

(Crisis) -

"YOUR SURVIVAL"

Hab. 3:2

There are two things that I want to fix in your mind. The crisis or need for survival. And second, the conditions - how to survive.

I. THE CRISIS

There are many things ahead for America. And it may be retribution - judgement may fall very soon upon our land. Major things could take place, as people turn away from their faith. They walk away from the moral standards of God. They do their own thing. And live life the way they want to live it.

Another thing could happen - the return of Christ could take place. Every thing points in that direction - "when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke 21:28.

On the other hand, it could be that a revival is on the way. That people have moved so far away from God, and the greatest need is for a Heaven-sent, Christ exalting revival.

More energy has been mis-directed today, more carts are put before the horse, and we want to know that the crisis that we are in - that God's own spirit must work. We have so many convalescent church members. Who need to be cured. They have an infection within their lives that has never been touched. They need to become normal Christians.

It is time for them to wake up.

Isaiah saw the Lord - he did not feel comfortable. God does not smile at sin. He does not wink at iniquity.

However, today, we are willing to do anything but repent. We have people who come to church gatherings - and they shout "Amen" - but when they are called on to repent, they are like the people of Ephesus. They are loveless.

Sometimes I think today in the world, we become noted for how Christians hate each other, instead of how they love each other.

3:2A. The prophet had fear. When he said, oh Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid. He was referring to the judgements of God upon Israel. The author of Hebrews said - "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Chapter 10:31."

The prophet had fear - they was thinking about the destruction of Israel. The northern kingdom of Samaria. And he was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. And Judah by the Babylonians.

Habakkuk lived during the period between the two events. The first destruction had come to pass. And now he is a messenger of God to announce the second judgement. And that is why, he said, "oh Lord, I have

heard thy speech. And was afraid.

He feared the judgement of God. The Lord sent him to announce it against his own people. His own city.

~~1:6-10~~ Let us ready his warning - Hab. 1:6-10.

~~1:13~~ The question of the prophet - V. 13. He asked Lord, however wicked and evil we may be, we are not more evil and wicked than the Babylonians. Why do you allow them to destroy us.

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil. And canst not look upon iniquity.

~~1:12~~ The answer, V. 12 - "Oh Lord, thou has ordained them for judgement. And Almighty God, thou hast established them for correction."

This is the message of God to you today, in Chesapeake - we cannot continue in drunkenness, blasphemy, and desecration, and not face the inevitable judgement of Almighty God.

The Lord will raise up the atheistic Communist to chase us. It is hard for us to realize that we could be lost in this country. Destroyed by some enemy.

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The prophet's prayer - Chapter 3:2. The prophet got himself together and decided if they were going to survive this crisis something had to be done. He had only one possible answer. (Oh Lord, revive thy work). Revival will save a nation, it will save Judah, it did in the days of Hezekiah. It saved Ninevah in the days of Jonah. It saved Italy and Florence in the days of Savonarola - and it will save your home. It did yesterday, it did today, and it will forever.

Now the prophet has discovered that what is needed is revival.

This is a family word. The lost are not revived - they are dead in trespasses and in sin. The lost need resurrection - to be born again. They need life out of death.

The family of God needs revival. I Peter 4:17. For the time has come that judgement must begin at the house of God.

The church can never give what it does not possess. There must be in the church, the presence of the Lord, and all the joy and goodness of God to over-flowing and abounding presence of the Spirit of God in revival.

This is a normal experience. It is a turning of the heart and the hands upward to God. Could you imagine a father - whose child was sick in bed, all year long - saying, don't worry about him. Let's not be

concerned or burdened about this child. Because next year, my child will be up out of bed maybe one week out of the year. Now that is an unthinkable experience. That a child is going to be out of bed maybe one week out of the year.

The same is true of God's children. Our lives are to be overflowing with joy and gladness. As a Christian, you are to praise God every day of the week and every Lord's day you ought to be in your place in church. This is normal.

This is something that God does because of the soverignty of God. And you are not able to bring revival. Neither is any preacher.

Now you can set up your own fireworks. And you can produce your little artificial fires. But you cannot produce what the prophet is talking about. The story of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones - they were put together. Muscles, skin, and they were lifeless and dead. And he emplored the spirit of God. To breathe upon them. And when your life becomes saturated with the presence of God, it is going to be alive.

