

The Essence of True Revival

Exodus 32-34

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-24-2013

Introduction – what revival is not

Last week we looked at God's promise that no matter how bad things might look in a culture, God's grace is sufficient to turn things around. And there are two main stages to this turning of a church and of a culture. The first stage is revival. The second stage flows from genuine revival, and it is Reformation of both church and culture. And I should say that both terms assume that Christianity has already been present. Otherwise we speak of it as missions. But when an individual, church, or culture moves from vibrant Christianity to a dead religion, revival of what is dying begins the process of Reformation. And we really want Reformation as the end product. But if you examine the Reformations that occurred in the books of 1 and 2 Kings you will see that God started with revival of things that were dying or had already died. And we desperately need a genuine revival in the church of Jesus Christ in America. And so today I am hoping to give you a worldview introduction to what genuine revival is all about. There is a lot of confusion on this subject.

And I will start by saying what it is not. When people say, "We are going to have a revival meeting next week," they are totally misusing that Biblical term. Revivals are not something we can schedule. They are a sovereign work of God's Holy Spirit that He brings when and where He pleases.

When I speak of revival, I am not speaking about the man-centered revivalism that could be seen in certain regions of America during the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening is a mixed bag. There was genuine revival in certain parts of the country (for example, at Yale), and other parts of the country had emotionally charged camp meetings that were anything but revival – as can be seen by the numbers of illegitimate births produced nine months after many of the camp meetings. It was hyper-emotionalism.

When some people think of revival, they immediately think of Charles Finney, who wrote a book on the subject. And I know this is controversial, but after reading his book and his instructions to pastors, I am convinced that his so-called revivals were not Biblical revivals. They were for the most part

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Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

man-centered revivalism. He taught that anyone could produce a revival if they structured the meeting correctly. And he had everything structured down to the timing of the invitation, the music, and which musical instruments would tend to drive people to the altar. That's why he preferred the piano – it's percussive. When you read his instructions, you can see that his so-called revivals involved huge amounts of psychological and emotional manipulation. I am not saying this to offend. I am saying this to distinguish what I am going to be talking about with what often goes under the label of revival, but which is not Biblical revival. Now, did some people get saved through Finney's meetings? Yes they did. But several studies have shown that the aftermath of Finney's revivalism left huge swaths of Eastern America highly resistant to the Gospel. People in those areas felt so manipulated that the districts became worse off than they were before. We speak of them as the spiritually burned out districts. And if this information surprises you, I can give documentation.

When I speak of Biblical revival, I for sure am not talking about the so-called revivals in Pensacola, Florida, or the Brownsville Revival, or the Toronto Revival. Iain Murray would speak of all of those things as revivalism, not true revival. And I won't go into detail of some of the horrible things that have happened at some of those so-called revivals. Some of it is downright demonic. So this morning as I give you a Biblical philosophy of revival, I think you will begin to see that true revival is quite different from revivalism. True revival is God-centered, produces holiness, impacts the culture around you, it gives people an intense hunger for the Word of God, etc.

Let me make one more comment before we dive into our passage. There are some Reformed people who have overreacted against such revivalism (and all of its dangers) and have thrown out the concept of revival altogether. And I think that is very shortsighted. Ezra 9 calls for revival. It's a Biblical word, and just because manipulators have misused it does not mean we should give that term up. Psalm 80 speaks of the possibility of revival of the church even during times of apostasy. Psalm 119 speaks over and over about the need for personal revival when Christians lose their zeal for holiness and lose the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, or where the children or grandchildren of true believers are not believers themselves. They are just outwardly in the church. And so the concept of revival is very Biblical. And the reason I wanted to give this follow-up sermon to last week's sermon is so that in our praying for and anticipating revival in America, we will not be sidelined by dangerous revivalism on the one hand

or satisfied with mere outward change on the other. And I see both problems in the church of Jesus Christ. Exodus chapters 32-34 are three marvelous chapters for looking at the essence of true revival. And the impact of that revival can be seen through the end of the book.

I. Be encouraged - Revival often begins during a time of unprecedented decline (Ex. 32)

What caused more and more Israelites in chapter 33 to flow to the prayer meeting outside Israel? Nobody called them to go there. They were drawn. What brought the worship and holiness throughout the camp in chapter 33? What made Joshua drop all responsibilities and never leave the tabernacle of meeting in 33:11? That is remarkable. There was something strange and unusual going on in chapter 33. Normally, the only time anyone drops everything to be devoted to one thing is when his house and life are going up in flames. And in chapter 32 that is exactly the danger that Israel faced. God was about to destroy the entire nation. It was about to go up in flames. And most in the nation weren't aware of it. They were oblivious to their danger. One of the first things that happen in a revival is a sudden awareness of the serious place that an individual, a church, or a nation stands in before God. Moses had called for repentance and prayer repeatedly prior to this, and nothing had happened. It appears that many in Israel thought that Moses was just being too uptight.

