

“They Spoke the Word with Boldness”
(Acts 4:31)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We've seen that one reason the Lord sends revival:
 - a. Is to gather in the people
 - b. Jesus laid down His life to save.

2. Another, is to subdue His enemies.
 - a. Both are rewards for His work,
 - b. And both are promoted by revival.
 - (i) Just remember what we saw of the Great Awakening
 - (ii) And consider whether it's true.
 - (iii) In revival,
 - (a) The Lord gives more of His Spirit
 - (b) To do what He always does, only more:
 - (1) To awaken those who are comfortable in their sins –
 - (2) To make them afraid through the threatenings of the Law –
 - (3) And to convert some who are awakened,
 - (4) By giving them the ability to trust in Jesus Christ.
 - (5) The Spirit brings the message home.
 - (6) He converts and gives new life.
 - (7) He strengthens His people to do His work.

B. Preview.

1. The question we want to deal with this morning is: What can we do personally to promote revival? Our text gives us some direction.
 - a. The time in which this event takes place was a time of revival.
 - (i) Jesus had ascended.
 - (ii) Before He did, He gave His disciples a command and a promise.
 - (a) They were to wait in Jerusalem,
 - (1) Until the Father's promise was poured out on them.
 - (2) The blessing of the Spirit.

 - (b) When He was poured out,
 - (1) They immediately began to speak of the wonderful works of God
 - (2) In the language of all the peoples.
 - (A) So much has been made of the fact they spoke in tongues by the Charismatics!
 - (B) They really need to pay attention to what they were saying.
 - (I) They were evangelizing.
 - (II) And as a result, many were saved.
 - (III) This was a time of revival.

- b. But notice that even though it was,
 - (i) There was still something the apostles needed to do:
 - (ii) To receive even more of the Spirit's help.

- c. After Peter and John healed the lame man,
 - (i) After they preached and thousands more were saved,
 - (ii) They were arrested and brought before the Council.
 - (a) The Council commanded them no longer to teach or preach in the name of the Lord,
 - (b) But they refused, because Jesus/God had commanded them otherwise.

- d. After the Council threatened and released them,
 - (i) They went back to where the other disciples were,
 - (ii) And they prayed.
 - (a) They realized these leaders were standing against God, as He said they would in Psalm 2 (vv. 25-28).
 - (b) But they also acknowledged that God was in control (v. 24).
 - (c) And so they prayed God would give them the ability to do what He commanded.
 - (1) That He would grant them confidence to preach (v. 29),
 - (2) And that He would send the power they needed to advance His cause (v. 30).
 - (iii) And the Lord heard them and answered.
 - (a) When they had finished, the place where they were gathered was shaken,
 - (b) They were filled with the Holy Spirit,
 - (c) And they began to speak the Word with boldness.

- 2. What does this say about how you can promote revival?
 - a. It tells you that you can pray that the Lord would send His Spirit to revive you,
 - b. So that you might be able to speak His Word boldly,
 - c. And in this way advance the kingdom.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, it tells you that you don't have to sit around and wait for revival – you can pray.
 - 1. You can pray first that the Lord would give you the desire for this work to move forward.
 - a. When you want something,
 - (i) Your whole attention is on that thing,
 - (ii) And you don't stop thinking about it
 - (iii) And working towards it, until you get it.
 - (iv) That's how much you must want God's kingdom to move forward,

- (v) If you're really going to accomplish much towards that goal.
- b. To have this desire, you need to pray and ask for more of God's Spirit.
- (i) Will the Lord answer this prayer? Yes!
 - (a) He will because He commands you to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
 - (b) You can pray for this blessing
 - (c) Knowing He will give Him to you
 - (d) Because this is His will.
 - (ii) Will you pray this prayer?
 - (a) You will if you want the Spirit.
 - (b) You will if you realize you don't have enough of His influence in your life.
 - (c) How can you know if you do?
 - (1) When you begin to live like Jesus;
 - (2) And love like Him;
 - (3) When you begin to make the sacrifices Jesus would make;
 - (4) And have a heart for the Father's work as He did;
 - (5) When you're reaching out to the lost from a heart of compassion;
 - (6) Then you have what you need.
 - (7) Until then, you need to pray and ask the Lord for more.
- c. You also need to guard what precious little you have of Him already.
- (i) The Spirit's influence can be lost through sin:
 - (a) By doing things you shouldn't be doing –
 - (1) By giving your time and affections to the things of this world,
 - (2) When you should be giving them to God.
 - (b) And by not doing what He commands.
 - (1) When you know God wants you to do something
 - (2) And you don't do it,
 - (3) That's sin.
 - (c) When you sin,
 - (1) When you resist the Spirit,
 - (2) When you grieve Him,
 - (3) You quench His work,
 - (4) And lose His power.
 - (5) Susanna Wesley warned her sons against this, "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, takes off your relish for spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may seem in itself."
 - (6) You must do all you do for God's glory.

