

Positioned for Revival

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Today, we hear many people prophesying that revival, worldwide revival, is soon to become a reality. That word is being proclaimed in many cities today as churches everywhere are praying for God to pour out His Spirit in their midst. But what brings revival? How can we be *positioned* for such a powerful visitation from God? What are the ingredients of Revival? Prayerful preparation is obvious, but when we are looking for a supernatural move of God, a revival, we need to present to Him **soil**, *prepared* and *ready to receive* what He has for us.

Recently, I have heard knowledgeable speakers declare to specific churches that all of those necessary ingredients are “here,” present in that place. The reasonable advice given is that they should keep on praying and keep on seeking God. I do not doubt the prophetic word, nor do I question what the speaker means. But, if we look to the *church* for revival, we will be discouraged when it is delayed (delayed according to our private concept of time). So, let us understand a very important factor: all of the ingredients for revival are “here” in *me*, in you, in individual believers! It is *we*, as individuals, who need to be *prepared* and *positioned* for the next move of God.

What is revival? Is the next move of God in revival going to be a repeat of what we experienced, heard about, or saw in Brownsville Florida in recent years? That church had been praying and praying for years, “Oh, God, open the heavens and send Your rain,” getting their soil prepared. *Suddenly* the Spirit of God was poured out in one of the greatest moves of God that we have heard about in our particular lifetime. In Florida, it was a powerful move of God where thousands of young people ran to the altars crying out, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” That was a wonderful time! Christians and sinners alike were shaken by the power of God becoming aware of His supernatural qualities. One result of that revival was dramatically changed lives as people began to believe God for more.

Historically, we can see a common problem, if you will, with revival. It is this: God’s intent for revival becomes ignored or obscured by the people, when God changes the accustomed mode, or method, or ways of revival – or, when He ceases doing what we have learned to look for in or during revival – or when revival doesn’t look like it ever looked before or sounds like it ever sounded before. When we lose focus of God’s purpose for revival, when we fail to maintain *His* intention, the current revival will swell in intensity, but then recede to the point of cessation.

Let us agree that God’s intention is for revival to swell to a high point where people encounter Him in eternally life-changing ways. But I do not believe it is now, nor ever has been, God’s intent for that “swell” to recede at all. I think His purpose would be for His supernatural intervention in our lives to continuously increase, moving us into higher levels with Himself. God’s intent in revival would be for greater intimacy with Him *introduced and maintained*, not lost somehow.

Let’s look at Acts 10, the whole chapter, to discover some not-so-obvious prophetic keys that precede “revival.” This scripture relates the familiar story of Peter and Cornelius, but I challenge you to re-read it in its entirety to refresh your memory about the details. In this scripture, we are able to see “revival” at its best. This man, Cornelius, a Gentile, had no right to anything “religious” as it related to piety toward the true God of the Jews. There were no preachers in that day speaking to anyone about Jesus but to the Jews. Even Jesus declared that He had been sent solely to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt.15:24; cf. Mt.10:5,6). Because Cornelius was a Gentile, he was not allowed to worship in the Temple or Jewish Synagogues, so we should note that he could have only overheard things, wonderful things, about this God of Israel. He believed what he heard and was hungry for more of God. That kind of faith is generally a rare commodity in America today!

We could also recall the Gentile woman who came to Jesus, knowing the Gentiles were considered “dogs” in the minds of the Jewish people, but she desperately wanted what Jesus had. She persisted with

Him saying, “Even the dogs can get the crumbs that fall to the ground.” Jesus declared her to have great faith, saying, “I have not seen such faith in all of Israel!” (Mt.15:21-28) Deep hunger for God. Rare today.

Too often the prevailing attitude here in America is arrogance and self-centeredness. “We are Americans. We bow to no one!” There is little humility, a quality God looks for in people He wants to bless. Plus, there is little awareness of the greatness of God, or how puny we really are in the overall picture of creation. We want God to do everything for us and to do it how, where, and when we try to dictate to Him. If He doesn’t fit into our timeframe, we go somewhere else. We choose churches like we choose theaters – “What’s on this week? Who’s playing? Oh, I’ve seen that one.” Those heart-attitudes prevent us from receiving what God has for us.

