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The Wave of Revival

Rev. Thomas Dibble

Psalm 85:6 *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

2 Chronicles 7:14-16 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. 16 For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*

- Gravity, wind and all the other meteorological stuff that goes into the making of a wave I will leave for another message and another time. But a wave in its most simple definition is a moving ridge or swell on the surface of the ocean. It is a pulse of potential energy traveling vast distances across the water.
- Surfing is the sport of riding breaking waves toward shore, especially by the means of a surfboard. Riding the waves or surfing can be traced back to the year 400. In 1771 the explorer, Captain James Cook reported seeing long-board surfers in Tahiti and in other parts of the world. In 1920 the first surfing club was formed in the Hawaiian Islands.
- While I am definitely not a surfer, in fact the closest that I have come to surfing has been to watch surfers as I have walked along the beach, but they say that the best conditions occur when large and smooth ocean swells in deep water peak up into steep sets of waves, or breakers. Under ideal conditions surfers can ride the wave for half a mile or more.
- The surfer first swims with his board out beyond the crest of breaking waves to the point where the larger rollers peak up. As the wave approaches him he paddles four or five times toward the shore to attain sufficient speed to coast down the face of the wave. Once the surfer has caught the wave he can rise to his feet in a standing position and ride the wave until it dies out near the beach.
- Not every wave though is the right wave. You must possess a certain skill in determining which wave is the right wave that will take you the farthest and give you the best ride. You can only catch a wave as it ends its long journey headed to the shore. If the wave is squashed it's uncatchable or if it is too steep and already falling over you may not want to catch it.
- There is a critical moment when it is the right time to catch the right wave. It is when the wave begins to get steep and swell up and just before it begins to fall over into the shape of a C. An experienced surfer knows which wave is the right one and they will wait until it comes along. Surfers will wait for and they will dream about the perfect wave to catch that will give them the ride of their life.
- Now to bring all of this surfing talk to a spiritual level and to make an application let me say that there is a wave of the sovereign move of God in revival that is beginning to rise up from the deep and head toward the shore in this day that we live in. In this time period that the Bible calls the last days the breakers of the waves of the move of God are making their way toward the church. We have been placed in the kingdom for such a time as this. We have been placed here to catch the wave of the sovereign move of God in revival for this end time gathering before the coming of the Lord. I'm talking about the wave of revival.
- But now the question begs to be asked, "Will we catch this wave of revival and ride it all the way to the end or will we let it pass us on by?" I'm preaching this morning about, "The wave of revival."
- In our scripture text from the book of Psalms, the psalmist asked the question, Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? This was during the time that the children of Israel were beginning to return from Babylonian captivity. It was a desperate time. The land was in utter waste. The temple had been unused for seventy years and had been destroyed. The brush and rubble had piled up around the holy places of God. The psalmist said if not for a move of God in revival then all hope is lost. The condition of the land is just too bad.

The condition of people's hearts is just too corrupt. Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

- Today as I survey the land I see that the condition of the land is in utter waste. Things are not getting better in the world but things are getting worse. People are moving away from God and away from His word. There is rubble and debris around the holy places and holy things of God. The things of God by and large suffer from unused and lack of care. The condition of the hearts of mankind is awful. If there is not a sovereign move of God in revival for this land and for this people then all hope is lost. So this morning I join my voice with the psalmist and lift it up to God and say, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" God we understand that revival is not something that we can manufacture or bring but it comes only from you. God we understand that we stand in need of a reviving. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

• Throughout the Bible and in history there have been sovereign moves of God in revival that have:

- Sparked a dead church,
 - Moved a cold-hearted people back to the Lord,
 - Caused an indifferent people to fall on their face in true repentance,
 - Turned the hearts of the church back to the Word of God, and
 - Set the church on fire with the power of the Spirit of the Lord.
- The Bible records such a revival in the book of 2 Kings chapters 22-23 under the leadership of young King Josiah that turned the heart of a nation back to God. After years of bad leadership and evil kings in Judah they were in need of a reviving. It began with King Josiah's desire to once again open up the house of God for worship. During the cleanup process they found the Word of God and read it to the King. It caused King Josiah to really see the Lord and to fall on his face before God in repentance, which in turn caused the nation to repent and the Lord healed the land.
- In the book of Ezra it tells us of the beginning of the revival in Jerusalem under the priest Ezra and the governor Zerubbabel, when the Jews in captivity began to return again from Babylon. During this revival they repented for the ungodly things that they had allowed to enter into their lifestyles and they made their way back to God. The foundation of the temple was once again laid. Worship was restored as well as the feast days and celebrations such as the Passover and God once again blessed them as a nation.
- Later in the book of Nehemiah it tells how Nehemiah continued with the revival that was started in Ezra and it was brought to a new level of the sovereign move of God under his leadership. Under Nehemiah they once again built the walls around the city of Jerusalem that would provide that city with protection. They had such a hunger to get back to God and his word that they stood all day long from the oldest to the youngest for the reading of the Word of God when it was once again found. This revival too was marked with them seeing God and a deep repentance and a move back to God and the Lord blessed them.
- In the book of Acts, chapter 2, this is where the Holy Ghost is poured out for the first time. It has been referred to as the first wave or the initial wave of the Holy Ghost outpouring.

