

# When the Reaper Overtakes the Plowman

by David Guzik

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*This sermon emphasizes the anticipation and longing for a new awakening of God's spirit in revival and spiritual awakening. It highlights the need for genuine, deep conversions and the importance of understanding the nature of true revival. The speaker draws insights from the book of Amos, focusing on the promise of restoration and the abundant harvest God can bring. The sermon encourages humility, contentment in anonymity, and diligent, blessed work in ministry, anticipating seasons of unexpected fruit and quality in believers.*

**Scripture:** Amos 9:13, Matthew 9:37, 1 Corinthians 3:6, John 4:35, Colossians 3:23, Galatians 6:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 5:6

**Topics:** "Revival", "Spiritual Awakening"

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## Description

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## Transcript

to change us, to help us, to revive us. Please do so in Jesus name. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm so pleased to be here with you. I just arrived 30 minutes ago.

I was detained in Santa Barbara and the drive out here was a little bit longer than I expected. And I really regret that I couldn't come here earlier because when I came in here 30 minutes ago, I was so touched just by the spirit of prayer in this room that it, um, it was wonderful just to, uh, just to be in the midst of it, to, to genuinely enjoy it, to join with you, even if it was just for a few brief moments with, uh, what the Lord was doing in and through that concert of prayer. So what a blessed, blessed start to the time together.

I do have something to share with you from God's word. I'll be speaking from the book of Amos in just a few minutes. Uh, but I did want to say some things just to begin with.

First of all, I wanted to thank our brother Greg Gordon for putting this on. And especially I want to thank him for his gracious invitation to allow me to come and speak because I think he was very accommodating to me. I'm actually flying out of LAX this evening and so I won't be able to stay around very long.

And I said, Greg, this is such a wonderful conference you could do. I'd be happy to come and be a part of it, but I only have this brief window and Greg was so gracious to, uh, to allow me to be a part of it because I, I genuinely long even as you do to see another mighty outpouring of God's spirit in revival and spiritual awakening. My own great interest in this subject was prompted not only from my biblical studies, of course, but also through my exposure to the ministry of a man that many of you know by name, the late Dr. J. Edwin Orr.

I heard him speak a few times, uh, before he passed to glory, uh, that was in the mid 1980s. Um, I was a young man then. I never had the courage to go up and introduce myself to him.

I wish I would have because I found out that he lived in Camarillo and I lived in Ventura and, uh, I would have loved to, uh, do that. But I really was drawn and attracted to his ministry and so touched by his ministry after he passed away, uh, in the mid to late 1990s. And his explanation of biblical revival and his amazing historical record of God's reviving work through the generations touched me so greatly.

I'm very happy to say that I was able to develop a relationship with Mrs. J. Edwin Orr, who by the way, is 99 years old, about three or four weeks ago. I was there with her children and grandchildren, my wife Inga Lil and myself were there celebrating her 99th birthday. And to be honest, uh, she doesn't have her mental faculties as strong as they once were.

I, we remember so many wonderful times of conversation with her in years past, but the Orr family has been very gracious to me and has allowed me to republish a few of Dr. Orr's books. So I brought some of these for the conference. Uh, I'll let Greg figure out how to distribute them, but I just want you to see the books that I brought were number one, what I think is one of the best books that Dr. Orr wrote called Full Surrender.

It's been out of print for 50 years or more. And this is a remarkable book. I won't go on and on it, but it just, it's, it's a remarkable book for, for personal revival.

And then the second one was his really brilliant history of the mid century revival in the 1800s. Uh, that work that I'll be referencing a few times in my message here this afternoon, it's called the Second Evangelical Awakening. And it's just a marvelous, marvelous history.

Uh, and done, done from a scholarly viewpoint, yet it's very accessible. Dr. Orr had three earned PhDs and he was a very, very smart man. And he, he yet knew how to make it very accessible.

So that really started my own interest in revival, spiritual awakening. So when Greg invited me to be a part of this, and when I saw the theme of the conference, I was really moved. When you think of the two word theme, how long? It's, it's really the, the cry on all of our hearts, isn't it? I mean, those of us who know our Bibles, those of us who know what God has done in generations past, we're astounded to see the depth and the breadth of some of these works.

