

The Hope of Revival

by Vernon Higham

The sermon emphasizes the hope of revival through a deep reliance on God and the necessity of unity among believers.

Duration: 1:01:33

Scripture: Psalm 1:6, Psalm 126:1-2, Psalm 126:4, Isaiah 62:3-4, Isaiah 62:8, Isaiah 64:8-12, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of turning to God and obeying His voice. He talks about the power of the Bible and how it can transform lives. The preacher also discusses the concept of hope and how it is a wonderful thing when it is present in a person's heart. He encourages the audience to pursue God passionately and to trust in His ability to bring about revival.

Transcript

Well, I'd like to bring to you this morning the last few verses in Isaiah 64. The last few verses in Isaiah 64, and that's verses 8 to 12. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand.

Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? At first reading, that last verse seems to be a negative kind of verse to end such a tremendous chapter and a series of chapters. But really, you see, there is an implied word there, if you look carefully.

The prophet here is writing to his climax in verse 12. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things? The answer is no. Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? And in the hearts of the prophets, it is inconceivable that the answer would be, yes, I will be very sore, yes, I will be very wroth.

But rather, the answer is the opposite. It is a glorious no. Now, sometimes yes is a wonderful word, but here, no is a tremendous word.

And he's saying here, no, I will not refrain myself. No, I will not afflict you very sore. So by implication, we have there a glorious no.

I've given a little heading in my own mind for this section. We have looked at various headings that I've endeavoured to follow in these chapters. And to promote, I hope, in our hearts, that there is a need.

I know there is much we can thank God for. We can always thank for our glorious gospel, our blessed saviour. I know that that is true.

But I think we are also aware, like it happened in the history of the church, and we have it recorded in scripture as well, don't we? In this incident with Isaiah here, he was very, very burdened, yet he knew God, and he knew the great things about God. And yet he was very unhappy about things. And so he expresses himself in this way.

And so that we are aware of a need. But we can be a little indifferent about that, worried when we hear about it, but just slightly indifferent. And then we are perhaps a little more impressed when the cry comes from our hearts.

And then a little more, maybe, and God sees if we are able to take a burden. I believe a burden is a God-given thing. And if the person who cries out is willing to say to God, well, yes, I'll take a burden.

A burden for the work. A burden regarding the glory of God. Because that is really, when you and I are talking about revival, it is but a word.

We are asking that God might refresh us. We're asking that God might do a mighty thing amongst his people. That he might come to our rescue in times of desolation.

We're asking him to glorify his name. We're asking that the name of God that may be honoured. That is really what we are asking.

And then if we have this burden, I see in this last part of the chapter, as if suddenly he comes to an area that I found very helpful myself. There are many tremendous buts. I meant to point them out but forgot as I went along in chapter 62 and 3 and 4. There were messages in themselves really, but never mind.

I've remembered this one. In verse 8, after all that we've gone through, but now, now we're getting down to business. But now, oh Lord.

So we're in that section. And I've given it in my mind the title of hope. Hope is a very wonderful thing.

When there is hope in a person's heart. And I'm not talking, you know, now about the ordinary little thing. I don't want to harass those with examinations and results and things.

And you ask them how they're getting on or if the results have come or are going to come. How do you think you'd do? Well, I hope I'll be all right. And you say so with modesty and anxiety.

You're not very sure how you're going to do. You hope. That's one kind of hope as we think of it today.

But a Christian hope is a very different one. If you remember in the Petrine Epistle, he says, a lively hope unto an inheritance incorruptible and defiled that's paid it not away reserved in heaven for you. There's a different quality of hope.

A hope that is a solid thing. A hope that seems to have no doubts in it at all. Now, I'd like to relate to the very beginning here a little incident to you from my ministry.

It has nothing to do with the theme that I have this morning in the sense of the theme. But it has everything to do with the word hope. And I want to inspire your hearts with the word hope.

And I want you to leave this conference with a hope in your heart. Yes, with a burden too, but also not mix and mix with a hope in that which God can do. It is an incident in the life or the death of a very ordinary little lady in my own congregation.

I think if I mentioned her name to many people there that the vast majority would not know her. She's a lovely Christian lady and a lonely little soul, yet faithful in the means of grace in as far as she was able to be so. And there came a time when she was failing and apart from the kindness of friends and so on there was not a great deal really to help her, not a great deal.

And there she was in the hospital and she dwelt on one psalm alone, God is our refuge and strength. But really I'm exaggerating. She dwelt on one phrase and I called each day to see her and she said, I've been studying the scriptures today.

And she had a terminal illness. I said, well, what have you had today? She said, you know that phrase, be still and know that I am God. I've been on the still bit and I've been still before God.

