

Nuggets in Habakkuk Part 4 - O Lord Revive Your Work

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 90, in the Scottish Psalter version, Psalm 90, page 350.

We're singing from verse 13 down to the end of the psalm. Turn yet again to us, O Lord, how long thus shall it be?

Let it repent thee now for those that servants are to thee. O with thy tender mercies, Lord, as early satisfy. So we rejoice shall all our days and still be glad in thee.

We'll sing from verse 13 down to the end of the psalm. To God's praise. Let it repent thee now for those that servants are to thee.

O with thy tender mercies, Lord, as early satisfy.

[1 : 31] So we rejoice shall all our days and still be glad in thee.

According to the days of the day, when we leave our heart, And years when we leave our sin, So you have made us not.

O let thy word and fire appear, Thy servants face before, And show unto their children here, Thy glory evermore.

And let thy beauty of the Lord, Our God, the earths of home, Our heavenly holy world, Our holy world, Our holy world, Our holy world, our holy world, Our holy world, our holy world, Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God as we come to you we thank you for the assurance that you will meet with us as we seek to meet with you that as we come in your name as we come with praise on our lips as we come with that desire to know you and to understand you more we pray that you will help us oh Lord and we thank you for these words that we have sung together they remind us of what we need even today that you would turn again towards us Lord that you would remember us that you would revive your work in our midst and especially these words that we sung at the end of the psalm that you would let the beauty of the Lord our God be us upon we pray that today as we worship you as we praise your name that your beauty would be upon us that we would know your presence and your favor with us we ask that for all of us together here from the youngest to the oldest we pray for all our families and our loved ones as we commit them to you we pray oh Lord for our young people thankful for this time of holiday now that they might enjoy a time of refreshment and rest both the children and teachers from the Sunday school and the day school alike Lord that your beauty would be upon each of them throughout these days keep them safe and watch over them and continue to bless the young ones as they meet in the creche and the tweenies as well that we would know Lord your favor upon them there as well so continue with us at this time bless us as we go on in your name guide us and keep us and pardon all our sin as we ask it all in Jesus name and for his sake amen but just a word to the young ones before someone will leave for the tweenies just thinking about the holiday times just now it's always good to be on holiday and I'm sure some of you may be traveling around different places over these coming weeks I'm sure many have already gone away from the island traveling to holiday destinations in different parts and as you travel around maybe you're traveling on the roads and you're traveling to different places maybe you're traveling from Ullapool to Inverness or perhaps you're going further than that you're traveling down the A9 maybe heading towards Glasgow or

[6 : 09] Edinburgh or maybe even if you're lucky enough you're making your way over to the sunny side of the island to the west side to Shawbust to enjoy the sunshine over there on the roads you'll often find something that can be frustrating and something that can be quite annoying and that is roadworks everywhere you travel doesn't matter what time of year you seem to come across roadworks and you start to think to yourself well surely they finished the A9 by now surely they've fixed all the potholes between Ullapool and Inverness surely they've tired all these spots that we're

breaking up but it's always ongoing there's always works going on and it can be frustrating for us but it's a reminder to us that roads always need repairing there's always work to be done and in the bible that we're going to look at this morning together in the church we're going to be looking at a book called Habakkuk we've been looking at this book a few times now and we're looking at a verse that speaks of the work of the Lord and it speaks in a way that's a bit like roadworks it's always ongoing and there might be times when we think surely

God's work is done surely God's repair work in us is done but it's never done because we live in a broken world and we know in our own hearts that we always do the wrong things or say the wrong things so God is always having to do a work in us and like that we just have to be patient in it we have to be patient when we're stuck in roadworks on the road but we have to be patient with God as well whether we're looking at the work he's doing around us or the work he's doing in ourselves we need to be patient with him remember that as he is working he is doing a good work in our midst and our prayer is that just as we sang there together that we think of holiday times as a time when we enjoy rest and refreshment in the midst of every part of our busy lives that today we would think too of the work that God is doing to give us rest in him that he would do his work and that we would know the beauty of the Lord as the psalmist said there the beauty of the Lord our God to be upon us so remember that over these holiday times wherever you go whatever you do that the beauty of the Lord would be upon you that he would do his work in us and around us to know that beauty and to establish it and may the Lord bless these thoughts to us we're going to say the Lord's prayer together now our father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever amen we're going to sing again to God's praise in psalm 61 again this is in the Scottish Psalter version page 293 psalm 61 we'll sing from verse 1 down to verse 5 oh God give ear unto my cry unto my prayer attend from the utmost corner of the land my cry to thee I'll send what time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity do thou me lead unto the rock that higher is than I we'll sing from verse 1 to verse 5 to God's praise oh God give ear unto my cry unto my prayer what time my heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity do thou me lead unto the rock that higher is the what time my heart is bound unto the rock that higher is the night for thou me lead unto the rock that higher is the night unto the Lord, the higher is the night.

