

Habakkuk - Part 5

by Roy Hession

The sermon explores the significance of the cross of Jesus in the context of Habakkuk 3, emphasizing the importance of mercy based on justice, restoration, and revival through confession and forgiveness.

Duration: 1:02:26

Scripture: Psalm 22:1, Psalm 90:11, Lamentations 1:12, Matthew 27:46

Topics: "Habakkuk"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Achan in Joshua 7. The children of Israel committed a trespass by taking things that were supposed to be destroyed and hiding them. As a result, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and they suffered defeat in their next battle. Joshua prayed and sought to find the cause of their defeat, and it was revealed that Achan had sinned. Achan and his family were judged, and the Lord turned from his anger. The preacher emphasizes the importance of admitting our sins and seeking God's mercy, as well as the concept of suffering as a form of chastening from the Lord.

Transcript

You know, there's nothing like a song to fix a message. I had a dear gospel singer, David Davis, who used to come with me in my campaigns. And he said, Roy Wimpy, you preach.

People sometimes argue with you in their mind, but when I sing, they don't argue. It gets in on our unguarded side. And when God gives a song to sum up a theme, a message, then it's his way of getting it into our hearts.

It's very, very fine. I'm sure it will grow upon us. Amen.

Well, now, I hardly perhaps need to ask you to turn once again to Habakkuk 3. You know your way there, and you've heard it so often. You can if you like, but we perhaps should turn to other scriptures too. But this is our fifth study in this verse and truths related to it.

At first, I thought that I'd only finished yesterday. And I thought, well, all I'm going to do, the last thing, is simply to read as nicely as I can, in your hearing, those three great prayers of national penitence. Daniel 9, Ezra 9, and Nehemiah 9. I don't think I'll have time to do that now the Lord's opened up other important concluding aspects.

But I do want to urge you, do go back to those. Read them solemnly. They're very, very moving.

And all the things we've spoken of are there. In effect, that's what Daniel prayed in Rome. Remember, mercy, and God did, and that captive people were brought back again through the decree of Cyrus.

And this was what Ezra prayed, in effect. When he discovered that restored people had failed God again, and had transgressed his commandment, and had begun to intermarry with the Gentiles, who would in turn have led them back to idolatry. And he was so shocked, and he sat down astonished, he didn't wait for them to pray, he prayed.

And when they saw him mourning as he did, and praying as he did, conviction spread upon the whole people, and there was a dissolving of these wrong and illicit marriages. And all the way in which he prayed, very sweet, moving. In effect, he prayed in Rome, we're incurring the anger of the Lord, we've known something of it before.

Are we again going to imperil the little reviving he's already given us? We certainly have incurred it, potentially, but Lord, in the midst of wrath, remember mercy, and God did, amen. When you ask this prayer, and ask for mercy, you get it, when you go this way. The answer is so certain, for he delights in mercy.

And when the Levites in Nehemiah prayed their prayer, they go over the whole history of their nation, how they've disobeyed the Lord and turned from him, and how his fierce anger has been kindled against them, and how they've been taken captive. And they too are in peril of deviating, even after their restoration. And those Levites prayed another great national prayer of repentance.

I think we can learn how to repent. Great thing to know, how to repent. We're told how to win souls, how to read our Bibles, there's an awful lot of know-how Christian books out today.

I think one of the most important things to know how, is how to repent. We can learn so much from this, that great chapter in Nehemiah 9. Well that's for your own personal study, and I think if you do, in your daily readings, well in the next few days, I'll stop my usual course, and we'll have a go. You may not get through the whole of one of them in one day.

You might. It just depends how much you meditate upon it as you do. But there's a lovely study for you, when you get back home.

Now this morning, I've seen this all, so many things, Pam and I were talking, I said Pam, that's it. And you know, I was putting on my tie, and doing this, that, and the other, and the Lord was making his revelation to our hearts. First of all, I want to deal, and talk about, and open up, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the context of this verse.

