

History of Revival (1740-1851), 5

by Ian Murray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the truth of God's word in the church's power and the need for a revival of truth.

Duration: 59:26

Topics: "Church History", "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by acknowledging that they have covered a lot of historical material and now wants to focus on a text from the book of Deuteronomy. The chosen text is from Deuteronomy 32:36, which is part of the song of Moses. The speaker explains that this verse speaks about God judging his people and repenting for them when they are weak and helpless. They draw parallels between this verse and the history of the church, highlighting how God empowers his people at times and how they can become careless and indifferent at other times.

Transcript

This morning I want us to leave the more historical material that we've been looking at and to come to a text of the Word of God. It is in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 36. Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 36.

And the reason I move to this text is that it seemed to me that we had covered a fair amount of historical material. I did have more which I had expected to get through, but we have been through a certain amount and I think sufficient. And it would be a pity if there were lessons that ought to be underlined which, for lack of time, we did not touch upon.

It seemed to me, therefore, that from a text of the Word of God such as this one we could draw certain concluding lessons and applications which I hope will also be encouraging to us. For the Lord shall judge his people and repent himself for his servants when he seeth that their power is gone and there is none shut up or left. Now these words, as you see, are part of the Song of Moses.

That is to say, part of the farewell discourse of Moses to the children of Israel as they were about to cross the Jordan and enter into the land of Canaan Moses, by the direction of God's Spirit, was given to understand that he would not enter the land and before, therefore, the people move on Moses has this final opportunity to address them and to give them the counsel of God. And in this remarkable portion of Scripture he speaks to them and gives them, by the inspiration of the Spirit a kind of preview of their future

history. There is a survey of times that were yet to come laid out before them.

And if you read through this chapter you will see that what is particularly underlined is the peril that would afflict them in future days of becoming careless and indifferent and negligent in the cause of God. They would enter the land, they would conquer the land but a time would come, says Moses in these earlier verses when they would wax fat and kick when they would become self-satisfied and self-complacent and when neglect and indifference would seize hold upon them. The consequences of that backsliding would be to provoke the judgment and the chastisement of God.

And we have in the verses preceding this verse a prolonged statement of the judgment of God that would come upon the land in the day when they turned aside from the God of their fathers. And that judgment would culminate as we read in verse 35 with their foot sliding in due time though they would suppose that they stood secure. To me belongeth vengeance and recompense.

Their foot shall slide in due time for the day of their calamity is at hand and the things that shall come upon them make haste. There would, in the case of a large number of the people be a final judgment which would remove them from this earthly scene and would indeed consign them forever to the wrath and to the judgment of Almighty God. Now after that section of warning we have a new note struck in verse 36.

There are another group of people who are spoken of here in the day when the land would become apostate and the majority would have forgotten God. There would nevertheless remain, says Moses a number who were still His people and His servants. They would be few in number.

But concerning these people we read in this 36th verse that the Lord would judge them and repent Himself for His servants when He seeth that their power is gone and when there is none shut up or left. Now let's first of all clear the meaning of these statements in verse 36. The word judge in this verse means not to be understood in terms of an act of sentence or condemnation.

It is rather God acting on the behalf of His people in order to deliver them. Now I am sure you are familiar with a number of instances in the Scripture where the word judge is used in that sense. We read for example that God is the judge of the fatherless and the oppressed.

He is the judge of the widow. That is to say those who have no one to plead for them on earth who are helpless and bereft of human comfort let men beware what they do to such persons because God is their judge. That is to say He is their protector.

He will act for them. He will plead their case. And so also of the Messiah who was to come we read in Isaiah chapter 11 that with righteousness He will judge the poor.

And therefore this word judge is not infrequently used in the sense of pleading the cause of a party of taking up the case of someone. And that is the sense here in these words. God will judge His people that is to say He will defend them and He will act on their behalf.

And in addition He will repent Himself for His servants. God will be moved to turn from affliction to blessing. He will repent.

He will take away from them those chastisements which were necessary and He will turn to them again in the abundance of His mercy. He will repent for His servants. And the time when He will do this is indicated by the closing words of the sentence when He seeth that their power is gone.