For Thou hast borne my remedy, a shelter by Thy blood.

And for defense against Thy foes, the lasting last of time.

Within Thy tower I lie forever in the light.

[12 : 15] And under cover of Thy wings, with confidence behind.

For Thou, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, my God, this year, Thou hast given me the heritage of those Thy name that fear.

Well, let's turn to read God's Word together now. We're reading in the book of Habakkuk.

I'm reading in chapter 2, taking up our reading at verse 18. You'll find this around page 950 in the Bibles. Habakkuk chapter 2 at verse 18, and we read into chapter 3 down to verse 10.

What prophet is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies?

[13 : 46] For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols. Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, awake, to a silent stone, arise.

Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it. But the Lord is in his holy temple.

Let all the earth keep silence before him. A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet according to Shigonoth. O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear.

In the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy. God came from Taman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.

His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light. Rays flashed from his hand, and there he veiled his power.

[14 : 55] Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. Then the eternal mountains were scattered.

The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of Cushion in affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers? Or your indignation against the sea when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation?

You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed.

The raging waters swept on. The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high. And so on.

[15:54] And may God bless that reading from his word. We'll again come to God in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, as we worship you, we thank you that you remind us that we are to come with boldness before you, but yet humbly before you.

That we are to come before you and lay all things in our prayers at your feet. And yet we are to come with that right fear of the Lord.

And this passage reminds us of both of these elements of our worship, of how we can approach you as a God who is able to do so much for us.

And yet it reminds us too of our own weakness and our own frailties before you as a holy God. But we thank you that you are a God of mercy and that you remember us by mercy.

And even as we look at this passage today, O Lord, we think of what our lives deserve, what this world deserves, what our sin deserves.

[17:02] And yet we have this great cry of Habakkuk in wrath. Remember mercy. And that is our prayer today, O Lord, for our nations, for our world in these days.

That you would, although we deserve, your wrath and indignation poured out upon us. That in wrath, O Lord, you might remember mercy. And we thank you for the mercy that you have shown to us and deserving as we are.

We thank you for the mercy we receive on a daily basis. The mercies of your faithfulness new every morning. Your mercies new every morning.

And we pray, Lord, that we will come with thankfulness in our hearts. Thankfulness that you do indeed remember us, that you have not forgotten us, but that you, O Lord, are with us and with us each day and each moment of each day.

We pray to know your strength and your blessing with us. We pray to know it even as you go on in this week for all that lies ahead of us. We pray, Lord, that you will remember us in all our needs, remember us as a people, remember us in our homes and in our families and in our communities.

[18:10] And far and wide, O Lord, in all the needs of our land and in the needs of the world, O Lord, that you would show us your goodness and mercy. And we know, O Lord, there can be so many things going on in our lives that leave us feeling overwhelmed.

But yet we look to you, O Lord. We look to you as the one who has the fuller picture, the one who is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the one who has made all things well and who has planned our very lives to every detail, the one who is appointed each day and each moment, the one who knows our every thought, word and deed.

And Lord, we come looking to you to guide us and to help us. As we think of families at this time where there is grief and sorrow, people are going through times of ill health, people who are laid aside at home at this time.

Lord, we know the needs are many and we just commit each one to you, O Lord. Pray for your grace and your help, your peace to be in the midst of all these things. And we think of our land, our nation at this time on a week that we will see a general election taking place.

