

# Oh Lord! Revive Thy Work!

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*Revival*

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**Bible Text:** Habakkuk 3:2  
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Turn this evening to the Old Testament Scriptures to the minor prophets to the book of Habakkuk. I have wrestled all week with how to pronounce that name so if I don't pronounce it again the rest of the service, you'll know why that is, and if I interchange it, you'll know what that is too, I'm wrestling in my mind how best to pronounce that. But I think however I pronounce it, you'll understand what I'm talking about and you'll be able to follow along in the chapter as well. It's not the easiest book to find for young people, sometimes for older people too. If you find the book of Daniel, then go through a little closer towards the end of the Old Testament, and you'll come across this little prophecy. It's only three chapters. It's a very interesting book in that it deals so much with the prophet's inner thoughts and his mind and how he wrestles before the Lord in regard to what is taking place in the nation.

I want to commence a series of messages tonight on the subject of revival. This has been upon my heart for a number of weeks now and I felt it would be a good time to commence this. We'll deal just with the first part of this tonight. I've entitled really the entire series, "What the church needs more than anything else," and we're thinking there in regard to God reviving his work. So we'll deal with the first part tonight and then if it's the Lord's will over the next number of weeks, we'll come back to the theme and work a little longer, a little more deeply on this subject regarding the desire for revival, the delivery of revival, the dynamics of revival, and what the Lord is able to do in our own generation.

So we're turning to this chapter, chapter 3, reading from verse 1.

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. 2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. 3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. 5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the

everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? 9 Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. 12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. 13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah. 14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. 15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. 16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. 17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

Amen. We'll finish there. We pray the Lord will bless the reading of his precious word to our hearts this evening.

Verse 2, the prophet says,

2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

He has the thought here of the Lord reviving his work. As I've mentioned, that's the theme I want to look at tonight and then in the Lord's will over the next number of Lord's Day evenings as well in the course of the next few weeks, at least.

With our Bibles open there, let's seek the Lord in a word of prayer together.

*Father, we come before thee now at the closing part of our service this evening. We thank thee for all that has taken place already, the praise that has been given to thy name, for thy word that has been read, for the prayers that have been offered, for the giving of tithes and offerings as well. And now, Lord, we come to the time of the preaching of thy word and we pray for help tonight as we come, Lord, to deal with what is a very very urgent matter for the church of Jesus Christ. So give help tonight in the delivery of this word, give help in the hearing of it as well. We pray, Lord, thou would meet with us this evening, touch our hearts. We pick up on the prayer of the prophet here and we ask, Lord, that thou would revive thy work in the midst of the years. Hear and answer prayer. Fill me with thy Spirit. Give help tonight in every part. We pray these things in our Savior's precious and worthy name. Amen.*

I think it's impossible to read this brief prophecy and not be struck by the intense concern that the prophet had for the work of God, and he speaks of God's work, as he does there in verse 2, he is referring especially to the Lord's people, the Lord's church, or to the Lord's cause, and as the prophet considered the aspect of God's work, he realized that all was not well.

Habakkuk lived in a day of spiritual declension. There were great problems in society for many had turned to sin and to vice and to immoral living. Violence was on the streets of the cities. Law and order had broken down. And as it was in the days of the judges earlier in the Old Testament, every man seemed to do that which was right in his own eyes.

There were great problems in society. There were also great problems with those in authority. In chapter 1 and verse 4 of this little book, the prophet lamented, "the law is slacked." He means the law ceases to be implemented and judgment never goes forth. The wicked never consider the righteous and, therefore, wrong and evil judgments were being made. The very heart of stable society was corrupt. There were men in high places, men who had authority, men who ought to have been implementing the law, and they were dishonest men, unlawful men, and they were passing judgments that were contrary to good sense, and more importantly, contrary to God's word.

There were problems in society. There were problems with those in authority. There were also problems in the spiritual life of the nation. False teachers influenced the people and they turned the nation away from God. There was a very deep sense of backsliding and spiritual carelessness across the land and, therefore, socially, politically and religiously, Habakkuk lived in a very dark and depressing day, not altogether dissimilar to our own times. The spiritual landscape in this nation and the many other countries across the world, is constantly in a state of change.

