The Diagnosis

SCRIPTURE

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" — Psalm 85:6 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

If you went to a doctor with chest pains, and he prescribed you a band-aid for your finger, you would be concerned. A correct diagnosis is essential for a correct cure. As we look at the church today—and more importantly, at our own lives—what is the diagnosis? What is our single greatest need? Is it more money? Is it better buildings? Is it more eloquent pastors or better technology? We often think that if we just had more resources, we could finish the work. But the sermon identifies a different need. The messenger of the Lord has stated, "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs." We are like a factory with impressive machinery. We have the gears, the belts, and the workers, but the engine is silent. We lack the power to run the machine. That power is the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, our religious activities are just motion without meaning. We are busy, but we are not fruitful. This week, we are going to confront this reality. We must stop looking for external solutions to internal problems. Our greatest need is not a new program; it is a new life. It is a revival of "true godliness"—not a form of godliness that denies the power, but a living connection with Jesus Christ that transforms the heart.

PRAYER

Lord, I confess that I have been focused on the machinery of my life rather than the power. I am busy, but I am dry. I agree with Your diagnosis: my greatest need is a revival of Your Spirit. Wilt Thou not revive me again? Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Psalm 85:4–7
- Revelation 3:14–19
- Psalm 42:1–2
- Psalm 51:10–12
- Ezekiel 36:26–27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What symptoms can reveal a need for spiritual revival?

2. Read Psalm 85:4–7. How does this passage deepen today's understanding of God's work in our lives?

3. What would it look like for you to assess where spiritual appetite has diminished?

Revival and Reformation

SCRIPTURE

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

We often use the terms "revival" and "reformation" interchangeably, but they are two distinct things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life. It is the "quickening" of the powers of mind and heart. It is a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation, on the other hand, signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. The sermon illustrates it this way: Revival is the spark of life; Reformation is the change in lifestyle that follows. You cannot have one without the other. Revival without reformation is just emotional excitement that fades away. Reformation without revival is just cold legalism—trying to change your habits without a change of heart. Imagine a corpse. You can dress it in a new suit (reformation), but it is still dead. It needs life (revival). Conversely, if a dead man comes back to life, he won't want to stay in the grave clothes; he will want to change his garments. God wants to do both works in you. He wants to breathe new life into your prayer closet (Revival) and then empower you to change your diet, your entertainment, and your temper (Reformation). Do not be content with just "turning over a new leaf." You need a new life. Ask God for the breath of life today, and then be willing to walk in the new habits that He commands.

PRAYER

Father, save me from the trap of trying to reform my outside without reviving my inside. I don't just want to change my habits; I want a new heart. Breathe Your life into me, and then give me the strength to change my ways. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Psalm 51:10–12
- Ezekiel 36:26–27
- James 2:17
- Psalm 85:4–7
- Revelation 3:14–19

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why must changes of conduct be rooted in a renewed heart?

2. Consider Psalm 51:10–12. What does this passage add to the main lesson of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to ask for inner renewal before addressing an outward habit?

The Condition of Laodicea

SCRIPTURE

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." — Revelation 3:17 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The greatest obstacle to receiving "Our Greatest Need" is the belief that we already have it. This is the Laodicean deception. We look at our "goods"—our correct theology, our health message, our Sabbath keeping—and we say, "I am rich. I have the truth. I have need of nothing." But Jesus, the True Witness, looks at us and says, "You don't know your true condition. You are actually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." This is a shocking diagnosis. How can we be so wrong about ourselves? It is because we are judging by the wrong standard. We compare ourselves to the world and think we are doing great. But Jesus compares us to His own character, and He sees that we are destitute of His love and power. We have the theory of the truth, but we lack the power of the truth. We are like a starving man dreaming of a banquet. He thinks he is full, but when he wakes up, he is faint with hunger. We need to wake up. We need the "eye salve" of the Holy Spirit to see our true spiritual poverty. Only when we realize how desperate we are will we plead for the gold of faith and the white raiment of Christ’s righteousness. The first step to being filled is admitting you are empty.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, shatter my illusions. I have been proud of my spiritual knowledge, but I am poor in love. Apply the eye salve to my eyes. Show me my true condition so that I can come to You for the riches I desperately need. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Revelation 3:14–22
- Matthew 5:3–6
- Proverbs 16:18
- Psalm 51:10–12
- Ezekiel 36:26–27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why can a sense of spiritual wealth conceal our greatest need?

2. How does Revelation 3:14–22 help clarify the spiritual principle in today's reading?

3. What would it look like for you to bring a specific area of pride before Christ?

The Prayer of Reception

SCRIPTURE

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" — Luke 11:13 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

If the Holy Spirit is our greatest need, why do we not have more of it? Is God reluctant to give? Is He holding back His power? No. The problem is not with the Giver; it is with the receivers. Jesus assures us that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than earthly parents are to give food to their hungry children. Think about that. If your child was starving and asked for bread, would you ignore them? Of course not. God is eager to pour out His Spirit. So why the delay? Because we do not ask. Or, we ask casually. We must come to God with a genuine hunger for His presence, asking in faith for the very gift He delights to give.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, forgive me for my casual prayers. I have treated Your greatest gift as a common thing. Today I ask with all my heart: Fill me with Your Spirit. I am hungry for more of You. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Luke 11:9–13
- John 14:16–17
- Acts 4:31
- Revelation 3:14–22
- Matthew 5:3–6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can we pray for the Holy Spirit with genuine receptiveness?

