



Network for Revival November 2018

Revival for God's sake: the grief of God

Some people mistakenly think that God doesn't have any emotions. As I point out in some detail on the Network for Revival Website <http://networkforrevival.co.uk/meditate-on-the-suffering-of-god/>, he does have emotions but he is not *subject* to any emotions or emotional reactions (he is in complete control of his emotions). Hence Paul writes in Eph 4:30 "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." The NIV comments that this verse "demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence, for only a person can be grieved." Other examples could be given from Scripture, including about God's positive emotions.

It is biblical, therefore, to say that God is grieved by our sins. Because of the sin of human beings Gen 6:6-7 says "The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled." Similarly the Lord says about sinful Israel "how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols" (Ezk 6:9). Similarly, when faced with legalistic Pharisees, Jesus "looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts ..." (Mark 3:5).

So one of the most powerful motives for praying and preparing for Revival is the grief of God at human sin. Genesis 1:31 says "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." But now look! How grieved God must be at human sin which is ruining his world. It is ruining human relationships, ruining human lives, ruining human relationships with him. Even where there is kindness, caring and self-sacrifice there is often also sin. But the most grieving aspect of human behaviour is godlessness. Many people simply ignore God. They may be decent, kind, caring people – but they ignore God. And it is happening millions of times over. How grieved God must be!

Then there is the church. Yes, there are good, caring, growing churches. But many are dwindling and dying. And many churches don't really pray beyond the minimum. Then the church seriously compromises with society, damaging both society and itself, but, more serious, grieving God.

I encourage you to take some time alone with God to dwell in depth on how grieved he must be with our post-Christian, largely godless nation and with the serious failings in the church. Is he saying again "how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me" (Ezk 6:9)?

I believe God is deeply, deeply grieved at what he sees and that makes me distressed and profoundly concerned that we should pray for him to come mercifully in Revival. So let's pray for Revival *for God's sake* – that his grief may be greatly assuaged.

Practical advice on how to pray for Revival

Following on from what I have written above, when you have a time of prayer for Revival, why not spend some time meditating on relevant issues, connected with the grief of God. Seek an unhurried time without distraction and let the Lord get through to you and motivate you to pray in greater depth. A substantial amount of petitionary prayer for Revival is vital but it is not the only relevant form of prayer.

Are you praying?

The purpose of Network for Revival is to inspire, encourage and challenge people to pray, either on their own or, if possible, with others. I pray for you regularly as a member of the mailing list, that God will inspire your prayer, help you to find time to pray for Revival in your busy timetable, and draw you ever closer to himself.

A quotation about revival

Colin and Mary Peckham: "As Margaret MacLeod so strikingly said of the Christians in the Barvas area [Isle of Lewis], 'It was a community at prayer.' Because they have come to know the secret of humility, of seeking the Lord,

of depending on Him to work, of importunately laying hold of Him, of passionately pleading with Him, God heard from heaven and came to them, forgiving their sin and healing their land.”

A simple description of revival

It is good if we encourage others to pray with us about Revival. But some may not really understand what Revival is. The following may be helpful to such folk:

Revival is a special work of the Holy Spirit which has happened from time to time in the past. It brings about:

- A deep desire to pray.
- A powerful sense of the presence of God
- A clear awareness of anything wrong in our lives
- Churches being given a new lease of life.
- A deep sense of unity and love
- A deep concern for those who have not yet come to faith in Christ.
- People outside the congregation coming to faith in large numbers.

The church desperately needs revival

I have written a paper on “The Oppression of Christians in the West.” See <http://christianteaching.org.uk/blog/biblical/oppression-of-christians-in-the-west/>. It includes some positive factors but also faces up to the serious challenges and problems facing Western Christians:

- Growing discrimination against Christians in the UK (also US and Australia).
- Undermining of Christian freedom of speech by the post-Christian society in the UK.
- Growing undermining of freedom of speech for Biblically-minded UK Christians by other (especially pro-homosexual) Christians.

God bless you.

Tony

The aim of *Network for Revival* is to help make ready a people prepared for him to come in Revival. God delights to use “small fry” in his big purposes. Prayer in the context of seeking holiness is our priority. Please pray for the Network as I pray for you daily (*feel free to send me relevant prayer topics*). Please encourage others to join. “Prepare!” is meant to be a dialogue not a monologue. ***Please send me material I can publish, including lessons from Scripture, helpful experiences, prophetic insights etc. But try to keep it brief. Let me know if you want it to be anonymous or with your name attached to it, if I publish it.***

Revival is a supernatural event in the church and society. It is a work of the Holy Spirit which brings: an overpowering sense of God's presence leading to uplifting, inspired worship; an awesome sense of God's holiness leading to a deep conviction of sin, even amongst those outside the church; a supernatural drawing of people together and an outpouring of love for one another, all of which leads to a huge number coming to faith. People's lives and whole communities are transformed.