

# 40 DAYS OF PRAYER

**for REVIVAL**  
**January 3 - February 11**

Church Family,

Thank you for beginning this journey together, as we prepare for personal and corporate revival. Scripture is full of examples of people, often leaders, experiencing personal revival that resulted in national revival. The pattern was similar: the individual explored the truths found in Scripture, they examined their lives in comparison, then they confessed and repented of sin.

This guide was comprised by your staff without any consultation among us about what each was writing. You will notice, though, many common themes, which is a demonstration of the Lord speaking to each of us about where we are as a church and where we need to be. I open us up with a look at Hebrews, which is addressed to a small, struggling church that is considering leaving the faith due to persecution. While you are probably not considering walking away from the Lord, you might be struggling and need the same encouragement as was given to this church.

John writes his devotionals using various definitions of “revival.” Aaron uses the letter to the Colossians and the struggles they were facing, then Ken uses several old hymns to challenge us. I appreciate these men and their ministries.

Our revival services are scheduled for Sunday-Wednesday, February 12-15. As you pray for personal and corporate revival each day, I also ask that you will join me in praying for Doug Compton, the preacher for our services. You will be blessed by him, and you will also find that he wrote some of the devotions.

Lastly, would you also consider fasting for revival at least one day during the next 40? It might be a traditional fast from food, but also consider fasting from such things as social media, television, your iPad, or anything else that keeps you from focusing on the Lord. Then, rather than spending your time on this activity, use it to pray for revival.

I cannot wait to see what the Lord is going to do in and through our church family. Thanks for the honor of being your pastor! I know you join me in praying:

“Lord, Send a Great Revival!”

*Bro. Clint*



## Hebrews 1

Billie Burke was a famous actress in years gone by. While enjoying a transatlantic ocean trip, she noticed that a gentleman at the next table was suffering from a bad head cold. "Are you uncomfortable?" she asked. The man nodded. "I'll tell you just what to do about it." She offered. "Go back to your stateroom and drink lots of orange juice. Take two aspirins. Cover yourself with all the blankets you can find. Sweat the cold out. I know just what I'm talking about. I'm Billie Burke from Hollywood." The man smiled. "Thanks" he said, "and I'm Dr. Mayo from the Mayo Clinic."

Sometimes, it is important to know who you are talking to- and sometimes it is important to know who you are talking about. The writer of Hebrews believes it is important for us to know who we are talking about when it comes to Jesus. The overall theme of the book is the supremacy of Christ: no one compares.

The author is focused on letting us know how good Jesus is; how much better He is than other options. Why? If we do not know how good He is, we will always look for something better.

The Hebrews revered angels and the Old Testament prophets. We must admit that men like Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others were an impressive group, but some of the believers admired them too much. Some had even become angel worshipers. The writer points out that Jesus is supreme to angels, or anyone/anything else, because He is the Son of God (verses 4-5), He has superior rank (6-7), His important role (8-9), He is unchanging (10-12), and He has authority (13-14).

Beginning in 1992, researcher George Barna conducted a survey of church people and found that only 55% of those who attended church regularly said that their faith affected the way they live. Each year, that number goes down. Why? Because churchgoers have concluded that Jesus is not that much better than anything else in their lives.

What about you? In order for revival to come, you must claim the supremacy of Christ in your life. There is nothing better.



## Hebrews 2:1-4

Tom Amberry is probably not a name that you recognize, but he put his name in the Guinness Book of World Records in 1993 when, as a 71 year old foot doctor, he set world a record by shooting and making with 2,750 freethrows in a row! He would have gotten more- but they had to close gym for the night What is his secret? When questioned, he replied, "Concentration! The more I read about it and looked into it, the more I realized the only way you do it is practice. You have to perfect all parts of your technique; then it's just focus and concentration. You have to put all other thoughts out of your mind." He'd bounce the ball three times, focus, shoot ... and swish!

The writer of Hebrews has something like this in mind when he warns us against drifting away from the words of Christ (1). We all have daily problems and pressure that attempt to steal our focus on Jesus. It is when we begin to look at other things that we begin to drift from Him. It is in this course of action that we often fall to despair and discouragement.

We can never escape the frustration and despair all about us if we treat with negligence the salvation we have experienced in Christ. To understand what I am saying, we might look at salvation as we would a garden. To be what it is meant to be, a garden must be weeded, watered, and looked after. If the weeds take over, it remains a garden, but it does not bear the fruit intended. The salvation we have is indeed a gift from God, but we are responsible for the importance we give to it and for the fruit that comes from it. You cannot neglect the salvation in Christ and at the same time experience victory in your daily life.

If every day does not include the living Christ, then you are inviting despair, for daily victory is found only in walking with the living Lord. We face the strong currents of life by fastening our gaze on Christ and anchoring our soul to His promises. This enables us to experience revival.

When was the last time you stopped to give God thanks for your salvation? How about doing it today? Then, remove any weeds that have crept into your garden..

## Hebrews 2:5-11

God created mankind in His image for the purpose of fellowship, yet on every hand this fellowship has been broken by sin. Just as God asked Adam, “Adam, where are you?” He still asks this question, not because He cannot find the Adams of this world, but because He hopes by so asking to awaken the Adams to see themselves.

God’s divine creative plan as set forth in Genesis was that humans should have dominion over the earth, but we see humans being mastered by the earth. We have followed the pattern of bugs that run from the light when a stone is lifted to reveal their hiding place, just as John 3:19 says, “Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”

The writer reminds us in verses 7-8 that God created humans slightly lower in power than the angels, intended to be master of all God’s earthly creation. Yet there are lots of sights and sounds to remind us that humankind is not occupying the place intended by God. Sin’s triumph is apparent all around us. If the story ended with verse 8, we would be doomed. But when we add Jesus to the picture, everything changes! Verse 9 states that the “grace of God” caused Jesus to taste death for everyone. Through Jesus, people can still experience the crowning glory for which they were created.

In Victorian England, treadmills were not found in air-conditioned health clubs—they were found in prisons. Treadmills, or treadwheels, as they were called, were used in penal servitude as a form of punishment. Some treadwheels were productive, grinding wheat or transporting water, but others were purely punitive in nature. Prisoners were punished by spending the bulk of their day walking up an inclined plane, knowing that all their hard labor was for nothing. He could not even look on his labor at the end of the day and know that, if nothing else, he had been productive.

As you struggle with sin, remember that Christ has set you free indeed and that you are no longer sentenced to be chained to the treadmill of sin and failure. He has paid the ransom demanded for your release from sin, and you are now walking in the freedom of the glory of the sons and daughters of God.

## Hebrews 3

Many residents of Washington remember exactly where they were and what they were doing on the morning Mount St. Helen’s blew wide-open. The shock wave rattled windows for hundreds of miles around. Prior to the eruption, scientists monitoring the peak did not know when it would go off or how big the blast would be, but all the signs of a live volcano were evident. It was just a matter of time. Local media issued warnings and regularly reported St. Helen’s vital signs. But as time elapsed and the big eruption did not occur, people became less wary and more bold. Campers, photographers, and others moved in to get a closer look. Then on May 18, 1980, the mountain that had been dormant since 1857 spewed ash skyward and killed at least thirty people. They had failed to heed warnings, and they died needlessly

Not paying attention to warnings is a dangerous thing! The writer of Hebrews gives the warning not to harden our hearts, and uses the Israelites of the Exodus as an example. Most of the stories we remember from the Exodus have to do with the sinfulness of the Israelites, God’s response to it, and the role that Moses played. They repeatedly ignored the directives of God- and faced the consequences.

