

Habakkuk - Part 4

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the anger of the Lord, justifying God's actions, and appealing to God's mercy in order to seek revival and restoration.

Duration: 1:02:26

Scripture: Psalm 17:4, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 85:5, Psalm 103:9, Psalm 119:67, Daniel 9:9, Habakkuk 3:2

Topics: "Habakkuk"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the concept of mercy and its role in restoring individuals who have sinned. The speaker references biblical stories, such as that of David, to illustrate how grace can restore and ultimately bring about a happy ending. The transcript also emphasizes the importance of humility and repentance in receiving God's restorative mercy. It highlights the idea that God's mercy is abundant and that individuals should have confidence in seeking it. The transcript concludes by encouraging listeners to pray for mercy and have faith that God will respond.

Transcript

Well, now you'll know your way to Habakkuk by now, I'm sure, and by the time we've read it every morning, you won't forget this text. Chapter three, verse two, O Lord, chapter three, verse two, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years, in our time, make it known. And then the prayer that's associated with that first prayer, but at a much, at a much deeper level, in wrath, remember mercy.

It's comparatively easy to pray God to send revival to your church, to your district, to our nation. And there are those who always have thus prayed, and we possibly, I'm sure, have from time to time been really concerned, and prayed God to do it again in our land, in our church, that which our fathers have told us he has done before. You don't need to be especially exercised in heart, strangely, to pray that prayer.

There is, once a month in London and in other parts, an all-night prayer meeting for revival. And I receive the bulletin that tells the news of what's being done. And though I know those people are very much in earnest and very much desperate, I still assert, you haven't necessarily got to have a very deep spiritual experience to pray that prayer.

Praying for revival, I'm almost trite in the church of God. But only a deeply convicted man can pray the prayer that's really going to touch God's heart in wrath. Remember mercy.

We have the first general prayer, revive thy work, O Lord, in the midst of the years, and then we get down to the nitty-gritty. When we ourselves pray this prayer, or a group prays it, not for others but for themselves, in wrath, remember mercy. One of the greatest, deepest prayers in the scripture.

And certainly, I assert, it is the prayer that cannot but touch the heart of a God of mercy. When we say, in wrath, remember mercy. And this morning, I wanted to look at the prayer itself.

We considered the anger of the Lord, the mercy of the Lord, and now the actual prayer. What does it mean? And how to pray it? Before we get down to that, I must, because of the subject, remind you some of the things we have said about the anger of the Lord. Without going into details, I remind you, I try to emphasise that this anger, contrary to human anger, is all the time love-inspired.

And somehow you've got to rid your mind of all your thought about human anger, when you come to consider the anger of the Lord, even the fierce anger of the Lord, or even, as in another place, the hottest pleasure of the Lord. Whatever it may be, however it may express itself, it is always love-inspired, designed for our blessing and good and the glory of his name. And then we suggested three ways in which the anger of the Lord may express itself.

As Isaiah 54 says, in overflowing anger, I hid my face from thee. And the anger of the Lord, when it is kindled against us over some matter, so often, almost always, expresses itself in that he seems to hide his face. Of course, some people don't know he's hiding his face, and they're in a more perilous position, and they seem to go on getting used by God.

But sooner or later, in his love and mercy, he will show them that their sin has separated between him and his God. And for one who's known what it is to walk with God, that's a pain indeed, that he's hiding his face from me, that the heavens seem to be as brass. I don't seem to seem to have that access to him that I once had, although I may use the phrases coming to him by the blood of Jesus, somehow it doesn't seem to be effectual.

In my experience, your sins have separated between you and your God, and your transgressions have hid his face from you. You may not know immediately for what purpose that is. You may hardly realize, no more than Joshua did, that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel as they approached Ai.

He didn't know that someone had taken of the accursed thing and made the whole of the nation accursed. But he did know some of the ways in which that anger was expressing itself. Though, as I say, all he knew was, and this is the second way in which that anger expresses itself sometimes, in unaccountable defeats and unexpected reverses, as Israel knew at Ai.

