

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF Nov 28th - Dec 4th, 2021 - **Volume 83**

THEME VERSE:

*Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Look to the Lord and His strength. Seek His face always.*

Psalm 105:3

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The Revivals of the Carolinas: When we forget

The idea of revival as something that God powerfully brings to pass in response to the heartfelt and faithful cries of His people is something that is backed by both Scripture (e.g. 2nd Chronicles 7:14 and 1 Kings 18) and the historical record of the last 2000 years. Now, certainly, individuals today definitely need to step out in faith and work in the power of the Holy Spirit, therefore, seeking revival is not an excuse to avoid taking a stand or using our spiritual gifts and authority.

Yet, by far the greatest hindrance to historic revival has always been that we trust too much in ourselves. We believers lose sight of God and forget about His desire and ability to be our deliverer in the darkest of times. We get caught up in our own strengths and resources. We rely upon old formulas and traditions. We fear that honesty about feelings of inadequacy will result in a weaker faith. We forget that God alone is big enough to set things right. So, inevitably, we devalue prayer. We forget God. And the Church stops praying. These tendencies bury the prospects of real revival before it can ignite. Or they feed a climate of divisiveness that dampens spiritual fire.

An example of this is found in the record of revival surrounding the Scottish Presbyterians. It may not be well-known, but it is nonetheless true that the Church of Scotland, the predecessor of modern Presbyterianism, was birthed and shaped in the fires of intense spiritual revival. Accounts from the 1596 Assembly in Scotland attest to how God pierced the hearts of the leaders that day and brought them to the place of intense groaning over their sin and shaking from the Spirit's conviction. This tradition of revival preaching and potent God-encounters would follow this church throughout Scotland and into Ireland as well as the New World of the Americas. Unfortunately, they would struggle to keep unity in the years ahead.

The Presbyterian church expanded into the New World early on, organizing its presence in 1706 in Philadelphia. Settlers moved into the Mecklenburg area of North Carolina as early as the 1730's, with formal congregations and ministers being set up in the 1750's. It was at this time that the believers formed 7 Presbyterian churches near present-day Charlotte, with Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church being one of the first established.

In the early 1700's, the Presbyterians had begun to settle into differing camps of thought: the "Old Side" faction or the "New Side" faction. The "Old Side" strongly favored subscription, adhering to traditional Calvinistic creeds, essentially guarding the orthodoxy of their denomination. The "New Side" thinking was far less concerned about theological creeds and instead emphasized anguished prayers, personal testimonies of life transformation, and the liberty to follow one's conscience as the Spirit led.

During the 1730's, Presbyterian leaders like William Tennant established the "Log College" as a means to train up new ministers to do revival preaching. The relatively minor tension between the two sides escalated as the First Great Awakening in America began to fan into full flame in 1739. The passionate graduates from Tennant's Log College caused the "Old Side" group to be very

uncomfortable. Yet, the “New Side” leaders continued to press forward with key ideas like 1) Preaching to the unchurched wherever God leads, 2) De-emphasis on need for formal theological training, and 3) Validating personal experience with God as a basis to become a minister. Eventually in 1741 the “New Side” and the “Old Side” formally divided into two separate groups. The “New Side” prayed intently and strongly stood by the revivals taking place around them, while the “Old Side” fought to maintain order and opposed the religious awakenings.

Even as revival spread across the region, reactions to this move of God often was mixed, depending on whether folks sympathized with the “Old Side” or “New Side” way of thinking. Regardless, God surged powerfully through the Carolinas and the other colonies as people recognized how much they truly needed God to work in mighty ways again. Revival only came when people halted self-reliance and instead prayed with purpose. It spread like wildfire when God’s sons and daughters heeded the revivalists’ message and surrendered their hearts to the Spirit anew.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

Thank God for the opportunity to spend time with family and friends over the Thanksgiving week. We can be thankful that there were not any real blockages to traveling by car or by plane domestically. Praise God also that COVID-19 numbers have stayed relatively low during this time.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE CITY:

- **SHOOTING IN DURHAM MALL.** A mall in Durham, North Carolina, was shut down on Black Friday when a shooting occurred there between two groups that knew each other. Pray for the healing and quick recovery of 3 people who were injured by stray gunfire, one of which was a 10 year old boy. Pray that authorities will find the culprits and bring them to justice. Pray that those involved in the shooting will encounter Christ and turn from the destructive path they are on.
- **WAUKESHA PARADE TRAGEDY.** Please also pray regarding the terrible incident at the Waukesha Christmas parade in Wisconsin this week. A driver, Mr. Brooks, drove his car seemingly deliberately into an innocent crowd gathered for the Christmas parade. 5 people were killed and at least 48 were injured. Pray for the victims and their families. Pray for the ongoing investigation also.

FOR JOBS AND BUSINESSES:

- **EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS.** Pray for those looking for jobs to find great opportunities that will provide good pay, good hours, and a healthy work environment. Pray also for current employees and employers who are facing difficult personal decisions around the government-driven mandates for COVID vaccines and masks. Pray that they seek Godly wisdom and His will in these and all decisions.
- **SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.** Pray for spiritual awakening in the marketplace – that Christian business men and women across the region unite in prayer and worship, asking the Lord to bring revival to our city. Pray for mature believers in the marketplace to disciple and mentor younger men and women, and pray for a boldness in sharing the Gospel as His ambassadors.

FOR REVIVAL:

- **TO NOT FORGET.** O Lord, help us not to get too confident in our own strengths and abilities. Let us remain humble and always seeking after You. Teach us Your ways and remind us of Your stories, so that we will never ever forget You. May we pursue less of us and more of You each day. We long for Your presence and Your overcoming power and for the day of Revival to arrive soon!

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