Could it be that one of the reasons we so desperately need revival is that our hearts have become hardened? Let us be sure that none of us “has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”

The word “Today” conveys the urgency of the moment. This does not necessarily refer to a 24-hour period of time. Rather, it refers to “now.” The time to respond to God is always now.

The problem begins when we hear the word of God, feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit and tell ourselves that we need to take action- but then we do nothing! We tend to procrastinate with the most important issues of life. The warning that runs throughout this section of the letter is that if we fail to follow through when challenged by the word of God, we face the inevitable hardening that occurs when we hear and fail to respond. The heart gets harder every time we say “no” to Jesus or to any part of His truth or will. What do you need to do “Today”?

### Hebrews 4:1-11

I do not have to tell you that we live in a very hurried world today. On this Saturday, you are probably exhausted from a week of running from place to place, only to find that this day will involve more of the same. The word “rest” is almost missing from our vocabulary.

The frantic lifestyle we live today has also crept into the spiritual realm. We can have frantic activity spiritually and fail to enter into God’s rest! It is possible to acknowledge God and fail to enter into His rest, it happened to Israel in the wilderness, and it can happen to us today too. The only way to enter into God’s rest is through faith in Him and obedience to His Word. Failure to obey God’s Word will leave us unrested. As God’s people, we can enjoy a present rest, where we are provided the strength of Christ as we face the hardships of life.

One of Israel’s greatest failures was refusing to follow the admonition of Caleb and Joshua when they returned from the exploration of the Promised Land. Rather, Israel listened to the other ten spies, “because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed” (2). Think about it, they had experienced the constant witness of God’s character and provision: the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud and fire, and the day-to-day provision of manna. Faced with a new challenge, they simply did not trust God and so failed to enter their rest. Many, perhaps thousands, were believers in that they *believed* in God, but only two *trusted* God and found rest.

If we are going to have rest in this life, we must trust God wholeheartedly. That is the idea of faith that permeates this chapter. To put it mathematically: belief + trust = faith that pleases God.

While I know that waking up every morning is a blessing, I must admit that I hate when the alarm clock goes off because it means that sleep is over. I like my sleep! I find comfort in the fact that God’s rest never has an alarm as long as we trust and obey. Find rest in Him today!

### Hebrews 4:12-13

Dr. Doren Edwards, a surgeon in Erin, Tennessee, tells of a patient of his, Blanche Bennet, whose alcoholic husband had died. Her two children were giving her problems, finances were tight, and life was very hard. One day she came to see Dr. Edwards with physical problems, and he diagnosed cancer, with multiple organs involved. No treatment was available, and she was very bitter. Dr. Edwards, a Christian and a Gideon, wanted to talk with her about the Lord, but she would not allow him to share his witness. She did, however, accept a small New Testament. A few weeks later, the doctor learned from the newspaper obituary that she had died. He sent a card to the family, telling them he had donated Bibles in her memory to the Gideons. The woman’s daughter called him. “Could you please send us a Bible like the ones you donated in the memory of our mother,” she asked. “We don’t have a Bible in the home. The last six days she was alive, her whole life changed. She was no longer bitter, she wasn’t afraid to die, and she said something about knowing Jesus. But she asked that her bible be buried in her hand, and we couldn’t keep it. Would you please send us a bible so that we can find what Mama found in that book?” Dr Edwards sent them a Bible, and to date the daughter, the son, and one sister have been saved as a result.

That is the power of the Word of God! Probably no one reading this devotional would dispute that God’s Word changes lives. But does it change your’s often? As we gather for worship and Bible study this Lord’s Day, will you prepare to have your heart touched by God’s Word?

The Word is no dead letter; as the living word it continues through each age with compelling relevance. It vibrates with active, effectual power as it rushes to fulfill the purpose for which it was spoken. It is also powerful, literally translated to mean “at work.” Charles Swindoll comments, “News articles may inform us. Novels may inspire us. Poetry may enrapture us. But only the living, active Word of God can transform us.”

Evangelist Gypsy Smith was once confronted by a man who said he received no inspiration from the Bible although he had “gone through it several times.” Smith replied, “Let it go through you once, then you will tell a different story.”



## Hebrews 4:14-16

In the comic strip *Peanuts*, Linus is always with his blanket. One strip pictures Linus sitting on the ground holding blanket and sucking his thumb. He is sound asleep. In the next frame is a picture of Snoopy crouching ready to attack. The next few frames show Snoopy running to Linus and grabbing the blanket to steal it. Much to Snoopy's dismay, Linus holds on. Snoopy runs all over the yard trying to shake Linus loose from the blanket. In the last frame Snoopy is clutching one end of the blanket and Linus is clinging to the other end. The blanket is stretched across the top of Snoopy's house dangling Snoopy and Linus on each end. No one could take Linus' blanket away from him.

This persecuted church is ready to let go and walk away. They are beat up, oppressed, and wondering if following Jesus is even worth the agony they face repeatedly. Therefore, the writer challenges the, "Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess" (14b). They do not hold on through their own will or power, or even through the support of others. They hold on through an understanding of Jesus as the Great High Priest.

While we might not be ready to walk away from the Lord altogether, we face difficulties. As you read this, it is a Monday and it might have been one of "those days." You may even be wondering if the Lord could even love you after this day, let alone use you. It may look appealing to forget all this talk about revival and just try to survive. You need to understand Jesus as the Great High Priest.

Jesus, the Son of God, fulfilled the role of the Great High Priest by making atonement, or provision, for our sin in a way that no other sacrifice could. He ascended into Heaven, where He sat down, symbolizing that His atoning work is done. He remains at God's right hand, interceding for us. While many think that He is distant and out of touch with humanity, He is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses." He knows what it feels like to stub your toe, to be hungry and thirsty. He understands how it feels to be betrayed by a friend and to be frustrated in your purpose.

Do not let Satan convince you that you need to keep the Lord at arms length because of your life. Come close and "hold on." He understands.



## Hebrews 5:11-14

One thing every one of us had in common as children was the desire to grow up. It occurred somewhere between our second and third year with the blossoming of our new awareness that we were little people who had the potential to become "big." Big kids (those a year or two older than us) came to have powerful influence over us. Some even became our secret heroes. Then as older kids, we wanted to be teenagers, then we desired to be an adult.

Much of life is about getting to the next stage. For some reason, we are not as concerned about our spiritual growth. As parents, we rejoice when our kids are saved, but not as concerned about their discipleship (or we would make sure we took advantage of every opportunity for them to hear and respond to the Word). As churches, we rejoice when a person "walks the isle" and is baptized, but we regularly lose contact and interest in the discipleship process.

