

# Obedience: The Fruit of Revival<sup>1</sup>



## SABBATH—JULY 27

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 26:69–74; Acts 5:28–32; Acts 6:3–10; Acts 9:1–9; Philippians 2:5–8.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The weapons I fight with are not the weapons the world uses. In fact, it is just the opposite. My weapons have the power of God to destroy the camps of the enemy. I destroy every claim and every reason that keeps people from knowing God. I keep every thought under control in order to make it obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5, NIV).

**AN EXAMPLE OF THE INFLUENCE OF REVIVAL ON DAILY LIFE CAN BE SEEN IN THE WELSH REVIVAL OF 1904.** Evan Roberts and some of his friends began praying hard for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They studied the Bible and shared their faith.

The Spirit was poured out in answer. Lives were changed. In six months there were one hundred thousand conversions<sup>2</sup> in the small country of Wales. People saw the results of this revival throughout the country. Throughout the day thousands of people came to churches for prayer. Rough coal miners were changed into kind, courteous gentlemen. Even the pit ponies in the coal mines had to learn new commands (words) because the miners were not cursing at them anymore! Changed, obedient lives came from converted (changed) hearts. This is proof of a true revival.

1. revival—renewed interest in God and the desire to improve one's spiritual life.

2. conversions—lives changed because of belief in Jesus Christ and acceptance of Him as Savior.

**SUNDAY—JULY 28****THE TRANSFORMED<sup>3</sup> LIFE  
(Matthew 26:69–74)**

Revival is not simply feeling close to Jesus. It leads to a changed life. There were times when the Bible writers felt very close to Jesus. Then their spirits were high from the joy of being close to Him. But other times, they did not feel He was near at all.

The results of revival are not always positive feelings. They are changed lives. But our feelings are not the fruit of revival. Obedience is. We can see this clearly in the lives of the disciples after Pentecost.<sup>4</sup>

**Study Matthew 26:69-74; John 21:15–19; and Acts 5:28–32. How did Peter feel before the Cross, after the Resurrection,<sup>5</sup> and after Pentecost? What difference did the Cross, the Resurrection, and Pentecost make in how Peter felt?**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost made a great difference in Peter's life. It transformed him from a weak believer to a faith-filled, obedient disciple. Peter had once used brash (proud) words, and he made empty promises. But after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, he now became filled with faith, courage, and strength for witnessing. It is a powerful example of what the Holy Spirit can do for

anyone who is surrendered in faith and obedience to our Lord.

**MONDAY—JULY 29****THE HIGH COST OF OBEDIENCE  
(Acts 6:3–10)**

One of the early examples of faith and its cost can be seen in the life of Stephen.

**How is Stephen described in Acts 6:3–10 and Acts 7:55?**

The infilling of the Holy Spirit led the disciples to live unselfish, godly lives. Their faith led them to obedience. At times the spiritual war was terrible. They were stoned, imprisoned, burned at the stake, and shipwrecked. And obedience also came with a high price. Many of the disciples suffered a martyr's<sup>6</sup> death. But Jesus, their Savior and Lord, was by their side to make their faith strong.

In Acts 7, Stephen preaches a wonderful sermon, explaining the history of Israel. Stephen describes the experience of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon. Stephen tries to reach the hearts of the people. He describes the differences between God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness. Stephen closes his sermon by saying that the religious leaders of Israel

3. transformed—changed for the better because of belief in Jesus Christ as Savior.

4. Pentecost—the time when Jesus' disciples (followers) were in the upper room receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

5. the Resurrection—the return to life of Jesus on the third day after His crucifixion.

6. martyr—a person who is put to death for Christ.

broke God's covenant<sup>7</sup> and refused to accept the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51, 52).

**Read Acts 7:54–60. What happened to Stephen because of His witness for Jesus? What does this teach us about the cost of faithfulness?**

Stephen was obedient to the call of God. He was faithful to the mission of God, even to the point of death. We might not all be called to die for our faith. But we need to promise our Lord that we would be willing to remain faithful to the end in the same way that Stephen did. It is possible that someone reading these words right now will one day have to give up his or her life for the Lord.