And then I want to go on to think of how God does indeed provide his work, when we humble ourselves, along the line of this prayer, in wrath, Lord, remember mercy. And then, I want to go on to the whole question of suffering, of course it's a huge subject, but just the question of suffering in the context of this verse, for some have asked me questions, and I realised we've touched on things in a very cursory way there, and might have given rise to misunderstandings, but it by no means is our looking at the question of suffering, just to clear up a few things, and questions, I believe there's something very positive, sweet, good for us, in what the Lord has in his word, along that line. And the first thing we've got to say about the cross of our Lord Jesus, if there's mercy, it's a mercy based on justice, a justice which was satisfied at the

cross of Jesus.

In Lord, remember mercy, that mercy which is sprinkled with the blood, which makes it sure to me, which makes it honourable to thee, to be stirred upon it. I've said more than much how much I, with many of you, appreciate the little book, Daily Light. If you haven't possessed yourself of a copy, I would urge you to do so.

There's a small edition, which was the original, in India paper, the larger one, the cheaper one, and the larger print, in paperback. For years it wasn't even known in America, but now it is. This particular edition has got a foreword by Billy Graham, he's got excited about it now, but we've known it of course for a few generations.

And I think I said how the marvellous thing is the juxtaposition of text. Oh, by the way, talking about getting yourself, I think they're pretty well out of them, just a few copies left in the bookstore. But order it, add a little bit for the postage, and you'll get it without fail.

Warren Eccles will be delighted to do that for you. I have said about this amazing juxtaposition of text, it was got out by the Batchelor family a godly pastor and his grown family. Before they went to bed each night, they were given the leading text, and then they each in their morning devotions, sought other texts from other parts of the Bible that bore on the leading text.

And out of that, those lists of texts, prayed over, revised, for many years came this precious book. And on the evening of February the 23rd, the leading text is, Who hath known the power of thine anger? And you drop your eyes to the bottom of the page, you have the reference, Psalm 90, great psalm, not of David, but of Moses. And in that psalm, he asks this question, Who hath known the power of thine anger? What a question! Who has ever known the full power of the fierce anger of the Lord against sin? Well that's the leading text.

Next text. From the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Next text.

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. And all this under the heading, Who hath known the power of thine anger? Who? Who has ever known it? Only one person has ever known the full power of the anger of God against sin. And that was his beloved son Jesus.

About the ninth hour he said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Because there he was in the form of sinful flesh. God wasn't judging his son as the son. But his son in the form, in the likeness of sinful flesh.

It was sinful flesh. It was sin that he was judging. But Jesus wore our likeness and bore our curse.

But he not only knew the power of the anger of God, but he exhausted it. Jesus said, It's finished. It's finished! The anger of God against sin has burnt itself out in me.

And there's a place where the fire has been, and been exhausted, where sinners can stand and be at peace with the Holy God. There's a story that we often tell. I'm not the only one who tells it.

Pam tells it. We have an arrangement. You're going to tell that story of mine when we're having meetings together.

And many others. I don't know where I got it. And I hope I'm telling it right because we've got a Canadian here.

Because it's about the Canadian prairies. And, of course, in hot weather, dry weather, there's always the hazard of great prairie fires. And when the wind is blowing, and the land is so flat, and everything is so dry, there could be great, mighty walls of flame that spread with extraordinary rapidity across the prairie.

And sometimes all that people can do is to take what possessions they can and flee. And the old days, before everybody had a car out there, it was a perilous business. They had to do it on their two feet, or on the horse and buggy or something, to escape the onrush of these flames.

Their homes would go, their flocks would go, their stock, the farm animals would go. They wanted to escape for their lives. And sometimes the wall of fire was gaining on them.

And the only thing they could do is something which is sometimes still done. They would light a great stretch of the ground in front of them and stand back and let the fire whip that flame further forward until there was a great burnt-out patch in which they would stand. And when the main wall of fire came, it skirted them and left them safe and went beyond.

And you and I are called to stand where the fire has been. Jesus was not the only one who knew and experienced the power of the anger of God, but hallelujah, he exhausted it, so there's none for you. We had an experience of that last week, or the week before that.