When they are an enfeebled and weak and helpless people. When there is none shut up or left. When there is no garrison shut up in the city to defend them.

When there is no soldier left in the field to act on their behalf. When there is none shut up or left. When all earthly help has failed them and no comfort is at hand for their relief.

Then God will act for His people and for His servants. So that this verse is a gracious promise. It is introduced by the word for in our English version the word which is elsewhere frequently translated but or nevertheless.

I have God says spoken of the judgment that I will bring upon a people. But nevertheless I will for my people repent and for them I will act and I will do it when they are in this weak and helpless condition. When He seeth that their power is gone then He will judge His people.

This verse then teaches us not simply a promise upon which God acted in reference to Israel but it leads us I believe to the very heart of that which God does in His kingdom throughout all generations. It is true it had fulfillment in terms of the Old Testament church. They did go into Canaan and they conquered.

And they conquered because they were clothed with divine strength. They were told the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. As thy days so shall thy strength be.

And they would drive out the heathen though God said though they have chariots of iron thy shoes shall be as iron and as brass. And as thy days so shall thy strength be. And we see the fulfillment of that in the book of Joshua.

But as we look on in their history we see other things. We see Israel conquered by the Philistines. We see Samson blinded and in his prison house of Gaza.

Further on in time we see the whole nation in Babylon with their hope withered and lying as it were like dead carcasses in a valley. And these are conditions which came about because their power was gone. They no longer conquered.

They were no longer strong. But they were weak and helpless. And it is of such times that this verse speaks.

When he seeth that their power is gone not then, then God will raise up his people and he will restore them once more. And so it has been through the ages of New Testament history. The early church was empowered with the Spirit of God.

They were sent out to turn the world upside down. They were given the assurance that their risen Lord had all power in heaven and in earth. And the church knowing his presence in their midst went forth to do his work.

But then as we see other ages of the church we see a different scene. We see that God's Spirit has been breathed and that God has been provoked. And the people of God become as it seems like the world.

They also become careless and indifferent until the very end of God's cause sometimes seems even to be at hand in the world. And it is then that this promise has been once more fulfilled. God judges his people.

God pleads for them. God once more pours out his Spirit from heaven and clothes his people with new strength so that the church which was like an army of dead bones is raised up to do the work of Jesus Christ. So much then for the general meaning of this text.

Now as we look at it then I want us to spend perhaps the major part of our time on the first head which I have and it is this. If we read here of the power of being God before we know whether our power is God before we can judge the true condition of the church we have to ask the question what is the power that God expects his people to have? The peril is still with us as it was with the church of Laodicea and other churches of supposing that they are strong and rich when they are not. And that error and that delusion occurs because men misjudge what is power.

What then is the power that God expects us to have? In answer to that question I think we must say in the first place that the power which God gives to his people is the power which comes from his truth from his word, from his statutes. Is not my word, God says, like as a fire and like as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

And the strength which the church possesses is not a strength which they have in themselves. It does not reside primarily in their feelings or in their experiences or in anything of that nature but it resides in the fact that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. And it is the truth which is the strength and the sword which is given into the hands of the church.

Now if you read through this book of Deuteronomy you will see again just how frequently this is brought out before the people. Look at verse 44 for example of this chapter that we have open. Verse 44 of chapter 32 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, He and Hoshea the son of Nun.

And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel and he said Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day which ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law for it is not a vain thing for you because it is your life. Their prosperity, their salvation would depend upon their adherence to the statutes and to the words which God had given to them. So on right through Deuteronomy chapter 4 Verse 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments which I command thee this day that it may go well with thee.

Chapter 6 The words that we have there in verses 6 and 7 And these words which I command thee this day they shall be in thy heart and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up in all that they did the word of God had to be possessing them. Thou shalt talk of it by the way when thou sittest down, when thou risest up and so on through Deuteronomy. And thus also when Joshua was sent into the land he was sent you recall with that commission that this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth day nor night for thou shalt meditate therein and then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.

Now there are many other texts that probably occur to you also but the truth is this great principle that the church is dependent for her strength upon the word which God has put into her hands and into her hearts. Let them cleave to that word. It is the word of salvation.

