

Habakkuk

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. Independence upon the Lord for his promised help and for his blessing.

I will venture to speak in his name from the words found in the second clause of the second verse in the third chapter of the prophecy of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk chapter 3 and the second clause in the second verse. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

This is a most necessary prayer. In various ways, the Lord's reviving of his work is so important.

[1 : 1 6] It is not difficult to understand how Habakkuk himself came to express this desire and prayer at such a time, concerning those revelations that had been made known to him, concerning the future of his people.

But the same prayer is equally suitable in our own day. And it is very encouraging and confirming when we find in our own hearts the very same petitions as the inspired writers had so long ago.

Now if this prayer is truly found in our hearts today, then it will be answered.

As surely as the prayer was when Habakkuk himself expressed it to his God. And how very desirable it is that those two things should take place.

That the prayer should be in our hearts and that the answer of God should descend. The prayer is needed in various aspects of it.

[2 : 5 0] It is needed in a personal way. Reviving, of course, implies that there is already life which is renewed.

It implies that there has been life and that that life has become rather low. And there is that restoration and renewing of that life again.

To revive means to cause to live afresh again. I have, as you know, been speaking particularly lately about spiritual life.

And that life which the Lord does implant in the soul is everlasting life. But it does not continue unabated at the same level of activity.

It constantly needs reviving. The word that Habakkuk actually used means to preserve a life. And it may often seem that the life that the Lord has given is at a very low air.

[4 : 1 1] You know how the psalmist in the 119th Psalm expresses such a deep love to the word of God and seems to be in such a lively state of soul.

And yet again and again in that psalm we read these words of reviving or quickening. He says, My soul cleaveth unto the dust.

Quicken thou me according unto thy word. And as he was often praying for this quickening, he often received it in answer to those prayers.

So that that life was revived. And we may be sure that if there is spiritual life in our souls, we shall, each one of us who possess it, need it to be revived again and again.

We may have felt a measure of reviving, perhaps on the last Lord's Day.

[5 : 20] But does that last all through the week? Do we not need every day and every hour the influence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts to maintain that liveliness?

As the psalmist again said in the 119th Psalm, Let my soul live and it shall praise thee. But we also need reviving collectively.

As a little church and people here, we certainly need the Lord's reviving work. We need his love, especially revived and maintained amongst us.

The love which he has given does not merely continue by itself. It needs the Lord by his Spirit to revive that love continually.

And to preserve amongst us all that is good. And to preserve us together in a lively state of spiritual exercise.

[6 : 35] This is needed surely amongst us collectively. O Lord, revive thy work.

It is also needed in that way of extending the kingdom of God. And especially as it regards national revival.

There are so many around us who need spiritual love. And how we do need in our country a reviving of true godliness.

A reviving of that spirit of national repentance and concern and prayer. That has been evident so much in previous generations.

We have known in these islands many revivals by the power of the Spirit of God.

[7 : 42] The coming amongst us. And yet it is a long time since there was such a revival. And we can see the very sad effects of that lack in our nation.

And it would seem that our only hope of any real improvement in the situation. Is that the Lord would answer this simple fervent prayer.

And revive his work again. So in these and other ways that we may consider. It is a most necessary prayer.

We may see in this word apart from the address to God. As the Lord, Jehovah. That there is the work of God.

The reviving of that work. The time in which the prophet seeks it. And the prayer for that reviving.

[8 : 48] The first thing there is the work. Revive thy work. This work is a spiritual work.

The prophet does not seek some reviving in the natural matters of the nation.

Though that certainly would follow. But it is in the spiritual condition of the people that a reviving is so needed.

We need this reviving in our hearts. How very important that work is.

Is there a work of God going on in your heart? The apostle Paul knew that that had happened to those Philippian believers.

[9 : 50] And he said to them that he was persuaded of that. Being confident of this very thing. That he which hath begun a good work in you.

Will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. That work would be maintained. But still there is the need to pray that it should be revived.

The psalmist had both the confidence and the prayer. He says at the close of the 138th Psalm.

Thou wilt perfect. The Lord will perfect. That which concerneth me. He will perfect that which he has begun. But he also says.

Forsake not the work of thy own hands. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.
Thy mercy O Lord endureth forever.

[10 : 50] Forsake not the work of thy own hands. He felt of need it to be revived. And so the apostle also writes to those Philippian believers.

It is God which worketh in you. To will and to do of his good pleasure. For what a mercy it is.

