

Patriotic Message – I Samuel 7

I Samuel 7

May I say as you are turning your Bible that America is in deep spiritual trouble and what we need is a genuine revival in the local churches of America.

I've entitled today's patriotic sermon: "Ebenezer or Ichabod?"

I Samuel 7:3

Let us stand for the reading of revival in the land. Will revival come again?

I Samuel 7:3-4

Let us pray

Ebenezer or Ichabod?

We do not see revival meetings much anymore

There was a day and a time when seven day revival meetings were common
– even two and three week meetings were held

There were sawdust/tent revivals and most every church had its own revival services every year – How many of us have attended a whole week of revival services?

Revival services have almost disappeared from the landscape of most churches.

However, revival is not merely a series of church meetings

Revival means to blossom again, to flourish anew, to live again, to spring into activity, to recover from a state of neglect.

The word “revival” literally means a reawakening

So revival can only take place in that which is already alive – revival is for Christians

When revival comes, a revolution will come – a revolution of righteousness.

When revival comes there will be a reformation or transformation of character.

This revival can take place in individuals, families, churches, communities, cities.
It can be national in scope!

And when revival comes to the believers, history has demonstrated that multitudes of unbelievers are swept into the Kingdom of God as well.

Souls are saved – not by handfuls – but by avalanche proportions

History has demonstrated that when revival comes, great societal changes come as well!

Revival will affect crime, drunkenness, immorality, gambling, profanity; selfishness.

Spurgeon defined revival like this:

“It is the fire of heaven so intense that it melts the most hardened hearts and this fire falls first on the saint and then on the sinner.”

We have in America – a history of revivals – no modern day history
But we have had revivals in this country before

Out of revivals we have the midweek prayer meeting. It was born during revival.
Today – most churches do not have a Prayer Meeting and if they do, it is the least attended service

Out of revival came the Prohibition Amendment against alcohol

People saw how whiskey was a curse to the people through the strong preaching of Billy Sunday and especially Christian women. It was outlawed and many counties became dry counties.

In New York City, for example, six people began to pray at noon – which eventually swelled to 500,000 – one million. Stores all over the city shut down every day at lunch for prayer meeting.

Songs like “Amazing Grace,” “There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood,” “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” – all born during revival

Sunday School came out of revival in England, spiritually educating the children.

The Salvation Army, the YMCA – they were a by-product of revival.

We have all around us in our midst today things that were born during revival times.

They are what I call remnants of revival.

Folks, do we need revival? Do we need it to blossom again?

Is it time for revival in our church?

Have we left our first love, lost our fervor, our spirit of urgency, our heart for souls, and our personal holiness?

Has pettiness, jealousy, gossip, unholy lifestyles, decimated us to weakness at best?

So goes the church, so goes the country. We want to blame the White House, the Congress, the Supreme Court, abortionist, homosexual. The blame is at the church door.

First, I want you to see the atmosphere in Samuel's day.

I Samuel 4:21a – 22

Israel had become an Ichabod nation.

The Glory of God. The hand of God, God's blessings, great grace and great power was removed.

What does a church look like when God's hand is removed from it? Stagnate, religious commotion, powerless, empty, edifices of emptiness.

The Ark represented the presence of God.

The Presence of God was gone. The blessing of God was over.

In the days of Samuel, it was days of spiritual apathy, darkness; days of unbridled sin.

Do you know where that lifestyle leads a nation? To judgment, slavery to vices, to self-destruction

Do you know how Israel got into this stupefied state – cesspool state?

The same way we have come.

1 There was Disgrace in the Ministry – spiritual leadership

2:12 – People who are in the leadership of God – who don't know God.

Vs. 17 – The hypocrisy of God's leaders was so bad that it repelled the people!

Religious people presenting a poor testimony to others

Vs. 22 – Eli's two sons were living in sexual immorality, yet still performing their religious duties. This makes a mockery of God's temple. We cannot work the works of God with sinful hands.

Let us not deceive ourselves, that God will overlook certain personal sins; that what we do for Him is more important than who we are. The two cannot and should not be separated. "A little leaven"

Is there any leaven in our church? Is there areas of our life we need to get right with God? Are there people who we have wronged? How does a little leaven affect the whole? Remember Achan?

God's leaders were living in sin! They were around religious things but they themselves were not in line with God. This is hypocrisy!

Is there any hypocrisy in the church?

Preachers are no more ministers of the Bible. Many do not even know the Bible that well. They have become counselors, psychotherapists and cheerleaders.

We have a "Burger King mentality in the church where you can have it your way"

We have Baskin-Robbins churches offering 32 different flavors

The State of the Church in many places is bankrupt, boneless, backwards

Now, how did God respond to this?

2:29-30, 34-35 – God is looking for faithful people – Faithful to Him and to His Word.

That cannot be separated. We cannot be faithful to God and at the same time be unfaithful to His Word.

Not only was there disgrace in the ministry

But #2, there was Decay in the Family - 3:13

There was failure to train and restrain children. Eli honored his children's sin therefore despising God.

We live in a day when parents have given up or they really don't know what to do with their kids. Basic child training is unknown among the masses.

We have a breakdown of God's structure in the traditional family. It is more than a break down. It is a melt down

Very permissive permissiveness – no rules – people involved with multiple people – unmarried – children born out of wedlock. It is epidemic.

And when those children who are unbridled, undisciplined, and lazy grow up, we have a vicious free fall of which we need a miracle from God to recover. We need revival.