The church of Jesus Christ is facing challenges the like of which in modern history it has never faced before. There are issues outside the church that the church has to contend with. The rise of Islam, for example, and the threat it poses to religious liberty, and all we need to do is look across the nations of this world and see the awful brutality that is meted out to Christians in various countries across the globe. There is also the political drive in many nations, including this one, to sanction same-sex marriages. There is also

the prosecution of believers who desire to run their businesses in accordance with God's word. There is the ongoing provision for abortion and euthanasia and other moral and ethical questions that the church of Jesus Christ must face up to and we are, therefore, living in a day where there are great issues outside the church.

Those are not, I fear, the most serious issues facing the church for there are great issues inside the church also that must cause tremendous alarm. For example, there are those who deny the authority, the inerrancy and the sufficiency of Scripture. This has come to great prominence in our time with a particular attack upon the validity and the accuracy of the first chapters of the book of Genesis. It has been said recently that the validity of the church's doctrine of the special creation of Adam and Eve body and soul as our first parents based on Genesis 1 and 2, and the corresponding affirmation of the historical reality of the fall based on Genesis 3, have come under serious cross-examination. The commentator goes on to say that there are voices, some of whom self-identify as evangelical, calling on the church to revise its historical teaching.

Believer, that's a very very serious issue. If there is no first Adam, as some are alleging, and the first three chapters of the book of Genesis are not to be taken literally, if there is no first Adam, then it makes no sense to speak of Christ as the second or the last Adam. Remove the first three chapters of the book of Genesis, and the entire record of Scripture cracks and crumbles and will collapse. How do we deal, then, with the issue of sin? How do we deal with the issue of redemption? How do we deal with the issue of marriage? If we do away with the first three chapters of the book of Genesis, there are massive theological ramifications, but we are in a day where those things are being openly questioned in the church and so-called science is allowed to trump the Scriptures. It's a huge issue that the church of Jesus Christ must face.

Then again, the church has become shallow in its understanding of God. How much does the church know of the attributes of God? How deep is our understanding of God's person? His sovereignty? His fullness? His power? His justice? His holiness? His wrath? His love? His infinite eternal and unchangeable being? How much do we really know about God? Go into any Christian bookstore and look at the shelves and the ratio of self-help books to sound theology books is staggering. Christian fiction has taken over Christian doctrine. The church of Christ does not know God as it should. I fear that we are content to get by with a little knowledge, even though Hosea 4:6 tells us, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." But there is a staggering ignorance of God.

Furthermore, there is an abysmal weakness when it comes to the truth of the Gospel. I've read interviews of leading evangelicals who fudged questions like, "Do you believe that there is only one God and that there is only one way to approach that God?" That should be a very easy question. One text should answer that, John 14:6 where Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." We can add in another text if that was necessary, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." But we are living in days where that simple question that really requires a very simple answer, is being fudged by leading evangelicals, and add into that the fact that the doctrine of justification has been undermined by the emergence

of the new perspective on Paul and by federal vision, and those subtle movements that have been in place now for a number of years have questioned the biblical and historical Protestant view of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Instead they're arguing that a future justification rests on the life of a believer and how the believer lives his life. It's essentially a justification by works and that has gained traction in our generation.

The church has been shaken by such a thing and that's not all, some are very weak on the issue of man's depravity and the absolute necessity of the new birth by the Spirit of God. There is a Gospel being preached that is not the Gospel of grace, and that creates a tremendous issue for the church.

Furthermore, the church is not enjoying the power of God in the salvation of souls. It's a very sad thing to state but it's true. I look into the New Testament and we see the preachers of the early New Testament church, some fishermen, some tent-makers, some deacons, some hated and persecuted because of their love for Jesus Christ, but when they went out into Jerusalem and beyond Jerusalem with the Gospel and preached the person and the work of Jesus Christ, they preached the word to dying souls, sinners were saved and sometimes saved in their thousands. It was an unusual thing for the apostles to preach and souls not to be converted, and now it's an unusual thing to preach and for a soul to be converted. There is not the same demonstration of the power of God. These are barren times. There has been much sowing but little reaping.

Something else that gives cause for concern and cause for alarm is the sense that the church is losing its sense of dedication. About a year before Dr. Paisley passed away, I went to see him in northern Ireland and I asked him what did he think was the biggest change in the church of Christ over the course of his lifetime from the late 1940s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He paused and he answered, "Commitment." He said, "Colin, there is no commitment," and I think it's hard to argue with that. We have become so busy with life, we've become so busy with ourselves, with our interests, that the things of God no longer occupy the position that they ought to in our lives, and I fear that the church has set its affections on things upon earth and not on things above.

