

Our Hope for Revival

by Erroll Hulse

Erroll Hulse's sermon emphasizes the hope for revival through understanding Baptist heritage, the importance of prayer, and the promise of God's expanding kingdom.

Duration: 1:06:17

Scripture: Psalm 2:6-8, Zechariah 8:20, Zechariah 8:23, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Revelation 7:9

Topics: "Great Commission", "Revival Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the responsibility of believers to fulfill the Great Commission as stated in Matthew 28. Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The speaker highlights the importance of prayer and information in fueling this mission, referencing a treatise by Jonathan Edwards that inspired a movement of extraordinary prayer in the 18th century. The speaker encourages believers to be diligent in their prayerfulness and earnestness for revival, both in their own nations and around the world.

Transcript

You are invited this evening to turn in your Bible, don't be embarrassed if you are not equipped with your sword, to Zechariah chapter 8 and the 20th verse. Zechariah chapter 8 and verse 20. This is what the Lord Almighty says, many people and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty.

I myself am going and many people and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him. This is what the Lord Almighty says, in those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the edge of his robe and say let us go with you because we have heard that God is with you. Now the Prophet Zechariah is difficult to interpret but in the able hands of Jim Packer, a well known expositor who trained at Oxford, England and who is known to be a great lover of the Puritan divines and the Puritan literature, he at a Southern Baptist Founders Conference suggested an outline of interpretation of the book of Zechariah or the first part of it, concluding with this section which I have just read.

Now it is interesting to observe that Jonathan Edwards wrote in 1748 a very unusual treatise in which he pleaded for a concert of prayer to be organised for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival. And this passage of scripture was one of the scriptures which inspired those who responded to the call of Jonathan

Edwards. That was a very significant call for what he termed extraordinary prayer.

I would remind you that Jonathan Edwards is rightly regarded by many as the best theologian that has ever adorned the North American continent. And I certainly am of that opinion myself. Having sought to acquaint myself with a number of your splendid theologians including Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Dabney, Dagg and Boyce and others.

But certainly as a formulative thinker and as an analytical theologian you could hardly improve on Jonathan Edwards who has the reputation in the history of the Church as being the theologian of revival. He experienced revival, he was able therefore to analyse the elements of revival and he wrote an amazing treatise called *The Religious Affection* in which he analysed the true affections and emotions of the soul. Now let me return to this treatise which he wrote.

It's not a long treatise but it has a fairly long title. Now the reason why men of that age had long titles to their books was because they did not have the advantage of the gaily coloured dust covers that we have on our books. You simply had the bound volume and then you looked inside and you'd find your title.

So in order to tell potential readers what they were going to get for their money they had to put on the title page what their book was all about. So if the title is a little longer than you are accustomed to then you will realise the reason therefore. So let me read you the title.

An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth. Pursuant to scripture promises and prophecy concerning the last times. Now Jonathan Edwards wrote another treatise called *The History of Redemption*.

And in this treatise he sought to describe the whole history of God's dealings with men from the very beginning to the very end of the age. Without becoming controversial he was very much more simple in his framework than are many modern thinkers. And he believed that this is the last time, that this is the messianic age and that this age is one of revival but of increasing revival until the whole earth will be evangelised.

And in order to motivate missionary endeavour he searched after the promises. And of course most of these come from the Old Testament. And the reason for that is very straightforward.

For instance Isaiah describes the Messiah in his suffering and in the glory that followed. But in the glory that followed the sufferings of the Messiah there are descriptions about the extent of his kingdom. And it's quite obvious, indeed it's transparent that the Messiah will have an increasing kingdom, a victorious kingdom, an ever increasing and extending kingdom to all people and all nations.

But not, no, a decreasing kingdom, a defeated kingdom, one that shrinks and gets smaller and smaller and then almost is ready to be extinguished altogether. Something that he would have to, in desperation, come to deliver. Rather, according not only to Edward but to the theologians and expositors of those times, they interpreted these passages as referring to the messianic age and to the reign of the king.

Who now ever lived to intercede for us and to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given for the express intention that he should give momentum to his cause throughout the earth, that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. And that is how they interpreted the passage which I have read. And it's one of many passages that could be cited.

