

Revival: Grace to Escape from Sin

By Shawn Reynolds



Bible Text: Ezra 9:8
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If you will this morning, turn with me to our text and it's found in the book of Ezra, Ezra 9:8. I'll give you a minute to get there because I know it's more of an obscure book. Ezra 9:8 reads this way,

8 And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how glorious and how great and how holy thou art. Lord, I praise thy name. I thank thee, Lord, for the time that you have provided this day to come away. O Lord, bid us to come away as we hear the things going on around us and we see them in our minds, easily run toward them, we pray, Lord, for that grace, that grace for a time to come away, to commune with thee. O Lord, may you bring us close to thy side. Lord, I pray this morning as we open up thy word as we are brought to this passage, I pray, O Lord, for more than the letter. Lord, I pray that you would reveal this day that thy word truly does testify of thee. Lord, that you would be pleased to reveal it by thy Spirit to take us to the depths of thy word and the depths of our souls as only thou can. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Truly this passage in Ezra 9 and we'll probably be looking at most of the chapter this morning, but the text that the Lord has given us today, one could certainly say is deeply experiential. I find that in the word of God when you read the word of God, it always has a historical meaning to it. Even when Jesus spoke to his disciples, he spoke to them at that time, but I see as we live in this time and we live in 2018 now, certainly the word of God takes on a deeper meaning to the church. It's not a historical book.

As I examined this passage this morning as the Holy Spirit examines this passage this morning, it's easy to see historically why it was written, it's easy to understand historically what's going on at the time, but it's a timeless treasure and the Holy Spirit makes it that way. When Jesus said, "Lo, I come in the volume of the book written of me," he meant from Genesis to Revelation. We should never ever lose sight of that, that

the Scriptures are not to tell us a story, they are not to be a history book, they are not even to teach us doctrine, for Christ called everything in here his doctrine, everything must flow from Christ. This morning as I prayed and I know in the spirit of what the Apostle Paul wrote, he prayed that we not be under the letter but that the Spirit would give life because the letter always brings death, and if all you have this morning is a historical understanding of this passage, then truly not only do I feel sorry for you, but I mourn because the Bible, the written word of God, is not, as I said, for the child of God, it's not a history book. May the Lord meet us in his word this morning as we read this text one more time.

I hope that as I read it the first time, something sparked within you; the Holy Spirit spoke to you and said, "You know, I understand where that's coming from." Maybe you don't understand the historical meaning of it. Maybe that Scripture spoke to you and now for a little space grace has been shown from the Lord our God. To me, I know when I hear that, I think of my everyday life. I think of what big picture is, what great grace God gives me every day to breathe, to act, to be a part of this life, to have my very being in it. But the grace that comes to the soul to experience Christ in our daily walk isn't a, should I say it's not readily there in our minds 24/7. It's not. We are very cumbered by the things of this world. We are very cumbered by the thoughts and the things that we hear so when we hear something like this, "now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape." Later after we read up to this point, we're going to examine the four things spoken in this passage. First, grace to escape; how the Lord gives his children every day grace to escape. Secondly, to give us a nail in his holy place. I hope you know, I hope you've experienced now, that that nail means a sure place; that nail means something strong; and that nail when spoken of in the word is Christ. Christ is that grace to escape. Christ is that nail in a holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, that Christ is our light and to give us a little reviving in our bondage.

This passage, I noticed, has been preached a lot to talk about revivals, to talk about how revivals are in lands or nations or how man will call or preachers will call for revivals. I've always chuckled at that going by signs saying, "Revival here tonight," how someone could promise the gift of the Holy Ghost to a place and a time in the future, not knowing whether the sovereignty of the Lord would meet in that place, his power to revive the soul. The word speaks of revival but it's a soul revival. It's how the Lord awakens us from a deadened state to life in him.

So, Lord willing, today we'll look at that but right now we're going to start at the beginning of chapter 9 and if you know anything about Ezra, he and Nehemiah were the prophets that the Lord spoke to that carried the people back from Babylon after that 70 year captivity, and the Lord restored his people back in Jerusalem. And Ezra, as we pick up this morning in chapter 9, they are now restored in that place. I also, I think when I read passages like this, it really gives me the understanding of man, fallen man. I know we live in a society that believes they can reform people, putting them in jail, putting them in captivity for a while, locking them up, giving them all kind of classes, telling them how they could help themselves, and that's supposed to reform man. Well, let's see if that's what takes place this morning.