He said, be still. And I've not allowed all the worries and how I'll manage when I get home. And will I be a burden? Will I be a nuisance? I'm not allowed that to worry me.

I've just said, oh, here I am Lord and I will be, be still. Then I'd follow her, see her the next day and she said, I've been studying the scriptures today. What have you seen my dear? And she would say to me, you know, I've been looking at that word, know.

Beautiful word. It was still yesterday, but be still and know. To know that he's my God, to know that he's my Lord.

And you know, it has flooded my soul all day with a knowledge of my salvation, of the forgiveness of sins, of peace with God. And so she went on, isn't it a beautiful word? She said, to know him and to be known of him. I said, lovely.

Then the third day I went there and she said, I've been studying the scriptures today. What have you been studying my dear? She said, that I am God. Isn't that wonderful? Be still, she said, and know that I am God.

Little me here and great God there. It's a wonderful thing for me to know. And so the fourth day she said, I've been studying my scriptures.

What have you been studying my dear? To be still. Then the next day to know. And the third day that I am God.

And so it went on. I could go on for hours. Lovely though, isn't it? And then she went into a coma.

And she must have believed that she had died. And in about half an hour she came round with a radiant smile, beautiful smile. She just beamed in the little room where she was.

And it was everybody was in white there, I suppose. And she beamed at everybody. And then the lovely smile disappeared.

And then she said, oh, I'm sorry. It isn't that I'm disappointed, she said, but I thought I'd gone home. Now then, that's a lively hope.

Am I right? She died believing with a lively hope. That hope, now that hope is for heaven. But surely a Christian hope is for many things as well.

And I want us to hope for great things for our church. I want us to have a large vision. I want us not to have a trembling hope, or a fearful hope, or a doubting hope, or a certain hope.

Now here we are. At last, let us trust that many, not all of us, are turning our faces towards God. And hope shines in our eyes.

Where are you in the line of things here? Have you come to see the need? Do you recognise there's a need in the country, in your hearts? Do you recognise that there should be a cry? Is there even a tiny cry in your heart? Have you any room to cry for God? Is there a little tear left for the things of God? Have you ever considered asking him for a burden? Are you in a place where you say, well from henceforth, I am committed. Committed for what? I am committed to the work of God in this way, that for my generation I want God's best. And however enticing and interesting other things and methods may be, I shall pursue this course of God's best.

I'm committed to it. Now that doesn't mean to say that you're not interested in sanctification, and in godliness, and in growing in grace. Of course you are, because all this is involved.

But all the time, over and all that you have this overriding thing, the glory of God in our age and generation. The glory of God in this city. An example, you know, where here we are today, and this week, a goodly number, and I'm sure a certain proportion of the citizens of Aberystwyth will know that we're here, but a vast majority haven't the slightest idea that we are here and what we are doing and why or anything.

But there could come a time, couldn't there? There could come a time that before we arrive, the place is full. And what a problem and a glorious problem that would be. Think in a big way.

He's a big God. A doctrine that's been forgotten very often. The immensity of God.

He can be very accurate and doing tiny things, that's true, like knowing the numbers of the hairs of our head and the sparrow falling and so on. He's like that, I know and precise, but the immensity of our God and the scale of the work that he is able to do. And in any case, it is but a small thing for him to set a whole world alight in this little planet that we live in.

What has happened in this chapter 64 as far as I can see? For me, I can see a deep concern in a prophet's heart for God's glory and his pursuit of God has become, it is still a pursuit, but it's become a passion for God. And that is an advance, isn't it? You can pursue and say, well, I've been pursuing well today, but I've not been pursuing much like yesterday and I'm not so sure about tomorrow. But when it is a passionate concern, my pursuit of God and the glory of Christ.

Now, the beginning I thought about when you read on books about revival, I have been concerned this week about those chapters, that one chapter that seems to be telescoped, doesn't it really? That spread

out, it could be many years. I don't know how many, it would be variable, wouldn't it? And the story of God's dealings with men and women. And yet every now and again, there are glimpses of something's on the way.

And I believe that, you see. Something's on the way. A wonderful thing.

I believe in the wonderful things of God. We may not all be as equally convinced of that, but there you are. I am.

And that's why I'm bringing a subject like that. And that's why I want you to go to your churches all over the place and hope that there will be a spark kindled in your heart where you say, I shall look to God for great things in our day and generation. And the work of God is always a very wonderful work.

Even before revival starts, men begin to glorify God in Jesus Christ. Listen to the type of hymn that I would imagine. Oh, love divine, how sweet thou art.

