# "Needed Revival"

**Psalm 85:6; Rev. 3:1-6; 2 Chron. 7:14**
11/28/04

**Revelation 3:1-6:**

- **THE ESSENTIALS FOR REVIVAL (v. 2-3a)**

- **THE INCENTIVES FOR REVIVAL (v. 3b-5)**

**Psalm 85:6:**

1. **The POWER of Revival is through PRAYER**
   ("Wilt Thou. . .?)

2. **The PRODUCER of Revival is GOD**
   ("Thou")

3. **The PURPOSE of Revival is RENEWED LIFE**
   ("Revive . . . again")

4. **The PEOPLE of Revival are BELIEVERS**
   ("Us . . . Thy people")

5. **The PRODUCT of Revival is REJOICING**
   ("That thy people may rejoice in Thee")

Conclusion: **2 Chron. 7:14:**

***REVIVAL PRAYER LIST:***

# "Needed Revival"

**Psalm 85:6; Rev. 3:1-6; 2 Chron. 7:14**
11/28/04

**"SARDIS: A CHURCH IN NEED OF REVIVAL"**

**Revelation 3:1-6**

INTRODUCTION: Verse 1

Dr. Vance Havner has said that spiritual ministries often go through four stages:

> "A man (whom God uses), a movement, a machine, and then a monument" (Wiersbe, p. 576).

For many churches, the only thing living in them is the mice and cockroaches.

Today, we need a revival!

Def of revival: to give life back to that which had life but lost it.

**V. 1**

The phrase "the seven spirits of God" is a reference to the Holy Spirit in all His perfection (cp. Rev. 1:4, 5:6; Zech. 4:1-6, 10).

The seven spirits are referred to as the eyes of the Lamb of God in Rev. 5:6.

The "seven stars" are the messengers (whether angelic or human pastors) of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20).

The points of Christ's description of Himself is that He has all power and authority to send revival.

There is hope for revival because Jesus--the Head of the church--is able to bring new life.

--His Spirit gives life (Tit. 3:5)

--His messengers can be used to give His people His Word (It gives life - Jn. 6:63).

"I know your works" - a phrase repeated to every church (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

The omniscient Lord Jesus knows everything we do.

The Sardis church had a name (or reputation) for being a living church, yet it was dead.

Men thought it was a great church, but Jesus, who knows all, gave the verdict that it was dead.
The church's reputation for "life" may have been due to the faithful Christ-honoring saints who had since gone home to be with the Lord.

She is sitting on her past laurels. She is resting on her heritage.

Today, how do some measure a church to determine if it is living or not?

Some would say a living church is a church that is:

1) Large or growing
(The R.C.C. is large, yet it is dead)

Is it growing because its members are getting right with God or is it growing because its pastor and program caters to the personal likes and dislikes of its members (an ear tickler)?

2) Exciting
(many programs, everyone is busy)

What is it excited about? There is a zeal that is not according to knowledge.

3) Spirit-filled

A true quality to look for, but how do they determine a Spirit-filled church? Tongues? (The Corinthians were rebuked for being carnal, yet they spoke in tongues)

Look for the fruits--not the gifts--of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

4) Doctrinally sound - Sound doctrine is a must!

But sound doctrine mixed with disobedient living is a shame to Christ (a church may have the name "fundamental, independent, soul-winning, sin-hating, devil-fighting, Baptist" and still be dead.

Every above mentioned description is essential to life in a church - but all are needed in the form in which God describes them.

***We, like the church of Sardis, need a revival!**

Two points to seriously examine:

## I. THE ESSENTIALS FOR REVIVAL (v. 2-3a)

### A. God's people must wake up out of their spiritual slumber (v. 2a)

"Be watchful" - continually have the attitude of spiritual alertness. Wake up and stay awake.

The church is like a sleeping giant. We need God to shake us up out of our slumber.

It's time to wake up!

SEE Romans 13:11-14

Ephes. 5:14 - "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

A person who is physically asleep is insensitive, incoherent (unaware of what is going on), and unresponsive. The same is true spiritually.