And I hate to make you a little bit jealous, but we've had the most wonderful first and second week. So hot and so dry, and we had a bushfire in the grounds. Hey, there was some excitement.

Any number of fire engines were there. All of us were doing something or other to try to put out the flames. And you can see where the fire has been, round behind the headmistress's house.

Mercifully, it didn't actually reach a building. If the wind had been blowing the other way, there's no doubt at all that Nightingale would have gone up and been finished. But it was just prevented in time.

Actually the wind was going the other way and it didn't reach the headmistress's house. But we noticed, as we were all trying to do our bit, though of course it was the professionals that really dealt with it properly, we saw all sorts of rabbits running for their lives out of where the fire was spreading. I want to tell those rabbits, it's safe now there.

You can go back, there's not much to eat, granted. But the fire's been, and you rabbits, you can go back there. Pass that way without fear.

And so we have that illustration not only from Canada, but from Southwell. And you know, dear one, he was the first to know the full blast of the anger of God against human sin. So much so you've got prophetic words of Jesus along this line.

I'm thinking of that verse, if you read and turn to it, only because it takes us time, I've got it, it's all right. Lamentations, the book of lamented, dear Jeremiah's sorrows, over all that fell upon his people. And he speaks sort of poetically with the voice of Israel.

And it proves to be the voice also of Messiah. And chapter 1 verse 12, If you find it difficult to take that phrase, fierce anger, so did Jesus. That's what happened at Calvary.

And the day of his fierce anger was the day of that old rugged cross, where the anger of God fell on him, but thank God, burnt itself out. And you can pray that prayer in wrath, remember, mercy. And no, if you take that low place suggested by that verse, you're going to get it.

But only because of Jesus, only because of the power of the blood, it comes to you sprinkled with precious blood. That's why it's so certain to you. And that is the reason why the anger of the Lord, expressed in the various ways we've suggested, is never punitive in its intention, but only restorative.

It isn't a punishment. That word punitive, maybe it's not the sort of word you normally use, but it isn't a punishment. It's not to be regarded as a legal punishment.

You've done something wrong, now this is what's coming to you. That aspect was forever finished at the cross. That's where the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon received, he's got to confess what he is and go by faith.

And stand where the fire's been at Calvary. This has happened to me. Is God punishment? No.

It's only the unenlightened who say that. A relative of ours died of cancer, painful death, and she died believing that God was punishing her for her secret unfaithfulness to her husband. That wasn't enough to punish such a sin as that.

The only adequate punishment was that which Jesus bore in his body on the tree and finished. Oh, come, tell me, what do these other things mean? They're restorative in its intention, designed to restore you, to provoke repentance where it's needed, to provoke humbling, to help us to pray this prayer. And when we get as low as that in humility, mercy is absolutely assured, mercy sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

Ezra, in his chapter 9 bit, he says, Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. Therefore he felt that whatever chastening they had endured, it bore no relation to their sins. Infinite less, but Ezra, he's not even punishing you.

He's restoring you. Punishment, the legal aspect, is only for those outside of Christ who die in defiance of the great white throne. Even for the unconverted.

God is using every means to provoke the prodigal to come home. Even ways of hardship and judgment and far country famines and so on. What we've got to do, when we find, what, he's hid his face from me, everything has gone dead and down, I find myself in unaccountable defeats and problems, I find that he shut up heaven, that there isn't any rain, no rain upon my soul or on the word, is to seek his face and ask him why.

That's what Joshua did. Wherefore hast thou brought this upon us, this defeated air? God told him. And then, he then had the possibility, the opportunity of saying, alright Lord, I'll recognise that this thing we're in, this deadness, this blight, whatever it is, and by those sorts of things, he's longing to bring us to the place where we're humble ourselves and say in wrath, I admit it, and I don't quarrel with you bringing it, thou hast done right in all thou'st brought upon us, in all thou'st brought upon me personally or upon my church, but in wrath, remember mercy, which of course, it is his delight to do.

