

We Need the Revival 1

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Gotthold Beck

リバイバルの必要性 1
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ゴットホルド・ベック

Psalms

26:2 Examine me, Lord, and inspect me! Test my heart and mind.

[International Standard Version]

139:23 Examine me, God, and know my mind, test me, and know my thoughts.

139:24 See if there is any offensive tendency in me, and lead me in the eternal way.

Nothing is more important for us than to understand the Lord Jesus. What is required for this is the so-called 'revival.' I dare to use this English word, 'Revival.'

We used to sing a hymn for the revival. We often use this English word, 'revival' in Japanese conversation. It refers to the spiritual awakening, the reconstruction of faith or the resurrection of our faith. Believers who have fallen asleep need the revival—the reconstruction of their faith.

That is to say, through active fellowship with Jesus, they need to be renewed, reborn and given the new life. Do we feel the necessity of the revival deep in our hearts? Have we noticed the serious defects that lie within us?

It is no use to pray and seek for the revival before the time of the Lord comes—this is the attitude of many believers toward the revival. But, it is wrong to believe that there is nothing they can do but wait until the time comes. Such an attitude is not acceptable.

Will Jesus be happy to see believers so thirsty and miserable in their spirit? If we satisfy the condition set by the Lord for the revival, it will occur at that very moment and begin to spread instantly.

The revival leads people to newly awakened life. What should be noted here is that it is only the saved people, the true believers who have new life and can arouse people from sleep.

There can be no revival for non-believers. The Bible clearly underscores the necessity for non-believers to

be reborn first. It is for the dormant believers that the revival is necessary and there are a number of these.

Thus, it is time for them to wake up from sleep. However, to wake up, they first need to admit that they are deep asleep and spiritually dead. They have to confess it. We will be truly blessed if the Lord Jesus comes into presence to help us understand the necessity of the revival.

So how does the revival, which is so eagerly awaited, occur? Firstly, it occurs when we are tested by the Lord. We need to be examined by the Lord. If Jesus tests us, it is a good sign. No matter how much we examine ourselves and look within, it is absolutely meaningless. What is important for us is to be examined inside by the Lord Jesus.

Although David was never perfect, he satisfied God's heart according to the Bible. We definitely need an attitude like his. Let us read again the verse brother Sadayoshi just read for us.

Psalms

26:2 Examine me, Lord, and inspect me! Test my heart and mind.

Because he took this attitude, he could satisfy the heart of God.

Psalms

139:23 Examine me, God, and know my mind, test me, and know my thoughts.

139:24 See if there is any offensive tendency in me, and lead me in the eternal way.

If we have the same desire and prayer, not only would the Lord be pleased but would answer us. He would never fail to give us abundant blessings.

What do we need to do to see the revival occur and to be given a new life? Instead of testing ourselves, we need our hearts exposed to the light of Jesus and be tested by him. It is necessary for us to be examined by the Lord. It will bring our sins into the light.

There are two kinds of sins that believers commit. One is the so-called sin of negligence and the other is the sin called desire.

What is the sin of negligence? The answer can be found in 4:17 of James. This is a very important verse written by James, and is worth contemplating.

James

4:17 Therefore, anyone who knows what is right but fails to do it is guilty of sin.

For example, the lack of gratitude is sin. It is not insignificant. Lack of love for the Lord is of course, sin. If you don't read the Bible with an open heart because of your own negligence, I must say that it is also a sin. Needless to say, disobedience too is a sin of negligence. Actually, disobedience is the worst kind of sin.

It is also a sin to neglect to pray. If someone is negligent and does not attend meetings with an open heart, it is not trivial but rather, it is certainly a sin. Being loveless toward your relatives, family, friends and acquaintances is also a sin according to the Bible. Not giving love to so many perishing souls is one of our sins, which can never be overlooked.

The Bible also calls it a sin not being attentive to other brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is also a sin to refuse to abandon yourself to follow the Lord, as is mentioned in James, 4:17, "Therefore, anyone who knows what is right but fails to do it is guilty of sin."

It is a wonderful blessing if these sins of negligence are exposed by the light of the Lord himself. When we admit these sins and repent them, an abundant revival would be triggered. So, we all should pray to the Lord to give us the revival, shouldn't we?

"For your glory, for so many lost people, for the new recreation and spiritual growth of our brothers and sisters, please give us the revival"—shouldn't we pray this way?

"I don't care about myself at all. Please let the revival happen." This should be the ever-lasting and true desire of our hearts. If we obey the Lord sincerely, the Lord will never fail to grant us the spiritual awakening.

How could the ten lepers be healed by Jesus? It was because they obeyed his words even in hopeless circumstances. The Bible says that "while they were going, they were made clean." Had they been disobedient to his words, they would never have been healed and they would have had to continue their miserable lives.

Are we sincerely following each word of the Lord so that he gets a chance to give us the revival? "Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he will eat with me." After all, "So put me to the test in this right now and see if I won't throw open the windows of heaven for you and pour out on you blessing without measure," says the Lord of the Heavenly Armies.

After all, I guess it is to look up to Jesus. Let me read this frequently cited verse;

Hebrews

12:1 Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us,

What does 'running' point to? The answer is in the next verse.

12:2 fixing our attention on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of the faith,...

If we look away from Jesus and are influenced by worldly values, it would make us fail. Nothing would work well if we did so.

12:2who, in view of the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
12:3 Think about the one who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you may not become tired and give up.

This was the attitude Paul took. The consequence was remarkable.

Philippians

3:7 But whatever things were assets to me, these I now consider a loss for the sake of the Messiah.

