

Habakkuk - A Work in your Days

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Now when I was a young man, still quite young, I've not yet reached the old age pensioners, when I was a young man I used to be scared stiff of the minor prophets, and when a brother stood up and ministered the word out of Zechariah, I thought how wonderful it was that he should have some understanding of a book like Zechariah, tucked away amongst these obscure remote difficult prophets which nobody ever read. I would encourage you my brethren, my young brethren, I would encourage you to read them all. These day by day notes which we have recently been given to read, they cover the whole Bible, and they give some very simple comments on the Bible, very straightforward comments, and the word says, the Lord, the New Testament tells us that the Scriptures, the whole Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and they're profitable.

[00:01:08] In coming to her back up this afternoon, I find that his message is so appropriate in practical terms to the day in which we live. We're living in a terrible time, you know, living in a time when the rulers of the world are not safe walking down the street. I don't remember a time like that, perhaps in the Middle Ages it used to be that way, certainly in the time of the Kings it was that way, you read in the Kings and you see the number of those that were assassinated, but now we're at a time when the rulers of this world are not safe walking down the street, even with a bodyguard. We're at a time when men's attitude to God is going through a phase where their audacity knows no bounds. Even a quasi respectable organization [00:02:02] like the British Broadcasting Corporation dare to put God upon trial to see whether he really exists or not. What a terrible thing to do. We're living in a time when violence is found in all the corners of the world, the time when the resources of the world are running out, the time when starvation is rampant, not just in Ethiopia, but it's reaching similar proportions in many parts of the world. And you know, the result of this is that it's causing men to question God, and they begin to wonder whether God really knows what he's doing. I'm quite certain that as Habakkuk started off to express the burden that was upon his soul, he had something of this in his [00:03:03] mind, because in this short prophecy, he virtually challenges God. In this prophecy, he enters into debate with God, not something unique by any means. Don't forget that God says in the beginning of Isaiah, come let us reason together, saith the Lord. He tells them later on to bring forth their strong reasons. He wants men to talk to him. Don't hold back from talking to God. Don't hold back from expressing your anxieties and your distresses and your exercises to God. That's what he wants us to do. He wants us to talk to him. There's no rebuke here as such to Habakkuk, but he starts off to pour out his soul before God because of what he sees all around him. We see that God graciously enters into dialogue with his servant. If we just look at the passage that we've read, we find that from [00:04:04] verses 2 to 4, it's the prophet that speaks. Verses 5 to 11, God answers the prophet. Verses 12 through to the end of chapter 1, the prophet comments upon God's answer. And

in chapter 2, God expands upon his answer and he concludes with those words, God is in his holy temple. The Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. And after those words, the only thing that Habakkuk has to say is in the psalm which comprises the last chapter. So you see, we could fairly say that in [00:05:01] this passage of chapters 1 and 2, God deals finally with the prophet's problems and he virtually says to the prophet, now you've said enough. I'm in my holy temple. The earth has no right to challenge, to question, or to criticize me. And you and I need to take that last verse very much to heart.

God is in his holy temple, not an earthly temple, because the most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands. God is in his heavenly temple. God is the most high that ruleth in the affairs of men, as he showed so fully to Nebuchadnezzar. And for you and me, as creatures that he's made out of the dust, we have but to keep silence before him, and to know that he is wise, and that he is good, and that he is mighty, and that no power that stands before him will survive, but he will sweep [00:06:04] everything away. He will bring everything into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Or shall we say the Lord Jesus Christ will bring everything into subjection, and then will finally deliver up the kingdom to God, as we have brought out so clearly in 1 Corinthians 15. Now let's look at what he has to say. In verse 2, his prayers apparently are not being answered. And there's that question, how long shall I cry? How long, Lord, do you expect me to go on praying before you give me an answer? And it isn't thou wilt not hear, it's thou dost not hear. It's not thou wilt not save, it's thou dost not save. It's not that God isn't willing to hear, it's not that God isn't willing to save, but he's not doing it while the prophet is praying. Up to this time, the [00:07:02] prophet has waited in vain for an answer to his prayers. And then we pass on to verse 3, and we see in that verse, and in verse 4, some of the things which the prophet has seen around him. We can just pick them out. We find iniquity. We find grievance. We find spoiling. We find violence. We find strife. We find contention. How many is that? I make it six. We know what the number six is, don't we? It's the number of a man. Seven is the number of divine perfection. Six is the number of a man. And these are the things which man perpetrates. These are the things which the prophet has seen as the result of man's misrule and man's disobedience to God. And then we see [00:08:07] what he has to say about the law, because you see these that he's praying about, these are God's people, Israel. He's not concerned with the nation's roundabout. He's concerned with God's people. He's living at a time when the wickedness amongst God's people is at such a level that God is just about to bring judgment upon them, as we shall see presently. He says in verse 4, he says, the law is slack. Judgment never prevails. The wicked compass the righteous, or we should say today, the wicked are making rings around the righteous. Wrong judgment precedeth judgment.

