

LISTENING TO THE WORD
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I am honored to be here as the presenter for the 2004 HMS Richards Lectureship on Preaching here at the SDA Theological Seminary. I am also a bit intimidated. Following great men and women of God like Henry Wright, whom I consider to be one of the finest Biblical preachers in the Adventist church today, and my esteemed colleague Hyveth Williams, who became a loved sister and fellow minister in Christ during our time pastoring in the Loma Linda area...following great men and women of God like Henry and Hyveth is like following Noah in a testimony meeting! You're not sure if there's much left to say!

But let me start by confessing that I do not consider myself to be a great preacher. I come here as a fellow student of preaching. A fellow practitioner. I've been a pastor for 14 years and I've been a teacher for 14 years. And I've discovered that it's a lot easier to teach preaching than it is to preach well. It's a lot easier to discuss homiletical method than it is to stand up and preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. I'm still learning. I have not yet attained, but I press toward the mark! I preached five sermons last week. And I'll preach four sermons this coming week. So pray for me! And I will pray for you, that we might be the powerful Biblical preachers that God has called us to be for His glory.

The individual who has had the greatest impact on my preaching ministry presented this HMS Richards Lectureship back in 1998. His name? Mentor, major professor, and friend

Haddon W. Robinson. Perhaps the most important single lesson that I learned from Haddon Robinson was this: a sermon should be a? BULLET, not.....” BUCKSHOT! If you remember that, and put it into practice, whatever sermon form you’re using, then your time here this morning has not been wasted.

The importance of presenting a single dominant thought in a sermon is certainly not original with Robinson, but he drove that idea home for me in a life-changing way. So much so that I am convinced that this lectureship should also have a single dominant idea if this series of lectures is to be a bullet rather than buckshot. So here it is! My single dominant idea: Reverent listening is essential for powerful Biblical preaching. Let me say that again. Reverent listening is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

In this first lecture, I want to emphasize the importance of listening to the Word. I boldly assert this morning that we have no right to speak the Word of God unless we have first listening to the Word ourselves.

It seems to me that one of the greatest challenges of being a preacher is ministry itself. We can become so preoccupied with the Lord’s work that we take no time listening to the Lord of the work. We can become so busy serving the Lord that we take no time to listen to Him. So of you know what I’m talking about, don’t you? And so we run the terrible risk of speaking for God when we have not first listening to Him.

Not long after I graduated from Seminary, a research team at the Alban Institute conducted a survey of 102 seminary graduates.¹ The research revealed a distressing picture:

¹Roy M. Oswald, Crossing the Boundary Between Seminary and Parish (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1980). The graduates came from ten different Protestant seminaries,

Sustaining and fostering personal integration and wholeness within a parish setting was a difficult task for these graduates. . . .

Only in retrospect did they realize that they had gone through (four) years of seminary education without once being asked about their personal life, their relationship with God, their experiences of Christ, the meaning of suffering in their lives, the ups and downs of their own spiritual journey, the ways in which they got centered and grounded, their personal discipline of meditation, prayer, and scriptural study....and the activities that fed them spiritually.²

My personal experience in the first few years after completing Seminary, and the testimony of fellow Seventh-day Adventist ministers confirmed that which the Alban Institute research team reported:

Many found themselves disillusioned by their failure to maintain their own sense of spiritual feeding and growth. Most were genuinely surprised as they had assumed that their spiritual life would be easily maintained or even grow by virtue of their work as pastors. Instead, they experienced a gradual decline or loss of spiritual awareness and wholeness during the two years following graduation. Even though they tried to find the time, place and opportunity for private prayer and reflection, they found their own attempts inadequate and the process very difficult. Some confessed feeling most depleted spiritually just when things were going well in the parish because they were not able to find the time or resources to nourish their own spirits.

In addition to feeling this personal vacuum, assumptions on the part of the congregation that the pastor is spiritually whole and healthy worked against their spiritual growth; the minister's needs were ignored or resisted. . . . As a total group they expressed feelings of inadequacy in the chief marks of their calling:

representing eight different denominations, who had been engaged in parish ministry for one to three years.

²Ibid., p. 18, cited by Forster Freeman, Readiness for Ministry Through Spiritual Direction (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986), pp. 7-8.

scripture, prayer, and worship.³

It is significant to note that many assumed their spiritual life would grow as a result of their work as pastors, but they were surprised to discover that the opposite was true.⁴

There is a story in the New Testament that illustrates the challenge that we face. You know the story well. Perhaps you have even preached a sermon on this passage. It's found in the Gospel of Luke. It's the story of Jesus' visit to the home of Martha and Mary.

The Gospel writer Luke begins his account in Luke 10:38. "....." John identifies this village in Jn 11:1 of his Gospel record as the village of Bethany. If you headed south east from Jerusalem, on the Jericho road, you would find Bethany nestled on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, north of the Jericho road. It was only about 3 kilometers from Jerusalem. It was here that Martha, Mary and Lazarus made their home. By the way, did you notice that Lazarus is never mentioned in this story? I wonder why? He was a beloved friend of Jesus, a faithful disciple. Perhaps he wasn't present at the time of this visit. But more likely, Luke has the specific intention of comparing the responses of the two sisters, and so he simply leaves Lazarus out of the picture.