Acts 2:1-4 and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- That was the first wave of the Holy Ghost outpouring.
- Throughout the pages of history there have been great revivals recorded. The great awakenings, as they called them, occurred at different times in history.
- One such "awakening" started on July 8th 1741 in Enfield, Connecticut at a Congregational Church with Jonathan Edwards preaching of his now famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." History records that Jonathan Edwards was a Trinitarian preacher. He came at the invitation of this oneness pastor, who he did not like, from Enfield, CT to preach. He brought what he considered to be his worst message for he intended to shame this oneness pastor and his congregation. He delivered the message in a low and monotone voice with no emotion whatsoever. One man in the congregation said he just looked straight ahead at the rope on the bell of the church until he looked it off. I have a copy of that message in my library and really it is not a good message at all and quite unsound theologically.
- But something happened there that day. The message did not affect the congregation but people who were walking by and driving by in horse and buggy were drawn into the church and came crawling down to the alter

calling out to the Lord in repentance. This caused the people in the church to then begin to call out to the Lord. It was a sovereign move of God in revival. This move of God was not brought about by Jonathan Edwards. He even at one point told the people to be quiet and let him finish his message. But God was in control and it was God who brought revival.

- At the turn of the century there was a sovereign move of God all over the world. It happened in
 - Topeka, Kansas
 - Los Angeles at Azusa St.
 - England
 - Wales
 - Korea
 - China
- Right in our own state revival began again that then spread throughout New England and the other states.
- There was a period of time that during the lunch hour all businesses would close for prayer. It was a sovereign move of God in revival. It wasn't scheduled or organized but it was the sovereign move of God.
- The question that must now be asked is, "What is revival?" I guess for as many people that you ask or as many books as you read on the subject there are that many ideas and more as to what revival is.
- Let me just say here that revival is not a harvest of souls. Harvest often accompanies revival but revival is not baptizing people and having them receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. But revival is primarily for the church of the living God. Revival is for people who are already saved. The word revive or revival means to bring back to life something that already had life at one time. Only those who have passed from death to life as the Bible says qualify for that experience.
 - Charles Finney said, "Revival is the people of God renewing their obedience to God."
 - Dr. Elmer Towns said, "An evangelical revival is an extraordinary work of God in which Christians repent of their sins as they become intensely aware of His presence in their midst, and they manifest a positive response to God in renewed obedience to the known will of God, resulting in a deepening of their individual and corporate experience with God."
- That's quite a mouthful but what he is really saying is revival starts right here with this old boy behind the pulpit. Revival also starts in the saints of God. Our prayer should be Lord send a revival and let it start in me. We should draw a circle around ourselves and pray, "Lord start a revival on the inside of this circle."
- "Pray for revival in America." So read the sign in window of the restaurant not long ago. In my spirit I said, "Amen." But I wonder if the folks in the restaurant really knew what they were praying for. When most people pray for revival they are really praying for a wonderful church service next Sunday at 10:00 A.M. But revival is more than a Sunday morning experience. Revival is more than a Sunday evening experience.
- When you pray for revival, you're asking God for life-changing, life-shaking experiences that will cost you plenty.
 - Revival is agonizing. It so terrorizes you over your sin that you repent deeply. Revival is also consuming. It leaves you no time for hobbies, for chores around the house, for work, or for sleep. Revival wrecks your appointment calendar, interrupts TV times, is more important than ballgames, demands your full attention, and wears you out.
- I'm talking about "the wave of revival."
 - Usually when we pray for revival, we're thinking about the bad guys, and we're telling God to "sic 'em, go get 'em God." Little do we realize that revival begins with us, the people of God. In fact I've got a suggestion for those people who want revival: Don't pray for revival. But just repent of all known sin, do everything you're supposed to do, give God all – not part, but all – of yourself and your time, and you'll experience true revival.
- I'm talking about "the wave of revival."
 - There is a tendency to quickly call something revival because it reminds us of our preconceived notion of what it is. It also makes it harder to recognize any future revival that is different and fresh. It is crucial that we don't allow our preconceived notions of what revival is to cause us to miss what God is doing right now.
 - Many people respond differently to revival but one outward expression is not better or worse than another. The true issue is inward reality. Does outward expression lead to right living and right thinking; does it change lives? You can kneel, sing, pray, or cry for hours; the only thing that counts though, is what happens when you exit the sanctuary and start living.
 - Revival cannot be organized, but we can set our sails to catch the wind from heaven when God chooses to