And so there is the great picture of the cross, the man of sorrows, acquainting with grief, being made a curse for us. Only criminals died on crosses, he could have died on a bed on the field of battle, there was a cross, and everybody thought he was one, he let them think it. And when they heard him say, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? There you are, I told you so.

The day, God's fierce anger, but thank God, the fire's down. Nothing but peace between you and God, sinner that though we all be, and anything that may come to us otherwise, is only designed to restore our souls. We have to see wherein they need to be restored.

We have to acknowledge he's right in all that he's brought upon us. But with great boldness, utter assurance because of the blood of Jesus Christ, we say, remember mercy. And now passing on from that, I want to think about how God answers that prayer.

Revive thy work, O Lord, is the first petition, followed by the other. And when we do humble ourselves, it's precisely that. He not only forgives us our sin, he revives his work.

I believe the first thing that we need is not revival but forgiveness. If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways, to Chronicles 7, 26, what is promised, I will hear from heaven. You're going to be heard.

Nothing first about revival. You're going to be heard. That's wonderful because you haven't been heard lately, haven't felt like it, seemed like it.

You're going to be heard. I will hear from heaven. He looks upon the blood.

He hears you make that confession. And he hears. Secondly, and I will forgive their sin.

What are you praying for? Revival. Wait a minute, you need something before revival. You need to be forgiven.

And I would say, emancipated, forgiven Christians, they're so happy, well if this isn't revival, what is? Forgiveness. And that's what you need, more than, more power. Forgiveness.

It comes as you confess through Jesus. And then, he'll have it. Now that's the picture of revival, if you will.

And that's what God does. I want to turn your thoughts back again to the story of Ai, Joshua 7. And we saw that the children of Israel committed a trespass in the devoted thing. And Achan took that which, some of which should have been destroyed and the rest should have been given to the treasury.

And he hid it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. So much so that at their next encounter with the enemy, little Ai, they were put to the worst.

And this was a tremendous thing for Joshua. And what a beautiful prayer he prayed. I tell you, there's some wealth here.

That prayer. Penitence, I should say. Couldn't have got lower.

And he expressed what doubts he had. Well, we'd better quit, Lord, if you're not up with us. Has something gone wrong up there, Lord? No, we're still up here, he said.

But Israel has sinned. And in a sense, as I said, that was quite good news. He thought something had gone wrong up there.

No, no, it's gone wrong down there. That's all right, I'm the same. And they sought to find what had gone wrong.

And they found it. And they judged it. It's a pretty awesome story.

Might even create some difficulties in your mind, but that's what the story is. And that having been done, and a great pile of stones raised over Achan and his family, so the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. I have thought that's revival.

It is the Lord turning from the fierceness of his anger which has caused him to hide his face from you, which has been the cause of your A.I. defeats, which has been the cause of those famines which you've known in your soul, which have made you such a difficult person and only added to your sins. He's turned from the fierceness of his anger. And he who said, neither will I be with you anymore except you destroy the accursed thing, was with them.

And you know in the book of Joshua there's not one defeat recorded after that. It was victory from first to last except for the A.I. thing. They learned a deep lesson.

Thank God, that was revival. Oh, what a wonderful thing, friend, if it could be said of your church, the Lord has turned from the fierceness of his anger. Oh, there was so much.

I tell you there is. I tell you there is. The flesh in the services of God expressing itself as it does, characteristically, in holy things, is abomination in the sight of God and is quite enough to account for any lack of revival in the moving of his spirit in our midst.

But thank God, he's prepared to turn from the fierceness of his anger. He's not going to turn from the fierceness of his anger merely because things are put right. Sin is judged by you or by others.

People begin to repent. Even when you've repented of that sin, it's a terrible thing still. It hasn't changed its character, nothing but precious blood.

And Tobit, I remind you of the cleansing of the leper. That cleansing ceremony was not performed until after the man was healed. You may have stopped doing certain things, you may have changed your behaviour, but the fact that you did at one time behave in the way you did, that's still there until precious blood.