O Lord, we pray for you to guide. We pray for you to help. We pray for you to give us spirit of the fear of the Lord in our midst in these days, that you would indeed in wrath remember mercy.

[19:40] And Lord, be merciful to all who go into this week ahead seeking to represent a people. May you bring people forward who would be used by you for your glory.

Do not just to represent a people, but to represent you. That your name would be praised. That your name would be lifted up even in our parliament buildings. That in times when we have seen so much ridicule and dishonor towards you, we pray, O Lord, that you would turn that tide and bring us to worship you, to fear you, and to praise your name.

We pray that for our world as well and so much that's going on with conflicts and fear and terror all around us in so many ways. And we pray, Lord, that you would come in your power, that you would revive your work in our midst, that you would remember and make it known, that your word would go out with power to all ends of the earth.

That it would be that reviving word, that word that gives life, that brings people from darkness into your wonderful light, that brings them to know the power of Jesus, the salvation that he offers, the joy that he brings.

We pray, O Lord, that you will hear our prayers in all of these things. And we give you thanks, O Lord, for the ministry of your word. We give you thanks for all that goes on over these days.

[21 : 07] We pray for the free church camps as they have started already, that your blessing will be upon all the children and leaders and all involved in the travel arrangements and running the camps.

Lord, we ask that your spirit will be upon them, that the beauty of the Lord would be upon them, that we would see and hear of days of your power in our midst. We pray, O Lord, that you would bless all that is done in your name.

We pray for our own holiday club as continued preparation is made. We pray again that your blessing would be upon it, that you would see your hand upon us for good in all of these things. We pray for the busyness of summer, although it's a time of holiday. We thank you, too, that the work of the gospel goes on in so many different ways. We thank you for the Fridays at the Free and pray for these meetings going forward, that we would see your hand upon us for good in that. We thank you, too, for the breakfast planned for later on in July on the Sunday morning. We thank you for all who have made preparation already for it. And we pray for willing volunteers to be involved and to bless that work as well.

[22 : 19] I think, too, are the open days for the cruise ships. And thank you for the many people who have already come through these doors and pray for others who will come around our church and meet with people here, that they would come to meet with the living God, that they would come to desire and to know more of who this man Jesus is, that they would hear of the salvation that is offered in him.

And so we thank you, Lord, for all the ways in which you help us and which you guide us. And we again thank you for the ministry that has been taking place here over these last number of years, and especially remember James and Donna.

It's the day officially marks that retirement day. We thank you for Friday evening and for the blessing that there was in it under your word and in our fellowship together. And we pray, O Lord, that we will be encouraged, as we heard, to look to you going forward, all of us together, as a congregation here and as Donna and James and the family settle into their new home, that they would know the blessing and the beauty of the Lord upon them.

And so, Lord, we commit ourselves into your hands. We pray, Lord, your blessing on us as we turn to your words, we sing your praise, that in all that we do, we would know your glory and your presence.

So pardon all our sins as we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let us sing again before we turn back to our passage in Habakkuk.

[23 : 49] We're going to sing in Psalm 85. We'll sing Psalm's version, page 113. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7. Psalm 85 at verse 1.

In times past, Lord, you showed favor to your own beloved land, the prosperity of Jacob you restored by your strong hand. You forgave your people's trespass.

You were pleased their sins to hide. You withdrew all your displeasure from your wrath. You turned aside. We'll sing from verse 1 to 7 to God's praise.

Amen. You restored by your strong hand.

You forgave your people's trespass. You were pleased their sins to hide.

[25 : 11] You went through all your displeasure. From your wrath you turned aside.