blow upon His people once again.

- It is very significant that when there is obviously an experience of revival in lives, those who are revived do not talk about revival but rather they talk about Jesus!
- So my definition of what revival is in its most simple terms is us, God's people, seeing Jesus again as He really is, which in turn should cause other things to happen.
- In doing much studying about revival and revivals that have happened I believe the Lord gave me some insight and revelation into his ways for revival. It's found in the book of 2 Chronicles 7:14-16. But before we turn there I want to read in your hearing from Acts 2 beginning with verse 36. This is what I teach and preach and believe to be the way to God in passing from death to life.
 - **Revelation** – Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
 - **Recognition** – Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart
 - **Responding** – and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
 - **Repentance** – Then Peter said unto them, Repent,
 - **Remission** – and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,
 - **Receiving** - and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
 - **Remaining** – And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
 - **Reproduction** – Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.
- Would you be interested to know that the same pattern applies to revival? Wouldn't that be wonderful if we could figure out the elements that accompany revival? Wouldn't it be great if we could know God's ways in revival? Well I believe we can and it's found in 2 Chronicles 7:14-16
Revelation – "If my people, which are called by my name"
- We are the people of the name. We have a revelation of who Jesus really is. We see him as he is.
 - **Recognition** – "shall humble themselves"
- When I see Him the natural thing that happens is I recognize how little I am compared to God and I humble myself before Him.
 - **Responding** – "and pray, and seek my face"
- When I recognize Him it causes me to respond to God in prayer and in seeking his face.
 - **Repentance** – "and turn from their wicked ways,"
- When I continue in the ways of God in revival it brings a natural repentance.
 - **Remission** – "then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin,"
- When we repent God will hear us and will forgive us.
 - **Receiving** – "and will heal their land."
- We will receive the healing of our land that we need that comes from revival.
 - **Remaining** – "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever."
- It's God's will that we would always be in revival mode. It's God's will that we never again get off of this wave of revival.
 - **Reproduction** – "and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."
- God wants this to be a thing that is reproduced over and over again.
- I'm talking about, "the wave of revival."
- In the time that we have remaining this morning I want to look at the revival that began in the book of Ezra because I think it gives us some further insights into revival.

Ezra 9:8-9

8And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. 9For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

- Ezra said there has been a little space of grace given from the Lord our God that has allowed a remnant to get back to the promised land of our dwelling. He said he gave us a nail in his holy place. That is he has given us a firm and a sure abode. You can always trust in the house of the Lord. Ezra goes on to say that he has given us light for our eyes and a reviving from our bondage. I'm so glad that God did not forsake us during our bondage

to the world. I'm so glad that when I left him, he didn't give up on me. I'm so glad that instead he extended mercy to us that we could have a reviving of our soul and a repairing of the precious things of the Lord that had been broken down and left in ruin. He has also given us a wall of protection around our lives.

- I see some interesting things from this revival here in Ezra.

1. A call to leave familiar ground.

- We must, if we hope to catch the wave of revival today that God has for us, heed the call of leaving familiar ground. Zerubbabel understood that he had to first leave the land of Babylon and head back to Jerusalem if he wanted revival. It is the step of leaving familiar ground, of leaving the religious, traditional surroundings and moving out into the unknown to accomplish what the Spirit of God might do. The people of God had become satisfied living in Babylon. Not everyone heeded the call to return to Jerusalem. Most of the people stayed behind in Babylon.

- **Ezra 1:3; 5**

3Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.