Historically, the greatest revivals have come when the church has been at its lowest ebb and spiritually undiscerning and uncaring, just like Israel was in chapter 32. And I don't think there can be any denying the fact that America is in a similar state of serious spiritual trouble. And yet (like Israel back then) the church is oblivious to the danger. The solutions that most churches put forward to our problem are a tiny Band-Aid on a patient who has terminal cancer. They are not going for the deep issues that need repentance. And there are hundreds of deep issues that need repentance. I will just give you one. Despite government schools having turned into indoctrination centers for androgyny, feminism, relativism, occultism, indoctrination in the techniques of promiscuity, instruction in evolution, and other horrible things, most Christians still send their children to be disciplined there. And yet Christians are oblivious to the awful affront that this is to God, and most churches will not let a pastor preach against it. And it is no wonder that the church resembles the world.

What had happened in Exodus 32? Moses was gone for a long period of time, and because of pressure from the people, Aaron allowed idolatry. He

made them a golden calf, and verse 6 says, **“Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”** Rushdoony reflects many commentators when he says,

The golden calf was a fertility cult object, and it is worshipped with sexual rites.... The word translated from the Hebrew as *play* can have an innocent meaning, being a word for laughter, but it is also used sexually, as in Genesis 26:8, ‘Isaac was playing with Rebekah his wife.’ In Exodus 32:1-14 it clearly means the sexual rites of a fertility cult.

We wonder how Aaron and the other Levites could be so blind as to fall into such rank idolatry and immorality. Yet today we have pastors and churches that are just as blind on a host of issues. Even here in Omaha, the number of people from various evangelical churches that I know for a fact have gotten abortions ought to make the church blush and cry out to the Lord in repentance. I think chapter 32:25 describes the church of today perfectly: **“Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies).”** The church today doesn't have the restraint of the law of God. The elders sure don't restrain them. And to our shame, we are impotent before the world.

But what's encouraging to me is that it was in *that* context that revival came – especially to the younger generation. As I mentioned, historically, revivals have come when the church was at her lowest ebb. But the scary thing about it is that when a nation gets to that place, if there is no revival, that nation and church can be given up to darkness for centuries. History shows this over and over again. Africa, for example, once had a vibrant and flourishing church. Augustine, the church's greatest theologian, was an African. Many people don't realize how strong the church in Africa was at one time. But after some generations there were the same kinds of sins that we see in the American church today. And when the church there came to a crossroads, there was no revival and Africa became the Dark Continent for over a thousand years. Their candlestick was plucked up; God spewed them out of His mouth. The same thing happened in several European countries. And that shows me that we cannot take the hope of revival for granted. I am convinced that America is at a cross roads, and we need to be praying for revival as we have never prayed for it before. Think of what would have happened if Moses had left God alone. In verse 10 God says, **“Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them.”** Israel would have been destroyed. But Moses did not

let God alone because God poured into Moses a consuming desire for revival, and Moses took heed and prayed.

There is hope for America. And this morning I want to preach on the characteristics of revival. When there are people who have a passion to know God as Moses had, awesome things can happen. This morning, I want to intersperse the sermon with prayers for revival and opportunities for the congregation to sing songs of faith calling for God to come back to His church. This is definitely not going to be your normal sermon.

So let me interrupt the sermon right now by going to God in prayer.

O Lord, God Almighty; Lord of Revivals; the One who is merciful, gracious and longsuffering and abounding in goodness and mercy. We look to you for help. We need your help to see that things are serious in our own lives. We need your help to see the sinfulness of sin. We need your Spirit to show us fathers where we have gone astray; to show us mothers where we have failed you. Work in those of us who are children to know ourselves as you see us and to repent.

We confess that our nation stands before You, deserving Your wrath and judgment, and we ourselves feel totally unworthy of your mercy. We confess the sins of lukewarmness, apathy, prayerlessness, and worldliness on the part of believers. We acknowledge before You the wickedness of our society and its deserving of judgment. We stand in to confess the awful affront to You which is represented in the drug epidemic, the drunkenness, the moral rotteness in the entertainment field, the gang violence, the increase of homosexuality, the hostility to your word in the schools, the crime increases of our land, and the lack of moral character in national leadership. We ask forgiveness and mercy for the religious sins of liberalism and the too-often harsh, bitter criticism, lack of love and contentious spirit of Bible believing churches. We grieve with You over the awful rise of interest in the occult and the open worship of Satan by wicked, deceived people. May You judge not this nation with wrath and fury as upon Sodom, but judge it with a mighty outpouring of conviction of sin. May sinners groan under the burden of their guilt until the people cry out as they did at Pentecost. "What shall we do to be saved?"