"Now when these things," verse 1, "were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites." So the Lord in his great grace and mercy upon the nation of Israel, he restored a remnant and he brought that remnant back and he gave them freedom to come back to their land, and under the heavy chastening of those 70 years that they spent in bondage and God miraculously setting them back up in Israel, this is the repayment that man gives him: they go right back to the wallow. They go right back to the mire as we see. That is what man does. When given the opportunity, so to speak, and mercy showed to him, does that make a change or alter man's heart? And we can say, I could change all of these ites today and put in our land all the things that as we are revived, as the Lord meets us in his place, as the Lord meets us in our soul, I could change all of these ite names and I could put in there sports, I could put in there politics, I could put in there financial things, I could put in there all of the gods of this land, all of the things that take our mind from Christ. And as we experience Christ in the soul, that's the question: do we walk in this life with our heads in the sky thinking that life down here is to be experienced above it? I hear a lot of that in the religious world today, just live above it, but we're going to see how that takes place today. We're going to see how that takes place with his prophet, how the Lord spoke to him, how he moved him to speak to the Lord, how he besought the Lord, and in what place did he do that.

So we'll keep going. "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." Even the ones, the ones who were leading this nation, are the ones who are leading them to sin. Remember this is how they're coming to the prophet, the one that has spoken, "Thus saith the Lord," to the people. This is the messengers are coming to him saying, "Listen, we're being led away even by the very priests, even by the very ones that are leading the people." The same case today and I've said it many times from this pulpit, meeting the Lord in your soul, you'll never be led there by a man. Men cannot, no matter what they say to you, they cannot persuade your soul to meet Christ in the soul. That's what Christ does. That's what the Holy Spirit does. He takes the things of Christ, it's God himself, who must give that power to come away, to be revived again.

"And when I heard this thing," verse 3, "I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished." It says "astonished," that's an old English word, the word means "astonished." He sat down just in utter amazement, looking at what God had done for Israel and he sat down, "Just how, how could we go right back to where we were?" Have you ever been there? Have you ever experienced sin this way? Have you ever wondered how the Lord has shown you that the sins that you commit, how he has nailed them to the tree? How his blood has covered those sins? How he has taken those sins away and a day later or two days later or a span of whatever time you want to say, we're right back experiencing that sin again? Are you ever astonished at that in your life?

As I said, I hope, I pray this morning I'm preaching to those in this room who have experienced Christ this way, that have experienced Christ in their soul, have understood what it's like to have his presence withdrawn from them, to be given a time, a space to experience the depth of sin, how wicked it truly is, to be brought to a shame, an absolute shame to what you do, what we have done against a holy and just Lord who has performed all things for us. So be careful as you point the finger this morning as you read this passage and you say, "Yes, what ungrateful people they were." Thou art the man. You and I both. How ungrateful we are at what the Lord has given us daily. How much we need our text today to be revived in our bondage.

"Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice." Notice, Ezra is not out in front of the people pointing out the sins. Ezra is coming and he sits astonished. He's sitting and he's having the time of meditation between him and the Lord.

I know, I know, I think we've all been there. I think we all as we are entwined in one another's lives, that there are times that we grieve for one another based on what sin that one is mired in or based on....and what is it that the Lord quickens to his people? "Come unto me. Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden." Our rest is to be brought to the Lord, to cry out to the Lord, and to wait upon the Lord. And that's what you see in this prophet. He's not acting upon what he's heard. He's sitting and he's still sitting in astonishment and there are those who feared the Lord who came around him and they sat and they conversed and said, "You know, what are we going to do?" Because those people that feared God, much like the prophet, knew what had just taken place. The same sins had caused this great captivity and how they had lost everything and he just sat astonished.