It has to be striking that in the latter 1800s to the mid 1950s, churches were sending forth missionaries all across the world. Young people were saying in churches in America and churches in Britain, they were saying, "Here am I. Send me." Young people were responding to missionary services, missionary calls, with the words, "I will go. I'm willing to leave home. I'm willing to leave my family. I'm willing to leave work. I'm willing to go and serve Christ." And the latter half of the 1800s and the early half of the 1900s, those were really very strong missionary years, but there is not the same passion for missionary work today as there was back then.

It's hard to keep the regular services in God's house well attended, never mind seeing men and women go further afield, and we have to ask why is that? What has happened? Have we got our priorities wrong? Do we think more of home than we do of souls or of Christ?

Does that betray a spirit of carelessness and spiritual coldness? We are comfortable, too comfortable, perhaps, in our own circles and it's an issue the church of Christ must face.

Furthermore, the church is facing a rise in worldliness and spiritual carelessness. Holiness is an issue of the heart but it will affect how we behave. And call me old-fashioned, but are there not signs that holiness is looked upon with a very strange frown in our generation? Christian liberty, I fear, has been stretched beyond its biblical definition and the pendulum has swung too far in favor of antinomianism. Every wants to do that which is right in their own eyes.

And one more thing, there's a spread of bitterness and suspicion and party idealism in the minds and hearts of many Christians. The sense of being part of Christ's body has been sadly lost by many and some believers work more for schism among the Lord's people than they do for the unity of the saints and they agree with no one but themselves.

Those are very sad admissions but I think the evidence bears them out. The church of Jesus Christ in the US and in other Western nations, is in a time of spiritual barrenness and it raises the question: what is the answer? What does the church of Jesus Christ need more than anything else? And I argue that it needs the very thing that Habakkuk prayed for, it needs God to revive his own work.

The church of Christ does not need a new Calvinism. It does not need a program of activities just to say that it's busy. It does not need celebrity preachers or entertaining services. It does not need to run its affairs like a profit making organization or like a public relations office. It does not need to adopt the ways and the methods and the ideals of the world. It needs a reformation and a revival, the outpouring of the Spirit of God in power upon his church.

One of the last recorded interviews that Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones ever gave, he was asked the question whether there was any hope for the Western world. He gave a one word answer. This was in the late 1970s. He gave a one word answer to that question was there any hope for the Western world, and his answer was simply, revival, and in a series of sermons on that subject, he spoke of the need, the urgent need of revival in the church of God at this present time.

Believer, if that was true back then, it is certainly true tonight. The one thing that the church of Christ needs in this land is a genuine, powerful, sweeping revival, and that's why I come to this theme tonight and in the nights to come. I want to deal tonight especially with the definition of revival. What is revival?

Now, given the important of revival for the church of Christ in this age, I think we do well to have a correct understanding of what revival really is. What is meant by that term? How is the term revival to be understood? How should it be described or defined? And throughout church history, there have been different ideas as to what revival really is. Some think of revival in terms of special evangelistic meetings. They host revival services, revival campaigns, revival weeks, and the idea is that a revival can be organized

and a revival can be planned by men, they schedule a revival. Others say that revival is linked to the restoration of supernatural gifts to the church. That became very popular in the early 1800s under different men. Those who followed those men, started an apostolic denomination with apostles and that idea has appeared in different guises and in different names and different forms ever since.

The charismatic movement often speaks in terms of revival and what they mean by that is the exercising of gifts, especially the gifts of tongues and the gift of healing that were evident in the New Testament church. So when they speak of revival, they're thinking of the restoration of those supernatural gifts for the church.

There is another use of the word that has gained momentum in recent years. Especially in South Africa but not exclusive to South Africa, there is a movement known as the transformations revival. Without getting into all the details of that, it presents a dangerous charismatic unbiblical approach of the Gospel under the premise of extraordinary spiritual warfare and that kind of a movement is a very dangerous thing and it adopts the term revival.