I remind you of verse 22. They will come and they will say, let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Almighty. And then it says, and I myself am going.

So there is this very resplendent, powerful statement about the increase of the peoples and nations who will come and entreat the Lord. Now, how does this apply to ourselves today? And that is my purpose this evening, to apply this passage of scripture in a way which is relevant for us. And I'm going to do it under three headings.

First of all, I'm going to refer to our own heritage, our own history. I'm going to ask the question, who are we? Who are we as Baptists who believe in the sovereignty of God? Who are we? With whom do we identify? That is my first question. And then, what is our responsibility? When we have identified ourselves, what is our responsibility? What are we to do? What is our purpose? And then third, what is our hope? Once we have identified our purpose, our responsibility, then what are we to do about it with regard to hope? How are we to go about it? What is our hope? What will motivate us in our responsibility? Well then, first of all, who are we? What is our history? Where do we find people who believe as we believe? And the 1689 Confession, of course, helps us to identify ourselves, gives us a kind of passport in the modern evangelical world.

When I came to America this time, I had to have a passport with a visa printed inside, which gave me the right to come into your country. I couldn't enter here without it. There's no way I could ever come into your country without a visa.

And then, when I came, they could see exactly who I was, where I lived, and by looking through the passport, of course, a few more details. So, who are we? We are Baptists. And this church goes back a long way.

This is the first Baptist church of Clinton. Well, if it's the first one, it ought to be the best one. It's been around long enough, so it really should be the best one.

But we're not out to compete with people, with other Christians. But who are we? Well, particular Baptists, Reformed Baptists, Baptists who believe in the sovereignty of God, Baptists who believe in the doctrines of Christ, emerged in England. As far as we can see, emerged there for the first time in history.

Now, I hope I don't offend some people who think that they can trace that back through all the centuries. We can argue about that later. But I personally don't think that that could possibly be sustained.

Those who believe these doctrines of God's sovereignty, as outlined in the 1689 Confession, they emerged in the 17th century in England. And they emerged under very difficult circumstances. Because up until that time, the whole English population had been required to conform to the Church of England and her formulary, to her prayer book.

And those who did not conform were subject to arrest and imprisonment. And indeed, Baptists, before the Puritan period, were subject to the sentence of death. And only this afternoon, Pastor Bill Ascol and I were investigating the death of a young woman during the reign of King Edward, the young king, who was put to death.

Signed by Archbishop Cranmer, the death warrant, for her to be burned at the stake for being a Baptist. Everybody was required to conform to the Church of England, on pain of heavy fines or imprisonment. John Bunyan, of course, was many times imprisoned, and under very great stress.

Now, when the Commonwealth period came, and I won't go into all the history of it because there's not time for that, in 1640 on to 1660 under Cromwell, mostly under Cromwell, there was a time of freedom. And when that time of freedom came, Baptists emerged as those who believed in the Reformation. And in the great truths that had been re-asserted, re-discovered and re-asserted at the Reformation, they believed those truths.

Most heartily, they embraced them. And they said, we embrace all that. We agree with Martin Luther and what he's done.

We agree with John Calvin and the other Reformers. We agree with this great statement of truth that the Presbyterians have put together in their Westminster Confession of Faith. We agree with that.

We accord with that. We are Orthodox Christians. But, we don't believe for one moment that everybody in the country is Christian, or that you can make them be Christian, or that you can make them all conform.

We believe that the Church, for instance, of those who are called, those who are converted, those who have a credible profession of having been born again, they are gathered together and they form the Church. So they wrote out their beliefs on Baptism and on the nature of the Church, and they changed those parts and said, yes, we believe in the Reformation, but we believe also as Baptists in the idea of a gathered assembly of believers as the Church. And that's what we are.

And they were called particular Baptists. And they had to fight for their place under the sun. And they were very, very severely persecuted again after the Commonwealth period.

Cromwell was a great man of freedom. Freedom of conscience. He believed in liberty of conscience.

And there was a respite for people to do their study and so on. But then Charles II came to the throne. When Richard Cromwell was unable to keep the country together, they had to have order and law again.