When shall I find my willing heart all taken up by thee? I thirst, I faint. How do we? I thirst, I faint, I die to prove the greatness of redeeming love, the love of Christ to me. Stronger is love than death or hell.

Its riches are unsearchable. The firstborn sons of light desire in vain its depth to see. They cannot reach the mystery, the length and breadth and height.

God only knows the love of God. Oh, that it now were shed abroad in this poor stony heart. For love I sigh, for love I pine.

This only portion, Lord, be mine, this better part. What's happening to us? We are beginning to move into an area of the arena of a special grace of the great work of God. Those are the kind of things that I would think that will become very real, that Christ will be glorified and uplifted in our hearts.

And we begin to see, we thought we had a good heart. We thought we had a generous heart. We thought we had a lovely heart.

And then we begin to see the value of man writing something like this. He says, God only knows the love of God. Oh, that it now were shed abroad where in this poor stony heart.

Yet he's a believer. A discovery that there is so much more to go, so much more to have. And when we go into the dimension of revival, what must it be like when he will flood our hearts with joy and when we'd be able to love what seems now to be impossible for us to love? The psalm that God gave me very early in my life regarding revival, the Psalm 133.

And it seems to have been in every critical time in my life, a spiritual critical time, that he has brought this psalm. It has special meaning for me. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

How simple. How simple. For there the Lord commanded the blessing.

But it is not simple. You know, here we are this morning and we can be united to a certain degree on the hymns that we sing, and hopefully on the things that we say as well. And there's a degree of unity, especially on the fundamentals of the faith.

But supposing we remained with one another for a month. Differences would arise. All sorts of differences. Doctrinal ones. Personality ones. Envyies.

Even hatred. And perhaps at the end of two months we'd be able to say, well I don't know so much about that unity. It's harder than we thought.

Well it is. And yet you see he desires this, that there might be a unity. Not only a conformity, that we believe all the right things.

And that's a wonderful thing to have. And indeed a basis for a unity. That is there, where in the fundamentals of our faith, we are able to say that we believe in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And in Jesus Christ as our Saviour. And in the second coming of our blessed Lord. That we are able to believe these great truths.

And in the day of judgment. And in hell and in heaven. And so on.

But there is something more here. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. This is a wonderful thing.

When I see you dwelling together, heart to heart, one in purpose. An openness of mind and heart. And a loveliness in a relationship with one another.

Now there he says, for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. Well are we there? We know it. We can know it.

Think of your own congregation. And often you'll have read from the pulpits maybe, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And you say, this is very good.

And then one day you pray. And you ask God to show you the meaning of spiritual unity. Because it seems to be so very important in Scripture.

In the day of Pentecost, there were, in one accord, in one place, there was unity there. It seems to be a very significant thing. And so you might begin to ask, well is this something in the area of revival, something that we have to learn? And so Lord teach us what unity is.

And then he may begin to show in your hearts enmity and disunity. And you're shocked at it. But then you justify yourself and say, ah well, how well.

There is a difference. I am united to this one, that one and the other. But ah well, this is a difference.

And we pause. How long do we pause for? A year? A quarter of a century? A lifetime? Stubborn? Seeing a simple little psalm? And we jibber-jabber and say, well I get on with most people. I get on very well, you ask my friends.

And then at last God begins to deal with us. Perhaps in the words like this, God only knows the love of God. You cannot be united unless there's love there.

God only knows the love of God. Oh that it now were shed abroad, were in this poor stony heart. And then we begin to understand the meaning of spiritual unity.

And then we'll be able to know something of what it means of a oneness of heart and mind and spirit and whole. And a delight in the things of God. We feel we've entered revival already.

We are told in the scripture, for there the Lord commanded the blessing. The prophet then says here, but now. The first point then is this, the plea of the prophet, but now, O Lord.

Thou art our father, and we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are the work of thy hand. So he's coming now, shall I describe it? What I would say is a place where we can learn a great deal. What do we do? Where do we go from here? I can't give you a revival.

I wish I could come to the fourth or the fifth in the series where I say, now then, we'll have the revival. It is God's prerogative. We can only go as far as the prophets.

We can only go as far as the frontiers. God opens the door. God opens the window.

We can only go as far as that. And it is in his sovereign will whether he will do so or not. We know that.

But we can hammer at that window, and we can hammer at that door. But now, O Lord, thou art our father, and we are the clay, and thou art our potter, and we are the work of thy hand. He's coming to an understanding.