Then we come to verse 5. I want to know right now, well not right now but after we read it, what do you see? "And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God." The Lord brought me to this passage probably a month or two ago and as I was reading this, this verse came with such power to reveal to me Christ. When I heard about Ezra who is acting as an intercessor, as he came before the Lord and he spread out his hands, immediately the Lord took me to the cross and showed me the depth of my Intercessor, the depth of the one who has died for me, who intercedes for me daily, who intercedes for me because it's something I can't do for myself, will not do for myself.

"And having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God." Now I want you to hold your finger here because when we come back to here, we won't be leaving again. The one time we're going to leave today is to go to John 17 real quick and I want you to, as I read this portion of Scripture, I want you to think about what the Lord has given Ezra in his place as a prophet, but now in interceding at the throne of grace for the people of God in prayer and supplication, pouring out his heart. This shows us that when that occurs, it shows the life of Christ in

the soul. That's how we come to him, it's the life of Christ in the soul, and as Ezra spread his arms out, as I said, it's powerfully, it powerfully comes to me to show me my salvation is in another; my Intercessor is in another.

We know that passage in Romans 8 tells us that the Holy Spirit prays for us, he intercedes for us, but what is he interceding? What is he crying out? "Lord, I can't do this." I mean, that's where Ezra is. He's brought to the end of himself, "I don't know what to do. I'm very fearful of where this is headed. I'm very fearful of where we could be heading." Are you ever brought there? Are you ever brought there, maybe in a prayer for one that you love dearly? Maybe you're brought there to say, "O Lord, I'm very fearful of where this is heading. Unless you intercede, unless you come, unless you reveal to them you on the throne." These are dire, dire circumstances.

Let's look at verse 9 in John 17 and let's just start there. We're going to read a couple of verses. "I pray for them." Notice Ezra in the place and the picture of Christ here is not pouring out his heart in prayer for the Jebusites, the Hittites, the Canaanites, the Egyptians, and all of those who are in the land. He's not praying for them to be converted. He's not praying for them, he's praying for the people of God. Jesus prays for his own. That's what he says here.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world." Now, I know our flesh doesn't like that. Our flesh likes to rise up and we like to be sentimental toward others. We like to tell people, "I'll pray for you. I'll pray for you. I'll pray for this. I'll pray." The Lord makes it very clear in his word that his prayers and his intercession is for his church alone.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world." This is what our Intercessor does. As I said, these words means as much to me today as it did to Peter and John as he was speaking it to them as they were sitting in front of him. "I pray for you." The Lord Jesus must pray for me. He must intercede for me. I know that the Lord has kept me in this world and there are many days that I grieve over that. There are many days I try to hide myself from the world, but it does not change the fact that the people of God are here upon this earth as pilgrims and strangers passing through this place, and the Lord has not taken them out of here, however, he has prayed for them.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Our preserving grace is in the oneness with our Lord. The Lord preserves us on a daily basis by revealing our union in him. Any thought that you have of being saved, any thought that you have of the blood being shed for you, comes forth from the union that you have in Christ Jesus. It's not of you, it's of the head.

Now just turn a little bit over to 15 and we'll finish here. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Sometimes in my thoughts and as I look at my children growing up and it's scary for me and the

children in this room that I love dearly, and I see them venturing out in the world, when I read something like this, sometimes I think I wouldn't have said it this way. I would have said, "Lord, keep them from the world. Keep them out of the world." And we know religious man has gone that way. "Oh, if I just go up in a tower somewhere and I shut the world away, or if I get in a nunnery somewhere and I'm sitting there...." Well, you're not going to escape sin and you're not going to escape the fallen nature that's in man. Our escape, which we'll see as this text unfolds, our escape is in Christ and Christ alone.

Back to our passage now in Ezra 9. As we see our Intercessor, Hebrews 7:25 says, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," that's that union. How do we come unto God? By him. How are we saved to the uttermost? By him. "Seeing he ever liveth." The Lord God reigneth. The Lord God, this is resurrection life that we have in Christ. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." The Lord prays for us daily. I know that's hard to understand because the Lord is not bound by time, we are, but the Lord intercedes on our behalf. He is the great High Priest. He is our Intercessor.