It is the word which convicts which cleanses, which humbles which restores. It is the word of God which does all the work in the church of Christ. And therefore when we think of revivals this will invariably be

found that a revival is essentially a recovery of the word of God.

It is bringing back to the very forefront of the thinking of Christians the truth of the word of God in their beauty and in their power. Now I must at this point say something which I did not say earlier and which would be a grave omission if I passed over it. We pointed out how often a revival can be actually dated.

That is to say that on a certain day just as in a similar way on the day of Pentecost the Spirit of God was poured out upon a people. Now that is true. But it is equally important to say that frequently the greatest revivals have been preceded by a gradual quiet movement of the Spirit which has preeminently been concerned with a recovery of the truth.

It is as the truth is recovered and restored to the church that we may then expect God graciously to own His truth and honor His word. And therefore it is equally true to say that a revival often begins in the broader sense silently and quietly. You must have beaches here in the United States which are not like the beach down here but are long, almost flat beaches.

We have many of them like that in Britain. When the tide goes out it seems to go out and out and out and then when it begins to turn the ground, the beach, the sand is so flat that you hardly can see it turn. It is almost impossible to tell at what point the tide went furthest out and when it began to come back in.

And so it is in times such as the Reformation of the 16th century. Tide had gone right out and no one could really tell the day when in monasteries and in quiet places the word of God was again being uncovered and the truth began to be restored. Or to use another illustration of the same thing Dobini says how in the time of Calvin in Geneva he says, speaking of the mountains that surround Geneva that when the sun comes up in the morning it first strikes the tops of the mountains.

And so he says when the truth of God is recovered it first of all penetrates to certain persons in the church, ministers of the gospel but then Dobini says how when the sun rises higher in the heavens its light begins to fall upon all the valleys round about. And that is as so often been. The truth is recovered.

It begins in the hearts of a few but then it is recovered widely in the churches. Now this is indeed I believe something that without presumption we may say God is doing in our day. And we ought not to neglect it.

There is a revival of truth. There is a hunger for the word of God. Especially if it could be seen amongst the younger generation and amongst young people.

And I say this is a marvellous thing for the truth is the church's power. And in every revival it has been the truth which pre-eminently has led the way to the restoration of the church. Maybe I could just take a moment on a slight digression but it really comes in at this point.

I had intended to say something earlier in the week on the serious controversy which developed in the United States in the 1830s with regard to revival and evangelism and particularly to what were called the New Measures. Now Nettleton and Griffin and Alexander and many others were very deeply opposed to the New Measures. Now you say you don't know what the New Measures are but I assure you, you do.

Although perhaps you don't know the name. The New Measures so called were introduced in the North about 1825 and the idea was simply this. When people were brought together in numbers the great thing it was said was to prompt them to action.

They would no doubt be stirred by the sight of many people present in a service and if they could be brought to action that would be a decisive turning point bringing them to salvation. So the New Measure particularly was what was called well in those days the anxious seat. The front of the building was often kept clear and people were called upon to submit to Christ and to show that they were submitting to Christ by coming to the anxious seat.

Now you are familiar now with what I'm talking about. That did not begin did not begin in the whole of Christian history until early in the last century. Now why did it begin? Now some people think it was just a difference of method but they greatly err.

It was a difference with regard to what is necessary to salvation. The old leaders of revival believed that to bring people to Christ what was needed was not a mere excitement of the will but the truth had to lay hold upon the mind and if that happened under the power of the Spirit of God the will and the emotions would follow. But they said you can touch people's wills you can move their emotions you can make them weep but if the truth is not implanted in the mind it will last perhaps days, perhaps months but then it will fail.

The true power of God resides in the fact that His word comes into the mind and therefore Griffin and Alexander and all these men most resolutely opposed the altar call, the invitation system because they said it confuses together and it brings together those who are merely temporarily excited and who make a public, a confession of faith when as yet we have no evidence that the truth has really come through to their mind and heart. And for them that change in evangelism was, I cannot really put it too strongly it was a disaster of enormous proportion because it was diverting the churches they believed from what until then had been their greatest work namely the full and complete preaching of the word with nothing else leaving the truth to be applied by the Spirit to the consciences of men. We cannot determine the time of men's regeneration we cannot bring them to Christ but the word of reconciliation we must preach and preach with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven that is what they believed.

