

Thoughts About Revival

Dr. J.I. Packer is quoted as saying, “Do not neglect the revival dimension in your ministry.” I believe a preacher should review their annual sermon plan and ask, “Are any of these messages focusing on revival?” My first years in the ministry were among churches that scheduled a “revival meeting” each spring. I think they were more like evangelistic services. I don’t believe that true revival can be scheduled or planned. Dr. Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr, describes revival as “a gift from the Throne wonderfully interrupting our little programs. The Holy Spirit blows like the wind, unpredictably, mysteriously, wherever he pleases (John 3:8. We can’t announce him in advance. We can only pray that he will blow our way.”

I would like to live long enough to experience what happened in the days of George Whitefield. In his Journals he says that during a sermon, “God, the Lord, came down amongst us.” In short periods and in minimal ways I believe that I have experienced special anointing from the Lord. But what I long to be involved in would be like the flame of revival described by Increase Mather. He preached in a darkened Boston in 1741. He expressed this plea, “Oh degenerate New England! What are thou come to at this day? How are those sins become common in thee that once were not so much as heard of in this land?” God heard and came down. Nineteen years later the prophet Mather wrote, “So many persons come to me under conviction and for advice, that I have scarcely time to eat bread. Wonderful things are doing here. The Word runs like lightning!” His statements were supported by the testimony of Benjamin Franklin when he wrote about Philadelphia. “It was wonderful to see the change in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seem’d as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro’ the town in an evening without hearing the psalms sung in different families of every street.” The above thoughts have been drawn from Ortlund’s book entitled, *When God Comes to Church*. Stephen Olford wrote, “Revival is absolutely essential to restrain the righteous anger of God, to restore the conscious awareness of God, and to reveal the gracious activity of God.” Let us together pray that God will “revive us again.”