Physical growth is so important to us that arrested growth is universally regarded as a tragedy. Babies are cute, but a baby that remains a baby is tragic. The same applies to spiritual growth.

The writer wanted to address some other matters that he considered deeper or for those more mature, but he admits he cannot do so because of the spiritual immaturity of the people. This is a powerful indictment, especially when you see the form of the language used in the phrase "you are slow to learn." "Slow" is only used here in the Bible and means "sluggish" or "lethargic." Literally, "you have become sluggish in the ears." Therefore, we understand that their problem was an acquired condition characterized by an inability to listen to spiritual truth. They were not naturally "slow," there was no intellectual deficiency, but they had become spiritually lazy. They had become unreceptive and closed.

In my ministry, some of the people who have been more unreceptive and closed to the Lord and His Word have been some of the best church members as far as attendance, but they were, and are, sluggish in the ears. Are you growing spiritually? Could you teach someone today or are you still learning the elementary truths of God's Word? Mature, growing believers are a blessing to their church and their families.



## Hebrews 6:1-12

Many men will agree with me that one of the greatest inventions of all time is the television remote control. No longer do we have to get the children of the house to get up and change the channel! The motivation behind the remote control was to assigned the elderly and disabled from having to get up every time they wanted to watch another station. But the remote control has been blamed for contributing to obesity, sparking marital spats, and causing many TV viewers to “zone out” as they “channel surf.” For many people, a remote control has become a symbol for convenience and even laziness. John Ortberg once half-jokingly wrote, “Life without the remote control is an unbearable burden for the modern American family.”

Today’s culture has come very near to making a religion of laziness. Spiritual laziness is a danger that looms over all of us if we do not work against it, which is why the writer stated to the Hebrews, “we do not want you to become lazy” (12). We talked about sluggish ears in yesterday’s devotion; more often than not, sluggish ears go with a sluggish, lazy life. When the ear becomes dull, everything else follows suit.

Today’s culture has come very near to making a religion of laziness. Carried to the ultimate, it separates us from God because it erases caring. More souls perish from laziness (ours and theirs) than from outright disbelief. Children are too idle to obey. Parents are too lazy to command. Students are too lazy to work. Men are too indifferent to be men. Women are too inattentive to be women. Doctors are too careless to care well. Shop clerks are too uninterested to be courteous. Believers are too dejected to bear witness. While there are exceptions, look at how much our society has to spend trying to correct us.

How do we guard against spiritual laziness? The writer speaks of being sure of your salvation (verses 4-8), then demonstrating that salvation (9-10). The Bible is clear that no one can be saved by works, but it is also clear that saving faith works. Spiritual diligence is a sign that God’s grace is really at work in us.

There is no spiritual remote control. It is time to get up and get busy.



## Hebrews 6:13-20

Several years ago, a lady heard on the radio a contest for “100 Grand.” They were looking for the 7<sup>th</sup> caller and she was that person. The next morning she went to the station but was asked to return later. When she got home, there was a phone message from the station manager explaining that she had won a Nestle’s 100 Grand candy bar, not \$100,000. The lady sued them for deceptive advertising. The station manager offered her \$5,000, but she wouldn’t go for it. “I said I wanted \$95,000 more,” she said, “Nobody would watch and listen for two hours for a candy bar.”

Instances such as this have created an environment where we do not trust anyone for anything. The days of doing business with a handshake and a verbal commitment have been replaced with multiple pages requiring the same signature. We tell people that we intend to do something and have to spend additional time assuring them that we intend to keep our word. We got used to being lied to by politicians, and now we take that same skepticism into even our closest relationships. This also carries over into our relationship with the Lord.

While we trust that the Lord will save us, keep us, and protect us, we often do not trust the individual, specific calls upon our life. When He lays that lost friend, family member, or acquaintance on our heart, we do not trust that He will save them, protect us, or even go with us. When He guides us to be involved in missions, we do not trust that He will take care of things at home while we are gone. When He guides us to increase our giving (money or time), we do not trust that God will help us do more with less.

The writer uses Abraham to encourage the Hebrew church as it braced for the test ahead. Abraham’s faith saw the unseen. He saw a living God who was sovereign in all of life. He saw his sacrificed son resurrected and living in. Abraham saw himself fathering a sea of humanity. He saw blessing for the whole earth. Because he saw this, he was patient for many years. One of our major problems is that we lack the patience to wait on God. He does not work fast enough, so we get our plan in place and move on without His direction.

In what areas of your life do you need to patiently trust the Lord?



## Hebrews 9:11-28

I have watched some of the biggest and toughest men I know completely lose these characteristics at the sight of blood. They cannot explain it, other than they just do not like blood. Verse 22 tells us that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

During the thousand plus years of the Old Covenant, there were more than a million animal sacrifices. Considering that each bull spilled a gallon or two of blood and each goat a quart, the Old Covenant truly rested on a sea of blood. Yet none of those thousands of animal sacrifices ever really gained forgiveness for sins. The sacrifices of the Old Testament could temporarily cover sins but they looked forward to a future fulfillment. For the sins to be forgiven there needed to be a new covenant relationship that fulfilled what was foreshadowed and promised by the Old Covenant.

One of the traps in using a revival preparation guide such as this is that once the Lord convicts you of your shortcomings, you begin to think about them more than you did before, which can lead to a paralyzing guilt. Verse 14 states that the blood of Christ “cleanses our conscience... so that we may serve the living God.”

The blood of animals was able to purify the flesh of an unclean person. But the blood of Christ is able to purge the conscience from sin to serve the living God. The animal sacrifices could not do this. For the daily and annual sacrifices constantly reminded them of sin (Heb 10:3). Therefore, Christ not only removes the "legal" guilt of sin, but also the "inward" (or emotional) guilt of sin!

The hymn writer put it this way, “What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus! What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!” Today, if you are struggling with guilt, understand that the blood of Jesus has completely removed that offense.

As another hymn writer said, “There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.”



## Hebrews 10:19-25

One of my responsibilities each Christmas is putting together all of the toys that must be assembled before they can be gifted. This usually results in a late night or two, as well as much frustration. The frustration comes from the lack of clear directions and the millions of small parts, but the greatest comes when I do not have the right tools for the job. This year, my drill would not work which took a lot of time with a screwdriver- which was too large for some of the screws!

The author of Hebrews points out to this persecuted church that they have all the tools they need to survive- and to thrive. These same tools are available to us and include divine access (verses 19-20), an advocate before the Father (21), nearness to God (22), and hope (23). All of these flow out of the work of Jesus on the cross and are given to us through our faith in Him.

But there is one more tool that we have more control of its availability and usefulness: one another. In the context of this passage, this tool is found and used when we gather for worship, or as we would say today, “for church.”

People have always had a million reasons why to stay away from church. It is not a new problem. The early church had a fall-off in attendance due to persecution, ostracism, rejection of beliefs, and arrogance. Today, persecution and ostracism may not be our experience, but people find many other reasons to absent themselves from worship, not the least of which is laziness. Christians who do not attend church have always been a departure from what is accepted.