But none of those positions come anywhere near explaining what true revival really is and Habakkuk prayed, "O LORD, revive thy work." He used a word that means to live and it refers to the quickening or the restoring or the recovering of that which is alive. In other words, he's praying that God would impart vigor and power into his people. The prophet recognized that they were full of apathy and full of indifference and that that apathy and indifference was leading to all kinds of sins and all kinds of spiritual coldness and so he prayed that God would revive them, that God would visit them, that God would give them vigor, that he would quicken them in their spiritual life.

To quote Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, he described revival in these terms, "It is an experience in the life of the church when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work." He does that work primarily amongst the members of the church. It is a reviving of the believers. You cannot revise something that has never had life, so revival by definition is, first of all, an enlivening and quickening and awakening of the lethargic sleeping church members. The stirring up of God's people. The stirring up of the saints of God.

Now, there is something very important there to note. Revival does not involve the Holy Spirit doing something altogether new in the church. This is where many of God's people have gone wrong and they think of revival as an alternative or as something different or something novel, something to replace the Spirit's usual work, but that's not the case. What happens in revival is not to be seen as something miraculously different from the regular experience of the church, the difference lies in degree, not in kind. In other words, in an outpouring of the Spirit, spiritual influence is more widespread, convictions are deeper, feelings are more intense, but all this is only a heightening of normal Christianity. The Spirit doesn't suddenly suspend his work and do something completely different, he simply heightens what he does and it's known as a revival. It doesn't mean something altogether new, rather it's a greater manifestation of the same Holy Spirit.

I think it's best illustrated when you think of the vision that Ezekiel had in Ezekiel 47. In that prophecy, the prophet Ezekiel has been brought to the door of the temple. As he stands there at the door of the temple, he sees waters rushing from the south side of the altar, and then he proceeded eastward and he saw that the water level had increased to the ankles, and then as he proceeds a little further, he discovers that the water level rises again and it's water to the knees. Then later on in the same vision, he sees waters to the loins or waters up to the thighs, and then eventually he sees a river and he testifies of that river, that he could not pass over it because the waters that had commenced at the ankles and had gone to the knees and then gone to the loins, he then testifies that those waters had risen so high that they were now waters to swim in. It was a great increase, a great effusion of the water, and so it is in revival. The Spirit of God is always at work in his church, but in times of revival, that work of the Spirit of God is amplified or magnified and blessings abound.

I think that's obvious from the language that's used to describe such times in Scripture. Take Acts 2, for example, it speaks there of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. On the day of Pentecost, there was the sound like the rushing of a mighty wind. The Spirit of God is poured out and men were filled with the Holy Ghost. Or the words of Isaiah 44:3 where the promise is the Lord will pour water on him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. You have not just the thought of water, but you have the thought of floods upon the dry ground. The thought there is the magnitude of what God is able to do. It's interesting that that passage in Isaiah 44 has to do with the salvation of children, the salvation of our offspring, and who among us does not want to see that happen, the Lord coming in power, giving us water upon the thirsty ground and floods upon the dry ground, and the salvation of our children, the salvation of our children's children, and they being brought into faith in Christ.

Malachi 3, there is a reference there to a blessing so large and so great that there's not room enough to receive it. He tells them, "Prove me now herewith. Bring the tithes and offerings into the storehouse." They had been robbing God and the Lord is saying, "Put that right and prove me now herewith, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." That's what happens in revival. It's not that the Spirit of God does something completely new, something completely different, rather there's just a magnifying of what the Spirit does and the Lord works in a powerful way.

I've been reading these past days in Murray's book, "Revival and Revivalism." He makes the comment that true revival is extraordinary, yet what is experienced at such times is not different in essence from the experience that belongs to Christians at other times. It is the larger earnest of the same Spirit who abides with all those who believe. That's what we pray for when we pray for revival, for the enlargement of it; for the greater blessing of it; that we might experience it.

Now, from all of what we have said already tonight and the thought here that this is something that is of the Lord and something that the Lord does in a magnified sense, as the prophet here is praying for the Lord to revive his work, there are certain things that



stand out from our considerations already. Think about the source of revival. Revival begins with God. Isn't that true of God's work in general? The salvation of one soul belongs to God. The stirring up of one believer belongs to God. The blessing of a single congregation belongs to God and, therefore, as you multiply that and other congregations are blessed and other believers are revived and other souls are saved on a greater scale, it's all of God. It's all of God.

