

The Burden for Revival

by Vernon Higham

The sermon emphasizes the need for revival in the church and the land, and the importance of God's intervention in bringing about this revival.

Duration: 1:06:36

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the need for revival in the land. He uses the analogy of a drought to illustrate how the absence of rain can lead to withering and a shortage in the future. The speaker also shares a story of a forest fire that threatened a village, but the people remained steadfast in their worship of God. He describes a powerful preaching experience where the congregation was in a stillness, as if chunks of eternity were thrust into time. The speaker emphasizes that many people are recognizing the need for God's intervention and are turning to Him for help.

Transcript

Well, this morning, again, I would like to bring your attention to the same theme that I'm endeavouring to convey, and it is because it is the burden of my heart, and between one way and another, by the grace of God, I would like that all of you, or some of you, might be moved by this great need in our land today. I regard the issue of revival as being the one in which we have no option. It is the only answer.

We're concerned about the glory of God and God's honour. We've tried nearly everything that you can think of, and we find that we cannot manage without him, and so we need his touch. There are times, aren't there, in the lives of an individual, when you can see that that person has changed immensely, and they might describe it in many different ways, and they might say, or someone say about them, they've had a fresh touch from God, and we are not surprised at that.

We have known that kind of thing in the life of a person, a meeting, a time of God, a word said in season, and they have been like a new thing. And a church like that, we know there are times in the history of the church where she languishes, and she needs that encouragement from God. And why not? We are a corporate body, we are like one in a sense, aren't we? And why not? That we should have a touch from God, and that we might know that it is for the glory of God.

We know we can't do it. We know that we didn't in any way contrive it. It is a work of God's sovereign grace.

And so far, we've been looking at the need in chapter 62, and then in chapter 63, the cry of the man who cares for revival. I'd like to bring to you today from chapter 64, and the first seven verses there, something of the burden there. I'll read you just the seven verses, it's just a little passage.

O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causes the waters to boil, to make thy name known. To thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.

When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waited for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.

Behold, thou art wrath, for we have sinned. In those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.

And there is none that calleth upon thy name, but stirreth up himself to take hold of thee. For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities." There's something of the thrill of anticipation of revival in those words, and there's something also of the anguish of the consequences of the sin of God's people. I wonder how concerned we really are, and how can we express the concern? We can talk, can't we, about the need, and we could go all over again, couldn't we, about the need in Wales, England, Scotland, and so on, and talk about the need of the land generally, the need of the churches, the need of those who have an experience of the grace of God, and how we have come to that place where we sometimes are hardly identifiable as the Lord's children.

We are so affluent, and we have so many things that we deny ourselves nothing, that we really are very difficult to identify amongst the peoples that we live in. And yet we should be unmistakably Christian, and with our gazes set upon God, and the reality, that great reality of God, that lovely hymn that we sang, I think I had one favourite yesterday, and this has now taken its place again, and that's my favourite all over again, thou art the one reality. And that's the kind of thought that I'd like to bring us to today.

I am a minister in South Wales and in Cardiff, and Cardiff is a, well you might not agree, but I think it is a very beautiful city, and it is laid out very pleasantly, with parks, and very beautiful buildings, and multitudes of streets, and seems to be endless, endless numbers of people. That's only one comparatively small city, as cities go. Outside Cardiff, one of the hospitals is there, and it is placed in a very beautiful spot on a hill, the area is called Llandoch, or Llandochai, and there the hospital is, and I have occasion sometimes to visit that particular hospital.

And from the very first time that I visited that hospital, when I had come from a little village in Cardiff, called Llandewi Brefi, a lovely little place, beautifully situated again, also very lovely, but with a population of 450 people, and perhaps in the hinterland, another 600 or 700 people more. And then you go to the city of Cardiff, so many people, people everywhere. And I can remember when I used to drive my little car down the hill into the city itself, that you'd find a very broad expanse of the view of the city.

And from that very first day, and I think it struck me particularly, having come from this lovely little hamlet, if you like, in Cardiganshire, it struck me particularly, almost as if God spoke to me, I have yet many people in this city. And I thought, well Lord, how do you reach them? I'll never get round all the streets. Should I live to be a hundred? I'll never manage that.

I'll never be able to knock every door. Lord, how do I reach all these people? And there it seemed to be just one little view, to think of London would be, my little mind would collapse. But the city of Cardiff, that was big enough, I could just see it there as an expanse, and it represented maybe the multitudes of the world as well.

I'm feeling something of the need, and as a servant of the Lord, a cry in my heart too. And over the years, that cry has become an anguish. And as I have grown older, it has been more distressing to me, because as one's strength fails, the anguish has increased, until on times it hardly seems bearable.