We meet Christ in a special way in corporate worship. It is true that a person does not have to go to church to be a Christian. He does not have to go home to be married either, but in both cases, if he does not, he will have a very poor relationship. When you absent yourself from church, you will hinder your ability to glorify God in worship. Congregational worship makes possible an intensity of adoration that does not as readily occur in solitude. As we gather together, we are reminded that we are not alone. Others are struggling as we are, while others have already learned from the same struggle and can teach us.

Be sure this tool is in your toolbox, prioritizing corporate worship tomorrow.







## Psalm 121:1-2

*Revival – “an improvement in the condition or strength of something.”*

*Synonyms: improvement, recovery, rallying, picking up, turn for the better, upturn, upswing...*

Throughout my career in evangelism, I have seen the occurrence of church wide revival meetings become increasingly less through the years. Less churches are having less revival services. Why is that? Is it because the lack of need? Hardly. Is it a financial decision? Let's hope that's not the case.

I have heard it said; “Times change. We simply cannot do things the way they have been done in the past if we want to be relevant in today's world.” While there is a element of truth there, the problem with that logic is that sin has not lessened over the years. What has changed?

I am afraid that we, in our arrogance and self-sufficiency and been led to believe that we are ok. We attend services, small groups, or even have a teaching role or other leadership. The truth is that even at our very best we are as filthy rags. Isaiah 64:6; “But we are all like one who is unclean, all our so-called righteous acts are like a filthy rag in your sight. We all wither like a leaf; our sins carry us away like the wind. “

Sounds to me like “an improvement in the condition” is necessary. That's you... staff member, you... Sunday School teacher, and you... deacon. The Bible says “all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

*Lord Jesus, today I ask Your forgiveness for all the ways I have disappointed and disobeyed You. I come before you today to tell You I realize my condition and call upon Your grace and power to prepare me for the work You want to do in my life. Amen*



## Psalm 51:1-10

*Revival – “an instance of something becoming popular, active, or important again.”*

*Synonyms: comeback, reestablishment, reintroduction, restoration, reappearance, rejuvenation*

Restoration...with all the home improvement shows on television, that word conjures up all kind of images. Craftsmen take an old, worn out item and in a matter of a 30-minute show (through the gift of editing), that piece destined for a junk yard or trash bin appears brand new. It is truly amazing to see.

Do you see yourself as a worn-out item...of no further use for the Kingdom? Living with unconfessed sin can do that to you. The devil seeks to destroy and while he is unable to take your salvation from you, he can render you ineffective by discouraging you and all the time blinding you to the sin that exists within you. But God, in His faithfulness and love for you, speaks to your heart and His conviction draws you to cry out; “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with me!”

*Thank you, Lord, for Your restoration and leading me to make you important once again! I see myself as You see me and I confess my sins to You. I trust in You to bring revival to my soul. Amen*



## Hebrews 4:12

*Revival – a new production of an old play or similar work.*

Are you used to “your preacher”? Have you ever heard another preacher and been guilty of saying; “Well, he’s not as good as my preacher?” It’s an understandable human reaction for we have our preferences...in foods, hobbies, even topics in which we prefer to converse.

Early on in my evangelistic ministry, while leading music in many revival meetings, I found myself comparing this week’s speaker with last week’s. One day God did a work in my heart and reminded me that what I was hearing was His Word and my “preferences for the messenger” had no bearing on His power and what He wanted to do in my life.

Is the idea of attending “another revival service” weighing on you? How is the music going to be...does the guest preacher raise his voice or preach long sermons? What will it all be like? Will it be at all like the last time? Perhaps a “new production of an old play” or “similar work”. Human preferences must go. It is God’s Word for you... this time, right here and right now.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

*Lord I thank you for equipping and anointing men that share Your Word through Your leadership. I pray that I will not allow myself to be hindered from hearing what You desire to say to me through this messenger. Remove my preferences and open my heart. In Your name, I pray. Amen*



## Isaiah 58:11

*Revival – a reawakening of religious fervor, especially by means of a series of evangelistic meetings.*

Well there it is. As I looked up the word “revival”, it took until the 4<sup>th</sup> definition to see what is a common thought when we hear the word, revival. The truth is, however, that used this way it only serves as the description of an event. “A series of evangelistic meetings.” So, here’s the question: When this series of services are complete, is that all that it will be to you?

Revival is a personal thing. You see, if you have never known that saving grace, the forgiveness of sins and placed Jesus on the throne of your life, you can’t be revived. An old preacher once said; “You can’t revive something that hasn’t been “vived” the first time.”

It is the clutter of the world, the unclean heart with unconfessed sin, the distracted mind, that can keep true revival from coming into your life and choke your spiritual life.

*“The toddler had already turned blue in the face when Tabitha Hearn pulled him out of the pool. She called 911 and, though she is trained in CPR, was too panicked to effectively help her son. Logan, her 9-year-old son, had just completed a CPR class and kept his cool. He told her she was performing CPR incorrectly and ask her to move out of the way. He performed CPR for two breaths, and stopped when Brendan started coughing up water. Soon his little brother’s chest started moving, and he was taking small breaths. ‘He did the procedure like it should be done, and it was working,’ said Tabitha Hearn.”*

*“I mean, I wouldn’t say I’m a hero, because any other brother would do that for his brother,” Logan Hearn told ABC7 Chicago.”*

You have life, spiritually, but you may be drowning with the cares of the world. Jesus wants to resuscitate you, be your lifesaver and revive you. Run to him with open arms and an open heart.



## Matthew 11:29

*Revival – a restoration to bodily or mental vigor, to life or consciousness, or to sporting success.*

The Bible says in Galatians 6:7-10; “Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows, because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. **So we must not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up.** So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the family of faith.”

“Weary in doing good”.... “but if I don’t do it, it won’t get done.” Perhaps you have been guilty of taking too much on yourself for the Kingdom. You have worked so very hard in His work and now you find yourself weary in doing good. The devil then takes advantage of the situation and softly whispers in your ear and discouragement takes hold.

Following a sermon on what Jesus meant in Matthew 11:29, a gentleman asked the pastor; “Do you know why His yoke is light, sir?” The pastor responded; “Well, because the good Lord helps us to carry it, I suppose.”

“No, sir,” said he, shaking his head, “I think I know better than that. You see, when I was a boy at home, I used to drive the oxen, and the yoke was never made to balance as you said. Father’s yokes were always made heavier on one side than the other. Then, you see, we would put a weak bullock in alongside a strong bullock; the light end would come on the weak ox, the heavier end on the stronger one. That’s why the yoke is easy and the burden is light, because the Lord’s yoke is made after the same pattern, and the heavy end is upon His shoulder.”

God has never intended you to shoulder everything. Peter Lord once said; “Sometimes we get so busy doing the good things that we don’t do the God things.” Are you guilty? There will be “things” that may seek to distract or hinder your participation in God’s work during revival services. Make a commitment to come, with your burdens, your heartaches, your “I’m doing all I can” attitude and surrender to His leadership.