We recognize that Satan and the kingdom of darkness have plotted and strategized against revival with relentless effort. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we smash and pull down all of the strongholds that Satan has erected to hinder revival. We pray the focus of the mighty victory of the cross and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ directly against Satan's plans to hinder revival. By virtue of our position in Christ, we pull down Satan's strongholds of religious loyalties that blind and bind so many. We pull down his strongholds of prayerlessness and carelessness with the Word of God. We claim back for the Lord Jesus Christ the ground Satan is claiming as a means of hindering revival, and we affirm that Satan's plans were fully defeated through the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We ask for the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and discernment to the leaders of revival chosen by You to lead. May this revival for which we pray be greater

than any that has ever come before. In fact, may it lead to thoroughgoing Reformation in the society as a whole. But we ask that you would revive the things that are dying or have died within the church of Jesus Christ. May you purify the church and may You bring multitudes into the fold all over the world. We need You Father. We need You. We need You if we are to see the seriousness of our state; we need You if we are to receive revival. Revive Your church O Lord. We ask this all and bring it before You with praise and thanksgiving for what you will achieve through your redemptive judgments. And we pray this in the merit and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

II. Characteristic marks of revival (33:1-11)

A. *Inward marks*

1. Recognition of and distress over our true condition (33:4 "distressing news")

OK, let's look at the marks of revival. The first mark that God's Spirit has been poured into the life of the church is that people begin to recognize the true condition of their sinfulness. Human nature has a remarkable ability to downplay sin, or ignore it, or rationalize, or to become comfortable with sin. But when God comes in power, all of those things are swept aside and we have a genuine concern for our sinful state. We see sin as sin; we see God's holiness for what it is. For example, in 33:4 it says, "**And when the people heard this distressing news they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.**" For the first time, Israel began to be distressed at how far they had strayed from the Lord. Maybe for the first time they *recognized* how far they had strayed from the Lord. But even if they had intellectually known that what they were doing was not right, for the first time their distance from God became a *distressing* realization; it *gripped* them.

And we see this in the revivals and reformations of the past. For example, George Whitefield did not change his preaching before or during the revival that happened in his day. He preached the same way before, during, and after. But when God's Spirit swept through the colonies, people responded to his preaching differently. They had such a deep sense of their sinfulness and of God's imminent judgment that they groaned under the burden of sin. In fact they were groaning before Whitefield even came. People were drawn like magnets to his preaching despite the fact that his preaching brought a terrifying realization that they were in danger of being consumed by God's wrath. It's hard to explain, but if you read much about that period, you see that it was a pervasive recognition of how serious things were.

The same was true of Jonathan Edwards. He preached Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God a month before with little effect. But when he preached it at Enfield, the Spirit of God took those words and for the first time gave the congregation such a strong sense of sin, of righteousness and of judgment that the people were undone. They lost all sense of their surroundings and felt like they were sliding into the depths of hell. They felt that they were in the very presence of the God of all judgment. John 16:8 says that this is one of the works of the Spirit – to **“convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”** When you see people inside the church and outside the church coming under intense conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of God’s judgment, you might have the beginnings of revival. The façade is ripped away and people see themselves for who they are. It is an awesome work of grace.

2. Realization that God has departed (33:1-4)

The second evidence of revival was that the people recognized for the first time that God had left them. They didn’t just see their own awfulness; they saw God’s displeasure and His absence. Do you remember what happened with the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3? Christ had left the church. He was outside the church knocking on the door. He said, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock.”** The problem was that the church was utterly unaware of Christ’s absence. They felt quite content with their situation. They thought everything was hunky dory. People were self-satisfied. Christ was preparing for revival in that church, but it had not yet come. And the absence of the first two points demonstrated that revival had not yet come. Like Israel in Exodus 32, they thought God loved them just the way they were. They thought of themselves quite highly, and they thought of God as a useful helper when they needed Him.

But God was not with them. And he was not with Israel in these chapters in Exodus. He had already told Moses in verse 3, **“I will not go up in your midst.”** And to symbolize His departure, God made that departure quite visible in chapter 33, verses 7-11 as the glory cloud left the camp. And suddenly Israel became aware of God’s displeasure. In fact, let’s go ahead and read those verses, beginning at verse 7.

Exodus 33:7 **Moses took his tent** [And notice it is *his* tent. People sometimes mistake this tabernacle of meeting for the official tabernacle. They are quite different. “Moses took his tent”] **and pitched it outside the camp, ...**

Now that is significant. Moses was in effect saying that if God went outside the camp, he would too. God was more important to him than family or friends, and if Israel came between Moses and God, Moses was going to choose God. And Hebrews 13:13 says that we must have the same attitude. It says, “**Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.**” This is a sign of revival – recognizing God’s absence, and being willing to leave anything in order to have His presence. So, continuing to read in verse 7:

Exodus 33:7 Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp [That’s how far distant God’s presence was – “far from the camp”], and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp.