Let me give you one quotation from Edward Griffin.

He is writing to someone in Britain and this person in Britain had asked why it was that revivals were so frequent at that time in America, early 1800s when they seemed to have ended in Britain and Griffin gives many reasons and they are very fascinating but one of them is this it is in terms he says of the truth which is being fully preached he says the unparalleled spread of knowledge under which the young grow up and demand to be fed with truth instead of noise all these causes operate to produce great plainness and directness in public preaching and to confine preaching to a naked, pointed, condensed exhibition of truth of the whole truth without any abatement or disguise even of those parts which in some places would be considered strong meat thus he says the sword of the Spirit

naked and glittering is brandished before all and it is not likely to be brandished in vain it was the truth he says it was the means that God so blessed and let me just give you one quotation from Archibald Alexander in which he speaks of the peril of the departure of the church from this preaching to the new measure style he says my mind is full of apprehensions respecting the affairs of our church I have never suspected that the new men and new measures would so soon prevail in the supreme judicatory of our church if the Lord intends good for the church our exertions, he means his opposition to these things, will prosper but if we are to be handed over to the men of the new religion bound hand and foot then we must yield and mourn in secret places over the departed glory we old men

shall soon leave the stage the burden and heat of the day will soon come upon you young men you will have great need to be strong and stand up bravely for the religion of your fathers then he says the new revival measures connected with the new theology are gaining strength and popularity every day the stream is deepening and widening and will shortly pour forth such a torrent as will reach the whole surface of this land now he was not talking there of liberalism of straight denials of scripture but he was talking of superficial evangelism of decisionism of the altar call these were the things which they regarded as to give you the words of Nettleton which I see before me he said it would undermine the fair fabric of our evangelical churches and spread a system far more unscriptural and

pernicious than Wesleyan Methodism now there is no more time to speak of that but I believe that the principle is here the power of the church is in the truth of the word of God you know perhaps the illustration from Greek mythology how Augeas, the king of the Argives had stables that were filled with cattle and oxen and for thirty years these stables had not been cleaned and Hercules was presented with the challenge of cleaning the Augean stables and to do it in one day and Hercules did it but how did he do it? well he diverted the course of these two rivers the Alpheus and the Peneus and these rivers were diverted so that they flowed through these foul and filthy stables and that is what God does with his truth the psalmist says he sent his word and healed them and delivered them from

all their distress in the reformation in the 18th century these revivals were the sending forth of the light and power of the word of God and men were willing to live and to die for the truth let us pass on then coupled with the power of the truth is of course in the second place the power of faith and what is faith but our acting in obedience in living obedience upon the truth when we read the scriptures we find do we not in every place that when there are exploits written of the people of God when they triumphed when they were given great victories the secret in so far as it was to be found in them was that they believed the promises of God you know the 11th chapter of the epistles of the Hebrews how from Abel onwards who offered unto God a sacrifice more acceptable than Cain to Abraham

and Moses and all the fathers we go on and the scripture says the time would fail us to speak of Gideon and bear out of Jephthah of David also who through faith subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness and obtained promises and quenched the violence of the fire and out of weakness were made strong it was through faith this is the victory says the apostle John that overcometh the world even our faith if thou canst believe said our Lord and Savior all things are possible to him that believes the man and the woman who adheres to the promises of God in faith they will overcome they will be overcome and God will honor them now that I say again is illustrated throughout revival history it would be a terrible thing if we left each other this week in our thinking on revival with some kind of

thought in our minds that it may be the chance one day we shall see these glorious things and until that time we must wait and sit and perhaps be a little hopeful no my friends that is not what the Scripture says the Scripture says we must believe we must have faith and that faith must be exercised upon the truth and the promises of God and God will not fail those who believe upon Him I'd like to give you one last quotation from the Alexander family this is from J.W.

Alexander and he's writing in New York in the midst of the 1858 revival and at the very end he has a little book which I had great difficulty in obtaining and in the end I had to borrow it from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia The Revival and its Lessons by J.W.

