

KWASIZABANTU MINISTERS' CONFERENCE 2019

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REVIVAL – GOD AT WORK

Wednesday, 6 March

Our theme for this evening: Why does revival come to an end?

Revival is not about churches being filled with people, but rather people filled with God. It is God coming down and walking amongst His people. God dwelling amongst men. God in our midst. God at work. Charles Spurgeon, sometimes called the prince of preachers, said, "Without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind. We are useless."

Why does revival come to an end? What stops a revival? We will have a look at some reasons for the termination of revival. There are times and seasons in the plan of God but at the same time I believe with all my heart that revival should never come to an end. If the victorious Lord who triumphed over death and every power of the devil, if He to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth, if the living God is in our midst in all His glory and majesty, something must happen. If the almighty, holy God walks and lives amongst us and we are His temple, there should be revival without ceasing because revival is God among us with His fire burning.

What is the reason for revival for the end of a revival? There are revivals which started in our lifetime but today we hear that the fire is no longer burning. It is tragic that revivals amongst white nations are very short lived - sometimes a few weeks, sometimes a few months. We need to ask ourselves why this is so? Where does the fault lie? Amongst African and other nations, revivals last much longer. In Africa, Uganda - 40 years, but when the children of the Lord started fighting, that was the end. In Korea, over 70 years, but then it became superficial and things entered which are not good.

Our portion of Scripture we find in the book of Joshua - Achan's crime and punishment. Joshua 7:1,6,10,11

But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel. (v1)

Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. (v6) The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned; they have transgressed My covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. (v10,11)

This incident took place just after the destruction of Jericho where the Lord undertook in such a marvellous way. Israel was triumphant and victorious. God was at work delivering Israel and doing the impossible. But it came to an abrupt end the moment sin entered. The little town of Ai overcame Israel. What a shocking picture of the people of God who could not stand before their enemies. God's army had to flee and many lost their lives. When Joshua, the man of God, heard about it he tore his clothes and immediately started with a day of prayer. In the evening, God came down and said, "What are you doing? Get up. Israel has sinned." Here we have the key and the answer to our theme and question: Why does revival come to an end? It is sin. S-I-N. There is only one reason, sin. Sin kills revival. It does not matter how wonderful that

revival is, if sin enters, it is the end of that revival. In a true Holy Spirit revival, a godly divine revival, God does not tolerate sin. If there is a so-called revival where sin is rampant, that is a false revival. Revival and sin do not go together. You can test it. If there is revival, test whether there is sin. Water and fire do not go together. One will kill the other. Light and darkness do not go together. The Holy Spirit and other spirits do not go together - one opposes the other. One is against the other. Even the spirit and flesh oppose one another. The flesh is against the spirit, even if they are Christians, the carnal Christian will always oppose the spiritual and the spiritual cannot go along with the carnal. Do you now understand why Christians are at loggerheads with one another? A carnal Christian will always fight. He is the biggest enemy of the spiritual Christian. Our opposition does not come from the heathen, but from carnal Christians. A carnal Christian in the Kingdom of God is a curse to the work of God. In this way, the devil from hell has got his angels among the Christians. That is why Romans 8 says that to be carnal brings death. A carnal Christian goes against the Spirit of God and that which is spiritual. Pray that you will not be carnal, because then you will be in the wrong camp. You will not be fighting with God but against Him.

In this text, we have a carnal, so-called Christian among the people of God. A soldier in the army of God. This soldier does things in secret. There are things which he hides, things which are not right. He sins in secret and then hides it but God in heaven sees it. Hiding sin kills revival.

What was the end of this deed of Achan's? The punishment? Even his wife and children were killed. He punished them with death. They kept silent about it and they had to die with him. It was not only his family. The Bible says, "Israel had sinned." Israel had to flee. Israel had to die. But how does it work with God? Just as He says, if you identify yourself with Achan, you are guilty with him. Only if he is out of your midst and you have dealt with him and with that sin, will you be free. This is a very dangerous matter. There is no future for us as long as we tolerate these things. This was not only the case in the Old Testament. God is still the same and this is how He works. In Luke 12, the Lord says there is nothing covered that will not come to light. There is nothing that one does in secret, behind closed doors, that will not be shouted from the rooftops. Christians, stop with your secret sins. Don't you know God? How can you think that you can sin in secret and your fellow pastors, deacons and fellow Christians know nothing about it? Did you never get converted? God sees that which is in secret. These are the things that count. These are the things that grieve the Spirit of God - and revival is the work of the Holy Spirit. If He is grieved, then He stops working. If such a so-called revival continues, it is a strange spirit, a false revival. Do not be a fool and say it is wonderful what God is doing, thousands of people come together. It is false. It is not a true Holy Spirit revival. Where God reigns, where He is the captain, where He rules by His Spirit, where He is the leader, sin is not tolerated.