We're nothing without thee. Do any of you think yourself to be anything? Whether you are a preacher, or an officer in a church, or a member of a church, whatever position you may have, do you really think yourself anything? Is it not true that even though we come into that lovely area of grace where we've come to know Jesus Christ as our saviour, and we have peace with God, that we are very much aware of our unworthiness? Very much aware of that? It used to amaze me in Llanddewi Brefi, my second church, Welsh church in Cardiganshire. There were people from the revival there.

And you know, at the beginning, I was a little irritated with them. Not in a nasty way at all, but I wanted to correct them. They would pray, you see.

And they would be praying, thanking God for salvation. Thanking God for the forgiveness of sin. Thanking God for peace with God.

And then after saying that, they'd say, Lord, we are miserable offenders. Lord, we do not please thee, we do not love thee as we ought. And having been brought up at that time, the strict school of the IVF, and of the doctrinal statement, and Calvin's theology, Birkhoff as well, all that, I said, they're wrong.

Where is their assurance? And I wanted to go about correcting them. But they were wise enough to be gentle with me. For they had known revival, and they had known when God is near, that even though you have the confidence or the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that you tremble at the very thought of God.

How great thou art. They had an idea of the immensity and the purity and the greatness of God. And always in their assurance, there was a note of astonishment, astounded, and an awareness of their unworthiness.

It is right. It is there. Now then, but now, O Lord, thou art our Father.

I wonder if that's true of everyone here this morning. Thou art our Father. In the epistle to the Romans, it says like this, that there can be a cry from our heart, Abba, Father.

Now, we've got to be in that place. What place is this then? It is a very remarkable place. A person who's able to cry, Abba, Father, he's saying Father twice, isn't he? But it's said in Aramaic, they said in the native tongue, as you would say it in Welsh and then in Greek or in English and whatever it is in the official language, but in your own, but you have your own there like he has Abba, Father.

Why? Because there is warmth there and there is depth there. He has believed. What has he believed? He's saying, I have believed in God.

I have believed in the Trinity. I have believed in my great need of God and I have seen that in Christ alone, I can have forgiveness of sins and peace with God. And from my heart, I'm able to say, I know, I know that I love thee.

I know thou art mine. And if ever I loved thee, Lord Jesus, it is now. And it's as if I was saying, and from my heart, there rises a cry, Abba, Father.

That area. Now then, I'm not making a difference between Christian and Christian, only in as far as this, that there is such a thing as a Christian going on with the Lord. There's such a thing as pursuing God.

There is such a thing as a passionate love of Christ. There is such a thing then that when he turns to God, he's, oh my Father, Abba, thou art my Father. And I come to thee in the name of thy blessed Son.

Such people are not afraid to say, we are but clay. Yet he has had mercy upon clay. I can remember Pastor Griffiths from Comstock many years ago praying.

And he said, Lord, we are the dust of earth. He's right, isn't he? Lord, we're only the dust of earth, but hallelujah, thou hast made sons out of dust. And I thought that is a wonderful thing.

But he remembered also that we are the dust, but he has made sons out of the dust of earth. We are clay. I said, no, I'm special.

I'm a knowledgeable Christian. I have not experience of many lovely experiences of the Spirit. I am very advanced as a Christian.

I am a mature Christian. I'm afraid of that word always. I'm a mature Christian.

You're clay. You're clay. How often have you sung this? Now then I usually go for hymns, but I'm going for a chorus.

Spirit of the living God, you know it, fall afresh on me. Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

You'd like to sing with me? Come on. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Break me, melt me, mold me.

Fill me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Great words, aren't they? We come to that place where I'm saying, but now Lord, I am the clay.

I am willing to be broken, proud as I've been, arrogant as I've been. I am willing to be broken, to have a broken and a contrite heart which thou wilt not despise. Lord, I am willing to let thee, and he hesitates for a moment.

I am willing to let thee to melt my hard heart. You see, we've got little areas we want to keep hard for certain enemies. Melt me.

At last, break me. Melt me. Then Lord, what can you make of me? Mold me.

Make something of me. Make me a vessel. Then Lord, don't leave me empty.

Fill me with the love and the grace and the joy of God. Enlarge on that in Jeremiah. Go down to the potter's house, it says in chapter 18.

Go down to the potter's house and there I will cause thee to hear my words. So the prophet goes, I know Jeremiah in that case does matter. Then I went down to the potter's house and behold he wrought a work on the wheel and the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter.

You see that happens, you can see it. Go to any potter, you'll see every now and again one of them is marred. What does he do? Does he try to improve it here and there? No, he remakes it.

So he made it again, another vessel. I seem good for the potter to me. And in a way, in a way, although we know we are complete in Christ, I know that is true, but in a way, in the mess that we are often in, we have to cry out to the Lord, I have not loved there's very little love here.