Alexander and at the very end of this book this is the final lesson which he leaves with his readers having spoken of revival he says unbelief as to the power and willingness of God to do this is at the bottom of all our neglect and wrong action in this matter if for a moment we fancy such an event as the conversion of our degraded and dangerous classes the incredulous principle replies behold if the Lord would make windows in heaven what might this thing be? an awakening which would shake the dry bones in all the lowest populations rousing them from filth and drunkenness and raising up an exceeding great army to fight the good fight of faith is more than we dare ask of God and yet brethren it is not more than we may reasonably expect on scriptural grounds nor more than the eyes of the

church shall joyfully see in the day when by the Spirit the church will rise to the height of faith and entreaty written in 1858 when the church rises to the height of faith and entreaty well then she will receive above that which she asks for thanks so it has been throughout the history of the church William Carey sailing to India in 1793 went forth by faith George Whitfield sailing the Atlantic those 13 times in the 18th century he went in the strength of faith so it must be with us the second power that we are required to have is the power of faith and thirdly in a word although indeed it is a subject on its own the power of prayer I draw your attention to the verses in Hosea chapter 12 and verses 3 and 4 we have in those verses Hosea 12, 3 and 4 a reminder of what happened when Jacob

was returning to the land and to face the wrath of Esau and how he was filled with fear and dread at that prospect and there at the brook at Peniel he met with God and wrestled with Him till the breaking of the day and we read these remarkable words in Hosea by his strength he had power with God yea he had power over the angels and prevailed he had power over the angels and prevailed and it was then that God said thy name shall be no more Jacob but Israel for as a prince thou hast had power and so on we were reminded yesterday of the revelatory character of names in scripture and the name Israel is a name given to the church in the old dispensation to remind them that their strength they were printed because through prayer their fathers had overcome if ye abide in me and my words abide in

you says Jesus ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much it works it has power is any afflicted says James let him pray what can prayer do? it can restore the backslider it can heal the sick it can do all that is necessary for the glory of God and the spread of His truth and let us not think well those who prayed were extraordinarily gifted men no he says Elijah was a man of like passions as we are yet he prayed and through Elijah's prayers God closed the heavens and reopened them so that the rain fell and thus it has been through the history of the church God's will is that His people should hold Him to His word and that they should plead His promises before Him in prayer and this is the Holy Spirit's own work

in the heart of His children to lead them to pray and in that prayer is indeed their strength John Bunyan puts this so perfectly in that account of Christian and hopeful when that sad day came that they fell asleep on the ground of giant despair and were taken into doubting cast and fastened up in all their chains in that miserable hole and then they were alarmed and terrified by the giant as he threatened them with various things and showed them as he said the bones of pilgrims that he had smashed and broken in pieces and so it will be with you he said and here were Christian and hopeful in this miserable dungeon until Bunyan says on Saturday night they began to pray and they continued to pray through the night and about the dawning of the day Christian he said stood up as a man of age

and he said to hopeful oh what a fool I've been I have in my bosom a key called problem which is able to open every lock in doubting time why that good news brother said hopeful that good news brother pluck it

out of thy bosom and try and so they did but it was the prayer that preceded the problem they took hold upon the promises of God and they were out through those grim doors and their chains were off so it is with the church we are helpless and we are bereft of strength but God has commanded us to pray and he has told us that we shall not seek his face in vain and when the church is truly a praying church then she is closed with energy and fire from heaven these three things then I believe need to be said what is the power that we are expected to have it is the power of truth of

adherence to the word the power of faith and the power of prayer now my second head I will pass over I hope in a few minutes it is just this and you could think it out yourselves what happens then when the power is gone this is the power the church is expected to have what happens when that power is gone now the answer to that question you will find written in this chapter when that power is gone then sinners perish because we see in the context here that it was in the day when the servants of God were few and weak and shut up in that day the great majority were going on the broad way to destruction unworn left by God and so it has ever been when the church becomes negligent and indifferent and cold the world goes quietly to wrath and condemnation God says to his people they shall hear

the word from my mouth and give them warning from me but when the church ceases to hear that word and to give warning then sinners perish verse 22 a fire is kindled in mine anger and shall burn unto the lowest hell a little later on oh that they were wise verse 29 that they understood this that they would consider their latter end when the church is clothed with power then it is that men are pricked in their hearts they feel that the word of God has laid hold upon them and even though sometimes they may remain unconverted they can be subdued by the powerful influence of the word of God and restrained and held back but in the day when that power is gone there is no restraint Habakkuk says the law is the law is flat that is what happens when the power is gone if you look at some of the

