

Jeremiah Lanphier started a weekly prayer meeting at noon during the lunch hour for businessmen in NYC in 1857. He invited everyone in his church and printed off a pamphlet which he passed out around town. The first day he prayed alone for 30 minutes. By the end of the hour six people joined him. A few more came the next week. In two months the meetings happened weekly. Six months later every church in downtown NYC was filled to the brim with prayer. It became known as the Businessman's revival.

A black preacher named William Seymour preached at a prayer meeting with a handful of people in a small church in Los Angeles. Thousands of people were saved and it birthed the pentecostal movement, which has spread over the globe. These are just two revivals that began with prayer, but most revivalists will tell you they all did. From the great awakenings to the house church movement in China.

These great movements of God always seem to begin with prayer. But what kind of prayer? How should we pray for revival? What should we pray? And what does the Bible actually say?

Psalm 85 is a prayer for restoration and revival. It is a prayer that God would restore the fortunes and spiritual state of Israel. It is a cry that the entire place would turn back to God and that God would turn back to them. I think reading this Psalm instructs us on how we are to pray for revival. How can we pray for our own country and for our own world?

### **I. Pray for restoration based on what God has done in the past (v. 1-3).**

The best appeal for a prayer is based on what God has done. If God has done something in the past, then we know He can do it again. And we know that God wants to do it.

Too often we pray and appeal to God based on what we want.  
Or based on what we think He should do.  
Or some people believe they have to name it and claim it.  
As if they can force God's hand.

But this is not how the Bible instructs us to pray.  
We should pray according to the Bible itself.

Verse 1, **"Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob"**

This prayer goes back in history.

Recounting the times when God blessed His people.

It is uncertain if there is a particular one in mind.

Sometimes Christian scholars like to pick the exact reference of things.

But there are so many times when God did this to His people.

When they were lost, people had turned from God, the leaders were wicked, the priests had failed, no one made the sacrifices, maybe they were conquered by their enemies, and the land was covered in famine and sin.

Plenty of times when they found themselves at the end of their rope with no hope.

And yet, God came and restored their fortunes.

God show them grace.

Verse 2, **"You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. Selah"**

The primary way God shows grace is through forgiveness.

It is through the forgiveness of our sins.

Getting rid of our iniquity.

And the covering of our sins with the blood of Christ.

This is what restoration ultimately is.

This is what revival ultimately is about.

It is not about the external trappings.

It is not about national pride being restored.

Is is not about the wall being rebuilt or the army being big again.

It is not about having good leaders or the national economy being great.

Biblical restoration is about the forgiveness of sins.  
It is about being coming back to God in repentance.  
The primary marker of revival and restoration is people seeking forgiveness.  
It is people turning from their sins and turning towards God.  
It is people falling on their knees begging for mercy and grace.  
That is restoration.

When we pray for revival, that is what we pray for.  
That is what we need to be sure we focus on.  
We don't need to be thinking about cultural differences.  
Or how nice it would be if everyone started going to church again.  
Or how much we want the right kind of leaders in charge of our nation.

Revival and restoration comes from embracing the gospel.  
It comes from acknowledging your sin and need of God.  
And then God brings the forgiveness of sins.

That is what our own nation needs more than anything.  
That is what the lost need more than anything.  
That is what we need more than anything.  
We all need to be forgiven of our sins.  
We need our iniquity covered by Jesus.  
What does it profit a man if we gain the entire world in an outward revival and restoration that is not matched by repentance?  
Or by true worship of God?

And this is the work God has done in the past.  
This is the work our God always does.  
He brings sinners and the lost sheep back home.

Verse 3, **"You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger."**

Because, when we turn to Jesus He forgives us.

And the wrath of God passes away.  
The wrath of God and the anger of God are hard to describe.  
Because we may picture the angry Old Testament God who throws  
plagues and wants to destroy people.  
That is certainly the image that the world has of God.  
But we need to remember that God is not like us.  
He is not controlled by His emotions.  
He does not get angry or wrathful and lose control like we do.

This is a poetic Psalm and a prayer.  
And descriptions of God's wrath and anger describe God's disposition  
towards sin.  
It is attempting to put into human language the way that the Almighty and  
Holy God cannot be in the presence of sin.  
That injustice in the world is antithetical to who He is.  
It is a violation of Creation.  
It is a blight on the world He made.  
And He will not tolerate it forever.

It is not like He is throwing a tantrum in heaven and our obedience helps  
calm Him down.  
His wrath and anger turn.  
Which means the consequences of our sin are lessened.  
The consequences of sin for Israel were severe.  
They were the curses of the law.  
And today we still face curses for our disobedience.  
Doing life without God does not work  
It does not lead to the good life or to blessings.

So whenever we read things in the Bible, talking about the wrath of God,  
or the anger of God, don't picture your own parent who lost their temper  
or someone who is angry and abusive.  
Recognize this is trying to describe the infinite God in human language.

And recognize that it's describing the attitude of God towards our own sin. It especially recognize that even though that is God's basic disposition towards sin.

This is not how God acts towards us all the time.

And then, even though God has anger and He has wrath he loves.

And He can turn away and withdraw His anger.

And He does so when we come to Him, and we admit our sin our brokenness and our need for him.

When we repent God forgives, and God receives.

God can and does forgive even the very worst of sinners.

### **"Restore us again!"**

This is the prayer.

That God would do again what He has done in the past.

So we pray that God would restore and God would revive today because we know that He did it in the past and ask him to do it again.

We ask God to repeat the blessings that He has given His people.

We asked that once again, God would restore the people bring us back into a relationship with Him, and to take away His anger.

See you again our prayer and when we pray for revival, and when we pray for God to restore things, we don't pray just based on what we want we pray based on what God has done.

We say God you have done this before so it has been in your will. It has been in your power. It has been in your desire. Would you please do it once again?

## **II. Pray for restoration based on God's present grace and love (v. 4-7).**

So we pray based on what God has done in the past we also pray on what He is doing in the present.

We can pray based on what we know God is right now.

And we know, beyond the shadow of a doubt that our God is gracious and loving.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.  
The love and the mercy of God never fade and never disappear.  
He always in every moment is filled with a maximum amount of mercy and grace and love.  
And so when we pray, and we pray for the revival that God would bring, we pray, asking based on the mercy of God.

Verse 4, **"Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us."**

Again is the prayer that God would restore that He would revive that He would bring revival to His people.

Notice as well this is not just a prayer to restore them.

It is not a prayer that God will revive those sinners over there.

It is not a prayer that God would bring revival to all those sinful leaders in that place.

Begin by asking that God would restore us.

Acknowledging that we need His mercy that we need restoration too.

We appeal to the God of our salvation.

We pray to God because He is the merciful God who saves.

He is the God who brought salvation through Jesus Christ, and we pray that He will continue the work of salvation in our lives.

And again is a prayer that He will put away His indignation that He will put away His wrath and He will put away his anger

The prayer that He will forgive that He will forgive us.

The prayer that He will forgive our sins.

Verse 5, **"Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations?"**

We had a lot of questions last week that was getting very honest with God and complaining.

I don't think that's what's happening here.

Last week we saw we can be really honest with God we can complain to God we can tell him what we don't like.

But I don't think that's what the Psalm is doing this time.

It appears more like the Psalm is saying "I know you cannot, and you will not be angry at us forever."

They are saying that they recognize God does send consequences to sin. There is punishment for the wicked.

And sometimes that punishment is on nations and on peoples, and sometimes all the people of God are punished for their sin.

He's acknowledging you won't punish forever because you are merciful.

There may be anger there may be wrath and it will not extend throughout every generation and forever.

It will come to an end.

And so this question here is an appeal to God to act according to His mercy and his grace and His love.

Is an appeal, knowing what they know about God's character.

Verse 6, **"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?"**

So the prayers just God what you do what you've done before?

Won't you act according to your character and won't you revive us?

Show us your grace?

And it's God won't you do it so that we can worship you and praise you.

So that we can tell each other how amazing and how incredible our God is.

So that when we gather to worship this Sunday, it's gonna be a giant party because we are all gonna be over the moon with how wonderful and amazing our God is.

No, don't get it confused.

This is not bargaining or negotiating with God.

OK, this isn't us coming to go with prayer and saying well we know you like to be worship God will give you a bunch of it if you do what we say. That isn't how we should ever God with our requests.

So why do we say this?

Well, we say something like this because it shows that we are appealing to God based on who He is and what He values and His love and His mercy. They appeal and say God we know that you belong to be worshiped and you should be worshiped and we do worship you and if you were revive us we can praise you even more.

You can think of the flip side of when Moses appeals to God not to destroy Israel. He says God, if you do, the other nations will mock you.

So save the people for your name's sake.

And so it's a prayer based on the name of God.

And a prayer based on the glory of God.

But we also pray it because it helps our own hearts have the right priority. It is deciding already that God when you do this we will praise you because you are worthy of praise because we acknowledge that this restoration didn't come from laws or kings or priests or pastors but from you and you alone.

But this isn't negotiating with God like He owns a store at a flea market.

Verse 7, **"Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation."**

This is the appeal Lord would you demonstrate and help us see your faithful steadfast love.

It is a prayer that God would restore because He is a merciful God

A prayer that God would bring revival because He is a gracious God.

A prayer that he would restore our own hearts because He is a loving God.

It's a prayer that God would not just tell us about these things.



There's a prayer that we would not just read about these things or hear them proclaimed by pastors or podcasts.

It is a prayer that God Himself would show off and show us His love in a way we can see and smell and taste and experience.

And it is a prayer that God would give us His salvation.

It's a prayer that He would forgive that He would show that mercy and love, not just in a feeling, not just in an experience, but by saving sinners and delivering them from death.

When you pray, you can pray based on who God is.

Especially if you are going to pray for wild things like revival, then you appeal to the character of God.

Pray because of the attributes of God.

Appeal to His mercy and His love.

Your prayers can never go wrong when you pray based on God.

### **III. Pray for restoration based on future promises (v. 8-13).**

We have prayed based on the past work of God.

We have prayed based on who God is right now.

We also pray based on the promise of what God will do.

Verse 8, **"Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly."**

The prayer now listens to what God will do and say.

But he knows how God is going to respond.

This prayer is based on God's promises.

God will say yes to His people.

Because God has promised to restore the people of Israel.

He will not abandon them forever.

He will bring them back to Him.

The psalmist can pray based on the promise of God.

That God will speak peace.  
He will proclaim the peace of His forgiveness to His people.  
He will revive the saints.

But he is also asking that the people would not fall away again.  
This is a pattern that happens with God's people.  
He saves sinners from their ways.  
He brings us into salvation and we are happy and grateful.  
We do our best to follow Him.  
But then we walk away.  
We start to drift from the faith and start worshipping idols instead.

God lets us drift and see what happens when we ignore Him.  
Eventually we get sick of our sin and like the prodigal son decide to come home.  
God receives us and revives us.

We need to do isn't make sure that we don't fall back into the same cycle.  
Then, after God restores, and after God shows up, and after He revives us  
that we don't turn immediately back into our sins.

Disappointing would it be if God came in He brought revival into our  
community, not just our church but in our county.  
If we just saw thousands of people come to faith in Jesus, and we dedicate  
their lives to Jesus and repent of their sins and turned to holiness.  
And we have wonderful worship services every church gets together and  
we all preach and we all pray we all worship God together for a weeks on  
end.

And then it ends, and we all take a deep breath and get a little bit more  
sleep and then immediately go back all the sins we just repented of.  
How disappointing would that be?

This is why we should pray "Lord when you do bring your revival to your people and when you do restore us what you know, we know that you will help us not go back to our sins.

Proverbs 26:11 says as a dog returns to its vomit so do fools return to sin. Because dog animals and animals can be ridiculous and foolish and there are times when a dog will throw up and then it'll come back later I'll eat it. And it's gross to watch it's gross to think about.

And yet that is a picture of exactly what it is that we do when we finish repenting of our sins when we finish going to church and then we immediately go back to our idols.

Then we immediately start worshiping other things.

Then we immediately start being unforgiving towards each other too wrong.

We immediately start sinning again.

Verse 9, **"Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land."**

The salvation, and the restoration of God is nearer to those who love Him and who fear Him.

The fear of God doesn't mean people who shake and are scared when they think about God it is people who live as if God is real and is alive and paying attention to them.

Those who fear God are those who live as if they are actually following Jesus.

They're following Jesus in their life.

They're living with respect and awe of God

Even when no one is watching.

It is to those people the restoration of God is very near and it is close and it is coming.

Because as we draw near to the Lord and as we seek him to restore as he draws near to us.

That was our call to worship this morning.

Personal revival is always close to us.

The ability to be close to God is not hard to find.

He promises to bring it whenever we seek Him.

The part of that is that we also have to purify your hands and repent of sin.

God will always come near to us if we fear him, and if we are seeking him, but we must repent.

We do this that the glory of God may dwell among us here.

It's almost it was the hope that the glory of God would dwell in the promised land.

The God's glory would not just be there spiritually but physically in a way that they could see like the way they saw the cloud over the tabernacle.

Like they saw the glory of God come over the temple in Jerusalem.

In much greater way, like we saw the glory of God when Jesus came

We should pray and look forward to the day when the glory of God will dwell among us. We will be people, and He will be our God.

Verse 10, **"Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other."**

This a beautiful passage.

God's steadfast love and his faithfulness come together and righteousness and peace kiss.

This is a description of what the restoration of God looks like and will look like in the land.

And it's obviously your metaphor, but there is something strange about it.

Johnmark Mcmillan is one of my favorite musicians. I just love his poetry and the way that he writes music.

His most well-known song came out a long time ago. It's just called how he loves.

And we've sang it here before I don't think we've sung it for a long time.

The song is just about how much God loves us, meditating on his love.

There's a line in it about how the love of God

"And we are His portion and He is our prize

Drawn to redemption by the grace in His eyes  
If His grace is an ocean, we're all sinking  
And heaven meets earth like an unforeseen kiss  
And my heart turns violently inside of my chest  
I don't have time to maintain these regrets  
When I think about, the way...  
That He loves us"

People have lots of opinions about worship music so plenty of people were offended and wanted to change the lyric.  
Or just don't sing it.  
Because we can't have poetic descriptions of kissing.  
And yet, here in God's word we have righteousness and peace kissing.  
Why is God describing it that way?  
It should get our attention.  
Especially if there's something in God's word that makes us pause or sounds different or isn't what we expect or even makes us uncomfortable.  
We should wanna sit and wrestle with it.  
Because He must've said it intentionally may be important to get that reaction out of us?

I think I describe it this way it's trying to describe what is it like when God brings restoration  
What is it like when God restores a nation and brings them back to Him.  
What is it like when the people of God finally from their sins and they come back in the land is restored?  
What is it like when revival is poured out?  
Well, it is like righteousness and peace, kissing together.  
All of the wonderful attributes and things of God come together and meet, and something significant and spiritual, and almost mystical and wonderful happens.  
It's something that almost defies our imaginations

That is what I think God is doing, describes us.

describing that God's restoration when it comes, it is the coming of His love and faithfulness.\_

Verse 11, **"Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky."**

This metaphor of faithfulness, bubbling up from the Earth  
And it is like righteousness is raining down from the sky.  
That is amazing what it is that God will do that righteous acts and  
righteous deeds, and righteous people seem as if they were just popping  
up out of the ground  
Like earthworms after a rain storm.  
Or prairie dogs when you drive by to their colony

Righteousness continues to burst.  
Because we know that we need God to be righteous, we need him to  
restore us. We need Him to make us righteous and one day He will.

And one day it is like it's faithfulness, and His righteousness is raining  
How much do we need?  
We've had a lot of rain recently, so maybe we are not as aware of our  
desperate need for rain.

But there's gonna be some moments in the summer when things get  
unbearably hot for weeks on end.  
There will be times when all of the grass has died when you did your best  
with your flowers, but your garden is no more  
When it is so hot, you cannot bear even being in the pool except before  
the sun is out.  
And we will pray and long for rain.  
We are in a drought of righteousness.  
But one day God will make it rain.

Verse 12, **"Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase."**

The Psalm knows God will restore their land.  
The crops will grow and the land will be restored.  
The harvest will be full.

Verse 13, **"Righteous will go before him and make his footsteps a way."**

This again is the promise.  
God will go before the righteous.  
He will make our way straight and lead us where we should go.

We know God will do this.  
The most clear promises is how one day every knee will bow and tongue will confess.  
We know everyone will see Jesus.  
In the future in Revelation, at some point all the people of God will be revived and restored.  
There will be the great multitude in heaven worshipping our Lord.

That will happen one day.  
And so we can pray confidently hoping God will give us a preview.  
We can pray for God to restore the church.  
Knowing that one day He will present us blameless and spotless before the throne of God.  
Revival will come.  
I don't know if it will come before Christ returns.  
But we can pray confidently knowing God will say yes, even if He does not say yes right now.

I do not want to give the impression that I had.  
That if you copy this Psalm verbatim and pray everything right, then God will have to restore the United States.  
Or even think that God will bring restoration and revival to our community.

But we can hold onto the promises that He makes.  
That He will bring revival and restoration.

In High school, I got very serious about revival and prayer.  
And I began to walk the halls praying for revival.  
I started meeting early before school each day to pray.  
Every day I along with close to a dozen other believers woke up early and  
got to school just to sit in an empty basketball gym and pray.  
I don't know how long we prayed for.  
I think it was weeks.  
But revival never came.  
Hundreds weren't saved.

Was that wasted prayer?  
Did we do it wrong?  
Did we not have enough faith?  
I don't think so.  
I don't think any earnest honest prayers to God are every wasted.  
I don't think praying this Psalm would have been the magic ticket.  
But praying for revival did revive my own heart.  
And it helped me be more like Jesus.

The same is true for us today.  
We should pray for God to restore us.  
To restore and revive our church and our community.  
And we should do so biblically.  
Not to manipulate God.  
But because we love Him.  
Because we trust Him.  
And because we know He will restore us and revive us.  
One day.  
But for now we pray.