Moses’ house now was the place where people would meet with God. God wasn’t even present in the official Tabernacle of God. It was just like the church of Laodicea. This was a house-based prayer meeting. And God was stirring in the hearts of the people a longing for God’s presence. They were not satisfied with simply being a part of Israel. They wanted the Life Giver Himself. Verse 8:

Exodus 33:8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.

Exodus 33:9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, *that* the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD talked with Moses.

Exodus 33:10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door.

They hadn’t done that previously when God’s presence was right in the middle of the camp. They had gotten used to God. They had taken Him for granted. But when God’s presence left, they felt it dearly, and their hearts worshipped and yearned for a return of God. Verse 11

Exodus 33:11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

That is remarkable. Joshua was a young man with such a passion to know God that all sense of time and space was gone and He was totally caught up in God’s presence. This was what the Puritans pursued with all their hearts. Yes they were academics, but they were experiential in their theology. Joel Beeke shows that the Puritans really had the balance between theology and experience that Reformed people need to regain. This was what John Owen wrote about in His marvelous treatise, called, *Of Communion with God the*

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly, In Love, Grace, and Consolation; or The Saints' Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Unfolded. Don't you love those long Puritan titles? It was an amazing title. But it was an even more amazing treatise. When I read that treatise it made my heart long for more of God and to recognize how shallow my walk with God really is. I'm preaching this in part because I know how much my own heart does not have God's presence and how much my own life needs revival. I look at Puritans like John Owen and I think of myself as a spiritual pigmy in terms of my walk. I want revival. I don't want revivalism; I want genuine, Biblical revival.

Unfortunately, some Reformed people scoff at this concept of revival. When they describe revival, they are describing revivalism; they are throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The Puritans did not do that. In Richard Sibbes' marvelous treatise, *A Fountain Sealed*, he says that if all you have is ravishing joy without the Word of God and without holiness, then your ravishing joy is wrought by Satan. Satan can give counterfeit joy. God the Spirit always brings ravishing joy together with the Word of God and such an overwhelming hunger for God's holiness and such an overwhelming sense of our own unworthiness that it is clearly a Gospel joy, a Gospel comfort, and a Gospel passion. But the Puritans distinguished between revivalism (what most modern ideas on revival have become) and genuine revival. Though Sibbes spent page after page in warning us against revivalism (or what he called enthusiasm, or enthusiastical fancy, or hyper-emotionalism), he also spent many pages describing the glories of knowing God so deeply that we are undone. So he wasn't against emotion. But it had to be anchored in the Word of God. *That* is what I am holding out before you this morning - not emotion by itself, but revival. It is *that* which made the Puritans so great, so holy, so practical, and so pastoral in their ministry. The sterile academics of many modern Reformed theologians is nothing like the passionate academics of the Puritans. Too many in the modern church have no idea of whether God is with them or not. All they have is a theology of God. And I am convinced that many of their churches are just like the Laodicean Church, where Christ was outside the church doors knocking and saying, **"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked..."** And the only way that Christ would come inside those doors and revive them was if they repented – which is the third mark of Revival.

3. Heartfelt repentance (33:4-6)

He told Laodicea:

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

The prelude to His presence; the prelude to revival is repentance. And in Exodus 33 God told Israel that without full-hearted repentance they would never again enjoy His presence. Interestingly, God told them that He would still go ahead of them and give them the land of Canaan. He told Moses that He would send the angel before them (not with them, but before them) to cast the Canaanites out, but that He Himself would not be with them. Now here is a test of whether genuine revival has begun. Will the church be satisfied with outward progress; outward success against the enemy and with prosperity, or will they be distressed without the comfort of God's presence? Look at how it reads in chapter 33:1-3:

Exodus 33:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

Exodus 33:2 And I will send *My* Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Exodus 33:3 *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people."

God says, "You go ahead and go into the land and I will ensure that you get in there, but I'm not going with you; I'm sick of Israel." Israel mourned at those words and found them extremely distressing, and they repented. They had finally been brought to a realization that life is empty without God and without the visible tokens of God's presence. They began to realize that it doesn't do any good to have a land flowing with milk and honey if God is not there. Revival begins when the church realizes that nothing could be more serious than to lose God's presence and it stirs up their hearts to repent as Israel repented in verses 4-6.

4. Longing for God's presence (vv. 7-11)

The fourth mark of revival is to see people not just recognizing God's absence, but longing for His presence. So we have first, recognition of their true condition, second, a recognition that God had departed, third, deep

repentance, and then fourth, longing for a restoration of God's presence.

When we see people no longer satisfied with things, with programs and agendas, or even with evangelism and outward success; when we see the church with vast blessings, but mourning because God is not present, we have one of the first signs of genuine revival. I'm not so convinced that revival is present when I see people repenting after a 9-11. That's a foxhole Christianity. I will begin to believe that revival may be present when I see God's people brought to deep weeping and repentance because they do not sense God's presence with them. One Reformed book on revival said this:

The question is not: Are you living a good life? Are you happy? Are you active in church work? In evangelism? In Christian Reconstruction? In pro-life activities? The question is this: Is GOD with YOU? Is He in YOUR life? Can you see signs of his presence with you? Is God living with you day by day giving you strength and joy? What are your personal dealings with God? Do you have any? Do not blame someone else. Look to your own heart and cry for God to return.