So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. I'll tell you another wonderful revival text. I suppose I see revival everywhere.

Why not? It's all of grace, it's all of Jesus. Isaiah 12, Isaiah 12, In that day, In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou, this is Israel speaking, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Thine anger is turned away.

Please follow that. You're comforting me, says Israel. And man, when you've got right with God, that love-inspired anger of his, which was only intent on your restoration, is turned away, and the sin blotted out in your soul is poured to God, and then he proceeds to constitute, pouring it in.

There was a time years ago, when I was called to Palm to submit to a very hard, difficult thing. Can't go into the details of it now. And at midnight I sat in my bed, I said, Lord, you can't, you can't mean it.

Can't I? Cannot I not do what I will with mine own? And at about midnight or later, I bowed and I said, All right, I'll take it. And the next day was Sunday, I had to preach. What a Sunday.

I could hardly preach, because I was so near weeping. I couldn't read the scripture, I couldn't listen to hymns, I was near tears. Not tears of the difficulty of the thing that I'd submitted to.

But he was comforting me. He was caressing me. I said, Lord, if you don't stop, I'm going to make a fool of myself in front of everybody.

Comfort, comfort. He came from all angles. Oh, this is what he does.

I tell you, if this isn't a Bible of one man, I don't know what is. I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, though you had chastened me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. And so we can go on with other Old Testament pictures of that.

Oh, it was life from the day when you prayed that deep prayer, seeing what's gone wrong, justifying God in all the difficulties. Man, you've made a decision, a ghastly mistake perhaps, and look at the situation. Maybe in your job, your finances, you were motivated perhaps by too much greed or something, and you made a decision.

Look at the situation. Oh, there's a way out of every such thing. Say, Lord, I admit it.

And thou art right in all thou hast brought upon me, but in judgment, in mercy, in Lord, remember mercy. And you're going to get it. Not only will you be forgiven, even the situational, God will do something about that, sometimes quite suddenly, sometimes progressively.

And you emerge with the sort of testimony we've been looking at. And now, I want to pass on to a word about suffering. And we have said that this love-inspired, domestic, fatherly anger of the Lord sometimes expresses itself in chastening.

And I think that's the word to use here. In spite of the fact we may try and redefine our terms, that word anger, it's difficult to get out of our minds that there's something that's untellingly wrong, and God is wild about it. But, suffering comes to some of the most obedient servants of the Lord, as far as we can tell.

So scrupulous in their walk with God, and yet, they're made to suffer along various lines. And such, we've all had in Christ, what have I done to deserve this? Is there something in which I've gone astray, where I need to be restored? Is that the reason? Now listen, sometimes it is. I turn you quickly to 1 Corinthians 11.

Sometimes, but not always, we shall see that. But sometimes, yes it is, there's a case very clearly referred to in 1 Corinthians 11. And here, Paul is talking, it's the passage where the last, the Lord's Supper was instituted.

And he has some things, many things to say to them. As you know, the Corinthians, much was wrong in that church. But they went on with their routine.

They went on with their celebration of the Lord's Supper. And in verse 29, some of them had been eating and drinking unworthily. And in doing so, had drunk judgment.

Not condemnation, not damnation, but judgment is the right word. Chastening. Not discerning the Lord's body.

It makes a difference between judgment and condemnation in this passage. And the judgment he speaks about, which we can bring to ourselves, is chastening judgment. That's what we've been talking about.

And then he goes on to say, this judgment, this chastening, has caused certain things. For this cause, many are weak and sickly and some sleep. That means they've been called to glory.

There's such a nuisance in the church. I'll bring them up to heaven. They might have had many years more.

But perhaps the best way out is to bring them up to heaven. Oh, we haven't lost heaven, but the church has lost a problem. And so sometimes, weakness, sickness, or even death, is the cause of the sort of guilt.

There was immorality of the very gross sort, and the elders were not dealing with it. There were terrible divisions, and all sorts of other excesses, and this letter was written to correct them. And he says, as a result of these things been going on, God has had to chasten his people.