Now the cry in Isaiah 63 leads us to this kind of burden, that this man you see, Isaiah, is convinced, absolutely convinced, that there is no option in a situation like this, other than God coming down. In verse 15, if you remember, in the previous chapter, it's his link naturally, he says, look down, look Lord, take a good look. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory.

And then he asked him, where is thy zeal, and thy strength, sounding in the bowels of thy mercies towards us? Are they restrained? Are we left as a forsaken thing? Where art thou Lord, thou in whom we believe, thou who dwellest in holiness and glory, thou who art mighty and powerful, and perfect in all thine attributes? Where art thou Lord? What has happened? Look at our plight, and we are in frenzied activity, and yet it looks as if all our activity, as if the power of God, is not there behind our words. Perhaps an illustration that has come to me now, in borrowing from the one from last night, and using it in a different way. If a policeman puts his hand up to stop your car, you know you have to stop.

But you don't stop, do you? Because of him as a human being? Because he's dressed in a certain uniform? You know he belongs to the police force, and you know that the chief constable will back him. And because the law, the land, and the chief constable will back him, you respect this little policeman. But if the chief constable came along and said like this, don't take any notice of this man, I'm not going to stand behind him.

He may wear a policeman's uniform, he may stand guiding the traffic well as he may, but I have stripped him of his power and his authority. And we'd smile at the policeman and wave, and pass on. We are almost like that.

We preach, but where is the authority of God? We plead with men, and they hear us with their minds, but their hearts are not moved. I am not saying that that is totally true. What I'm saying is that it is generally true.

It's as if we were on our own. And here is a prophet saying, Lord, don't leave me on my own. Look down, and then come down.

And not only may thy authority be with me, but stand by my side so the people can see that the authority of glory and of heaven is there by my side. And wing the words as they are preached. And that's the dimension we're thinking of.

We're thinking of that kind of touch of God upon his church, and upon his servants, upon his ministers. Now then, when such times have happened in the history of the church, and there are an innumerable number of revivals and awakenings and visitations of God, that we not all are recorded. Some are recorded, some are recorded in part, and I've read one or two little instances from some, and they're only a tiny glimpse of the glorious things that happened in those particular revivals.

But what is it like with us today, looking at our land? Let me use an illustration that surely will be one that we will all understand. You and I would say that we have had a beautiful summer. The weatherman would call it a drought.

Now then, so far you might say it's very nice and we can enjoy ourselves, and then in certain areas it's not so enjoyable because things are beginning to wither. And the countryside is beginning to change colour in some areas. The green becoming a kind of a reddish brown, and the red earth is seen more plainly than the green.

And that tells a story, that there will be a shortage in the future. And then a little notice comes along and says, in some areas to start with, that the water will be turned off from a certain time to a certain time. Then we get a little bit more concerned about it.

And they say, well of course it will be all right and it will eventually rain. But when the rain doesn't come we become increasingly anxious about this. But we don't know what a drought is.

We fear something of it. And when we see the lakes of our lovely country, and when we see how little water is in them, and where the reservoirs are, and where villages that were drowned in order to have water for cities and so on, they are coming into sight again. Little churches where people worshipped in little streets and little bridges that used to cross little rivers are coming into sight.

And they say, this hasn't been so for 50 years. We haven't seen this for a very, very long time. And you might say, indeed this is a drought, the kind that we have not known the like before.

And a little anxiety maybe, just a little. But then we are reminded of countries where it hasn't rained for five years. That's a drought.

Then we see on the television screen, don't we, pathetic and heart-rending pictures of mothers trying to feed their children. And children with enormous tummies full of wind. And little arms like pencils almost.

A sight that you almost rend your heart so much you don't want your mind to stay too long upon it. And then if you get more involved with that, not only do you see the need, your heart cries out. And not only does your heart cry out, it becomes a burden.

And you might organise that there might be water brought to these countries, and that there might be large tankers that bring water and relief and grain and so on, that they might be assisted. And it is a help. The only real help is rain.

That's the only real help. And that comes from above. Spiritually serious as that is, and I'm not belittling it, as serious as that is, there is a spiritual drought in our land today.

Oh there were times when a preacher like myself, when I was a student, making his way perhaps with a few others in a car, joined together, going to and being dropped off at village churches as we went and