It's Martha who welcomes Jesus to her home. She is a good woman. Generous. Hospitable. She is a woman of faith, according to John's record. Martha loves the Lord. At the time of her brother's death, Martha confessed to Jesus, "Yes Lord, I believe you are the Christ,

³Oswald, p. 18 (emphasis supplied).

⁴Several other surprises in the area of spirituality were cited by Oswald: "Not knowing how to support my personal spiritual life; my spiritual life did not grow as expected--am not spending much time with it; lack of spirituality of clergy in the Diocese; my spiritual discipline fluctuates wildly; (ibid., p. 22).

the Son of God who is come into the world.” Martha is a remarkable woman of faith. But Martha has one big problem. She is too busy! No, she’s not busy doing bad things. Martha is too busy doing good things. She is entertaining the Lord. But she is so busy serving the Lord that she has no time to be with Him. She is like so many of us. Running on empty. Praying on the run. So busy doing good things that she omits the one thing that is needed.

Jesus gives us a unique glimpse inside Martha’s head. We can read Jesus’ words in Luke 10:41. “.....” Martha, Martha, Jesus says, expressing both His affection and his concern. You are ANXIOUS. The verb used here in the Greek is a strong one: merimao. It implies division of the mind. We find this same verb in Phil 4:6 where Paul exhorts the believers to “be anxious for nothing..” We find the noun, merimna, in 1 Pet 5:7 where Peter appeals to believers to cast all of their anxiety, all of their cares, upon the Lord. But Martha holding on to all of her anxieties. She is anxious. There is a division and distraction of her mind. She is full of inner turmoil.

But notice, in Luke 10:41, that Martha is not only anxious, she is troubled. This is a rare Greek verb, used only once in the NT, thorubadsomai, which implies external agitation. Some manuscripts have the synonym, turbadso, from which we get the English word turbulence. Martha is not only full of inner turmoil. She is also full of outward agitation. Can you see her there? Poor Martha. She is all bent out of shape! Full of inner turmoil and outward agitation.

And notice how this inner turmoil and outward agitation affects her. Look at Luke 10:40: “.....” Martha is distracted. The verb suggests to be drawn about in different directions.” Martha is all stretched out. She is spinning her wheels. So has so much good to do that she can’t do anything. Immobilized, as it were. Can you relate to Martha’s condition? You

feel so swamped, so overloaded that you can't do anything? That's just how Martha felt. And not only is she distracted. She is also clearly mad at Mary. But apparently Martha has learned from experience that it won't do any good to talk to Mary, so Martha dumps on Jesus. Notice her words in Luke 10:40: "....." Now it's not only Mary's fault. It's the Lord's fault too!

Oh, Martha. What has happened to you? You so much wanted to serve the Lord. You welcomed Him into your home. But you have become so busy serving the Lord that you have no time to be with Him. You're all messed up and all strung out.

Can you relate at all to Martha's experience? Look honestly into your own heart right now. How is it between you and the Lord? I taught a colloquium here in the early 90s and a doctoral student came to me with this startling testimony: "I've been a student here for the past five years and I don't remember the last time I opened my Bible just to listen to God." I wish I could tell you that a rare exception. But he is not. He had fallen into a trap of ministry. So busy serving the Lord, or preparing for service, that he took no time to listen to God personally.

How is it with you this morning. Honestly now. How are you ordering your priorities? Demands in your academic studies. Demands at work. Bills to pay. Families to take care of. Responsibilities at church. It isn't easy to get everything done, is it? Sometimes we feel just like Martha, right? Like we're being stretched out in ten different directions. We need 25 hours in a day, and eight days in a week, or maybe nine.

And what is it that so often suffers? Isn't it our personal time alone with the Lord, sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His word? We end up praying on the run, serving on the run, preaching on the run, and we rationalize that maybe it will be better next week, or next month, or next year. But it's always the same. The tyranny of the urgent. And on and on it goes.

We all face the challenge that Martha faced. We all are inundated with good things that need to be done. But we all need to remember that our first priority is to take time at the feet of Jesus, sharing with Him in prayer and listening to His voice through His Word.

The challenge of staying focused increases as your preaching ministry develops. I want to turn your attention to another familiar passage of Scripture that has guided my thinking and my ministry for the past 18 years. It's found in the book of Acts, chapter 6.

Have you ever sat down and read the first few chapters of Acts at one sitting? It's a marvelous story of the power of God at work in the life of the fledgling Christian church! We read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost...of sweet fellowship among the believers...of unprecedented growth...of courage in the midst of persecution.

And then we come to chapter 6. And here the apostles face an enormous challenge. It's a challenge that has the potential to derail their ministry, to cripple their effectiveness.