Justice is perverted. Four things, you might say, the universal condition, all these things. Well, now there's nothing new about that, is there? Some of those that copied the Bible on the New [00:09:07] Testament in former times, they came to the eighth chapter of John's Gospel. They found the story there that they didn't like the look of. They left it out. My Bible's got it in, and I'm sure it should be there. It's the story of the woman that was taken in adultery. And there the Pharisees brought her to the Lord Jesus and said, look. And as we read the story, we realize, if we read it carefully and think about it, we realize that the thing that distressed the Lord Jesus most was not so much that this incident had occurred and that this woman had been, as we say, caught red-handed, but what distressed the Lord Jesus most, I believe, was the fact that there was no one, no one there amongst all the leaders of Israel that was able to put the law into effect, [00:10:06] standards of righteousness of God. We read about this in the 59th chapter of Isaiah, where this particular incident, I feel, is matched in the prophetic account. And there we read all kinds of statements about this breakdown. Verse 9 of the 59th of Isaiah, Therefore is judgment far from us, neither does justice overtake us. We wait for

light, but behold obscurity. For brightness, but we walk in darkness. Verse 12, For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us. Verse 15, Verse 14, Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off. For truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

[00:11:04] And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him. You know, I believe that as the Lord Jesus stooped down and wrote upon the ground, I have the impression, I wouldn't attempt to be dogmatic about it, but I feel that as he wrote upon the ground in that incident in the 8th of John, that he had these scriptures before him. And he was writing perhaps the first time from the 59th of Isaiah, and perhaps the second time from the first chapter of Habakkuk, because we find there such a plain prophetic statement as to the breakdown of righteousness. The Lord Jesus was the only one who was capable, who was competent to restore righteousness in this world. He's the one that will do it in the coming day. He's laid down the basis for it at the cross. He's laid down the basis for man's righteousness in accordance with [00:12:04] God's righteousness. Romans 4 tells us about imputed righteousness for those that have faith like Abraham. The Lord Jesus, when he came, he was so distressed that there was no one here that was capable of doing it, and that was why he had to do it himself. And I say again, this is the universal condition in this world, the total breakdown of righteousness. In this country where we're so proud nationally of our legal system, we're proud of our judiciary, we're proud of our police, and so on, we're still seeing it. We're seeing the breakdown of righteousness. We're seeing the standards of morality, as we say, going out of the window. No longer can we regard this nation as a Christian nation or a God-fearing nation or as an upright nation. We see everything being watered down and destroyed that we previously perhaps have held to be sacred. Well now, that's the end of Habakkuk's initial expression of his burden, and that's the point at which God replies.