And so they got monarchy back and the persecution started all over again. The great engine of persecution was rolled out and now people were again subject to the most awful fines and imprisonments if they were anything else but Church of England. So all the Baptists just sucked under and kept quiet and just went on their way and did the best they could.

Very often the magistrate could see that they were such honourable upright people, the magistrates weren't interested in persecution and got out of it some way or another. So that's how many of them survived those days. But the suffering was intense.

But then, when William of Orange came over, when James II, who followed Charles II, the son of Charles II, when he failed with an abysmal failure, then the country called on William to come over and to take the throne and to be king. That was the way they thought, that was their system. And he came and when he came there was a general consensus that persecution does nothing, there is no advantage in it.

So an act of toleration was passed whereby Baptists could register their churches and other non-conformists who were called dissenters could register their churches. And so the Baptists then came out from hiding and said, great, now we can publish our confession, which they did. And so the 1689 Confession was published.

Now, that confession has been taken on into America. 1744 it became the Philadelphia Confession of Faith and has been used in America very greatly in your history. But C.A. Exspurgeon took the same confession when he as a young, young preacher came to London, to Subbot, to New Pass Street, on the south side of the Thames, and had a tremendous ministry, none like it in all Baptist history like the ministry of C.A. Exspurgeon.

He began his ministry by saying, this is what I believe. And he was unashamed of it. And he preached that all his life, always faithful to the great truth of the Confession.

And now, in the late 20th century there is a revival of these very truths. And it's springing up, I'm glad to tell you, all over the world. And it's beginning to spring up in other languages.

And so I come back to my text, or the passage. Many people and the inhabitants of many cities will come. And the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, let us go at once to entreat the Lord and to seek the Lord Almighty.

And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and entreat Him. Now, you have to observe some humanistic, some principles of interpretation of all these things. Every prophet was bound by his own environment as far as his descriptive powers were concerned.

Jerusalem stands for the cause of God in the earth. Hence we get that prayer that we will give God no rest until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Well, you don't mean by that that Jerusalem, now in our modern age, must be a most beautiful architectural piece.

Or that he must now have the best church in the world, although we all have to have a conference over there. It's not a conference hall large enough over there anyway to seek the Lord. It doesn't mean that.

It's a symbol and has been in biblical history for ages. Jerusalem stands for God's cause in the world. His cause will prosper.

And his cause will so prosper that mighty nations will be affected by his cause. And so we have an identity in this modern world. We know what we believe.

We formulate what we believe. We preach what we believe. And we are not severing ourselves from other believers who may not believe like us, who may differ from us.

We don't want to excommunicate them, so less do we want to send them to burn them at the stake. We don't believe in that. We believe in maximising our unity with all believers as much as we can.

Now obviously if there are groups of people who behave in such an alarming way that we can't worship them, because they go wild, or famous enough, or do something like that, well we have to keep them at arm's bay. We say, well the Lord bless you with sanity and may it come soon. But we don't excommunicate them, nor do we wish the fires of heaven to come down to consume them or anything like that.

We don't do that. They're obviously on the Lord's side, but they need some instruction. So we're patient.

And there are all kinds of denominations. With the Presbyterians we do have a very good unit. We really do.

But we insist that there is enough water for that fire. They've always said that at the time of Pentecost there was not enough water to do all this. They said it's ridiculous to think that Peter and the other, and the twelve, or the disciples, however many of them there may have been, fifty or sixty men who were capable of baptising, that they've always suggested, and the very men I love, theologians like Hodges, these believers, that there just simply wasn't enough water to do a thing like that.

It's just totally unbelievable. So let me tell you that I have now an article coming into Reformation today, not the next one 108, but number 109, researched out by a Reformed Baptist from Australia who's been working with Yadin, who is one of the great archaeological experts in Jerusalem. And they've now discovered forty-eight mikvahs from the time of the apostles.

And all the water systems that fed the mikvahs, the mikvah was an ablution pool. Six steps down, six steps out, and forty-seven inches high. That was the specification.

And they've unearthed forty-eight of these. So there wasn't a problem. There was water in Jerusalem.

I've always known that, because I'm an architect by profession, you can't have a city without water. It's just impossible. So I've always believed there'd be enough water there.