- The first step was for them to leave the place that their family and friends had spent for a number of years in captivity and had become quite comfortable there and take the 700-mile journey to Jerusalem. They left familiar ground because they had a vision to rebuild God's house. It tells us in Ezra that their spirits were stirred up as God moved in upon them. It refers to the sovereign move of God. It takes a stirring of the Holy Ghost to prepare people to move from the familiar, from the traditional, to a new level of spiritual activity.
- If we are to catch the wave of revival that God has for this church we too must be willing to leave the familiar ground that we have been on. Some of us maybe have become comfortable with the things of the world around us. We have learned to fit in and blend in with everyone else. Can I remind you today that this old world is not our home, for we are just a passing through. Our treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
- This morning Pastor is giving a call to leave the familiar things of this world and catch the wave of revival that is sweeping by.

2. A call to build and strengthen the foundation

- **Ezra 3:10-13**

10And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

- Zerubbabel had the ability to make the laying of the foundation an exciting and emotional time. It was a

time of celebration when the foundation was laid.

- Foundation building, in the natural or in the spiritual, is usually not a highly emotional time. It is a time to dig deep and build on the rock. It is a time for removing rubbish and debris out of the way. It is a time of hard labor where big rocks are moved out and the work is difficult. It is tedious and slow work. There is not much excitement because the work is being done underground and the results are hard to see.
- But in times of revival foundation building is absolutely necessary. This is the time when all the basic foundational stones need to be in place in preparation for what God desires to do.

- **The stone of:**

- Who Jesus is
- Making him the Lord of your life
- Holy living
- Integrity
- Raising your family in the fear of the Lord.
- Daily taking up your cross and following him.
- If we are to catch the wave of revival we need to strengthen the foundation.

3. A call to prayer.

- During revival times there is always a spirit of prayer that encompasses God's people.

- **Ezra 10:1**

1Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

4. A call to repentance.

- **Ezra 10:9-12**

9Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

10And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

- There was a spirit of repentance that hit the people when they prayed and began to see and have a fresh view of God. It caused them to recognize their condition of sin in their lives.

5. A call to identify right priorities.

- In Ezra chapter three it tells us that they began by building an altar and started offering burnt offerings to the Lord there. We're doing all the things that we are supposed to do God, aren't you pleased with us? In verse six it gives us a clue as to what God thought about their altar.

- **Ezra 3:6**

6From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.

- He was trying to tell them that there are some priorities that you need to have and the first one is to get the foundation laid. The prophet Haggai who was prophesying at that time says God was not happy with all their sacrifices.

- **Haggai 2:18-19**

18Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.

19Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

- The day that you get right priorities in your life God can begin to bless you. The day that you make him

the Lord of your life God can really begin to work in your life. In catching the wave of revival we need right priorities.

6. A call to greater vision.

• Ezra 3:4-5

*4They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;
5And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.*

- They hadn't experienced some of these feasts and special days in over seventy years. One of the feasts they celebrated was for the harvest. Wait a minute – there was no harvest. They had just come back to the land from captivity so they had no harvest to take in that year but they celebrated anyways for the harvest that was to come. Zerubbabel had a vision for the future and an ability to move into it by faith. There were no crops to harvest, no cities to celebrate in, no temple to worship in. They had no evidence that they would ever have any of that. All they had was the vision of what God was going to do in the coming years. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Habakkuk when he said:

• Habakkuk 3:17-19

17Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

- If we are to catch the wave of revival we are going to have to get some vision as to what God can do in your life and in your family and in this church and in this city. You need vision to see your whole family saved and living for God. You need vision of a mighty revival sweeping across this church as we catch the wave of the sovereign move of God.

7. A call to warfare.

• Ezra 4:1-5

1Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

2Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

3But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

4Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

5And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- We must understand that whenever we move out to catch the wave of revival that God has for us there will always be someone to fight against it. There will be attacks against the leader. There will be attacks against the people. The attacks will seek to frustrate the purpose of God and revival. They will seek to blur and dim our vision as to what God can do.
- But knowing the attacks are coming we can prepare for them and when the enemy comes against us, like a flood the Lord can raise up a standard against him.
- If we hope to catch the wave of revival we need to be prepared to fight.

8. A call to perseverance

- Zerubbabel had to endure delayed and incomplete vision as he was moving the people to revival.
 - **Ezra 4:24**
24Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.
- Zerubbabel had cast vision, laid the foundation, got his priorities right, and warred against the enemy, but now he was experiencing what everybody goes through from time to time. He was going through the time from the promise until the promise showed up.
- It is during this time that we must persevere. We have prayed for revival. We have believed for revival. We have asked God for revival and now we must persevere for revival. We must persevere UNTIL...
 - **Zechariah 4:6-9**
6Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 7Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. 8Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 9The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.
- Will we catch the wave or miss it?