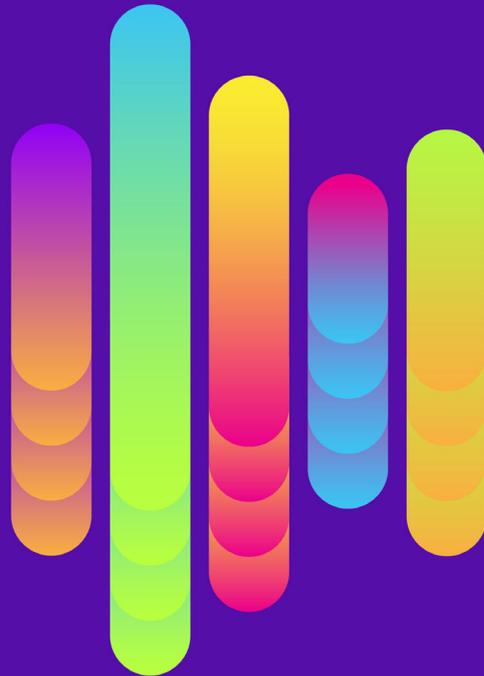


REVIVAL

five shifts to host revival



Revival is on the way. We cannot plan a revival. Revival is something God does. But we can prepare and pray for it. God is calling us to prepare for revival and we believe we are going to host revival right here in the heart of downtown Colorado Springs. Get ready.

PENTECOST SUNDAY • REVIVAL • John 17:24–26 • Tim McConnell • May 31, 2020

I am so jealous of my friend, Eddie. He went and got tested, and he has the antibodies in his system. I know this doesn't grant total certainty of freedom, but it makes me a little jealous. I'd love to know that I'm past this virus, wouldn't you? One day we will be. One day we will be all done with this one, and I think we will be pleased to see how much less damage it did than say Spanish Flu or other plagues in history, and the sacrifices we have made will feel worth it. I hope that's true. But I sure want to be past it, to have the antibodies, to know I get to be part of the cure! Not only do we want this trial to end, but deep down, we want to be part of the cure! I'd love to know that I'm part of the cure—that I am one place where this virus ends. In the meantime, we watch. Crisis leads to Christ. When everything else is stripped away, what matters most rises to the top. We are praying for **Revival** and preparing to host Revival right here.

From time to time God does this. The Holy Spirit is stirred up and poured out to fill hearts, change minds, touch souls, heal lives. Like on Pentecost in Acts 2. Today is Pentecost Sunday. We remember a day when ordinary men and women, young and old, were filled up with the power of the Holy Spirit stirred up and poured out by God into them. It was the birth of the church! The church. The church we know that is clear, not confused, [Confusion to Clarity] about its mission. The church that isn't a building but a people [Building to People]. The church that is more in love with its future than its past [Past-Bound to Future-Captured] and knows how to follow God's wisdom out of debt and into investing in the Kingdom [Indebted to Investing]. A church, a people on mission, not spoon-fed but coached up, not to be served but to serve [Served to Empowered]. A church like that can host revival. It can host new life in Christ. A church like that, a people like that, can be where sickness ends and cure begins. It can happen. Jesus prayed for it.

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world" (John 17:24). The life of Jesus didn't begin with His birth. The birth was the beginning of His incarnational ministry. Jesus has always been. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos, the Word made flesh. His glory goes back before the creation of the world. His glory goes forward into the restoration of all things. Now, let me tell you the good news, Jesus

wants you to be with Him. "I want them to be with me where I am. To see my glory." Jesus loves you. Jesus wants to be with you. Jesus wants you to be with Him.

This "wanting" in Jesus, it is very strong. Don't doubt it. Don't fall asleep to it. Jesus wants to be with you and wants you to be with Him. So much so that Jesus made salvation possible. "I want them to be at home with me, with us Father." "Enough to give up heaven and be born a humble child?" Yes. "Enough to be misunderstood and ridiculed when you show them the beauty of the Kingdom of God?" Yes. "Enough to be arrested, beaten raw with whips, crowned with thorns, spit on, washed in your own blood?" Yes. "Enough to go down into death itself to take the consequence that is on them?" "Yes. I want them to be with me where I am, in glory. I want to be the cure. I want to be the life." Jesus wants you cured, restored, made whole, forgiven, redeemed. He wants you so much he came to seek and to save you. So, He was sent: "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me" (John 17:25).