## 2 Peter 3:18

*Revival – the growth of something or an increase in the activity of something after a long period of no growth or activity.*

If you saw someone approximately 20 years old but was the size of an infant, what would you think? Brooke Megan Greenburg was born in 1993 and died in 2013. She was an American who remained physically and cognitively similar to a toddler, despite her increasing age. She was about 30 in (76 cm) tall, weighed about 16 lb (7.3 kg) and had an estimated mental age of nine months to one year when she died. Brooke’s doctors termed her condition Syndrome X. Although she endured a number of physical ailments in her short life, doctors were never able to isolate the cause of her condition.

The average church is filled with members who, at a time in their life, surrendered to the Lord and His will for their life. They called on Jesus for forgiveness of sins and asked Him to save them. But something happened. Syndrome X. These young Christians remained Infants in Christ. This condition is not new. In fact Paul dealt with it and addressed it in a letter to the Corinthians. 1 Cor 3:1-3; “So, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but instead as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still not ready, for you are still influenced by the flesh. For since there is still jealousy and dissension among you, are you not influenced by the flesh and behaving like unregenerate people?”

We find ourselves, sometimes, stunted in our growth with the Lord by the things of the world. Whether it is an attitude of unforgiveness or bitterness, gossip or jealousy or any unconfessed sin, God wants to remove those things and heal us. After all, He does not command us to just “sit tight” after our salvation but rather challenges us. 2 Peter 3:18; “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Unlike Brooke, our condition does not have to stay that way. I once heard; “If you feel far away from God, guess who moved.” He’s the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.



## Psalm 77:11

*Revival – revived – to renew in the mind or memory*

While leading a study for a group of kids, I once asked the question; “What does *forget* mean?” “To not remember,” one said. Another shared the story of how their parent forgot to pick them up following an event. And on and on...The Biblical definition of Forget would be; no longer influenced by. In other words, it doesn’t matter, it has no effect, it is history.

Memory is a powerful thing, isn’t it? To this day, the aroma of a fireplace on a cold, crisp day takes me to Thanksgiving at my grandparents in Memphis. It seemed to always be cold and as we played outside, the sights and smell of the smoke rising from many chimneys would smell so good. I’m sure you have your aroma memories. Memories are a powerful thing.

However, just as memories can bring wonderful feelings, difficult and often tragic thoughts can emerge by memory. The memory of a poor choice early in life, an episode in childhood that has been recessed, a loss of a loved one, or a failure in your life that has been difficult to release. All these things can hinder our relationship with the Lord. But there is a wonderful hope through Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that “If we will confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

When those memories surface, they are coming from one of two sources. The first is Satan. For he is prowling about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour... and since he is unable to take your salvation from you, he is trying to beat you up over the regrets. But the beautiful promise we have in that is the promise of forgiveness from the Lord. If you have confessed the sin that is dragging you down, the Bible says in Psalm 103:12; “As far as the east is from the west- that is how far he has removed our rebellious acts from himself.” Once forgiven they are remembered no more.

The second source of a resurfaced memory would be the Lord. There are those times when the Lord will remind us (convict us) of unconfessed sin and His desire is not to beat us down but rather draw us back to Him through the Shepherd’s Discipline. Sometimes it may involve a love tap, other times something somewhat stronger.

I am so thankful for His grace and love. Psalm 77:11; “I will remember the deeds of the LORD. I will remember your ancient miracles.”



## Colossians 1:11-14

Near the end of the summer, some friends and I went white water rafting for one of their birthdays. Right after going through a class 4 rapid, the raft behind us lost a few people. Everyone grabbed the raft or floated to another raft to get help, except for one person. He tried to swim against the current to safety instead of allowing one of us to grab him and pull him in. Eventually he got tired and could not swim anymore, and it was only then that we were able to grab him and pull him to safety.

That story is a perfect example of what Christ has done for us. We live in a world of darkness that we cannot navigate ourselves. We do not have the strength, the will, or the wisdom to live holy lives. But we have a Savior who has rescued us from the darkness. He has pulled us to safety and brought us to his kingdom.

In order to experience this safety and peace, we have to rest in his strength. Our faith must be in him and not in others or ourselves around us. This extends past the moment when we accept His grace, knowing we cannot be righteous without it. It is a continual reliance on Him, His power, and His wisdom. And even when it seems like life is in turmoil, we can have confidence and joy in knowing that it is all in his control. He is preeminent over it all.

How could you rely more on God and less on yourself? Perhaps you have not thought about this much. Take some time to try and find the times when you have had to rely on Him, and try and find ways you could trust and rely on Him more. Give thanks for what the Lord has done by pulling you from darkness and into light



## Colossians 1:15-19

The Colossian church was a young church that was being easily influenced by a group of Jewish people who had some very skewed views even for Judaism. They were questioning whether or not Jesus was actually God incarnate. They believed he was a good man, or possibly only partially God, but not fully God. When Paul heard of this heresy, he sent his disciples quickly with this letter to set the record straight.

Paul wanted the church to recognize Jesus' authority over the world and all things in it, and also the church. Jesus was there at creation and he is the first person of the church. He was the first to die and be raised again for the church. But Paul goes even further saying that everything is reconciled by Jesus, through Jesus, by his blood on the cross. We often think about our own reconciliation through Jesus but seldom look at the broader work of the cross.

At creation everything was in harmony with God, just as He had intended it. But when sin entered the world, it all was blown out of whack. Pain, death, sadness, trial, and a host of painful things entered the world because of sin. Although this type of world is the only world that we have every known, it is not what this world was intended to be. That is were Jesus comes in. His work on the cross reconciles us to God, and when all is completed and He returns to bring a new heaven and a new earth, His work on the cross will be complete and all will be as it was intended to be.

What a glorious day that will be! The hope of what is to come, because of the work of Jesus on the cross can be overwhelming if we think about it. It is also a reminder that he is Lord over all things, the church, and even us. We need to readily submit to his Lordship, knowing what is to come one day.

Take a moment to pray and thank Jesus for his work on the cross. Think for a while on the kingdom to come and a world reconciled to God the way it was meant to be. Thank him for providing that opportunity. Now how should your life

look in light of this truth?



## Colossians 1:21-23

You never notice how something is transforming until you take sometime away from it and come back. Lizzy and I found this out when we came home from the hospital with the twins. When we left our yard and the surrounding woods were still green. But when we came home on that Friday, the first thing I noticed pulling into the driveway was how there were so few leaves on the trees and what was still there was a beautiful shade of yellow and orange. Even though the change happened over time, I had not noticed it because I wasn't watching it. The chlorophyll had broken down in the leaves completely transforming them from what they were.

Many times we forget just how much we have changed in our walk with Christ. Or perhaps we have not changed much at all. I think it is beneficial at times to gauge the Christian we were, to the Christian we are today. Paul notes the transformation the Colossians had undergone. They were once alienated, hostile in thought, and doing evil deeds. But Jesus took them from alienation from God to being set apart for God. He took them from thinking about hostility to being completely blameless. He helped them rid them of their evil deeds so they would be above reproach. They were completely transformed and Paul wanted to be sure to remind them of the place from which they came.