I can't go in to suggest the sort of things that it might mean in detail, because it will vary, but there's a whole class of experience under that heading. And the anger of the Lord is kindled against us, and it expresses itself, that he's no longer with us in the battle. Indeed, he said to Joshua, I will not be with you any more, except you take away the accursed thing from you.

But at first, he didn't know there was any accursed thing to take away. All he knew was that the triumph of Jericho wasn't repeated at Ai. It was most ignominious.

The only law had 36 casualties, but that was enough to make all the rest turndown, most ignominious. So, unaccountable in view of what they just experienced, and this happens with us. And then we saw a third way in which the anger of the Lord expresses itself.

In the general term of chastening. And there's a great passage we looked at, didn't we? We read it certainly in Hebrews 12, the chastening of the Lord. David said, chasten me not in thy heart's displeasure.

Now, very often, the one who's thus being chastened isn't ostensibly departing from the Lord in any matter. But I remind you, we said that the fall of man has had far more effect in us all than we've ever realized. God is on a recovery operation.

It began when we were first born again, but that was only the beginning. It's not the work of a day or of a year. And the areas in which even the most apparently obedient Christian may not realize where self is still reigning, and which, if not revealed, may lead to terrible things.

David said in Psalm 119, 67, before I was afflicted, I went astray. But in the hour of affliction, something happened to my spirit. It's that proud spirit that expected everything to go its way.

We learn to accept, as coming from God, some hard things. And there's a difference in us, quite ostensibly. Just that which God was working for.

I was looking this morning at Psalm 17, verse 4, by the words of thy lips I kept me from the proud of the destroyer. What does that mean? I kept me by thy convicting word from being a destroyer. I think it means that.

And you know, some of us, if certain things aren't revealed, could become little tyrants. And though hardly would you like to describe his reaction to those unseen and potential things in our hearts as the anger of the Lord or the hot displeasure of the Lord, that is the phrase the scriptures use. And frankly, when I'm trying to help anybody, I don't use that word anger.

If I want to give them that lovely verse, it's so encouraging, his anger endureth but for a moment, his favor for a lifetime. I prefer to say his chastening endures but for a moment. And I think that perhaps does convey the meaning better.

Well now, these are the various ways in which this love-inspired anger of the Lord for his dear children, whom he doesn't want to tolerate going into bypass meadow in any way, expresses itself. And another thing we said, I'm sorry to repeat these but it's so important, be assured all that God permits to happen to us in the way of chastening, in the way of expressing his anger, is never punitive, always and always and always and only restorative. I believe this applies even to the unsaved.

I know it sometimes happens that certain sins produce very closely related unhappiness or reverses. And you say, well that's a punishment for that. I don't think so.

Right up to the last gasp, all that happens on to any man, saved or unsafe, is restorative in divine intention. Only when the day of probation is over, this life ends, is the anger of the Lord has to be punitive. And those that stand at the great white throne to be judged for the things written in the books, and if their names are not written in that other book to be cast forever into the lake of fire, they are those who've resisted right down the years every overture of grace and mercy.

Oh, and some of those overtures came to them in hard ways, but they were restorative. At the last moment they were designed, if only at the last moment, to win that soul back. For the prodigal to say, why in the world have I been in such an unhappy state when in my father's house there's been enough of despair? But when that last moment comes, the day of probation is over, and then the judgments of God

are not restorative, they are indeed punitive, and they have to be.

There's something that cries out for justice, it must ultimately be done, but right to the very moment the door of mercy is opened, and the very angers of the Lord, expressed in various ways, are designed to get that man through that door. And if that's true of others outside, how much truer of us who are inside, but whom the Lord wants to perfect in holiness, is set on our holiness. But obviously if the anger of the Lord in various ways is designed to restore us, we must respond.

And this prayer we're considering this morning, gives us the pattern of our response. Here, listen to it again in raw. Remember mercy.

First, that prayer was an acknowledgement on Habakkuk's part, that all that Israel was going through of calamity and defeat, and they're on the verge of being deported into Babylon, was because they were suffering under the anger of the Lord. He goes, oh well it's our force, our army isn't strong enough, our leadership hasn't been good enough, or it's just the fortunes of how things fall out. He could have passed the buck, and accounted for their situation in other ways, but he didn't.