Once again, it's restorative. I mean, it was restorative for those who had their lives shortened. They got to heaven.

And they got it all squared with the Lord. And they're at peace. And it was restorative for the whole church.

And the Bible was able. Now, sometimes it is that. Fifteen years before my wife, Revel, was ultimately called home, on the Portway Road, on the way back from Clevedon.

She nearly died of a miscarriage. It really reached almost the end of the road. I didn't go into medical matters.

And they just put a drip feed in her nose with glucose, and they said, her kidneys have ceased to work. If that doesn't work, there's nothing more. Progressively, she will die.

And this, of course, was a real test. God, in a wonderful way, blew his whistle. And his hidden prayer warriors came out.

And I don't know how many all over the country, in Africa, heard the news and prayed. And God was merciful. For myself, as I sought the Lord, I knew I'd been going easy on certain sins.

I'd not been judging them. Impure fantasies. And in the hour when one was suffering this chastisement, I humbled myself.

I said, Lord, I haven't been repenting of this impure chastisement. These impure fantasies. And the blood of Jesus came.

And a wonderful thing happened. Her eyesight was restored. Because when the blood pressure gets to such a point, the eyes are affected.

And the kidneys began to work. And God brought her again from the dead. And I always said that Revel was brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Oh, that precious blood was enough for my sin. But it seemed to cover the whole situation. I don't know, there's many other reasons why God permitted that thing.

God gave her 15 more wonderful years. But sometimes, and if you're in trouble, I should really be sure your sins are forgiven up to date. That's a thing.

Be sure your sins are forgiven up to date. But that may not be in every case. Why God permits severe, sad things to happen.

Now for the world, I don't know there's much of an explanation you can give. Except God is his own interpreter. And he will make it pay.

But for the Christian, it's all anticipated in his word. And you've got that great charter for the suffering ones. Hebrews 12.

The passage that speaks of the chastening of the Lord. And I do believe, perhaps, that's the word we must use in such cases. I don't know that I like to say, to comfort such in ones.

A verse which is indeed comforting. His anger endures but a moment. His favour for a lifetime.

Only a moment it will seem, ultimately. His favour for a lifetime. I don't know I could quote it that way.

I find myself saying, his chastening, his disciplining, endures ultimately but a moment. His favour for a lifetime. That's what it is.

And what does Hebrews 12, the great charter, say? It says, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourges every son whom he receiveth. And if you are without chastening, if you never have test, it almost looks as if you're a bastard and not a true child of God. That's what it says.

I'm almost quoting it, word for word. It's a mark of love. It's because he's intent on our holiness.

Even in the most obedient of us, there may be new things he wants to do in our lives. New things to correct, which we didn't know were there. Or new qualities of patience, of caring for others in trouble.

New gentleness. That old strong eye, it's just been too strong. We don't know.

He's not censuring you for that which you don't know, but he knows what you need. And he's working for our holiness. And that's the reason why it says, no chastening, for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, but afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

What you need to say is not why am I suffering this way. No, not what have I done to deserve it. You haven't.

But why is he allowing it? What's he teaching me? And you'll learn bit by bit and afterward. As you're exercised thereby, as you're willing to learn, let God speak to you. Not only comfort you, but lovingly speak to you.

And what he says will be very loving. It will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. How often have we not heard ministers tell us there's one member of their congregation, a sick woman, and they go to comfort her, and she's so raging in spite of her trouble, she's got right through, that it's the minister who gets

comforted, rather than the other way, she's unblessed.

The peaceable fruit of righteousness. There's no rebellion. There was at first, maybe, but that's been settled with Jesus.

And there's such sweetness and concern. Oh, my dear friends, so hallelujah. Nothing's gone wrong.

Heaven is still occupied by the Lamb upon the throne. Now, what are we to do? However, according to Hebrews 12, it just gives us these considerations. It's a mark of the care and love of God.

And if that serves, as I've said the other day, some of us seem to be more loved than others, because they've suffered more. It's not a mark. You're not loved.

