

Revival

Sunday, October 1, 2023

A Sermon Delivered

at

First Baptist Church of Ogden, UT

Question for you; What excuse did Adam give his children about why they no longer lived in Eden? Your mother ate us out of house and home.¹

So it all began. The creation of Adam and Eve by God is related to us in Genesis chapter two. God forms the man from the dust of the earth and breathes life into his nostrils. God places the man in the garden to keep it and to cultivate it. God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, removes a rib and fashions a woman from the rib. God then brings the woman that He fashioned to Adam and Adam famously says to God “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen. 2:23 [NASB])²

Adam and Eve, together in the garden planted by God. In a state of perfect creation and in perfect, proper relationship with God. How do we know that Adam and Eve were in perfect, proper relationship with God? Because back in Genesis chapter 1, the overview statement of all creation, verse 31 tells us “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Gen. 2:31) Then comes the Fall. Detailed in Genesis chapter 3, is the narrative of how Eve was deceived by Satan working through a creature called the serpent. Eve eats the fruit of the tree, then she gives it to her husband Adam

¹ “The Constantly Growing List of Funny Christian Jokes (with pictures!),” Christian Camp Pro, accessed September 29, 2023, <https://christiancamppro.com/the-constantly-growing-list-of-funny-christian-jokes-with-pictures/>

² All Scripture citations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NASB.

and he eats it too. Then comes the first instance of homelessness. I'm skipping over a lot of detail here, but you get the idea.

Generally when most of us read through the first several chapters of Genesis I think that we just sort of pass right over it. Maybe we think, yeah, how cute is that! Or maybe we think, well that's a heck of a story, sort of a tragic ending though. You know, if I had been in her place I certainly wouldn't have eaten that apple.

Let's think about this for just a minute. What kind of state were Adam and Eve in before they took their first bite of that fruit? A perfect state. A perfect relationship with God. They knew Truth. And they had moral agency. By that I mean that they both had the full capability of choosing to not disobey God. They knew what God's instruction to them was; any fruit from any tree in the garden for food except one tree; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:16 -17) Apparently it was located in the center of the garden; the middle. That is what Eve told the serpent. (Gen. 3:3) What a conversation that must have been. Eve knows God's word, but the serpent finally convinces her that God really doesn't have their best interest in mind, and she chooses to rebel against God's word. So does Adam.

And the rest, as they say, is history. Sin, which is rebellion against God's word, is now manifest in the

world and we are all affected by it. (Rom. 5:12) Every single one of us. That is the point of our message reading text this morning. Each and every one of us is impacted by sin. Just look around at what is going on in the world today. There are so many examples to choose from. Just considering “In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted” (Ps. 10:2) The examples just this portion of the reading literally pour forth from our Federal Government on a daily basis. Not just from the Government, it comes from everywhere. It’s not just within the past few years, either. This has been going on from the beginning. Genesis chapter four has a perfect example of what I am talking about. After his offering to God was rejected, Cain gets himself in a snit and kills his brother Abel. (Gen. 4:3-8) On and on it goes, where it stops, nobody knows! I’m borrowing an old saying and changing it a little bit, so please forgive me!

But is that actually true? Where it stops, nobody knows? Or, is there an answer to where it stops? Yes there is an answer to where it stops, but in the mean time, what do we do?

I want to propose to you that the answer to stopping, or at least slowing the train down, is found in the title of the message today. Revival. We’ve all heard the word before. Sometimes it’s in a little different context. Like when someone says “Oh yeah, that cup of coffee really revived

me .” Or when the city of Ogden says that their plan to buy up decrepit property and then sell it to a developer will revitalize the downtown. A little different form of the word, but it comes from the same root. The dictionary I have on my phone says that revive is a Middle English word from an Anglo-French word which has the meaning of “to live again.”³ Revival is the noun form of the adjective revive and so it is an act or instance of reviving.⁴

To live again, that is what I really want to talk with you about today. How do we experience revival? Well, I would like to give you a few points to consider. If you are taking notes the high level outline will be something like this:

1. The Cross
2. Priesthood of Believers
3. Embrace the Spirit
4. Regain Biblical Literacy
5. Fear the Lord
6. Relationship with the Body

Now, I’ve only got the time today and this list has six items in it. Actually, this is a very much abbreviated list from a list that I got from a lecture. The point is, there isn’t time here today to really develop even this list of things, unless I keep you here for several hours. Which I

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary

⁴ Merriam-Webster

won't do. So, let's see what we can do in twenty minutes, or so.

In Romans Paul makes the point that sin entered the world through the choice and action of one man and through that sin death also entered the world. Worse than that we, meaning each and every one of us, are all subject to that sin that entered the world through Adam. So, like sin, each one of us is also subject to death because of our sin. We are born that way because we are descendents of Adam. In the end the wickedness that we see all around us and that is spoken about in the message reading is as a result of the sin that entered the world. But don't think that it is only somebody else's sin. Each one of us is born with that tendency in us. We all sin.

But I'm not that bad, you say! I don't go around killing other people. I don't go around stealing things from other people either! Boy, can you believe the nerve of that guy! Standing up there like some kind of MAGA Republican, telling me I'm, I'm some kind of sinner! No wait, even the Republican's hate those MAGA people. Why, I've got a mind to, to So before you continue on, Paul mentions this very kind thing in Romans. In fact, he writes "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...." (Rom. 3:23) There it is, the perfect statement of the problem.