He said, I'm going to accept this fact as being an expression of the anger of the Lord, we are suffering under the wrath. Now this is the beginning of the prayer that could change everything for us. When I'm prepared to say in raw, remember mercy, if I'm prepared to say these circumstances in which I am, this deadness of soul, this state of my ministry, this state that the church has got into, of which I'm a part, is not just one of those things.

I'm going to accept the fact that the anger of the Lord has been kindled against me, against my company, against our fellowship, and he accounted for it on that ground. I told you about the three great prayers, and we may look at them tomorrow, of national penitents Daniel 9, Esther 9, Nehemiah 9. Daniel prayed his prayer from far away Babylon, thinking of all that had come upon Israel, the ruined city, the captive nation in another land. Ezra prayed his prayer when a remnant of them had been brought back through the action of Cyrus, but they were in a pretty poor state in ruined Israel.

And as he prayed, he accounted for all that had happened, because the anger of the Lord had been kindled against Israel, her kings, her princes, and her people, for the way. That was why they were there. Daniel 2 said that.

And the Levites in Nehemiah 9, as they surveyed Israel's history, and Israel to whom God had been so good, but who in return they had departed from. All that had come upon them, he ascribed, wherefore, thy hand was against us. And I want to suggest, this is the way to respond, to acknowledge that what you're experiencing, the shut heaven, of extraordinarily unexpected reverses, are due to the fact that the anger of the Lord has been kindled against Israel.

That's the first thing. And it is so easy, not to face up to that fact, to account for it on another ground, but somewhere along the line, that has happened among us. The treatment of others, or the treatment of our opponents, as we think, all sorts of things.

He'll show you what it is. And because of that, the anger of the Lord has been kindled against Israel, and Israel better acknowledge that fact. We had better acknowledge it.

That's the first element in this prayer, an acknowledgement that that which I suffer, whatever it may be, is because of the anger of the Lord. Then we go further, and it's implied in the verse. Habakkuk said, in

effect, and it was right of you so to afflict us.

It's all summed up in that phrase in raw. Not only that which has come upon us is because of that, but Lord, I don't quarrel with it. It's right.

Right art thou to afflict me in this way, in the Nehemiah prayer, going through all they've been through, a terrific, extraordinary thing, a decimated nation, a ruined temple and city. But it isn't often you've heard of a whole nation being deported. Perhaps there's never been such a thing in history, save here.

And when he recites it all, he says in Nehemiah 9.33, how be it? Thou art just in all that thou has brought upon us, for thou has done right and we have done wickedly. And we too have got to say this. This mess I'm in, I know I made a mistake, but I asked you to interfere, but you didn't.

You were pleased, apparently, to let it have its natural effect. And this is what's happened in my business, or in my church, in my personal circumstances. Whatever it may be, you're to say, thou has done right, but I have done wickedly.

Thou art righteous in all that thou has brought upon us. I tell you, this is getting pretty low pace. We talk about getting to the foot of the cross.

It's not all that easy. A real visit to Calvary involves you in getting as low as that. Not only the situation in which I found myself is due to the fact that his anger has been kindled against me, but I justify him in it.

Thou has done right, we have done wickedly. Daniel says the same. He said, righteousness in this great prayer belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day.

And then thirdly, in the midst of this experience of trouble and disaster, which he acknowledged was due to this deep factor, the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. He made his appeal to the mercy of God. In wrath, remember mercy, because he knew this God who'd seen it right to chasten and humble his people, delighted in mercy, and that with him, mercy rejoiced against judgment, was ever bigger than it.

And dear old Habakkuk, he has somehow learned how to touch God on his weak point, though it's really his strongest. And in view of all that God has said about his mercy enduring forever, could he turn away the prayer like that? Not only did Daniel say, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but he said, unto the Lord our God belongeth mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against it. In wrath, remember mercy.