So we have that pictured for us in 5, and then we go over to verse 6 and it says... Let me finish 5, "I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God." Listen, dear ones, if you have ever sorrowed over sin, this is the end result. You don't sorrow over sin by saying, "Oh, I'm really sorry for my sins. O Lord, forgive me my sins. I've sinned against you today, Lord." When the Lord comes to the soul and he convicts the soul and convinces the soul of sin, the sorrow comes with it over sin. It's not a flippantness, it's not saying a few "Hail Mary's," it's not rubbing some beads, it's not in a rote confession over and over again, "Lord, forgive me. Lord, forgive me." It's a deep contrition of soul. That's what I see here.

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." John tells us in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And just in case you think that that's you that's doing the confessing, we're already to John 16:8, "when he is come," the Holy Spirit, "he will reprove the world of sin." The world of the elect will always, as you see it here, are reproved and taught thou art the man. He did it with David. He did it with Jonah. He did it with all of his people.

They must be shown the sorrow of sin and that's what you see in 6, "I am ashamed and blush," I'm embarrassed. I can't even lift up my eyes to pray unto you. What else do we call that? Unworthiness. Do you have unworthiness in yourself? And if you don't, I would venture to say you have never been convinced of sin. Our worthiness is in the Lamb, the Lamb without spot. But in order to see the worthiness of the Lamb, you must experience the unworthiness of man and that includes you.

Verse 7 says, "Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day." Lord, that sin, we just keep doing it over and over and over again. Sometimes I ask

the Lord, "Lord, why? Why do I do the same things over and over? Why do I get angry at the same things all the time? You show me great conviction, how horrible and horrific that sin is, and yet I'll return that way. Lord, keep me."

"Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day." Ezra is brought to the end of himself and he's brought really really low. That's what it is to be emptied, it is to be brought really really low. The psalmist said it this way in Psalm 116:6, he said, "The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me." How does he preserve the simple? He brings them low. He must increase, we must decrease.

I find every day in my life when the Lord comes to me, if I start to rise in my mind, no matter what it's about, whether it's in my job, whether it's in reading the word, as I start to have those thoughts of exultation, the Lord is quick to say, "Do I have the preeminence?" And sometimes that's a hard lesson in this life. Sometimes we're suffered to walk in a way that we think what we're doing from God is something good and meritorious and then the Lord must come and bring us back to him by emptying us of self. I speak a lot about self. Self, I believe, is the greatest enemy. Self is the one so close to us that rises up every day, it's that old nature. Oh, we need the Lord's righteousness. We need the Lord every day to put down self; to reveal the glorious righteousness in the new man, which is his Son.

Now we come to our text and now we understand how we got here, but do we really? When we left in verse 7, he's still low. He's low and he's emptied and he says, "Lord," he's emptied to say, "Lord, where else can I go?" And all he can see is the sins of those around him including himself and he cries out to the Lord and then verse 8 is the great rescue. It is the great grace that comes to the soul of the child of God to rescue him from the bondage of sin, and at the same time, teach him that that's the only way out.

"And now," our text, "for a little space," for this moment, Lord, you have given me grace to escape. "For a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape." Lord, there is a people, there are those who you are faithful to, to escape, escape this world. And I'm not talking about physically, I'm talking about in our soul, in our mind, in our heart, as the Lord is faithful to do so.

The psalmist in 71:2 said, "Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me." Did you hear those words? Deliver me in thy righteousness. That's another emptied soul. Don't deliver me in my strength. Don't deliver me in my intellect. Don't deliver me in situations in this world. Lord, deliver me in your righteousness. And to be able to pray that means you must be emptied of self.

"Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape." Escape to thy righteousness. Escape to you, Lord, my strong tower. Escape to you, Lord, my head. Escape to you, Lord, my life. "I am the resurrection and the life."

"Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me." Isaiah said it this way in Isaiah 37:32, "For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this." There is a remnant that will escape and this escaping down here is experiential for you and I. We live in a day that we have of the Lord's mercy to come here today in the freedom to do so, to worship the Lord today. We have that freedom. We have the freedom to leave this place, to go to our homes, or go to wherever we want to. That's the freedom the Lord has given us.