I am not a broken, I have a, no, not a broken or a contrite heart. Lord, in a way, there is that need for thou to break me down and mold me and remake me that I might be a glorious vessel fit to receive the blessing of God. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? He's only a little potter.

Cannot I do with you as this potter? Said the Lord, behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hands, O house of Israel. So whatever we have become, even as Christian people, and we can go very far, we can become hard, we can be fearful of blessing and fearful of God, even we can be unwilling, we can be stubborn and we can be all sorts of things. But do you believe, O house of Israel, that he can make you like new? That's the appeal there.

And he bases his plea on this, verse 9. Be not wrought very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever. Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are thy people. You see, he's not running Christians down or believers down, he's recognising their inadequacy and their iniquities, yet at the same time he's able to say, but we are thy people.

Sometimes, hardly recognisable. Perhaps Abraham might not recognise us, perhaps somebody else might not recognise us, but we are thy people. And on the basis of the fact that we are thy people, we have claims upon thee and we can sue thee and we can come as near as we can, we can come to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We are thy people and we are that. We are enfolded in John 17, in our Lord's high priestly prayer, and think of the things that he gives us. He gives us eternal life, he prayed for us.

He says to the Lord God, they are thine and they are mine. He says to God, he says, keep them in this world, in all the difficulties that they are. He says again, keep them from evil or from satan.

He says, sanctify them. And then he says this, and the glory which thou gavest to me, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one. What a prayer! He wants us to be like that, and Jesus Christ has prayed that for his people.

Think of the height he gets hold of, of Psalm 133, and brings it into a living reality, because the man in heaven, because our blessed saviour, our advocate, on the right hand of the majesty and high, has prayed his high priestly prayer, and applies it. We are one, they are one, even as we are one. Enter into John 17, enter into that, and recognise what we are in our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

Despite all our failings, we are his people. And then he reminds him again of the plight of the church. I'll not stay long on this now.

I'll read the verse, give one point. Thy holy cities are a wilderness. He's reminding him again at the end.

Thy holy cities are a wilderness. Zion is a wilderness. Jerusalem a desolation.

Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. What a terrible thing, you know, if you've been going to a chapel that you loved all your life, beautiful one like this may be, and remember a time when there was a vast congregation, and then it begins to dwindle, and then the time comes down, and the bulldozers come on one thing and another, and those big things with a big kind of enormous stone, pounding at the walls, and you look in amazement, and you say, what are they doing to our beautiful places? Zion is a desolation. But I can remember, like we all remember one incident that brought it home to me, but it is a long time ago.

As a student here in Aberystwyth, I'm preaching always fairly near, because it was too far to go home every weekend to Lancashire and preach in that area. So I was always round about this area, and I can remember going to one coastal town, a lovely little chapel, but things had altered since the last time I'd been there, and they had said to me, we're going to have a joint service tonight. The Congregational Church of about 300 members is going to join us, we have about 200 members, have been told this, and we shall have a joint service, because they haven't got a preacher today, and they decided to join together at night.

Now then, we were seven, we were seven, and I cannot in any way make light of it in saying, what is the preacher, that kind of thing. No, we were seven, and I preached, and then an elder got up, and then he remembered the revival. He was from Blenheim-Hessenia, and he talked about it, and then he turned to me and waved his hand to the mostly empty pews, and he said like this, an enemy hath done this, this big strong man, and he began to weep.

I'd never seen an elder weep, never. Elders didn't weep. I'd never seen them shed a tear.

They were always polished and composed. An elder weeping. I didn't know what to do, so I gave the benediction.

That's about the only thing I could think to do. I was inexperienced in the kind of thing that was happening, but you know I wasn't entering into what was in that man's heart. I do now.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. That's what he was doing, you see. He was remembering Zion, and we wept when we remembered Zion, and for they that carried us away captive required of us a song saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.

We hear that Welsh people sing very well. I know that they're not Welsh people there, but allow me. We hear that Welsh people sing very well, and we say, how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Yet although we cannot sing, they cannot forget, and we haven't entirely forgotten, have we? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, and let me take a verse from a different context with Hezekiah and the extension of his life, when he turned to the wall and he wept, and I know that it was a different situation, but the lovely phrase, that's a reply, I'm sure we can allow to take it, I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears.

Now I am not saying now that we get emotional praying, that kind of thing, but nevertheless, there is such a thing as weeping too, that comes because our hearts are so burdened. We can weep within us, we can weep with our eyes, yes, that we might be there, and God might say, I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears. We're beginning to turn on the cords of God's heart, if I dare put it like that.

