

Hungry? Why Wait?

Jeremiah 29:11-14; 2 Chronicles 7:13-14; Ezekiel 37:11-14; Psalm 63:1-8

Central Idea: How desperate for a move of God in your life are you, and what are you going to do about it?

Introduction

There are many things in this world that are not free. You have to fight for them. You have to spend money to get them. But some things are free, and most people won't hesitate to obtain such items. I have here today a whole basket of free snickers candies. The title today is borrowed from Snickers as well. These are totally free. Anyone can have one or two or three. The question becomes, what would you do to get one? How far would you go to get one of these little guys? What's holding you back from taking one right now, in the middle of the sermon?

While most of us have no trouble taking free candy, almost none of us realize the resource that we have in our relationship with God. We're more than willing to even look foolish in front of others for free things, but not one of us would use the same devotion and desire when talking about our walk with God. What if I told you that God wants you to seek Him above all other ventures, and that He's not hiding from you, but is waiting for you to truly and devotedly seek Him? If we were hungry for God, He would come and fill us. But are we hungry? What are you waiting for in your walk with God? Why aren't you deeper in Him?

Text – Jeremiah 29:11-14

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

- I. The Lord promises that we will find Him.
 - A. God's promises for us are linked to our seeking Him.
 - i. As with mere candy, many of us have certain hindrances and aversions to seeing God's plans fulfilled in our lives. I think that most of the time, God's plan for you is not realized on schedule because we kick against His plans.

- ii. God's plans for us are positive plans. He has His very best in store for us as His children. He wants us to prosper and to have hope and a future. But many times, we subvert God's plans through our disobedience and unfaithfulness.
- iii. We set back the schedule of God's design in our lives when we sin against Him for sure, but we also set back His plan when we don't wholeheartedly seek after Him and serve Him.
- iv. Those who live a holy lifestyle run from the world into the arms of Jesus. We seek Jesus' opinion, Jesus' will. We want to please Him and have His attention.
- v. We are more concerned with His power to live out our days rather than our own resources. He is the very center of all that we are and all that we want to be.
- vi. True revival and renewal do not begin in your life until you grow tired and sick of what the world has to offer and begin to long for God and His things. True revival starts when you become desperate for God to the point that you choose to not live without more of Him in your life than anything else.
- vii. When we seek God, it is clear from Scripture that we receive His plan and His promises and blessings. But when we don't seek God, when we decide to not be desperate for Him, we make our own choices and look to other sources.
- viii. To receive God's plan for our lives, it is also clear from the Scripture that we must seek God. Seeing God's plans come to fruition in your life means seeking Him with your whole being.
- ix. **Application:** What are the plans God has for you in your life? How is He fulfilling them? You must seek God first, and His righteousness as Matthew 6:33 puts it, or you will not see God's plan of hope and a future in your life. Seek God only and often, and you will see what He has in store for you.

B. Seeking the Lord requires desperation and focus.

- i. We have lost the art and the discipline of seeking the Lord, of tarrying at the altar, and of not leaving until He answers us. We have turned to other things that are quicker or more in-the-moment.
- ii. We have lost the patience and the desire to wait on the Lord's reply and on His presence. Instead, we turn to quick fixes. And a revival is not going to happen until we are sunk on all other possibilities than God Himself and His presence.
- iii. It's the mistake made in the Garden of Eden that God is not good enough, that there was something more than the presence of God. Every moment

of our lives could be lived in the presence of God, and yet we turn away from times to seek His face.

- iv. There's always something more important, the next event or the next task, lunch, supper, work, family. When will we wait on God? When will we wait in His presence? When will we do the hard work of seeking Him?
- v. Until we completely give our attention, time and effort to seeking the Lord, we will not see revival. We will not be renewed. We will stick with our other methods of being renewed and revived. We will look elsewhere.
- vi. Waiting on the Lord is not a waste of time. It is not easy. It is hard. And it takes our everything, our desire, our will, our patience. God is waiting on us to seek Him. If we would, He would come to us.
- vii. James tells us that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. The question is not if God is ready to come to us. It is if we are ready to come to Him. In Revelation, Jesus is waiting at the door of our hearts. Why is He waiting? He's waiting for us to open up to Him!
- viii. The problem with seeing revival is not that it is hard for God to move among His people or even that He has chosen not to move among us. It is that we have rejected the idea of waiting on Him and seeking Him. We don't do it anymore.
- ix. What percentage of us comes to prayer meetings? What percentage of us waits at these altars? Who has come to God and not left until He has provided His answers? We all give God a shot, but then go somewhere else. We are an impatient and lazy people.
- x. Revival will not happen among us until we get serious about God and discipline ourselves to seek Him alone. There is no other savior. There is no other product or event more important or potent than our God. If we truly believed that, then we would tarry at these altars. We would seek God until we had our answer.
- xi. Our services would be about pressing in, about learning how to pray, about personally knowing that presence of God, that Shekinah glory, but we don't know anything about most of that in my own generation. All I have is memories.
- xii. **Application:** God's revival and renewal should not be memories! When will we get sick of not seeing Him move? When will we desire His presence again? When will we make Him our top priority? When will all other things around us fade? When will we have the guts to see His answer through? God wants to see desperation in His people. He wants us to be able to say like Peter when Jesus asked if the disciples would leave Him too, "Lord, where else will we go? For you alone hold the words of life!"