Absolutely remarkable. And we live with the awareness as our brother shared before, that now we have a generation coming up who really knows nothing of, of even what we might call lesser revival works, not even to mention some of the greater works that have been seen through history. And for me, before the Lord, I tried to let it continue to build in me a sense of faith and anticipation for what God will do rather than a sense of despair, because we want to see the great things God will do.

And I believe that conferences like this play a role in that. They play a role, first of all, just in the phenomenon of prayer. Secondly, it's undeniable that where there is an interest in revival, it's often an evidence that God is stirring up his people.

But it's also important that we receive biblical understanding as to the name nature of true revival. Because sometimes when I look about in the world today and the Christian world today, it seems like the understanding of revival is so shallow and so self-centered and so misguided that it seems like the place to begin is just with a biblical understanding of what it is. It's sort of my opinion that when you understand what revival truly is, and if I could recommend a message to you that you could look up, we started a website, [jedwinore.com](http://jedwinore.com). It's just simple to understand, [jedwinore.com](http://jedwinore.com). And if you go to that, Greg, for all I know, you have this message on Sermon Index.

It's the message, revival is like judgment day. Look it up on Sermon Index. It's the last message that Dr. Orr ever preached.

He preached that message the night before he went to heaven from a heart attack. It's a remarkable message. And in that message, one of the wonderful things he does is help define what true revival is.

And my understanding, my takeaway from that message is that even though in many corners of the Christian world today, people are crying out, Lord, send revival, Lord, revive us again. Their cry is focused upon a very shallow understanding, a superficial or erroneous understanding of what revival is. And if God were to see what their heart really says, what they really desire, they don't want to come anywhere close to revival because of the true cleansing and purifying work that is so characteristic of revival.

Revival's early stages. Well, if we are going to understand something of what biblical revival is, I want to take you to a passage of the book of Amos chapter nine, verse 13 is what I'm going to focus on here this afternoon. And I do want to say that I don't believe there's probably any one biblical passage that says everything that there is to be said about revival.

So my tendency here is to look at a passage like this and think about maybe all the things that it doesn't say that I need to add in, but I'm going to do my very best to resist that temptation. I'm the first of 12 speakers here. Many more will add and contribute and improve upon what I have to say here as opening a message for the, what are we doing here? This is a conference.

I'm going to set a convention, but it's not a convention. It's a conference. We're conferring with the Lord and with one another.

But this passage in Amos chapter nine, verse 13, I think is a marvelous, marvelous description of some of the work that God does in revival. Father, we pray that you'd bless your word to us now here this afternoon. You have heard our prayers and Lord, even now as we listen to your word and the understanding of it, we receive it in a spirit of prayer and we ask that you would speak to us by the power of your word, by the presence of your Holy Spirit.

Do it among us Lord in Jesus name. Amen. Amos chapter nine, verse 13, behold, the days are coming says the Lord when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes, him who sows seed, the mountain shall drip with sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it.

The book of Amos taken as a whole is not a very encouraging book. It's a book of judgment. Amos was a prophet of God, a very simple man, a farmer who was called of God to confront a corrupt nation.

And in the process of that confrontation, he had to speak about the judgment of God a lot as a whole. The book of Amos is not cheery. It's not encouraging.

It's not happy. Let me read to you a few selections speaking about God's judgment from the book of Amos. This is just to give you a flavor of what most the book is about.

Here's some Amos chapter two verses four and five. Thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Judah and for four, I will not turn away its punishment because they have despised the law of the Lord and have not kept his commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed.

But I will send a fire upon Judah and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. Not exactly a cheery word, is it? And then chapter two verses 13 through 16, behold, I am weighed down by you as a cart full of sheaves is weighed down. Therefore flight shall perish from the swift.

The strong shall not strengthen his power nor shall the mighty deliver himself. He shall not stand who handles the bow. The swift of foot shall not escape nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.

The most courageous man of might shall flee naked in that day says the Lord. Again, a very strong word of judgment. And then just one more just to give you a flavor of what most the book of Amos is about.

This is from chapter five beginning at verse 21. I hate, I despise your feast days and I do not savor your sacred assemblies though you offer me burnt offerings in your grain offerings. I will not accept them nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.

Take away from me the noise of your songs for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. I don't want your sacrifices. I don't want your music.