This church reminds me of the Hebrew believers described in Heb. 6:9-12), who started off so well, but became discouraged and spiritually sleepy (cp. 5:11).

To remain alive, a church must stay awake in 4 areas of our spiritual lives:

**1) Be watchful in our prayer life:**

Mt. 26:41 - "Watch and pray . . ."

I Pet. 4:7 - "Watch unto prayer"

Col. 4:2 - "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving"

Eph. 6:18 - "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"

**2) Be watchful of our <u>personal lives</u>**

I Cor. 16:13 - "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

II Tim. 4:5 - But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

I Tim. 4:16 - "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

**3) Be watchful of <u>our adversary</u>**

I Pet. 5:8 - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"

"Vigilant" = watchful

**4) Be watchful for <u>our Lord's return</u>**

I Thes. 5:6-9 - "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mark 13:33-37 - Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

**B. God's people must <u>become dissatisfied</u> with the way things are (v. 2b)**

In order to strengthen our lives, we must be awake; and in order to stay awake, we must be strengthened.

"Strengthen" - the aorist tense of this imperative, points to the <u>urgent</u> need for strengthening.
The idea of the verb is that some things in their spiritual lives (like muscles) began to sag and droop down, but needed to be <u>firmed up</u>.

The saying "use it or lose it" is true physically and spiritually.

"The things which remain" - that which is <u>still left</u> (with life in it).

The picture I see is that of a battle, where the enemy has attacked, the war has been fought, the dust has settled, and bodies appearing to be dead lie helplessly all around the ground. However, every once in a while you see an arm move, a leg kick, someone sits up, another person speaks. Though everyone is badly wounded, there are still signs of some life. There are still useful body parts that need medical attention and care.

In your lives, no doubt a war has been going on. Your Adversary (because of your lack of spiritual vigilance) has succeeded in destroying some virtue in your life.

Maybe your sexual purity has been married - strengthen what remains!

Maybe your reputation has been ruined - strengthen what remains!

Maybe your tongue has burned much good in your home - strengthen what remains!

Maybe you have failed in reaching your loved ones with the Gospel and some have passed on - strengthen what remains!

"Ready to die" - imperfect tense = in the process of dying; beginning to die.

Immediate strengthening is needed!

NOTE: The responsibility is up to us. Christ desires to strengthen us (Phil. 4:13), but we must let Him. God wants to give us His strength (II Cor. 12:9), but we must accept it.
The Lord's reason for why the Sardis church needed to be watchful and strengthen what was left was because He looked and saw her works not complete in the sight of God.

"Perfect" = brought to fullness or completion.

The character and quality of our works must measure up to God's standard. God does not accept our work unless we offer Him a finished product.

"God wants us to finish the job; not quit; not get discouraged and fall asleep on the job.

In the opinion of men, what a church (or person) does in the name of Christ might be acceptable.

But all that matters is what God thinks.

Our works are in plain view before God ("All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

A dead church is a people that are passive not active. A people who are affect by the world but leave no effect on it.

Ask yourself, "Am I having an effect on this world, or am I being affected by it?"

**C. God's people must <u>remember</u> what God did for them (v. 3)**

Something dies in us spiritually when we forget what God did for us in saving us (ILLUS: Marriages, when the honeymoon ends).

--We forget God's wonderful mercy and grace.

--We forget the wretchedness of our lives when rescued.

--We forget the intimacy, the thrill, the sparkle in knowing God.

Heb. 10:32 - "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."

"Thou hast received" - the perfect tense indicates that they received something that they <u>still possessed</u>.

They received Christ (Jn. 1:12), His life, His Word, His Spirit, His power (Acts 1:8).

"Heard" - Aorist tense, looks at the moment when faith came by hearing

--Do you remember how sweet the Gospel story was to your dry and thirsty soul?

--Do you remember when the "lights went on," your eyes were opened, and you finally realized the love of God for you?

NOTE: Receiving and hearing are tied together because what we have received spiritually has come to us via what we heard.