God and Savior God and Savior for course studs. Robe sec norv iT If thirteen lartesll ■ die àcost. How they your age Will you hang it burn Against us Will it last From age to age Will you not Again revive us That we may Rejoice in you Show us Lord Your common mercy Your salvation And all you Well we can turn back to our reading in Habakkuk We're going to be looking at chapter 3 and verse 2 together this morning

There are times when we look around and are blinded to seeing things especially to seeing things from a bigger picture or even an eternal perspective because in front of our eyes all that we're seeing are challenges that seem to us sometimes overwhelming or sometimes they seem like things that are unchangeable that nothing can change in what's going on around us and we miss

the potential of what's around us because our vision is short-sighted Here are these three examples of a vision that didn't look very far In 1926 Lee Forrester invented the cathode ray tube What is used or what used to be used more commonly in making televisions For many years that's the way TV sets were made and yet at that time in 1926 Lee Forrester said this

Theoretically television may seem feasible but I consider it an impossibility a development which would waste little time dreaming about It seemed like something that was impossible Well fast forward a number of years later and television is something we know all around us Another example in 1943 Thomas J. Watson was chairman of the board of IBM the computer manufacturers and he said I think there's a world market for about five computers You look around the world today and there's billions of computers around the world In 1962 a recording company experts said we don't think the Beatles will do anything in their market Guitar groups are on the way out How many years later and the Beatles are still a world known brand brand around the world

[28 : 43] So you think of these occasions when vision just looked at the there and then instead of looking beyond and looking to what potential there was that lay ahead And we come to look at Habakkuk today and we ask well what kind of vision did Habakkuk have in his day Was he short-sighted and just looking at the problems and as we've seen there was many problems around both nationally and internationally there were problems all around in Habakkuk's day but was he short-sighted or was he looking up and looking at things eternally and with a longer vision Yes he had his questions We've seen that already He has his questions in verse 2 of the opening chapter O Lord how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear There was this wondering what was going on but yet there was this assurance of knowing where to come

We have seen already the mysterious ways in which God works in verse 5 of chapter 1 We have seen how God tells his people and Habakkuk instructs his people that they are to be a people who live by faith And then the last time we were together we were looking at verse 14 of chapter 2 And there they have these wonderful words of a vision that looks way beyond anything that's happening in his day but a day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters covers the sea So Habakkuk has this greater vision of the potential that there is in looking to God in the darkness of his day he didn't see God and think he can't change this he can't do anything in this circumstance He saw a God who can change things and that's the way he came to him

And so today we come to another of these nuggets of gold that we find in this book of Habakkuk nuggets that remind us that God is working that God is able and so we're going to look at verse 2 of chapter 3 together today and this is when we come in to Habakkuk's prayer as he approaches God in this wonderful prayer we're going to focus on verse 2 today and there it says O Lord I have heard the report of you and your work O Lord do I fear and your work O Lord do I fear in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known in wrath remember mercy and you look at the psalm that we've just sung together there Psalm 85 it's a psalm that has so much of what this verse speaks about it speaks about the anger of God his wrath and yet the power of God to revive and that is what this verse is all about the way the Lord is able to revive his work in the midst of Habakkuk's day in the same way that he is able to revive his work in the midst of our day and so there's three things

I want us to take from verse 2 here we're going to look at first of all the blindness that there was and then the boldness that he had and then the blessing that was promised so we're going to begin with the blindness you see in Habakkuk's day there was a problem and it was not a new problem and it's not a problem that has gone away since that day it's a problem that is still all around us and what is that problem well it is spiritual blindness the people as we see in Habakkuk's day and even as we think of our own day to day are people who have lost sight of God and when we lose sight of God this leads us to look elsewhere and that's what we see at the end of chapter 2 here in Habakkuk we see the blindness of the people has led them to look elsewhere and what we read in verse 18 there what profit is an idol which its maker has shaped what profit is an idol they are looking to something that they can make something they can touch something that they can see whether it's made of metal or wood because their eyes of faith have been dimmed their focus on God has gone and they are looking around them in the midst of the

Babylonian armies and they've been devastated by what's happened they've been taken captive and they're looking around and they're saying God is gone God is not with us we need something else to put our trust in and they are blinded to God and they fix their eyes now on idols idols that

cannot help and as verse 19 there goes on to say woe to him who says to a wooden thing awake to a silent stone arise there's just foolishness there's this blindness in turning to idols God seemed far away God seemed to have forgotten all about them and as we saw before in verse 1 verse 2 of chapter 1 it was something that Habakkuk himself struggled with how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear but Habakkuk knew where to go he knew that idols weren't going to help his eyes were still open to the