But now we can prove it from archaeology. But I wrote a book, not long ago, called the Texts and Years of Baptism. And we've unearthed, or archaeologists have unearthed, beautiful baptisteries from the apostolic period.

In Syria, in Italy, in North Africa, all over the place. And there's mosaics on them, they've been very nice. But the Jews used to have ablutions, washing.

We read in Hebrews 10, your body is washed with pure water. So we don't think it's a terrible thing at all, to baptise a person. There are people who've been against us about that.

They've suggested all kinds of things. They've suggested you might get pneumonia if you give a bath in water. But many people swim.

It's not a problem. It really isn't a difficulty. The Jews have always had ablutions.

They've kept it up. Orthodox Jews still have ablutions of immersion, where the whole body is washed. And in the early church they like running water, just to make it a little more illustrious.

The washing away of your sins. So we don't want to fight with our brothers. We want to be really, really brotherly.

They believe as we do, on 95% of the great truth. But we still insist that that is what the Bible says. John the Baptist baptised at the place called Enon because there was much water there.

Now if it was a matter of a few drops, he could have easily availed himself of one flask and that would have done the trick. But why go over there and be so zealous? Well of course he needed the water to do his process. So we are believers in the Reformation.

We believe that. We believe in the great doctrines. We really do.

Wholeheartedly. But we insist on being Baptists. And we do not think that that is something of no account, of no importance.

We believe it's important. Because Baptism actually forms the structure and the nature of the church. It tells you what the church should be.

It tells you how the church should be formed. It should be formed of people who come confessing their sins, who repent of their sins, and who believe in Jesus Christ and are united to him in his death, burial, and resurrection. Symbolised in an immersion.

Now some people have written to me about this and they say well we all must pray a bit about this. But we can't find a mention of water in Romans chapter 6. Well fair enough. Why should the Apostle every time have to mention water? He mentions it in Hebrews 12 and Peter mentions it incidentally as well.

About water. You don't have to mention the thing every time. But my answer to them is if you can find something better to baptise in, well then find it.

You can't do it in sand because you'll get a headache if you try to baptise a man in sand. So what are you going to do if you don't use water? What are you going to bury a man in? I don't know. Certainly you wouldn't bury him in sulphuric acid.

You'd bury him in water. Preferably if you feel cold in warm water to make it comfortable. So we believe that.

But we don't want to have bad relationships. Nor do we want to upset them. I am invited to churches in Scotland and I enjoy preaching there and of course I keep quiet.

I don't go in there to blaspheme the Baptist because I don't want to be blasphemed after myself anyway. But I really do want to have good relationships. We must have unity.

But we identify ourselves. That's what we are. We are spiritual now.

We really are. Many people read Spurgeon and love Spurgeon without always investigating what he believes. He believes in the sovereignty of God.

He believes in the Reformation. He believes in the Puritan Rites. He saw their value.

He recommended them. And we have noticed recently, at the time of the first centenary of the 300th birthday of the 1689 Confession, we have observed that whenever the churches in England have been close to this Confession they fasted. Now before I go on to our responsibility, which will be quite brief because it's only a reminder of our responsibility, let me follow up what I told you at the beginning.

In 1748 this thesis of Jonathan Edwards was produced. And it found its way over, as we would expect, because he had friends in Scotland. A man by the name of John Erskine corresponded with Edwards and he got hold of this thesis and he told his friends about it.

And he told John Ryland Jr. down in England about it. And John Ryland Jr. told John Sutcliffe, another friend about it. And John Sutcliffe got hold of this thing and was really inspired by it.

And he said, look we've got to really do something about it. This humble attempt to promote extraordinary prayer is something we've got to get down to. And he really worked at it.

And he said, look in our vastest association of churches who believe in these doctrines, let us meet every Monday night for one hour and pray for the extraordinary calling of God's Spirit. This will be a time of extraordinary prayer for a time of extraordinary outpouring of God's Spirit. God's reviving power.

We need that. The churches were going down. And they were alarmed and they were concerned.