It's not done unto me. It's done unto the pagan gods or the God of self. We read, we read these judgments of the book of Amos.

We think how many of them apply to the current spiritual condition of the Western world. Well, God would not abandon his failing people and he promised that he would not He promised even within the book of Amos a restoration to the people of God. And here in verse 13 of Amos chapter nine in the images that come very easy to a farmer like Amos, God spoke to Amos about an ultimate restoration, a revigoration of the nation.

You could call it a revival of the nation. He was giving Amos and all the people of God. First of all, that God can make things different.

They look around and they saw the desperate spiritual condition of their time and it was easy to lapse into despair. Amos gave the people of God hope. Maybe this word for the Lord gave Amos himself hope that God could bring restoration.

But then the secondly, just the fact that it showed that God is interested in restoration. When we have a sense of the judgment that we may deserve as a church, as a whole in the Western world, we sometimes think, well, how long Lord, if you're delaying this, this long, maybe you never desire to bring it. Maybe you're not interested in this kind of reinvigoration of your people, this kind of transformation of society in a spiritual awakening.

But then I read passages like Amos nine, 13, and it really gives me hope once again. See God announced in Amos chapter nine, verse 13. Look at the first few words.

The days are coming. And under the prophet Amos's words, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he leaves the book of Amos on a high note of hope, looking forward to a great day of restoration. Now what's interesting is in the reign of Amos, not the reign, the ministry of Amos, it was held during the reign of Jeroboam the second.

And if we understand the history of the times correctly, the reign of Jeroboam the second was a time of great material abundance, but it was not abundance in the Lord. Here we see in chapter nine, verse 13, that God promises something even greater than material abundance. And we have the material abundance.

We really do. It is unparalleled the lives of luxury that we live. There's something greater than spiritual abundance.

It's the spiritual abundance that comes from an outpouring of God's spirit. Israel had no idea how good it could be under the Lord. And so here he gives the word.

Look at the words coming here right now. Verse 13, when the plowmen shall overtake the reaper. With that phrase, Amos described the miraculous and amazing blessing of God and the restoration that he promised to bring.

Picture that scene. Just think of that phrase. When the plowman overtakes the reaper.

Do you see two men working in a field? And there's the reaper. He's working all that he can, but the harvest is so mighty that he can't bring in the harvest before the plowman has to do his work. God has brought in such an amazing harvest in this picture with the plowman overtaking the reaper.

It's so rich. It's so abundant. It's so full.

But the, that the reaper has to look back at the book. Hey, whoa, slow down, slow down. There's so much here.

It's going to take a long time to gather it in. But that's how great the abundance would be that the plowman would overtake the reaper. Now, I just want to draw forth a few simple principles from this verse that I think really speak to the matter of the nature of revival and spiritual awakening.

Number one, when God sends blessing and restoration, when God sends revival, fruit comes quickly. You know, I'm no farmer. My knowledge of farming is pretty much reduced to what I've seen on television and a few vegetables in the garden.

But from what I understand, you don't plant a seed and then the next couple of days you're harvesting it. The farmer understands that in normal times the fruit doesn't come quickly. Normally the plowman and the reaper are in no danger of running over each other because their work is far separated by months and months.

But under these unique seasons of blessing and restoration, they bump into each other. The crops were so big, as I said before, that the plowman and reaper didn't have time to let the other finish their work. Now we should pray for such seasons of God bringing in a mighty harvest.

And look, it's inexplicable, but we know this both from our study of the scriptures and we know it from history that there are seasons when God brings in converts quickly into the community of God's people. When, so to speak, the catch of fish is just plain remarkable. It's miraculous.

Now there's a lot of examples of this throughout history, but let me give to you a few just from this book here. J. Edwin Orr is quoting from that great work of God that happened 1857-1858 starting in Canada and then spreading to the United States. Some people call it the second evangelical awakening.

I mean from my research on there, I find that there's no universally accepted terminology for these different works of God. J. Edwin Orr called it the second evangelical awakening, whatever that counts in your mind. And it seems this revival began in Canada and then soon spread to the United States and starting in 1857 over about a 12 month period.

And again, Dr. Orr does a wonderful job documenting this from hard figures in historical research that in about 12 months in 1857-1858 a million people were added to churches in the United States, a million converts. And that was when the United States had a population of about 30 million. Now think of what it would be like on our scale today.