Isn't it interesting how the prophet prays here, "O LORD, revive thy work." Why does he pray that way? We'll come to this next week, but why does he pray that way, "O LORD, revive thy work"? Because he knows that the reviving of God's work belongs to the Lord. It is the Lord who does this work. It is the Lord who does the reviving. It is the Lord who moves in the heart. It is the Lord who stirs the soul. It's the Lord who pours out his blessing. This is the Lord's prerogative. This is what the Lord does. No man however spiritual he may be, can produce this kind of outpouring.

God is the author. God is the source. God is the origin of such times. That's why the psalmist prays in Psalm 85:6, "Wilt thou not revive us again?" If he could have done the reviving himself, he wouldn't have had to pray that way, but he's lifting up his heart, he's lifting up his voice to God and he's crying, "Wilt thou not revive us again?" because he understands that the source of revival is not within his own heart, the source of revival is not within his own hands. He must look to the Lord to do that and revival begins with God. The source of it.

Look at the sovereignty of revival. There is sovereignty in all of God's actions and what is true in general is also true in revival. Why does the Lord bless in one area and not in another? Why does the Lord bless in one year and not in another year? Why was there a Great Awakening in the 1700s and another in the 1800s? Why did revival come to New York in 1858 and in Ireland in 1859? Why does God send special times of revival in one land at one time and not in another land at the same time? Because he is sovereign. Because he is sovereign.

You've heard something of the work in Nepal. A man gets converted in Nepal some years ago and he tells others in his family about Christ and they, too, get converted. They form a church and from that church they send a missionary to the next village and that missionary goes with the Gospel and he tells the villagers in that place about Christ and they get converted and they form a congregation, and out of that congregation, another man is raised up and he goes to the next village, and so it goes on until within a very short space of time there are 140 congregations that we're familiar with and we have part of in Nepal.

Why does that not happen in the United States? Why does that not happen in Liberia? Why is it not happening in other countries of the world with other faithful preachers and other faithful denominations? Why is it not happening in other places? Why does it happen there in Nepal at that particular time? Because God is sovereign. Because God is sovereign.

It has been said that he has never promised to bless in proportion to the activity of his people. Revivals are not brought about by the fulfillment of conditions any more than the conversion of a single individual is secured by any series of human actions. The special seasons of mercy are determined by heaven. That's not to say that we should just sit back and wait and be passive. We must look to the Lord to bless and when the Lord moves and hearts and men begin to pray and things begin to change and there is a desire for this developing in the hearts of God's people, we can be confident the Lord is beginning to work and we ought to be engaged in things that will show our desire for this blessing.

But with all of that, revival is God's sovereign work and when he blesses in another place, we should be thankful. We should be thankful that the Lord is blessing across the world. We should be thankful the Lord is saving souls. In a sense, the Lord is always reviving some part of his church. We might not see it in our part, we might not see it in our generation, but the Lord is always reviving parts of his church, and when we hear of that and when we see that as the Lord enables us, let us rejoice in that, that God is working.

The source of it, the sovereignty of it, the scope of it. Revival by its very definition suggests a great measure of power, a great measure of blessing. Souls are stirred. Believers are quickened and revived in their hearts and things that have been languid and almost lifeless, the Lord is breathing upon those things and there is freshness there, there is vigor there that comes, and it not just affects one person, it affects more than one, it affects perhaps entire congregations or entire areas. There are more abundant displays of God's grace when revival comes. It goes beyond the ones and the twos. It spreads like a flame.

Some of God's work in history has been described that way, the spreading flame. God begins a work and then the flame begins to spread and God's graciousness and God's reviving blessing increases until we have, like Ezekiel's prophecy, we have waters to swim in. It's an interesting image when you think of oftentimes we have prayed about the tide being out and that's how it often feels in God's work, it feels as if the tide has gone out. Believer, when revival comes, the tide comes in, and when the tide comes in, we have waters to swim in and there is a scope to it, a vastness to it, that brings glory to God's name. You're familiar with the accounts of revival in the past when hundreds of thousands of people have been converted, what happened there? The scope of God's blessing just grew larger and larger and larger and God was pleased to bless.

What about the significance of revival? This brings good to the saints of God. Revival is a good thing. It doesn't deal with all the issues. Sometimes we think that revival is a cure-all for all the ills in the church of Christ. It's not. In fact, it often creates other issues that have to be dealt with. But revival is good for the saints. It's good for the salvation of the lost and ultimately it brings glory to God's name.