You might be thinking, in fact I'm hoping that you are thinking, I'm praying that you are thinking. Thinking either I know the answer to this problem, or what is the solution to this problem. If your thinking "I know the answer to this problem!" fantastic, but don't get up and leave just yet. I might have something for you in just a minute. If you are thinking "What is the answer to this problem?" the answer is Who, not what. Just a moment ago I quoted Paul, but only part of what Paul said. The rest, or at least a part of the rest is "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. (Rom. 3:24-25a)

There is so much there in just that one part of a sentence, so much that entire sermons are given on just that part alone. But the simple answer to our question is that revival begins with the cross and all its implications. Jesus died on the cross for us. He paid the penalty for sin. But, it doesn't end there, with death I mean, because He rose from death three days after being placed in the grave.

What is the implication of Jesus' death and resurrection? Well, as it relates to revival it is just this; Jesus died for us; from here on we need to live for Him. How do we do that? We can sum it up in the idea that we were bought with a price and because of that we need to live to do God's will. (1 Cor. 6:20) As believers each one of us must

realize the divine calling on our own lives. (2 Tim. 1:9) God has a purpose for your life. You discover that purpose in partnership with God through Jesus, who always live to make intercession for you. (Heb. 7:25) Each believer is equally a child of God, (John 1:12) a member of the Body, (Rom. 7:4) a branch of the Vine. (John 15:5) As believers we are each uniquely called to serve Jesus and doing so, to touch the world.

Great, you say! I'm ready to go! I want to serve Him by serving others. I don't want to throw cold water on your enthusiasm, but there is a trap here that you might not have noticed. That trap is I! I totally get your enthusiasm! I really do! Been there, done that. I think I actually had the tee shirt at one point. Anyway, what I am pointing out to you here is the focus. You want to go out and serve Him. You. Oy vey, this guy is really getting on my nerves here; isn't that the point? Jesus did for me now I go do for Him? Well, yes, sort of, but, if you go out to serve Him, you will fail. Unless, that is, you embrace the fullness of the Holy Spirit and His power.

Here is the deal; God calls you, the Holy Spirit convicts you, and Jesus restores you. But it doesn't end there. Once you are saved your journey is only just now beginning. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4:6) Every one of us must realize that the work of the Holy Spirit extends far beyond

His work in convicting people of sin. Each one of us has to personally come to terms with that. This isn't a corporate sort of thing. It truly is individual. (Luke 24:9) Having recognized that the Holy Spirit indwells us and empowers us as believers we also must recognize how the Spirit has gifted each one of us to function within the Body. (1 Cor. 12:4-26) This was a foundational practice of the early believers, but has become foreign to the Church of today. We must regain this if we are to function successfully for Christ both individually, and as the Body, to carry out the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:18-20) Let me ask you; Are people perishing today without Jesus? (John 14:6) Yes they are! Who brings the Good News to them? We do!

How are you doing, are you still with me? So, how does one come to understand these things? Where does faith come from anyway? Well, the faith to believe in Jesus comes from God himself, (Eph. 2:8) and growing faith comes from hearing the word of Christ. (Rom. 10:17) Jesus is the most perfect revelation of the will and the way of God, and God's Word is with us today in the form of the Bible. Isn't it amazing the access that each one of us has to the Bible today. The fact is that almost everyone who has a cell phone has instant access to at least one translation of the Bible. We have Bibles in the form of books, Bible on tape cassettes (for those who still have cassette players), Bible on CDs, Bible on DVDs. You can

even get the Bible on YouTube for the moment. But in the midst of all these sources of the Bible, our Christian subculture has created some bad habits that actually reduce, not enhance, Bible literacy.⁵ How do we decrease the increasing Bible illiteracy and restore our understanding of fundamental biblical truth? Well, the answer takes some determined effort, but it is easy enough to do. We read, read, read and meditate on what we read. An easy orchestrator of a our reading effort is a Bible reading plan. Love God's Word! Those of you who have participated with me in various learning events know that I frequently put it this way: "We need to the come to point where we love what God loves, and hate what God hates."

Hey, wait just a darned minute there bubba, whadaya mean hate what God hates?! God is love, isn't He? I know that He is 'cause His Word tells me so! Yes, God is love. However, what do we do with "I hate you new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them." (Isa. 1:14) Or how about "Oh, do not do this abominable thing which I hate." (Jer. 44:4) I hear it now; "Oh yeah, well those are Old Testament quotations; We have the New Testament now!" Yes, it is true that we do have the New Testament now. Yet, I do want to call this to your attention: "All

⁵ "Let's Talk about Our Bible Literacy Problem," Crossway, Articles, December 29, 2022, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/lets-talk-about-our-bible-literacy-problem/>

Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.” (1 Tim. 3:16)

We also need to return to a healthy fear of the Lord. Yes, God is love. Perfect love in fact. God is also just, and divine judgment is real. (Rev. 20:11-15) God’s Word say that we need to “fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.” (Matt. 10:28) A real danger that we face is that counterfeit conversions and skin-deep believers are the results that come from imbalanced views of who God is. God is a gracious, compassionate Father (Abba), who is still a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:29) Let us love and enjoy, but not diminish His holiness or justice.

You all still with me? I’m just about done. How do we put this into practice then? Well, the best way of bringing this about is the same way that the early church brought it about. It is through relationship with the Body. Look up here for a moment, if I cut my hand off it is still a hand. It has the potential to do what a hand does, but it doesn’t have the ability to do what a hand does anymore because its relationship with my body is severed. Well, the Church is a Body, not a building. Of course we know that. What we really want to get to understand though is that the Church is an organism, not an organization. Organisms have organization, but organization isn’t an organism. The gathering together of believers should not be

neglected, but we want to be the Church, not just go to church. (Heb. 10:25) All the more so as we look around us and see what is going on in the world. We want to encourage each other to be imitators of God, not just be informed about God.

Finally, if you are here today and you have felt that conviction; you know the conviction I'm talking about; don't walk away from here without surrendering. Let's bow our heads and our hearts before the Lord.