

# The Church Why No Revival?

## Introduction

During my forty-nine years preaching the gospel and presenting the truth of the Lord to the saints, I have been asked many questions. However, there is one which has been asked more often than all others. It is a question people from many parts of the world have asked:

**“Why do we not see the hand of God upon us in blessing more often?”**

When the Lord was speaking to the churches in Asia (Rev. 2-3) His comments were precise and oftentimes unflattering. Most recognize that the expression “the things which are” (Rev. 1:19) refers to the present time period. I will take them on another avenue, the Lord will show them “things which are” not only relative to their place in the governmental universal dealings of God, but as the individual churches were spiritually. It is not what they think they are, or what they assume they are, nor what they once were, or even would like to be. The Lord is giving His assessment of them exactly as they are at that moment in time. The Lord was not politically correct, but with the precision of a surgeon He exposed the spiritual cancer in those where it existed. He was the Physician and His diagnosis was perfect. It is important to understand that God never gave to any individual, any assembly, or any group of assemblies the prerogative to determine if such in such is an assembly. Had I lived in the days of Paul, would I have viewed the Colossian assembly with its errors a church, an assembly, or would I have cut it off? What about Corinth, or Ephesus, or Thyatira, or Laodicea? Yet, God recognizes them as a candlestick, (more correctly “lampstand” for a candlestick is one unit with multiple branches, whereas the lampstand is an individual unit.). When I read the Lord’s diagnosis I learn of:

## The Spiritual Losses

When considering the four major prophets we discover there was loss in each of them. The people of Isaiah’s day had lost their spiritual consciousness (Isa. 1:3). The Lord, through Jeremiah, reminds them that they had lost their spiritual joy (Jer. 2:13); Ezekiel informs them of how they had lost their spiritual glory (Ezek. 9:3; 10:18) and Daniel emphasizes they had lost their God given inheritance (Dan. 1:1-2). When seeking to listen to the Lord and His critiquing of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2-3), we learn that they had three great spiritual losses which do happen to the saints.

### **1) There was a loss of their spiritual equilibrium.**

- a) This declaration was made against four of the churches; Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira and Sardis. That perfect balance between grace and truth was missing in Ephesus, between truth and error was missing in Pergamos, between works and doctrine was missing in Thyatira, and between starting and finishing was missing in Sardis. The saints at Ephesus would not tolerate doctrinal error or those who taught it (Rev. 2:2), but sadly “truth” for truth’s sake became the major criteria to them. This being so, it was not love to the Lord which made them hold the truth. Somewhere along the time line they had become hardened, conservative, closed, tight, and it was evident love for Christ had been misplaced. That would hinder revival. Could that happen today, and if so, what should be done about it? Thankfully the Lord gives the answer: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen” (Rev. 2:5); “Repent, and do the first works”, that is, do the works out of love for Christ (Rev. 2:5). The Lord also gives a warning, and it is the only one of such severity, “OR ELSE I will come . . . and will remove thy candlestick” (Rev. 2:5). Thyatira had gone to the other extreme. They were a wide open liberal church where anything and everything was acceptable, and while the Lord condemns them for not holding truth, yet it is the only assembly He commends for their love. To them He says: “I know thy works, and charity”, that is love”. Furthermore, it is not “phileo” love but “agape” love, and twice over the Lord commends them for their works, for they were doing more for God than they had ever done. (Rev. 2:19). This church had much physical life, but in their open to all policy resulted in association with Satan and children under the judgment of God (Rev. 2:23-24).

## The Church Why No Revival?

### 2) There was a loss of their moral compass.

- a) What is the purpose God created everything, whether it is creation, man, church, governments, etc? The inspired apostle reveals the acclamations of Heaven: "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure [will] they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). A government can only be right if it is righteous and in conformity with the laws of God. There is no place for political correctness in God's evaluations, and only as a church functions according to God's own character will it be pleasurable to Him. All things have been made "for Himself" (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36). Therefore, the purpose of the local church is for the glory of God. It is only when its moral compass is pointing exclusively to the Lord the church will know the blessing of God. Five of the churches had lost their moral compass. Ephesus, despite all their professions, had gotten their eyes off the open heartedness of Christ, of which Paul spoke (Eph. 3:17-18). Pergamos had gotten their eyes off the Lord and His distinction between separation and isolation. The Lord showed Himself separate from the religious racketeering and cleansed the temple, but will use the temple for teaching (Jn. 2:16; 7:14).