And the mission field was out there and nobody was going to the mission field. So they were really alarmed about it. So they said, let's heed this Jonathan Edwards, let's heed his appeal and really, what is 12 hours a year? That's not asking too much.

12 hours a year in earnest prayer together, every Monday night, once a month, let's pray. So they got down to it and they began to pray. And you know what happened? In the next 40 years, the churches quadrupled from 300 that went right up to nearly 1400 churches.

That's how the movement grew and revived from the time they sought God earnestly in prayer. And you know what happened? William Carey came out of that. The first great, tremendous missionary heralding the way in the modern age, the modern age of missions.

William Carey came out of this entreaty for people to pray together. And even though the situation seemed impossible, he went out against all the impossibilities to India and persevered and was later joined by brilliant men, missionaries. A man by the name of Marshall, another man by the name of Ward.

They worked together as a dynamic team, publishing the scriptures, preaching the word, evangelising, patiently he waited eight years for his first convict. But he believed the promises. And because he was inspired by the veracity and power of the promises of God, he went on with his work and triumphed in his work.

So who are we? Well we are Careyites, we believe that, we love that, we look for that. Here is our idea. We want the fact that Bible Presbyterian churches are multiplying in the Philippines.

Well done, it's Koreans that are doing that, not Europeans. Koreans who have experienced a great revival in Korea and who have more seminaries for their staff than you do here in the United States of America. It is the Koreans that are doing it.

It was thrilling. The time of the Olympic Games in England, the commentator said, well we are not expecting so many people tomorrow in the stadium. He said they go to church in this country, he said, and down the road there is a church of 10,000 people.

What he didn't say was the church of 10,000 people was filled over twice because 10,000 wasn't big enough. So we are glad, we are absolutely thrilled, we are enthralled, we are delighted that the Bible Presbyterian churches of Korea are reaching out to Plum churches in the Orient and different other parts of Indonesia and all over the place. Hooray! And we are inspired by the fact that there has been a colossal change in the whole face of the world as far as Christianity is concerned.

The year 1800, 99% of professing Christians were Western Europeans. Now we only constitute 33% and all the rest are other people. And it is rapidly changing so that we are coming down to be a smaller

minority.

Hooray! A thousand hallelujahs! We want that to be made for all those people, the Chinese believers, the sooner the better. And Japanese, and Indonesians, and Filipinos, and on and on and on it goes. That is what we want.

And it will happen when they all start evangelising each other. Why should the burden only rest with us? They will come from every quarter. Many people and powerful nations will come to seek the Lord and entreat him.

So now that we have our identity, we find that we are not without doctrine. We are not like the Quakers. You know the Quakers during that time of Oliver Cromwell, they emerged as a very powerful people, as numerous as the Baptists, the Reformed Baptists.

They were just as numerous, were led by a very godly man called George Fox. A gentleman. Whenever there was an English gentleman he was the one.

Never complained under his imprisonment or his persecution. Perfect gentleman. A godly, godly man.

But there was one problem with the Quakers. They went by their feelings. Now feelings are good, we must have feelings.

I wouldn't like to be married to a wife who never had any feelings. It wouldn't be any good would it? We need to have feelings. We're not zombies, we're not machines, we're people.

Why? Well the Quakers, with all sincerity, they put feelings up top. It's what you see. It's the Holy Spirit moving your feelings.

Well that's a good point, but you've got to start with the scriptures. It's the scripture and then our feelings. So we're not that.

We don't say well, you know we have a confession of faith but every page is a blank one. We can't say what we believe. Well we can say what we believe.

Very clearly we say what we believe. And we've pleased the Don. The Church has always been compelled to specify what it believes.

Otherwise we'd be overrun by every count on the front. We've got to be able to say what we believe about the person of Christ. Of course we must.

What we believe about Scripture. We must say that. Who God is we must say what it is.

But Scripture references. I would throw this confession away if it didn't have the Scripture references. You know at the Westminster Assembly they produced a confession that didn't have references.

And the members of Parliament sent it straight back. They said we want the references in there, this good confession you're doing there, but can we have the references. So who are we? Well we're not Quakers.

And we love the Presbyterians, they are our brothers, but we're not Presbyterians. We believe in the Church gathered. And we're certainly not Episcopalians.