**What would happen if you had to die because of your powerful witness? You might not be able now to foresee what you would do. But how have your past actions shown what you would choose to do if one day you had to die for Jesus?**

## TUESDAY—JULY 30

### WHEN THE SPIRIT SURPRISES (Acts 9:1–9)

Saul<sup>8</sup> was wrong in his attacks against Christians. But he thought he was doing God's will by trying to destroy a "false" religious group. Saul was traveling to Damascus to cap-

ture Christians and take them back to Jerusalem. But Jesus surprised him. Saul's experience on the Damascus Road changed more than his life. It changed the world, too.

**Read the story of Paul's conversion experience in Acts 9:1–9. Why did the Lord send him to Ananias after this experience? What important lesson is here for us?**

"Many think that they are responsible to Christ alone for their religious experience. They also think that they are independent of His known followers on earth. Jesus is the Friend of sinners. His heart is touched with their suffering. He has all power to do everything, both in heaven and on earth. But He respects church methods that He has authorized [given permission to] for preaching to, and saving, people. Jesus directs sinners to the church, His light to the world.

"Saul was blind and mistaken in attacking early Christians. But when he had a vision of Christ and was converted, God directed him to the church, which is the light of the world."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles [Teachers and Leaders]*, page 122.

**Read Acts 9:10–16. How did Jesus surprise Ananias? What attitude (feeling) must Ananias have been feeling that helped him to do what Jesus commanded him to do?**

7. covenant—a promise and agreement between God and His people.

8. Saul—Paul's name before he accepted Christ and was converted (changed).



The heart of Jesus is touched by the suffering of sinners.

Try to put yourself in the position of Paul after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. What a shock this meeting must have been to him! Also, try to put yourself in the position of Ananias. What a shock the meeting must have been to Ananias, too! What do these stories teach us about the ways that God might ask us to face and do things that we do not understand? But why must we obey the Lord no matter what we think?



The church is the light of the world.

### WEDNESDAY—JULY 31

#### SENSITIVE TO THE SPIRIT'S CALL (Acts 26:18)

Throughout his ministry (work done for God), Paul was led, taught, and empowered by the Spirit. When Paul defended himself before King Agrippa, he described the heavenly vision on the Damascus Road. Then he said that the purpose of his ministry to both the Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) was “ ‘to open their eyes. I [Jesus] want you [Paul] to turn them from darkness to light. I want you to turn them from Satan’s power to God. I want their sins to be forgiven. They will be forgiven when they believe in me. They will have their place among God’s people’ ” (Acts 26:18, NIV).

**Read Acts 26:19–32. What is important about the apostle Paul’s answer to his Damascus Road vision, an answer that he gave under the Holy Spirit’s leading? Compare<sup>9</sup> the difference between Paul’s answer to the call of the Holy Spirit and King Agrippa’s answer.**

Unlike Paul, King Agrippa did not surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit. The king’s pride and selfish desires did not agree with the Spirit’s invitation to a new life in Christ.

Jesus said it clearly: “ ‘You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light. Do this before darkness catches

9. compare—to show how two or more things are the same or different.

up with you. Anyone who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. While you have the light, put your trust in it. Then you can become sons of light' ” (John 12:35, 36, NIV).

As we obey and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and walk in the light of God's truth, He will continue to show more light and truth. At the same time, too, the more that we refuse to accept the leading of the Holy Spirit, the harder our hearts will become.

“ ‘You almost persuade [convince] me to become a Christian’ ” (Acts 26:28, NKJV). These words of King Agrippa are some of the most powerful and sad words in all the Bible. How can we be in danger of having nearly the same attitude (feeling)? For example, how does compromise<sup>10</sup> in our walk with the Lord show the same principle (important rule) that Agrippa's words do?