[00:13:09] And God's reply is a most unexpected reply. It's also one which, as we think about it, we shall see its far-reaching effects. He says, Behold ye among the nations. Whenever you read heathen in the Bible, invariably it ought to be the nations, because that's what God calls the nations, the Gentile nations. He calls them the nations. The heathen is a word which has religious connotations, but the word the nations shows, it speaks of all those that are not people of Israel, and it gives us a clearer idea of the meaning of the word if we say nations. Behold ye among the nations, and regard and wonder marvelously, for I will work a work in your days, which ye [00:14:03] will not believe, though it be told you. So he directs the prophet away from the people of Israel with all their troubles, and he tells them, tells him to look at the nations, and there he sees something which he never expected, and that is that there is somebody from the nations being raised up by God. God had done it before. He called for the fly and the bee, hadn't he? He called for the Assyrians to take away the people, the ten tribes of Israel, but now he was going to call for the Chaldeans to take away even the people of Judah. And he tells about their character, tells about their attitude, he tells about their style. They shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not there, and this is what they're like. Terrible and [00:15:03] dreadful, their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. In other words, they make their own standards. Horses, swifter than leopards, fiercer than the wolves of the evening, and they're horsemen, and they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat, or shall we say the vulture. You know what the vulture is like? The vulture descends, and it picks the bones clean and leaves nothing behind, scorched earth. They shall come all for violence, their faces shall sup up as the east wind, they shall gather the captivity as the sand. This is not a nice picture that he draws for the prophet, is it? Something which is absolutely

devastating, which he describes. And then in verse 10, the attitude of these people towards the kings and the princes, it scorns them. Their attitude to the stronghold, the strong cities, the fortified cities, they shall deride them, they shall heap up their mounds against them, and they shall take them, [00:16:02] no problem. And then, having done it, they pass on. And we see a picture of the Chaldeans, which in the terms of the history, perhaps with which we are more familiar, they match to Attila the Hun or to Genghis Khan. You know what Attila said? Where I pass, nothing will grow, where my horse passes likewise. Their idea, these terrible men, was that they should consume and leave nothing. And this was the description that the Lord gave to the prophet of those that he was raising up. This was his answer to the conditions which were distressing the prophet. And the prophet's reaction we see in the following verses, as he goes on from verse 12 with his complaint. And he challenges God, and he says to him, art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. Thou hast ordained [00:17:05] them for judgment, O mighty God. Thou hast established them for correction. Now, I'm not quite sure exactly how this verse should be read, because some read it that God has raised them up in order to judge and to correct his people. But I feel rather that the sense may be, and I don't wish to dogmatize, please, the sense may be that God ought to be pouring out his judgment upon them instead of upon his people. Because if his people were wicked, well, then they were more wicked. Well, then they were more wicked. If his people were ungodly and had departed from him, well, they had never been godly. They'd never been in any relationship with him at all, and therefore he feels that they're the ones upon whom God ought to be pouring his judgment. That's how I feel the sense reads. And then in verse 13, he says to God, thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. Wherefore, lookest thou upon them [00:18:02] that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. So, you see, he's accusing God here of acting out of character, because those that God calls upon to judge his people are worse than his people themselves. Well, God knows all about this, doesn't he? And God tells in the following passages how he will deal in his time with those that are the wicked. And in the part of chapter two that we didn't read, we have the five woes expressed of what he is going to pour out upon those that are the wicked. And then the prophet, as he goes on with his plea, he has a simile, he brings up a simile about the fishes in the sea, as though God is making all his people like the little fishes at the bottom of the sea. [00:19:07] You look down into a lake or into the sea, if you happen to have water that's clear enough in the sea, and you see all the little fishes swimming underneath. I remember when we were in Switzerland three years ago, we could look down there at the side of the lake, and we could see them in the part which wasn't too polluted, and there they were all wriggling and squirming, the tiny fishes at the edge of the lake. And this is the simile that he uses, as he addresses God. Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them. And then he says, these, these wicked people, these Chaldeans, he says they take them all up with the angle, that means the hook, catch them on a hook, and they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet. We should call that a trawl, shouldn't we? You see, three ways they have, and that the poor little fishes, they haven't got a chance, have they? Our trawlers go out into the North Sea to bring us [00:20:04] the food that we like to have on our supper table with our chips, and the fishes haven't got a chance, have they? And that's the way he speaks, that's the way you're dealing with your people, you're making them like a shoal of fishes, and here are these terrible, ruthless fishermen that are coming after them, and he tells them, tells them, tells God the kind of fishermen they are, that they sacrificed to their net, they burnt incense to their trawl, because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous. You see, they're, they're gloating over the richness of their catch, and they're making this, their, their income, what they're gathering up, they're making that their God, instead of the one who rules over heaven and earth. And then in 17, at the end of his plea, shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations. In other words, are you going to allow this kind of thing to go on