[35 : 10] God who was there for them and we were reminded of this on Friday evening as Kenny I was preaching to us from Joshua that as he spoke of the Ark of the Covenant going ahead of the people it was with a purpose that they would see ahead of them that God was with them that their focus would be on God because when we just look down we don't see him and it's the same here the people aren't looking to God they're blind to see him and so they're looking to themselves to what they can make and how they can help themselves but they have been blinded we need to keep God in view and that's what Habakkuk is saying to us here we need to keep God in view but we need to have a vision of what's going on around us as well because Habakkuk he understood what was happening around him he saw what was happening around him and he saw how the people were blinded by the gods of this world he realised the problem it wasn't just with the people but the way this world blinds us to God and this happens in every generation when we start to forget about

God we look elsewhere and so as we know God ourselves we have to ask ourselves the question do we understand the people around us do we understand the situation that is all around us do we just look and condemn without thinking do we look and judge without realising the problem is not just with the people but the problem is more powerful than that the problem is sin and the evil one who works in this world and the blindness that sin brings and Habakkuk as he looked around could see the blindness of the people he was seeing these idols all around them and seeing that they had lost their focus on God they had lost their focus on looking eternally into eternal matters and he understood what was needed and there is blindness all around us and do we understand what is needed among our people around us do we understand the needs of the people around us do we understand how sin blinds a people from seeing

God Habakkuk did and you look elsewhere in scripture you find someone like Paul who understood that as well because he looked around him and saw the way the people lived the way they conducted themselves for example when he was in Corinth as he spoke to them there it says in 2 Corinthians 4 in their case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers there is a blindness in this world to this day that is not just from the people we see around us the ones we can so easily judge but the blindness that comes from the God of this world and he's talking there about Satan the devil who is active actively blinding people from seeing the glory the gospel of the glory of Christ and so there is blindness all around us and this understanding that Habakkuk has this understanding that Paul has this understanding that we should begin to see more and more of should then shape our lives and how we live and how we pray and how we witness and in everything that we do understanding what is going on around us is so important to that and so as you come into verse 2 in the beginning of verse 2

Habakkuk says there O Lord I have heard the report of you and your work O Lord do I fear now the work of the Lord as we have seen before here is in verse 5 of chapter 1 I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if I told there were things that left Habakkuk afraid taking into captivity by the Babylonians that God would use this powerful nation ungodly nation to fulfill his work and this work leaves him fearful and leaves him fearful not just for himself but for those who are blind around him and so as he begins his prayer here he says I have heard the report of you and your works O Lord do I fear he's looking to the past he's looking back and he's seeing the things that

God has done and this is what shapes his prayer this is what leads him to pray to God to make a difference to make a change because of the blindness that there is he wants them to see God and so for ourselves today we should long for that as well that our people would see Jesus there's a version Job in the last chapter of Job chapter 42 and it's coming to the conclusion of all that he's experienced in life Job who lost so much whose life was just turned upside down who suffered in so many ways and yet in chapter 42 just before you see the Lord restore so much to him what you

hear Job saying is as he comes in repentance he says in verse 5 of chapter 42 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now my eyes see you

[41 : 42] I had heard about you but now I see you and there's a wonderful power in that for us as well we have heard of God we have heard of God through his word again and again but our prayer is to see to see him and that is where this prayer begins Habakkuk is one whose eyes have been opened he is not blind but he is seeing a people around him who are blind and his longing is that these people will be led to see the glory of God once again and so for ourselves too as we think of where we begin looking at this verse a prayer of Habakkuk to God is that our longing is that our desire to see the people around us blinded by the God of this world but our longing that they would see

Jesus a realization and understanding of the situation secondly is what gives Habakkuk this boldness as he approaches God there is both boldness and urgency in his approaching God and you see that in the middle of verse 2 where he says in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known he is talking here about his work the work of God and again when you think of verse 5 in chapter 1 it says therefore I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told so there's a short nature to this the work in his days but now Habakkuk's prayer is looking beyond this there is this work that is necessary in their day to bring them to repentance but now he is looking further ahead and he says in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known so he's saying