biographies that we have been mentioning and many others you will find in the case of these men that God raised up as leaders in revival there was laid upon their souls this great burden of those who were perishing perishing just because the church had become so neglectful and careless that is how revivals so generally begin consequence then sinners perish also as you will see in this chapter when this power is gone from the church then Christians become timid and ineffective those who are or should be filled with strength are the opposite verse 30 how should one chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight except their rock had sold them now this is not the one being the believer putting the world to flight but it is the opposite I commend to you on this chapter Matthew Poole's

commentary on the Old Testament I think he is very good on some of these rather out of the way passages look at Matthew Poole on verse 30 and the principle that is there is simply that when we lose the power of the spirit of God we become concerned about the approval of men we become men pleasers we become timid we become effeminate and feeble that has always been the case and the other side is when the spirit of God is restored in power to the church men become filled with holy boldness and they do not fear to offend the faces of men they speak to their consciences and to their faces my friends how we need a revival of such speaking in our day and lastly here we learn from the passage and from the whole of scripture that when the power is gone from the church then God himself is

dishonoured for God's people represent him in the world this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise when Israel marched into Canaan with power the heathen feared their God they did not praise Israel but they trembled at the presence of the God of Israel and when the Holy Spirit filled the church in the days of Pentecost in the days of the Acts of the Apostles it is the consciousness of God that

came upon men as they beheld the church and when then the spirit of God is breathed in the church the people of the world instead of seeing the church as the representative of God see them as of weak and worldly people and they do not fear God and the reason the world does not fear God today is because there is so little fear of God in the church when the church fears God

then it will not belong under the blessing of God's spirit before the world fears God there will be no fear of God in the world when that fear is absent from the church you know the story perhaps of George Whitefield preaching in Boston, New England many children were gathered into the kingdom of God and they drank in his preaching one little boy said he made God look big and another boy who died not long after when he was dying he said to his parents I want to go to Mr.

Whitefield's God you see under the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ these children had got an impression of the greatness and the compassion and the wonder of God he made God look big now that surely is what Christians are to do and if anyone here thinks that there has been too much emphasis upon the doctrines of grace upon the electing grace of God I assure you my friend it is not so because the honor and glory of salvation is to be given wholly to God and these are the doctrines which show forth that glory which is His I mentioned a little while back of this controversy over the new measures I want to give you I can put my hand on it and I don't think I can but I can remember it ah yes here it is a quotation from Edward Griffin toward the end of his life when these changes

were coming in evangelism he wrote a book on the divine efficiency and the purpose of his book was to demonstrate that God has to change the will that God renews the heart that man cannot do it of himself he said when I wrote this book and when I sat down to work on it I was out of health and I was so lame that I could take no exercise it occurred to me that to write that book without exercise might cost me my life but I was so affected with the dishonor cast on God by denying Him the glory of efficiently sanctifying the heart that I said with tears I will write this book and die meaning I will write it if I die and I wrote it he said with a tender regard for the divine glory which I was defending I never wrote a book with so much feeling of this sort nor any such except one and that

spirit moved in those letters zeal for the glory of God when strength departs God himself is dishonored now then the application of these things I believe is already before us what power have we my friend what power have you what do you know of the power of the word of God are you able to say on this Friday morning having been together these last days that we have known something of our hearts burning within us as the scriptures were opened to us do you know have you felt the truth of the word of God coming to your conscience that is the power you need it is to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as that glory is set forth in His word to have it written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts by the Holy Spirit and the power of faith and the power of prayer my friends let us

examine ourselves in the light of those questions and then at last what does this verse and passage teach us on the recovery of this power well it teaches us just this it teaches us that God judges He revives His people He restores them not when they become faithful not when they turn from all their sins and fully surrender themselves not when they do this or that but what does God do verse 36 He does it when He feels that their power is gone when there is nothing to move God except the misery and the need of His people then for His own glory's sake for the sake of the gospel which saves the ungodly then He comes to work amongst His people in other words and you will see it brought out more fully in verses 38 and 39 and verse 40 God restores a knowledge of Himself and that knowledge is