then picked up afterwards, the place would be populated with men and women wending their way to the morning service. I can remember as long ago as six years ago that from Aberystwyth to Carnarvon, I passed one person, I'm sure there were more, but I only passed one that you could tell he was going to chapel. Well that wasn't the full picture, the full picture would be more than that, it would be more people I know, but it was an indication where you saw them going in groups and so on, and walking their miles to their chapels, and you might say there is a great drought in this land, and even when we come to our chapels and our churches it seems as if the taps have run dry, and there is no living water there, there is a great drought in this land, and we're beginning to get concerned, we're beginning, we're beginning to talk about a need, we're beginning to recognise that most of the people of the land hardly know anything about our Lord God, we know that, and we're beginning to see the need amongst Christians, the expensive things that we have, you know you have the same pleasures, the same enjoyments, the same holidays, the same everything as the world will have, we may not sin like they do, but we go shoulder to shoulder with them, and yes there is a drought, there's a great spiritual death in the land, a terrible one, and then maybe when it goes worse and worse, we might begin to say, well Lord something's got to be done, and I've heard elders who are not particularly evangelical have said, well you know, it's been bad before, God has helped before, something's got to be done, and then not thinking of doing anything, but something's got to be done, but some of us do things, and we try this thing, and we try the other, we try to bring little buckets of blessing from one man and another man, and say we've heard of a man over there, he's quite a good man, and he's used, let him come along, and he comes with a couple of buckets of blessing, but what's that in a drought? What's that amongst so many? We need drenching with showers from heaven, and the only answer can be from God.

It cannot be any more. By the efforts of people, men, as earnest and as sincere as they may be, and collective as they may be in their committees and their energies to organize whatever you have, we need God to look down and to come down. Now then, in this picture here this morning, the prophet sees what it could be like, but it says, all that thou wouldst, but he also makes it sound as if it had happened, so in a sense both are captured here, but it is an if, if thou wouldst, all that thou wouldst, the power of revival, so let's for a moment then, for a little while, be captured by the wonder of that, and these first two verses where he says, all that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, and the fire causes the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations might tremble at thy presence.

Who's he addressing? He's addressing God. Now here is a vital difference. I could go to some of my friends and say, this is a terrible fight that we're in, what shall we do, shall we have a discussion, and I could go on and enlarge upon that, we'll try this and we'll try the other, but he said, now look, there comes a time when you have to consider the author of it all, there comes a time when we have to recognize our maker, there comes a time when we have to recognize the head of the church himself, and that is God himself, and so the prophet here is saying, look it is so bad, I'm asking you to look, no, I'm asking you to come, that is his plea, and to come down into this situation.

Well, who's he inviting? What is God like to you? What is he like to you? Have you got a picture of him in your mind? He's absolute, he's perfect in all his attributes, in every single one that you can think of, if you think of his love, we can try and measure his love, and then the length, the breadth, the height, the depth, and then a passive knowledge, we've run out of our tape measure, we can't measure his love, but we can understand something of it, and we then think of his holiness, and we can catch a glimpse of his purity, and his righteousness, and his holiness, and then when we consider the face of God, we might say, well,

how can I look on thee and live?

We've even got the sense to say that's what is God like, and to meet God, hymns very often, endeavored in a beautiful way to describe this, and the one that comes to my mind now is this, immortal, invisible, God, only wise, in light, inaccessible, hid from our eyes, most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days, almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise, and listen to God moving now, unresting, unhastening, and silent as light, nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might, not only this little planet, but all his creative, all his creative span, thy justice like mountains, high soaring above, like clouds which are fountains of goodness and love, to all life thou givest to both great and small, in all life thou livest the true life of all, we blossom and flourish as leaves on the

tree, and wither and perish, but naught changes thee, great father of glory, pure father of light, thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight, oh Lord we would render, oh help us to see, it is only the splendor of light hideth thee, how do you think of him, the altogether great one, how great thou art, or just a verse from this one, my God, it's as if he's making a discovery, my God, how wonderful thou art, thy majesty, how bright, how beautiful thy mercy seat, in depths of burning life, intensity that I could not bear, how dread are thine eternal years, oh everlasting Lord, by prostrate spirit, day and night, incessantly adored, how wonderful, how beautiful the sight of thee must be, thine endless wisdom, boundless power, and awful purity, oh how I fear thee, living God, with

deepest, tenderest fears, and worship thee with trembling hope, and penitential tears, and so on, capture, capture a glimpse, or a thought, of our glorious God, allow him to fill your mind, and your heart, and your soul, here in this morning worship, and as it might be before your eyes, and your thinking, God, righteous, and holy, and perfect in love, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, eternal, righteous, holy, good, all these things, in their absolute perfection, this God is the end of my journey, think of him, as I have been very bold, thou who dwellest in glory, and in holiness, look down on planet earth, look down, then he becomes very daring, come down, God of the universe, God of beyond the universes, and come down, oh that thou wouldst render heavens, rip them, you can

almost hear it, can't you, as if it could happen in this town of Aberystwyth, as something should happen like this, that you might hear a tearing sound, and then from the very depths of the height of the sky, a big ripping sound, and God inching into his church, in a glorious way of blessing, and of mercy, and of pity, think large about the presence of God, and about the might of our God, here the prophet then comes to terms that we can understand, oh that thou wouldst render heavens, that thou wouldst come down, and he begins to think what would happen if he came down, and then he looks at the mountains, and we can consider the mountains of North Wales, and they're high enough, if you've been abroad and seen higher abygals, well think of them, whatever these mountains are, and then