indefinitely? Well, we can express our [00:21:06] sympathy with this kind of prayer, can't we? We can understand that the prophet was burdened as he addressed God in this way. You see how simple these prophets are, and how up-to-date they are, and how real they are, when we think about these circumstances of the world around us. Don't dodge the minor prophets, will you? There's so much in them which is instructive. And then you see God replies, no, before God replies, Habakkuk, you know, he, he seems to sort of stand back and take stock of what he's said. Now, I've said a lot. I've opened my mouth pretty wide, he says, and now he says, I'm going to stand on my watchtower and see what God is going to say to me, and what I'm going to answer when he tells me off next time. We've already seen that he doesn't have another chance, does he? Because when God finished speaking, next time he says, God's in his holy temple, let all the earth keep [00:22:02] silence before him. So Habakkuk, Habakkuk is answered before he has another go. God has the final answer here. He says, the vision is yet for an appointed time. Write it and make it plain, so that he may run that readeth it. I wonder what that means. It's been inverted, hasn't it, by some, they've, they've said, he that may read that runneth. That's not what it says, that he, that he may run that readeth it. Whether he should run for his life, or whether he should run to spread the good news, is a little bit open to question. I always felt that he should run for his life when he read it, because it's, it's a terrible, a terrible thing that God has said about the Chaldeans. And when the Lord Jesus speaks in similar terms, he tells about those that are on the housetop, not to come down to fetch their coat, doesn't he, to flee the mountains. [00:23:05] But then he goes on, he says, behold it will surely come, it will not tarry, the vision is for an appointed time. God has everything precisely under his control. When he's ready, then he will call his servant to do his work. When you come into the revelation, and you read about the riders on the four horses, this authorized version doesn't help you very much. It says that God's, that the word is to them, come and see. It isn't come and see, it's come. Each of those four horses that is to come forth after the Lord Jesus has taken the church away, they come forth as God, through his angel, beckons them. He says come, it's time for you, it's time for you, it's time for you, it's time for you. It's like a conductor in front of the orchestra, as he calls in the various instruments with their particular emphatic parts to make up [00:24:05] the music, so he beckons them in. So it is, God in his position of absolute control, when he's ready, he will bring in the four horsemen, as we call them, the four horsemen of the apocalypse, in the time when they're absolutely right for the moment in his control plan. Because you see, everything that happens in this world is under God's hand. Never let us think for a moment that man is dictating, or that Satan is dictating, it's God that's dictating, and God gives the signal when everything happens. And while we're speaking of this, let's just come more to the heart of the matters that we come to hear in Catford, Galatians chapter 4, and when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law.

[00:25:02] You see, just as God controls man in these activities, so he was the one who timed to perfection the moment when his son would arrive in this world, so that we should receive the adoption, so that we should be brought into sonship. His control is operative in every sphere, but the point that we should emphasize here is that God's timing is always perfect. And then in the fourth verse, we get this principle laid down, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.

And this is the second of what I would say are the great statements of Habakkuk's burden, or Habakkuk's prophecy. First of all, thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity. Why, it's almost in our prayer book, isn't it? [00:26:04] Something that we quote so often, how true it is. God's eyes are pure, he can't look upon sin. Where he sees it, he has to deal with it. And here the other one, the just shall live by his faith. Well now, this is a principle in scripture, and it runs through the Bible, doesn't it? But in the New Testament, it's taken up in two particular ways. It's taken

up in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. There, we read that the righteousness of God is revealed.

Romans 1 and 17, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Or if we dare to paraphrase that, it's revealed to men of faith on the basis of faith. Righteousness.