Lord as we go forward from here as we look ahead from here in these years revive your work and not just the work of bringing them into captivity as we see in chapter 1 verse 5 but more bringing them into freedom bringing them into the presence of God in a more blessed way in the midst of the years revive it what do you think of when you think of revival it's the word that we hear and pray so often that the Lord would bring revival but do we really know what that would look like our expectations of it may be better days blessed days easier days to be a Christian but the reality of revival is so often something else it may be many of these things it may be that our prayer is that we would have days like that but revival begins with a realization a realization that there is decay and even death spiritually at a time and that's what Habakkuk is seeing in his day there is decay there is death all around him we saw in chapter 2 as we looked through it that there were five woes and woe was a word for death and there are five things that brought death into their midst because they had lost sight of God and so as

Habakkuk is praying now he is praying in the midst of this decay in the midst of this death that in the midst of all of this that the Lord would revive his work and the word revive has that very sense about it it's linked to death and you think of the defibrillators we have around our communities they've been placed there because of a need a need if an emergency arises that someone will be brought back to life using that and that is the very urgency of this prayer as well revive is so closely linked to death a people who are perishing a people as Paul describes in the New Testament as those who are dead in their trespasses and sins the people here were under severe oppression from the Babylonians one commentator puts it like this he says the people are either dead or under the threat of extinction this is how close they are to the end and in this he pleads with God to act to save and deliver this is the revival that Habakkuk is looking for this is the revival that Psalm 85 is speaking about this is the revival that we need today is to see the death and decay that is all around us and that the Lord would come and work in his power to bring life that what is the work of God that Habakkuk is speaking of here what do we pray for when we think of praying for revival is it that our praise would be more loud and full is it that our prayers would be more powerful and urgent is it that our lives would be less tainted by sin we can have all of these things but the greatest work in view here is to bring life to the dead for God's saving work to be known in their midst so that people will be made alive in Christ in our day so that as we look around we would see many being born again to a living hope see a day of salvation not an easier day to live as a Christian but a day when we will be bold when we will be courageous when we will be strengthened in the Lord in the midst of all the challenges to be bold towards God and to be bold for God that is what

[48 : 44] Habakkuk is praying here in the midst of the years revive it bring life into our midst when there are people perishing all around us and then he says secondly there in the midst of the years make it known make it known so that it's not just the knowledge of something that could potentially happen not just that knowledge that God may be there for us but make it known make it a reality for us make us see the power of your word throughout hearing of it through our witnessing to it make

yourself known and the power that you give to your people to be bold and courageous for you that is what Joshua had to do as he took up from Moses the Lord said to him be strong and courageous be bold for the

Lord there was a preacher by the name Hugh Latimer he was a minister in the 16th century and he sometimes had occasion to preach to King Henry VIII and I'm sure if you heard anything of King Henry VIII it would be a terrifying thought to go and maybe preach in front of him and this time when he was going to preach before him he said he thought about the great responsibility he had in bringing the message before the king and as he was preparing he realised it would be a message that the king would not like and yet he began to preach before him with these words he said Latimer Latimer do you remember you are speaking before the high and mighty King Henry VIII who has power to send you to prison and who can even have your head cut off if it please him will you not take care to say nothing that will offend him and he paused for a minute and he continued Latimer Latimer do you not remember that you are speaking before the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords before him at whose throne Henry VIII will stand before him whom one day you will have to give account for yourself Latimer Latimer be faithful to your master and declare all the words of God he faced a choice would he preach to please King Henry or would he preach to please the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords he chose to preach for Christ and later on in his life he lost his life as one of the martyrs for being faithful to his Lord but he was bold he was courageous and may God give us the boldness to make him known in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known because this is of eternal importance

I read this quote this week it's one of these ones where you just it may not be the reality but it's just something to think about and it said imagine in heaven one day some person walks up to you and says I am here because you weren't ashamed and told me of Jesus thank you it's a powerful thought because there are people perishing around us because they hear nothing of Jesus they are blinded by the God of this world that is the situation of Habakkuk states our own day too there are people who are blind so we pray in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known thirdly and finally we see here the blessing that