And he did so in confidence, and you can do same. And somehow when you got to this low place, at the foot of the cross, was praying this sort of prayer, there's now room for real confidence and boldness, inspired by this day, in mercy. Souls and men by will you scatter from a love so true and deep, can't you see? Depth of mercy, can there be? Sure, man, there is.

Buckets of it, oceans of it. You're giving Jesus his opportunity to show himself great on your behalf, but you must go through the first, in wrath. And when you get to there, you're a candidate.

I cannot conceive God failing to respond. Maybe, though there's been much prayer for revival, there hasn't always been an answer commensurate with those prayers. It may be because we haven't moved on to that second half, so seldom prayed.

Here's a church, things aren't going too well. Heavens don't seem to be all that open upon us. We're in problems, we're in death.

Can you conceive of a few, hopefully the pastor among them, getting together? Say, O Lord, in wrath. And the wrath we experience, we're going to admit that this situation of deadness is due to one thing. The same thing has happened today.

The anger of the Lord is kindled against us. Israel, some in some way or other, has taken to the accursed thing. In wrath, Lord.

Remember mercy. Can you conceive of that initial group of people going to the whole congregation? I said, Brethren, as a church we've been suffering under the anger of the Lord. We know what's gone wrong.

We aren't innocent. We've been involved in the argy-bargy. Many of us have.

Brethren, could we all pray and acknowledge that fact? And could we say, thou art righteous in all that thou has brought upon us, our financial difficulties, the troubles we have? Could we not together say, each one personally for himself, in wrath, remember mercy? Is it possible for such a group of men then to begin to extol the possibility of mercy? In order, because as we saw yesterday, it's the biggest inducement to repentance. The Lord is merciful and gracious. That's the one we're saying it to.

Now that would be the way. That would be the way. And it's got to begin with each one.

Didn't Corporate say, yes, Daniel, he did identify himself with the sin of the people. We have done wickedly. Though he was the goddess of the bunch, I suppose.

But I don't know that we can quite take the innocent ground of Daniel. We've been involved, not only in church things, in personal affairs. And this is a prayer that I need to pray personally.

Oh, it's so sweet. Wesley talked about the mystic joys of penitence. I'm in a bad way these days, Lord.

Everything's gone dead with me. My spiritual life is just an outward show. In wrath, I know it's twenty years and this very deadness, you are right in having brought it upon me.

But Lord, in the midst of wrath, remember mercy. Remember Calvary. Remember Jesus, my advocate above.

I tell you, you won't be in that condition very long. And if there's survival in nobody else, it'll be in you, in me. And you'll emerge new.

Peace again, joy again, forgiven again, restored again, in the old book, living again, something for others again. Oh, the mercy of the Lord for those that come this way. When David had the choice of which of the forms of chastening he would prefer, because of his numbering of the people, what were the three now? Defeat before his enemies, and one thing and another, and the last was pestilence.

He said, let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great. I don't think I'd trust man, this thought. But oh, well, pestilence is something very, an epidemic is very especially something that doesn't come from human intermediary.

And he found his mercies were great. Yes, he got squeezed, and the nation did, in that epidemic. But the fingers of the one, of the hand that was squeezing them, was the hand of the one that loved them.

He said, that's all right. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great. And you really do fall into the hands of the Lord, when you pray this sort of prayer, when this is your response.

Isn't it a great prayer? I cannot conceive, in view of all the Lord's sin, about himself being the merciful and gracious, of inhaling in his own way, to respond to such a time. And the darkness will flee away, even for those whose experience is not that of unaccountable defeats, or the hiding of his face, but the painful chastening. I believe, dear friend, you could rightly understand, better not pray in front of the others, they wouldn't understand it.

In wrath, remember mercy. What's it got to do with you? Well, you know now, a little bit. I believe there'd be such a response.

Maybe that particular chastening, whatever it may be, the outward circumstances of it may continue, but he'll be with you in it, in a new way. You'll find you're cushioned, you're hidden. Oh, hallelujah, I don't know, this is a wonderful new experience, because you've made this sort of a prayer.

Remember mercy. And it's mercy we all need, really and truly, I don't care who you are. You'll hear the old story often told, of the man who went to have his photograph taken, and he straightened his tie and brushed his hair, he said, I hope you do me justice, he said the photographer.