[00:27:01] Man is always concerned, if he recognizes God, he's always concerned with being reckoned being reckoned righteous in God's sight. Remember that Zacchaeus, when he came down from the tree, and when he was accused of being a sinner, immediately he opens up to prove to the Lord Jesus how righteous he is. Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. If I've taken anything from any man by a false accusation, I restore him fourfold. See what a good man I am, he says. The Lord Jesus says, salvation has come to this house because he's a son of Abraham. There it is, there's the principle, the just shall live by his faith. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, to men of faith, on the principle of faith. See, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ungodliness and unrighteousness, but righteousness is revealed is revealed to faith on the principle of faith. And we get the same, the same scripture quoted in [00:28:06] the end of the 10th chapter of the Hebrews, don't we? Where we've had there in the previous verses statements about continuance, the need for continuance, patience is on trial. And then we get a verse about the coming of the Lord in verse 37, a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry. And then it says, now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, that's failing in continuance, if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but them which believe to the saving of the soul. The just shall live by faith. And you know, I believe that the following chapter, Hebrews 11, is put there for this very purpose, to illustrate that great statement that the just shall live by faith. And we get a whole array of just men and [00:29:04] just women right the way through that 11th chapter. And there were things there which are said about them in verse, verse 13, for instance, and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. And then further down, we get, well, let's go straight to the end. Verse 39, and these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. And then in the beginning of the next chapter, wherefore, seeing we are encompassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, a cloud of witnesses to the truth of the scripture, the just shall live by faith, let us lay aside every weight, and so on. Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set [00:30:03] before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty of God. So you see that great principle is established, and here as the nation of Israel are to anticipate this terrible destruction, there's this assurance given to those of faith that God will bring them through. God always leaves himself a remnant. God always deals with men of faith on the basis of their faith, and he has a way of salvation for his people in every trial. When I just want to expand a little in the few moments left to us on perhaps the most important part of our subject, because this is in the New Testament, it's in the 13th of the Acts. It's in the 13th of the Acts that we get the first recorded sermon or preaching of the apostle Paul.

[00:31:01] The 13th of the Acts, he's called with Barnabas to go forth in service to God, and it's at Antioch in Pisidia that he stands up to preach. He has preached before. He's preached at Damascus many times. He's preached at Jerusalem. He's confounded the Jews and he's confounded the Greeks. But here is the first time where the Spirit of God is pleased to record his preaching. Here it is, and in his preaching, verse 17, he goes through Jewish history. He talks about the time when there were strangers in the land. He talks about the time when God destroyed seven nations so as to bring them into the land of promise. He talks about the time of the judges, the 400 years, and the kings,

Saul and David. And then in verse 23, he says that God has been pleased of this man's seed. According to his promise, he's raised up unto Israel a Savior, Jesus.

And then he goes on and tells the result of God having raised up a Savior, Jesus.

[00:32:14] Quotes the Scriptures to support his statements. He goes into the Psalms and goes into Isaiah to do this. In verse 38, we find there that he preaches to them through the Lord Jesus Christ the forgiveness of sins. And in verse 39, he preaches justification. And you know, when we preach the Gospel, we must stress these points as Paul did, mustn't we? The Lord Jesus came for these very purposes, that we should receive from God the forgiveness of our sins, and that we should be able to stand before him in justification. And the Scripture says, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. We must make sure that we make these truths very, very plain, that God has established our righteousness [00:33:04] in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we stand before him, it won't be that we should be judged for our sins, because the Scripture says there's no judgment for those that are in Christ Jesus. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he's judged sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. How vital it is. And there he spells it out to them, these people.

Then he comes to the quotation in verse 41. It's a warning to them. Beware, he says in verse 40, beware lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold you despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. But what a difference there is. What a difference. [00:34:08] God was working a work in Habakkuk's day, a work of judgment, a work to bring his people under the rod of his correction. But here what a different work. It's a work of grace.