suddenly you see a more strange sight, you see this mass of granite, that took you a day before, five or six hours, only just to get around the perimeter of it, and then you suddenly see something shaking there, and they've known that in North Wales recently, not an earth tremor, they've had dozens of those, but an earthquake, now we don't get them normally do we, a 5.7 earthquake, equivalent to the one in Yemen, that killed 2,000 people, but because of the structure of the houses, it cracked them, people rushed to the street, no one was killed, but it was a terrible experience, for 15 seconds it felt as if your whole world was giving way under your feet, and yet we are not moved, yet we are not moved, but here the prophet sees these mountains, as if God got hold of them, and the heat of

his righteousness melts them, you will be terrified and say, what's happening in Wales, what's happening in Britain, what's happening in Europe, if God should only just incline his little finger and say, melts, that's all, he had got, that's all, what are we, no wonder that we are described as little grasshoppers, hopping about here and there, in our stupid petty little bonnets, and yet we are allowed by the mercy of God to contain in our little minds the knowledge of God, it is a wonderful thing, but there are mountains aren't there, mountains of materialism, you think it's, God can never move a man from the idol of his heart, you see them polished as new, or his two new cars, you come between him and his car, it's like coming between a dog, a hungry dog and a bone, he'll snarl at you,

he'll call you anything, come between a man and his pleasure, it's my rights, come between a man and his money, it's mine, it's mine by rights, you think the mountains of materialism can be melted, yes, I believe in God, do you believe that the mountains of hard humanism that gets hold of the media, and just conveys over and over again in a subtle way, this is how things are, this is how things are made, this is what little sod is here, that's the meaning of that, and that's the meaning of and these poor little men, if they were only in one little chamber, would be calling out, oh God help me, or if they had a heart attack, and that's only a very little chamber compared to the universe, oh God help me, and yet they talk big, as if they understood the order of things, can humanism and

man's pride be melted, yes, I believe in God, can all the hatred of the truth the hatred of our glorious evangelical truth from this infallible inherent word of God, can that hatred ever be removed in the hearts of men and women, can hard hearts who are entrenched in unbelief and some philosophy on earth, can they be moved, yes, I believe in God, then there are mountains of sin, mountains and mountains of sin, and they love their mountains, and they caress their mountains, and they embrace their mountains, and they cling to their mountains of sin, and they say, well I have a right, I only live once, you think you can never get them, they're almost like those little things, uh that you used to put on the hand, I can't think of the name just now, that used to suck blood, what a terrific job

it was to get them off, and they're like that's under their sin, you need four or five men to pull them away, and then they protest, but you think that it can be moved without that effort, of course they can, God can do it, I believe in God, then there are mountains of unbelief, oh, there's unbelief in our hearts, we do not really believe that he can move a city, those vast areas of houses, we do not really believe, we think of cities like Birmingham, and Manchester, and London, and Liverpool, and so on, and so on, and we say, oh Lord, there are so many people, it's such a colossal task, and you know, God would say back to me, my dear little boy, he said, do you know, come here a minute, I'll come down, but you come here, up here for a moment, and I'll take you up, now then, tell me where

you live, Lord I can't see, I can't see the particular order of stars, I can't see my solar system, oh it's a billion, billion miles away, have a good look now, and he shows me the vastness of his creation, and the multitude of his galaxies, and the universe, and so on, and he shows me this, and colours I never knew of, and sounds I'd never heard of, and beauties I'd never envisaged, and he says to me, now what is your problem?

I said, there's a problem in the church, Lord, in the evangelical church, we don't think you can move our heart, heart, we don't think you can move our unbelief, and God laughs in his heaven, he has a right to, hasn't he, my dear little boy, go back and tell them, yes, he's able to believe in God, in a revival there is also the supernatural, he says something very wonderful, listen to this verse, when thou didst terrible things which we look not for, thou camest down on the mountains, flowed down at thy presence, let me

just give you glimpses of the supernatural, because it does happen, I can think of many, and every time I talk on something like this, I just have to limit it, I just have to, because there are so many instances, let me read you one now, which is from, I don't know if it's, yes, it was a local revival, in Penmachno, North Wales, in 1818, but this is only an example of that which has been heard many times, in the 1904 revival, what I'm going to talk to you about now, was heard from Aberystwyth to Llanuria, to Trigaron, for three quarters of an hour, and a sight seen, unmistakable, listen to how this man put it, perhaps something should be said about that which is described as singing in the air, some have heard the singing, when there could be no possibility of anything else being heard, they say that you, they say that you have but to hear the singing, and it leaves a deep impression upon the hearer, the sound is above the melody of earth, it is like the sound of a thousand myriad of heavenly melodious voices, singing in a way unknown to men, honest men have claimed such things, and that they have stayed listening for some considerable time, a gentleman from Penmachno was returning from the monthly meeting at the spotty, they believed as they left that they heard singing come from the chapel, they thought that this for some time, eventually it came nearer, and above them, of the like they had never heard, and such glorious sounds, the reverend D.