Something important that we have lost is our fear of the Lord, but it will return to the church. Already there is a hungry remnant in the church, pastors. Not everyone is truly hungry for God, but His remnant is. The remnant is comprised of a particular group of people who are seeking God, who want God, who need God, who know it and are not afraid to say so.

Whenever God sends revival, it will be to remind us of some things we have forgotten or lost or missed altogether. *God’s purpose in the outpouring is to saturate us completely with His Spirit* and then thrust us out of the church building and into whatever our “world” is – our realm of influence – our home, workplace, and marketplace. Therefore, we *must* learn to be as “spiritual” on the outside of the building – every day, all day – as we are when we’re inside the building. If we fail to do this, we’ll never experience revival, for how can we call ourselves witnesses to the power of God if we’re unwilling or unable to live like we have received something wonderful from Him? What God needs is for us to be His light in the darkness (Mt.5:14; Phil.2:15).

God wants to reveal His truth to us. He wants to give us a fresh revelation of Himself that is truly power-filled and glorious. That’s why we are seeing the restoration of the 5-fold ministries of Ephesians 4 as we’ve never seen them rise before. We are seeing the authentic rise of His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. And, we are also seeing a heart and desire for the salvation of souls returning to the church. That is something God plants deep within our own spirits that cannot be ignored. God gives the revelation and anointing as He directs. It is not something we can earn, or ever deserve.

Cornelius did not *deserve* God’s call or mercy. He had no *right* to ask for anything. He only vicariously heard the Gospel, as the job of centurion officially placed him in a position of functioning among Jewish believers where he heard them speak of this Christ. What Cornelius was hearing (or over-hearing) was completely strange to what he already knew. Yet God broke through to this man’s inner being with *His* truth. The “word” Cornelius heard, actually being delivered to other people (the Jews), seeped through to him and he claimed it for himself. That demonstrated that “God is no respecter of persons” (Ac.10:34).

God needed someone to be the first to understand that the Gentiles were supposed to hear of the same Savior as the Jews; that the Gentiles were going to be filled with the same Holy Spirit; that the Gentiles were to have the same right, or opportunity, to come into God’s Kingdom because of Jesus Christ; that the Gentiles were to be able to “live and move and have their being” in Christ (Ac.17:28). God needed someone to illustrate all of this. Cornelius was that someone. Are you a candidate for such a demonstration of His plan and power today?

In your workplace, regardless of how godless your job atmosphere may be, or seem to be, God needs you to be there. He does want you to be that light in the darkness. He wants to reveal Himself through your life, not necessarily your mouth. He wants your life to be a demonstration that God is not a respecter of persons and that what others see in you that is appealing is because of God’s abiding Spirit, and is also available to them.

Thus, an important factor in our passage is the man, Cornelius – a candidate to be the revelation of God personified. This candidate does not have a *right* in the natural to be the candidate. He has no proper qualifications or credentials, but he has done some things that make him the candidate. He *performed* according to his knowledge.

The first thing we can observe, then, is: **Performance**.

In Acts 10:2, it says Cornelius was “a devout man who feared the God of Israel” (NLT). He wasn’t going to church with the Jews, but Cornelius was doing everything he knew to do. *Performance* is acting upon the level of your knowledge, or being accountable to God. It is doing what you know to do before you seek from Him what you don’t yet know. It’s doing what you already know before seeking something more from Him. Accountability. Scripture repeats this concept: “If you *know* these things, happy are you if you *do* them” (Jn.13:17; Jas.1:25).