Do you long to know God more deeply? This is the essence of what it means to have a burden for revival. I don't think you could have a person more humble, patient, and godly than Moses, but I want you to notice that revival did the same thing to Moses that it did to Israel - only on a more heightened level. Prior to this, God continually talked to Moses face to face, but what was Moses longing for? Chapter 33:13 tells us. Moses said to God,

Exodus 33:13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight...

That verse makes clear that Moses was not satisfied. He wanted to know God more deeply. What was Paul's passion? He said, "**That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.**" If Paul already knew God (which he did), why did he say that it was his passion to know Him and His power? Because when you taste of God in this way, you want to know more of God, and more of Him, and more of Him. Paul even wanted to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings. He wanted to know more of Jesus in all of his life. That is the whole point of Moses' prayer in verses 15-17. Moses said, "**If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.**" In effect Moses was saying, "I'd rather not have any of the promises fulfilled or any blessings from Your hand if I don't have your presence." He wanted God more than he wanted the blessings of God; he wanted the Giver more than the gifts. That is a sign of the presence of revival.

In verse 17 God says **“I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”** He was telling Moses, “OK, I’ll grant your request. I will come back into the camp. My presence will be felt in the church.” But I want you to notice that Moses is not even satisfied with that. You can’t be when revival has begun; you are driven to pursue more of God. In verse 18 Moses says, **“Please, show me Your glory.”** I mean, God had already revealed so much of Himself to Moses, but Moses says, “Please, show me Your glory.” It’s like an addict who always wants more. And you know the story of how God shows Moses such glory that his face shines. When Paul comments on that in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul says that this longing to see more of God’s glory and this being transformed into the image of Jesus from glory to glory is really the essence of revival. It is the strange coexistence of a fear of God’s consuming fire and yet an attraction that wants to press deeper into God’s consuming fire. It is this drawing of the heart to God. That is Biblical revival.

Do you long for God's presence, or is it only God's blessings that you want? The beginnings of revival could care less about outward blessings. They could care less about getting Canaan. You could take them all away and the person would still be enraptured with the joy of having rediscovered the presence of God. What they really care about during revival is getting to know God, and knowing Him ever better. The psalmist wrote: **“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for God; my soul thirsts for God, the living God.”** (Psalm 42:1). The psalmist is not after more blessings. He is after God Himself. In his book on Revival, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones asks:

Do we know anything of such a longing? We may have been Christians for many years, but have we ever really longed for some personal, direct knowledge and experience of God? Oh, I know, we pray for causes, we pray for the Church, we pray for missionaries, we pray for our own efforts that we organize, yes, but that is not what I am concerned about. We all ask for personal blessings, but how much do we know of this desire for God himself? That is what Moses asked for: 'Show me thy glory. Take me yet a step nearer.'

It is the same thing, of course as the Psalmist voices in Psalm 42: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.' That is what he wants. He wants the living God himself, and that is why he pants and thirsts.

The prayer for revival is a prayer for the manifestation of the glory of God, individually and collectively. And the rest of the things that are listed in your outlines as marks of revival really flow out of this great point. When sin

hinders our fellowship with God, a person burdened with revival will fling away the least and the greatest of sins. He doesn't want anything to come between him and God. Though it may be embarrassing to confess his sins to others, he will do it so that he might see God's glory. That is a sure sign of God's sovereign work of inward revival. Oh, may it come Lord Jesus!

5. Consumed with a desire for God's reputation (32:9-12)

The fifth mark of revival is being consumed with a desire for God's reputation. And we see that in verses 9-12. But I want you to notice that a person consumed with *God's* glory will have a holy passion for God's *people*. Gone will be the critical spirit over sin. Instead there will be groaning over the church's sins such as the groanings that Moses had in these chapters. Like David we will be able to say in Psalm 119:136: "**Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law.**" Has God's Spirit caused you to groan over your own sins and the sins of others? If not, pray for revival. It has always been one of the signs of genuine revival. When revival comes, gone will be the careless attitudes toward the lost. In chapter 32:32 Moses says, "**Yet now, if You will forgive their sin - but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.**" God had given him such a passion for the church that like Paul, he asked God to send him to hell so that others might be saved. God of course refuses, but this shows the kind of consuming desire that Moses had for revival. It is God-given. You cannot generate that kind of love that is willing to go to hell so that others might be saved. These are some of the supernatural marks that make it easy to distinguish genuine revival from modern man-centered revivalism.