When the Israelites purified and sanctified themselves, God was in their midst again. Then again they went from strength to strength. Again they lived in victory. But when sin came in God said, "No, I am no longer with you."

Disobedience is the end of revival. In Acts 5:32 we read about *"the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."* Obedience to God is a prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit. We learn this same lesson in the Old Testament where the Israelites who left Egypt never saw the Promised Land that God had promised their forefathers because of their disobedience. Even if God has given you a promise, the day you are disobedient, He cancels it. His oath does not apply to a person who is disobedient. You have got no right to make use of God's promises if you are disobedient. We must obey God. The Bible says that disobedience is the same as witchcraft. That is what the prophet Samuel said to King Saul. Can we expect that God will live and reign together with sangomas, witches and witchdoctors who are busy with their things in our midst? Never. The Word of God teaches that disobedience is like witchcraft. Stubbornness is as idolatry. Will God reign and rule together with idols? Never. The Bible says being self-willed is idolatry. Wanting it your way - I want it like this. I want it like that. If things go against your will it is terrible. Everything is wrong. That is idolatry. In revival there may not be any stubbornness. Has God dealt with your own self or is it still alive in your life? If so you are not part of revival, you have no part in it. You are not in it

but outside it. You are a danger to the revival. The sooner you get out of it the better. The sooner you die the better because as long as you live with your own self and stubbornness, you are like a devil to the working of the Holy Spirit. No disobedience. No self-will. As soon as that comes in, revival stops.

The Bible says we should not grieve the Holy Spirit, do not quench the Holy Spirit. If a person is grieved, he is no longer free but he withdraws and so the Holy Spirit withdraws and is not free to work in us if we sin. If we persist He is quenched and like a candle, He is put out.

In these, over 52 years, we have met up with a lot.

The first example is the one of a farmer who backslid. One day a woman came to me, I honour some women, and she said, "Erlo, I want to share with you that I am troubled about my husband. For a long time people used to come daily for help and my husband would be busy late at night. Sometimes people had to queue up to speak to him but over the last weeks no one comes anymore. We sit together, read the newspaper and listen to the radio." Just imagine a farmer's wife crying because people do not come for help anymore. Her husband was a tool in Jesus' hands but no longer. Sisters, are you just happy that your husband sits with you every evening while not leading a soul to Christ? Are you happy that he is with you while souls go to hell? Maybe you say, "I am a busy man" - just like the rich man, and in his busyness, he went to hell. Even if you are busy, the Lord should be able to bring people to you at night. We prayed together and said, "O God, that man is backsliding and he is on the way to hell and not to heaven." God was faithful to His Word - "Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I will be present." It did not take long and the husband came and unburdened himself of a lot of rubbish. A short while later he came again and said that God was working again.

The second example is one of a business man. God was working through a certain business man who had a normal job as a clerk. Before his conversion he did not want to know anything of the Bible. He tore a Bible to pieces and his wife had to hide her Bible. But then he got converted and he started preaching and brought many people to Christ. The church grew and grew. I feel sorry for those of you where the church does not grow. Some like taking their children to rugby matches, but why don't you take your children to huts and preach the Gospel? If one soul gets converted, it is better than a win for the Springboks or Bafana Bafana, better than playing golf. Have you spoken about Jesus to the people on your farm? If the Holy Spirit is in you, if you are filled with Him, then He will direct you and convict people of sin, righteousness and judgement.

Soon the room where they held services was too small and he got a bigger one and later a bigger one. Whenever he was here, he was a blessing to us with his beaming face. But after a while some black co-workers asked me what was wrong with the man? Had he lost his authority? Something was wrong. After three months, he came at night like Nicodemus and said for three months he had not led one person to Christ. He could no longer bear it. He said that for three months he went to his room, prayed and confessed his sins in secret to God, behind closed doors. He said, "I know where it started. I can take you to the place where I sinned. Since that day, I have not led one soul to the Lord. In these three months I found fault with the others and thought the Christians don't like me, they don't want my company and look down on me. But tonight I have come to confess my sins." Mark these things. When there is something wrong in your life, when you are blunt and you feel others are shunning you, the fault is with you. There is something wrong in your life. You say that they do not worry about you and they do not like you - wait a minute - the person with life will see that the fault lies with you.