That would be like 10 million conversions in the United States, genuine conversions, deep conversions in one year. That would be a remarkable thing, would it not? And again, these were not Christians getting right with God, of which there was a whole nother number of those, probably uncountable. But these were unbelievers definitely and radically changed and committed to Jesus Christ.

And as I said before, in today's terminology would be something like 10 million in the United States coming to the Lord in a year. Now that is rapid fruit and there are such seasons when the plowman overtakes the reaper. Here's another example of quick fruit from that revival.

A Presbyterian church in Charleston, South Carolina, there were 48 black Christians and 12 white attending this Presbyterian church. The minister was a man named Dr. John Gerardo and he was an outstanding theologian. He started a series of prayer meetings to ask God to send revival.

The prayer meeting grew and grew until the sanctuary was filled. The leaders in the church told him that now it was time for him to start preaching. He began to preach, well, excuse me, he waited to preach until he sensed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to do so.

And then one evening while leading the people in prayer, he received, and again, I'm just giving you the history from the book. I'm not saying that it should be like this for everybody. I'm just telling you what happened in this situation.

But Dr. Gerardo, a Presbyterian doctor of ministry said that he sensed in his body something like a surge of electric power first in his head and then in his whole body. He said that for a little while he sat under the strange feeling and then he stood up and then he sat down again. He was confused.

As he later related, he said there was nothing in the Presbyterian order of service to account for this. Then he spoke out to the prayer meeting and he said this, the Holy Spirit has come. We will begin preaching tomorrow evening.

And then he closed the meeting with a hymn. He dismissed the congregation and then came down from the pulpit. But you know what happened? No one left the church.

Then he realized that the Holy Spirit had not only come upon him in a remarkable way, but maybe not in the same sensation, but in the same reality, the Holy Spirit had come upon the whole congregation and immediately he began exhorting them to accept the gospel and many people began weeping softly. That weeping continued until it became either a loud sobbing over brokenness and sin, or there was a rejoicing that one had who had been once convicted had now been set right with God. It was midnight before he could dismiss the meeting.

For eight weeks after that, he preached to crowds from anywhere from 1500 people to 2000 people night and day. And there were so many converts, both white and black that joined the churches of Charleston. Now that work of God spread over to great Britain in the years 1859 and 1860 and great Britain at that time had a population of about 27 million.

Do you know how many people came to the Lord? New converts in a calendar year in a year, not a county over 12 months. Again, it was a million documented converts in great Britain in that year period. Here's an example of God's work in that period at a town named Hale in southern England, William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army.

They had a meeting at a church in August of 1861. They were somewhat discouraged because they had no actual conversions on the first Sunday. So at the meeting that they had on Monday Booth spoke to believers on the subject of hindrances to Christian labor and Christian joy.

Afterwards they had a prayer meeting and nearly everybody stayed at the prayer meeting and after a second message from Booth, a woman made her way to the place up front where those who were concerned about the state of their soul received prayer and then William Booth said that he hoped that she would be the first fruits of a glorious harvest. Over the next 18 months, 7,000 people were converted in that ministry and in that town, 500 people were converted in the first six weeks. Now again, isn't that the plowman overtaking the reaper? That's not normal.

But these times of great outpouring of God's spirit, they're not normal. There are times when God just in a remarkable way says, I'm going to advance my kingdom by big leaps, not by small steps. Now brothers and sisters, I want you to know, I do not despise the small steps.

I do not despise the ordinary things of ministry. I do not despise how we just week in and week out, remain faithful to our call and do the work of evangelism. But I hope that as someone who has a ministry, someone who serves the Lord, someone who has the opportunity to speak to people from time to time, I hope that I can, so to speak, walk and chew gum at the same time.

That I can thank God for the daily plodding of faithful people doing the work day in and day out, knowing that God works through that while also praying for and anticipating these remarkable seasons where the kingdom of God seems to take big steps forward. It's not an either or proposition. We don't despise the small things and the daily work, but neither, neither do we approach these seasons of true revival and spiritual awakening with skepticism and criticism.

