

The harvest is past the summer has ended

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[0 : 0 0] The closing Sabbath evening of another year in our lives, another opportunity to preach the gospel to you, another opportunity to present you with the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

And I thought that tonight these words might be very appropriate for us to meditate on them. And tonight I thought that we would look at them from four different angles.

First of all I felt that we should look at the stark and solemn facts that are here for our consideration.

The harvest is past, the summer has ended and we are not saved. Oh, friends, is this true concerning any of my heroes tonight?

That this year's harvest is past. This year's summer has ended and you are not saved. And my friend, is it not true that as that may be a stark fact, there's another one follows on from it.

[1 : 2 3] And that is this, that very soon before we know it, the harvest of our life will be past. The summer time of our life will be past. The summer time of our life will be ended and still some of us are not saved.

Oh, friends, aren't these solemn, solemn issues with which we must confront ourselves tonight. And then secondly, we're going to look together at the prophet's reaction to this solemn situation.

He says, for the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. I am black. Astonishment hath taken hold upon me.

And then thirdly, he asks two very penetrating and practical questions. And these penetrating questions are as follows.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Is it really true, my friends, that those of us who are here and the harvest is past and the summer is ended and we're not saved, is it true, my friend, that God hasn't made provision for you?

[2 : 5 1] Is it really true, that after all, God has been provision for you? And I've got these same questions to ask you tonight. Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there? And then finally, there is in this text a plea that is full of pathos.

And it says, why, why then is the hurt of the daughter, the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?

First of all then, we're coming to view these stark facts. The harvest is past. The summer is ended.

And we are not saved. Now, one or two things about harvest time. Harvest time is the time of ingathering.

[3 : 5 4] And you know, for some people here, harvests of ingathering have passed. How come? Because there are some in this gathering tonight.

And God has come perilously close to them. God has come peculiarly close to some of you in this gathering.

Let me stop for a moment. And let me think of the harvest of ingathering that came close to your life.

There are some of you here, and you've grown up in the very bosom of privilege. There are some of you here, who are the children of Christian parents.

Maybe some of you here, who are the children of Christian parents, that have gone home to be with Christ in glory. And you've seen a harvest gone past.

[5 : 07] Oh yes. Can I take you back, the way the psalmist took us back tonight, and said, the years of old, to mind I called.

Do you really think that you'll ever be able to earn the example of godliness that you've seen from your life?

Do you really? There are some of you here, and you've had mothers, that bowed their knee to God, for your soul, from the time that you were little, little fellows and little girls, at your mother's knee.

And they bowed their knee to the God of heaven, and they shed their tears for you, and they asked at the throne of grace, Lord, save the Lord.

And sadly, they've gone to be with their Saviour now. They've gone to be with Christ perhaps, but their prayers aren't forgotten.

[6 : 20] Their tears aren't forgotten. Remember what God says about a godly mother or father's tears. Into thy bottle put my tears, says David.

Are they not in thy book? And although the harvest is past, as far as you're concerned, who have a godly parents, still the efforts of their life aren't forgotten.

And nor will they be forgotten by you, my friend. Oh, what a privilege it has been for you to grow up in a home where the Lord was honoured, and the Lord was revered.

And yet, sadly for some of us in this gathering tonight, the harvest is past, and we are not saved. And there are others of you here, and God has come peculiarly close to your homes, because maybe God touched these homes of yours.

Maybe he touched someone in the home, and it's just with you as if it is true of others. When the Lord comes a second time, the one shall be taken, the other left.

[7 : 43] Is it true that there are two women grinding corn on the house shop? There are two in the bed. And is it true that as far as God's harvest in the gospel is concerned, the one is taken, the other is left.

And then I want to speak a word to some of you here who have seen a very strange thing in your lives. You've seen the Lord coming with a harvest time for your children.

And your children have been converted, but you're still not unconverted. You're still unconverted. Isn't that a solemn thought? Your children brought into the kingdom of heaven, but as far as you know, you're still outside.

Oh, my friend, in a peculiar way for you, the harvest is past, and you're still not saved. Harvest time is a time of ingathering.

But harvest time is also a time of opportunity. Time of opportunity. God has come close at harvest time to some of you this year.

[9 : 16] How do I know that? Because I seem to feel in my soul tonight that there are men and women here who have been touched by the gospel.

I feel it in my soul that there are some of you and the hard time of God's gleaning hasn't passed you by. Somehow you've been made to stop and think and consider the matters of your soul.