Then to close, the power of the Lord. What is revival? Well, I mentioned Sprach before, and he put it very beautifully. He says, it is a revival of scriptural knowledge, and you will hear people in their prayers weaving scripture and knowing the scriptures, applying them in life.

It is a revival of true piety, where they will worship God with reverence and respect, and with the Spirit and in truth. It is a revival of practical obedience, and they are not backward in helping the poor and helping those who are in need. All that is there, but shall I tell you, I respect the man very much, this is an excellent book, but shall I tell you, there's more, there's more.

Listen to this, this is what revival is to me. Immortal honours rest on Jesus' head, my God, my portion and my living bread. In Him I live, upon Him cast my care.

He saves from death, destruction and despair. He is my refuge in each deep distress. The Lord my strength and glorious righteousness.

Through floods and flames He leads me safely on, and daily makes His sovereign goodness known. My every need He richly will supply, nor will His mercy ever let me die. In Him there dwells a treasure all divine, and matchless grace has made that treasure mine.

Oh, that my soul could love and praise Him more, His beauty's trace, His majesty adore, live near His heart, upon His bosom lean, obey His voice and all His will esteem. Like that, to the left of me, to the right of me, above me, in front of me, behind me, the glory of Christ and the Holy Spirit doing this great work and turning my gaze upon my beautiful, beautiful Saviour. Is that the taste of it? There is power in revival.

Please turn over the tape now. The recording continues immediately on side two. Turn again our captivity, O Lord.

Our streams in the south. What a strange thing. There is great power.

He is a God who shook a prison and saved a jailer, shook him too. Listen to psalms that I will mix together, psalm one to six. Turn again our captivity, O Lord.

Our streams in the south. What a strange thing. That was a desert.

There were no streams there. There were none. It was a desert.

So He was asking really for a remarkable thing, a little phrase that you and I could look over. Turn again our captivity. What shall it be like? It will be as remarkable and as miraculous as if streams suddenly sprung in that vast southern desert.

And again for us today, turn us from our captivity of our apathy, of our indolence, our carelessness and our often laxity in the things of God. And it will be a miracle like a desert land and streams of grace and beauty and joy and spreading throughout the land. It's a miracle.

Do you want it? Let me jump to another psalm. Psalm 110, verse three. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

You say, yes, well, I do want it. A little bit scared, a little bit afraid, perhaps likely so. But he says, thy people shall be willing.

But Lord, are you sure? I'm one of your people and I want revival. But do you think I will actually be willing for all the things that are going to come in revival? Maybe I won't like that. Maybe I won't want that.

You say, I shall be willing and willing for God to work. He deals with us. We may be full of fears.

We may be clinging to besetting sins. We may be possessed with inordinate affections of various things. Jonah was a godly man.

We know him for his disobedience and he tried his best. He couldn't have gone into a more difficult place, could he? He tried his best and God brought him back and put him where he was to be. He made him willing.

Then there are the years that the locusts have eaten. How many years have you wasted? Young people, are you wasting years now by being silly about trivial worldly entertainment and trying to drag it into Christianity and call it holy? Be honest, you know. You know that it can never be so.

Are you fooling about with things that are not necessary and yet you are a Christian person? Are the locusts devouring precious ears when you should be making great decisions for your God? Where you should be saying, take my life and let it be consecrated law to thee, not fooling about and playing. Are you willing to come there? He will make you willing. You see, older people, how many years have you wasted? I think of myself, you know, on the topic of revival.

I think of that too. There can be a long period when I haven't prayed as I ought to and then I look at those years and I say, the locusts have been at it again. But the wonderful thing is this, that when we see that, he restores the years that the locusts have eaten as if they hadn't been.

Come to that place. He will make you willing in the day of his power, joy and agony in the dealings of God. His power is a remarkable thing.

And I've been thinking and wanting to think of an illustration of power, not for the sake of an illustration, one for you to remember. And I'm going to give you one now. You'll see its power and it's from the 1904 revival.

It was a great revival. I met the convert early in my ministry. Let me give you one.

I can remember going to the convention in Amman for Woodson many years ago, about 30 years ago. And as I was leaving one of the meetings, I could hear a little pitter patter of footsteps after me and somebody almost breathless tapping my shoulder and said to me, I'm your uncle. I said, are you? Well, he was a Welsh uncle.

Do you know what that is? A Welsh uncle can be a cousin of a cousin of a cousin like that. It wasn't all that far away. But I said, what's your name? He said, Huxley.

Now, we never used his first name, George. He was always known as Huxley. And my mother told me about Huxley, that when he went out to the mission field that she was a little child of three or four years of age.

