

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

When I Think of Revival

SERIES

Come Alive in 2025

DATE

1/19/2025

KEY SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 57:14-15

SYNOPSIS

What is genuine revival? How can we prepare for it?

HIGHLIGHTS





## ☞ When I Think of Revival

The word revival is not exclusive to Christianity; it's used in a variety of ways...

"Fashions from the 1970s are *enjoying a revival*."

"There are three musical *revivals* on Broadway this season."

"With new policies, the city is showing signs of *revival*."

"There has been a new interest in the *revival* of space exploration."

Some today would like to see "a *revival* of good morals and common sense."

When talking about revival some people will immediately think of highly emotional evangelistic service...

"We're going to have a week of revival services with special guest Jon Doe." Some think of people jumping and dancing and shouting. When I think of revival, that is not what comes to my mind. Some of those things may happen in a true revival, but in and of themselves, they are not revival.

According to the dictionary, revival is when there is renewed attention to or interest in something; a new presentation of something old; restoration of force, validity, or effect. Those definitions are closer to ☞ what comes to my mind. In the Hebrew language **revive means** to give life or **restore life**. This fits with our current theme, **Come Alive in 2025**. One way to think of Coming Alive in 2025 is through the lens of revival. So, what is it, really?

A spiritual revival is when Christians who have become lukewarm and grown distant from God are now ☞ motivated to **get back on track**. I think of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11ff) who had walked away from home and squandered all he had, but then came to his senses and went back home. That's revival. And, ☞ a modern revival will likely include **prodigals** you know **coming back to the Lord**.

☞ A personal spiritual revival is when an individual recommits their life to the Lord and has a **renewed passion** for the things of God.

☞ Sinful tendencies and spiritual **bondages are broken**. A Spirit-led revival will often include a comeback of the **spiritual gifts**, including healings and miracles which cannot be denied.

☞ I think of **an overwhelming sense of God's presence** when we gather together. As I mentioned last week, the priests in Solomon's temple couldn't do business as usual because God's presence was thick as a cloud. When Jesus was on the earth, in person, people couldn't resist him. They wanted to be wherever he was. People came to him to see and experience the miracles he was performing. Some people's lives were radically changed because Jesus touched them.

I've personally seen hardened people break into tears in the presence of the Lord. I've seen others laugh for joy in the presence of the Lord. There's healing, peace and joy in his presence. That's a significant part of revival; Coming Alive in 2025.

Now, those are the kinds of things I think of when talking about revival.



--An Online Article... While the Bible doesn't use the word "revival," it does detail instances in the lives of God's people where sudden and surprising change takes place. Whether we call it an "awakening" or "renewal" or "reformation" or "revival," there have been times throughout history—including biblical history—where the God who normally works by ordinary days has chosen to work in extraordinary ways.

True revival will be Bible saturated. Revival is not simply an intense longing for spiritual things. Tom Cruise has a hunger for spiritual things. Gen Z college students are generally interested in spiritual things. God-wrought revival brings a **fever for the Bible**, that we might live, pray, work, and worship according to the word of God.

When revival comes, God draws near, and the nearness of his presence produces profound reverence and **awe**; (**fear of God**.) Whether converted for the first time or brought back to God again in a new way, in true revival sinners are made freshly aware of the holiness of God.

Renewed commitment is another mark of genuine revival. When God brought revival in the Old Testament, his people began to say to each other, "It's time to ante up, time to **recommit**." When revival comes to a church or community, people start to live like they profess. Instead of blending in with their cultural surroundings, God's people stand out. They pursue faithfulness to the word, not the fashions of the world. It's a **return to righteous living**.

So, what is true revival? It is not generic spirituality, mere emotionalism, or utopian idealism. True revival is marked by a rediscovery of the word of God, a restored sense of the fear of God, a return to God through confession and repentance, a renewed spiritual commitment, and, finally, a reformation of true [devotion].

So, then, how can we experience revival? Well, the kind of wide-spread, thorough revival I'm thinking of can only come by God's sovereign choice. However, as usual, partnering with us, he does allow us to share in the process...