And sadly, the harvest of this year is past. Just think back over the Sabbath evenings we've had together here.

Think back over some of the things we've discussed in the last year. The times, the motivating springs of our Christian ministry. The encounters that men in the Bible had with Christ.

We've been thinking on the past. We've been thinking on these themes. And I'm sure for someone here it's been a harvest time. But for someone here the harvest is past and you're still not saved, my friend.

[10 : 32] Still not saved. Oh, it's a solemn matter to come to the end of a year with all the accountability that that left us.

And here we are at its end. And how do we stand before God? I remember being with a minister on a late Sabbath evening at a communion time in our congregation.

And we met together coming in from church in some ways weary after the day's work. And he said to me that's another day past.

It's gone into its own envelope. It's gone into its own fold. And all that we're left with is the accountability.

My friend, this is another year past as far as gospel presentation is concerned for you. And all that you're left with is accountability.

[11 : 39] My friend, how do you stand at the end of this harvest time? At the end of this year? Harvest it with your soul, my friend? Have you passed over from death to life?

Have you crossed over into the experience of new life in Christ? Or are you still dead in your trespasses and in your sins?

Where do you stand, my friend, in relation to the gospel of Christ? Oh, let me help you. harvest time because just as harvest time is a time of ingathering, and harvest time is a time of opportunity, harvest time in the culture of the western world is a time of joy.

And let me just ask you one question. Have you tasted anything of the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life? Have you tasted the joy of sin forgiven, of your transgression blotted out, of power for God?

Have you tasted it, my friend? Oh, if it's true of you tonight that the heart has passed and you're not saved, then sadly whatever joy, whatever happiness, whatever pleasure you've known in this year, you don't know that joy, you don't know that blessing, the blessing of sin forgiven.

[13 : 18] But let me pass on, the summer is ended. What is summertime? Summertime is the time of the gentle south wind.

That's what summertime is. It's the time of the gentle south wind. All children in the congregation listen to me tonight. Because you know you little ones in this congregation tonight, this is the time of the gentle south wind in your experience.

Look at the blessings some of you have had, moms and dads who love you and who pray for you at a throne of grace and who love you for your salvation and who ask God day by day, oh, come for them, lead them to Christ, bring them into the kingdom.

Young folk, in this gathering tonight, do you know how privileged you are to be where the gentle wind is blowing, where the south wind is blowing?

the south wind is blowing softly for some of you. But sadly, you know, summer is coming to its end.

[14 : 39] Summer is coming to its end. There are some in this gathering and sadly, they're making choices, they're making decisions, they're making their decisions, the only decision they can make.

And the decision leaves you asking, will these also go away? Are you going away, young people, who have grown up in the bosom of the gospel, who have grown up with the blessings of the gospel, are you going to go away and are you going to leave it all behind?

Are you going to turn your back on it when the gentle south wind is blowing? It's warm, it's warm, it's influencing your life.

are you turning away? And is it true tonight that the summer has ended? You are not saved. What can we say about this summertime then?

Well, I think we can say, summertime for the soul is a time of love. It's a time of love. You know, young people, I believe that there are many young lives in grey friars tonight, young lives in this congregation and somehow or other your time is a time of love because the Lord has been dealing with you and he's been working with you and he's been gently drawing you by his love in the gospel and he's been saying to you, will you not follow me?

[16 : 15] Will you not take my way? Will you not go in my path? And some of you here, sadly some of you here are resisting the Holy Ghost.

Oh, it's the truth. Do you know this my friend? Let me warn you. There are three steps in the way that you're taking if you're resisting the Holy Ghost. You can resist the Holy Spirit and then you can grieve the Holy Spirit and at last you can quench the Holy Spirit.

And you be careful my friend lest the path that you're on is the path of resistance that leads to grieving and ends in quenching the Holy Ghost.

Oh, while the gentle breezes of summer are blowing my friend, would they not waft you into the kingdom? Would they not bring you to the river inside of Christ?

Would they not bring you to see the cross? in the experience of our Lord? Would they not bring you to know Christ?

[17 : 30] The time of love but the time of love has ended for son. It's gone. It's gone.

God and all that's left what's all that's left from the time of love? All that's left for some is a heart of stone.

That's all. What an awful life is that young life where the heart has been turned to a heart of stone. Oh, my friend, is it through tonight that the harvest is passed and the summer has ended and we're not saved.

Let's look then at the prophet's response to this solemn situation. I'm hurt, he says, for the hurt of the daughter of my people.