Although I must make a confession. It may be controversial to some of you. I'd rather have the government of the Episcopacy, that is bishops and archbishops, than no government.

Because if you have no government you're going to have pandemoniums. And some churches that are independent behave as though they're like the Vatican, as though they're the only church on earth and just do what they like. And that's ridiculous.

And then the cause of Christ gets into a very very bad state of reputation. People say well look at the Church of Christ and it's just disreputable. These people just behave like lunatics.

So I'd much prefer to have order than no order. And in the early centuries if there wasn't an Episcopacy we wouldn't have survived. They did have bishops, but they were very much better bishops than we have today.

They were believing bishops. That's why we have survived. And they got together when there was a crisis and they did something about it.

And there were reasons why it was like that. Pragmatic reasons, practical reasons why it was like that in the early centuries. And God overruled it, for our good.

But now we have elders and deacons, and we believe that elders have authority, but they mustn't abuse their authority. And I would suggest that we should do what we've always done, as confessional people who believe in the confession of faith, that we should have associations. Regional associations so our pastors can come together and confer together.

Not to rule each other, or to come and subvert any church. No, let every church have its independence, but at least let there be a court of appeal, and let us work together. And this is the RBMF that I came over, so encouraging to see churches harmonizing, working together.

Using their gifts together, we can do so much if we work together. But now I'm telling people in the SBC, which is the largest Presbyterian church there's ever been, as far as governance is concerned. When people say, what is Presbyterianism, I say, well look at the Southern Baptist Convention.

It's the biggest Presbyterian church as far as governance is concerned that the world's ever known. Because they all have the same fund, and so there it is. But of course that's undigressing, so forgive me for that.

But who are we? Well, we do identify with these things. The other day, just before I came here, I was preaching in Bradford on AIDS. A church of over 300 years of age, and unlike you they haven't had so many ups and downs.

They have really consistently through that whole period, been in the truth, and are forging ahead today. What a wonderful testimony. So for 300 years I know where I am.

I have identity for at least 300 years. We identify with clergy. We identify with the people who adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, which is the same thing, virtually.

Now, having described who we are, very briefly, what is our responsibility? What is the work we have to do? Well, there's no clearer statement than Matthew 28. This is a great commission. And that is our responsibility.

What are we to do? Well, we are to go and teach all nations. Where do we start? Well, the best place to start, of course, is here, in your own area. But that's not enough.

Because if you just stick to this area, what about all the other un-evangelized countries? How can you fulfill your responsibility then? All nations, it says, not just one nation, all nations. Well, it's inconceivable that you can do all nations. But it is conceivable that you can help with one or two nations.

So I ask you, are there any young men here who are going to be missionaries? Is there a William Carey here? Or, if you haven't got one, are you supporting somebody who is preparing to spend his life going out and devoting his life to another nation? Are you doing that? Well, if you're not doing it, why not think about going in with other churches and sharing with them to do it. And sharing with them in a meaningful way, so that you can follow the missionary with your prayer. And give him the support that he needs.

But we all have to ask ourselves, what do we do? I'm very happy at the moment, I'm very, very pleased because I've been given the commission by a church in England to spend time, to promote missionary endeavour. Church planting in England, and to spread the truth abroad and to encourage church planting in other nations. And I have a commission to travel.

I have a church behind me to support me in travelling to go to other nations and to stir them up and to unite them and to spread the word far and wide and to discover places that are not evangelised so that we can evangelise. He took a fair portion, guided by the Spirit of God, a fair portion, and he chose up certain things, main things that Jesus did, and the outcome of those were recorded, and he put that down. And the sequel, what happens? So we're told more or less what Peter did at the beginning, and then the Apostle Paul takes over the academic, and we need an academic to formulate things for us, and so we have a completed scripture.

But we're not told about what Philip did, or Bartholomew, or what these men did, or Thomas, they went to these different places. And they are familiar, and they keep the word, to obey the commission. And we must do the same.

There's a tremendous amount of mobility in the New Testament, have you not noticed the book of Acts, they seem to be travelling everywhere, but they take the word with them. They just want, they're linking up together, they're keeping their unity. That is our responsibility.