If there is this evidence that God himself is at work. In our hearts. That his work is begun.

And we do so desire. That it may be manifest where it is begun. That prayer of Moses the man of God.

Is so suitable still. Where he says. Let thy work. Appear. Unto thy servants.

[11 : 50] And thy glory unto their children. You see that comes first. The Lord does use instruments. Often. To fulfill his work.

And so the psalmist says. And establish thou. The work of our hands upon us. Yea the work of our hands. Establish thou it.

Now how we do need the Lord's work. That spiritual work. To be revived. And it is a sovereign work.

The prophet. Humbly. And submissively. Waits upon God to do this. There is no one else. To go to.

O Lord. Revive thy work. In the midst of the years. There have been those such as.

[12 : 48] The. Famous evangelist. Charles Finney. Who said that. Revival could be arranged.

At any time. He had a recipe. For revival. If. You did these. Four or five things. Then revival was certain to follow.

But of course. That is not the case at all. Such teaching. Denies. The sovereign power. And purpose of God.

That it is he. Alone. Who can revive his work. The whole matter. Lies in his own. Sovereign hands.

In his purpose. And therefore. We. Can but wait upon him. And seek his face. That he may do it. As far as it may be.

[13 : 43] His own will. It is according to that. Word of the Savior. The wind bloweth. When it listeth. And thou hearest the sound thereof.

But canst not tell. Whence it cometh. Or whether it goeth. So is every one. That is born of the spirit. The wind.

May suddenly blow. We do not know. When it is going to blow. It may blow gently. It may blow very powerfully. We all know.

And have cause to. Witness. How that. The wind very suddenly changes. And that wind is said to be. In the.

The fists of God. It is in his hands. It is under his control. And so it is. With every work. Of reviving. It is according to his own.

[14 : 44] Sovereign pleasure. And appointment. That work. The work of God. God. It is. The sovereign. The spiritual work.

And how. We do need that word. To be. Revived. Oh Lord. Revive thy work. That work. Is.

A perfect work. All that God does. In the end. Will be. Seen to be perfect. To be perfect. He is never.

In a hurry. To do. What he is purpose. To do. But in the end. It will certainly. Be accomplished. As the. Man of God.

Moses said. He is. Our rock. His work. Is perfect. All that he does. Is of that nature. The.

[15 : 41] Wise men. Also declared. Concerning it. I know. That. Whatsoever. God doeth. It shall be. Forever. Nothing.

Can be added. To it. Nor anything. Taken. From it. And God. Doeth it. That men. May fear. Before him. He is.

At work. The work. Of his grace. And he will. Perfect it. In the end. As sure. As the work.

Of the savior. At carvery. Is finished. And complete. So surely. Will the work. Of the holy spirit. In the hearts. Of all his chosen people.

Be brought. To absolute perfection. In holiness. So that there is. Every reason. To pray. This prayer. It is.

[16 : 37] According. To the. Sovereign purpose. Of God. That his work. Should be revived. And continued. And completed. And. Why might.

We then. Be encouraged. Thus. To pray. As Abacob did. Oh Lord. Revive. Thy work. And. Then also.

Here. There is. The. Reviving. Of that work. What the Lord. Himself.

Does. When he does. Of course. That. Work. Of his grace. To spring up. Again. In the hearts. Of individuals. And.

It may be. In the hearts. Of a great number. So that there is. A more general. Reviving. Of his work. Now this is. The first. Very necessary.

[17 : 33] It is so important. That. The Lord's work. Should be revived. For. Otherwise. That work. Would. Languish.

Away. To see. How it was. In. Abacob's. Own. Circumstances. He was. Faced. With. The prophecy.

That. The. The. Chaldean. Nation. Would. Come up. And. Overrun. The nation. Of Israel.

Or. Judah. In. What. What. Would. Be. Left. How. Important. It.

Was. In. The. To. Pray. To. The. The. The. The. The.

[18 : 28] The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The.

The. The. The. The. In.

New. The. The. The. and told him plainly that although it would not be in his own time, yet that judgment was certain to come, because the iniquity of the Jewish nation had reached such a high level.

But still, a prayer like this may result in the mitigation of that punishment, that correction. And it is so needed that afterwards there might be a restoration, as there was of course later after these 70 years' captivity, and how necessary it is in our own cases.

Either spiritual life will languish and grow weaker and weaker, or it must be revived. There is that warning to one of the churches in the Revelation, that they should strengthen those things that remain, that are ready to die.