When we got up, he asked whether he should stop preaching now. I said no, he should have stopped when he was hiding sin, not now that he had confessed it. No person in this world knew where he was, not his wife or children or anyone, only he and then me because he told me. He left for home and at about 12 that night he phoned and told me with great joy, that when he got home, a miracle happened. Three men stood at his front door and he asked them they wanted. They said that they were sinners on their way to hell and they requested help and prayer. Three people entered the Kingdom of God at 12 that night. He said, "Erlo, tell the people all over the world how it works. You can even tell people my sin." I said that I would not tell

what he had told me in confidence, but I would tell people how it works. The streams of living water were again gushing out of his life. He could preach with authority and lead people to Christ.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord.

The third example is that of a girl under a tree. One day we visited my brother Heino in Dalton. As we sat outside in the garden, with the co-workers, reading the Bible and praying, we saw a girl leaning against a very tall tree at the end of the garden. She was very shy. We called her over and asked her what she wanted. When the Holy Spirit came, He used anybody, a girl, a boy, a business man, a farmer. One day we received a call from a place where there was no preacher, telling us that people came from all over from the hills asking for help. Even where we had never preached the Gospel, people were convicted and came for help. The Holy Spirit was at work. Now this girl told us that she was troubled. Since she was converted, day after day, the Lord brought people who wanted to make peace with God. She was illiterate but in a few months she won more people to the Lord than many ministers or evangelists do in their lives. She said that in the last two weeks not one person had come to make their life right with God. Just imagine, a young teenage girl who was unable to sleep at night because she had not led anyone to Christ for two or three weeks. “Something must be wrong,” she said, “because I cannot lead anyone to Christ anymore.” Maybe it is some months since you led anyone to the Lord. You are quite happy and satisfied, you have your eggs in the morning and live your life - you are spiritually dead. At night she cried to the Lord, “Why is this, Lord? Why can You not bring people anymore?” These people know nothing about theology just, “I was a sinner and Jesus came to set me free from my sins.” That is what they proclaim.

The previous night she had had a dream. She was hesitant to tell us the dream, afraid that she was going off her mind. She asked whether there was a book called Isaiah in the Bible? Yes, we said. She started smiling. She asked whether there was a chapter 59? We said yes. A verse 2? We said yes. Eagerly she asked us to read it to her. “The Lord told me in my dream that as the Holy Spirit cannot work anymore, I would find the answer in Isaiah 59:2.” We read her the first two verses of Isaiah 59 – *“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”* She wept and said, “Now I know. There is a sin I recently committed. I knew that I was sinning but I continued with it. But now I want to confess it. Please pray for me that God will forgive me.” We wept with her and prayed for forgiveness. After that the Lord started working through her again.

As you sit here and I explain to you what it is like when God is at work, allow me to ask you a personal question: Are there rivers of living water flowing from your life? Has the desert turned into a garden? Are there trees bearing nice fruit and healing leaves that have sprung up? Answer me, dear friend. If I don't say, “Many rivers,” is there one river flowing from your life? Even a single river from your life? If not, allow me to say you are dead. Finished. The Holy Spirit is not working in you. Do not say you are a believer or a preacher. There are many churches which do not grow or make progress or where there is no fruit. You are a Pharisee or a hypocrite.

I do not want this which I say to just go in one ear and out the other. This year is two months old. In these two months, how many people have you won to the Lord? How many people have been blessed by you? If you say no one, I say you are dead. The Holy Spirit is not in you. If God is in you, He cannot just be there and be quiet. He works through the Holy Spirit and those rivers of living water will flow forth. The power of God, of the Holy Spirit working in you, will be there. The book of Revelations speaks about having the name of being alive but being dead. A person can say that he is a believer, he has the name of being a believer, he can even be here at KwaSizabantu but he is dead because God does not rule in his life, he rules himself. It does not go according to God's will but your own will. I want you to see whether you are a true believer or not, as the Scriptures say. Jesus said, “If you believe in Me as the Scriptures say...” Do you hear what the Scriptures say? In Revelation we read about trees that bear fruit always, every month, never coming to an end, no interrupting. If you do not have the fruit of the Holy Spirit, you will be rejected from heaven. This is not what I say but what the Scripture says.