Can you see this transformation in your life? Perhaps it is very evident, but you need to be reminded of the work Christ did in you. Think about who you were compared to who you are. Or maybe when you take a long hard look at yourself, it does not seem as though much has changed. The Christian you were when you were first converted is pretty much the same one you are now. You need to grow and you can start that growth now as we prepare for revival. Be transformed just as those in Colossae were.

Take a moment to pray and thank God for your salvation. Ask Him to continue the transformation in your life so you can serve Him better. Ask Him to revive you during this time of revival in our church.



## Colossians 2:6-8

Have you ever seen the Truman Show? It is about this guy who has been duped into thinking his entire life was, well, his life. In all reality it was a TV show people had been watching since he was young. Obviously this could not happen in real life. It would break tons of human rights rules. I am sure and with the way media is today, there is no way you could keep the secret from the person for that long. But I have often wondered how Truman felt. I know he was not real. It is TV. But that would have to be a horrible feeling to be told that everything you had been living was a lie.

That must have been the feeling the Colossians had, but they had it twice. First when they found out the life they had been living and gods they had been worshiping was a lie, and then after they found the true God being told that it was a lie by the people in their city. These people had already made one huge change and were being told that it was wrong and to make another.

But Paul tells them to stand fast in their beliefs because they are true and then tells them to be “rooted” and “built up” and to “walk with the Lord.” His reason for saying this? So that they would not be lead astray by foolish philosophies or beliefs. He wanted them to be strong and to continue to grow in the faith so they would not be fooled.

There is no doubt that there are some crazy belief systems out there today. Most of these we can usually stay away from but there are also some that look very much like the truth when they are really lies and heresy. There is no way to tell the difference unless you know the truth. You too must have a firm foundation in your faith and in the word so you are not led astray. It should be our goal to walk with the Lord and grow in that walk daily.

How could you grow in your faith? What are some places in your life that you are not walking in the Lord? As we prepare for revival try to give those parts of your life over to God. Walk with Him and take action to build a firm foundation.



## Colossians 2:20-23

Believe it or not, there was a time when I was much more fit than I am today. I remember once when I was traveling with some friends that I was mistaken for someone, or something that I was not. I was wearing a Mississippi State Football sweat suit that was given to me by one of the managers. While at a gas station a man stopped me to tell me that we had played a great game last Saturday and he was enjoying watching us play this season. I of course told him I did not actually play and his excitement faded. Although my chiseled features may have made me look like a football player along with the sweat suit, I was far from it. It did not matter how much I may have looked the part, it was all superficial in reality.

In the passage you read, the church in Colossae was being told by outsiders to basically complete these stringent tasks and they would be saved. These outsiders had based their entire faith on different religious rituals. While religion is not bad, it is also not faith. Our salvation is not based on actions we complete but instead it is based on an action completed by Jesus. It is this reason why we do not have to be enslaved to rituals or traditions that may seem to have religious worth but have no value. They are not necessarily bad but they do not save us.

What are things that you may be clinging to that are not necessarily bad but you have placed too much assurance in? What are some things that you could get rid of and fill the gap with Jesus? It could be money, a Christian friend, a good devotional, or a Christian song list. These things are not bad. But they are also not Jesus. Our lives should be dedicated to Christ and supplemented with these good things that add to that relationship.



### Colossians 3:1-4

When I was young I wanted to be a professional basketball player. I thought I had mad skills and people always said that if you put your mind to it then you could do anything. Turns out that statement is not completely true. I can assure you that I did not achieve my goal of becoming a professional basketball player for lack of focusing on the goal.

I placed my focus on something that really had no worth, but Paul calls us to place our focus on something that has all the worth. He says that if you are a Christian seek things that are above and set your mind or focus on heavenly things, not earthly things. It is important to know that his use of the word "if" is not saying your Christianity is based on if you do these things. Instead he is making a dramatic statement challenging them to be focused on what is above because they are Christians. He wanted them to seek Christ and think about Him and His kingdom continuously. He knew their life would be changed as they shifted their focus from things of this world to things above.

It is easy today to get side tracked by stuff around us. Whether it be work, the kids, school, or social life, there are tons of things vying for our time and concentration. It is never hard to find something else to add to our lives, but it is extremely difficult to clear things from our life. We need to put a premium on time that we are seeking and thinking on God. Every action we make should be with Him in mind and in an effort to glorify Him and build His kingdom.

Make a resolution during this time leading up to our revival to keep your focus on things above and not get caught up in worthless earthly things. In the end our home is not here anyway.



### Colossians 4:2-6

This has to be one of my favorite passages in this book. Paul gives a clear call and "how to" of evangelism, while also showing that even he needs others to pray for him in his ministry. He starts by telling the Colossians to pray and to pray steadfastly. He does not want them to pray occasionally and forget about it. He wants them to keep praying and to be watching for God to answer those prayers while they pray, giving thanks as he does.

After asking for some of those prayers to be for himself, Paul then teaches us a valuable truth. Prayer is the best thing we can do, but it isn't the only thing we can do. He tells the church to "walk" in wisdom towards outsiders. That means that they need to be aware of how those outside the church are viewing their lives. Their lives should be examples of what Christ can do to a person when He transforms them. But Paul doesn't stop with that. He goes on to say their speech should be gracious and seasoned with salt. It should be different and refreshing to those who hear it. It should be taking advantage of every opportunity it gets around those who are lost. Paul gave a simple formula for Christian living and evangelism. Pray with expectancy and thankfulness, live like a Christian, and tell others about Jesus.

How could you carve out time to pray for those who are leading the way in getting the gospel to people who have never heard it. Do you pray often for international and national missionaries? Do you look for those prayers to be answered as you pray them? How could you walk more like a Christian and take advantage of every encounter you get with the lost. During this time that we prepare for revival, take advantage of those moments. Tell the lost about who has changed your life and ask them to attend revival with you.



**1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Imagine praying 24/7. Head bowed. Eyes closed. If you chose to live in that manner, you would miss the things the King had for you- not to mention you would often bump into things as you tried to get from place to place!

Prayer is a humble, yet worshipful, request before God, where you not only talk to God but listen to Him to talk to you. Yes, you pray for things about your life and the life of others, but be sure to ask what He needs you to be a part of today.

We tend to run to God and tell Him what we want. When we do that, we act very entitled. We deserve nothing, yet the King of kings wants to share with you. He wants to include you. You have to talk to Him and listen. Prayer happens everywhere. Pray as you go. When you are vigilant in prayer, you begin to see things and hear Him guide you. Your prayer has to be for Him to use you.

Kids tend to always want something. Sometimes they have to work to get things, but that can help determine how badly they want it! Prayer is a game-changer. How bad do you want revival in this land? In your life? Are you working that way? We have to seek to communicate with the Father. He is waiting to talk to you.

Today, take 10 minutes. Yes, 10 minutes. Find it! If you do not have 10 minutes, you might be too busy. Use those 10 minutes. Focus on Him. Ask Him to help you learn and grow- and for Him to guide you.



**1 Thessalonians 5:16**

I am the pity party king! I order a cookie cake, ice cream, and gray and black streamers. I struggle to rejoice many days. I look at what others have and wonder why I do not have those things. Media, social media, and water cooler talks tend to rob our joy. We place so much in what others are doing and saying that we neglect what we know to be true.