☞ **Isaiah 57:14-15**

14 And it will be said: "Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people." 15 For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

--Ian Malins... In ancient times when a king was to visit a city, a messenger would go before, telling the people to get ready. The people of that city would then get busy preparing the road along which the king would travel. They would remove rocks and stones on the road, fill in potholes and make the road wide and smooth. If these kinds of preparations were made for an earthly king coming to visit his people, how much more do we need to prepare the way for the sovereign Lord to come to us in divine visitation?

Raise the Road. Build up, build up; prepare the road



= areas that are below grade; substandard; less than God's best. These need to come up to the required level. These are things we've neglected, and not been diligent about, and have allowed to degrade into substandard qualities. Things like obedience, righteousness and holiness.

☞ **To raise the road, we need holiness and truth.** We need to fill the potholes where we've been lacking in these areas; things in our lives that have been less than pure, right and virtuous; times when we have been stupid and lacked discernment. Those things have left ruts and potholes in our lives which need to be raised up. There's a choice to be made and it's going to take some effort. Jesus said that we should hunger and thirst for righteousness.

*Have you ever been so hungry you started snapping at people? There is a real-life behavior called "being hangry"—so hungry you begin to get angry. Ella Carter and Philip Watts actually did a study on this. "When we are hungry, our brains are essentially starved of glucose, meaning that our ability to control our emotions is reduced, as is our ability to concentrate." Jesus wants believers to be hungry and thirsty. But not for food—for the righteousness of God. When you are hungry you go to the refrigerator or to a drive-through with anticipation of finding food. God wants you to go to church, read your Bible, and pray with an anticipation that he will give you what you need.*

It's time to build up the road, preparing the way for the Lord. Here is a simple way to begin... Psalms 50:23 says, "He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God."

I've actually created a chart showing how Christlikeness comes more naturally by simply beginning with thanksgiving. As we express gratitude it leads to worshipping God. As we worship God it enhances our sense of humility while strengthening our love and fear of God. Humility, love and the fear of the Lord lead to transformation. And it all begins with gratitude. Raise the Road.

Remove the obstacles

= areas of resistance; barriers between us and God. These are areas of unevenness; inconsistencies; ups and downs; hot and cold; areas where refining is needed. We all struggle with this one, but God can ☞ work in us to **remove obstacles and be more consistent in our faith-walk.**

Too often, we think that we're just fine when it comes to God. We think we're not as bad as other people. We're pretty good. But we need to see ourselves as God sees us. It's not how we compare to other people; it's how we compare to Christ.

There may be presumption that we're "pretty okay," which leads to pride and self-indulgence. And once you get used to self-indulgence, you tend to become stubborn, because you like having everything focused on you. But God calls it "stiff-necked" and resisting the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 reminds us, "Don't stifle the Holy Spirit. We need to see ourselves in comparison with Christ and remove all the obstacles between us and him.





☞ Be contrite and lowly in spirit – **repentance**. Think differently; change direction. God lives in a high and holy place, but also with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit (humble). **Humility** refers to a reduced focus on self; absence of pride or self-assertion; and having an accurate opinion of yourself. And, when you truly have humility, you will be compelled to repent for your sinful attitudes and behaviors. Contrition and humility – God is drawn to this. And, when he reveals himself more fully to us, we experience revival.

*The heart and center of revival is simply the rediscovery of the wonderful sense of the presence of God and a hunger for that presence.*

*--Ian Malins... Revival is a sovereign act of God, but He is looking for people who are prepared and ready to receive His blessings. For revival to come there are conditions we must recognize and preparations we must make. We must prepare the way.*

Raise the Road, Remove the Obstacles, and Repent to be Revived.

*--Vance Havner... What we call revival is simply New Testament Christianity – the saints getting back to ☞ normal... **Naturally supernatural**, where all the supernatural stuff in the bible is just normal life for the believer. That's what I want. As I think of revival, I want us to Come Alive and Be Alive in 2025.*

☞ **Malachi 3:1**

"See, I will send my messenger, who will **prepare the way** before me. **Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple**

Today, we're going to close the service with communion. The scripture teaches us that when we share in the Lord's Supper, we ought to examine ourselves with spiritual discernment, so that we don't sin against the body and blood of the Lord. I think this is a good place to start the preparations for the revival we seek. As you come to the tables to get the bread and drink, return to your seats and take a few moments to pray and repent. Then, we will all share in communion together.