In the Contemporary English Version of the Bible, it clearly states what it was Cornelius was doing. Acts 10:1-2: “In Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, who was the captain of a group of soldiers called ‘The Italian Unit.’ Cornelius was a very religious man. He worshipped God, and **so did everyone else who lived in his house**” (bold added). *That* is a powerful statement that could bring strong conviction on many of us. We raise our children and may watch them walk away from everything we have stood for and taught them. They exercise their free will, go into the world, and embrace some things we (and they) know are not a part of God’s plan. What we must do is to adopt a faith-filled position of confident strength in God and pray them back into God’s hands. “I’m praying for you. I know you’re coming back! I *call* you back from wherever and whatever!” That’s doing what we know to do.

Cornelius did not know a lot, but he believed there was only one true and living God. He had heard the testimony of the believers and knew there was more to learn. He was doing what he knew and listening for more. In the mean time, he influenced his whole household for God.

Acts 10, verse 2 continues to relate that Cornelius “gave generously to charity.” We tend to think that “charity” refers only to the “poor.” But the truth is, God wants us *not* to hold so tightly to what He has provided. We seem to think of “giving” as only to those who are worse off than we are. When we do that, we miss a huge blessing from the Lord. He wants *us* to give as He directs so that He can bless us abundantly. Giving is an open door to blessing, and withholding out of fear, greed, stinginess, or even ignorance closes the door on God’s blessings. (Mal.3)

Cornelius lived as a believer in his day, demonstrating how we are to live today. He knew *some* things, and he did what he knew. He shared his wealth, and he shared his influence. Cornelius was a *witness*. Everyone who came into his house heard as much as he knew about God. We make excuses for not witnessing because we think we don’t know enough, or we can’t quote enough from the Bible. I would ask what do you know? Is Jesus real to you? Do you know you are a sinner but are forgiven by God because of the price Jesus paid for all your sin at the cross? Do you know He died for *you*? If so, my friend, that’s all you need to share! Share the goodness of God, liberally given to you and for you.

Verse 2 tells one more important thing about Cornelius that we should note. Not only was he devout in his lifestyle toward God, and truly a God-fearing man, giving alms to the poor, and otherwise to the work of God, but the scripture further says he prayed always to God. He prayed regularly. Now, we can only imagine what Cornelius prayed. “God, You’re wonderful! And I know there’s more of You than I have or know. If it be possible, I’d like to see that ‘more.’ I’d like to possess more. So, here I am to worship; here I am to bow down. Here I am...” Truly, beloved, that’s the only prayer we have: “Here I am God ...”

Then it says Cornelius heard from God – through an angel (v.3). The message was, “Send for the head of the church, the one who was doing the most preaching to the Jewish people. He never preaches to anyone else, but send for him anyway.” We tend to argue with God when He gives such a directive. We want to

“logic” God’s ways and rationalize why we cannot do what He tells us, or how He directs, because it may not appear reasonable in our minds. We miss it so many times! Our main problem is that which exists between our ears! “Oh, Lord. I can’t do that. I would love to but that important person would never come to me. I’m nobody special, but I do want to hear from *You*, Lord. Give me something else that I can believe.”

Not so with Cornelius. He wanted more from God, so he *positioned* himself for it by *performing* what he already knew. And, he had great *passion* for God and His ways.

2) Passion

Passion is the antithesis of passivity and the latter is a mammoth problem in the church today. Too many Christians have the attitude of “whatever will be, will be.” We lack *passion* in the pews (sadly, even in some pulpits) and especially in our corporate prayer-life. We want to do our duty to God and show up for church on Sundays, but if the worship gets too loud or goes on too long, our personal passivity rules and we tune out. If the preacher goes on too long or talks about sin or tithing, we defer to that passive spirit, and any *passion* that may have been stirred in the service wanes away.

Passion. I love The Song of Solomon in the Bible. It is the primary example for us of passion for *our* God and King. Throughout that text, there is *passion* in every dimension and on every level. *Passion* when the Shulamite first meets the King and says, “If You’ll draw me, we will run after You.” *Passion* when she is in His presence and says, “When the King is at His table, mmmmm, the fragrance is incredible and my hunger is stirred.” *Passion* when she loses Him through disobedience, and subsequently runs through the streets of the cities and every church she can find (Selah!) saying, “I’ve got to find Him! Oh, I’ve got to find Him!” Where is that *passion* today? *Passion* that she expresses when she finally finds Him on one occasion and declares, “When I found Him, I would not let Him go.” That’s the same *passion* we see in Jacob, wrestling for a blessing from God (Gen.32:24-30). It’s the *passion* we see in other men and women in the Word of God who say, “Oh, we’ve tasted and seen and we are witnesses to the power of God.”