[20 : 09] The Lord says, I have not found thy works perfect before God. There were those things that seemed almost ready to perish, and how those people need it, and every such church needs the Lord to revive his work.

Know that in some individual churches, the candlestick has been removed. Although the work of God is maintained in the hearts of his people, it is not always so in a particular place.

Unless that work is revived, then there is no future to be expected. It is so important, so necessary, that this work of the Lord should be continually revived.

And then it is so confirming, where that work is begun, in the soul of any, there are many times, when it does need to be revived again.

And when that is so, there is a bringing back again, of those things that had been known and experienced before. It may be that in a period of low spiritual life, many doubts prevail.

[21 : 40] Doubts about what had once been experienced in the soul, and doubts even concerning the precious truths of God's word, and the wonderful promises that he has given.

It is sad. It is such an indication of low, a low state when these doubts prevail. But when the Lord revives his work, then those doubts vanish again.

They are dispelled, because all that he does is in the same vein as what he has done before. It brings back the memory, of those things that have been experienced and enjoyed, in previous years.

And so there is a wonderful confirmation, of all that the Lord has wrought before. It is so establishing, when the Lord revives his work, because it is always on the same lines.

It is always in the same spiritual way. And when that work is revived, it brings back memories, of previous blessings, and those things that have been known before.

[23 : 06] And so doubts concerning them vanish away. And then this reviving of the work of God is so honoring to him.

It means that all those graces, which are Godward and spiritual, and honoring to him, are renewed again.

There is fresh life and vigor in them. We may notice this, especially as regards a widespread reviving of the work of God. In such times, all the honor and praise is rendered to the Lord alone.

His work appears, and his honor and glory are manifested in it. All that which is done, which does appear, in times of special reviving, is for his praise, and will be rendered to him alone.

And thus it is so desirable that his work should be revived again, that his name may be honored by it. How sad it is, especially as it is so dishonoring to God when evil flourishes, and when godliness is at such a low air.

[24 : 37] But when the Lord's work is revived again, so that all can see the evidence of his gracious power, how much this is to his own honor in the earth.

The prophet Habakkuk, in the previous chapter, was given a most precious prophecy concerning the Lord's work, that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

And how encouraging then it was for him thus to pray, O Lord, revive thy work. And then thirdly here, there is the particular time which is mentioned in this prayer, in the midst of the years.

That is really in the intervening time. There was a space between the vision being revealed to Habakkuk and the fulfillment of that word.

There was, so to speak, a little breathing space between the sin and the judgment. There was a special time to pray in this interval.

[25 : 59] Surely it is so with us as a nation. The sin of the land most certainly provokes the wrath of God and calls for his just judgment.

But there is a space between the two and it is a space in which the people of God should earnestly cry to him to revive his work and that his just judgments might be turned away from us.

and so this interval time this intervening time is really a seeking time.

It was at a similar period of history as this that Hosea wrote it is time to seek the Lord. There is a space when it may be whether individually or more widely.

Life, spiritual life is at a low end and it is such an important time to seek the Lord that that work of his may be revived again in its vigor and in its purity that there may be again an earnest seeking of the Lord for him to accomplish his gracious purposes afresh.

[27 : 36] Surely it is time to seek the Lord to seek his face when there is this intervening period this little space to repent and so it is also a time of waiting and watching as Habakkuk waited for the answer of the Lord to that previous petition surely he also waited for this.

There was very good reason to hope that the Lord would appear again as it is shown by the poetic psalm which comprises this chapter where we have the account of the Lord's mighty dealings with his people of old and the prophet clearly is greatly encouraged because what the Lord has done before there is every hope that he will do again.

The Lord had been very favorable to that nation again and again he had worked most wonderfully on their behalf and so the prophet seeks that he will do it again and surely this should be our encouragement also.

We have been able to say the Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad. Well might we also pray turn again our captivity O Lord as the springs in the south do great things still for us and as it has been the case in the nation we have seen again and again the mighty hand of God stretch forth for us on our behalf as a land then surely this is encouraging for us to seek the Lord still and to plead with him that he would revive his own work and get honour to himself in this land.

Then also there is the prayer of Habakkuk itself this is expressed in the form of a petition of a prayer O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years.

[30 : 15] It is then a most appropriate prayer in all the circumstances. The situation was very dark and gloomy. How depressed the prophet might have been to hear of what the Lord would do to chastise his nation and bring that fearful nation of the Chaldeans up to overthrow all that they esteemed in the land.

