



## I Can See Clearly Now: A Spring Revival Experience

By Darchelle M. Garner

*What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.* 1 Corinthians 2:12-13



I was physically tired, emotionally spent, and spiritually drained. The valley had been long and dark, and the mountains – looming on all sides – remained unyielding. I was overwhelmed by circumstances that, over the years, had become worse instead of the “better” for which I had long prayed and believed God. I had grown weary waiting for things to improve.

But Spring Revival was approaching. TPCBC revivals in the past had always been uplifting and encouraging with awesome preaching, exceptional teaching, warm fellowship, and invigorated worship. Yet, even though there was much to look forward to, this spring I needed more. I needed change – actual, tangible, measurable change – in my life. I needed to see some element of my circumstances transformed, improved as a result of my participation in Revival. I shared with God that, as much as I appreciated encouragement, encouragement alone would not suffice this spring. I asked that Revival would bring about exactly what I believed it is supposed to bring about: my life revived, refreshed, renewed, *changed*.

So, on each Revival night, I prayed, worshipped and fellowshiped. I opened my heart and listened intently to the guest preacher, expecting to experience at any moment a word, phrase or concept that would herald the life change I so desperately desired.

On the first night, Dr. Therm James, Sr., from Baltimore’s Bethany Baptist Church, delineated the principles that would help me get “From Here to There” (John 14:12-18), from sorrow to singing, from hardships to Hallelujahs. He encouraged me to not give up, but instead to keep “hollering” until I get my breakthrough. A week later, Pastor Anthony G. Maclin of The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square in Capitol Heights, described “The Power of a Dream” (Acts 18:8-11), urging me to never downplay my dream, because it came from the Lord. He assured me that, as I endure, God will perfect my dream as He perfects my destiny. Then, on week three, Dr. J. Albert Bush, Sr., Pastor of Walker Memorial Baptist Church in Bronx, New York, defined God as my Hero, a perfect Hero, and “A Hero Worth Having” (Acts 10:38-43).

Oh, yes, I definitely needed to make that journey from here to there, from sorrow to singing. And I committed to keep believing in the dreams that God, my perfect Hero, had placed in my heart. Three evenings of powerful, Spirit-filled worship had provided much food for thought and prayer. My hope was buoyed, but I had not yet seen the change I sought. Perhaps it was still unfolding...

On the fourth evening, Pastor Robert A. Turner, from St. John Baptist Church in Columbia, Maryland, assured me that “The Best is On the Way!” (1 Corinthians 2:7-10). He said that what I consider as better is nowhere near God’s best. And when I am at my worst, God is at His best. He urged me to declare that, “The worst is over, the better is about to be outdone, and the best on the way.” Then, at the fifth Revival service, Rev. Heber Brown, III, Senior Pastor of Baltimore’s Pleasant Hope Baptist Church, addressed “Dealing with Doubt” (John 20:24-29). He stressed that doubt will always demand more and more of my life. Instead, I must allow faith to reign. His prescription for dealing with doubt is to tell the Lord what I need, just as the apostle Thomas did when He doubted Jesus’s resurrection. Jesus will do what it takes to give me what I need.

So, I made my declaration: “The best – *God’s best* – is on the way!” And I resolved to stop wondering when my circumstances would change, the very ponderings that had opened the door to doubt. I determined to renew and refresh my trust in the Lord.

But what about the change I wanted to see?

On the final night of Revival, Rev. Gregory Sims, the shepherd of New Canaan Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., posed in his sermon the searing question: “Who’s Really Controlling Your Life?” (Acts 2:1-4). In describing the events of Pentecost, when tongues of fire rested on the Apostles and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, Rev. Sims noted that there was no chaos in the room. No one was frightened. No one fell out. No one tried to take control of the meeting. And although each was touched by the flames, no one was burned. The Holy Spirit had complete control of everything. Hmm. Perhaps, I thought, I had not fully yielded control of my life to the Holy Spirit. Rev. Sims went on to remind me to re-connect with God’s Word, that His Word will bring me back to center, for when the Word gets hold of my heart, I will be changed.

In the days following Revival, I considered all of this, prayed for understanding, and delved deeply into God’s Word. As a result, I was reminded of God’s goodness and greatness, His love and power, and His perfect control over my life. I realized that I had wanted things to happen according to *my* plan, when what I *needed* was to yield to *God’s* wonderful plan for me, even if His plan requires me to face undesirable challenges, or if those challenges take longer to resolve than I wish to wait, even if those challenges are never resolved according to my wishes. Rev. Sims had said to allow God to strip me from what is comfortable in order to accomplish His perfect will for my life. He said that being filled with the Holy Spirit is about perspective (*how I view things*), not preference (*what I want*). Living for God is about how I view both God and my circumstances. I must fully surrender the latter to the Former and let God have His Way.

And so I released it all to Him.

It wasn’t long before I discovered that the heaviness I had been carrying was not so heavy anymore. Doubts that had obstructed my view of my future seemed to have fallen away. Frustrations that had been constant companions dissolved to nothing. I began to reclaim the promises God had made to me regarding my life, and excitement returned to my heart. I was still in the valley – my circumstances were the same – but the valley *looked* brighter. No longer overwhelmed, I was filled with new hope.

And that's when I knew that God had indeed brought about the "actual, tangible, measurable" change for which I had prayed, for God had changed my perspective. He lifted the fog, and just as Johnny Nash sang in that popular 1970s song, *I Can See Clearly Now!* Hallelujah!