Dr. Orr spoke about the quality of that revival by saying that Perry Miller, a Harvard professor, he was not a believer, but he was a very prominent American historian. In a book that was published after his death, Perry Miller called that 1857-58 revival in America, he called it the event of the century. Now, you know what's remarkable about that? To call that revival, the event of the century in American history in the same century in which you have the Civil War, that's truly, truly crediting the amazing work that God did in the

United States during that year.

Another way to illustrate this is by the life of D.L. Moody. D.L. Moody died in 1899 and he said toward the end of his lifetime, a lifetime of fruitful Christian service, he said, I would like before I go hence to see the whole church of God quickened as it was in 1857 and a wave going from Maine to California that would sweep thousands into the kingdom of God. You know what Moody was saying? That in 40 years of remarkable service, he never saw anything that compared to the work that God did in 1857-58.

Now look, does it sound impossible? Well with man it is impossible, but not with God, not with God when he says, I tell you there's going to come a day when the plowman will overtake. Now we see next here that when God sends blessing and restoration, when God sends revival, the fruit comes from unexpected places. And again, I confess I'm not a farmer.

I don't know about, you know, growing vines and grapes and all the rest of it. Even though Santa Barbara has a beautiful vineyard area, you know, not far from, okay. But from what I understand, grapes don't grow at high elevations.

It's more the lower elevations. But look at the promise here in verse 13. It says, notice it says the plowman shall overtake the reaper.

The treader of grapes he who sows the mountains shall drip with sweet wine and the hills shall flow with it. We should pray for seasons of unexpected fruit. Nobody expected the tall mountains of Israel to bear vineyards, but God's promises.

When I send revival, the fruit will come from unexpected places. So I don't know what the unexpected places are for you in your life. Maybe it is truly an unexpected place.

Geography. They say, no, if God were to send revival, he'd never do it from here. He'd never do it from a small little community on the outskirts of Los Angeles.

He'd pick something much more prominent to do it. But listen, when God sends revival, it is often from unexpected places, but it's not just places in geography. You also know that when God sends revival, he often uses very unexpected people.

Isn't that the truth? You know, we have a way. And I was so appreciative for our brother's word here leading us in prayer. We're so aware of the phenomenon today of the celebrity preacher, the celebrity pastor.

And listen, I can't say that I know this. Don't, don't regard this as a word from the Lord. All I can say is that it's just sort of this hanging suspicion in my heart that, that should God send revival, it's not going to be through some celebrity preacher.

Again, I can't say that's from the Lord, but it just feels that way, doesn't it? That he'll probably use obscure men, obscure women, but just don't care for it. He'll send it from an unexpected person, unexpected places, unexpected ministries. Here's the other thing.

This is a third point. When God sends blessing and restoration, the fruit comes with great quality. Amos looked forward to the day when the wine came quickly from unexpected places and it would be sweet wine.

Now, brothers and sisters, I don't know anything about wine. I know that's a whole world that people are very much interested in. They know this or that.

But I do know that in the Hebraic culture, sweet wine was regarded as good. This was a compliment. It's not the kind of thing where, you know, Amos would roll it around in his mouth and say, no, wait, or take this away.

This is too sweet. Now this was a way of demonstrating the quality of what God would bring forth. And this is another thing that's true.

We should pray for such seasons of good fruit because brothers and sisters, we're not content to see God do something where thousands of converts are brought in, but they're very shallow. We've got enough of that already. Now we need God to bring in the sweet wine, a deep work.

Now it may very well be that whatever work God has you focused upon right now is more focused on developing quality in the people that you share in discipleship with rather than it is the quantity. But you could have a massive impact upon the world with truly what you might call, boy, isn't this a phrase that could be misunderstood easily, sweet wine believers. Matter of fact, let's just scratch that one from the record.

What I mean though is believers of great quality and depth in their life and their walk with the Lord. Fourthly, yes, yes. Holy believers.

Fourthly, when God sends blessing and restoration, the workers may be anonymous. Look at the people described in verse 13. Just take a look here.

What do you have? Who are the people described here? You have a plowman, you have a reaper, you have a treader of grapes and you has him who sow seeds. Do you see a single name mentioned in verse 13? No, they're all workers, but they are all anonymous. And this shows that even in times of great harvest, it may be that God will not raise up a high profile prophet or preacher.

