

Recently I have been challenged to pray for revival in the church. Denominational yearbooks give evidence to the condition of the church and some make for sad reading. When you read the history of past revivals they invariably started with just a few people who recognised the need of the hour.

Psalm 85 is all about restoration; about overcoming discouragement in difficult times. There are four important things to observe here in relation to revival.

■ ***We need to reflect on past blessings and mercies v1-3.***

As the sons of Korah crafted this song they took time to look back at how God had blessed the nation of Israel. They were no doubt exciting times, times of great expectation as to how God was working and how He was going to work. God had wonderfully brought Israel back to their land and set them free from their captivity to serve Him. In past revivals they often had their genesis in two areas. Firstly people remembered past blessing, past fruitfulness in ministry where it seemed that God was continuously at work. Like the sons of Korah I yearn to see that sort of blessing return to the church.

Past blessings also included knowing God's forgiveness for sin and being restored to all that God wanted them to be. Of course this is exactly what God wants for His church when it comes to revival. He wants to see a church that means business with Him and building the kingdom of God. The remembrance process also includes God's mercy in pouring out His mercy on a rebellious people who deserved quite the opposite. I can't help but think of Jeremiah when Israel had been taken captive after years of warning from God, which was clear evidence of God's mercy. In the book of Lamentations he is reflecting on what has happened and is so disappointed that Israel had not been obedient to God's warnings. However, he encourages

himself with these verses in chapter 3; *"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*

PRAISE the Lord for:

- An encouraging trip for Carl to Malawi and South Africa as we continue to develop the Main, Military and Prison editions in these countries
- A number of commitment slips coming into the office from people reading the paper
- Those who have applied to come on our next Impact Africa mission trip. At this stage we have 14 but would love a team of 23.

■ ***We need to pray for restoration v4-7.***

As the writers of this psalm remember God's past blessings they are moved to seek God for the restoration of Israel. Likewise as the church we need to pray for restoration. I read recently of how Isaiah went into the temple (Isaiah 6), and saw the Lord high and lifted up. The immediate result of this was that he saw himself as he really was before a holy God. Often our assessment of the church and our own Christian walk is way too optimistic as to how we are going spiritually. Isaiah was under no illusions as to how wrong he had been and I think we and the church would have a similar response. So the cry of the psalmists to

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4. **No noses** – No matter how much the fire was piled with offerings, dead gods could not smell them. Yet our God is available to receive our worship 24/7, and delights in our genuine worship.
5. **No hands** – The reality of this rather sad but comical picture, was that the makers of the idols had more power than the idols themselves. Our God is constantly at work for us and in us.
6. **No feet** – These idols were immobile unless carried by their worshippers and yet they were blind to this. Our God carries us in those challenging and difficult times and walks with us each day.

The dreadful outcome of this is that those who trust in idols become like them. We become like the god we worship. With all the addictions we have in this world you don't have to go far to see this with drug addiction, alcoholism, or pornography. What we worship determines how we think, and how we think determines how we behave. However, when we come to Jesus and commit our lives to Him He transforms our minds, ears, eyes and hearts.

So the Psalmist then states what must seem the obvious in that our God is: **A Giving God** v9-15. We discover as we trust in the true and living God He gives us His help and

protection. No matter what we see on the TV news our God reigns. As we stand in awe of God we grow in our understanding of just who God is. One of the things we see is that we are remembered by God. In fact He knows us much better than we know ourselves. He is aware of our needs and meets them according to His perfect will and purpose.

Lastly, we see that our God is: **A Receiving God** v16-18. We know that all things belong to God but He has given us the earth to inhabit and look after. We who are the Lord's can give Him His due praise and worship. The wonderful joy of being a Christian is that God responds to the continual praise of His people. Remember – **OUR GOD REIGNS.**

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- The South Africa hub as we recommence (no promotion during Covid) visiting churches and various groups to promote and develop the use of the Challenge newspaper through evangelism
- Our board (Nic, Graham, Rob, Steve, Dawn, John, Jenny, Carl) as they continue to oversee an expanding ministry around the world. Pray for God's wisdom and clear direction in the various requests to begin new projects around the world
- Our wonderful writers who contribute each month. Pray they will know the Lord's leading with each article they produce
- A number of our team who have ongoing health issues. Please pray with us for healing

Ongoing supply of testimonies

If you would like to share your testimony through the printed page please email carl@challenge.news for further information

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