

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

26 February 2023

Our Need for Revival.

Do you need revival?

Of course you do; we all do!

Why do we sleep at night?

Our bodies need revived and rested for the new day that is coming.

What if we did as much for our Spirits as we do for our bodies?

We feed our bodies, we care for our bodies, we rest our bodies.

How about our Spirit?

Which lasts longer?

Our body or our Spirit?

Yes our Spirit or Soul lives forever.

You should have a concern for when you appear before the Lord God Almighty and He asks you what you did to prepare your spirit for life with Him; forever.

If this life is a preparation for the life to come, how prepared are you?

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” *Math. 10:28*

Are you prepared for the life to come?

Are you preparing for the life to come.

Are you bringing the life to come to earth in the way you use your resources?

Including your very existence.

Your existence is your reasonable act of worship.

And you prepare it by the renewing of your mind.

Then you can know and do the perfect will of God.

And we owe God this because of his unfailing kindness toward us.

Got it? You better had!

Or you had better be getting it.

We do not want God looking at us and saying, “You wasted the time, talents and resources that I gave you to use for my kingdom.”

We are here for a purpose.

And it is not to do everything for our benefit or pleasure.

It is to partner with God in accomplishing His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

And to continue the ministry of Jesus “The Christ”.

Giving hope to the hopeless, healing the sick, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, restoring sight to the blind, releasing the captive, setting people free.

Psalm 80 contains a truth that is urgently important to all of us.

It is a word from God that will help us understand the events of our time.

It will lead to a heart cry for revival, which in turn will lead us to new life in the church.

There are three words that pinpoint this truth.

Psalm 80:12 & 14. “Why have you broken down her hedges, so that all they who pass by the way do pluck her? . . . Return, we beseech you, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.”

The first word to consider is the word Hedges.

The purpose of hedges.

At the heart of this truth is a biblical understanding of hedges.

In the Bible we find hedges around three things: a nation, a family and a person.

God's hedge is his invisible wall of protection that he builds around a nation, a family, a person, a church, or even our possessions when we are obedient to him.

In our Scripture for today, the hedge was protection for a vineyard and a property marker for the owners.

In the New Testament, Jesus prayed for Peter, essentially building a hedge of protection around him.

Jesus also prayed for protection for his disciples.

Paul prayed for those under his spiritual care.

Second Corinthians 10:4-5 provides powerful insight into this kind of protection.

The problem with hedges.

Verse 12 mentions "broken-down hedges."

Somehow the hedge around Israel was demolished, and the nation was ravaged by enemies like a wild boar ravages a vineyard.

Today enemies like "wild boars" are running rampant throughout the world, the nation, and even our own area.

The United States has been suffering a critical moral crises for many years.

We have been confronted with terrorism, street crime, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual immorality, and the decay of marriage and the family.

But there is more.

Spiritual illiteracy, apathy, irreverence, greed, pride, all of these threaten America and the world.

Something has been happening in America.

Our hedges are almost broken down.

Who has broken down the hedges?

Verse 12 says that God is the one who had done this.

But why?

For three reasons:

To bring judgment on this people.

To awaken us to spiritual vigilance.

To bring us to confession and repentance. A holy God demands a holy life.

Hope

The second word is hope.

Is there any hope that God will establish the hedges?

Yes, if we understand the ways that God builds a hedge.

God builds a "hedge" through godly people.

Ezekiel 22:30 states. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge."

Job was a godly man.

He was perfect, not without sin, but wholeheartedly devoted to pleasing God.

He was "upright"; that is, all his relationships were right, with God, with self, and with others.

He "feared God," honored him, and "eschewed evil," hated evil and turned away from it.

His outward walk was like his inward relationships.

God builds a hedge through his Word.

Ezekiel 13 teaches this truth.

Ezekiel was speaking against the prophets of Israel, who had not retained the hedge.

They followed their own minds and saw nothing.

They did not have the vision the Lord gives to his true prophets.

This example from Scripture teaches us that God builds a hedge through prophets who preach his Word.

As these servants of God proclaim his standard, God can build a hedge of protection around a person, family, church, city or nation.

God builds a hedge through prayer.

Ezekiel 22:30 says, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

God builds a hedge when his people engage in intercessory prayer.

Soon after the colonists came to America, many of them turned away from God and the nation

experienced a moral slump.

The people were poisoned by greed, the churches were almost empty, and European atheism filled the vacuum.

In New England some people began to pray for revival.

In 1734 in Northampton, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and in one service hundreds of people repented of their sins and turned to the Lord.

Unbelief was diverted, righteous living returned, and in a short time one-sixth of the population was won to Christ.

Churches were filled with worshipers.

In 1849 revival again came in answer to prayer.

The Lord always works in response to prayer.

God builds the hedges of protection when we pray.

Heart cry.

When the psalmist Asaph realized what was happening to the hedges of protection, he wrote this heart cry for revival: "Return, we beseech you, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine."

Our prayer is, Lord, visit this nation!

You have broken down the hedges that guarded our country, but we know you want to bless us again.

Turn us to you! This is our heart cry!

Lord, visit your church! You birthed it.

You are building it.

It belongs to you.

It exists for your purpose.

This is our heart cry for revival for souls.

Lord visit our families!

Many are suffering.

We need help. Restore the hedge around our families.

Visit our home with revival!

Lord visit our lives! Get our attention.

We are being overcome with evil. We have sinned.

Protection is gone. Lord visit our Lives!

A while back, a young seminary student was preparing to preach the evening service at a church one Sunday.

The elderly pastor had witnessed some glorious outpourings of the Spirit in his early years.

He longingly told the student that he and his wife had prayed every morning for ten years to see one more mighty move of the Spirit.

The young student had hardly started his sermon when a woman began to weep and then another and another.

Soon the entire congregation was on its knees.

In the midst of prayer and weeping, people were accepting Christ as Savior, old animosities were being healed, broken families were being united, and new spiritual commitments were being made.

The pastor walked slowly down the aisles and whispered, "He did it one more time."

Lord, visit this vine!