Hurt, hurt for daughters. And you know, my friends, tonight I believe that there are men and women in this gathering and they're hurt for the daughters of their people.

[18 : 47] Hurt and weeping because of daughters that are still stay Christless, daughters that are still godless, without God and without hope in the world, as we draw to the end of another year in our life's journey.

How many parents there are here? I wonder if I were really to ask, would they put up their hands and would they say yes? We know what it is to weep for our children.

wanting to see them in the kingdom, but they're still not in Christ. Wanting to see them turning while the soft winds of summer are blowing, but they're not turning.

They only seem to be hardening. They only seem to be going to stone, turning away, turning away for the hurt of the daughter of my people, am I hurt?

And you know the sad thing Christian father and Christian mother hear, the hurt of your daughters, they don't know that it's hurting.

[19 : 59] They don't know that it's hurting. They think they're having a good time. They think that all's going well for them, in the paths and in the clouds and in the way of the world and in the Sabbath breaking.

they think that it's going well with them. But you know, you know that what they've got is a big hurt in their soul.

You know it. And that's what leaves you so often crying for them and weeping for them at a throne of grace. That's what leaves you asking God, oh, for my daughters, for my sons, for my children, that they'll come to Christ, that they'll be in the kingdom.

And I know it because of my own and you know it because of your own, my friends, here tonight. But do they know the hurt of being without Christ in their souls?

Do they? Do they? Do they really know what it is that they're hurt and they're hurting? No, they don't. So often they think that the world is the good way and the world gives them their good times and the world has so much to offer.

[21 : 18] You know, the devil is a tremendous window dresser. You go through the shops in Inverness, that's what the shops have been doing for the last months now. They've been doing up the shop windows so attractively and the devil does up his shop window very attractively so that our young people will be drawn and attracted to the things of the world and the flesh and the devil.

What does Jeremiah have to say? He says this, I am black. How was this minister of Christ seeing his people turning away from God and their youth turning away from Christ?

How was he? He was saying, I'm in mourning, I'm in mourning. Is there anyone in this gathering tonight really, seriously before God, you're mourning over things that the world has done in your family?

You're mourning over things that the flesh and the devil have done in your family and you're longing to see a change and you're longing to see a turning and you're longing to see your children brought on by the spirit of God and brought to Christ?

Oh yes, I'm black. I'm in mourning. And then there's something else. Astonishment has caught hold upon me.

[22 : 51] Isn't that strange for any minister of the gospel to say that? Astonishment has caught hold on me. But you know, that's the way I feel.

that's the way I feel when I go home from here very often on a Sabbath evening. I'm astonished. Astonished, astonished at my own poverty.

But astonished most of all that my fellow citizens and my fellow travelers are still godless and still Christless. Or do you ever feel like that after the gospel has been preached you wonder why do they go on in unbelief?

Why do they not come to Christ? Why do they not turn? Are you questioning? Are you feared with astonishment? Has it caught hold and are you wondering why?

Why are they carrying on like this? Why are they going on like this? Why are they still without God and without his Christ? past? But Jeremiah has two penetrating questions for these who carry on in unbelief.

[24 : 09] And the first is this. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no balm in Gilead?

You know what that means? it means this. Does the gospel not have power to save you? Does the gospel not have power to heal you?

Of course it does. Really these are rhetorical questions. They're questions that don't need an answer in a sense because they're so obvious.

They're questions that have the answer yes there is a balm in Gilead. but you're going on in your unbelief. And you're going on in your godless way.

You're going on Christless. And we ask you tonight is there no balm in Gilead? Does your lifestyle prove that the gospel has no power?

[25 : 12] Well if it were just up to your lifestyle it would prove that the gospel has no power because it has had no power with you as yet unconverted soul.

But I want to tell you there is a balm in Gilead. Oh the gospel can heal the foulest stain it can.

His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me. You want to know how I know that the Shabbat in Gilead are well the proofs are many but the proof of proofs for me is this I've experienced it for myself.

Do you know my friend you won't know that the Shabbat in Gilead till you really experience it for yourself. It doesn't matter who in your family who in your circle feels it and tells it.

It's better felt than tell it. You've got to experience it for yourself my friend that there is a gospel balm. Oh there is balm in the gospel adjointment poured out that's what God calls the name of Jesus.

[26 : 38] His name poured forth therefore do the virgin slavvy thy name is like ointment poured forth. Do you know that name?