His great mercy and his great grace has come forth and given us this time, however, can we do that spiritually? We try. Oh, I know, I try. I try every day in the word. "O Lord, meet me here." But he is faithful. He is faithful to draw his children. He is faithful to provide for them. That's what Isaiah said, "the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this." I have a remnant that I meet in their souls. I do this. I am faithful to do this.

1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us this, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." That is comforting to me. As Solomon wrote as the Holy Spirit testified too, there is nothing new under the sun. We will be tempted with the same thing they were tempted with. Our temptations were the same ones that Christ went through.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." And that's not how we think. When we're sitting there in the seat or we're sitting at home or we're sitting in the middle of bondage, we always think, "I've got it worse than everybody else. Nobody else goes through what I go through." But the word of God tells us as the people of God we all go through the same things in different measures. We do. We all have the temptations in front of us.

Then we have the great "I am" come and say, "But God is faithful." That's what Paul writes through the Holy Spirit, "but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." How does he make a way to escape? And we start to go in our mind, "Oh." We're looking for a way. The way is John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Our escape in this life from the temptations, from the sins, from the sorrow, is Christ.

And he tells us in this passage, "to leave us a remnant to escape." Let me finish that verse real quick. "But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." And we bear it in Christ and Christ is the escape, and that's what I was saying. What is that escape? Well, he doesn't leave us and he says, "and to give us a nail in his holy place." A nail. A sure place. Something so strong that we hang life upon this nail because our life, if it truly is life, is hidden in Christ.

Isaiah 22:23 says, "And I will fasten him as a nail," this is where Christ was spoken of by the prophet, as a nail. "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house." Christ is that nail. Christ is that sure place. Christ is that holy place. We'll see that in a minute. He is our habitation. That holy place isn't a

place in your home, it isn't a closet, it isn't this place. It's Christ himself who hides his children in him, the cleft of the Rock. He is the Rock.

Isaiah 57:15 says, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." Think about those words a minute, "thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity." Thus saith the Lord, "whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Isn't that what we just spoke about a while ago? You must be emptied. The Lord empties his children.

"I dwell with those who are dependent upon me, a humbled and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble." We're going to talk a little bit about revival in a minute. That's the revival. "I revive the soul." That's what he says, "to revive the heart of the contrite," I'm sorry, "to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." I do this. I bring forth myself in your soul.

I don't know about you, this is comforting to me. It's very comforting to me that my Lord has performed all things for me and he has made every provision for me. I've said it many times up here. I can't get away from it up here because when I open these Scriptures, that's what the Lord shows, "They testify of me. This is what I've done for you. This is what I've done for my people. I've given them a nail in a holy place. It's me, Christ." And that's what Ezra saw, and that's what Isaiah saw, and that's what David saw, that's what Paul saw.

Psalm 71:3 says, "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress." The Lord is that habitation. The Lord is that holy place.

You know, sometimes when I think about when I'm reading the Old Testament and I go through those sections that talk about the altar and that talk about the candlestick and talk about all the pieces, the shewbread and everything, and every time, the Lord, "This is Christ. This is Christ." Then you go to the New Testament and Jesus is saying, "I'm the door. I'm the porter. I'm everything. I'm the pasture." And we look at that and we say, "Well, Lord, how can you be that?" Because the Lord is everything to his people.

That's what the Scriptures testify of. We have a Lord who is faithful to his people. That's the only way you can escape. You're going to need escaping this week, I promise you. We needed escaping last week. You might be in that chair right now needing escaping really bad, to escape the thoughts in your mind, the weariness of your body, the sickness maybe that you have. We need escaping. He is faithful.

He is the nail in his holy place, but that's not enough, "that our God may lighten our eyes." Is this not a dark world? Is it not? As we've seen many times in the Scripture with the church when they don't see Christ, are they not groping in the dark? Are they not out in the streets saying, "Where is my beloved?" Is there not periods of darkness here while we tread this earth? Do we not need the light of Christ?

John said in John 1:4 and 9, he said, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." That's a mouthful. Christ is life and his life is the light of men. If you and I ever have light, it's because Christ is light. This isn't the counterfeit light that's in this world where titles and riches and, "Oh, I have so much. I have so much." No. Just like the Apostle Paul, the Lord brings you to say, "That's all nothing to me. That's waste to me." Christ is life. He is light.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Verse 9 says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And every man that will ever have light, that has ever been given light, has to have light in Christ. It's his light. That's his people.

