

☞ Preparing for Renewal

I believe God has some “new wine” he wants to pour into the Church today. We must be willing to stretch with the new wine of His presence. We need to be made new.

☞ **You need a whole new experience for a whole new day.**

Get a fresh revelation of Jesus by reading the Word spending time with him.

Get a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit by worshiping and praying.

☞ **Be renewed by expectantly waiting on the Lord, patiently serving him.**

Get a better picture of God. He’s in charge and he holds you close to his heart.

Decide if you really want to change, Stop making excuses, and Take action.

☞ 1 Kings 18:21-45

Scholars have studied great moves of God throughout history and have discovered some “Revival Patterns:”

- 1) Awakenings are usually preceded by a time of spiritual depression, apathy and sin, in which a majority of nominal Christians are hardly different from secular society, and the churches seem to be asleep. The moral leadership of the Church has been stilled for some time and social evils are usually rampant.
- 2) An individual or small group of God’s people becomes conscious of their sins and backslidden condition, and vows to forsake all that is displeasing to God. Christians recall past outpourings of God’s grace and power, and long to see them again.
- 3) As some Christians begin to yearn for a manifestation of God’s power a new awareness of the holy and pure character of the Lord is present. This standard of holiness exposes the degeneracy of the age and stimulates a striving after holiness by God’s people.
- 4) The awakening of Christians occurs: many understand and take part in a higher spiritual life. And, whole societies often change for the better.

We need a renewal. Billy Sunday said, “They tell me a revival is temporary; so is a bath, but it does you good.”

1. ☞ The Problem

Drought and famine – Elijah prophesied this in 17:1; 18:3 says the famine was severe.

Here’s the back-story: They rejected wise counsel; there was division; there was rebellion; there was compromise. The enemy of renewal is compromise, corruption and competition with the things of God.

☞ At this point the people were wavering (lit., limping). They were **indecisive**. We talked about this last week. Make a decision! Stop making excuses! Take action! Romans 4:20 indicates that wavering is actually a product of **unbelief**. They didn't really trust God. So there was a drought and famine of the Spirit. And when Elijah confronted it, the people were **silent**.

Psalms 34:17

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

When we are confronted with our own corruption and compromises, we need to turn to God and cry out to him.

2. ☞ The Proposition

If Baal is God, follow him; but if the LORD is God, follow him. Which is really the supreme God of all? Baal meant lord or owner, while Yahweh means the self-existing one. Who is really God?

They were in violation of the first commandment found in Exodus 20:3: "You shall have no other gods before me." They were trying to have God and other gods as well. **You ☞ can't just add God to your life; you need to give your life fully to him.**

A woman getting onto a ski lift was given instructions that the moment the lift's chair touched her backside she was to sit down and lift her feet from off the ground. Instead when the chair came against her she sat down but was nervous about the height of the lift. Her hesitation caused her to keep her feet firmly planted on the platform. She wanted to see the magnificent view from the top of the lift, but also wanted to be firmly attached to the ground. With her feet on the platform, the seat began to wind back and then like a slingshot hurled her off the platform causing injury to her legs and back. Indecision is a dangerous thing. Straddling between two positions can be hazardous to your health.

So, Elijah proposes a contest involving an impossible situation: Make a sacrifice, but don't ☞ light it up. Let's see which god will start the fire. **God does business with those that mean business.** Plus the odds were against him: 450 to 1.

Gaither Vocal Band...

*You might be thinking that I'm sure to lose
But I've got reasons for the sides I'd choose
Well, the Lord is with me and He's always won
So I'll stay with Him until the battle's done*

*I've got power that you can't see
God is living inside of me
I can fight any enemy
Cause God and I make a majority*

When you're facing an impossible situation, who are you gonna call?

Luke 1:37
nothing is impossible with God.

In fact, Elijah was so confident in God, that he taunted the prophets of Baal.

3. 📌 **The Process**

This is what we need to pay special attention to if we want renewal.

Here's some things that don't work... v. 26, 28, 29 they shouted... they danced around... they shouted louder and slashed themselves... until their blood flowed...they continued their frantic prophesying. This represents a lot of hype. Excitement, shouting, dancing, etc. Now, those things aren't all bad, but they're not the key to renewal.

"Come to me" – as God's prophet, Elijah represents the Word of God. We've been talking 📌 a lot about this lately. **Get back into the Word!**

Ephesians 5:26 speaks of washing with the Word. Colossians 3:16 says we are to let the Word dwell richly within. I have said recently that I've been reading my Bible lately, not for study purposes or note-taking, but simply for this "washing." However, I don't want you to get the wrong idea. We should be responding to what we read.

James 1:22
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

"He repaired the altar" – this represents a variety of things such as **gathering** together with 📌 other believers, **giving, praising, praying**, and remembering what God has done in the past. The altar was in ruins. Apparently, the people had not been worshiping, giving or praying. Do you need to repair the altar in your life? Have you been giving? Praising? Praying?

We've talked in the past few weeks about watching and waiting. We need to come each Sunday expecting God to move powerfully. During worship and singing you can be chilled, thrilled or filled. Chilled = going through the motions, but remaining unmoved

and cold. Thrilled = being entertained and focused on yourself. Filled = loving God wholeheartedly, receiving the Spirit and being renewed.

