

## **Revive Us: Introduction – Psalm 85:6-7, 2 Chronicles 7:14-15**

With a new year comes newness: new beginnings, new expectations, new adventures, new relationships, new ministry opportunities, and so forth. As we begin 2025, we are going to start with a new series of messages which I feel God has been preparing for some time. If you remember back in 2023, almost two years ago, on the campus of Asbury University, a scheduled chapel service turned into a spontaneous prayer meeting which transitioned into a Holy Spirit filled worship service, that then morphed into a 16-day long revival in the Wilmore community of Kentucky. What was most unique about this movement of God is that it took place among the Gen Z's, which is the most un-churched and non-religious generation in US history. By the time word spread about this revival, over 15,000 people attended daily, and it is estimated that because of social media outlets, over 63 million people were able to witness God's power during this time. What was the impact of this movement? Let me share what the university's president told CBN and what some of the students said about this time with God.

*Kevin Brown*, Asbury's president said, "Our students continue to be hungry. They continue to lead. They've gone, and they've shared, we've had over 50 groups go to different ministries and churches, both in the United States and overseas."

*Riley McChord*, a student at Asbury said, "God turned my world technicolor, and I don't know how else to describe it, but prayer came alive,"

Another student, *Caleb Rushing* said, "It was an overwhelming glimpse of just God, His goodness, His mercy, His grace, His firmness. It was a glimpse of what heaven's going to be like when we get to just reign and dwell with God forever."

One student, who wished to remain anonymous, confessed to being filled with anger and experiencing fear of repenting, but after experiencing God's presence and peace, said, "the pit in my stomach is gone."

*Bobilyn Carr* commented that she "didn't have a community," but after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit began, she said, "He has given me a peace I don't understand, and He has shown me that I am loved, seen and known by Him."

What started as a message on LOVE from the chapel pastor turned into a movement of God that changed people's lives for eternity and is still having a tremendous impact on the community of Wilmore. What happened at Asbury is something that resonates profoundly with every Christian. My entire life, I have heard many of my brothers and sisters in faith proclaim that what we need is a great revival. Just like the new beginnings of a new year, Revival is just that for the people of God, Revival is something new and is a fresh outpouring of God's powerful Spirit. When it occurs, faith is reawakened, hearts are changed, and relationships with Jesus are deepened.

Revival is not a new concept, however. The Bible includes several passages which speak to this powerful involvement from God with His children. This morning, we are beginning a new

series of messages designed to help us approach God and genuinely ask Him to *Revive Us!* Not to copy what was done at Asbury, but to Revive us with something fresh, something new, something powerful! My hope is that you desire to experience the presence and power of God, not just here at MFBC, but in your personal life as well. Perhaps, you need to borrow from the words of **Psalm 85:6-7**, which asks, *“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.”* When we make such a plea, we should only do so with full expectation that God will be faithful to answer us, and we will experience the joy and restoration that our salvation brings.

Along with this plea to God, we need to seek revival based on the steps provided for us in God’s Word. In other words, God is not going to necessarily just show up and pour out His Spirit in a new and fresh way, unless we, His children, have prepared ourselves beforehand. Look with me at the familiar verse from **2 Chronicles 7:14**. It is in this verse we find a recipe necessary for revival. It says, *“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* What’s the first step? One of my favorites – Humility. Once you decide to remove self from the picture and allow God to be in charge, things will begin to change in your life. James teaches us that God loves a humble person and will show them favor. (**James 4:6**) Humility and submission to God is one of the keys for spiritual freedom and the first step towards revival. The next verse, **James 4:7** says, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Next, we should pray. Remember the words of Riley McChord. She said about the moment revival broke out at Asbury, “prayer came alive.” From our text in 2 Chronicles, God specifically told King Solomon that His people should pray and seek His face. We need to stop looking at prayer as something we must do and see it as something we get to do. Stop being embarrassed to pray. God gave us prayer to communicate with Him. If you genuinely want revival in your life, in your home, in your community, get over yourself and pray. Again, maybe you need to remind yourself of the words from **Psalm 116:1-2** which says, *“I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.”* Prayer needs to be part of who you are as a Christian.

Revival will only come to those who are seeking the presence of God. The third step is just that. When is the last time you truly sought the presence of God in your life. **Proverbs 8:17** says, *“I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.”* Yearning for God’s presence is a good thing. It is a fundamental aspect of every believer’s relationship with Jesus. It is necessary for the Spirit of God to actively work in your life. Are you thirsty for God? Do you thirst like the deer panting for water as mentioned in the Psalms? Jesus says, *“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* (**Matthew 6:33**)

Finally, God says we must be willing to repent. We must recognize the sin in our life, ask for forgiveness from those sins, and then enter into an agreement with God that we, under the authority of Jesus and the helping power of the Holy Spirit will not do those things again. Like the recipe for revival, there is a Biblical recipe for repentance. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and then leads us to the righteousness found in relationship with Jesus. The Holy Spirit allows us to feel what it's like to be forgiven by paving the way for God's mercy and grace. The Holy Spirit's power allows us to overcome sins control on our life and turn way from a worldly life without Christ. The Apostle John assures of these things when in **1 John 1:9** he says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

I think what you will see as we work our way through this series is that revival is not just an event. Instead, it is a profound journey, and a spiritual awakening reserved for those who love the Lord. When it occurs, it brings restoration and renewal that impacts the individual, families, friendships, congregations, and communities. But it will only come to those who are prepared and ready to receive it. Will you enter this journey with me as we begin a new year? Will you humble yourself? Will you pray without apprehension and with expectation? Will you "pant" after the presence of God? Will you acknowledge the sins in your life, seek forgiveness from those sins, and turn away for the evils they present? I'm tired of just experiencing the things of this world. Are you? I'm ready and willing to experience a supernatural reviving from the Spirit of God in 2025. Are you?