And the photographer gave a knowing look at his client, he said, sir, I think you need justice more than mercy. You need mercy more than justice. Hope you do me justice, you need mercy.

And that's not the way to approach God. I want justice, Lord. That's all I ask, plain, honest justice.

No more, just justice. Like, if it's justice you want, you ought to be in hell. Every one of us.

Mercy, Lord, and remember it. You said such beautiful things about yourself and mercy, then I'm a candidate, Lord. You are a fit candidate, made fit by your very need, by your very failures.

You really sit at a special place, custom-made for you, and you become the object of divine mercy, that not only forgives that which was the basic troubles, those various sins and attitudes, but not only does that, but recovers situations and the outward circumstances. I know a man who was facing bankruptcy, like many others, but he had deeds with God. He asked for mercy, and God said, give to that missionary cause, when he couldn't afford to do it.

And he got mercy, and his business, circumstances changed beautifully. And if he's in great prosperity today, he hasn't forgotten. He, ah, when he said, remember, mercy, Lord.

And when the Lord said, all right, give, give away some more. It may not always be that what he asked you to do, but I just throw out all these sort of illustrations, so that you can make your own application. I say again, the three things.

First, this prayer implies that your difficult circumstances, your unhappy state of heart, are due to the anger of the Lord being kindled against you. Second, that in that prayer, you make no bones about it, that he has done right in all that he's brought upon you. And then, in brave confidence, you make your appeal to mercy.

There for you, your Savior stands, shows his wounds, spreads his hand. Some of these difficulties, and going back, backtracking a moment, are sometimes ghastly mistakes we've made, which are having most unfortunate consequences, with which God does not choose to interfere. And here you are, don't know what to do.

This is what you do. This is the way out. And we can be in a jam.

Some of the decisions we've made, they were self-inspired, they were the wrong thing. Look what's come upon us. Well, go this way, man.

In wrath, Lord, you're right in all you've brought upon us. I've been so wrong. I didn't really consult you.

Okay. But in the midst of it all, remember mercy. He knows how to restore your soul, forgive your sin, and even progressively unness the mess.

I know a dear, dear friend of mine, he got restored years ago in a business venture, undertaken with the best of intention, in the Lord's work. But it wasn't of the Lord, it was his idea. I wasn't too happy about it, but still, it seemed so good.

It went wrong. But he took this ground, and he's never left it to this day. And it's taken him almost the rest of his life to see the situation recovered.

He was not going to go bankrupt. He was going to repay every debtor, even if it took him the rest of his life. Well, he's through now.

But in the meanwhile, he's been so happy indeed. You see, he walks in with Jesus in this situation, knowing he's going to do it, even deal with the circumstances. Sometimes he restores circumstances so quickly, sometimes a little longer.

And if that's the case, it's in order to advance you in the path of sainthood. It was so with David. He went through discipline, but he was forgiven.

There wasn't one little bit of guilt left on his heart. He wasn't going through them like a dog with its tail between its legs. He was restored forgiven.

And the prayers he prayed against his adversaries afterwards, although it was prophesied he was going to have trouble from his own house, so full of boldness, smite them on the cheekbone, and much else. The sort of expressions I wouldn't use about my enemies, he did. But man, you are suffering because of that affair with Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba.

How can you be so bold in that prayer? Psalm 3 is it. It's the psalm which he prayed when he was freeing from Manson. There was not one bit of guilt left there.

No one did all this, all because I did this. All the commentators, they've never, they never forgive David. Anything that goes wrong afterwards, they wrote it up.

And Joseph said, he said, you see, you should give me your notes today. Oh, they don't know grace. Poor old David.

Not so good. He was restored to God as much as grace could restore him. And when he, and then he looked at everything that came upon him, with the Lord on his side.

And sure enough, though he had to run in exile, he was restored ultimately to his throne. More love, more honor than ever before. A glorious happy ending.