Davies from the same district believed for a time that a whole forest was taken up with song, all this was in 1818, one man described the events in this way, at first, listen to this, at first it is melodious, faint and distant, until it fills the skies, like unto a great congregation, praising God, many asked if there was a meeting in the chapel at different times, when they heard that there had been none at that hour, because they had heard melodious voices singing in the air, my friend, it is a wonderful thing, it fills the air, it is like singing of a multitude, who are taking up with an object of beauty beyond all description, as if they were unaware of us, but we are allowed to listen on the perimeter of it all, and you never forget it, it is beautiful, glorious, with celestial sound beyond the imagination, the supernatural, he delights in the beautiful, he can do that as well, Helen Roosevelt, a friend of many of us, staying in our house in time, and she shared with me a time that she was in a revival in Zaire, and she gave, there are many instances, but there are two that I can recall very clearly, of the supernatural, here is one of them, she was travelling in a Land Rover, and with a driver, a friend, there they saw in the distance, what seemed like a forest fire, and it was right above their beloved village, a thing that they dreaded to have, they said hurry, we must get there, and help as many people as we can, and so they rushed as quickly as they could, in order to reach this place, but when they got to the village, the fire was above them, and below the fire, were the people, praising God, and worshipping God, another instance, when she was in a large plain building, barn-like structure, in one village, and there was a particular kind of wind, which they had the name for it, that when they heard it, they used to then take all the shutters down, rather than close them, so that they would not be ripped apart, and everyone would lie around the edges of the walls of the church, and keep a still and a subtle link together, that was the usual procedure, when this wind came, and when the service was on, somebody said, that certain wind was coming, and it became louder and louder, and in an orderly fashion, they all then arrayed themselves, around the perimeter, the circumference of the church, and then it arrived, with all its sound, without a breath, and men and women began to stand up, and to weep, and to confess, some rejoiced immediately, because they had already expected, that it would be a time of blessing, and they had put their hearts right to God, so they quickly and joyfully went into blessing, others unprepared, yet Christian, confessed their sin, yet it was not public, because there were a multitude of them, and as they confessed, they were forgiven, and as they were forgiven, so they rejoiced, until the place was full of the rejoicing of God.

I'm taking you on to another world, the dimension of the supernatural, listen to verse four, for since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither have the eyes seen, nor God beside thee, what he hath prepared for him, that waited for him.

Now I know that that verse is taken, and it can be a lovely picture of heaven, but here it's in this context, what is he saying, what have I got for my people, when I come down in my presence, and in my glory, what have I got, I tell you this, Isaiah, he's saying, you wouldn't be able to write down, because you have not heard, of the lovely things, Isaiah might say, I've heard wonderful things, I've heard glorious things, but you've not heard the things I've got, for this occasion, I'll fill your ears, until you're mine, with the words of God, then he says, not only will you hear, but you will see, ah Lord, that I have seen, I can remember one day, when I was in the temple, and the presence of the Lord was there, and the place was as it was filled with smoke, and I said, woe is me, for I

am an unclean man, and so on, and I can remember the skirts of thy garment, Lord, I have seen, my dear child, he said, that is only the, only the edge of my garment, sweeping past you, you haven't begun to see, the things that I can show you, and the post of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke, how can this be, that's a picture, how can this be, the pursuit of righteousness, there's a little verse here, it is a mountain of a verse, verse five, thou meetest him, that rejoices, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee, in thy ways, behold our wrath, for we have sinned in those discontinuance, and we shall be saved, I looked at that verse, and I gazed upon that verse over and over again, I know that the revival is a sovereign act of

God, I know, and I know it is God that stirs the heart to think, I know if I have a burden at all, I wouldn't have that burden, if God hadn't given me that burden, and if you have a burden, you wouldn't have that burden, unless God had given you that burden, all the glory goes to God, we know that, we know that, yet in our experience, we can say we have come to a place where we see the need, and our hearts are cried out, and we have a burden, it says on what terms will he meet us, I'm not for one moment saying there are conditions, I'm saying here that he meets his people on his terms, who are the people that he meets, it's our special times, are there not times sometimes in a congregation, when we worship, there is the presence of God in the air, it can sometimes be in the reading of the