We are going to sing two songs that will let you express your heart on this theme. And I'm going to do something a little different after the first Psalm. In the New Testament synagogues, there was a time at the beginning of the service when men could pray. I'm going to give you an opportunity to do that. If any of the men are burdened to publically pray, there will be a time after this song when you can do so. But let's sing "As The Deer."

As the deer

As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

I want you more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye

You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

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Let's pray for personal revival at this time. You can pray silently that God would visit us, or you can pray out loud as the Lord leads, but let's ask God to help us to know Him better.

Prayer

There is a place...Near to the heart of God

There is a place of quiet rest
Near to the heart of God
A place where sin cannot molest
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, bless'd Redeemer
Sent from the heart of God,
Holy those who wait before thee,
Near to the heart of God.

6. Grieving over the church's reputation before an unbelieving world (32:30-32; 33:16)

I'm not going to go in depth on the last four inner marks of revival. But let me briefly mention them and read one or two of the verses in your outline. The sixth mark of revival is longing for a restored testimony of the church before an unbelieving world. Chapter 33:15-16

Exodus 33:15 Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here.

Exodus 33:16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth."

Notice that phrase, "how will it be known?" Moses is grieved over the thought that the church's testimony is ruined. He longs to see a church that will glorify the Lord before an unbelieving world.

7. Longing for the silencing of God's enemies (32:11-12)

The next mark of revival is a longing for the silencing of the God's enemies. Look at verses 11-12

Exodus 32:11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

Exodus 32:12 Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, "He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.

He was concerned for God's testimony in the eyes of the world. The thought of the world mocking God was troubling to him.

8. A desire to know God (33:13), to experience His presence (33:14-15) and not satisfied unless we have more of God – this is the essence of true revival (33:18-23;34:5-9)

The eighth internal mark has already been dealt with adequately – it is a desire to know God and His work more fully.

9. An appetite for God's Word (34:27,32ff)

The last internal sign of revival is a renewed appetite for the teaching of God's Word. In chapter 34:27 God gives Moses His Word so that he can give it to the people. But let's read verses 32-35.

Exodus 34:32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

Exodus 34:33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

Exodus 34:34 But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded.

God established a drive for Moses to preach every Word of God and He established a desire in the people to listen to every Word of God that Moses preached. The truncated preaching of most revivalism is quite different from this. This is preaching the whole counsel of God. It glories in all of God's Word. Jesus said, **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”** During revival this becomes a renewed passion. Verse 35.

Exodus 34:35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Continuing on in chapter 35:

Exodus 35:1 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, “These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do:

And you've got Moses giving the rest of the Pentateuch. When people are only given to mysticism, you know you don't have genuine revival that has the potential of leading to genuine reformation. When they are given a renewed appetite to study and apply God's Word (like they were at the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation), it is an indication that Revival may be present.

B. Outward marks

1. God gave one man a burden to pray (32:30-32; 33:7-11)

But let's look quickly at the outward marks of revival. The first outward mark of every revival that I have studied is that God gives one man a burden to pray. Here it started with the intercession of Moses in chapter 32:30-32, and we see the ongoing prayer of Moses day after day in chapter 33:7-11.

One of the first things that happens in revivals is that God lays on the heart of some man, woman or in one case, a child such a longing for revival that it drives them to prayer. Sometimes others don't even know that they have gone off to pray, or why they are spending time alone. In the New England Revival for three days prior to the revival, Jonathan Edwards could not sleep or eat, but kept praying to God with deep groanings, "Give me New England! Give me New England!" In the Welch revival it was a timid young girl, who could hardly talk. All she could do was blurt out, "How I love Jesus!" In Germany it was a deacon who agonized in prayer. And in revival after revival, God usually begins with one person who is burdened. Maybe God will use one of you. God sovereignly chooses where and with whom He will bring revival.

2. This time of prayer became the nerve center of prayer, worship, revival, reformation in others (33:7-11)

The second outward mark is that as the person prays, God's Spirit comes upon his prayer in such power that others are drawn into the circle with the same concern and burden. This prayer meeting becomes almost a nerve center of prayer and revival in others. It is like there are flowing streams going out of the prayer meeting. Others, just by the power of God's Spirit are drawn to repentance, prayer, and a passion for God. And it is my great hope that during this year of our church's focus on prayer, that God would stir up a nerve center of revival through prayer. The second half of verse 7 says, **"And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp."** And you see God stirring hearts after this. Chapter 35 says, **"Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose heart was willing..."** But I like that phrase, "whose heart was stirred." It's speaking of God's sovereign work stirring our hearts and preparing them. Chapter 36 again speaks of those "whose heart was stirred." Notice that Moses doesn't *call* them to come out to this tent. It's not human agency. I can't plan or produce a

revival. In the revival happening in these chapters, nobody's arm is being twisted to go to prayer. *That's* not a sign of revival. In fact, Moses makes it hard for them to come to prayer. Moses is far separated from the camp. They've really got to want to go to make the trek out there. But despite the inconvenience, more and more people start drifting in to this prayer meeting as God's Spirit rests upon them. When revival happens, people won't have to be dragged to prayer time; they will be drawn to it. That is a sign that true revival has come. We can't generate it. It is a stirring work of God's Spirit. The Bible says that God pours out upon His people a spirit of prayer and supplication. But this may also be an indication that our church desperately needs revival.