Now verse 26, the last line of this prayer we have been studying for six weeks: "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (John 17:26). "I have made you known to them." Jesus discloses the character of God. Jesus faithfully represents the Kingdom of God. If you want to know God, look to Jesus. He said once to Philip, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 14:9). Jesus makes the Father known. And, He says, "I will continue to make you known." What was that? Well, what was Jesus just about to do? He was about to go to the cross, to die for all sins, to have His body laid in a tomb, and He was about to rise again on Easter morning. He was about to see the church born in the power of the Spirit with a mission to reach this world. Jesus will continue to make the glory of the Lord known.

Why? Keep going here. "I will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them." Jesus will do all this for one purpose, that the love, the love of God; the love that God the Father has for Jesus, God the Son; the love of God so intense and intimate, so powerful that it could be said that

all existence is the product of this love, that creation itself is the child of this love, being itself is because of this love; the love between God the Father and Jesus the Son, that love—that love may be “in them.” In you. Jesus will not stop until you feel the love of God within you. In the words of the praise song, “there’s no shadow you won’t light up, mountain you won’t climb up, coming after me. There’s no wall you won’t kick down, lie you won’t tear down, coming after me.” Romans 5 says, “And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5). From time to time the Spirit of God is stirred up and poured out, until people feel His love. Until you feel it.

“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them” (John 17:26). I myself, says Jesus. There is no revival in the world until there is revival in individual souls. There is no revival in the church until there is revival in your heart. There is no revival as a collective phenomenon—it’s about one person at a time. One heart at a time. It’s about you. There is no more important question for you to answer. There is a disease in this world. Do you want the antibodies? We will all be asked soon, will you take the vaccine? Will you take the test? Will you be part of a cure? There is no more important question in all your life than this: will you receive Jesus into your heart? He is the cure. With Him inside you, you are part of the cure. Jesus will not stop making Himself known to you “in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

This is the one question I have for you today as we close this series, celebrate Pentecost, wrap up this monumental prayer of Jesus: will you have the love of God? Will you have Jesus inside yourself? From time to time it happens. The Holy Spirit of God is stirred up and poured out, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. But sometimes we struggle to feel it. What is blocking? What is keeping the love of Jesus from penetrating your heart today?

I once sat with a 15-year-old girl on the front steps of the church. She trusted me enough to tell me something she had never shared with another soul. She could not feel the love of Jesus in her heart. When she got close to Jesus, she felt dirty. When she was only 8, her older brother abused her. It was blocking the

outpouring of love. We prayed that whatever happens to our bodies on the outside, that the Holy Spirit would pour His love into our hearts on the inside. She needed restoration. She found it in Jesus and started new life. The block was removed and the love of God poured in.

I once knew a man who was in sales, traveling a lot, and he cheated on his wife in every city. The marriage fell apart, but he turned to Jesus. He needed forgiveness. He found it in Jesus. He believed that what Jesus had done could pay the penalty for his heinous sins. He could be forgiven! The block was removed; the love of God poured in.

I baptized a Lieutenant Colonel one summer, three weeks before he went to Iraq. I asked him why he was, at age 42, ready to be baptized. He said he had thought God loved people, but never really considered that God might know him by name and love him personally. Something I had said in a chapel service stirred that up. He needed to be known by God, personally. He found it in Jesus. The block was removed and the love poured in.

A friend of mine was very active in the church. He was even in leadership. But he didn’t understand grace. “Why do you preach so much about Jesus?” he asked. “Why Jesus, not just God? We do justice, love mercy, and serve God. If we do well enough, I figure God is good to recognize that we tried our best and welcome us into His family. But you always talk about Jesus and what He did and how we are to talk to Him. Why?” Because no matter how well we do at being moral, within church or without church, no matter how good we do, it will not match the righteousness of God or earn us a seat at God’s table. Jesus is not a recruiter for a moral program, or a representative selling you a system of beliefs. Jesus offers a relationship. He reaches out a hand and says, “Follow me.” That is the only way to be at home with God. You have to let Jesus take you and lift you up. You have to surrender to Him. Later that year, he gave his testimony at a men’s retreat. The theme of his talk was surrender. The hardest battle of his life was to surrender to Jesus. To let Jesus save him. “I never really understood grace until I surrendered,” he said. He needed grace. He found it in Jesus. The block was removed and the love of God poured in.