word of God, or the sermon, it can sometimes be, I used to describe them like this, because I used to be very worried about them, until Dr Lloyd-Jones helped me and said, there should be in preaching, that there sometimes would be a stillness in the congregation, until I felt everybody had stopped breathing, and that preaching seemed to be as if it was ripping the air and superfluous, and the way I described it to him was this, like chunks of eternity thrust into time, he said there's a spirit, it can last a minute, it can last an hour, there are glimpses, but in revival, it is as if eternity were hovering over us, like that, it is an unforgettable thing, and it is in the air, in the air, many people are talking about these things, many people are despairing of the methods of revival, many

people are beginning to talk about God and saying, only God can give the answer, most unusual people are telling me these things, people I've never thought had any interest in God and say, only God can help us now, only God can save this situation, even they are saying that, what about the lost people, is there any hunger or desire that God might be amongst them, Abraham pleaded, Jacob argued in earnest, if we fail to see the need, we will not cry, if we do not cry, we will not know what a burden is, look at the man he meets, I believe this is a burdened man, and you know it is not complicated, he rejoices and worketh righteousness, the first one, he rejoices in righteousness, who is he, unmistakably a Christian, he has

righteousness, not his own, his own unrighteousness is taken and

nailed to the cross, and the penalty is paid, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed by day to him, and so he might say about this man, he rejoices in the righteousness of Christ, he is one of God's gifts to Christ, he rejoices and worketh righteousness, so that this man who has had such an experience as that, is a man, not only who has imputed righteousness, but imparted righteousness, and his desire in his life is to live to the glory of God, and to delight in God, and to walk according to the precept of God, not to say, I think this would be a nice thing to do, I think this is the idea I would have, no, but to submit himself to the precepts of God, and to the way of God, and to light in the way of God's righteousness, he is that, and there is another little phrase, the one that

remembers thee in thy way, that remembers thee in thy way, here he is, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, here he is, a righteous and a godly man, living by the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and growing in grace, and he might say, here is a man who is living, and walking in a plain path, along the narrow way, he is a Christian man, and there is no contradiction in him, he is unmistakably Christian, not complicated, he is unmistakably Christian, but he knows something else, in this verse he is asked if he gave us a little secret, thou meetest him, that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways, here is a man now, that has not only been gripped by righteousness, and grips the righteousness of

God, but he's taken up with a will of God, we are swayed by so many things, but listen to how John Calvin, I believe, puts it like this, I greet thee, whom I sure redeem at heart, my only trust and saviour of my heart, who pained it undergo for my poor sake, I pray thee from our hearts all cares to take, thou art the king of mercy and of grace, reigning omnipotent in every place, now here we are, so come O King, and our whole being sway, is that wonderful, so come O King, and our whole being sway, shine on us with the light of thy pure day, for remember thee in thy ways, and God says, I'll meet him, he'll meet him, do you think he'll meet us?

I'm not saying there are conditions, I'm saying those are God's delights, that's the inheritance in which he delights, these are the father's gifts to the son, these are they, we are told that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, are we able to speak to him, is there a ground where we can put our case to him, about the dearth that there is in the land, you remember the story of Esther, poor old Mordecai, and you remember the great plight of the Jews there, do you remember that account, living in an alien land, and she wanted to protect her fellow countrymen from a terrible end, and she knew that there was a way of approaching the king, you couldn't go to a king, though she was a queen, you couldn't go to the king and say, now look here now, I've got something to say to you, my

people are having a rough time, and I'm not having it, no that wasn't on, and she would be dealt with very swiftly in those days, and so she would go to him, and invite him to a feast, and honour him as king, we have forgotten haven't we, how to honour him in our prayer, we forget you know, I remember in the theological college there was a little phrase from one little book it said, God can be your friend, but you can never be parley with the almighty, never forget he is God, always remember that, and so Esther came as a queen, so she was dressed in the right robes, like we can be dressed in the righteousness of Christ, yet we approach our God with reverence, our God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, how it be thy name, thou who dwellest in light, and holiness, and then come without

petition, but he didn't allow her to give a petition, until there's a very lovely scene, after he noticed her, and her apparel, and her expression, and her words, he would extend his scepter, permission to speak, very lovely isn't it, permission to speak, and I believe there are times like that, I believe there are times like that, when we can come to God, and in our hearts we know that he's giving us permission to ask, that he's brought us to that place at last, righteous in Christ, righteous by the grace of God, in our ways too, in as far as we are able by the help of God, but also honoring, and knowing, and remembering the way of God, he knows all that, then suddenly you find he's willing to meet me, and he says my child, my scepter is extended, what do you want, from this little CIM