How much do you really care if *you* have a fresh revelation of God? How *much* do you *really* care? God watches the condition of our hearts – He is interested in the underlying attitudes behind our *doings*. He may even allow us to fall, or fail, until we develop a *passion* for others to know Him like we know Him in salvation.

God has raised up some marvelous preachers or orators today. But the absolute truth is the individuals in the pews, who can pick up the same *passion*, would have just as much on-going revelation in their lives – if they would walk in the same obedience. Lifestyle obedience to the ways and plans of God – with *passion* – that is what is going to bring revival. We need to walk the walk and practice diligently obeying God’s Word. Notice the immediate action taken in Acts 10, verses 7 and 8: “As soon as the angel was gone... [Cornelius] sent them off to Joppa.” It was an immediate act of faith based on what this *Gentile* heard.

Peter is the one God needed and selected to be His mouthpiece to the Gentiles. If we look closely, however, Peter was not a great candidate for that assignment. He was *prejudiced* and didn’t even realize it. Having walked with Jesus, Peter had heard Him declare that He had come for the “house of Israel.” With his whole heart, Peter believed that the message of the Messiah was for the Jews only. Oh, the subtlety of prejudice! Christians, for the most part, decry prejudice – so we say. We must squarely face this reality, church, for God must shake us free from all types of prejudice.

Take a simple test. How do you feel when one of your own family members begins to interact with people who are somehow “different” from you? Not as educated. Not as monied. Not the same class,

color, or culture. “Different” is usually *suspect*, and often causes a measure of panic in the depth of one’s being.

Unfortunately, in addition to the “usual” types of prejudices, we are able to identify prejudiced attitudes from one Christian denomination to another, from one type of worship experience to another. God *has* to remove that, or visitors among us are going to sense its presence. He is working in each one of us to break down the strongholds of prejudice because we must be able to flow together as one Body of Christ. Unity in the Body of Christ helps to *position* us for revival. That unity begins in the heart-attitudes of individuals.

God selected Peter in Acts 10. It’s almost as if God invited Peter to go on a picnic, and He brought the meal! In the vision-dream, down from heaven came a tablecloth filled with all kinds of things Peter had never eaten, or even touched, in his whole life. He rejected any idea of ever doing so. Don’t miss a small detail in this vision: the food was taken back. Let’s learn that if we continue to reject what God presents to us, there will come a time when He will no longer offer it.

In Acts 10:16, however, we see that the vision was repeated for Peter three times. Oh, the grace of God! Peter did not understand the *why* of the vision, or what God had already ordained to come to pass (the inclusion of Gentiles in the Body of Christ). He didn’t know that Cornelius had sent his servants to invite him to his home, the house of a Gentile. We don’t always know what God has in mind for us, either. We may not know *why* God has done some things in our lives, or why He’s even blessed us at all. We don’t have to know every detail until God’s time is at hand, or until it’s time for us to move on what we do know.

When Peter gets the word from the vision – when he understands – when revelation is clear – when comprehension has been received – when he says, “Yes, Lord, I get it!” – *immediately*, there is a knock-knock-knock on the door. “Peter, there are three men down here looking for you.” Peter goes down to face the Gentile callers and they explain, “Our master, Cornelius, is a God-fearing man though a Gentile. And he does this and this and this...” and they list his practices, “...but he had a vision from God and in that vision he was instructed to send for you.” What would Peter have done a couple hours earlier? He would have responded, “No way. It’s against the Law. Certainly you must know that. You must have the wrong Peter. It’s not me your master has sent for. There must be some mistake.” But God had *prepared* Peter.

