



Network for Revival Prepare Issue 35 – February 2022

We continue our series on seeking holiness, which is crucial to praying and preparing for revival. Firstly, we looked at the motive of God's holiness, which should inspire godly fear. Then we looked at the motive of the majestic glory of God which should be manifested amongst us. In our Advent issue, we looked at the motive of the judgment of God, which we all face. Last time we looked at the need to go on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now we look at the motive of Jesus' challenge to true discipleship.

Seeking holiness: are we real disciples of Jesus?

That may seem to be a slightly insulting question. By the nature of the case, everyone on the mailing list will be a Christian, and many are Christian leaders. But I'm following in a good tradition, asking such a question. Jesus wasn't just polite and diplomatic. He frequently used provocative, even quite extreme, language and illustrations to challenge people out of the danger of apathy.

Luke tells us that "Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:25-26). How would people react – hating family, even your married partner? Many years ago, a Christian teenage member of our church took our discipleship training book home and left it open where it referred to this biblical passage and his non-Christian parents read it. You can imagine their reaction!

Jesus clearly wanted total, sacrificial commitment from his disciples, and he still does. I have a feeling that, as he looks at the church today, he is often disappointed. But we must take the lead in this if we are preparing for Revival. Revival demands sacrificial commitment.

Jesus clearly did not mean that we should not love our nearest and dearest, but that he should come first – by a long way. This means asking ourselves questions such as the following:

Do we long to be in God's presence?

A couple of years ago I was challenged by the following inspiring biblical passages (interestingly, all from the OT) as to whether they expressed what I felt about God. I realised I didn't share these writers' deep yearning to be in God's presence, and I needed to ask God to correct that.

"One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (Psa 27:4). "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psa 42:1-2). "You are my joy and my delight" (Psa 43:4). "I long to ... take refuge in the shelter of your wings" (Psa 61:4). "You, O God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water" (Psa 63:1). "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psa 84:2).

We can relate this to prayer for revival with the following passages "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13). "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psa 37:4).

Do we make sufficient time for the Lord?

If we are serious about Revival, it isn't sufficient to pray for 10 minutes or even 20 minutes each day. We may start with such lengths of prayer time, but the Lord will steadily move us on into longer periods of time. God calls us to plead with him, and that takes time. But prayer is dialogue and he also wants to speak to us, whether through Scripture or our own thinking, and we need to meditate over what he says. That takes time as well.

Do we "hate our own lives" and "give up everything we have"?

Jesus also required that his disciples should "hate" their own life. He adds "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (v 27) and "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples" (v 33).

Again, Jesus is being provocative, not literal. He is calling for us to be ready and willing to sacrifice everything for him: time, comfort, popularity, pleasure, relaxation, entertainment, money (as well as all sinful behaviour, of course).

How much are we longing for Revival? This isn't the only motive for accepting the above challenges. But praying and preparing for Revival in the present world with all its sin, depravity, unbelief and openness to demonic attack, requires our total commitment. Are we real disciples of Jesus?

A description of Revival by Colin & Mary Peckham

“At Cornaig [in the Hebrides] we laboured under great difficulties, for the tumbledown former United Free Church in which we were working had its shutters closed against the wind as it howled through the broken windows. There was a space under the door through which the wind swept with a force which would chill you to the marrow. The gales were blowing and we were battling against the elements. Few people came to the meetings, and sometimes there was no-one. We would then hold a prayer meeting — just the two of us. One night there were two people there ... This forlorn state of affairs continued for seven weeks. The mission seemed fruitless, but we knew that the Lord had sent us and we were determined to see victory in this place...

One day we had great freedom in our prayer-time together ... Jean had great liberty and the joy of victory was so marked that she laughed as she broke through prayer. The devil's on the run!' she exclaimed. We prayed on with great joy and expectancy. The break in the atmosphere had come and we were soon to see what the Lord would do in our midst.

The next night we looked out on the dark, flat, treeless landscape and wonder of wonders, we saw them coming. Lights were moving towards the church: lights of torches as the people converged on the meeting. Suddenly there were about eighty people present! Some brought heaters which they placed in different parts of the hall, and this certainly made a difference! God was coming to our aid and the people were coming to hear the gospel. Soon the place was full of people and of the power of God, and we were conscious of His mighty working in so many hearts. God was in the meetings; God was moving everywhere! It was a wonderful time of mighty spiritual blessing. God was in the midst and drew forth from so many hearts that abandonment to Him and that trust in Him as Saviour and Lord. Many yielded to the Saviour and became staunch pillars in the churches on the island.”

APPENDIX: OTHER ARTICLES I HAVE WRITTEN

You may find these articles helpful. Feel free to circulate them to others. Further details and hyperlinks to the articles are in the attached file. You can also find the articles, and many others at <https://christianteaching.org.uk>

APOLOGETICS

“Hawking finally disproves God – or does he?”

“Is Religion a Force for Evil?”

DEVOTIONAL

“Love is complicated – but good for you” (*a definition of love*)

“Miserable sinners” (*taking sin seriously*)

“Peace of mind” (*dealing with anxiety*)

“Preparing for Communion”

“Supermarket culture” (*materialism and self-denial*)

“The importance of the will” (*Love is primarily an act of the will*)

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

“A right approach to worship”

In Network for Revival God has called us to “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” This includes:

- Encouraging people to seek holiness and true biblical discipleship.
- Encouraging people to major on prayer for Revival.
- Encouraging churches to be radically biblical in the power of the Spirit (see [Church Development](#) for information and resources).
- Encouraging people to “Watch!” for the return of Jesus (Mk 13:32-37 – see [Eschatology](#)).