This is a service where we need to examine ourselves. No one should leave without having done that. You could even ask other people whether there are rivers in your life – those who live with you, those you preach to. Do they see and experience rivers flowing out of your life, rivers that are growing so that they are also caught up by it? Do they get unceasing fruit from you? The lovely fruit of the Holy Spirit. Fruit that never ends.

Logical thinking is an enemy and obstacle to revival. God teaches us so clearly in His Word to trust in Him with all our hearts and not lean on our own understanding. I would like to share with you how God dealt with me concerning this. When we came to KwaSizabantu there was a handful of co-workers. They said, “Mfundisi, you pray for the people, you counsel them, you do the preaching. That is too much. May we take care of what the people will eat, then you needn’t worry about that.” I said to them, using my own understanding, “Do you know what it means, how much food you need to feed one hundred people three times a day? Will you be able to cope with that?” Tears filled their eyes and they said, “Mfundisi, most probably we don’t know but we felt that the Lord laid it on our hearts to do this.” I saw that I had hurt their feelings. But we whites are so callous and so hard, we say what we like and do what we like. We don’t mind whether we tread on another man’s foot, whether we hurt him or her. When Jesus is there, you are very, very sensitive about what you do, say and how you behave because you are careful that you won’t hurt a person in the wrong way. If you don’t do that, people will not see Christ in you, they will see the devil. I was the son of a farmer, I grew up on a farm. I did some business. I asked them whether they knew how much food a hundred people eat a day. “What do you think? Where will you get the food from?” They said, “Mfundisi, we have got sweet potatoes and madumbes at home. (They just had a little garden.) We will bring that,” they said. That was not enough according to my understanding, my judgement and my knowledge but I said, “Let us see whether it is going to work.”

After a few days they came and said, “Mfundisi, we have prayed and asked the Lord what we should do. Could you order a lorry load of potatoes? (They were 5-10 ton trucks.) I asked, “What for?” They said that they wanted to plant them. This was just before winter time and according to my knowledge, it was the wrong time. “You have to plant things at the right time,” I said, “we cannot do that, it is not the right time for that.” Tears filled their eyes again. They said they had prayed and asked the Lord what they should do and they felt He said that they should plant potatoes. I was sorry and felt that I had done wrong. I said I would order some but not a lorry load, just a pickup load full so that if frost came and we lost everything it would not be such a great loss. They said they were thankful for everything even if it was one bag. So we got a pickup load of seed potatoes and we planted them on the other side where Emseni Care Centre is now. We ploughed. They planted. It was winter time. Beautiful rains fell. The potatoes grew. It was a bit cold but not too cold for the potatoes. It was a mild winter. They grew as I have never seen potatoes grow before. No insects. No sickness. Nothing. We got a bumper crop. We dug them up and they were white as if washed already. There were too many to eat. We sent them to Pietermaritzburg market. With the money we bought bedding for 100 beds. I said, “God, forgive me, I thought they knew nothing and I thought I was the one with the knowledge.” What would have happened if we had planted a lorry load of potatoes? Out of season. There was no frost. They grew marvellously. I wept, I cried. I asked for forgiveness from the people and said that I was disobedient not only to them but to God. If I had ordered what they had asked me to do, a lorry full, what would have happened? That was the time when the Russians sent Sputnik to space and put Laika, the dog, into it. On my knees I asked the Lord to take my understanding and send it to the moon like Laika.

Away with everything which grieves or quenches the Holy Spirit. Whatever it is in your life, away with that which grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit. Deal with it ruthlessly in Jesus Name. Do away with it so that through you, the Holy Spirit can convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement. Just think what would have happened in our country and the world if all of us would be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we meet again in 2021, how many people wouldn’t be here. Speak to God so that He can show you if there is

something in the way. For God's sake, please do not treat things lightly in your life that grieve the Holy Spirit. Rather cut off your right hand and pluck out your eye than grieve Him. May he who has an ear, hear.

May God be with us in His mercy. May the love of the Father fill our hearts. May the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us so that He can lead us into all the truth.