3. Even those who are not at the prayer meetings are impacted positively as cultural Reformation begins to happen (33:7-11)

The next outward mark is that even those who are not at the prayer meetings are impacted positively as cultural Reformation begins to happen. In chapter 33, as a result of this united prayer, the power of God's presence was undeniably felt by both believer and unbeliever. And yes, there were both believers and unbelievers who worshipped and who were positively impacted. What happens is that Moses and God receive a new respect and reverence from the entire nation. We've seen that the people who sought God went to the tent. But *now* look at what happens to even those who *don't* go to the tent. Look at chapter 33, verses 8-10:

Exodus 33:8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.

Exodus 33:9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses.

Exodus 33:10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door.

So radiating out from that prayer meeting is a powerful moving of God's Spirit in the homes throughout a district or nation. People are changed. There is a new reverence for God. People sense His presence, worship Him and walk with a sense that He is with them. The profound change in England and America as a result of the First Great Awakening has been documented by many. It affected police departments, business, politics, children, spouses, and every area of life. It was the beginnings of small Reformation. And historians have said that it was more than a revival. It was a small Reformation. Without it, England would have likely become like

Revolutionary France. Without it, America would not have been prepared for the War for Independence. It had a profound impact as revival began to spread out into cultural Reformation.

4. God specially gifts some with a gift of intercession (33:11)

Fourth, there are always some like Joshua, who are specially gifted by God to continue in prayer without ceasing during the initial stages of the revival. They have the gift of intercession. You see this in every single revival. There are specially gifted people who pray almost nonstop. Everyone has been drawn to prayer, but as I mentioned earlier, Joshua never left the prayer tent during this time of revival. It consumed him. When you do not see this happening, there is not yet a revival from God. Verse 11 says,

Exodus 33:11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

I am encouraged that around the nation there are the beginnings of these things. God is raising up ministries where prayer meetings never stop, with people praying in twelve hour shifts. I am hopeful for America when I see such seeds of revival.

5. Repentance resulted in changed lives (33:4-11)

The fifth external mark of revival is that repentance results in changed lives. If a so-called revival does not lead to holiness, and does not lead to some cultural change, it is counterfeit. God brings revival to make people love His law and love His holiness and reflect His holiness. And revival transforms entire communities, lowering crime rates and outward manifestations of gross sins. That hasn't happened in Brownsville or Pensacola. We don't see culture changing holiness like what happened in the First Great Awakening. Revival after revival down through history has followed this pattern. And it is a pattern that I long to see happening once again in America.

Right now I want to sing a Scripture where God promises to bring revival and Reformation if His people will humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways. But before we sing it, let me pray once again:

Our Father, we approach you once again in the strong name of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 2 you promised Christ, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for

Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” We thank you that in Revelation, you extended that promise to us. And we do agree with Christ in asking that all pagan nations would be given to Him. We long to see His glory extended to the ends of the earth. We long for our nation and our own city to bow its knees before You. Since this is your desire and your promise as well, we ask in faith that you would cause revival to break out in Omaha. If we can be used to that end, then use us Lord. But we do not seek our own glory. We seek you. We want to know you and the power of Christ's resurrection. Fill us with your Spirit, sweep out the sin from our lives; give us a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And as we sing this next song, we humble ourselves before you and ask that you would heal us, and heal our land. Move by your Spirit in our midst O God. We ask all this in the strong name of Jesus Christ our only Savior, Amen.

Let's sing, “If My People”

III. God's Response

A. *A partial answer*

I am going to finish off this sermon by looking quickly at God's answer to Moses prayer. The answer actually began happening in chapter 33. But God gives more in chapter 34. And then you see even more remarkable things happening in chapters 35 through the end of the book, with people being unbelievably generous in their giving, and joyful in their work.

Now, I say that it is a partial answer because God told Moses that he couldn't see his face and live. There is only so far that we can press into God's presence in our earthly bodies. He tells the people in verses 3-4 that the people cannot approach too closely and live. God sets the terms of revival and never gives exhaustive manifestation of Himself. He gives just what the church needs prior to heaven.

B. *Manifestation Of God's Goodness (33:19; 34:6)*

Secondly, Moses may have been praying for a manifestation of God's power, but in chapter 33:19 God promises something much better. He promised to make all of His goodness pass before Moses. Our real need is not power. Our real need is God's goodness and a knowledge of the character of God. If we are mistaken in our knowledge of God, we will be mistaken in everything else. Cults twist and change the doctrine of God because Satan knows that this is foundational to everything else. We must know *about* God if we are to *know* God. Flee from any church that despises doctrine. In revivals God causes His goodness and His character to be manifested in the

life of the church. And the church studies to know Him.

