

Sharing the good news of
Jesus and His Kingdom
and equipping the church
to do the same.

Life
JOHN 20:31
IN HIS NAME



Greg West,
Evangelist

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Saint Augustine of Hippo: On God becoming one of us

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) was a leader of the church in North Africa in the 4th and 5th centuries.

Maker of the sun, He is made under the sun, In the Father he remains, from his mother he goes forth. Creator of heaven and earth, He was born on earth under heaven. Unspeakably wise, He is wisely speechless. Filling the world, He lies in a manger. Ruler of the stars, He nurses at his mother's bosom. He is both great in the nature of God, and small in the form of a servant.

Pastors and leaders: Have you thought of this? An online revival



I've been working with Rev. Joe Varner at Thalia UMC in Virginia Beach. We were focused on small groups and a recovery of the Wesleyan Class Meetings. Then, the conversation turned to the need for revival. Here's what we did in addition to small group training: We sent out a full outline of an online "Revival Night" with questions, Scripture and thoughts for each person to think upon and pray about beforehand:

"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, LORD, and grant us your salvation." – Psalm 85:6 – 7. Some of the questions we asked included: "Do you personally believe you need revival?" "Do you personally believe you need more of the life of Christ within you?" "Do you long for it?"

John Wesley illustrated the Gospel by preaching on "the porch of repentance, the door of faith and the house of holiness." I encouraged participants to think of the houses in nearby Smithfield, VA, like the picture above, for a good visual!

So, during the revival I used the porch, door, house illustration, preaching a short message on each of the three topics. Following each topic, we moved into small groups for discussion. There were three small group times during which specific questions were asked to engage each person. In this way, we modeled the Wesleyan Class Meetings.

During these times each person shared an account of their own spiritual condition within an atmosphere of grace and truth. So, the question: "How is it with your soul?" was asked in terms of where do I need repentance, greater faith and holiness in my life? We closed each small group time with each person praying for another in the group. If someone wasn't comfortable praying out loud, we asked them to pray silently, then say "amen" when they were done. Again, we intentionally empowered each person to take an active role in the group by both sharing and praying.

Below is an outline. I used more Scripture in the preaching/teaching times. I am available to help churches or groups if you believe this could assist you in building up the body of Christ.

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- Preaching on the Porch of Repentance (followed by the small group questions):
 - Scripture: Mark 1:15
 - Questions:
 1. Where does the world (those who don't yet have faith in Christ for salvation) need to repent?
 2. Where does the Church need to repent?
 3. Where do I need to repent?
- Preaching on the Door of Faith (followed by the small group questions):
 - Scripture: John 10:7 – 10
 - Questions:
 1. Where can the world (those who don't yet have faith in Christ for salvation) come to faith in Christ?
 2. Where does the Church need to have greater faith?
 3. In what areas of my life is God calling me to a greater faith?
- Preaching on the House of Holiness (Christlikeness) (followed by the small group questions):
 - Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13 – 16
 - Questions:
 1. How can the world (those who don't yet have faith in Christ for salvation) encounter holiness?
 2. Is holiness the goal of the Church and is it evident?
 3. How can I obey God's commands and be more holy that is, Christ-like?