As much as we are able to take an intelligent, a prayerful interest in the extension of Christ's kingdom to other nations, we are to read about it. William Carey began by reading about Captain Cook's travels, couldn't wait to get further news. He read everything he could about it, even before he came to India he was learning the language, so that when he got there he would already know so much of the language.

We are to be informed, and if we are to have extraordinary prayer, then we need to have information to pray. That means work, somebody has to be researching us out, making us interesting, stirring us up so we can pray fervently. We need news, we need information, so we can fulfil our responsibility.

My bedside book is Operation World, my Bible, and Operation World. Operation World gives an outline of all nations, except some parts of the Soviet Union, because they don't know enough about it anyway, to publish it. So we must fulfil our responsibility, and it's very important to have prayer fuelled by information.

And we need to improve in our earnestness, and in our prayerfulness, we need to improve, become more disciplined in earnest prayer for revival upon our own church, upon our nations, and upon the nations of

the world. That is our responsibility. Finally, thirdly, what is our hope? Well our hope is the fulfillment of the promise, and this evening I have chosen this text in Zechariah.

Many people, and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, let us go at once to entreat the Lord, and seek the Lord Almighty. And then it interjects, I myself am going, are you going? I am going, I am going to seek the Lord. And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat Him.

And in those days, he says, he is inferring there will be such a hunger, that ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the edge of his robe and say, let us go with you. And again it's their way in the Old Testament of expressing tremendous spiritual appetite. Here is the man who knows the truth and take hold of him, and we are not going to let him go.

We want this man to teach us. Longing, desire for the truth. And who brings this appetite? The Holy Spirit quickens this appetite.

The people long for the gospel, long to hear the truth. Only the Holy Spirit can engender that appetite. But what is our hope? Well our hope is the fulfillment of these promises.

That all of these writers, Jonathan Edwards and the other writers, they all looked at Romans 11. And they looked at verses like Romans 11 and verse 15. Where we read, for if their rejection, that is the Jews, of the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Just this week I was given a magazine describing a work among the Jews in the Argentine.

An increasing number of ponderers among the Jews in the Argentine. Well how did all those Jews get to the Argentine anyway? Well that is not very difficult because they were driven out of Europe and went to the Argentine. But how thrilling to learn that they are being evangelized and that there is a response among us.

In our town, in our city of Leeds, the biggest structures are not sudden Baptist churches or Baptist churches or even Anglican churches. The best defended biggest structures are synagogues in Leeds, England. And we have just simply got to pray about that and do something about it.

We can't just let that go by. Here are promises, do we believe them? The Prophet Isaiah complains, I believe it is toward the end of his prophecy, he complains that the Lord is a pawn. Nobody takes his promises seriously.

He makes promises, nobody takes them seriously. So eventually Isaiah says, well if nobody is going to take them seriously I have to act on my own, says the Lord. But we mustn't be like that.

We must look at the promises, we must heed the promises. There are promises in the Psalms. Psalm 2, the Lord says, Yahweh says, I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

And because I have set him there, now ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. I have set him there as King, now he is King. Ask me for the nations, come on ask me for them.

We are living in a time when one powerful man can reach a whole nation if he is well thought and determined and a powerful preacher. And there are hungry nations. I was telling Brother Bill Ascol at our

visit to Malawi, right in the heart of Africa.

And there is so much work to do there, so many people who are willing to receive the Gospel and listen to the Gospel. You can start at six in the morning and you can end at midnight. And you can do that every day.

Such is the opportunity. So we must take these promises. And then that promise that our Lord Jesus so often repeated, Psalm 110.

The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion. You will rule in the midst of your enemies.

And then when we turn to one quotation, there are several quotations of that in the New Testament. We turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 25. We read, for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. So let's suppose that the Lord has enemies. There are demonic religions.

There are the religions of darkness and superstition, by which millions of people are deceived. These are enemies. But what are we going to do about it? Oh we must pray about it.

We must be concerned about it. Because these enemies will be conquered. But they must be conquered.

They must be overcome. But they can't be overcome unless there is fervent gospel preached. The light must remove the darkness.