C. Proclamation Of God's Name

The third response of God was to proclaim His name. And His name is not Benny Hinn. His name is not Brownsville. When true revival happens, personalities fade and God comes strongly into the foreground. Chapter 34:5 says, “**Now Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name Yahweh.**” The proclamation of God's Name really involves showing God for who He is and what He stands for. So the next two verses explain what the proclaiming of the name of the LORD means.

Exodus 34:6 And Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed, “Yahweh, Yahweh God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Exodus 34:7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

Those verses sum up the meaning of God's name to His people. It is as we embrace God and know Him more and more that we begin to experience His glory and are changed ourselves. Paul picks up the imagery of Moses reflecting God's glory in 2 Corinthians 3. He says

2Corinthians 3:16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, [There’s revival – when one turns to the Lord] the veil is taken away.

2Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

2Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul says it is not by trying to live the Christian life that we see revival. It is by being consumed with God. The focus is on Him. It is by worshipping in His presence and looking into His glory that we are transformed. Everything else flows from God. Concern for missions, concern for the church, sensitivity to sin; all areas of revival flow from a knowledge of God Himself.

D. Revelation Of God's Glory

And I won't take the time to develop the points, but point D shows a revelation of God's glory. This is God's goal for human history – to reveal His glory. And that means that revival and reformation that is lasting is God's goal for history. To me that is encouraging. It shows that revival is not simply something for the past. It is something that will more and more characterize this earth.

E. Restoration Of God's Presence & Power With His People

And point E was the restoration of God's presence and power with His people. God's glory cloud came back into the camp and God blessed Israel with victory and further manifestations of His power. And I find it so encouraging that God says that this too will be the continuing experience of God's people and will eventually become the pervasive and permanent experience of God's people in the New Covenant. He uses the image of this glory cloud, only instead of it being in one place, it will be in every assembly; in other words, in every church. Isaiah 4:5 promises,

then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a covering

That image speaks of His goal for New Covenant history – to dwell in God's presence hour-by-hour, day-by-day, and month-by-month, and year-by-year. A glory cloud above every dwelling place and above every assembly. Restored presence; restored fellowship; restored Christ-likeness. That is what our hearts should long for. May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen. Let's pray.

Final song

El-Shaddai*

The LORD appeared to [Abram] and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you." Gen. 17:1, 2

Unison

1. El - Shad - dai,* El - Shad - dai, El - El - yon* na A - do -
 2. Through your love and through the ram you saved the son of A - bra -
 3. Through the years you made it clear that the time of Christ was
 4. El - Shad - dai, El - Shad - dai, El - El - yon na A - do -

nai,* age to age you're still the same, by the pow - er of the
 ham; through the pow - er of your hand you turned the sea in - to dry
 near, though the peo - ple could - n't see what Mes - si - ah ought to
 nai, age to age you're still the same, by the pow - er of the

name. El - Shad - dai, El - Shad - dai, Er - kam - ka* na A - do -
 land. To the out - cast on her knees you were the God who real - ly
 be. Though your Word con - tained the plan, they just could not un - der -
 name. El - Shad - dai, El - Shad - dai, Er - kam - ka na A - do -

nai, we will praise and lift you high, El - Shad - dai.
 sees, and by your might you set your chil - dren free.
 stand, your most awe - some work was done in your Son.
 nai, I will praise you till I die, El - Shad - dai.

Michael Card, 1981
 Arr. 1990

* El-Shaddai: God Almighty na Adonai: O Lord
 El-Elyon: God Most High Erkamka: we will love you

EL-SHADDAI Irreg.
 John Thompson, 1981
 Arr. by Lawrence C. Roll, 1988

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The Essence of True Revival

Exodus 32-34

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-24-2013

Introduction – what revival is not

- I. Be encouraged - Revival often begins during a time of unprecedented decline (Ex. 32)
- II. Characteristic marks of revival (33:1-11)
 - A. Inward marks
 1. Recognition of and distress over our true condition (33:4 "distressing news")
 2. Realization that God has departed (33:1-4)
 3. Heartfelt repentance (33:4-6)
 4. Longing for God's presence (vv. 7-11)
 5. Consumed with a desire for God's reputation (32:9-12)
 6. Grieving over the church's reputation before an unbelieving world (32:30-32; 33:16)
 7. Longing for the silencing of God's enemies (32:11-12)
 8. A desire to know God (33:13), to experience His presence (33:14-15) and not satisfied unless we have more of God – this is the essence of true revival (33:18-23;34:5-9)
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- III. God's Response
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 - B. Manifestation Of God's Goodness (33:19; 34:6)
 - C. Proclamation Of God's Name
 - D. Revelation Of God's Glory
 - E. Restoration Of God's Presence & Power With His People