He took her on and he had sung to her the little songs of Lushai in India. She remembered and often related that to me. Now, I met him, a saved member of the family.

Wonderful. I said, come home with me. I'm glad he said, because I've nowhere to go.

So he came. If you knew, those of you know Huxley, you know, don't you? He was a beautiful man. Am I right? Those of you who know him, he was a saintly man.

And he told me a story. I'll briefly tell you this. Huxley was a good boy.

Huxley was a tidy boy. He never missed the morning service or Sunday school or evening or prayer meeting or the Seath Society. And indeed, he was considered by the minister as a candidate for the ministry.

Huxley was a good boy. And then he came and shook Bethany Armand Fort. And there were meetings, chapel crowded out, much more than this.

They wouldn't bother, you know, about the aisle. It was another place for people to come. All over the place, up here, around everywhere.

And Huxley went home one night and he could see men and girls that he knew that were careless about the things of God, indifferent about the prayer meeting, rejoicing and singing the praises of Zion. And he said, well, what's wrong with them? You know, Huxley was a good boy. And they said to him, Huxley, they said, you need to be saved.

What does that mean? I'm a good boy. Go back, Huxley. Go back.

It was about 11 o'clock then in the evening. And so he went and the place was full. And as he entered, I remember him telling me myself, as he entered through the doors, there was a presence that he knew not the light before.

There was a presence and a power that began to churn his sinful heart that he had never knew existed like that before and entered his mind and his being in a way that he didn't know and called him. And it's more or less, it was this. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me.

And the next thing he knew, he was being like in a football match, not that I've ever been, and carried over the tops of the heads of people. And he was in the big seat sitting next to the minister, crying for the mercy of God, the power of God. Oh, you might say it's a passing thing.

He was on the mission field for 50 years. Their first little girl died. And she wouldn't have died, if you speak like that, if there had been any kind of medical attention.

It was Lushai down to 1906, around that period. Then they had a son. And the son had an illness that affected his thinking.

The son, you know, he looked after all his life. And then he came back, and that's where I met him. And he came and stayed with us.

And he was saying, we'd had our home for the first time. Two rooms, he said. For the first time, he said, we've had rooms.

They're not ours. It's a good friend. Oh, it's lovely.

But so he said, the wife said she loved the garden, and there was a garden there. She was a long time in the garden. And I went out to see, and she'd gone home.

And I thought, God has taken her home, and he's left my son with me, who doesn't really know who I am. Then he said, the Lord never makes mistakes. Power.

He died when he was 96, and he preached two months before his death. Flash in the pan, power, my friends. A power that transformed and saved.

And a power that pursued, until he entered into glory. A wonderful, wonderful thing. You know, let me read you this, and I'm afraid of time.

Can I have five minutes? That's upside down. I need 10 minutes. New England.

A farmer from a farmer's diary. Now it pleased God to send Mr. Whitfield into this land. And my hearing of his preaching at Philadelphia, like one of the old apostles of many thousands flocking to hear him preach the gospel, and great numbers were converted to Christ.

I felt the spirit of God drawing me by conviction. I longed to see him, hear him, and wished he could come this way. I heard he was to come to New York, and the Jerseys, and great multitudes flocking after him, and great multitudes after him, under great concern for their souls, which brought on my concern more and more, hoping soon to see him.

And next I heard that he was at Long Island, then at Boston, and next at Northampton. Then all of a sudden, in the morning about eight or nine of the clock, there came a messenger and said, Mr. Whitfield preaches at Hartford and Weatherfield yesterday, and is to preach at Middletown this morning at ten of the clock. I was in my field at work.

I dropped my tools I had in my hand, and I ran home to my wife, telling her to make ready quickly to go and hear Mr. Whitfield preach at Middletown. Then ran to the pasture for my horse, with all my might, fearing that I should be too late. Having my horse, I, with my wife, soon mounted the horse and went forward as fast as I thought the horse could bear.

And when my horse got much out of breath, I would get down and put my wife on the saddle and bid her ride as fast as she could, and not stop or slack for me, except I bade her. And so I would run until I was much out of breath, and then went to mount the horse again with her. And so I did several times to this as a favour to my horse.

We improved every moment to get along, as if we were fleeing for our lives, all the while fearing we should be too late to hear the sermon, for we had twelve miles to ride double in little more than an hour, and we went round by the upper way. And when we came within about a mile of the road that comes down from Hartsford on Highland, I saw before me a cloud of fog arising. I first thought it came from the Great River, but as I came nearer the road, I heard a noise of a horse's feet coming down the road, and this cloud was a cloud of dust made by the horse's feet.