**D. God's people must <u>retain</u> what God has given them (v. 3)**

"Hold fast" - God is calling on the Sardis church to pay attention to what she has heard and guard it or keep tight hold of it.

A church dies when it fails to retain that which gives life.

We must retain the Word!

We must guard against being forgetful hearers. How? James 1:22-25

--Meditation, memorization, and mobilization (let the Word move you into obedience)

**E. God's people must <u>repent</u> of sin (v. 3)**

Old-fashioned repentance is needed before any reviving will take place.

(II Chron. 7:14 - "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,a nd will forgive their sin,a nd will heal their land."

Genuine sorrow for sin, a burning thirst for God and righteousness, a total dissatisfaction with the way things are in our lives, etc., are prerequisites for revival.

## II. THE INCENTIVES FOR REVIVAL (v. 3b-5)

### A. Incentive #1 - The Lord's return (v. 3b)

Those who are perpetually asleep spiritually reveal the sad condition of their soul. They are lost!

Upon these, Jesus arrives like a thief, but to those who are spiritually awake, He arrives as Bridegroom! (Mt. 25).

"Thou shalt not know" - a double negative = "by no means know, in no way know" - emphasizing the imminency of Christ's return.

A "thief" (robber) only surprises those who are not ready.

Christ exhorts us to watch (stay awake) so that we will not be caught off guard at His second coming.

(Cp. Mt. 25:5 - sleeping before Christ's coming)

### B. Incentive #2 - The Lord's reward (v. 4-5)

**V. 4**

Most every Bible-believing church has a righteous remnant.

"Defiled" = soiled, dirtied, spotted with sin.

"Garments" - represents one's life (Jude 23 - "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.").

Cp. Rev. 16:15

**V. 4 & 5**

"White" = a symbol of inner purity (ILLUS: a white wedding dress).

Rev. 19:6-9 - Marriage of the Lamb

**V. 5**

NOTE: Our white clothing comes from the Lord, not ourselves.

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Is. 1:18).

"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7).

"Many shall be purified, and made white" (Dan. 12:10).

This phrase: "I will not blot out his name. . ." does not suggest that the Lord has a practice of blotting names out of His book; it merely emphasizes the security of having your name remain in His book.

The emphasis is positive, not negative. Nowhere in Scripture is a name of a believer blotted out of the rolls (scrolls) of the Book of Life in Heaven.

The phrase is a figure of speech known as a "litotes." An obvious understatement. A way of making a positive affirmation by negating the opposite (EX: Heb. 6:10 - "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.")

"I will not" - lit. double negative = "I will in no way; I will by no means; I will absolutely, positively not blot out his name.

It's like me saying, "Those of you who are faithful to church can be assured that I will not stop praying for you." This statement does not mean that I will stop praying for those who are not faithful, but it emphasizes my prayer for the faithful.

Our names were written before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8, 17:8).

Jesus told His disciples to rejoice because their names were "written (perfect tense) in heaven" (Lk. 10:20).

It is not those whose names are blotted out that are cast into the Lake of fire, but those who never had their name written there to begin with (Rev. 20:15).

The greatest announcement that could ever be made about you is not that your name be announced over the air (EX: Family Radio children's hour "Just For Us Kids" with Mr. Ken) or that your name appears in the newspaper, etc., but that your name is confessed by Christ to the Father (cp. Mt. 10:32).

CONCLUSION: Verse 6

1. The essentials for revival -

   --We must wake up out of our spiritual slumber

   --We must become dissatisfied with the way things are

   --We must remember what God did for us

   --We must retain what God has given us

   --We must repent of sin

2. The incentives for revival -

   --The Lord's return

   --The Lord's reward

**Psalm 85:6**

**1. The POWER of Revival is through PRAYER**
("Wilt Thou. . .?)
Ex. Revival in NYC which sparked the "Great Awakening"
Ex. The Welsh Revivals

All were a result of prayer
II Chron. 7:14
Jer. 33:3
James 5:16

**2. The PRODUCER of Revival is GOD**
("Thou")

Revivals don't come out of the brief case of a pastor; They don't come merely because advertisement is made (flyers are mailed etc.); They don't come merely because a special speaker comes to preach. Rather, they are God-sent at His sovereign time of choosing.