We have a reason to rejoice! Please understand: joy and happiness are not the same things. Happiness revolves around circumstances.

Think of a favorite gift. That gift made you happy, but happiness is short-lived. Joy revolves around commitment. Jesus has committed to secure our place in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is forever.

Look around you. Are there things in your life that you have hoped would help you obtain joy? Joy is something that can only come from the Father. The security. The love. The JOY!

In my office at a very large church, my wife wrote this on my first day, "Nothing will come your way today that has not passed through God's hands first." I found great joy in that phrase. I knew that anything I faced, I could overcome. Not because of me, but because of Him in me. Even in great trials, we have joy, which provides peace.

Have you allowed life to rob you of joy? Have you given up on joy? Have you tried to fill the void in your life with others things? Until you find your joy in Him, you will seek aimlessly and never be filled.





**1 Thessalonians 5:19**

Fear. Have you ever wanted to be able to explain all that happens? Have you ever attempted to explain things away, especially things you do not understand? Many people fear the Holy Spirit. We fear His power. We fear His love. We fear the unknown. When we do that, we stifle Him. He is the connection to the Father. He makes groans for us that we cannot even process. The Spirit helps us to understand His Word. Rest in Him. Jesus sent us a Comforter. We should not fear.

The word "stifle" is a word that can also be translated as "quench." To put it in terms I understand, imagine a small bonfire. The glow is beginning to grow, warmth is coming and comfort for those in need. People begin to walk over to seek comfort and someone walks over and throws a wet blanket on the fire. That is a quench. That completely stops what was going to happen. Do not be that person. Seek to allow the Spirit to guide you. Many times you will not be able to explain your actions, except to realize it was God. That is His plan. He should get the praise.

In seminary, my wife and I were broke. We had very limited finances. I was driving to speak at an event in Arlington, TX, and as I was leaving, I felt the Spirit prompt me to give away a certain amount of money. The amount was specific, as was the person I was to give it to. I fought it for a minute, then followed. I found the person, gave him the money, and made sure he knew it was not from me. I was not wanting to give it! I was hoping he would say, "No, I am good." He did not! He immediately began crying. He had spent the afternoon seeking God to meet his need. The Spirit was working. I just had to listen.

Are you willing to embrace His Spirit? Revival might come in a way you are not used to. Are you willing to allow Him to work? Are you listening? Today, ask God to help you see where He is working and choose not to be "a wet blanket."



**1 Thessalonians 5:22**

We know to avoid certain places and things. How? We have heard that they can corrupt and hurt us. We tend to lean toward the lesser of evils. I watch my kids do things and say to them, "You know better than that." Then I wonder how many times God looks at me and says the same thing. I know to avoid things, but I do not. Sin is ever before me.

Do you ever attempt to classify your sin? To make it look better than it really does? In our culture, we have a sin structure. We say one sin is permissible, but some are worth casting stones. Stop buying in to that type of thought. Sin put Jesus on the cross. The ones you commit and the ones your neighbor commits.

Revival comes when people confess and avoid evil. Take an inventory of your life. What are the "evil" things you are accustomed to? What are the things you have allowed to become an every day part of your life? Gossip, foul language, pornography, apathy, racism, and a litany of other things. Stay away from "every form of evil."

A man was looking for a driver to take his family back and forth to their mountain cabin. Three men were asked to come back to drive for the man. The first man drove up and the mountain and was able to stay about 18 inches from the edge, priding himself at how close he could drive and still be safe. The next driver drove 12 inches from the edge. He, too, was proud. The third driver chose to drive as far away from the edge as he could. The man asked him, "Why are you so far from the edge?" The driver's response, "The farther away from the edge, the safer we are."

Today, stay away from the edge of evil! Cling to what is good!



## 1 Thessalonians 5:23

He is coming! That is such a wonderful thought. It gives me great joy. He is coming! He will ride in and take me home. He is the God of peace. Peace in the middle of a storm is something we sing about and talk about, but do we truly have it?

God has provided such peace through His Word. Many of us do not take time to study or learn about Him. He does not hide things from us. He wants to reveal what is going to happen and how you can be part of it.

My prayer in my life is simple: I want to hear the whispers of God. I want to be on the front row so I do not miss anything. He gives me peace. In the chaos of war, hate, and all the other things you see and hear daily, He alone provides peace. It is a funny thing: when He disciplines us, it is so we can live in peace with Him. It is done so that when Jesus comes back, we are kept sound. Embrace Him!

Have you ever had someone pop in for a visit and your house be unprepared? The things that happen are tough. You never fully engage in conversation because you are constantly worried about what they are thinking as you try to hide the mess. Now, if someone is coming to visit and you know ahead of time, you clean. You create an inviting environment to visit and relax.

Your lives should be kept clean. Taking time daily to allow the God of peace to change us, to clean us up. This way when Jesus comes, we are prepared. Today, take a few minutes and clean up your soul. Purge the things that are evil and clean up your heart. The only way peace comes is through Him. He alone can sanctify you. Trust Him.



## Romans 5

In 1779 John Newton wrote “*Amazing Grace*” as the story of his life. Every word of this beloved hymn was penned with pain from the dark and perilous times of his younger days when he sailed the seas to the joy he experienced when he discovered the love of God. He wrote his own epitaph which examines the highs and lows he experienced in life: “John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.” Every line of his famous hymn is filled with tears of remorse because of his sin, and expressions of joy because of his discovery of God’s grace:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me;  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.*

It’s no wonder that when we sing “*Amazing Grace*” in worship, it is the one song that every person, regardless of age, sings out with gusto. Obviously it’s because it’s so familiar, and often because it was grandma’s favorite song, but I think it’s because it truly speaks to our hearts and reminds us where we’ve been and where we’re going. As we prepare for our revival services, may we once again be amazed by God’s grace as well as realize, that even if we have strayed, God still offers this grace to each one of us.

Pray that God will help you recognize the grace in your life and that you in turn will extend grace and forgiveness to others as you share the Good News with your family and friends.



## Jeremiah 18:1-6

Adelaide Pollard wrote many hymns and poems, but only one has survived the tests of time. In 1902 she wrote the words to “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” which is a familiar hymn we usually sing as an invitation/hymn of response. Many have made public their response to Christ during the singing of this hymn. The song speaks of surrender and an acknowledgement that our lives are not our own and must be surrendered to the will of the Master. The image of the Potter and the clay in verse 1 is based on the verse in Jeremiah 18:6: “Just like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand.”

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay!  
Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now,  
As in thy presence humbly I bow.*

During our choir’s Christmas music presentation this past year, we were intrigued by the large lump of clay sitting on a pedestal next to the organ. Toward the end of the program, a young lady came up and began working on the clay. As the choir continued singing she slowly but meticulously fashioned the head of Christ out of that lifeless lump. As the choir finished singing “What Love is This” the finishing touches on the face and the crown of thorns were placed and all could see how that clay had been transformed into a beautiful piece of art. What made the transformation? It was the sculptor. Only she knew how to make that transformation. She removed the parts of the clay that weren’t needed and she added to it, shaping and reshaping until the product was finished. So our Heavenly Father molds and shapes us into His image as we surrender our wills to him like the clay submits to the Potter.