Not only decay in the family

But there is #3 Despair in Society – 2:17; 4:2; 4:10 – hopeless, helpless . . .

The glory had departed – lost two battles. They thought their strength was in a box.

Our strength is in our money, sophistication, business marketing, and technology. We had better trust in the Lord. They had forgotten God.

We too have forgotten God – the glory has departed – “Ichabod” churches leads to an “Ichabod” nation.

We wonder why it seems like things are falling apart. Our country is teetering on bankruptcy, spiritually, financially and morally.

We cannot have a society that lives decently without acknowledging and obeying the moral absolutes that God has given in His Word.

Relativism has crisscrossed our land – the guardrails of the Bible have been lifted and removed and there are hardly any boundaries. No absolutes – everything depends on the situation and what the people in the situation believe.

We are not the nation we used to be

Israel had disgrace in the spiritual leadership, decay in the family, despair in the society. They needed to turn it around!

God sent revival in Samuel's day and God can revive us today!

There is bright hope, a diamond in the rough, a light in the darkness.

In the midst of failing homes, failing schools, failing culture, failing society, failing churches, there is hope.

We cannot throw up our hands and say it is too late – that God can't do it – we've done too much sin.

God would rather forgive than punish; reconcile than send away; restore than put down;
 and revive instead of judge
 But He will do one or the other

I Samuel 7:3a

If -- Choice

Let us see how this revival came

What precipitated the revival?

There was a communication of God's Word (3:19-21) – through the foolishness
 of preaching.

For revival to begin – the Word of God must take central stage!

The center of our worship services should be the preaching and teaching of the Word of
 God.

When we go to church, – and the preaching of the Word of God is Spirit led, Spirit
 empowered, it is like a cold, cold drink on a hot summer day.

Folks, a rare commodity is a church that is found preaching and teaching the Word of
 God. **All of it.** Where the whole counsel is preached and where the
 congregation is living it out.

No skipping, no overlooking, picking and choosing and compromising

Samuel was a man of God who shared the Word of God

There was a communication of the Word of God

As a result of this communication of the Word of God, there will come a fresh
 consciousness of the presence of God

When God is seen in His holiness – picture of Him – Isaiah saw his own wickedness

When God is seen in His righteousness – Woe unto me and we get right with God.

When God is seen in His power and His love

When we begin to see God and become conscious of Him – then there comes convictions and we fall on our knees because of our sin.

Revival is not about preachers, books, programs, buildings, numbers, money, and fastings

Jonathan Edwards, during the revival of his time, read his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Revival is about becoming aware of God – aware of ourselves

What was the people’s response?

First of all, they returned to God with all of their heart – Start of Revival.

I Samuel 7, look at verse 3b – all your hearts. Does God have all our heart?

James warned about being double-minded, unstable in all our ways.

Does God have all our heart?

There was a wholehearted turn to the Lord

Secondly, as a result of revival, there was a confession of sin and the putting away of sin

When God gets a hold of us, when we are revived, how do we know when that begins?

It begins when we put things out of our life, when we don’t tolerate sin in our lives, vs. 4.

They begin to serve God. Where are the throngs of God’s people going into service for Him?

How many people are rising through the ranks of a local church and then onto the ministry fulltime? -- Very few churches are producing Christian soldiers for the front lines.

In order for Revival to begin in us we must: Put away sin from our life.

Not only are we to be broken over our sins, we are to be broken from our sins

Put away these things – that’s forceful

When this takes place amongst a growing number of people, then there is great societal change

Thirdly, as a result of Revival, God’s people became bold

There was a renewed confidence in God

Vs. 8

Notice where their confidence was. They didn’t ask for the ark – they called on God.

They were not looking at their president, military, or congress – they asked God.

When people begin to get serious with God, you can expect the enemy to rise to the occasion – there will be opposition as soon as you and I begin to move in God’s direction.

Vs. 11

Their mentality had changed

No more “hold the fort” – it was “onward, Christian soldiers” – aggressive Christianity

Not this passive Christianity. When God becomes central in our lives, that turns our homes, church, country, up side down.

Vs. 12

God gave the victory and the people gave the praise

Ebenezer – Israel lost twice before they won

Now, I'm finished but I want you to envision revival with me. What would revival be like if we really had it?

Envision churches on Sunday, filled and overflowing – while jails and dens of wickedness were empty

Imagine our national leaders and Supreme Court Justices turning to God – consulting the Word of God – and praying from the heart and not a script

Imagine believers making restitution for past wrongs – stolen property being returned – people confessing dishonesty

Souls being saved by the thousands and being swept like a tidal wave into the Kingdom of God

Imagine marriage sacred – men and women keeping their marriage vows – loving, honoring, cherishing – reestablishing the family

Immorality and crime – decline

Imagine America – where the glory is departing

Imagine the glory one more time on America as she cries out to God

Ebenezer

Do you think it's possible? It first must be real in you and me!

Let's stand for closing invitation.

Every eye closed

How many would say this morning, "Pastor, I know that I am a Christian, but I need personal revival"? "My life is not where it needs to be."

It takes more than just desire to renew our relationship with God.

Give Him our whole heart; put away our sin and serve Him only

Maybe you are here today and you really don't know God. He is a distant reality.

Personal relationship through His Son.

God so loved the world that He sent His Son to pay the price and penalty for our sins.

Will you be saved today?

Let us pray

O God, send a mighty revival. Let the revival begin in me. Do a work in my heart.

Clean out my life, Lord

And one day we'll raise our Ebenezer and say, "Thank You, Lord