### 3) There was a loss of their spiritual sensitivity.

- a) One of the charges God had against Ephraim was they did not know the gray hairs were upon them (Hos. 7:9). Samson was insensitive to the Lord not being with him (Jud. 16:20). The church at Laodicea was insensitive to their condition.
  - i) They were deceived by their own pride. Like Job they had said: "Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God" (Job 13:3). Today I find God's word is not the final court of appeal, but its teachings for church gatherings are matter for personal choice and debate. I hear the sayings: "Such was only Paul speaking"; "Such was cultural"; "That was for that day". This is daring to reason with the Almighty. The saints in Laodicea had failed to realize they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17). Sadly they were self delusional in that they thought themselves to be "increased with goods and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17) because they had an abundance of material things. Ever comparing themselves to others as being superior. This was the attitude Job had. He viewed himself superior to his associates: "If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you" (Job 16:4-5). There will never be revival until there is a manifestation of the greatness of God and one carries the burden of sin and confesses: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (Job 40:4-5).
  - ii) They were blind as to their true condition. Eli, who was the last priest, was blind, his eyes were dim (1 Sam. 3:2; 4:15); Samson, the last judged, had his eyes put out, and he was blind (Jud. 16:21); Zedekiah, the last king, had his eyes put out, he was blind (2 Kgs. 25:7); and Laodicea, the last church, and God says, "they are blind" (Rev. 3:17). Why were they in this condition? Peter gives the answer. They had failed to develop spiritually, being contented that they were going to heaven, and had forgotten they had been purged from their old sins (2 Pet. 1:9). Sadly, Laodicea was a church which was blind to spiritualities and eternal realities, Heaven and Hell, and the universal by birth condemnation of all humanity.
  - iii) They were naked. They had the clothing of salvation (Isa. 61:10 ) but had failed to partake of the divine nature in lifestyle. Instead of being clothed with humility (1 Pet. 5:5), they were conceited, failing to see they were devoid of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
  - iv) They were poverty stricken relative to spiritual appetite, conscious dependence on God, and praying. They knew little of answered prayer and they did not recognize that although they functioned, the Lord was not in their midst. He was outside. The Lord was on the outside, therefore, what of His promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). They had failed to understand that for that promise to be fulfilled, they had to meet the qualifications, one of which was humility.

## The Church Why No Revival?

The reality is, the Lord does not say to Thyatira where the figurative Jezebel was speaking, or to Laodicea, “I will remove thy candlestick”; but to the church/assembly that was all for truth, cold, hard, legalistic spirituality. To the church (Thyatira) which many of the Ephesian saints would not have put a foot in, and if any came from it, they would not be received. They had lots of children but the children had no spiritual life! There was no mention of fruitfulness in Ephesus. They were less than they had been, shall we say, twenty years before; and they were contented with their status quo. Thyatira was working very well but the children of wrong teaching were dead. Why have individuals and congregations become spiritually off balance and spiritually blind? The Holy Spirit used John to give the answer:

**“Thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4)**

### How can things be changed so that the glory of God does mark the saints and the gatherings?

My conviction is that we need to be freed from counterfeit consecration and defective consecration. During my almost sixty years of church life, I have heard many messages based on Rom. 12:1-2 and 1 Jn. 2:15-16. While they were good in as far as they went, they never went far enough! Looking at the passages we read:

“I BESEECH you therefore, brethren . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice”

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.” Then consider verse 17 and the reason: **“And the world passeth away and the lust thereof”**

Due to space we will only consider Rom. 12:1-2.

What does it mean to present my body as a living sacrifice? Two case histories can be set before us. The Lord Himself and the other is Daniel.

- a) When we think of our Lord and the sufferings He endured by men and those from God, they surely are beyond comprehension. His face was buffeted and his body was broken (but not His bones). The matter to be considered is: “When men were spitting on Him, mocking Him, nailing Him, and God forsaking Him, was he alive or dead?” Putting it in the context of Romans 12, was He a living sacrifice? What did it mean for him to be such? It meant enduring without murmuring whatever was required of Him to bring the greatest glory to God.
- b) Considering Daniel when he was thrown into the lion’s den, or the three Hebrew servants when faced with the fiery furnace. In Daniel’s case it was “just be more discrete in the praying”; “compromise a little, for instance, pray with the windows shut, or at a different time”. Besides, if he did pray with the windows open, look at the consequences, fierce unfed lions! Which is it to be, a living sacrifice enduring without murmuring whatever was required of Him for to bring the greatest glory to God, or shaming God? Would that then have been a living sacrifice? Or the three Hebrew servants, “Why not just bow, after all, God knows your heart and we are to obey the laws of the land. Besides, no one would know if you did not worship, and it would only be the once”. Then add to that the fiery furnace, feel the fierceness of the heat. What were their options? Give their bodies a living sacrifice, doing that which will bring the greatest glory to God, or save their own skins, doing what is easiest for them.

These are the decisions that must be made as individuals and churches. It is an “either” or “or” situation and there are no in-betweens. That will be the cost of revival and blessing.

# The Church Why No Revival?

## Power Through Prayer

No man is greater than his prayer life.  
The pastor who is not praying is playing.  
The people who are not praying are straying.  
The church has many organizers but few agonizers;  
Many players and payers but few prayers;  
Many singers, few clingers;  
Lots of pastors but few wrestlers;  
Many fears but few tears;  
Much fashion but little passion;  
Many interferers, few intercessors.

The secret of praying is praying in secret.  
A sinning man will stop praying and  
A praying man will stop sinning.  
Prayers if profoundly simple are simply profound.  
The modern church setup has the  
Main goal and anxiety on money.  
Yet that which tries the modern church the most  
Troubled the New Testament church the least.  
Our accent is on paying;  
Theirs was on praying.  
There is no substitute for genuine prayer.

---

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia