

GNITN

The Revival Code: Unlocking Heaven's Next Move

Week 4

Imperfect People, God's Perfect Work

Revivalists

As we peruse the lives of so many of the men who would shape the world around them theologically, we see that they are often like the Apostle Peter, blunt, direct, and rough around the edges socially. Peter would eventually soften his approach as evidenced by the two epistles that bear his name, both seen now as eloquent and well-thought out pleas to the churches he influenced later in his life. We don't always see people who represent themselves well in their writings or their interactions with their contemporaries with some consenting to seeing their opposition burned at the stake with green wood so their execution by fire took longer. God, in His infinite plan still used such vessels and dealt with their imperfections over time and most likely, individually on their road of life made them see those flaws and repent of them. As mentioned before, if we want perfect men and women to lead our revivals, we will be waiting a long time.

Learning From Those Mistakes

Historians often point to the extremes of these errors in applying theology to discredit Christianity altogether. They have evidence to throw out all of God's words and plans by pointing to these unrighteous actions but fail to understand that our Heavenly Father forgives and allows free will to all even though some misuse their power and positions by letting their flesh implement most ungodly rules, regulations, edicts, and even military campaigns. However, this same free will has allowed many Godly people to flourish and, to some, greatly offset the cruel doctrines that hurt so many. To not see the whole picture and realize that people can act in Christ's name but not have Him in their hearts is also not right. And I only bring this up so that we can learn from these mistakes in the next revival. We can and must do better and my hope is we will as long as we let Holy Spirit guide us at every turn.

Calvinism And Arminianism

Nowhere is there such a contrast in theology than Calvinism and Arminianism. In an [article](#) by Mary Fairchild the differences are pretty clear:

In summary, Calvinism centers on the supreme sovereignty of God, predestination, the total depravity of man, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

Arminianism emphasizes conditional election based on God's foreknowledge, man's free will through prevenient grace to cooperate with God in salvation, Christ's universal atonement, resistible grace, and salvation that can potentially be lost.

John Calvin was the champion of the former while one of his ardent students, Jacobus Arminius was the champion of the latter. Arminius would change his theological tune after an extensive study of the book of **Romans**. The point I want to make here is that adherents of both can agree while not slicing and dicing each other up verbally since there is some common ground to be found. And that leads us to laying the groundwork for a future revival, a foundation that will serve us well if we discipline ourselves to heeding it.

Maintaining Unity Amidst Our Differences

This is a lesson that is hard to learn and even harder to implement, yet it must be done for any lasting revival to not only come but exist for a long time. We may experience a bright burst of change at the

beginning of a move of God, but it will splinter and fail if we don't fight the urge to find common ground in our differences. Revival author *Winkie Pratney* sums this up this guideline [thusly](#):
Two conditions of true unity are common understanding and common unselfishness. Wisdom and love - if we want revival, we need them both. It begins with each of us possessing a servant's heart and a genuine love for Christ; pianos tuned to the same tuning fork will also be tuned to one another. From such a true commitment to His Lordship, differences can be accommodated and distinctions maintained without hurtful division. Brothers in the same family may not always agree, but they must not forget that they are still brothers. Those true to him will not hate each other. And that friends, is the commonality of affection and conviction that sets the stage for His entry.

The Reformers

We touched on the Protestant Reformation in our previous lesson, but only briefly. The problem with those who sought to build on what these reformers taught us is that they developed camps based on their favorite teachings without embracing the others. As we embark on learning about the First Great Awakening, we must know that such camps need to come together as *Pratney* admonished us. In a book by *Charles Spurgeon*, the Prince of Preachers he [noted](#) this:

The Reformation was due not so much to the fact that Luther was earnest, Calvin learned, Zwingli brave, and Knox indefatigable as to this - old truth was brought to the front and to the poor the Gospel was preached. Had it not been for the doctrines which they taught, their zeal for holiness and their self-sacrifice, their ecclesiastical improvements would have been of no avail. The power lay not in Luther's hammer and nails, but in the truth of those theses which he fastened up in the sight of all men.

Spurgeon rightfully pointed out that the Reformers personalities weren't the backbone of the movement, rather it was the Godly doctrines they highlighted. And we must not get bogged down today with the differences we have with our leaders today. If we want to see another Great Awakening we must coalesce around the cardinal doctrines of the faith. We may see an initial agreement based on the excitement of the fire, but it will be doused with fighting over our inherent differences. John Robinson who was the pastor to the pilgrims counseled the early Americans to not let their own religious history or religions keep them from letting God move when he told them [this](#):
But, as John Robinson, the Pilgrim fathers' pastor, reminded those who first came to the United States seeking to put these principles into practice in a nation, "many of his contemporaries had failed to go beyond the initial work of the first Reformers." He said, "We have come to a period in religion (when) the Lutherans cannot be drawn beyond what Luther saw. And the Calvinists stick where Calvin left them. Luther and Calvin were precious shining lights in their times, yet God did not reveal His whole will to them. I am very confident that the Lord hath yet more truth and light to break forth out of His Holy Word" (Reclaiming Reformation Day, p. 36).

What Did They Teach Us?

These previous revivalists taught us four things that somehow got lost in the religiosity of their church leaders and they are [summed](#) up by *Pratney* from an article by *George Fry* and *Duane Arnold* in an [article](#) from *Christianity Today* titled *Reclaiming Reformation Day*:

... the Reformers major contributions, the recovery of the scriptures, the centrality of faith, the liberty of conscience, and the priesthood of all believers. In our day these have implications in the areas of personal Bible study, personal relationship to Christ, every Christians right and privilege hear God's voice for themselves, and true community in believer's fellowship.

Each of these key components of Christianity were obscured or even eliminated in the teachings given to the believers in their congregations. *Pratney* summarizes these contributions into three

areas: Freedom, Authority and Destiny. These concepts are hardly new and can be found in the Bible, but their transforming themes can be lost on us unless they are highlighted. Let's go over his summarizations now.

Justification By Faith – Freedom

We are no longer Jews or Greeks or slaves or free men or even merely men or women, but we are all the same—we are Christians; we are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28, TLB)

A believer need not have to prove his worth in the Kingdom by his works because we are made worthy by our faith in Him. Paul the apostle made this extremely clear when arguing for Gentiles to be part of Christianity in the book of **Galatians**. The famous hymn puts it like [this](#):

*My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less Than
Jesus' Blood And Righteousness;
I Dare Not Trust The Sweetest Frame,
But Wholly Lean On Jesus' Name.*

In any revival, the call is for whosoever will to come and be made free without conditions of previous worth or lack thereof. Both the down and out and the up and out are welcome. If we want to have revival we must give up who we let come to church. It may provide for some messy moments, but we can't put restrictions on these new converts that Jesus Himself didn't expect.

The Lordship Of Christ – Authority

The authority of the believer was also drilled into the hearts of converts and seasoned saints alike by *Martin Luther*. The man who literally flogged himself because of his belief that he wasn't worthy, was freed by the concept of being justified by faith alone. He would then go on to preach we function with power given to us by Christ Himself. And it was this right that would allow him to act as *Pratney describes*:

A soldier apparently, hunting for Luther and ordered to arrest him, knocked on his door and asked, "Who lives here?" Luther answered, "Christ lives here!" Could you wake one night to see Satan at the foot of your bed, say, "Oh it's - only you," and go back to sleep? Luther did.

There may be times in the coming revival that you may be called upon to do things you lack the power and the authority to do or be asked to speak on things you are entirely unqualified to do so based on your worldly pedigree. Like Peter on the day of Pentecost, Holy Spirit will empower you and give you the ability to rise up and command an audience as did this apostle and see three thousand or more added to the church in one day. We must remind ourselves of the great teaching now, and not later.

The Sovereignty Of God – Destiny

I like how *Pratney summarizes* this most important fact:

We are part of the essence of history and thus have the opportunity above all others on earth to carry a high and holy sense of destiny. We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. And all power is given to Him in heaven on earth. God can do anything He wants. The final future is not in the hands of men; the outcome of history is not limited to what we can do and what we can concoct. God is the King of the whole earth and He is the Lord of the Church.

You see, if we are to be a part of and lead what I believe to be final revival before the Lord returns, we must know our destiny. And this destiny cannot happen if the God of creation is not intricately involved if not imminently in charge of such a move. This last point is more than the cherry on the top, it is the whole reason for the awakening. It is not the height of arrogance to declare this, it is the soul of confidence derived from a humble knowing of our omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent

Creator. Yes, we have read the end of the book and we do indeed win. However, it is our total reliance on our God that will bring it to pass. I say as another hymn [declares](#):

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war

With the cross of Jesus going on before...

Like a mighty army moves the church of God

Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod

We are not divided, all one body we

One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

That is our prayer saints.