God may do much of the work or mostly all the work through people who are relatively anonymous. And we should be content to be such servants and we should be very on guard against the idea of desiring revival so that we can be known as mighty men and women of revival. Instead, our heart cried before God needs to be Lord.

I would be a thousand times more pleased, a million times more pleased for no one to know of any impact or worth that had done with this. If your work could multiply. Now this is very interesting because when you see so often these marvelous works for revival, you see that a God oftentimes leaves the great workers in them unknown or or relatively unknown.

If I were to tell you who were the great workers of the 1857 58 revival in America? Well, I mean one name that might come to mind, Jeremiah Lamphere. He's the guy that started the prayer meetings in New York City. A lot of people are familiar with him.

And then some people will say, well, wasn't Finney really part of that? No, that was past Finney's day. And some people say, well, wasn't Moody part of that? Well, no, Moody didn't make the revival. The revival made Moody.

Who were the other? I mean there must have been thousands of people actively involved in the work. Who were they? Bless the Lord. We mostly don't know.

Now there are a few names, but isn't that a wonderful thing? Oh, their names are known in heaven. No doubt about that. But who cares on this earth? Now we think about the great Welsh revival, which I like how Dr. Orr described it.

He would often call it the Welsh and worldwide revival because he really again with historical documentation would point out that yes, there's no doubt that it began with a mighty work in Wales and it was a stunning work in there. And if you were to associate the work in Wales with one name, what would it be? Of course, the name Evan Roberts. But, but that revival work extended far beyond Wales, far beyond.

Matter of fact, many people don't even know how much that revival work affected the United States in 1904 and a few years afterwards. Let me tell you, it began among, as you might suspect, the Welsh speaking or bilingual coal miners of Pennsylvania, of which there were a lot. If the Welsh know anything or knew anything back then, it was how to dig coal.

So when they came to the United States, a lot of them settled in the coal regions of Pennsylvania. That revival first was sparked in the United States. Again, we're talking about 1904, 1905.

It was first sparked the United States among that Welsh community there in Pennsylvania. And you could just go through a geographical recounting of what God did in Wilkes Bar, Pennsylvania. Pastor JD Roberts instructed 123 converts in one month in 1904.

In Scranton, large congregations gathered all over the area with the spirit of revival evident in all the churches. In Philadelphia, by early spring of 1905, the Methodist reported 10,000 converts. They said that it was the largest and greatest work they had seen since the Moody and Sankey meetings of the previous century.

In Atlantic City, there was such a revival happening that it was claimed that there was not more than 50 unconverted persons in a city of 60,000. In Atlanta, in November, stores factories and offices closed for a day of prayer and thousands of people gathered for prayer. In Louisville, more than 4,000 conversions and 58 leading business firms of the city closed at noon for an hour of prayer.

In Michigan, Baptist reported more baptisms in 1905 than in any year in a decade. In Denver, in January 4th, 1905 was declared a day of prayer. At 10 a.m. all the churches were filled and at 1130, almost all stores and businesses were closed.

And at 12 noon, 12,000 people crowded into the largest theaters of the city for combined prayer meetings. Every school was closed for prayer. This is in 1905 in Denver.

In Los Angeles, a hundred churches cooperated and combined for meetings that saw more than 180 thousand people in combined attendance with more than 4,200 conversions. And then in Portland, more than 200 stores signed an agreement to close between 11 and 12 to allow their customers and their employees to attend prayer meetings. That was quite a work going on in the United States, 1904, 1905.

The Welsh revival was not confined to Wales, but you know what I love about that? Who were these people in America leading these works? We don't know. Because again, just as Amos 9.13 tells us, you have a plowman, you have a reaper, you have a treader of grapes, you have a sower of seeds. These

were pretty much nameless plowmen and reapers.

And we need to come back to a satisfaction with that enemy. Brothers and sisters, if I, if I have any ache in my heart regarding the anticipation of a new awakening that God might do among us, I can't quite get my head around how God may do it in a social media age. I'm not saying it's impossible and maybe I shouldn't even bother trying to figure it out.

But there is such an aspect of self promotion and self glorying in our modern age that I wonder if it isn't just diametrically opposed to true revival work. I shouldn't be afraid of such things, but I do fear sometimes in a more doubtful moment, I think of God pouring out his spirit at a time and place and a marvelous revival work beginning and then it being quenched very early because people rushing to social media to promote themselves as part of the revival, to sell whatever it is they can make money off of as part of it. We just say, Lord, what you do is far more important.

