

RENEWAL AND REVIVAL

On a Sunday service dedicated to renewal and revival, it is good to turn to one of the Prayers of David and let him help us express and focus our need and desire.

Psalm 40: 1-10 I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie!

5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

6 In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: 8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

9 I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD.

10 I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

This Psalm speaks both of "waiting" and of "seeking."

It is good and right to actively seek God.

But even when we are seeking God, we need to admit that God is the most active party in any genuine renewal.

Because before we sought God, He was seeking us!

Before we were thinking of Him, He was thinking of us!

Our renewal always begins when we decide to listen, to be quiet, to wait for God, who is already speaking.

David tells us that he waited patiently for the LORD; and God turned and heard him.

This Psalm is clearly full of two things, certainty, and praise!

David tells us three things that every believer needs to receive:

I. WE NEED A FIRM PLACE TO STAND.

(2)"He ... gave me a firm place to stand." "He set my feet upon a rock..."

There are some things that we know that don't need to be proved.

One of these is something I refer to as personal spiritual certainty.

Somehow in the process of learning, and the explosion of knowledge in our day, many people have lost their spiritual certainty.

When something on the inside of us gets lost, it is a terribly tragic when it is our spiritual certainty!

It is a dark place when all you have is a slippery slope or a miry pit of destruction when you need is a solid rock on which to stand!

I don't know quite how to say this: I've alluded to this before.

It is humbling to me as a Pastor, to realize that even in the common ideas of life, none of us always right about everything.

What this means to me is when I talk to you about GOD, and I attempt to explain Him, the criteria prayerfully includes, but is not limited to

- (1) needing to be correct.
- (2) that you hear and perceive what I am attempting to convey.
- (3) that if you do what I say it will make a difference in your life.

But there is all the difference in the world when God talks to you by any means that He has at His disposal-- and you are listening—and God gets through to you.

When God speaks, and you hear-- you can take it to the bank!

People who have been "talked into" what I call cheap grace, and who never "wait patiently for God" for themselves, may wonder about the "knowing" aspect of their salvation.

Call it a witness, or call it assurance, but we need to know God, and know that we know God.

It is not only possible, it is God's expectation for our lives.

But we have to get this firm place to stand, on God's terms!

II. THE NEED FOR A NEW SONG TO SING.

(3)"He put a new song in my mouth"

A "revival" that simply beats us around the ears with new "oughts" and "shoulds" is something I can do without.

I can recall many times as a child when all I got out of revival meetings was the scare of my life.

And I even remember a few since I have been pastor where I wondered if anyone else felt as guilty as I did.

But what I like to remember is the joy of my first love of God; I like to do more than stand against the evils of our day, I like to be so full of the love of God that "Many will see and fear and put their trust in God."

I suppose that cheerless and dull gray religion is better than none at all, if there is any spiritual life at all in it.

But somehow the very first casualty in the process of slipping away from God is genuine JOY!

We do not have any lack of religious excitement, or interesting seminars, or things to do to keep busy for the Lord.

But David says that when he waited on the Lord he began to sing again!

The song had left, evidently, but God gave David a new song of praise!

The world can be changed by people of God that are singing His new song of praise!

I'M TALKING ABOUT JOY, WE GET IT BY WAITING PATIENTLY (INTENTLY, ON PURPOSE) FOR WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY!

III. THE NEED FOR A TASK THAT DELIGHTS

Yes, there are things that we must leave in order to follow after Jesus.

I have never said that Jesus would require us to sell our homes and follow Him.

But I did say that there must be a willingness to leave all to be near Him.

I suppose there are some "sacrifices" that are necessary.

But clearly the Psalmist isn't into long-faced, sorrowful lists of things he has given up.

(6) "Sacrifice and offering you did not require" he writes "but my ears you have pierced."

He goes on, ***"Burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come-- To do Your will, O God is my desire (delight!); your law is within my heart.'"***

Many scholars believe that the "ear piercing" has to do with the ceremony prescribed in Exodus and again in Deuteronomy when a slave was being set free, and he didn't want to leave his master's house.

When a servant became a love-slave his ear was pierced, and he became a permanent family member; his "ear was pierced."

Romans 12:1 makes provision for believers to become "love-slaves" of God-- to say, make me Your servant forever! I delight to do Your will, O God!

CONCLUSION:

What I am trying to express, or to let God express to me and through me is this; "true revival" is the possibility that we can raise our level of the experience of spiritual reality if we will wait "patiently" (intently, on purpose) for our God.

I say we need to break through to refreshing and reviving in the Lord.

And while the "waiting on the Lord" sounds passive, it needs to be done deliberately.

It is obvious that we cannot "schedule revival" and say to God: Tuesday and Sunday of next week we would like You to bless us up a little-- not too much, now-- because we have very full schedules.

But bless us enough to keep us out of hell, if there is one, and make us real nice people, and bless our relationships and keep us pretty comfortable. Amen"

But perhaps we can say:

"Lord God, we walk through whirling mists and hear shouting voices.

Please help us make sure our feet are on the solid rock.

"And, Heavenly Father, we are full of causes and agendas and burdens; please help us remember the old songs of praise, and, if You would, give us a new song of praise that will lift us toward You.

"And, Lord, help us to love You so much that serving You will be our delight and our joy, always!

"You have promised that if we seek You, we shall surely find You!

With the Psalmist we pray, 'may all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You!'

"We will do our best to clear the way to begin now.

You come as You see fit, for we wait patiently for You.

Turn to us and hear our cry!



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In Jesus' name, Amen."



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