

So. say. March 14, 75 - A. M.

REVIVE THY WORK

Habakkuk 3:2

The cry of the prophet is the anxious cry of one over-burdened, who feels the keen responsibility for the spiritual need of his day. His people are in great sorrow. The reason - they have forsaken God. In anguish, he pours out his troubled petition and he believes there is only one hoperevive thy work.

1:5

What work was the prophet talking about. In the 5th verse, we find God's promise - "I will work a work in your days which you will not believe. Though it be told you. Chapter 1 - Verse 5. The prophet is praying for a revival of the work of God. A renewal of his dealings with individuals. And with God working with the (national sins.)

At the thought of how grievous the affliction might be, and he prays for God to be merciful.

This is the same cry that the prophet - the (Psalmist) in the midst of affliction prayed. Psalm 85:6 - "wilt thou not revive us again." That thy people might rejoice in thee. "It was winter time spiritually. The earth was cold. The winds bleak. The trees were without life. The flowers were withered. And death reigned. But the coming of Spring did change all of that. And there would be beauty, spiritual resurrection, the quickening of God's spirit in the midst of his people, would restore the joy of their salvation.

The Prophet (Isaiah) saw the necessity for revival. He had an experience with God in the 6th chapter in the year that the king Uzziah died. "I saw the Lord high and

lifted up and sitting on a throne. Now he did not see some puny sort of God, a way off there in the blue or some man upstairs. He saw one who was (mighty above this earth). He also (saw a sinful nation). And he (saw a people weighed down with iniquity). He saw a seed of (evil doers). He saw (children and corruptness). They had (forsaken the Lord). They had provoked the holy one of Israel unto anger. And they had gone away backwards. V. 4. 1st chapter of Isaiah. The results of their disobedience was that their (hearts were sick). The country was desolate. The cities were burned and God was tired of their multitude of sacrifices, when they were not living sacrificial lives.

And the great prophet cried out - wash you, make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Seek judgement. Relieve the oppressed. Judge the fatherless. Plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together. Thou your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

My brethren, if we could see God and what He sees like that, nobody would have to beg us, prime us, or pet us to do God's business.

We are always in a hurry. We have no time to wait upon God to renew our strength. But God wants his disciples to wait upon his presence to confess their sins. And that is the problem in Isaiah's day.

Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. His face was wet with tears over the sins of his day. Lam. 5:21 - Turn thou thus unto thee, o Lord, and we shall be turned. Renew our days as of old.

(2 Chron. 7:14) - Solomon in those remarkable words that the Lord said if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways - then will I hear from Heaven. And will forgive their sin

and will heal their land.

Now these cries are ~~the~~ the cries of human hearts for revival in the prophets and the Psalmists. And are the same in our day and generation. Desperately as the men needed God, in the day of the prophet Habakkuk. It is no more fitting than in our day in the deep distress of the soul when we join in and we plead oh Lord, revive thy work, revive thy work.

Think about the present crisis of spiritual things in this nation. We are experiencing days of special crisis.

In relation to health, there are many things that are going on. Change in disease, is taking place all over this world. The treatment of these diseases will determine whether there is recovery or not.

There is the economic crisis. Some people call it a recession. Others call it a transition. But on every hands the best minds are at work. Trying to recover from the economic struggle and crisis that is in the nation. And men are working hard trying to bring about an economic revival.

If we think of the giant efforts today that are being made to save businesses. To restore property. To keep down unemployment. Industrial, social, the economic reforms, are taking place. There are revolutionary changes, that are going on as men are trying to bring about this revival to save the crisis.

Now what about our spirituality. In this 19th century, I wonder if some men could come back, that lived 1900 years ago - and see the advancements of modern day

science - what would they say. They would say this is a new world. I do not recognize it.

But if those same people would come back and spend some time with the people, who live here today, they would no doubt say this is the same old sinful world in which I lived. It is no better. I wonder if that would not be true. If the prophet Isaiah came back today.

Dr. Lawson, the Home Mission Board, said that Lenin was reported to have said before World War II - "We will win the Western world without shedding a drop of Russian blood." We will create fear and suspicion. We will work inside by creating racial hatreds, religious antagonisms. We will pit father against son - wife against husband. We will inaugurate campaigns to hate the Jews. And to hate Catholics. And to hate Negroes. We will inspire sit-down strikes and riots. We will plant the seeds of turmoil and cover it all with an inflation that will lead to economic disaster, until we have 14 millions unemployed people in the streets of the democratic country of imperialistic America. We will break their economy. We will send their dollar down until it will not be worth 10¢. We will destroy the future security from life insurance, from old-age pension, until a life annuity that some felt would be substantial for the rest of life will buy but a loaf of bread. We will break their currency. We will break their spirit. We will frighten them. We will scare them. We will create political deceit. We will confuse international diplomacy. We will do these things."