He's taking time out, trouble with you. He's got a gracious purpose. Well, what is your attitude to be when you're in that thing? Shall we, inasmuch as we had fathers of the flesh who chastened us for our good, after their own pressure, shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of Heaven and live? Subjection.

And the next. He bowed his head for us to something far worse. And he said, bow your neck.

Wear my yoke. This yoke is from me, but it won't fit if you've got a stiff neck with seeds of rebellion. And go through it with Jesus.

And when you find yourself not submitting with self-pity in your heart, well, there's another sin to take to the cross of Jesus. I don't think he expects any of us to go through certain paths without having to go back and repent about attitudes that come. But be assured, no matter what the experience is, you go through the high way of holiness when it goes through it.

You can walk on that high way of holiness. Yes, especially when it first hits you, you'll get off. My goodness, your mind reels when something or other happens.

But the way back is there. It's sprinkled with precious blood on that high way of holiness. Every last thing that could go wrong has been anticipated by Jesus on the cross, and settled to the satisfaction of God.

So that when something does go wrong in your attitude, he's not surprised, he's been provided for. You know, Isaiah 35 is the passage that talks about there should be a high way of holiness. It says two things.

The unclean shall not pass over it. Well, that's not very encouraging because we do get unclean. Unclean don't pass over it.

And even the very name, the high way of holiness, is a bit forbidding. Am I holy enough? Well, you say, who in the world do walk on it? A little later down in the passage. But the redeemed shall walk there.

And who are the redeemed? Those who have mourned once, more times than they like to remember, have been rendered unclean. But they have found there was power in the blood of Jesus. It's the high way along which those redeemed, the constantly redeemed, the clean walk.

I have a dear friend in Switzerland, a German speaking friend, and there was one conference years ago, the great sea, it passed from mouth to mouth, immer erlöst. Erlöst, I'm not pronouncing it right, am I? Clearly. Means redeemed.

Yes, redeemed. And immer means ever. Continually redeemed.

And even now when he meets me, he always says, immer erlöst. Hallelujah. The redeemed walk there.

And man as a high way of holiness. Yes, there'll be many coming back to Jesus. Many things will be revealed in your heart.

That's all part of the reason. The scum comes to the surface when bone soup is put on the hob. Then you can take the scum off.

And we put on the hob sometimes and the scum comes up. Jesus takes it off. And in this way, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

And more than that, in this period of trial, you can pray havoc with prayer. Perhaps we'll alter its wording a bit. Perhaps for such, in such a case, we will say, in this time of chastening, O Lord, remember mercy.

You delight in it. Maybe his mercy isn't going to mean the complete changing of a certain situation. As in some of the situations I've referred to, it does mean when it comes to revival.

Maybe it's not going to bring a loved one back to life. But you're in need of mercy and so much else. And you're in the midst of this chastening.

Remember mercy. Don't ask for justice. Ask for mercy.

Don't be like that man who went to the photographer and said, I hope you do me justice. What you need is not justice but mercy. Ask for mercy.

All I want is justice. No, ask for mercy. Your attitude, many things.

And I want to tell you, you touch him on his weak point and you're going to have mercy, abundant, and gloriously compensating in the difficult path you're called to work and to walk. And so here's our great loving text. O Lord, remember let us bow our heads in prayer.

We want to thank thee, dear Lord, for mercy brought to us by Jesus at such a time. And we want to thank thee for all we've heard. We can only ask thee interpret it each to our hearts so that we've it's been as if you yourself have been counselling us as we've listened.

And may the end be joy and peace even though maybe there have been a few tears and may yet be others but we thank you. We can be amongst those who can say thine anger is turned away from me and thou comfortest me. We think of the comforts of God.

Isaiah saying comfort ye, comfort ye my people. They've been through it. They've received in the Lord's hand double for all their sins.

And now the hour of comforts comes. The hour of renewal. The hour of revival.

The hour of joy. So Lord may we all get into that in these days. In this day our last day together.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Alright, let's try and sing our chorus again.

And

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