publication again, called effective prayer, Satan dreads nothing but prayer, wrote Samuel Chadwick, his one concern is to keep the saints from praying, he fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion, he laughs at our toil, mocks our wisdom, but trembles when we pray, in the history of the China Inland Mission, now called the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the tide in many a crisis has turned, when its workers have met a situation with prayer and fasting, many a stubborn city has opened, many an intransigent heart has yielded, many a financial need has been supplied, and many a delicate personnel difficulty has been resolved by this means of prayer, there is a time, there is a way to ask, what about this asking then to close, the place of repentance, we are

dealing or being dealt with by God, and to me that's a wonderful thing, and it also terrifies me, let me give you a simple illustration like this, which again is topical in a way, consider the sun and its heat, and this is about as much as we probably can cope with, perhaps a little bit more, but imagine now, if the sun should come, or we to it, a little nearer, we would be destroyed, also if the sun withdrew, we would be devastated, but you see this is our God, He is the God of all creation, and the upholder of all things, and by Him all things consist, but He's the God of precision, He can put His finger on the need of my heart, in this solar system, in this planet earth, in this little land of Wales, in this little mortal frame, and He can put His finger on me, and He can put His

finger on you, He can be as precise as that, this great God, so He knows how to deal with us, and He knows how to come without destroying us, Lord we're asking, the years have slipped by, 1904, oh thank you Lord, thank you Lord, 1964, oh come Lord, 1974, oh Lord have mercy, 1984, oh Lord we are desperate, and may it not be that we have to say, 94, 94, you see we can look back to 74, it's almost like yesterday in a way, but it's a long time, but the thought of 94, our hearts would break, Lord, Lord, Lord, before then, surely there should be some awareness in our hearts of this great need, we know that we are completing Christ, yet at the same time we know so little of His way that is mentioned in verse 5, and that He meets those people, and isn't it something like this, a very unusual

thing, a broken and a contrite heart, do you ever say the phrase, have you any thoughts about it, what it means to have a contrite heart, in this age where everybody says we must be h-a-p-p-y, yes I am happy, I am joyous, but I am consumed with grief for my land, as well I rejoice in my Saviour with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and yet an aching and a rending heart that God might have mercy, that's why God then calls into the ministry, the love of God constrains us, the terror of the Lord as well, and then we look at ourselves, who's going to pray, let's look at those little children we had in 1859 in Dolgshire, and they met and they were worried because their parents hadn't had the revival, and everyone else had, so they met in this little room, you remember I said yesterday

morning, and one of them said you pray, I can't pray, no you pray, in the end they started the Lord's prayer, and I can imagine a sinner who, who can ask in such a thing, who can come to such a place, and

then we look at ourselves, and I look at me, and you look at you, verse six, but we are all as an unclean thing, this is now not belittling our position in Christ, but we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away, we're unclean Lord, oh Lord, I don't know how to ask, oh Lord, you will have to meet me, you'll have to lift my face, and turn my face towards thee, and then we say, and there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, for

thou hast hid thy face from us, and has consumed us because of our iniquities, Lord that's our position, we can't find a spokesman here, we can't find anybody to ask for us, oh Lord, and the greatest thing that we are worried about here, the greatest thing is this, that thou hast hidden thy face from us, and we want to see thy face, and then a terrible realization comes upon us, that we may go on living, and the decline will continue, and we'll go on living, and men will mock true religion, and we are satisfied with less, and if we are preachers, and whatever the sizes of our churches are, supposing you have a church that holds a hundred, and you go about and say, our church is full, we're all right, or a church that holds a thousand, our church is full, and we're all right, nonsense,

nonsense, it's nothing, it's nothing, and even then they examine our hearts, how far, how very far from God we can be, you know we can be drunk sometimes, by so very little, with the activities of our own little hands, and the measure that God has given us, God, we want more than that, but we don't know how to come and ask thee, how shall we ask thou hast hid thy face from us, we have been satisfied with a lesson, do you remember the reading at the beginning, when Moses pleaded, when Moses pleaded with God, I can remember the verses now, now therefore I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, verse 9, if you remember, talked about it came to pass, as Moses entered into the temple, the clouded pillar descended, and stood at the door of the temple, and the Lord

talked with Moses, as a man face to face, now therefore I pray thee, if I found grace in thy sight, show me now the way, thy way, there it is in verse 5 in Isaiah 64, show me thy way, that I may know that thee, that I may find grace in thy sight, and consider that this nation is thy people, and he said my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest, Moses you see was in earnest, look at his answer, and he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, hence it is hopeless, if thy presence is not with us, for wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight, is it not in that thou goest with us, we want thee to come down, he said, so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth, and the Lord

said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken, for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name, and I said, beseech me, show me thy glory, daring is he, and he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy, and he said, thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live, and the Lord said, behold there is a place by me, and I shall stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I'll put thee in the cleft of the rock, and I will cover thee with my hand, and I will pass by, and I will take away my hand, for thou shalt see my back pass, but my face shall not be