Communism works day and night to accomplish its aims. What are we as Christians doing. Fiddling while Rome burns. Are we on a sit-down strike. Are we doing nothing. Many Christians are not even attending church. Many are taking it easy in Zion.

Now the one need that we get out of this text is - the need for prayer. In our nation's capitol we have a most beautiful prayer room. It has a few chairs and kneeling benches. With a beautiful altar and the Bible pointing to Psalm 16:1 - preserve me oh God, for in thee, do I put my trust. The altar is beautiful. And above the altar is a stained glass window and it speaks of our religious faith. That George Washington, upon his knees remind us that we need to make fervent supplication to Almighty God. And there is the great seal - and an eye with the Latin phrase - God has favored our undertakings and a new order of the age is born. And this nation which has made many - and we think of Lincoln's address. This nation under God. One feels that he is glad he lives in America. When he goes into that prayer room. A quiet place in the nation's capitol. Where members may seek the consciousness of God's presence.

What we need more than anything else in the world is a genuine revival of religion. A spiritual regeneration of the modern life.

Many people live 25 years without even thinking about church.

Why is it that we have so many absentee members. Why is it that we have so many people who leave their memberships at home and move to the great cities every year. Many of them have at one time knew hard times. And many of them did not have the luxuries that they have today. And they did not have the good food that they have today. They have left God and they have forgotten and forsaken him. And all of these excuses will not hold up in the day of judgement.

People give all sorts of excuses.

A 74 year old man said that he had drank a lot of liquor in his day when he had

one foot in the grave but he was still not reaching out for the cross.

There are families who put up signs on their doors - no solicitors. And there is a lady who said once, I'll never join a church. My husband sees so many people who attend church on Sunday doing things they should not do during the week.

There are others like the individuals who say I work on a night shift. I can't go to church.

There are teen-agers who say "I can't make up my mind."

Have you taken and professed Christ - or have you turned your back on him. Have you been true or have you been unfaithful. Do you say that you are a Christian and live like the Devil. Do you stay in bed on Sunday morning instead of coming to church. Monday morning you go to work. You go fishing. You go to see relatives. But you do not come to God's house.

How long have you been living in the city in which you live. And how long would you live in this city if there were no churches in this city. You wouldn't even want to live in America if there were no churches. And yet people won't accept Christ. And they are not interested in his church.

Do you have time to read the paper? Do you have time to look at television shows? Or go to the football game? To go automobile riding, to go boat riding, but you have no time for God Almighty. "The judgement of God is going to begin at God's house."

Now revival must begin in the church. And that is what the prophet is praying for. We must repent of our failures. Our lack of prayer. We want the church to

maintain worship services, but we will not worship. Did you know, there are lots of people who want this church to have worship services. Now say, if next Sunday - I said well, we are going to close up the doors. We are not going to have any 11 o'clock preaching next Sunday. Some people would be up in arms. And some would not even know what happened. And the same thing would be true of the evening service.

Unless we repent, we live in this godless, churchless, Christless world - it would be horrible.

Now, we pray sometimes (Lord use me). The best kind of prayer you can pray is - Lord make me useable. When you allow God to make you useable - he'll use you. He will work you to death. Now the trouble with many people is - they don't want to be used. And they are not willing to be made useable.

They are too comfortable. A lot of people pray for the power of God but they are not willing to witness the power will never come. "Lord, take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee." And I will tell others about you with my lips and my life. Then when you say that, the demons of Hell cannot stall the power of God.

When we think about Revival - we make (all) kinds of excuses. The attendance is bad, the weather is bad, the children have exams, the P. T. A. is on, there is going to be a hometown game on. And did you know the most important game in the world will be the revival.

When we start put God, his church, and his business above everything else - and everybody, and we start to do some things for God's glory and only God's glory -

can finish it.

You remember Elijah went upon the mountain with the false prophets of Baal. And there was a showdown between the power of darkness and the power of God. He built an altar and they had one and they cried - nothing happened. He repaired the altar of God and few of us would have thought to have done that. And he brought four barrels of water and poured in on a sacrifice. And then he went and he says, go and get four more barrels and pour it on. And the water was all around on the trenches. And the old man of God got on his knees and he cried, God, won't you send some fire and the fire fell.