It arose into the air over the tops of the hills and the trees, and when I came within about twenty yards of the road, I could see men and horses slipping along in the cloud like shadows. And as I drew nearer, it seemed like a steady stream of horses and their riders, scarcely a horse more than his length behind another, all of them foaming with sweat, their breath rolling out of their nostrils every jump. Every horse seemed to go with all his might to carry his rider to hear news from heaven of the saving of souls.

It made me tremble to see the sight, how the world was in a struggle. I found a vacancy between the two horses to slip in mine, and my wife said, our clothes will be all spoiled, see how they look, for they were so covered with dust that they looked of almost all of a colour, coats, hats, shirts, horses, all the same. We went down in the stream, but heard no man speak a word all the way for three miles, but everyone pressing forward in great haste, and when we got to Middletown, Old Meeting House, there was a great multitude.

It was said to be three or four thousand people assembled together. We dismounted, and shook off our dust, and the ministers were then coming to the Meeting House. I turned and looked around the great river, and saw the ferry boats running swift backward and forward, bringing overloads of people, and the oars rowed nimble and quick.

Everything, men, horses, boats, seemed to be struggling for life. The land and the banks of the river looking black with people and horses, all along the twelve miles. I saw no man at work in this field, all seemed to be gone, and when I saw Mr Whitfield Kemp upon the platform, he looked almost angelical, a young, slim, slender youth, before some thousands of people with a bold and daunted countenance, and my hearing how God was with him everywhere as he came along, it solemnised my mind, and put me into a trembling fear before he began to preach, for he looked as if he was clothed with authority from the great God, and a sweet solemnity sat upon his brow, and my hearing preach gave me a heart wound.

By God's blessing, my old foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness could not save me, but the righteousness of Christ, and I became a Christian. Isn't that beautiful? Imagine a time like that, imagine a time like that, that we could have such a time in our land, and that we should see people going in that kind of way. Can it ever be? Well, the answer in this chapter is this.

If we ask him, Lord, are you going to forget us in this decade? No. Are you going to be vexed forever with us? No, I am not. Then, by implication, what do we understand, Lord? What do we understand? Come, let us to the Lord our God with contrite hearts return.

Our God is gracious, nor will leave the desolate to mourn. His voice commands a tempest forth, and stills a stormy wave, and though his arm be strong to smite, it is also strong to save. Long hath the night of sorrow reigned.

The dawn shall bring us life. God shall appear, and we shall rise with gladness in his sight. Now, I'll finish with this tiny illustration, a living one for me.

You know a lot about me by now. I was born in 1926. Nuisance, isn't it? You also know I've been a coal miner.

I've also been a schoolmaster, and I had my form. I was a form master of a form about 12 or 13 years of age. When it came my turn to teach them, there was one boy there.

I would say that he was a boy in the greatest advantage, not much encouragement at home. He was very dirty looking and very untidy, and he must have had a very unkind home because every time you passed him, he raised his to protect himself like that. He was a pitiful little boy, but he was a naughty boy, and he was quite a nuisance in the classroom, but I felt sorry for him.

And in my particular subject, there was a lot of clearing up, and I said, now, look now, and at that time, children like to help, and they used to go like this, sir, sir, sir, don't know if you remember that, and so you'd go like this, pencils, paint, wash the tables, and so on. And then there came a little voice, you know, his face was covered by his arms, and he said, sir, you never fix me, and I realized. You see, you notice the bright, or the bright eyes, the clean, and the pleasant personalities, and the good ones in your subject.

He was hopeless. Sir, you never fixed me, and I loved him. And I loved him more than any of them then.

I loved him. May I put it like that in this kind of illustration now? Will the gates of hell prevail, Lord? No, they shall not prevail against the church of God. Will thou forsake us, Lord? No, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Will thou be angry forever? No, I will not be angry forever. Sir, you never, in our age, we have not been picked. And then it's as if God was in his heaven, and he says to his glorious congregation there, I believe the saints are knocking at my window.

Open a window. Have they been undergirded and strengthened in the inner man? Are they prepared for what I have for them? Bring a vessel, bring a vessel of blessing, and of grace, and of joy, and of power. Bring a vessel, and prepare that this window now should be open, and we will pour this blessing upon these people.

And then, this is my imagination. Then he says, no, no, I'll go myself. That's what we want.

In the midst of us, mighty to say, mighty to say, because we know something, you see. We know he loves us with the love that he loves his son, and we have a claim there. And so when we call like this, he will come.

Gentle Jesus, when on others thou art smiling, do not, do not pass us by.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/vernon-higham/the-hope-of-revival/>

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