- (ii) If you would be revived, if you would be filled with the Spirit,
 - (a) Not only do you need to pray and use the means of grace faithfully,
 - (1) You must stop pouring the water of your sins
 - (2) On the fire of your devotion.
 - (b) When you're filled with the Spirit,
 - (1) There's nothing you'll want more,
 - (2) Than for God's kingdom to advance.
 - (3) So pray first that the Lord will fill you with His Spirit.
2. Second, pray for your brothers and sisters in the Lord that they too will be filled:
- a. Will the Lord hear your prayer? Yes!
 - (i) If you are filled with His Spirit, your life will be pleasing to Him.
 - (ii) And if you are pleasing to Him, He will hear your prayers.
 - (iii) James writes, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (5:16).
 - b. If you are revived, pray!
 - (i) Pray that the Lord would revive this Fellowship.
 - (ii) Pray that He would revive His church in this city, in this country, throughout the world.
 - (iii) Pray that the Lord would raise His people up as an army.
 - (iv) Pray that He would equip us with the truth and the boldness to proclaim it.
 - (v) Pray that He would move His Kingdom forward through the Gospel.
3. Third, gather with God's people to pray.
- a. Peter and John didn't just go to their prayer closets.
 - b. They didn't meet by themselves for prayer.
 - c. They went back to the disciples.
 - (i) They told them what happened – they shared their burden.
 - (ii) They prayed together, sought the Lord as a body.
 - (iii) And the Lord heard them and shook that place,
 - (iv) And filled them with His Spirit.
 - d. You need to enter into prayer with the body of Christ and seek the Lord together.
4. Finally, pray that the Lord would send His Spirit on the lost
- a. To convict and convince them,
 - b. To awaken them to their danger,
 - c. And prepare them to receive the Gospel.
- B. Second, as you pray, realize the work isn't going to be done, unless you do it.
- 1. The work of the Spirit is so important,
 - a. If He doesn't do what only He can –

- (i) To convince the lost of their sins,
 - (ii) Of their need of the righteousness of Jesus Christ,
 - (iii) Or they will face Him as Judge –
- b. They will never turn from their sins
- (i) Believe,
 - (ii) And be saved.
2. But His work through you is also important.
- a. If He doesn't work in you
- (i) To give you the heart for the work,
 - (ii) To give you the conviction that these things are true,
 - (iii) To give you the boldness and love to speak to others,
- b. You won't get out there to witness,
- (i) And the Spirit won't do His work to convince.
 - (ii) He works through His instruments –
 - (a) Through His church –
 - (b) You are part of His means.
- c. But there are certain things that must be true of your witness –
- (i) These are things the Spirit will produce –
 - (ii) But that would be helpful for you to know
 - (iii) So that you can submit to the Spirit in these areas.
- d. If I can borrow the thoughts of J. C. Ryle
- (i) Regarding those the Spirit of God used in the Great Awakening in England: He said,
 - (1) They preached;
 - (2) They preached simply, fervently, directly;
 - (3) They spoke words of faith with faith, and the story of life with life, convinced that it was true.
 - (4) They threw their heart and soul into it, sending their audience home at least with the impression that they believed it and wished them well.
 - (5) They spoke from the heart to the heart.
 - (b) If you are to be faithful and effective in your witness for the Lord, you must do the same:
 - (1) You must tell the Gospel to others;
 - (2) You must tell them simply, fervently, and directly;
 - (3) You must speak the words of faith with faith;
 - (4) The story of life, with life;
 - (5) Be convinced in your own heart that these things are true.
 - (6) Throw your heart and soul into it,
 - (7) Knowing that if those you minister to don't receive this message
 - (8) They will suffer for eternity.

- (9) Send them home at least convinced that you believe what you're saying,
- (10) And that you really want them to be saved.
- (11) Speak from your heart to their hearts.

- 3. So what can you do to promote revival?
 - a. You can pray – for yourself, for the fellowship of which you're a part, for your family, friends and neighbors.
 - b. You can pray by yourself, with your family, with other believers, but especially with the people of God as they meet for prayer.
 - c. You can pray that the Lord would revive your heart – make you more like Jesus –
 - (i) That He would revive the hearts of all His people,
 - (ii) And awaken those who are spiritually dead,
 - (iii) And save them.
 - d. And you can communicate the Gospel to others,
 - (i) In a way that not only convinces them that you believe it,
 - (ii) But that shows that you really care enough about them
 - (iii) That they should believe it
 - (iv) And be saved.
 - e. May the Lord help each of us to do so. Amen.

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