## THURSDAY—AUGUST 1

### SPIRIT-LED OBEDIENCE (Philippians 2:5–8)

The Holy Spirit played an important role in every part of Jesus' life. He received His beginning “from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20, CEV) at birth and was “anointed [authorized and empowered] . . . with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Acts 10:38, NKJV) at baptism—the beginning of

His ministry (Matthew 3:16, 17; Acts 10:34–38). Throughout His life, Christ was obedient to the Father's will (John 8:29; Hebrews 10:7).

**Read Philippians 2:5–8. What parts of a life filled with the Holy Spirit show up in this special description of Jesus?**



Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Christ was really God, but He “made himself nothing” (Philippians 2:7, NIV). (The Greek language of the New Testament says that He “emptied Himself” of His rights and honors of being God's equal. Instead, He became “a servant.”

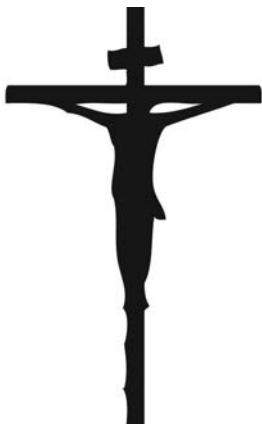
Jesus was a servant to the Father's will. He “humbled Himself” and became, “obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8, NKJV). Jesus gives us an example of what a life filled with the Holy Spirit is like. It is a life of willing obedience and humble surrender to the Father's will. It is a prayerful life dedicated to (lived

<sup>10</sup> compromise—the act of giving up some of your beliefs by following the world instead of God's Word (the Bible).

only for) service and ministry (work done for God). It is a life filled with the desire to know that others are saved in the Father's kingdom.

The apostle Paul declares that Spirit-filled, New Testament believers have "received grace<sup>11</sup> and apostleship<sup>12</sup> to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith" (Romans 1:5, NIV). The non-believers "only look out for themselves. They don't [do not] accept the truth. They go down an evil path. God will pour out his burning anger on them" (Romans 2:8, NIV).

**In Romans 6:15–23, Paul uses two different examples, "slaves of sin" (NIV) and "slaves who obey God" (NIV). In Romans 8:12–17, Paul describes the "spirit of bondage [slavery]" (NKJV) and the "Spirit of adoption"<sup>13</sup> (NKJV). What does your own struggle against sin and your struggle for acceptance with God tell you about the meaning of these words?**



**Jesus was obedient to the point of death.**

11. grace—God's gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

12. apostleship—accepting the responsibility that comes with being an apostle (leader and teacher) of God.

13. adoption—being received into the family of God.

## FRIDAY—AUGUST 2

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** "At the entrance gate of the path that leads to everlasting life, God places faith. And He prepares the whole way with the light and peace and joy of willing obedience. The traveler in this way always keeps in mind the goal of his high duty to Christ. The prize is always in sight. To the traveler, God's commands are righteousness [a holy life] and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places*, page 183.

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any kind of people. Christ announced that the influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) has been sent to all who have surrendered themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Savior, the Holy Spirit has come as a Counselor, a Guide to pure and right living, and a Witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully they have shown their Savior's love and His saving grace. There have been people who went through many years of attacks and suffering. But they still enjoyed the great blessing of the Spirit in their lives. They also have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men,

they have shown the changing power of Christ's saving love."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 49.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ Read Acts 5:1–11. What can we learn from this powerful but frightful story? Why do you think that Ananias and Sapphira faced such terrible punishment for their actions?
- ❷ Think about Thursday's study, which talked about how Jesus had

"made himself nothing" (Philippians 2:7, NIV) so that He could finish what He came here to do. How can we use that principle in our walk with the Lord? When we try to have revival and reformation (change for the better) in our lives and in the church, why is this kind of self-denial and death to self so important?

- ❸ " 'You almost persuade [convince] me to become a Christian' " (Acts 26:28, NKJV). In class, talk more about what those sad words may mean.