One more fellow I know told me this story. Early in his career, his hopes for advancement were dashed by

a rejection letter. He spent days in his apartment, drinking, sleeping, wallowing in his despair. One night watching television the show ended, and on came a Billy Graham Crusade. He wanted to turn it off, but it felt like something was holding him down in his chair. He couldn't rise. He couldn't turn his eyes away. The message of the Gospel came pouring through that screen and into his heart, and the next thing he knew he was on his knees giving his life to Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. He needed hope. It was found in Jesus. The block was removed and the love of God poured in.

It happens from time to time. The Holy Spirit of God is stirred up and poured out into hearts. The block is removed. The love of God pours in. It can be yours today. For all the things that come to you through that screen you are staring at right now, I stand to represent the truth to you today—the love of God can come into your life right now through Jesus Christ. “I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them” (John 17:26). Some eras are so comfortable they lull us to sleep. But there are other moments. Times like we are in today. Times that force us to take stock. Times that prompt us and spur us to action. Crisis leads to Christ. Jesus makes the love of God known. And the ministry of Jesus is yours today if you open your heart. Love is yours, and the glory, and the eternal life. Jesus said, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20).

I am going to invite you to pray with me now. A simple prayer to open a door, to remove a block, to allow the love of God to pour into your own heart. I invite you to follow along with me. If you are alone, it is easy. If you are in a group or with your family, you might feel bold to pray along, but if it is only in your own heart, that's fine. Jesus hears you. God reaches out in Jesus Christ, and if you open your heart, He will be in you, with you, and you in Him: “Lord Jesus Christ, I open my heart to you, forgive my sins, remove whatever blocks your way, pour out your love in me, thank you for giving your life, now I give you mine. In Jesus' name. Amen.”

STUDY GUIDE

PENTECOST SUNDAY • REVIVAL • “Host Revival”

John 17:24–26

UP: **UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word**

Friends, humanity is being rocked right now by needing to physically distance ourselves from one another. For the Christian, we do this out of love for neighbor. Fight hard to distinguish these two realities: physically distancing and relationally separating.

Now is the time to become the greatest artist you have ever been. Create ways to stay relationally and spiritually tethered to your core circle. We need each other. We are gifts to one another! Make phone calls; text photographs; set up video gatherings. Together, we are the hands and feet of Christ to one another and this city!

Begin your study in prayer. Read and reflect on John 17:24–26.

- 1) What is Jesus' prayer for you in our passage this week? How does this make you feel?
- 2) According to verse 26, what kind of love does Jesus desire to be in us? How does this make you feel?

OUT: **Connect With the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)**

3) Pastor Tim writes, “There is no revival in the world until there is revival in individual souls... One heart at a time. It's about you.” What does this say about the interconnectedness of mission and your own personal walk with the Lord? Are you closer to God than last week? Are you growing in the likeness of Christ so that the world might see Christ through your life laid down at His feet?

IN: **Connect with Each Other**

Pastor Tim writes, “Jesus will do all this for one purpose, that the love, the love of God; the love that God the Father has for Jesus, God the Son; the love of God so intense and intimate, so powerful that it could be said that all existence is the product of this love, that creation itself is the child of this love, being itself is because of this love; the love between God the Father and Jesus the Son, that love—that love may be ‘in them.’ In you. Jesus will not stop until you feel the love of God within you... This is the one question I have for you today as we close this series, celebrate Pentecost, wrap up this monumental prayer of Jesus: will you have the love of God?” How do you respond to God desiring to pour His love into your heart? How can you grow in your ability to receive God's love? Can you identify a “block” in your life that is preventing God's love from penetrating your heart? Connect with your circle about what you are processing in order to pray together and build one another up in Christ.