So when Habakkuk is praying here, "O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy," he's praying that the Lord might bless his work. "Revive thy work." He's not saying, "Lord, revive my work."

He understands that the ownership of this work lies with the Lord. It's the Lord's calls. These are the Lord's people. This is the Lord's church. And his focus is not upon his own reputation, the focus is not upon his own name or the name of his people, the focus is upon the Lord's name, and the significance of revival is that God is glorified and those who have mocked him, those who have scorned him, suddenly see the finger of God. That's what the psalmist prays, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

We look at revival and we think, well, we would love to have a full church; we would love to have a stronger denomination; we'd love to see things in the nation turned around, and all of that has its place, but our primary goal, surely, in desiring revival is that men might rejoice in the Lord; that our name might go into insignificance; that it might not be about us but it would be about the Lord. That's why the Lord revives, that his name might be glorified.

I was reading something this past week on Samuel Davis. Samuel Davis has been described as one of the greatest American preachers ever to live. He ministered in the 1700s and he said as he looked back on the events in the 1740s, he said, "About 16 years ago in the northern colonies when all religious concern was much out of fashion and the people lay in a dead sleep in sin, having at best a form of godliness but nothing of the power, when the country was at peace and prosperity, free from the calamities of war and epidemic sickness, when in short there were no extraordinary calls to repentance." Reading between the lines what he says is when there was a time when nothing was happening. People had forgotten God. There was not epidemic of sickness, there was not need, therefore, to call upon God's name in an emergency. There was prosperity. There was no war to have to deal with. Things were just going on in the nation very generally, and because of that, people had fallen into spiritual apathy. He says, "Then suddenly a deep general concern about eternal things spread through the country. Sinners started out of their slumbers, broke off from their vices, began to cry out, 'What shall we do to be saved?' and made it the great business of their life to prepare for the world to come, then the Gospel seemed almighty and carried all before it. It pierced the very hearts of men with an irresistible power. I have seen thousands at once melted down under it, all eager to hear as for life, and hardly a dry eye to be seen among them." That's revival. In an age of apathy, an age of indifference, an age of carelessness, an age when there is a name of Christianity but it is without power, it's just a nominal, lukewarm, Laodicean Christianity, when suddenly God began to move.

Believer, that's the need of the church of Jesus Christ. That's what we need more than anything else in this age, and with those truths before us tonight, is it not obvious that this is a very urgent matter and, therefore, it ought to be an urgent topic for prayer. We need to see the Lord move. I'm talking now about his church in general. We need to see the Lord move.

As I read these verses in this prophecy, I come to the conclusion that Habakkuk was very disturbed in what was taking place. He recognized the trouble that the people of God were in. But he not only recognized the trouble they were in, he recognized the remedy.

He did not think for a moment that he could solve it by himself so he called upon God to revive the work, and there is a sense of urgency in his words, "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work." Believer, let us make that our prayer tonight, that God in his mercy, God in his infinite grace, might come to his church in this nation and revive his work. Read the account of the Great Awakening. Read the account of the second Great Awakening. Read the account of the 1858 revival in New York. Read the account and the various accounts from across the world where God has been pleased to move and I guarantee as you read those, your heart's cry will be, "Lord, do it again. Do it again."

"O LORD, revive thy work." The greatest thing the church needs is God's blessing in this way. So, Lord, help us to pray.

Next time, we'll come and we'll look at the desire for revival. We're work through the chapter and work through what the prophet here is saying, how he prays, and may the Lord come and stir our interest, stir our hearts, and commence a gracious work of this nature in our generation and for his glory.

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

*Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy word. We pray today and tonight that thou will graciously move in our hearts. Lord, we feel the apathy. We see the indifference. We see our nation. We see the state of thy church. We ask, Lord, tonight that thou would revive thy work and in the midst of the years make known in wrath, remember mercy. In the midst of these years, Lord, wilt thou not come and breathe upon us by the Holy Spirit? Bless thy people here. Lord, we need revived individually in all the challenges, in all the circumstances of life. Lord, that thou would revive us individually, stir our hearts, we pray. Give us a fresh love for Christ and a fresh love for his word. Lord, revive the church, we pray. So answer our prayer tonight and part us in thy fear and with thy favor. Bless our studies these next few weeks. Lord, touch our hearts, we pray, that thy name might be glorified. We ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.*