

The Gospel of Matthew
"Revival in Our Times"
Matthew 5-7,8,23.

Introduction

1. There was a critical point in the history of Israel when a spiritual revival could have come to the nation--it didn't!

2. The Messiah was born; He was heralded (Matt. 3); He attested His right to be King (Matt. 4)--then, He announced the true character of the Kingdom of the Heavens (Matt. 5-6); He advertised His presence. The Kingdom was summarily rejected (Matt. 12) and later utterly repudiated (Matt. 14-26).

3. The appeal of our Lord to the nation Israel (He speak to the multitudes in one long discourse, cf. Matt. 5:1; 7:28) for true repentance to enjoy the Kingdom is marvelous to study! It serves to illustrate how revival can come in our time.

4. The big issue with Israel then and with us now is the matter of discriminating priorities. Consider, for example, Mark 8:36; Heb. 9:27; Luke 12:15,21; Eph. 6:10.

5. Specifically, wherein did the Lord make His appeal? How does this reach us? What can we do to bring about revival in our times? Here are some important priorities:

1. First your brother, then your gift. Matt. 5:23-24.
How clear the divine order is! The Evil One delights to sow seeds of discord, but the Lord notes the path of victory. It commands His immediate blessing. To paralyze God's work, ignore the injunction here. No believer can be right if he is consciously at odds with his brother. Think hard over the word "remember" in v. 23.
2. First the spiritual, then the temporal. Matt. 6:33
Even in days of shortage, the Lord will provide IF we put His claims first. The world scene in which we find ourselves is

basically materialistic. That men put a prime interest in material gain is patent. He appeals for an emphasis on: kingdom of God (to be saved, by application) and His righteousness (to be sanctified, by application). Amongst many verses remember 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3. He guarantees the supply of our needs IF we put Him first (cf. Phil. 4:19 and 1 Kings 17:13-16).

Is it true that you put more concern on the spiritual than the temporal? If not, beware, for you have dammed up His blessing in your life!

3. First judge yourself, then your brother. Matt. 7:3-5.

It would be better for understanding to read "splints" for "mote" in v. 3 and "plank" for "beam." How blind we are to our own faults, yet so keenly observant of the failings of others. There IS a criticism faculty in every church. If you happen to serve thereon, make certain you follow the ground rules (Gal. 6:1).

4. First want what Christ wants, then what you want. Matt. 8:21-22.

Here it is--that deadly enemy of the blessing of God: "me first" disciple. Why that harmful habit? that failure to win souls? that lack of obedience? that divisiveness in the church? that???? Why? "Me First!"

5. First the inside, then the outside. Matt. 23:25,26.

This is the nub of the whole matter. Revival does not come with outward reformation, but with inward cleaning! This is where God has always placed His concern (1 Sam. 16:7 and Psalms 51:6,10).

Conclusion Beloved one, revival can be in our time.

Israel missed it in her day. Let the lesson be diligently learned. When our hearts are truly repentant, seeking His will, the fire will come down (2 Chron. 6,7). Amen.

NOTES