What's God doing in this day of grace? He's calling out from this world a people for his son, isn't he? That's what he's busy with. All these things that are going on around us, they're back cloth for the work which he's doing. He's calling out a people for the Lord Jesus Christ, a people from the nations, a people that shall be his heavenly bride in the days soon to come. But do you notice the difference? As he gives the warning, he doesn't say look to the nations. He says behold ye despisers. And why does he say that? Well, [00:35:01] the answer is quite simple. And the answer lies in the Septuagint version. Now you know what the Septuagint version was, don't you? It was the translation of the Old Testament scriptures into the Greek language shortly before the time of our Lord Jesus. And it was the scriptures that were in common use where Hebrew was not read. And this in verse 41 is a direct quotation from the Septuagint. If you look up the Septuagint in the Greek, if you can read Greek, or if you look at the literal English translation of the Septuagint Greek, you'll find it reads precisely like this. Behold ye despisers. This is in Habakkuk, I mean. Not look to the nations, but behold ye despisers and wonder and perish. And how appropriate it is that as Paul takes it up that he should use those terms. How right it is to these Jews that he's speaking to, to these Jews that are turning their back on God's grace, who are despising the fact that God has given something [00:36:07] new and something vital and something transcending in the gift of his Son. He's given eternal life in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel has been proclaimed. And here are men, they're despising it. And he takes up the words of Habakkuk to emphasize the fact that their despising is going to bring them to a terrible end and wonder and perish. And for those in our time, those who consider themselves superior in intellect, those who consider themselves self-righteous in God's sight, well this is applicable to them. Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish. The gospel says, should not perish, but have everlasting life. But that's not for [00:37:02] the despisers. You know, it's a terrible thing to

despise God's grace. How dreadful when man considers himself superior to God, when God has gone to such immense lengths in order to meet man in his need. And this is the warning that the apostle gives. And then he talks about the work, the work which I do in your day, the work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. You know, I believe the Lord Jesus had declared this work very strongly in Matthew's gospel in chapter 22. There he tells about the king who made a marriage for his son. You know it well enough, don't you?

My father used to say that whenever he went to preach anywhere for the first time, he always preached on this scripture, because he felt it was such an essential presentation of the gospel. [00:38:03] The king that made a marriage for his son. But then you see, in the invitations which are sent to the marriage feast, there are three distinct phases, are there not? First of all, there were those that were bidden in verse 4, those that made the excuses. And then in verse 8 he says, those that were bidden are not worthy. Go into the highways, and as many as you find, bid to the marriage. And then in the end he says, the servants went out and gathered together all as many as they found both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. You know, I believe we're in a third stage today of the preaching of the gospel. Hundreds of years ago, right up to the beginning of this century, this country of Britain was in the focus of the gospel of God's grace, even as the North American continent perhaps was, and certain [00:39:05] of the countries of Europe, God's grace was being preached, and people were turning to him in their thousands. But today it's not like that, is it? We get just a local, dare I say it, I was going to say a flash in the pan, but it's more than that. God is being gracious in sending his servants that can bring many to the point of repentance in our time, but compared with what he's doing elsewhere, how small it is. Do you know, I was looking at a paper which somebody gave me last week, no it was last Tuesday, and in Cape Town, one of the, an evangelist was there with what is described as the biggest tent in the world, and the wind came off the sea and destroyed the tent. The tent was there big enough to hold a crowd of, I think, 40,000, but after the tent had been blown away, God gave perfect [00:40:01] weather, and they reckoned that in 18 meetings, there were 800,000 people that heard the gospel of God's grace. So they're going round in that country, place to place, places like Soweto that we hear about so often, in these sort of places, places where the human need is so stirring, God is gathering them in, in their thousands, thousands being brought in every day. We find as we read the accounts of the missionary work in other countries of Africa and elsewhere in the world, that from the more, as I say, the less civilized people, there's a great response in these last days of God's grace to the appeal of the gospel. He's working a work in our day, a work that we are staggered by because of its immense dimensions, a work that the scoffers can laugh at, but he said [00:41:07] wonder and perish, a work that ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Praise the Lord for what he's doing in our time. How wonderful if he gives us some small, small share in our service, in the work that he's doing in our day, that we should be able to bring one soul, or perhaps several souls, to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the preaching of his glorious gospel. May he help us to do this. May he make his word real in our hearts and give us a greater appetite for it, a greater understanding of it, so that it shall enter into us, so it becomes a part of our lives.