We know throughout history and we know throughout the word of God there were those that sat in darkness and were never delivered. They mimicked light but they were not given light. Judas. Many others. Many today. "I have light. I have light." What does that light produce? Is it a broken and contrite spirit? Or is it, "Look at me. Look at my religion. Look at my works. Look what I've done for God." That's not light. That's not the light of Christ. Christ must have the preeminence. He will have the preeminence.

2 Corinthians 4:6 says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That's the light, it's the face of Christ that smiles upon the child of God, so to speak. It's the light in the soul of the child of God that's inexplicable to you and I. "Lord, I don't know how that light, how I got here. It must be you." And the Lord reveals, "Yes, I have carried you. I have revealed myself to you."

Ephesians 5:8 says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." There is that union. In the Lord, "walk as children of light." Children of light in the Lord. What a difference to walk as children of light. The mind is the mind of Christ. There is no concern about what's going on in this world. It's glory of the Lord. How is the Lord glorified? That is walking as children of light with a singleness of eye, and that too, is by the power of him.

But that's not all, "and give us a little reviving in our bondage." Do you not hear that faithfulness? Oh, the bondage that we have and you can try to deny it. I mean, I've heard enough religious people before, "Oh, the Lord has set me free and I live so free." Do you really? Do you not feel the weight of this world? Do you not feel the weight of your sin? Do you not? We're always going to. Hebrews tells us all our life we're subject to the fear of death. That brings its own bondage too. Sin is something as long as we live here, it will be in these members. Lord, we need reviving. We need to be made alive in the midst of this deadness and this bondage. We need to be set free. Lord, you are the freedom. Lord, I need to stand fast in that liberty and that liberty is you.

David said it this way in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." What? Lord, I know that I'm your child. I know that I've sinned against you. I need you to renew a right spirit in me. Show me, Lord, your forgiveness.

Show me, Lord, that you have cleansed me. Show me, Lord, that you are my Lord who has taken away my sin. Show me that you're my nail in a sure and holy place.

Psalm 85:6 says, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" How can we rejoice in thee, Lord? This is a hard life. When you revive us again. It's a wonderful question, "Will you not revive us again, Lord? And then we'll rejoice in thee." It's true. You can't have one without the other. Dependency but dependency on one who is faithful.

And finally, Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Yes, Lord, we need reviving every day and renewing. As I said earlier, I know in this life we hear a lot of, "Oh, there's going to be a revival here today," and people will gather and they'll be singing and hollering and running up and down the halls and saying, "Oh, the Lord is here." And I've sat in some of those, a lot of them when I was younger, and when that revival was over, the next time we met, we went right to the mire. The same bickering. I always wondered about that. "Oh, things are going to be different. We're all going to get along. God just revived us. There is something new." No. I've sat through some powerful ones, too. Powerful, with persuasion of the dark side. It's very powerful.

But let's read in closing the rest of this chapter. Verse 10, "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness." I read that and I said, "Wow, that sounds a lot like today." From one end to the other, this land is just filled with uncleanness. One abomination after another. I hate reading headlines. There are days I've just got to turn it off.

"Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." Have you been brought there where the Lord has shown you the great mercy that he has not consumed you because of that wretched sin nature?

"And hast given us such deliverance as this; Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations?" It's a rhetorical question because then he kind of answers it and he says, "wouldest not thou be angry with us?" Lord, I know the fallenness of man. I know what the propensity is to go right back to the sin.

"O Lord, be not angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?" Then to finish he says, "O LORD God of Israel, thou art

righteous: for we remain yet escaped." And you and I today, we remain escaped. We remain escaped in the righteousness of Christ and that only. We remain escaped today when the Lord reveals to us that he is life; that he has performed all things for us. We remain escaped today when the Lord reveals the depth of his righteousness and the filthy rags of ours.

"For we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this." I hope you never think that you'll ever be able to stand before a righteous and holy God without being clothed in the righteousness of Christ and being found in him. To him be all glory for the great grace to escape as only he can provide.

*Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity to thy word for thy glory.
In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*