Text – 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

¹³ When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, ¹⁴ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

II. The Lord promises that we will be heard.

A. Sometimes God disrupts our selfish patterns.

- i. Many people will quote from 2 Chronicles 7:14 about the promise of God answering our prayers. They'll even give it a fair shake when they talk about the onnis being on us to pray when things happen to us and we need God's help.
- ii. But very few will give this verse in its context, along with the beginning of the promise. The beginning of the promise does not say, "When things aren't going your way...pray."
- iii. The beginning of the promise of God hearing His people is actually initiated by God. These things He say He is doing. I think it's to grab the attention of His people.
- iv. Who is the agent of the havens being shut up, of there being no rain? Who sends the locusts both here and in the book of Joel? God does. God takes the responsibility for the "evil" coming upon Israel!
- v. Because of James 1:13-14, almost all good theologies have a prohibition against blaming God for temptations that we meet. But this is not a temptation. It is, however, a trial!
- vi. Why would a loving, good God keep rain from His people's crops? Why would He allow, or even more actively, appoint draughts and locust destructions?
- vii. The Bible is clear that God is sovereign. Let us not mistake His sovereign moves to grab our attention and show us that He is the reason we are prosperous for God allowing or even being the agent of evil.
- viii. God does not tempt with evil. But God will send trials to those who do not look to Him. He will actively pursue those of His people who say He is the center of their world, but live as though He doesn't exist.
- ix. When God's people ignore Him, don't consider Him their center, and live as though He is not present and active, God shakes things up. He reminds us of our priorities.
- x. **Application:** Are you having strife in your life? Do you look to other things before you look to God? Sometimes, it's God's will that we go through trials. But those trials are almost always meant to bring us closer

to God. If you need to be closer to God, He may allow you to go through trials to get your attention! I hope that we hear Him in the midst of that trial and run to Him, rather than to our own resources.

- B. Seeking the Lord requires a deep and devoted prayer life.
- i. The people of God have an innate problem with them. They only seek God when they are in great need. They don't seek Him every day whether in plenty or in want.
 - ii. See, we develop an understanding that God is only helpful or that we only communicate with Him when we are in need. Sure enough, when we are in need God is there for us. But He is there always!
 - iii. We tend to only come to God when we're in trouble or trial, but God wants to have a relationship with us, not just fix our problems. In this sense, it is not wrong to see God as allowing problems if just to commune with us.
 - iv. We need to learn to seek Him whether things are good or bad in our lives. We should not seek Him only when we need Him. By the way, when don't we need God?
 - v. You see, when these trials come, which the Sovereign Lord allows, we do cry out to God in prayer. Prayer is an absolute necessity of revival. If God's people don't pray, they should not expect revival.
 - vi. If we can't even long for His presence and long to be in constant communion with God, why would we want His special presence to dwell with us?
 - vii. The Lord promises us that when we do have troubles, He is there. But God's people don't know how to pray. We don't want to learn. We just want God to fix things.
 - viii. Our disease is that we use God rather than wanting to be used by God. We talk to Him when we need Him, not because we want to be with Him. We ask Him to fix things, because we care more about things than Him.
 - ix. Until we make our existence about knowing God and communing with God, God will not bring revival. We need to want Him, not use Him. We have to develop a hunger for God, not call on Him for emergency surgery.
 - x. **Application:** God does answer our prayers. But sometimes, the things we're going through He has allowed so that we would just talk to Him. We need to learn to have a regular routine of going to God first in all things, blessing or trial, of seeking God no matter our circumstances. We need God whether we are rich or poor, sick or healthy, and the moment we realize that anytime without God is a trial, we would make a discipline of devoted seeking of God, then God would readily come to His people, and revival would break out across the land.