Light is more powerful than darkness. But we must spread the light. So we have hope.

And now I conclude. We have a history. We know what we believe.

We have a substantial confession of faith. A world tried over hundreds of years. We know what we believe.

We know who we are. We are learning more about cooperation and unity. We know who we are.

We know what a Christian is. A Christian is one who has repentance and faith. Are you a Christian? Are you sure that you are a Christian? Have you repented? Have you believed? Are you in union now with Christ? The only way you can know that you are a Christian.

I have union with him now. I am one with him now. Therefore I am a Christian.

Not that I have made a decision some ten years ago. Maybe you made another decision five years ago. But that's where it ended.

It's not making decisions. It's being in union with Christ. You can make ten thousand decisions if you're not in union with Christ.

You're not a Christian. A Christian is one with Christ now. I'm a Christian because I know him now.

I am in union with him now. That's why I'm a Christian. I'm not resting on something in the past.

My memory can tell me I'm a Christian now. Are you a Christian? Well if you are a Christian do you believe the doctrines? Do you believe the Bible? Do you believe the truth? Do you believe the confession? Are you well grounded? Do you know your identity? Well if you do then you have a big responsibility. A major responsibility because now you must take this and for the earth as Jesus said in the commission.

All things, not some things, if you can choose some pleasant things, happy things and leave the rest. Heaven and hell must be preached to all the world. To all nations.

The whole truth. All the counsel of God must be preached. All of it.

In it's vast proportion must be preached. That's their responsibility. It's very hard as it was for them at the beginning.

They had to go back to Jerusalem, to the very place where they found Jesus Christ. They had to go back there and confront these ferocious Pharisees, the Sanhedrin and all the rest who had done that, who had imbued their hands with the blood of the Son of God. They had to go back to those people and their preach.

That took tremendous courage. But where did it come from? It came from the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is to say right there is this great work.

Let's pray about this. Let's get on with it. Let's see what we can do.

Let's contribute to this. Let's gradually, we won't do it overnight. We'll gradually increase the volume of our prayer and the intensity of our prayer.

We'll seek God for this. We will do it. We will.

We will work together. We can't send somebody else, ourselves. We'll work with others and we'll send them to the ends of the earth.

We will do it. And we know we will succeed. This is the promises of God.

And they are to be taken seriously. Beautiful promises, eloquent promises. That even mighty nations will seek the Lord.

We're living in a time of mighty nations. The mighty Soviet Union. Can you believe that? A change there.

Can you believe it? I can. China. Look at China.

We're ready to write China off. And look at the terrific, what they say, 50 million Christians now in China. I've got a personal friend who's writing a PhD thesis on the increase of the evangelical churches in China.

Mighty nations. That's the largest nation in the world. Brazil.

Argentina. Then there's Japan. I was reading Christianity today.

And about Japan. What a desperately needy nation. Possibly the cleverest people.

With all due respect to you Americans, even technology cleverer than you are. But so superstitious and such bandits. Such a clever people, intelligent with their fingers and yet so blind as to the truth.

Will this mighty nation, with its financial power right at the top of the league. Will that nation believe? Well we must pray for them. I pray for them.

Indonesia, they have made big strides to believe it. But a vast amount yet to be done. Philippines, very encouraging.

And so we can go on. Now India. I've got a friend, John Armstrong, who's been to India.

It's challenging. Horrible. He's been to India.

They worked him to death. He staggered back to London. And he couldn't, he was so tired he couldn't even phone me up.

He was exhausted from preaching to large, large crowds in Andhra Pradesh, in southern India, in the province of Andhra Pradesh. So the population is about as big as England. A huge area of population.

But he's been absolutely transformed in his new life. He's passionate to go back and take others back. He's never had such congregation, never seen such a thing in all his life.

He can't get there that fast enough. And then he's got the promises to encourage us. The Lord is not against that.

It's for us. It is hard work. And it does require prayer.

And we must pray. We must have extraordinary prayer. We must become earnest.

We must study these things. We must be burdened by them. But I say it's something that gradually increases on us.

Because Jesus will have the victory. He will indeed. To him be all the honour and praise forever and ever.

Amen.

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