God set Peter up. And He has set you up, too. Everything that has preceded this moment in time is God’s set-up, for each of us. He has allowed us to go through some things as preparation for times yet to come. God has set up the church – for such a time as this – things too wonderful for us to even grasp – yet (Ps.139:6; Jb.42:3; Rom.11:33). *All God is looking for is to see how many individuals are walking in the fullness of what they already know.* God has set us up – you, me, every believer. Learn to accept that with a positive attitude and say, “Lord, what a joy! What a privilege that You set me up.” Maybe you prefer the word “prepared.” God has used every incident, every circumstance, every failing, every victory, every moment of our lives to *prepare* us for *this* moment.

So, *performance* has brought a *passion* and a *persistence*.

3) Persistence

When Peter comes to the door and says, “What is it that you want?” the men don’t actually know what to respond. They don’t know specifically what to say, except they do know what God said. Friends, it’s okay to pray, to ask, and yet not know everything. There are times when we know exactly what and how to pray, but there are also times when we are at a total loss as to what it is we need. That’s the time when we come to Him simply grateful for His invitation to come. “Lord, I just come to worship. I just come to bow down. And Lord, I want...” and here’s the key word, “MORE! I have to have more of You!”

It's like getting used to the water and learning how to swim. At first, just wading in ankle-deep water was refreshing and fun. In the last revelation, it was the greatest thing we'd ever known. "Ooooo! This is great! Come on in!" That was wonderful for a while until we ventured out to a little deeper place, and then only wading became boring. And someone said, "You need more water. Greater blessings come in the deeper water." More anointing comes through our speakers and leaders, and greater prophetic utterances begin to be spoken as we grow closer and closer to Him. Pretty soon, we're in waist deep water and begin to experience some of the elation of that measure of refreshing and buoyancy, as we trust God for more. We are encouraged to get out far enough where we yield ourselves totally to the river of God and swim along with His current. I *know* I can't go back! I hate the ankle-deep experience I once loved and found so refreshing. I have to have more!

What's the *purpose* of all this "more?"

4) Purpose

I think we find the *purpose* of revival in this lesson of the beginning of the Gentiles finding Jesus. Cornelius doesn't know exactly what to ask for; Peter doesn't know exactly what to give. We don't always see God's purposes with clarity at first. All we can do as believers is to *prepare* daily whatever He sets before us, walking in the light we have, applying what we already know, and seeking for more of God through fellowship and study. We "get ready." We *prepare* for whenever that time comes that God says, "Knock-knock-knock. I have someone for you to speak to. It's time."

Here, in Acts 10, we have the ingredients for revival. We have the man who is living up to the knowledge he has (Cornelius). We have the one with much superior knowledge and experience (Peter), who never believed the message or ministry should go to the man he has actually come to see. They both know they have heard and are obeying the direction of God. That sounds like being a Christian to me. That sounds like being Spirit led. "They who are led of the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Rom.8:14). I know what my Father wants because I am His child. I don't always know how to get it, or how to give it, but I know the goal. Peter did too. The goal was to reveal the Messiah, the Christ, the Jesus, who came that ALL might be saved – so that, "As many as received Him" (Jn.1:12) could come to know Him.

Peter began to talk about Jesus. In his sermon in Acts 10 (vv.34-43), there was no great reference to their past. There was no great oratory about "even though thou art a Gentile and I am a Jew...." Peter just says, "Well, let me tell you what I do know. I walked with Him. Jesus came and healed the sick, blind eyes were opened, He raised the dead, and whatever needed to be accomplished, He did it. And then He said He was going to leave it all to us!" Fearful thought! "And greater things than these shall ye do because I go to the Father" (Jn.14:12b) – the provision has been made by God Himself.

Note the next verse (Ac.10:44). As Peter revealed Jesus Christ, freely given to as many as would receive Him, the scripture says, "...the Holy Ghost fell on all who received the Word!"

The *purpose* of revival is *power* – an outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit.