the knowledge that God is sovereign and omnipotent and full of compassion and we can be at our very lowest and our least deserving and in those conditions God comes to us to restore us as Peter poor Peter denying His Lord with oaths and curses and then does Jesus come to Him and call Him again to Himself and commission Him to go out to the world so God does with His church it would be a poor gospel that told us today that if only we will fully surrender or do this or do that and perform certain conditions then God may bless us that is not what the scripture teaches the scripture teaches that God for the glory of His own name for regard to His own truth will come and lift up His people and do it even when their power is gone for when we were yet without strength even then Christ died for

the undaunted let us then fasten our hopes upon the character of God Himself and upon all that we have been hearing this week of His glorious name therein lies our hope and our comfort that God is all that He has declared Himself to be and let us then be cast upon the name of God and God for His name's sake will surely bless us now as I close I must just take two or three minutes at the most to say a word of profound thankfulness for the time that we've had with you these days you know that we British people have a reputation for not being good at opening our hearts and I think that's true but I cannot really tell you how much we have felt the encouragement and blessing and hope of this conference we had long anticipated for many weeks and indeed months we had been looking forward to it

and we believed that it would be a time of blessing and we believed that partly I think because of the encouragements or indeed a good deal because of the encouragements that we have already had in fellowship with several of you that we will go from this place deeply encouraged now there are just two things that I want to say in regard to the cause of Christ at this moment the two things that give me greatest thankfulness are these one is that through the recovery of the truth that we have lived to see there is also a recovery of the old unity which was known in bygone centuries a unity of those who cleave to the doctrines of grace and which transcends denominational differences which transcends geographical distances and which brings together in the spirit of prayer and oneness

yourselves many of us in the British Isles and in other parts of the world I do believe that for the first time for many long years there is a recovery of the kind of unity which existed in the reformation period and in the 17th century and that is no small blessing and we need to guard it for the adversary of our souls would do all that he can to disrupt us but we believe that God has blessed us with a spirit of oneness and of brotherly love and we rejoice in the work of literature for example that we are enabled to print books by Anglicans and Presbyterians and Baptists and Independents who are men who have this spirit who gave themselves to the doctrines of God's Word who love the old Confessions and Catechisms and we believe that that is a unity which undergirds us and is so strong

that we pray that by God's grace nothing will ever sever it in this life till we be joined in the Church Triumphant I say that is a cause then of great thanks there is a new unity which is appearing in the earth and secondly we should be profoundly thankful that there is a new note a new school of preaching also emerging and we have felt it have we not this week we do not want to hear sermons that flatter us we do not want to hear sermons that simply please our feelings but so many others have come this week because we want ministry that will search us and humble us and convict us and that ministry does not come from men it does not you would not have heard the preaching you have heard this week if it had been left to men not one word which you have heard similar to what has been given

God has graciously been restoring the preaching of His Word and how thankful we should be for that how much more we should pray that this work will go on let us covenant to pray one for another and pray that

across oceans and continents the Spirit of God will be poured out in great reviving power for His name's sake Amen let us pray O Lord our gracious and almighty God we bow before Thee help us to bring to Thee the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart do Thou enable us to repent deliver us from all our carelessness and indifference and so stir up our hearts by Thy truth and by Thy Spirit that we shall long to love Thee with all our being we thank Thee for the blessings of these days we believe Thou hast not left us alone Thou hast not forsaken Thy people for Thy great name's sake

and therefore we pray Thee to continue with us and to teach us how to pray bless O Lord the preaching of Thy Word to us further this morning may we all be knit together in the bond of love and truth bless our homes and families bless our churches to which we shall return grant that in our midst we may experience the shout of a king and know the authority of Thy salvation O God hear our cries and accept our thanks and praise as we ask it all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Amen The preceding lecture or message was recorded by the Banner of Truth Trust in Carlisle, Pennsylvania by the Reformed Baptist Family Conference or the Reformed Baptist Pastors Conference held each year in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and distributed through the Mount Olive Presbyterian Church Tape

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