

REVIVE Sunday

This sermon is designed for 4th of July weekend

Sermon Outline / Starter

Calling all churches: Let's take an opportunity to PROCLAIM the Reviving Work of God. AGAIN

*O God, from my youth You have taught me,
and I still proclaim Your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and gray hairs,
O God, do not forsake me,
until I proclaim Your might to another generation,
Your power to all those to come.*
Psalm 71:17-18

The psalmist had a great eagerness to receive the instruction of God through the witness of His wondrous deeds experienced in his life. He also had a strong desire to teach God's REVIVING work to the next generation. For too many people in our churches, the wondrous deeds have been confined to the past and relinquished to history. Still, the psalmist reminds us God's Reviving work is accomplished in each of our lives and throughout our lives. Part of the reviving work of God is not only God picking me up and dusting me off but actually reviving my awareness of the work that God does to help me. Truly, our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Theme Verse: Psalm 71:20 *"You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again."*

It is critical that you take this psalm in its original context. Read and study the entire psalm. While we do not know who wrote this Psalm, many suspect David in his later years. Some have suggested it was during the season of Absalom's rebellion. Regardless of whether it was David or another, the emphasis on the writer's previous experience with God's reviving work is obvious. From the time he was in the womb to the day he composed this psalm, he had witnessed again and again God coming to his rescue. God's reviving work is personal and intimate as the psalmist reveals.

We have recently gone through as a nation some of the most challenging times in our history. While some of these experiences will make the record books, much of what we experienced will drift off into obscurity. The question then is what is the value of these personal or private experiences? What has this past year taught us about ourselves, our nation, our relationship with God? Did we seek Him? Do we recognize His work in our own personal lives, the lives of our family and friends, the role our faith plays in our daily lives or weekly routines? Where have we lifted our eyes to? The hills or God? Can we say, He taught me and I'm still proclaiming (17)? And if He has taught us, are we ready to teach others and pass these lessons on to the next generation (18)?

Personal reflection: I can see the trouble and calamity. I know what I've personally been through or seen in others. I can also see God's hand at work. Can you? Did you question where this was all going and how it would end? Did you wonder "What was God thinking?" or "What is God planning?"

Our country will likely see some form of revival, but is it real or contrived? Will it involve a national reconciliation with God? Is the world suddenly going to believe in Jesus and desire to follow Him? All

efforts that seek a revival without an acknowledging of Jesus as the Son of God will ultimately involve His denial of many in eternal life. A revival that only sees an improvement in one area of healthcare or a segment of the economy but does not include calling on the name of the LORD is only begging for the relapse.

A message of trouble and calamity is not difficult to construct but serves as the necessary backdrop for the reviving work. If we are all surviving just fine reviving is unnecessary. But the reality of our great need is evident. Likewise, the reality that God has not only accomplished His Reviving work in some tangible ways, but He uses us as messengers and instruments of that Reviving that happens again and again and again. We who can see with eyes of faith are charged to not only trust in His Reviving work but proclaim it with confidence. "From the depths of the earth You will lift me up again." Even more so, God may use us to initiate or bring about His Reviving work. For that reason we join the Psalmist praying, "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!" Psalm 90:17.

Of course the greatest picture of God's REVIVING Work is found in the Gospel of God's Son Jesus who personally endured trouble and calamity, but was revived and was literally laid in the depths of the earth to be lifted up again.

Possible outline.

- I. Trouble and calamity are a natural part of living in a fallen world with sin and death as part of a daily drama. The troubles and calamities happen again and again and again.
- II. We deserve trouble and calamity, but God's grace in Jesus gives us what we do not deserve – forgiveness and life. This was earned once and for all by Jesus' death and resurrection.
- III. What Jesus did once and for all, we apply again and again and again. There are many opportunities for us to not only witness the work of God, but to be used by God to accomplish His REVIVING Work.