Well the only way that you can come to know Jesus' name as ointment poured forth is that you will come to know him in the cross because that's where the casket is broken.

That's where his name is like ointment poured forth in the cross of Christ. My friend have you come to know Jesus Christ in his dying?

Have you come to know Jesus Christ in his cross? Is there no balm in Gilead? Yes there is and it's in the cross of Christ. That's how you will be saved.

That's how I will be saved if I'm going to be saved. I'll be saved by the cross. But then there's another question. Is there no decision there?

[27 : 40] you're going on without God and without Christ? There are some of you here tonight and you felt well really I should think seriously about these things.

I should really turn my ways and go out with the people of God to seek him in the prayer meeting. I should be there with God's people where they are together in the meetings of the sanctuary.

I should be with them. But you're not with them. Why? Because you haven't come to know the balm and you haven't come to know the physician. That's why if you knew the balm and if you knew the physician you'd be where the physician is applying the balm.

You sure would. You'd be with them where the physician is applying the balm. Oh yes. You know a hundred thousand soldiers couldn't keep you away from Christ if you found him to be the good physician in your soul.

A hundred thousand enemies couldn't keep you away from Christ if you found him to be your own physician. You couldn't stay away. But why?

[28 : 52] Why are you content to stay away? You're content to stay away because you don't know the power of the balm and you don't know the power and the blessedness of the physician.

That's why all my friends get to know the physician. Whoever else at the end of 1991 you get to know get to know the good physician.

Get to know may he be the first fruit in your home. May he be the first fruit in your heart this week. The good physician, the son of God who loved me and who gave himself for me.

May he be your visitor. Is there no physician? And as far as some of you are concerned you don't know the physician.

You've never felt his power, his healing touch hasn't come near your soul, your life hasn't been touched by Christ, sadly. All that's true, sadly.

[29 : 55] And the answer to both these questions is a big yes. the prophet is just left with a plea full of pathos, and it's this.

Why then is the health of the daughter of my people not recovered? My friend, can I ask you tonight, why are you not a Christian?

Or you're saying, minister, if you only knew me, how close I came to the kingdom. I was almost a Christian a few months ago, one night sitting in this church, all the earth I became them.

I was on the edge of my seat, I was on the edge of committing myself to Christ. But the harvest is past, and the summer has ended, and the feelings I had that day have gone.

No longer do they affect me like that. I've been able to resist, able to resist, my friend. Are you greedy?

[31 : 17] Able to resist, are you going to quench the Holy Spirit? Are you? Is that the way 1991 would close for some of you in this gathering tonight?

Having resisted, you've grieved, and at last, you'll quench the Holy Spirit, and send him away out of your life, so that no longer will the things of God worry you.

No longer. God, let's look at this plea full of pathos then before we close tonight. And it's just one big word.

And the big word that I've got to address to unconverted souls tonight is just simply this. Why? Why? Why? Why?

That's all. Why? Has Christ, as a good man once said, has Christ been so false to you?

[32 : 25] Has he been so false to you that you would go and deny him? Has he been so false to you that you would resist him and that you would quench him and at last you would grieve him out of your life so that his spirit will not longer strive with you man.

Why? Why? Why? Answer that question tonight and convert it soul in the quietness of your heart.

Why? I can't answer it for you except in the words of God himself. Why are you not converted?

Let me answer it from God's own word. Because you love darkness rather than light.

Because your deeds are evil. What do you need tonight my friend to whom I am saying why? You need a changed heart. heart. You need that heart of stone taken away and you need to have it replaced by a heart of flesh.

[33 : 44] You need heart surgery. You need a new heart my friend. And the only one that can give it to you is the God against whom you're sinning. The God whom you're resisting.

The God whom you're grieving. The God whom you're quenching. Will you not turn to? And when I ask you why will you not go to him? Will you not say to him Lord have mercy on me.

Have mercy on me. Have mercy on my soul before the close of this year. What about you? Before the close of your life my friend.

You know what your life is like and mine too. It's like one of these little glasses that you get to time an egg being boiled.

And the sand trickles and it trickles and it trickles. Do you know for many of us in this gathering tonight there's more of the sand gone than has still to come.

[34 : 57] Why then is your health not recovered? Why are you not saved my friend? Why are you not a Christian? Let us pray. Oh gracious God how solemn it is to be able to speak to our fellow men on the threshold of the eternal verities.

Help them and help us to see how real these things are. And all for Jesus sake. Amen.