2. Read Luke 11:9–13. What connection do you see between this passage and today's Scripture?

3. What would it look like for you to make a deliberate time to ask God for the Spirit's guidance?

Unity Precedes Power

SCRIPTURE

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." — Acts 2:1 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Before the fire fell, the unity was formed. Acts 2:1 tells us they were in "one accord." This didn't happen by accident. In the days leading up to Pentecost, the disciples had to do the hard work of reconciliation. They had to put away their differences, their desire for supremacy, and their petty jealousies. We often pray for the power of the early church, but we are unwilling to pay the price of unity. We want the tongues of fire, but we also want to keep our tongues of criticism. We want the boldness of Peter, but we still hold grudges like children. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Unity. He cannot dwell in a divided heart or a divided church. If there is someone you are refusing to forgive, you are blocking the flow of the Spirit. If there is a root of bitterness in your heart toward a brother or sister, you are insulating yourself against the Latter Rain. "Our Greatest Need" requires us to humble ourselves. It requires us to say, "I was wrong," and "I forgive you." We must press together. The devil knows that if we ever come into the unity of the faith, nothing will be restrained from us. Let us dismantle the barriers of pride today so that the Spirit can have free course among us.

PRAYER

Lord, search me. Is there any friction in my heart toward another believer? Help me to put away my pride and seek peace. Bring us into one accord so that we can be a fit vessel for Your power. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Acts 1:14
- Acts 2:1–4
- Ephesians 4:1–6
- Luke 11:9–13
- John 14:16–17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can pride and division hinder united prayer and witness?

2. What encouragement or instruction does Acts 1:14 offer in light of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to take a humble step toward peace with another believer?

Power for a Purpose

SCRIPTURE

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me..." — Acts 1:8 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Why do we want the Holy Spirit? Is it so we can have a "spiritual high"? Is it so we can feel good during worship? God does not give His power for our entertainment; He gives it for His employment. Acts 1:8 is clear: "Ye shall receive power... and ye shall be witnesses." The purpose of the outpouring is evangelism. It is to finish the work. The Holy Spirit is the equipment for service. If we have no intention of witnessing to our neighbors, sharing the truth, or serving the lost, why should God give us the power? That would be like putting a jet engine in a car that is parked in the garage. Many of us are praying, "Lord, give me power," while we are sitting on the couch of idleness. But the promise is often realized in the "going." As we step out in faith to share a tract, to give a Bible study, or to help the needy, the Spirit meets us there. The Jordan River didn't part until the priests' feet touched the water. If you want to experience "Our Greatest Need," get busy with the Master's business. Be a witness. Open your mouth. As you pour out to others, God will pour into you. The channel that gives is the channel that receives.

PRAYER

Master, I don't want power just for my own comfort. I want power to be a witness. Show me who I can serve today. As I step out to share Your love, fill me with the Spirit to speak Your word with boldness. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Matthew 28:18–20
- 2 Corinthians 4:5–7
- Acts 1:14
- Acts 2:1–4
- Ephesians 4:1–6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What purpose should guide our desire for spiritual power?

2. How does Matthew 28:18–20 support or expand the lesson we have considered today?

3. What would it look like for you to use one gift to point someone toward Christ?

Sabbath Summary & Reflection

SCRIPTURE

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." — 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV)

SABBATH REFLECTION

This week, we have faced the reality of Our Greatest Need. We diagnosed our lack of power and identified the Laodicean deception that blinds us. We learned that Revival (new life) and Reformation (new habits) must go together. We saw that Unity is the landing strip for the Spirit, and that prayer is the key that unlocks the storehouse of heaven. On this Sabbath, let us rest in the assurance that God wants to answer this prayer. He is not reluctant. He is waiting for the channel to be cleared. • Reflect: Do you feel a hunger for the Spirit that you didn't have at the start of the week? • Evaluate: Is there a habit you need to surrender or a relationship you need to restore? • The Invitation: Begin each morning by asking God to revive your heart, reform your life, and fill you with His Spirit so that you may be His witness.

PRAYER

Father, we agree with Your word. A revival of true godliness is our greatest need. We humble ourselves. We seek Your face. Heal our backslidings, fill us with the Holy Ghost, and finish Your work in us and through us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- James 4:6–10
- Acts 2:42–47
- Acts 1:8
- Matthew 28:18–20
- 2 Corinthians 4:5–7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the weekly study direct us from diagnosis toward repentance and service?

2. How does James 4:6–10 bring together the spiritual lessons of this week?

3. What would it look like for you to commit to a sustainable practice of prayer and cooperation?