And we all praise God for the magnitude of God's grace. And there's so many other cases of the wonderful reviving, restoring effects of grace, when a man goes this way, Samson. Well it's pretty easy to see that his ultimate defeat and the blinding of his eyes was due to his sin, which in turn caused the anger of the Lord to be kindled against him.

But you know, the hairs of his head began to grow again. I don't know what that means. I'll tell you what I think.

You're not told everything. I believe he humbled himself. I believe in that jail he repented.

And I believe in his head, he prayed this prayer, Oh Lord, in the Lord, remember mercy. And when they led him out to make talk, he said, Oh God, did it wrong. I brought this upon myself and you were right to bring it upon me.

The Lord, remember mercy. Strengthen me. This one.

This is how it used to be on me. You know the story. The roof collapsed.

Thousands of Israel's enemies perished and Samson too. But he went to his God, restored and forgiven. And he accomplished more in his death, to Israel, in the destruction of her enemies, than he ever did in his life.

Oh, how beautiful. Remember mercy. You get an idea what tremendous responses of grace there are for any man who goes this way.

The Nazi, Billy Graham calls him the wickedest man in the Bible. Maybe you haven't read his story. Well, it's in 2 Chronicles 13, around there.

Terrible man. Son of Hezekiah, godly king, if ever there was one. But a wicked, wicked man.

He made the streets of Jerusalem run with innocent blood. He led the people into gross forms of idolatry, hardly known by the Gentiles. God sent him messengers who spoke to him.

He wouldn't listen. But ultimately, God's anger expressed itself in the coming of Nebuchadnezzar. And he was taken captive to faraway Babylon.

And there he rotted in a Babylonian dungeon. But we read in 2 Chronicles 33, in the time of his death, he humbled himself greatly. And besought the Lord.

He didn't say this sort of prayer. He said, Lord, this has come upon me for my own fault. And you are right, Lord, to bring it upon me.

But Lord, I seem to have heard in my years that thou art merciful and gracious to sinners. If ever there was a sinner anywhere, who's brought all this rightly upon himself, but in the midst of merciful wrath. And he got it, not only was forgiven, he expected just to die forgiven, still in the dungeon.

But grace went further than that. Not only was he forgiven his sin, but Nebuchadnezzar sent him back to his own country. Unbelievable.

He didn't do those sort of things, but grace touched that man. The king's heart, and Manasseh went back. And he spent the rest of his life putting the wrongs he'd committed right.

Someone said to another whom he was counseling, or the one who was being counseled said, well if I had to put everything right that's been wrong in my life, it would take my life in which to do it. And the one speaking to him said, you couldn't have a better life work. And he became Manasseh's life work.

Alas, he had a son who followed his father's former sins and didn't follow his father's repentance. So much of the good that was done was undone by his son. But I believe there's a case.

Unbelievable. Manasseh restored, just because he prayed this sort of prayer. And then of course Nebuchadnezzar.

I'm one day going to try and give a series of talks on the outstanding conversions of the Old Testament. You try and work out how many conversions can you think of. Well Nebuchadnezzar was there, no doubt at all.

And he was influenced through Daniel. And it was Daniel who gave him that dream, or the interpretation of it, of the tree cut down. And warned him that he was full of pride, that he must put right his sins.

But he never did. He went on in pride, boasted about great Babylon, and a fellow voiced from heaven, thy kingdoms departed. And he was driven out from the sons and men because he lost his reason.

And for years he lived in the fields like an animal with uncut hair and uncut nails. I don't know. We're not told about that.

But actually gives us testimony. Remember the story you get about this is in an encyclical, which Nebuchadnezzar himself wrote and had circulated around his kingdom after he was restored. The day came when his reason came again.

And he glorified the God of heaven. He said, oh I see souls of walking pride. Thou art able also to abate that none of, none worship save the God of death.

And do you think into his subtle brain there came the ability to pray. He said, I seem to hear, remember Daniel saying that Jehovah was merciful and gracious. I wonder if I qualify.

Certainly I've qualified. I've qualified for his anger. Do I qualify for his mercy? And maybe he almost used these words in wrong.

Remember mercy. Oh he got it in big glorious measure. And he became a worshipper of the God of Israel.