Pray that God will mold and shape you into His will. Ask forgiveness for not being fully submitted to Him and commit to letting Him be the Potter and you the clay.



## Isaiah 40:28-31 & Matthew 11:28-30

Often times we find it hard to surrender fully to Christ. Sometimes it’s because we are just stubborn and not willing to relinquish control of our lives. But many times it’s because life has gotten us so burdened down, we cannot see through our problems and we drift farther and farther away. The third verse of the hymn, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” is a confession of our need and a confession of who truly has the power to restore us. It is desperate plea for help.

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!  
Power, all power surely is Thine!  
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.*

Every Sunday our pews are filled with hurting and desperate people. Often you can’t tell it, but all of us bring something that is burdening us. Whether it is a family issue, a strained relationship, holding on to bitterness, financial burdens, spiritual dryness, illness, or grief, our church is filled with weary and wounded people. The invitation is open to all who are weary and wounded:

*“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*  
(Matt. 11:28)

In what areas of your life are you wounded and weary? Do you need healing? Do you need rescuing? We often settle for second best because we can’t let go and let God take complete control over our lives and our situations. Our revival services are designed to help us see our need to depend completely on Jesus and His power. Only when we surrender, can we truly be restored and refreshed.

Pray for healing in whatever area of your life where you are hurting or struggling. Turn it over to God completely. Ask Him to take your burdens and shoulder them. Then be willing to follow Him in the way He leads you. A life not fully surrendered is not surrendered at all.



**I Kings 19:1-18**

Everyone has times when they feel discouraged. Even those we consider to be men and women of great courage and conviction have times when they are discouraged. The Lord had just given victory to Elijah over Ahab and the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel and he seemed indestructible. But as all men, Elijah had weaknesses.

It would seem that after he had won his lifelong battle against the prophets of Baal, he would not be intimidated by Jezebel’s threat. But instead of rising to the challenge, he ran away. You would think God would give Elijah a break after all of this. Hadn’t he earned the right to just retire in peace? The thought of another battle after just finishing one was overwhelming. As with most of our characters and heroes in the Bible, we are reminded that Elijah was made of frail, human flesh – just like us!

Often in the midst of our greatest spiritual victories, we find life throws its worst at us. It’s okay to have doubts and fears, but we can’t let them consume us. We must wait on the Lord and look to Him to rescue us. He always arrives on time.

What fears are you carrying on your shoulders today? What obstacles are affecting your relationship with the Father and those around you? As you pray today, turn those over to Him and ask Him to give you His peace and a fresh perspective. Commit to trusting Him in the midst of your doubts and fears.



**1 Kings 19:8-12**

How does God speak to us today? The Rev. Billy Graham says that God can communicate in a variety of ways, including through prayer, the church community, and the Bible.

In response to a question about whether or not God will speak verbally to His followers, Graham explains that while it is possible for God to speak to someone in an audible voice, it's typically "a deep inner conviction about God's will."

God can communicate through Scripture, prayer, or "other believers, whom God uses to encourage us and help us understand His will," Graham adds.

No matter which way He chooses to communicate, it reveals "God loves us and knows what is best for us, and He wants to show it to us. In fact, when we come to Christ, God Himself comes to live within us by His Holy Spirit — and one reason is so He can guide us."

To emphasize his point, Graham cites Psalm 32:8, which reads: "*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.*"

As we read in yesterday’s devotional, the prophet Elijah had run away in fear and prayed that he might die. God sent an angel to attend to Him and strengthen him enough to travel 40 days to Mt. Horeb. Even there, the discouraged prophet couldn’t understand why His faithfulness to God wasn’t enough to stop those who were trying to kill him. But the LORD told him to stand on the mountain because the LORD was about to pass by. Elijah experiences a powerful, destructive wind, a strong earthquake, and a fire, yet the Lord was not in those. Instead, the Almighty came in “a gentle whisper” (or as some translations state, “in a still, small voice”).

The hymn, “Speak to My Heart” speaks the prayer:

*Speak to my heart, Lord Jesus,  
Speak that my soul may hear.  
Speak to my heart, Lord Jesus,  
Calm ev’ry doubt and fear.*

How is God speaking to you today? Often we don’t hear Him because we aren’t truly listening. Ask God today to give you an open heart that’s listening for His voice.



## Psalm 145

The book of Psalms is often referred to as the “Songbook of the Bible.” Many of the songs of worship we sing come directly from the Psalms. There has never been any literature written that expresses the character of God that can compare to the Psalms.

King David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned Psalm 145 as a psalm of praise. In this Psalm He speaks of the greatness of God and explains why God is worthy of our praise. Verses 4-7 explain how each generation testifies to the wonders and works of God. Not only does each generation tell of God’s awesome works, each generation joyfully sings of His righteousness (Yes, it is important that we sing as well as speak).

For those of us who are “more seasoned in life” (“getting old” to our younger readers), we have a responsibility to impress on the generations younger than us the goodness and faithfulness of God. For the younger generations, you need to encourage the “seasoned” generations by expressing God’s working in your lives. It’s important to walk this journey together, young and old alike. God’s mercies are for all generations.

Go back to today’s reading and see how many different attributes or characteristics of God the Psalmist mentions. You might want to underline these. Focus your prayer today on praising God for who He is. You might even read this Psalm aloud to God as your prayer of praise.



## Exodus 19

Tomorrow begins our revival services and is the day for which we have been praying and preparing. I am expecting the Lord to do some great things in our church and in individual lives- including mine- as the Lord meets with us.

Exodus 19 records the Israelites preparing to meet with the Lord. Moses was about to ascend Mt. Sinai, where the Lord would give Him the Law. But before this occurred, there was a time of consecration. The focus of the past 40 days has been to consecrate ourselves in preparation of revival. As we have read, we have been challenged to remove sin, focus on the Lord, and make ourselves available to Him.

This time in Exodus 19 was also a time of admiration, and I pray that we will have similar experience. God warns the Israelites to keep their distance from the mountain. God was different than them and was not to be approached lightly. Living in a polytheistic environment, as they had, where the Egyptians had worshiped hundreds of different gods, the Israelites were accustomed to seeing the Egyptians carve their gods out of wood or stone, and manipulating them however they desired. God wants them to understand He is no false god. He is the One true living God who will not be manipulated, handled, or approached casually. He wants them to understand Who it is they are approaching.

Here in the West, there is a casualness in the way that we often approach God, which I believe betrays an ignorance on our part as to with Whom it is we are dealing. So often we come to church laid back, sing our songs of praise half-heartedly or from rote memorization; we listen to His Word preached with a critical ear, never giving thought to the reality that when we come to worship we are coming to meet with God. We have become guilty of becoming overly familiar with that which is holy to the point that church has become more of a place to meet other people than a place to meet God.

The closer we get to God, the less casual we will become. The more we know of His person, the more reverent we want to be. Let us draw close to Him.