But may you, no, let me use the biblical phrasing. He must increase and I must decrease. I think that spirit will see us into the work that God wants to do.

All right, just a few more here. Number five, when God sends blessing and restoration, there is still a division of labor. I find that interesting in Amos chapter nine, verse 13, the plowman still plowed, the reaper still reaped, the treader of grapes still stomped the grapes and he who sowed seeds still sowed seeds.

You see the important thing is the work of the harvest in general. It's far more important than the individual work of any particular man or woman. We're never in the place of saying, well, Lord, um, send revival.

And let me do this in it. Oh, Lord, you will divide the labor as you please. And whatever role you would want me to play or not play in a mighty work that you would do, I will be at rest with that.

And by the way, the plowman is never in competition with the reaper. We refuse to compete with one another and measure ourselves against one another. And then finally, and this is number six, when God sends blessing and restoration, the work is blessed, but it is still work plowing, reaping, treading grapes, sowing seeds.

Again, I didn't grow up on the farm, but I'm smart enough to know that's all work. The outpouring of God's spirit, the awakening, the quickening that he would send to congregations and to communities. It's a lot of work.

It's a lot of effort not to produce it. No, no, no, no, never, never. It's not work for us to manufacture it.

God forbid the work isn't trying to keep up with what God is doing. That's the work, but there's a lot to do. God doesn't do it.

God did not promise Amos. The days are coming when I'll do all the plowing. I'll do all the reaping.

I'll do all the sowing. I'll do all the treading of grapes. No, God would still use his workmen and work women.

No doubt about it. The work would be blessed as never before, but it would still be work. So the plowman doesn't just wait around.

He gets busy. Even if he might bump into the reaper, the seasons of unexpected blessing never mean that God's people sit on their hands and do nothing. There's still work to do.

It's genuine, glorious, blessed work. I guess what I'm saying this, brothers and sisters, please don't wait for the day when ministry becomes easy. There's always an element of sacrifice.

There's always an aspect of being poured out, but there's a way of work that has remarkable blessing from God. And that's what we long for him to do. Let me read to you a quote from Charles Spurgeon where he described this kind of blessed work.

You ready for this? I love this quote from Spurgeon. He says, quote, I meet with my brethren in the ministry who are able to preach day after day, day after day, and are not half so fatigued as they were. And I saw a brother minister this week who has been having meetings in his church every day.

And the people have been so earnest that they will keep him very often from six o'clock in the morning to two, excuse me, from six o'clock in the evening to two in the morning. Oh, said one of the members, our minister will kill himself. Not he said, I, that is the kind of work that will kill no man.

It is preaching to a sleepy congregation that kills good ministers, but not preaching to earnest people. So when I saw him, his eyes were sparkling. And I said to him, brother, you do not look like a man who's being killed, killed.

My brother said he, while I am living twice as much as I did before. I was never so happy, never so hardy, never so well. That's true, isn't it? And so we're not afraid of the work.

We say, Lord, we understand that it will be work, but it will be blessed work. Now we will continue faithful in serving God. Day in day out, as Paul said to Timothy, preach the word in season and out of season.

This is our commitment. I'm the first one to tell you though, in seasons, a lot more fun. And I pray that God sends a mighty blessed season.

As our brother said before, I was so touched by his words. We see the mercy drops around us and we are grateful for them. When we see God stirring and moving in any way, we never look our nose down on anything God is doing.

No way. We are excited by even the smallest mercy drop. Thank you Lord for it.

But at the same time, we have it in the back of our mind, Lord, send the days, send the days among us when the plowman will overtake the reaper. Father, I pray for a rich blessing upon this conference. I pray that not only as it has been today, that it would continue to be a time when your people genuinely confer.

Yes, Lord, with one another. Yes, Lord, with whoever comes to minister. But most importantly, that we collectively would confer with you that you would lead us and guide us and Lord, whatever preparation you must do in us and many others for the work that you long to do.

We open up our lives wide before you and you say, do that work, Lord. Do it in us. We pray this Lord in Jesus' wonderful name.

Amen.

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