Now we're coming towards an end. I want to turn you back to a scripture which we read earlier. Psalm 85, former morning.

Psalm 85, verse 5. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not rather, I insert that, I believe it's helpful. Wilt thou not rather revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Two questions. The first is, wilt thou be angry with us forever? Is this experience

going to go on forever Lord? And the answer is no.

He retained not his anger forever. I will not contain forever. Neither will I be always wroth.

People couldn't bear it. The saint couldn't bear it. For the spirit would fail before me and the souls that I have made.

No. The answer to the first question is no. He will not be angry forever.

His anger, his discipline, his chastening are only for a moment. His normal, his favour is for a lifetime. And the second question is, wilt thou not rather revive us again? Now which do you think God would rather do? Be angry forever or revive his dear people again that they may rejoice once again? Of course he would much rather.

And he's made every provision that that should be our experience. There is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. There's grace flowing from Calvary's mountain.

He'd much rather revive us again than keep on challenging, convicting, disciplining. I want to tell you, you can pray for God to revive you, your situation, your home, your church as if he was reluctant. But listen, prayer is not trying to conquer God's reluctance.

It's laying hold of his willingness. Of course he would rather revive us again. Oh happy the bunch, happy the church, happy the fellowship group.

You can see that. We're going to have it. We're going to be blessed again.

The Lord's going to appear again inshallah. Of course he is. Don't you get the idea that such blessed reviving as something far off from which you've got to pray and agonise is what God wants.

He would rather, much rather, revive his people again that they may rejoice in him. And every provision has been made to that end. And I close with one last text, Jeremiah 8. Jeremiah 8. The last two verses of Jeremiah 8. Very, very touching verses.

Jeremiah 8 verse 21. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. I am black, says Jeremiah, astonishment to take hold on me as I see that all has come upon them.

And then he says, is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? There was plenty of balm in Gilead. The balsam tree grew in abundance in that very place. And the balsam tree was the most frequently applied remedy in those days.

There was balm in Gilead. And physicians, that was where the physicians foregathered. That was the Harley Street of Israel.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then, why then is the health of the daughter of my people not required? Man, is there no fountain open for sin? Is there no power in that precious blood? Is there no balm in Gilead that can make the wounded whole? Of course there is. We heard all about it last night. Is there no physician here? There's a hint, there's a great physician now is here that sympathizes.

The blood of Jesus has not lost its power. Jesus, his long arm of grace has not grown short. He still loves to show his skills in recovering that which is lost.

All right then, why then is the health of the daughter of my people not recovered? Why aren't you revived? Why is your health not recovered? Could it be you don't call sin, sin? Could it be there's a strange reluctance to be honest? Well, you'll have to answer that question yourself. I have to. Why then? Why aren't you saved? If Calvary is there for you, Jesus is there, why are you and I not revived? Why are we not rejoicing? If there is, balm in Gilead, and there is.

Well, could it be you won't put yourself on the wrong of the other fellows? Will it be you're trying to account for your plight on some lesser ground, passing the buck to circumstances somebody else's fault, and you're not really willing to pray to say that you and I can be? And praise God, there is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul. We're going to sing that.

You may not know it, but you will. Just the Amen. To make the wounded whole, to heal the sin-sick soul.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. It doesn't matter too much, it all means the same. Praise God.

Now we're going to pray. And I'm going to take one or two minutes to give an opportunity for brief prayers. And they're going to be representative of the prayers of many.

If you've got something to say to the Lord, to thank Him, that in spite of all you've been through, there is a balm, Jesus is there, you thank Him. The little something you want to admit to, you do it. And listen, the few prayers that will be prayed will be representative, I'm sure, of many others for which there isn't time at the particular moment.

But let's praise that way. Let someone be loud enough, bold enough, brave enough to pray the first prayer, then another, then another. Then we'll have the day.

Amen. To make the wounded whole, to heal the sin-sick soul. In that love chorus, there is power.

Wonder-working power. You're dismissed to your elevenses, O Israel. But go with the Lord's blessing in your heart, praising him one to another.

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