What a prospect it was and yet instead of despair he turns to prayer. There was still hope that there would be at least some mitigation of the trouble, the distress that threatened the nation.

It would be surely according to their sinful condition. You know how wonderfully the Lord did work through his prophet Jonah in the case of Nineveh.

And so that threatened judgment to that heathen nation was delayed for many years because they repented at the preaching of Jonah and there was that remarkable revival amongst them.

And now the prophet Habakkuk so praised from his heart in this very suitable way. It was so appropriate to the situation and when things are dark it is no time to give up hope but rather to seek most earnestly that the Lord will appear.

[32 : 11] The greater our need the more earnest and constant it should be our praying. And surely this is indeed also a most earnest prayer.

It is in a way reminiscent of the way in which Daniel later prayed in Babylon where he expressed himself in those terse sentences which showed the deep feelings of his heart.

O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do. Habakkuk prays, O Lord I have heard thy speech and was afraid.

O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, as it would be rendered literally in order.
O Lord thy work preserve it alive.

surely the prophet prayed most earnestly concerning this matter. And what a need there is of that earnest prayer still.

[33 : 31] O that today and as a result of our considering this word there may be more earnest prayer like this. it is short enough, this particular petition in this verse, but surely there is a great intensity in it.

We read that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And so this was also a hopeful prayer in view of all that the prophet says, afterwards in this psalm, he was certainly full of hope that this prayer would be answered.

The prayer that he felt deeply in his heart and expressed in such earnestness before his God would have its answer in due course.

In that time and in that way that the Lord so appointed, there would be that reviving. we can see of course in the way of history that it was so.

We read later of how Ezra says that the Lord had given them that little reviving in their midst in that time. And again and again there was that little reviving and at times greater revivings of the Lord's work, greater power in them.

[35 : 14] And so there is every reason for hope in the character of God, in the promises that he has made. as the prophet later refers to this of the anointed.

Looking back to the past he says, thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.

And all those that were anointed in Old Testament times, anointed with oil were so because of the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, God's anointed one.

And because of him there is hope. Habakkuk undoubtedly knew the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah.

And he looked to the future with hope. And we live in the midst of the years, in the period between the first and the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

[36 : 34] And in the midst of these years, how we do need the Lord to revive his work, and what hope there is that he will do it, as he has so often done ever since Pentecost.

again and again, his spirit has been poured out in a gracious reviving. So, there is good reason for hope in this prayer, that the Lord will indeed answer in his own way, and place and time, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

Dear friends, is this prayer in your heart? If it is, may the Lord keep it there. Maintain that spirit of prayer in your heart, because truly it is most necessary.

And if it be not there yet, may the Lord give you a heart to pray like this. We need it, as I have said, before our own individual cases.

We so need the spiritual life and the work of God's grace to be continued and maintained in our own souls, and to be revived again and again.

[38 : 08] We need it in the church of God, how much it is needed in our own country and no doubt in other lands also. And thus there is a need of widespread revival as far as we can see.

O may we most earnestly pray like this. O may the Lord in his great goodness grant us this spirit of prayer. For Habakkuk undoubtedly prayed and expressed this under the direct influence of the Spirit of God.

With faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we in these days have that name to plead, the name which the Father loves to hear his children plead.

And all such pleading he approves and blesses them indeed. We now can look back to Calvary and the wonderful work of God that was fulfilled there was finished and completed in the Saviour's shedding of his blood.

And as a result of that, what encouragement there is to pray that the Holy Spirit will be poured out again and again, that we ourselves may be filled with the Spirit, and that the Lord in his sovereign goodness and grace would revive his work.

[39 : 54] O may the Lord help us much to pray like this. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Hymn 208, Tune Revival 686.

Hymn 208, Jesus, lover of thy nation, Saviour of thy people free, visit us with thy salvation. Let us, Lord, thy glory see.

O revive us, that we may rejoice in thee. Let us find thy love surrounding us, thy fickle children here, and thy mighty grace abounding, leading us in holy fear.

Guide us, Jesus, to our souls be ever near. Hymn 208. Jesus, love of thy nation, same longstines, Jesus, above the water, in Christ neither suffered alone, whether the Dream
■■■umnum, above the Mick,■■■ sag we■■, and thy mountains.

[41 : 35] Let us know thread thanguard ■■■■ through the schautqu Late ■■■■ especial. His holy thing, Thul pueden Kazuy Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Thank you.