival I mean a real, genuine, spiritual awakening. A spiritual awakening takes place when our hearts recapture their first rapture; when the soul recovers its first love. A spiritual awakening has been used for bringing in the kingdom of God, no student of Church history will deny. We cannot throw the revival, spiritual awakening away, simply because it has been counterfeited.

You are not going to toss the diamond aside, the diamond that you wear, the diamond that your husband gave you for an engagement ring, just because there are diamonds made of paste. I am not going to throw the little money in have in my pocket away, just because there is counterfeit money. No amount of sham can destroy that which is real.

2. The modern church is an ease-loving church. It is not willing to pay the price that a revival costs. There are many, no doubt, who would be willing to have a revival, a spiritual awakening, if it could be had without cost and serious hard work. But a revival is costly, a spiritual awakening is costly. It has always been. Hosea gives us some idea of the price to be paid as he pleads for a revival in his day. "Break up your fallow ground"

he cries with passionate earnestness. "Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." What does he mean by fallow ground? He is speaking of ground that has been under cultivation. It needs to be broken up anew. The farmer only wastes his seed who sows them on ground that ground that has not been prepared. So our hearts that have been broken, must be broken anew, broken by repentance, before there can be a revival. God is always ready to give, but he cannot give unless we are willing to take. He cannot thrust life into our hands, if they are too full of other things to receive it. The revival, the spiritual awakening, always begins, not by gathering in those without the church, but with a deeper consecration of those within. The church that will have a revival, a spiritual crusade, must first of all repent. Repent of her forgotten vows, of our uncharitable judgments, our open transgressions of the Law of God. We need to repent of our lack of prayer and the resulting lack of power. We need to repent of the shameful way we have shunted God's cause into second, third, or hundredth place, instead of putting it in first place. We need to repent of our listlessness, our cruel indifference, as we face the plight of lost souls. We need to repent of our spiritual barrenness. "When Zion travaileth she brings forth children." There are hundreds of churches in our denomination who did not report one single addition last year, did not report one single addition on profession of faith. It means that we will

repent and be sorry, that we will turn about and share with our Lord the burden of a world gone wrong.

Do we need a spiritual awakening? The heart of humanity has not changed. The Divine nature has not changed. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is not that a spiritual awakenings are no longer possible. I believe that any pastor who will unite with his church and study the field and make up their minds that a spiritual awakening is possible, and pray with men of old, "Give me or I die", will have a spiritual awakening, as surely as night follows day.

III.

~~What~~ do we need to have a spiritual awakening?

Let us bear in mind, that we do mean a spiritual awakening. We believe in a revival, a spiritual awakening, because we believe in God. We believe in a spiritual awakening because we believe that God is an absolute necessity. When Ezekiel went into the valley of dry bones, he did not think that he could raise up "an exceeding great army" by polishing and organizing the dry bones. He knew that the breath of God must breathe upon those bones before there could be any life. "Where there is no vision, the people perish," said one of long ago. The one hope then for the cure of the deadly evil of "indifference", is the recovery of a vision of God. There never was more preaching of an ethical nature than there is today. But somehow ethics are not always put into practice. We need to pray for a revival; for a spiritual

awakening.

Conclusion:- A revival means a rebirth of joy, and that is a commodity on which the modern church is exceedingly short. But this joy is something far greater than a mere tide of emotion. It is a joy that is the natural outcome of abounding spiritual life. It is a joy that means the changing of our want into wealth, our timidity into courage, our weakness into strength, our pathetic pessimism into glowing hope. It means the rekindling of our burnt out passions and the re-birth of a firey earnestness. It means a new passion for saving men and for the spreading of the kingdom of God to the uttermost parts of the earth. It tends to making the Church a truly glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

We sometimes pray, "God be merciful to us and bless us; and cause thy face to shine upon us." That is good, but it is not enough. This world is a sick world; but there is a remedy. There is a balm to make the wounded whole. Do you believe this? If you do let us this morning come to this altar of consecration and prayer, and let us pray that great prayer of repentance, repentance that I mentioned in my sermon, and let us pray, that the people of God may rejoice in him.

Does your heart yearn for a revival in our midst, do you want more of His power in your life. Let come to this altar for forgiveness, mercy & rededication & Commitment. God says of my people which are

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and that is the condition on which the members

of the Church are to be called by name will humble

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from their wicked way, then

will I hear from heaven with

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