Habakkuk was looking for as God saw the world in Habakkuk's day it would have been easy for his wrath to be poured out because of the sin of this world the same as our own day but look at the wonderful prayer that Habakkuk has these words in wrath remember mercy remember mercy Habakkuk knows that any wrath that God could pour out on his people here it would be justified because sin deserves it but he is pleading with God pleading one of his amazing attributes that he would show mercy go back to the days of Noah and the flood when the Lord saw the wickedness of man and he would have been justified to destroy the whole earth but in

[54 : 10] Genesis 6 verse 8 it says but Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord there was mercy from God go back to the days of Moses when God's people were suffering in Egypt he could have said they deserve it for their sin they can be left there to suffer but in Exodus chapter 2 verse 24 it says God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham with Isaac and with Jacob God saw the people of Israel and God knew what did he know he knew he knew that they needed mercy and he gave them mercy and so Habakkuk is pleading with God to show his mercy once again even though he could justifiably pour out even more wrath upon them he says in wrath

Lord remember your mercy have mercy upon us mercy is a powerful thing a mother once approached Napoleon the great leader of his day and she approached him seeking pardon for her son Napoleon replied that the young man had committed an offense not just once but twice and just as he said demanded death but the mother said I don't ask for justice the mother said I plead for mercy and Napoleon's reply was but your son does not deserve mercy and the woman replied sir it would not be mercy if he deserved it and mercy is all

I ask for Napoleon saw this woman pleading in this way and after pausing for a moment he said well then I will have mercy mercy is not something we deserve and yet it is something that God graciously gives what do we deserve in our life when we read a text like Romans 6 verse 23 it tells us what we deserve for the wages of sin is death that is what we deserve that is what our sin deserves but that verse goes on to say but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord that is the mercy that we need and where can we find that mercy today well the supreme display of that mercy is at the cross at the cross of Christ there we see mercy mercy that we don't just hear about

God did not just talk about forgiving our sin or healing a broken people he did it his mercy is seen in Christ and do you know this mercy have you come pleading for this mercy in wrath remember mercy I know my sin deserve your justice Lord but remember your mercy there's two wonderful examples for us in the New Testament one is the tax collector who went up to the temple to pray what did he cry to God even as he was hearing another who was so boastful beside him praying his prayer was simple God be merciful to me a sinner another example is Bartimaeus blind Bartimaeus who people just looked down upon what did he cry out he said

Jesus son of David have mercy on me two simple prayers and yet two powerful prayers be merciful to me a sinner have mercy on me and the wonderful thing is that God has mercy to give he has mercy to forgive as the hymn says what patience would wait as we constantly roam what father so tender is calling us home he welcomes the weakest the vilest the poor our sins they are many his mercy is more what riches of kindness he lavished on us his blood was a payment his life was the cost we stood neath the dead we could never afford our sins they are many his mercy is more our sins are many and they deserve the wrath of God but praise

[59 : 33] God his mercy is more and perhaps our vision is short sighted today in the here and now we look around us and all around us is a blindness of a people who are blinded by the God of this world but let us approach a great God a God who is able and to come boldly that we might know the blessing of God reviving his work in our midst a work that brings life to the dead a revival not just that fills our praise and our prayers that brings people to be born again to a living hope in Christ and that we would know his mercy not as our sin deserves but that in wrath he would remember mercy and that goodness and mercy would follow us all of our days let us pray our gracious

Lord in heaven we do thank you for every way that you remember us you know our sins they are laid before you you know that they are many but we thank you that your mercy is more and we pray Lord that today and in our years and our days Lord that you would remember remember our needs that you would revive your work in our midst that you would revive it in a way that it is made known and that in wrath you would remember mercy we thank you for it as we see it at the cross as we see it in Christ who took our sin and we pray to know that wonderful forgiveness as we ask it in his name amen we're going to conclude by singing again in psalm 85 on page 113 and we sing from verse 8 to the end of the psalm to god's to the end of the psalm to god's praise time hinapp to father g Versa the good

And return to foolishness. Surely for all those who feel him, his salvation is at hand, So that one sack in his glory may be seen within our land.

Love and truth are met together, Righteousness and peace and grace.

Righteousness looks down from heaven, From the earth springs faithfulness.

[63 : 18] What is good the Lord will give us, And our land its fruit will bear.

Righteousness will go before him, And his royal way prepare. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left.

We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.