“He arranged the wood” – How do you arrange wood for a good fire? I believe this ☞ represents **unity and aligning with God’s plans**. In Acts 2, the believers were all together, in one place which is exactly what Jesus had told them to do. So, they aligned with God’s plans and were in unity. That’s when the Holy Spirit came on them all in tremendous power.

“He cut the bull” – this represents removing sin, and in our modern language means ☞ **“sincerity.”**

Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart...

Colossians 3:5

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...

☞ **GROJ sale = Get Rid Of Junk**

☞ “He poured water” – this represents **sacrifice**. Remember, they were in a three-year drought. Water was a very precious commodity at this point, but Elijah poured it on in abundance.

Psalms 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Romans 12:1

offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.

☞ “He stepped forward” – this can represent **doing something new** like we discussed last week. If you need renewed, and nothing is happening, then do something different.

--John Hagee... When you want what you’ve never had, you have to do what you’ve never done.

If you’re not experiencing renewal as is, you need to do something different! You can’t stay in the past. God is on the move. So we must be moving too.

Finally, “he prayed” – this one is obvious.

--E.M. Bounds... *"What the Church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer."*

--Samuel Chadwick... *"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray."*

Jesus asserted that sometimes our prayers need to be accompanied by **fasting**. Now, on 📅 **February 18th**, we're having an all-church **prayer meeting at 5:00 p.m.** That's roughly three weeks from now. Would you consider doing some fasting between now and then? There are many ways to fast. You can skip meals and pray. You can limit what you eat. You can exercise self-control over many things like TV, Facebook, or other forms of 📅 entertainment. Whatever, it is, let's fast and **PUSH... Pray Until Something Happens.**

And I want you to notice what Elijah prayed for. He didn't pray for the fire to come down and he didn't pray for the rain to end the drought. Instead he **prayed that God would be 📅 known.** (v. 36)

Ephesians 1:17

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

📅 And he prayed that the **people would turn back to God.** (v.37)

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

We need to focus more on God. We need to know him more. We need to turn to him.

--Dr. A. C. Dickson... *When we depend upon organization, we get what organization can do. When we depend upon education, we get what education can do. When we depend on money, we get what money can do. When we depend upon singing and preaching, we get what they can do. But when we depend upon prayer, we will get what God can do.*

These are the priorities of prayer: God's fame and man's repentance. This all leads to...

4. 📌 The Product

When Elijah prayed, God responded with fire.

📌 God's fire is all-consuming. **He takes over.** Hebrews 12:29 says, our "God is a consuming fire." He doesn't want just any part in the theater of your life. He wants the starring role. He doesn't just want you on Sundays, but every day, all day. He doesn't want just your words, but your actions as well. He wants all of you.

Have you ever heard the saying "If that don't light your fire your wood's too wet?" Today I want you to know that your firewood doesn't ever get too wet. God can light a fire in you no matter how soaking wet you think you are.

📌 "The people fell" – **they turned to God**; they repented in response to Elijah's prayer and God's power. They were restored and the process of renewal had begun.

When God brings renewal and makes visitation great things happen...

Acts 2:41 three thousand were added to their number

Acts 2:43 many wonders and miraculous signs

Acts 3:19 times of refreshing

Acts 5:12-16 highly regarded by the people

During the first meetings of the Hebrides Revival, it was reported that 75 percent of the converts were born again before they arrived at the meeting place.

Almolonga – large percentage of people are now believers; many of the businesses have Biblical names; even the crops have increased in size and quantity; and they rarely need to pray for sick people.

📌 Then, "a small cloud rose" – God was giving a **token of his plan for renewal.** He helped Elijah and his servant see what was in store for them. He was sending the rain.

Elijah pressed the servant to go back a seventh time. "Go and look again." Open up your eyes. The servant came back this time and said, "Behold there is a little cloud—like a man's hand..." Elijah didn't belittle the fact that it was a very small cloud in a great big sky. It was the beginning of a bigger storm cloud—the answer was beginning to take shape. We may shrug off the beginning of God's answer to us. "Oh, it's just a little." But

the little cloud speaks of hope. When we are waiting on God, we need hope to have something to look forward to. Sometimes people will say, "The situation is just hopeless—nothing is going to happen." But when you have hope, you can wait for it to happen.

It didn't just stop with the token cloud. It was "a heavy rain" that built up to a downpour.

☞ That's what I'm looking for! The **refreshing rain of the Holy Spirit** comes to us when we turn back to God. The **new wine of his presence** that we've been talking about comes when we are renewed.

And that's not all. Notice verse 46... Elijah was empowered to run ahead of a chariot all the way to Jezreel. When we are renewed and receive a downpour of the Holy Spirit, we

☞ are **supernaturally empowered to do God's work.**

☞ **If you've been feeling like an old dried-up wineskin, then admit your problem and get down to business with God.**

Get back into the Word. Gather, give, praise, pray. Make a sacrifice by fasting.

Let God have full authority in your life. Welcome the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Invite the Presence of God into your daily routine.

Let's be renewed!

Song: Pour out your Spirit