

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF Jan 10th-16th, 2021 - Vol 37

THEME VERSE:

*But I tell you, love your enemies
and pray for those who persecute you.*

Matthew 5:44

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The 1863 Great Revival of the Civil War

The American Civil War was one of the most devastating and yet important wars waged by this nation. Fought over the issue of slavery, it resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the North and the South. Although the war has been studied and discussed much, one aspect that is often overlooked is the great revival which broke out within the army ranks.

During the early months of the war, many young soldiers found themselves far from home and faced with a wide array of temptations: gambling, drunkenness, prostitution, and fighting. President Lincoln did everything in his power to establish chaplains in the Northern army who could provide spiritual guidance. The South also tried, with more limited success, to raise up spiritual leaders to encourage and comfort their soldiers in need. In addition, Christian organizations from both sides worked hard to get Bibles and tracts into the hands of these men, often additionally providing medical aid and access to worship and prayer services.

The first wave of revival came in the spring of 1862 in Virginia shortly after seeing significant battle between the opposing sides. Soldiers were exposed to the reality of possible death in combat while also deeply thankful to God for helping them survive the conflicts. The troops would gather in nightly prayer meetings with a heightened desire to regularly read God's Word, and chaplains would preach and share the Gospel to all who would listen.

Although many smaller-sized revivals surfaced during the war, the Great Revival took place in Virginia and Tennessee from late 1863 until summer of 1864. Prayers took place not only on the battlefields but also among the families and towns back home, often with a call for public prayers and fasting. Soon God's Spirit swept throughout the Confederate army, but awakening also erupted across the Union forces. In the midst of the grim ugliness of war, many soldiers turned to Christ and put their faith in Him. Every evening was marked with packed services of prayer and worship, and in some places the preaching and intercession would continue 24 hours a day. It was common to find a river nearby afterwards to baptize the new believers. Every brigade was affected, with more than 10% of all the forces coming forward to receive prayer or find salvation. Soldiers formed "Reading Clubs" to pass around a single copy of a well-worn Bible to read aloud. Others held "Experience Meetings" where the attenders would take turns to share a testimony of how God had led them to faith.

As a result of this Great Revival, it is estimated that over 150,000 in the Confederate army found Christ, and that almost 200,000 in the Northern forces turned to Jesus. Among those who returned home after the war, many went into full-time ministry or became pillars of faith in their family and community. Looking back, in the midst of the tragic and bloody Civil War, God heard people's prayers and brought desperately-needed redemption and salvation through this mighty move of revival through the Holy Spirit.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

- Praise God for all the ways this week God has provided for us, protected us from Satan's attacks, and blessed us through our families, friends, and church. Praise God for our solid hope in Christ that can never be taken away or stolen.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CITY:

- **UNITY.** Thank God for a spirit of collaboration among ministries in 2020 that was unprecedented in the face of a global pandemic. The pandemic continues, and the need for increased displays of unity are even more needed. Pray that God will lead us to even more ways this year.
- **COVID-19.** Pray for public safety, strong immune systems, and healing for all who do get sick. Pray that safe and effective vaccines make their way into our communities, and that the Church can help with that effort. Pray for increased education about prevention and treatment. Pray for God's wisdom to best respond to the pandemic for each of us. Pray the Lord will end this pandemic soon.
- **POST-ELECTION REPAIRS .** Pray that any election abuse or corruption that was exposed recently to be handled transparently and justly. Pray that any part of the voting process that is broken to be fixed so that confidence can be restored in our nation. Pray for healing in our nation and for a renewed hope in God to lead us forward.

FOR THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESSES:

- **STIMULUS AID.** Pray for timely delivery of stimulus payments to families whose jobs have been impacted by the COVID restrictions.
- **SAFETY IN MARKETPLACE.** Pray for the safety and health of workers and customers in the marketplace as COVID positive tests reach record numbers in our state. Pray that protocols will be followed and spread of the virus will be reversed without further restrictions which would impact our businesses and workers.

FOR LOCAL MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **LOVING LIFE.** Pray for a local Charlotte mother who chose life instead of following through with an abortion, but then her baby passed away 10 weeks after he was born. Please lift up the mother & her family. Also, please pray for the Love Life ministry team (promoting God's love for life and an end to abortion) as they plan for a new year of 40 weeks of prayer walks, Pray that they would follow the Lord in His wisdom to where they should expand throughout the nation.
- **REVIVAL.** Pray that the church would find her strength and hope in Christ alone. Pray that hearts would not give in to discouragement in the midst of conflict. Pray that God would ignite a fervency among Christians to pursue Christlikeness, to endure persecution, and to live out our lives with Holy Spirit power. Ask God to pour out revival even in the midst of great darkness!

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