**3. The PURPOSE of Revival is RENEWED LIFE**
("Revive . . . again")

To "re-vive" means to impart life again. Note the scene of vv.4-5. When God revives a person he is spiritually refreshed. The windows of heaven seem to open. Showers of blessing are poured out. The darkness & gloom of one's soul turns not light. The lethargy & luke-warmness of one's life turns into zeal & fire for God. Ones life becomes filled with a new burden to pray; A fresh interest in the word; A deeper love for fellow believers; A deep concern for lost souls; A genuine conviction of sin.

**4. The PEOPLE of Revival are BELIEVERS**
("Us . . . Thy people")

Unbelievers cannot be revived since they have never been "vived" in the first place.

**5. The PRODUCT of Revival is REJOICING**
("That thy people may rejoice in Thee")

**II Chron 7:14**

***"My people" -*** In context, a reference to the Israelites, who were to be called "people of Yahweh."

The one reason why God would send trouble upon the land and lives of His people is because of their backslidings. God's law of sowing and reaping is avoided b no one, not even God's people.

Although originally given specifically to the nation of Israel, the principles found in this verse are applicable to the Church today. The responsibilities of humility, prayer, seeing God's face, and repentance are repeated in both the New Testament Gospels and Epistles.

If there was ever a time you loved God more, you are backslidden.
If there was ever a time you served God more, you are backslidden.
If there was ever a time you enjoyed God's company more, you are backslidden.
If there was every a time you found more fulfillment in God's work, you are backslidden.

Everyone who backslides does so for four reasons. Satan sidetracks people four ways:

--Pride
--Prayerlessness
--Preoccupation (other things become more important)
--Pollution from the pleasures of sin

True believers often temporarily drift from an intimate fellowship with their heavenly Father. (Permanent apostasy is indicative of the fact that the were never saved to begin with.)

***God will respond to the heart that returns to Him.**

How must you return? You must return to God with:

**1. A HUMBLE Heart**

It was pride which always led to Israel's abandonment of God. In the Old Testament, when she abandoned God, judgment (chastisement) always followed.

*"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18).

God *"will destroy the house of the proud"* (Prov. 15:25).

*"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility."*

(Prov. 18:12)

***"Humble themselves" -*** No one can humble you. They might humiliate you, but only you can humble yourself.

Humility is simply seeing yourself for who you <u>really</u> are. It is having an <u>accurate</u> view of yourself. The ancient Greeks said, "Humility is <u>truth</u>." Truth about yourself.

People have an <u>over-inflated</u> view of themselves because they have an <u>under-inflated</u> (inadequate, low) view of God.

Your view of God will determine your view of yourself.

No one saw the sovereign omnipotent holiness of God without immediately attaining a humble view of themselves (EX: Isaiah, Job, Peter, John, Israel [II Chron. 7:3]).

The psalmist said, *"When I consider the works of Thy hands. . . What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"*

We are like *"grasshoppers"* (Is. 40:22).

Why does humility head the list in verse 14? Answer:

1) No one sincerely ***"prays"*** who is not humble

   In pride the have puffed up feelings of <u>self-sufficiency</u>.

   "I don't need anything from God."

2) No one ***"seeks God's face"*** if the are not humble.

   In pride the flaunt their <u>independence</u>.

   "I can make it without seeking His face."

3) No one ***"turns from their wicked ways"*** if the are not humble.

   In pride they think the will escape <u>accountability</u> for their sin.

   "He caught and convicted others; I'm different, I'll get off the hook."

**2. A <u>PRAYERFUL</u> Heart**

The troubles of life are often God's way of getting us to pray.

We should pray always; we must pray when a crisis strikes.

*"You have not because you ask not."* (James 4:2)

*"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."* (Jn. 14:14).