It was an unimaginable price.

3:8 What is more, I continue to consider all these things to be a loss for the sake of what is far more valuable, knowing the Messiah Jesus, my Lord. It is because of him that I have experienced the loss of all those things. Indeed, I consider them rubbish in order to gain the Messiah

An attitude like this will bring us to the road to the revival. It is dormant believers who need the revival, reconstruction of faith and the resurrection of their faith. That is to say, they need to be renewed and newly reborn through active fellowship with Jesus. David, the author of Psalms once prayed;

Psalms

85:6 Will you restore our lives again so that your people may rejoice in you?

so prayed David.

How will the revival occur, which is being anticipated so eagerly? Firstly, it will occur when we are examined by the Lord. Secondly, it is done when we examine the Lord. Both of these tasks are necessary. We absolutely need to have this attitude of David —“Examine me, God, and know my mind, test me, and know my thoughts. See if there is any offensive tendency in me, and lead me in the eternal way.”

As I mentioned earlier, there are two kinds of sins; the sin of negligence and the sin of desire. Repentance for sins is meaningless unless it is truly sincere. Our sins were committed one at a time, so they need to be exposed and repented one at a time as well.

It is a great blessing to be illuminated and examined by the light of the Lord. Setting our minds on worldly things instead of seeking those from above, arrogance, jealousy, the spirit of judgment, slander, lie, hypocrisy, being untruthful, shallowness, making others stumble—these are all sins according to the Bible.

However, the Bible clearly states that “anyone who knows what is right but fails to do it is guilty of sin too.” That is to say, the lack of gratitude, lack of love for the Lord, not reading the Bible, unfaithfulness, leading a life with none or very little prayer, not coming to meetings, being loveless toward perishing souls including your relatives, family, friends, not being attentive to other brothers and sisters—these are all sins.

Ephesians

5:13 But everything that is exposed to the light becomes visible,

5:14 for the light is making everything visible. That is why it says, “Wake up, sleeper! Arise from the dead, and the Messiah will shine on you.”

This is what Paul wrote to the saved people in Ephesus. If we are exposed to the light of the Lord and recognize how tainted we are, and then if we accept the blood Jesus shed and begin to be purified, the darkness within us will disappear, and we will be filled with brightness. This exactly is the revival I have been talking about. In Luke, 12:49, Jesus explained one of his purposes of coming to this world;

Luke

12:49 I've come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already ablaze!

While Jesus lived in this world, he wished fire to fall from heaven, that is to say, the spirit of the Lord to be poured onto this ground abundantly. Although he no longer lives in this world, Jesus is still alive and he

must have the same desire today. In other words, the revival is absolutely necessary.

At the beginning of a new year or on a birthday, people often take some new pledges or make some wishes. Although this is neither a new year's day nor someone's birthday, let us try to make this wish.

I know this wish may sound strange, but I want you to get sick. I want all of you to get a kidney disease for now. I once got nephritis. It was before I moved to Tokyo, when we lived in the Ibaragi prefecture. I came to thank the Lord for getting this kidney disease and for the fact that I had to stay in bed for a while.

Before I started to have the symptoms, I suffered from severe headaches which lasted for several days. At that time, I had the chance to visit a familiar doctor and asked him to diagnose me. It was then that I first realized I had nephritis.

As I received an explanation from the doctor, I realized that nephritis was a peculiar disease. There was no effective medicine for the kidney, at least in those days. The only cure was to stay in bed utterly still and quiet. I looked around but I could see no peace or relief.

People work so hard. They even work after hours. I was informed that there was no cure for kidney disease other than complete rest. The illness was a blessing for me because it gave me time for profound contemplation. After I got this disease, I remembered that there were some references to the kidney in the Bible and looked it up in there.

Psalms

139:13 It was you who formed my internal organs, fashioning me within my mother's womb.

139:14 I praise you, because you are fearful and wondrous! Your work is wonderful, and I am fully aware of it.

In the original Bible, the word 'kidney' is used instead of 'organ'. Let us look at some other verses from Jeremiah;

Jeremiah

11:20 Lord of the Heavenly Armies, the righteous judge, the one who tests feelings and the heart...

so admired Jeremiah the great work the Lord has done on him.

Jeremiah

17:10 I am the Lord who searches the heart, who tests the inner depths to give to each person

according to what he deserves, according to the fruit of his deeds.

The word 'feelings' (and 'inner depths') that appears in these verses is translated as 'kidney' in some other versions of the Bible.

What does kidney imply in the Bible? It represents our conscience, subconscious awareness or something that lies deep in our hearts. As we read earlier today, it was David who prayed and sought in front of the Lord, "Examine me, Lord, and inspect me! Test my heart and mind."

When he offered this prayer, he prayed, "Lord, please test my conscience, my subconscious awareness and the depth of my heart." When the Lord examines deep within our hearts and exposes everything to his light, the revival will occur.

Are we prepared for it? When people get kidney disease, they absolutely need complete rest for the recovery of their kidney function. Likewise, for the Lord to examine the deepest recesses of our hearts, we too need to stay quietly in front of the Lord.

It was not for your benefit that I wished for you to get kidney disease, but because I wanted you to have the time to be quiet in front of the Lord and have him examine the depth of your hearts. When you do, the fire will fall from heaven, the flow of the Holy Spirit will reach the ground and then the revival will occur.

When the depth of our heart is examined by the Lord, and then we put the Lord to test, the fire will fall. How happy we will be if we see the revival occur in front of our eyes! The Lord is ready to make it happen for us.

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