5) Power

The path to *power* is the sharing of Jesus! It is in witnessing to others about the Good News He came to share with all of us. God's power cannot be purchased, or obtained with any sort of bribery. We receive His mighty power in our lives because we have earnestly sought **Him**. We receive because we are not seeking the power by itself.

Remember when Moses was saying "Goodbye" to the Israelites in Deuteronomy – his marvelous farewell sermon? In Deuteronomy 10, verse 17, Moses says, "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of

lords; a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” You cannot buy *power*. You cannot bribe Him or bargain with Him (as in “Lord, if You do this, I will do that”). Those days are far behind us.

Because the correct *position* had been taken by Cornelius and by Peter, the *purpose* had been revealed in Jesus Christ; the *power* had been given through the Holy Ghost; the people had been moved into a higher level of revelation and a higher plane of *performance* than they had ever dreamed possible. That is **revival!**

Revival IS going to come because God has declared it. If we want to be an integral part of His next move of power, let’s carefully consider these 5 points in being *positioned* for His visitation. If we ignore what we already know, we will find ourselves on the periphery, the outside, of His next move, simply watching Him move. We will not enjoy a fresh revelation of God until we *perform* what He has already revealed to each of us. Passion grows as we continuously seek for more of God, realizing that nothing else fulfills our deepest needs as well as a personal and intimate relationship with Him. We would be unable to fully enjoy the depths of revival without this pressing on into greater relationship with Him, for only those who learn how to swim in the deep water experience the fullness of the river.

Here, then, is the challenge for our readers. Are you ready for the next move of God? Do you want to be a part of what He is about to do? If so, personal, self-evaluation of where you presently stand with God is advisable.

Would you admit to failing in step one – *performance*? “I’m not doing all I know to do.”

Now would be a good time to purpose in your own heart to *prepare* for that coming move of God, by being obedient to do what you know to do. Follow-through would be a must.

Would you admit to failing in step two – *passion*? “I really don’t have a *passion* for God, the things of God, or for souls to be saved.”

This deals with your heart-attitude toward God Himself. It has to do with consistently choosing His ways over your own comforts. It has to do with trusting Him to lead you, withholding nothing from His rulership in your life. It is like allowing the natural buoyancy of the water to hold you up rather than relying on whatever you can do for yourself.

Have I missed it in step three – *persistence*? “I just don’t *persist*. I ask and pray and occasionally go into a prayer line seeking more of God, but I don’t *persist*, looking for Him to fulfill His promises.”

As you surrender more and more of your *self* issues to God, accepting what He has to offer in place of what you can do for yourself, you will find that it becomes easier to come to Him, in faith, believing He truly wants to respond to you. Men have a more difficult time pressing into God in this area because they are not naturally given to *nagging* to get what they want. They are much more matter-of-fact than that, and too willing to accept the lies of the enemy saying that God doesn’t respond because He doesn’t really care. Women, on the other hand, just keep coming back until we get what we want. We *nag* by nature. This is not meant to be funny, but illustrative. *Persistence* in seeking God needs to be developed, for it is His good pleasure to bless His children.

Have I failed in step four – *purpose*? “I missed the whole *purpose* of revival. I thought it was just for my private, spiritual blessing. I see now that it’s so I would tell the world around me that Jesus came for them.”

As we grow in the Lord, receiving more of His power in our lives, we are empowered by His Holy Spirit to become *witnesses* to who He is and all He wants to pour out toward us (Acts 1:8). It is not a giant, impossible task for us to carry out. It simply deals with our willingness to tell others around us about His love and goodness and provision for a future with Him.

What about step five – power? “I’m just too shy to witness.” Or, “no one wants to hear what I have to say.”

Power. God has given you “power to be My witnesses” (Acts1:8). Until you put that to an authentic test by talking about your God, you will not experience His *power* that equips and enables you to obey this command.

Positioned for Revival. *Doing* what we know to do, *preparing* for the out-pouring of His Spirit, and *persisting* in our pursuit of God with *passion*, regardless of what has yet to be revealed to us. Regardless of what we can see or not see, we just keep on pressing into Him.