Revival comes from the Lord. Because of the soverignty of God. Now Paul predicted that we were going to have crisis just like this. Our national problems, our readers, they get together in the capitol and act like little children. Quarreling and fussing - and playing selfish games with the economy. And with the lives of people all over

the world. Crime rises. The streets of our city are not safe at night - or even in the daytime. There is racial hatred all around. Hostility.

Our homes look like a disaster area. Divorce is not only common but you know it is often condoned. And boys and girls grow up deprived of a Godly mother.

The social life has been taken away from the family altar and we have replaced it with discotheques. The neighborhood liquor store. These places are festering young people. They need someone to point out to them the sins of this age. We go along with the crowd. The moral guidelines have been stripped away. And you drive along the highway not knowing where you are going.

Now, the homes are not as God intended them to be.

In our church, the average church member - the person does not know the difference between the world and between the spirit. God meant for a Christian to be different. And God meant for you to have a different kind of life.

Probably the largest group of people in jail are those who have their names upon a church roll.

There is so much spiritual immaturity, in the church. I'm amazed at

how childish the average Christian is. Why folks get mad over the least little thing. They get their feelings hurt over the least little thing. And there are some who brag about it. It is a sign that God needs to send revival and get people to love Jesus, and to stop this silly childishness, that goes on. We are so swept away with the standards of the world, until we have the idea that all in the world that we need is success. In fact, we can get along without the Lord. We need nothing. Now that church in the book of revelation was fat and rich, but here was a prophet saying - wilt thou revive us again. God's people are the subject of this. And we ought to be winning lost people to Christ. And God performs the act in our hearts. And it means to live again.

But do you know, some of you Christians are hindrances to God doing his work. When God wanted Ninevah to be converted, why the reluctant man named Jonah hindered the work being done. And the sailors found him asleep. God wants you to do his work and he wants to work in your life. And the thing about it is - whether or not God works in anybody else's life or not. If you want revival, you can have it.

I used to think that God had to have (everybody) in the church right. In fact, one time, I used to think that (all the Deacons) in the church had to get right. But I found out, that you can't get all of the Deacons right.

I used to think that all the (young people) had to get right. But I

found out that you can't get them all right. I used to think that all the Sunday School teachers and officers had to get right. But they are not all going to get right.

If only a few people will get right, and meet God's condition, then God will move in. Just one person who will draw a circle around himself, and say, oh God, let this thing start right here in my life today.

II. THE CONDITIONS

How are we going to survive. Now we come very specifically to the thing that we are talking about. The steps for revival, and survival.

First, confession and contrition.

We must have this first of all. Oh God, forgive my stubborn pride, forgive my unfruitfulness, forgive my lack of burden...and we may be not praying, not receiving, and not weeping. And not burdened because we are not burdened. We may become fully concerned and care and indifferent. But we must recognize the hardness of our hearts. And with a broken heart we must turn back.

2 Chron. 7:14 - It is useless for Christians to expect Revival, and spiritual blessings without bothering to fulfill the conditions, which govern spiritual blessings.

No 1. - He says, if my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves. That is the first thing and that is not easy.

And that means that you are going to admit this to God - that you are dissatisfied with yourself.

Are you back-slidden. You are not as close to Jesus as you used to be. You are not as consecrated to the Lord as you were once. Was there ever a period in your life when you felt the presence of God more than you feel it now. Was there a moment in your life, when you loved Jesus in a very real way, more than this very minute.

You need to humble yourself. And I am going to tell you - that is not easy. Because when you humble yourself, that means that you say, you are not what you ought to be. Not nearly the Christian that you pretend to be. Not as spiritual as God's church demands you to be. You are not under the absolute Lordship of Christ. Therefore, there must be some contrition and some confession.

Second, prayer and agony.

Read. Isa. 59:1-2, behold the Lord's hand is not shortened. That he cannot save, neither his ear heavy - that he cannot hear. But your iniquities are separated between you and your God. And your sins have hid your face from you. And he will not hear.

That is why the old-time church had a morners bench. It is not easy for people to forsake sin. To deny the flesh - to live a victorious life. But we must confess our sins, and we must pray in burden for the lost. We must have a care for them. Paul said in Rom. 9 - I have great heaviness and great sorrow in my heart. For I could wish myself a curse from Christ for my brethren, and my kinsmen in the flesh. V. 2-3.

Did you know that you will never be the kind of Christian that you ought to be when you go through days and weeks and you never think of the lost people that are around you. And you never have any burden to invite people to come and know Jesus Christ.