Now you know some people would say - do you really believe that. Yes, I believe that with all of my heart. He set the stage so that it would be God or else. All the glory would be God's.

He prayed, (hear me) - hear me oh God. That this people may know that thou art the Lord God. That they may know that there is a prophet in Israel.

Now that is the (difference) in Elijah and most of us. We try to put out every little fire that might be under the altar. While we are trying - we are always trying to build little fires - Elijah was putting them out and we are trying to help God out. But here is he - trying to water it down. He wanted that congregation to know that there were no tricks that it was God or else.

I think sometimes in our churches we try to break Sunday School records and we tried to break everything else except allowing God to break us.

Well, we have had banana bunches, we have packed pews, we've had men's night, and old-fashioned night, music night, ladies night, etc. And everything else - we

ought to have God's night or nothing!

You remember David said to that giant - it is not by spirits nor by power, but my spirit sayeth the Lord. The early church continued in prayer and supplication. And when there were people who lied to the spirit - ^{the son of Sapphira} - God made them an example. And they were buried and great fear fell upon the whole church. And upon as many as heard these things.

Now there was a church that people were afraid to belong too - unless they were willing to serve God. We need more like that today. Do I really - do you really believe in prayer? Do you really believe God hears and answers prayer.

There was a revival service on and there was a 28 year old man who had been saved a few weeks before this revival. On Friday afternoon he came to the Pastor and the Evangelist. He looked them square in the eye and he said do you believe in the inspired word of God. And the Evangelist said, yes, I believe in the word of God - and I do believe it. He was wondering what he was driving at. He said, I thought you did - and I just wanted to hear you say it. And then he asked him, do you believe in prayer? He said, yes, I read in the Bible whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father might be glorified in the son. And this man also said, where two or three are gathered in my name, there will I be in the midst of them. And whatsoever they ask shall be done for them, for my father which is in Heaven. This man said then, that makes three of us that believes that and I believe it with all of my heart. He said, let's get down on our knees right here and ask God to save my wife tonight.

Now there was some stumbling and some stammering on the part of those preachers, but the big old country boy fell down on his knees and the pastor decided, and he asked the evangelist to lead. He started to pray. Now he did not know whether to give

God a little advice or not. And say Lord here is a man who has not been saved long. He believes in the Word. He wants his wife saved. And he prayed and concluded. And then the boy prayed - he reached up and took hold of God. He said, Lord, I was one of the meanest men that ever walked the face of the earth. And you saved me. But Lord my wife is lost and I want her saved. You want her saved - you said you would do anything if we would just ask you. I know you wouldn't lie to me. Save her tonight. I believe you are going to do it. Amen.

He jumped up and he grabbed the evangelist and the preacher, and he said my wife will be saved tonight. The evangelist said I hope she will be. And he said, preacher don't talk like that. You ought not to say I hope she will be. But say I know she will be. And so they went on their way. And they began to think. What if his wife isn't saved tonight. And they remembered that if his wife isn't saved - his faith will be shattered. Can you imagine what that preacher was thinking about. Why, he said, God's not going to turn down his children. He came to that service and that young family sat on the second pew. And he said the evangelist preached the sermon and all the time he was praying - oh God, what if she is not saved. When he gave the invitation - the first one down the aisle was this woman. The man stood there and smiled - after the service was over, he said, I knew she would be saved.

The evangelist said he went back to his room and got on his knees and said, oh God, forgive me. I have been up and down this land telling men about the great saving power and promises. But it took this Christian only a few weeks old to teach me about what praying it all about. I want to ask you - today, do you believe in that kind of prayer?

God either meant it when he made that promise in John 14:13 - that that boy claimed - or God told something that wasn't so. I wonder if we couldn't claim that promise during this revival.

We need some Habakkuk's, some Isaiah's and others whose hearts break over sin and over corruption. Who love the Lord Jesus. Love the church, love souls, and people everywhere. It is their relatives and their friends and neighbors who are lost. They have need of Christ. They have need of revival. They are strangers to the church and to the cross. And to Christ. And are under the curse of sin.

If you believe the Bible, you know that those outside of Christ, go where the word dieth not and the fire is not quenched. We need to make haste my friends. And invite them, urge them, pray for them, and remember he died for sinners.

As Mackey wrote - "we praise thee O God for the Son of thy love. For Jesus who died and now gone above.

Revive us again

Fill each heart with thy love

May each soul be rekindled,

With fire from above.

With the prophet this morning we cry, revive thy work.