*"Call unto me and I will answer thee. . ."* (Jer. 33:3)

*"The prayer of the upright is His delight"* (Prov. 15:8)

*"Could ye not watch with me one hour?"* One hour of prayer should be a minimum, according to Jesus.

Prayer has become a "lost art" in American fundamentalism today. It is the most important exercise we can be engaged in, and yet it is the most neglected spiritual duty.

No day should begin without a prayer time. It is more important than showering, shaving, brushing your teeth, or eating breakfast.

The most vital occupation you can engage in is prayer.

A Pattern for Prayer:

A doration
C onfession
T hanksgiving
S upplication

--for your needs
--for others' needs
family, friends, church members, neighbors, co-workers

There has never been a revival ( a mighty movement of God's Spirit) without prayer.

**3. A SEEKING (devoted) Heart**

Sometimes God allows affliction to come our way so we will seek Him.

*"I will go [and] return to My place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek My face in their affliction the will seek Me early."* (Hos. 5:15)

***"Seek My face" -***

--Not the face of idols or false gods (money, materialism)

--Not the face of man (*"Vain is the help of man"*)

It's amazing how quick people are to seek the face of:

--a psycho-therapist (secular shrink, worldly counsellor)

--Uncle Sam (welfare system)

--A guru; charismatic leader

. . . Rather than the God of the Universe!

How do we seek God's face?

Answer: Not by seeking signs and wonders, visions and dreams.

*"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign"* (Mt. 12:39).

We seek Him by going to the place where His face is revealed. --The Word of God.

To seek God's face is to seek His help.

(Cp. how God would hide His face [i.e. help] from the wicked - Dt. 31:17, 18; 32:20)

Psalm 27:8-9 - *"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."*

Psalm 105:3, 4, 5 - *"Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth."*

Is. 55:6-7 - *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for*

*he will abundantly pardon."*

Jer. 29:13 - *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*

**4. A <u>REPENTANT</u> Heart**

God's requirement for you to recover from backsliding is to ***"<u>turn</u>"***

--Not <u>cover-up</u> your sin, but turn from it.
--Not <u>justify</u> your sin, but turn from it.
--Not <u>shift the blame</u> for our sin, but turn from it.

***"Turn" -*** Not simply to change direction, but to <u>return</u> (turn back, go back) to a previous place of departure. God wants the backslider to return to the place of departure and get back on the right path; to mend the wrongs committed and reconcile with the ones wronged.

***"Wicked" (ra) -*** Badness in general. A broad term which usually refers not only to the moral evil but to the hurtful, distressing, miserable calamities which result from the evil.

*"The way of transgressors is hard"* (Prov. 13:15).

If America does not turn from its evil, God's judgment will fall upon it (like ancient Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).

Jer. 18:8 - *"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."*

***"Ways" (derek***; akin to direction) **-** the wicked road, path, journey, or course of life must be turned from.

Why would anyone stay on a road that leads to miser, lostness, destruction?

CONCLUSION:

***"Then" -*** Then and only then.

No short cuts; no alternative routes. Only when God's four-fold path to blessing is followed can we expect to receive the promises.

***"I will hear" -*** I will listen to your heart's request with interest and responsiveness.

***"I will forgive" -*** I will pardon your sin and not hold it against you (from a practical standpoint) (positionally we have already been forgiven).

***"I will heal" (rapha) -*** Like a physician, Jehovah Rapha will make healthy a society to the degree that His people influence that society.

Is God faithful to this promise? Yes. Those who seek God are blessed; those who rebel are under a curse.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rehoboam | (II Chron. 12:1-2, 6-7, 12) |
| Asa | (II Chron. 14:9-12; 15:1-2; 16:7-10, 12) |
| Jehoshaphat | (II Chron. 18:1-3; 19:2; 20:2-4) |
| Uzziah | (II Chron. 26:5-7, 16) |
| Hezekiah | (II Chron. 32:24-26) |
| Josiah | (II Chron. 34:1-3, 26-28) |

New Testament examples: John Mark
Simon Peter
The Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:17-24)