

Luke 17: 20, 21
Luke 19: 1 - 10
Revival Begins With One

The Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is' or "There it is' because the Kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17: 20, 21)

Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, (Zacchaeus the chief tax collector) is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19: 9, 10)

When God transforms a life, Revival has come to that life. I suppose it is typical of us as humans that when we hear the term *Revival* we think of the big, mighty wave that sweeps across entire cities and nations. We have recently been “reintroduced,” as it were (through Eric Metaxas’ excellent book, *Amazing Grace*, and the movie of the same name), to the life of William Wilberforce, one of the most influential – and, until recently, most forgotten – modern heroes of the faith. Wilberforce, a fervently “born again” Englishman and member of Parliament, led for twenty years the effort to abolish the slave trade in the Great Britain of King George III; perhaps more importantly, he laid the foundation for what he referred to as the “restoration of manners” that would lead his countrymen from the nasty, brutish and sordid facets of life in George III’s time to the far more polite society of the Victorian Era... not to mention influencing some of the Founding Fathers of the American Revolution.

(Now, I am aware that some people reading this will still be looking at the Victorian Era through the distorted lens of today’s thinking, that the Victorians were repressed, hypocritical and generally uptight. And who knows? There may even be some truth in that – but things *were* far worse in the period of the American Revolutionary War; if you want details, I suggest you read Metaxas’ book.)

But the example of Wilberforce serves only to reinforce my first sentence about Revival beginning when an individual’s life is transformed by God; what happens thereafter is purely a result of the person’s willingness to be used by Him. I do not believe it to be exaggeration when I say that Wilberforce’s faith eventually swept across Great Britain, raising the people with him.

I fear that we as believers today, want to see a big, mighty revival like in Wilberforce’s day or in the Great Awakenings of past American history only *partly* for the sake of the Kingdom of God, who is anxious that none should perish but all come to repentance. Our other great motivating factors include vindication of our beliefs before others who mock and scorn faith in general (kind of like the Pharisees who saw Jesus healing people and still wanted a sign from Heaven, a “Stupid Messiah Trick,” the Kingdom on their terms and

not God's), the fact that a big, mighty revival would be quite entertaining, indeed, or that a big revival somehow implies more work on God's part than ours.

We forget that small waves and big waves serve the same purpose. In fact, small waves are more persistent, unrelenting and more likely to accomplish their function over time than big ones. And, in some cases, small waves joining together can lead to big waves.

The Kingdom of God is found in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of Almighty God. When Jesus comes into a person's life, then the Kingdom of God has arrived. To use C.S. Lewis' wartime analogy, another beachhead is established, and when enough lives are transformed by Jesus then a city is transformed. When enough cities are transformed, a nation is transformed. And when a nation is transformed, its culture naturally follows.

God calls us to let our light shine before people, those that you know and those you don't know. We are called to *be* the *Corpus Christi*, the Body of Christ, to those around us. Let other people see the Kingdom of God as God puts it into you and "tweaks" you to let more of it shine through.

This is not to say that praying for big revivals or the salvation of the entire nation is useless. Of course, you should; God wants you to pray for your nation and others. And God *does* send big, sweeping revivals when it suits His purposes. If you are blessed enough to live through such a time, then praise Him for it. But in our pleas to Heaven for Revival, we have become so focused on "the big one" that we forget that God is also the God of the everyday. There isn't an aspect of our lives that He doesn't know about or does not want to help us and guide us through. God is the God of all of our life – the peaks, the valleys and broad, vast, seemingly boring plains stretching between them.

When we deal in individual lives, spending ourselves for Jesus in the world of those in our little circle, *being* the Body of Christ, we never notice the larger picture until one day we look around us and we see the work the Holy Spirit has done through ourselves and others and we see the world around us transformed. It's like in the old, pre-modern technology days before mechanical harvesters when people harvested the crops by hand. You had your area to work and you didn't spend a lot of time (if you were smart) checking on the progress of others – you did your own work. Only when you were finished with your own area did you take a look around you; and often, you were surprised at how much work your fellow laborers accomplished. So it is with the work of the Kingdom; we work in the area God plants us in, we deal with the lives of those around us and, if we are faithful in our work, Revival comes to those lives.

One day, however, we will look up and see the overall effects of a huge, mighty wave that God has sent, and find our entire nation and culture transformed by His Spirit as everyone does what they are supposed to in their own little, *seemingly* insignificant sphere.

For the Glory of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ
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