No wonder the second part of Chron. says, it never comes without prayer. The unrevived soul is a prayerless soul. The deadness in the average congregation is prayerlessness. In the days of Samuel, prayer was the burden of a mother's heart. In the days of Nehemiah, the layman, there was the burden. In the days of the Pentecost, there was the upper room.

The third thing is unity. There must be a unity of fellowship to meet this condition. In the matter of Pentecost, Acts 2:1 - they were in one accord in one place. There was no division of spirit. They were all given to one great dedication - and when the church of the Lord Jesus Christ comes to the place that the members and the leaders will be of one mind, one spirit, in oneness - then this thing will

happen. In oneness you will seek God's face - you will become interested in the Lord again. There will be a God consciousness. You will be willing to lay things aside - some of the amusements, some of the things that entertain you, and you will be willing to turn the T. V. off and unplug it for a month. And your families will begin to know one another and you will be able to carry on an intelligent conversation. But with your eyes riveted to the T. V., looking there, not wanting anybody to speak - so that you can hear and see what Howdy-Doody is going to say and do next.

I remember the story of a magazine which had a series of pictures in it. It is the saddest story that you can imagine. The first picture was a vast wheat field in Western Kansas. As far as the eye could see, the field was covered with wheat.

The second picture was the distress of the mother in the farm house in the middle of that wheat field. She had a small boy, and he had wandered away, and she could not find him. She called her husband and they searched. They finally called the neighbors, and they began to look - and they could not find him.

The third picture, all the people who heard of the little boy being lost, joined hands in a great sweep and they said, let us join hands, and let us comb it from one side to the other until we find that little boy.

The last picture, would break one's heart. It was a picture of a

father, standing over the body of his little boy. They had finally found him. But the lad was dead. Underneath the picture was the words - Oh God, that we had joined hands before. One could not forget a story like that.

Revival in our church means - that in the hearts of the people, there is going to be a true unity, oneness, and intercession in the spirit seeking and searching God's blessed will.

And in oneness, we are going to seek to turn our face from our wicked ways - and turn from our wrong lives.

Someone has said, if you don't pray - you are not a Christian. Regardless of who you are, no man who does not pray - can claim that he loves the Lord and knows the Lord.

You will pray - you have got to pray. I'll tell you what happens in your life that ought not to be there. There are some things - and if you are not praying, those things will pop up right in front of you, and your prayer. And you get no further. And until you straighten those things out - you will never be able to pray.

When you start praying, there is going to be someone in the church that you have spoken a hard word against. An ugly word against. And that is going to come to your mind - and that will stop you from praying.

As you start to pray, to your mind, you'll hear some individual that I have by-passed and have not spoken to in five years. And that will cut your prayer off. You will not be able to pray until you deal with that. You have to be willing to turn from your wicked ways. You have to be willing to repent of your sins. And until God's people repent like they ought to repent, to expect revival without repentance is like - getting to the moon riding on a North Carolina mule. It just doesn't work that way.

Finally, there must be a hungering for God. A longing for God. A seeking for God's face.

The Psalmist said 63:1 - My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longing for thee, in the dry and thirsty land. "

As the heart of the deer panteth after the water brook. So panteth my soul after thee. "

Annual Service Deacon & S.S. Teacher (Bryan Holoman) Day after Election - I said, Bryan visited for years as his candidate - He told me "He would not get well & was making his departure - Just hours before his spirit went up unable to speak - needed for son & grand child + his wife told his hands up - a tear trickled down his cheeks - Have you drank of the water of this life and are you still thirsty. Telling them good bye & reaching for God -

Have you found an emptiness in the rewards of the world. Are you still longing in your heart and flesh for something more than the world can give you.

The things of this world are fleeting. The hymn writer said, if you are tired of the load of your sin, let Jesus come into your heart. If you desire a new life to begin, let Jesus come into your heart.

Just now, your doubtings give ore, just now reject him no more, just now, throw open the door. Let Jesus come into your heart.

The last condition is response and commitment. I wonder if you are going to be one of those who will say today - I have said "no" to God for the last time. I am going to come today to Jesus and say "yes". Have you had a spirit of rejection in your life. A spirit of unbelief. Will you not answer God's call with a "yes" today. With a commitment today. And say,

I am resolved, no longer to linger
Charmed by the world's delight
Things that are higher
Things that are nobler
These have allured my sight.

I am resolved, and who will go with me
Come friends, without delay
Taught by the Bible, led by the spirit
We'll walk the Heavenly way.