seen, yes I know that is true, we would not be able to look at the face of God and survive, I recognize and I realize that, but there is a sense, where I would say here this morning, as we sang earlier on, in the merits of Christ, show us thy face, we can say thus, it's said in scripture in Psalm 20, Decembers 8, when thou saidst seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face Lord will I seek, hide not thy face far from me,

put not away thy servant in anger, thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation, a little child, I'm a father of three, and I can remember looking back, you know, I'd be talking, always talking, you know, talking away to somebody, and children trying their best to get a little word in their ears, and they'd come in, and I haven't

seen them, I haven't noticed them, until in the end, a little hand would come on my chin, and pull me like that, that, and then it was impossible to ignore, but let me give you an illustration, I have asked one of my sons for permission to give it, I have three children, an elder son, a daughter, and a younger son, when I came from Chandawee Breve to Cardiff, I said, no bicycles, we now live in a busy city, with big cars, and so on, and so on, no bicycles, but I make you a promise, when you're 17, you can, you can go for your driving test, and I will let you drive the car, that's in far enough a way, and with my elder son, the anticipation of passing his test, satisfied him, and with my daughter, the anticipation of passing the test, satisfied her, but not my younger son, he started off

like this, in June, he said, do you want to know what I want for Christmas, dad?

No, I want a bicycle, which I ignored, and then he'd come a little later, and he'd say, I don't know if you heard me, dad, I was talking about bicycles, and he named a shop, and their names, and their qualities, and their times, and their gears, and so on, and he said, I really want one, now this went on for three months, every day, so in the end, I think that I, I do now record my patience, in the end, I said, if you say that word, bicycle, once again, now I leave your imagination, half an hour later, he said, you know that thing, that I'm not supposed, you know that thing, I'm not supposed to talk about that, they miss that on the recording, don't they, I made a sign of two wheels, and at Christmas, I took him to a shop, a beautiful bicycle shop, and I bought him the nicest bicycle I

could find, why, he was so persistent, he was so persistent, and I was determined, you see, and I'd say, the other two haven't, they say, that's not me, and it certainly wasn't, now you can say like this, if I dare say it in the context of revival, you know, people might pray and say, and say, well, we prayed, and they might say, I'm not going to let him go, I'm going to name it in every way I can, as a presence of God, as a glory of God, as seeing the face of God, as multitudes being moved, as a conviction of God, as God sweeping people into the kingdom of God, and dealing with the saints of God, in every way I can, I will present it before him, and say, look down, and come down, and lift the sky if thou must, and rend the mountains with thy blessing, do that, show me thy face, one

transient gleam of loveliness divine, and I shall never think or dream over the loves of thine, or lesser light will darken quite, or lower glory shine, or lesser light will darken quite, or lower glory shine, the beautiful of earth will see, the beautiful of earth will scarce seem beautiful again, marvellous, show me thy face, my faith and love shall henceforth fixed be, and nothing here have power to move my soul's serenity, my life shall seem a chance, a dream, and all I feel and see, elusive, visionary, though the one reality, may I read this to close, because this is from my heart, rend the heavens, thou prince of glory, melt the mountains with thy grace, pour thy presence, show thy mercy, and the radiance of thy face, we believe that thou art able, in thy greatness and thy love,

make the nations fear and tremble, as thou comest from above, rend our hearts in sorrow sighing, stir our souls to seek for thee, turn thy wrath and meet our crying, help us from our sin to flee, there is none that seeketh rightly, yet oh father we are thine, come oh come revive us quickly, make our hearts to the incline, cause us now, thy way to cherish, and thy righteousness to hold, hear our plea, lord else we perish, call

and bring us to thy fold, none have seen so dear a saviour, none have heard so sweet a sound, as the name of our redeemer, may his praises now abound, thou dost meet the heart that seeks thee, righteousness is robe and joy, thou delight'st in thy mercy, when our souls thy grace employ, since the world began its journey, I and dear have never seen all the wonders of

the glory, god provides beyond our dream, lord the sight of our condition, degradation is our way, filthy garments are destruction, sin would hold its evil sway, like a faded leaf we wither, caused by the by caused by every wind to fly, brief our life and we can never stay the hand that bids us die, cause us now to call upon thee, call upon the name of names, stir our hearts to gaze at Calvary, there behold reviving flames, holy gates of Zion city, now let Israel see thy face, for the god of might and glory dwells within thy holy place, oh lord come, let us pray, our gracious and our heavenly father, we thank thee that we can come to thee in the name of Jesus Christ our saviour, and ask thee father, stir us oh lord, stir us, ask thee oh father, that when we are stirred that we might

remain, grant us grace to hold the burden, to bear the burden, and may the burden be lifted at thy coming, oh lord visit us, visit us in such a way, for the sake of Jesus Christ our saviour, amen.

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