Text – Ezekiel 37:11-14

¹¹ Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

III. The Lord promises a renewal of His people.

A. The dryness and death of our walk can be renewed.

- i. The third place we are going in Scripture is used often when talking about revival. In Ezekiel 37, God sends the prophet to a land in which there has been a great battle, and the soldiers are all dead.
- ii. It was a battle long ago, for the bones are dry. This vast army is dead in the valley of dry bones, and the Lord brings Ezekiel to it to teach him a spiritual lesson.
- iii. The lesson is that God is the God of the living and the dead, and only the Author of Life can bring life not only to those who have just passed into death, but to those who have been long dead.
- iv. No matter how dead we are, God can bring us to life. He can resurrect us from our death. We are supposed to be dead to sin, but sometimes, God’s people fall prey to a death from His presence.
- v. We forget what it is like to live in Him and to know Him. There’s something special about those who are saved in Christ. At first, they have this passion for God. They don’t even know what they should sometimes, but they’re out there witnessing to friends because of that passion.
- vi. When we get older in Christ, for some strange reason, we lose that passion for Him. Let me be very clear this morning. To lose passion for God is not part of the Christian maturing process. We are all to maintain our passion, like a child is to maintain a creative and curious mind even as they grow older.
- vii. The beautiful promise of Ezekiel 37 is that it doesn’t matter how dead you are to the things of God. God can revive you and give you life in Him. He can remind you of what it used to be like in Him.
- viii. The tragedy is that we forget. We get out of God’s presence, and we get used to not having His presence in our lives on a regular basis. Then, we go through the motions and diminish in our spiritual walk.

- ix. **Application:** Do you need renewed in Him? Do you miss that presence? Do you want Him to do a work in you that is incredible? That the world cannot deny or ignore? Or are you happy with so-so, with status quo? All we have to do is ask God to renew us. He is the Author of Life, and He will renew us if we really want it!
- B. We need a renewal of our souls when we search for God.
- i. God is waiting on us to get an appetite for Him and His presence. He is waiting for us to be hungry. Not the kind of hungry that comes when we need Him to fix something, but the kind of hungry that misses Him.
 - ii. This is the kind of hungry that doesn't get bored in the waiting for Him. It's the kind of hunger that fights through the silent moments to hear the voice of God. It's the kind of hunger that knows only God can make me feel like I was designed to feel. Nothing can replace God in my life.
 - iii. It is the kind of hunger that replenishes our hope in God and puts our eyes back on Him and reminds our mountains how big our God is. It is the kind of hope that reminds us that this world is not our home and we should not be fooled by its momentary delights.
 - iv. We need to be renewed often by the Lord. And we need to come into His presence regularly. Nothing else is as good as God's presence. We were made to be here with Him, not out there.
 - v. God promises that He will renew and revive us. When we come to Him and open to Him, He will come in and bring us His presence. When we get an appetite for God so that nothing else satisfies our soul like Him, He will respond.
 - vi. I think that is the greatest truth and promise in God's Word, that He will respond to us, is actually waiting for us to ask Him and hunger for His presence.
 - vii. But do we have that hunger? Do we long for Him more than anything else? Or are there other things? What would it take for you to come to a place where you were hungry for God's renewal, for God's presence, where you denied everything else so that you could wait on Him?
 - viii. **Application:** God is waiting to renew you. God has a plan for your life and is seeking you. But you must seek Him. You must desire Him above all else. God will not contend with the "other things" in your life. He must be the only thing in your life. When we are ready and hungry for God and God alone, we will see revival like never before.

Text – Psalm 63:1-8

¹ O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. ² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. ³ Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. ⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. ⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, ⁶ when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; ⁷ for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. ⁸ My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Conclusion

May we long for God in this place once again. May we not allow these mirages in this desert of the world to fool us so that we miss the oasis of His presence and His people together in the unity and power of the Holy Spirit. May we become so desperate for God that we seek Him even when we are in the midst of prosperity and blessing, when we realize that He is our life, not the one who fixes our life. When we are hungry for God, He will come to us and renew us. But we must become desperate for Him. We must be willing to do the hard work of seeking Him and waiting on Him before we can experience His powerful and palpable presence in our midst. When will the presence of God be worth the work of waiting in your life?

Action Points

- God has promised that when we wholeheartedly seek Him, He will come near to us. What in your life is keeping you from seeking after God with reckless abandon for everything else?
- What would it take for you to need God? He is not just God in the trials. He is always God, and we must always seek Him.
- What's your prayer life like? Do you know how to pray? How to wait on God? Do you have the patience and desperation to seek Him? What quick fix is standing in the way of seeking God alone?
- When will the presence of God be worth the work of waiting in your life? How long do you think God will wait for you to want to wait for Him?