I want to suggest that the passage naturally divides into three sections:

Firstly, there is the challenge, in v 1.

Secondly, there is the consensus v 2-6.

Thirdly, there is the consequence in v.7.

Firstly, let's look at the challenge, in v. 1. What was the problem? v 1 "....." The challenge is concerning the fair distribution of a daily food allocation. The Grecian Jews were complaining that their widows were being overlooked. In the midst of all of the miracles and marvelous manifestations of God's power, we see the church is far from perfect! It seems that someone is always complaining about something. And things haven't changed much. There's at least one in every church! Right?

Notice in v.1. We read that the number of the disciples was increasing. And whenever that happens the great controversy rages. For just as the Lord does not desire that any be lost, the Devil does not desire that any be saved. We see it every time we go out on the front line, don't we?

You don't know what I'm talking about, don't you. There's a great controversy going on between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. And the Devil will do anything to prevent men and women from being saved in God's kingdom.

And so the Devil sows a seed of contention regarding the fairness of the daily distribution of food. Just consider for a moment the logistics of such a task! The core of the Christian church, we read in Acts 1:15 was about 120. Then as we know from Acts 2:41... about 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost and added to the church. By the time Peter and John are arrested and taken before the Sanhedrin, in Ch 4 the membership has already mushroomed to 5000 men!, which would give a total membership of well over 10,000, plus children.

And do you remember how they handled their possessions? Acts 2:44-45. "....." It's a beautiful picture of unselfish fellowship, isn't it? Christian communism. In Ch 4: 32ff we read, "....." But just think for a moment. Over 10,000 members, and everything held in common. Can you imagine how difficult it would be to ensure that everyone received a fair allocation of the daily distribution? It's a perfect opportunity for the Adversary to sow seeds of doubt and dissention. He plays on a long standing rivalry and jealousy between the Hebraic Jews and the Grecian Jews. And he suggests to the Grecian Jews that their widows are being unfairly treated.

The Scripture record does not suggest that there was any validity to the accusation. It's

hard to believe that the apostles would deliberately discriminate against any person or group. It is far more likely that being foreigners, the Greek-speaking widows had difficulty making their wants known and getting them attended. Or it may simply have been a case of some people getting lost in the shuffle.

But whether the complaint was real or imaginary, the apostles realized that the challenge was a real one. It had to be dealt with. Problems seldom go away just by ignoring them. We need to have the courage to face them. And this was a serious accusation. An accusation of prejudice in the church of Jesus Christ. An accusation that had the potential of dividing the church.

But the apostles also realized that there was a bigger issue that needed to be settled. It related to the focus of their ministry as spiritual leaders. The work of caring for the day to day needs of the believers was becoming an all-consuming task. The apostles were in great danger of falling into the trap of ministry...becoming so busy serving the Lord that they had no time to be with Him.

And that brings us to the second section of this passage: the consensus, in v. 2-6. "....." Two vital decisions come out of the ensuing discussion. And notice that the process is not arbitrary or dictatorial. Rather there is a consensus. V. 2 records that the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and v 5 tells us that the proposal pleased the whole group.

The first decision was that there needed to be a delegation of responsibilities. Seven men should be set aside to care for the daily distribution of food and concerns relating to the daily operation of the church. These men were to be "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." And the Scripture records that this decision was implemented ; v.5-6: "....."

The second decision is, in my mind, even more significant, though it is often passed over without mention. There is an affirmation of the God-ordained focus for the spiritual leaders. Notice in v.4 "....." We will devote ourselves to what?...prayer, and the ministry of the Word.

As we read through the preceding chapters of the Book of Acts we see that this was indeed the focus of their life and ministry. In Acts 1:14 we read, "....." Again in Acts 2:42 we read: "....." Listen to their powerful prayer after Peter and John were released from the Sanhedrin for the first time. Acts 4:24-30. "....."

That's a powerful prayer of faith, isn't it? And I don't want you to miss v.31. "After they had prayed...when? after they had prayed...the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

If you want God to accomplish great things through the ministry to which God has called you, I want to remind you this evening, it's going to happen after you pray. Prayer is the key. Where there is prayer, there is power.

In a very thought-provoking chapter at the end of Ministry of Healing entitled the Higher Experience, Ellen White has this to say about the privilege of prayer:

We must have times set apart for meditation and prayer and spiritual refreshing. We do not value the power and efficacy of prayer as we should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish." MH p.509

That is why we are called to be men and women of prayer.

But back to v.4 of Acts 6. Prayer does not stand alone. What does the text say? "We will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." First comes prayer...then

comes the ministry of the word. Would it be too bold of me to assert that we have no right to give our attention to the ministry of the word unless we have first devoted ourselves to prayer? We have no right to take the Word to peoples' homes if we have not first bathed ourselves in prayer. And would it be too bold of me to assert that we have no right to minister the word to others until we have first allowed the Word to minister to our own souls?

But if we are first and foremost men and women of prayer, and have allowed the Word of God to minister to our own souls, then we have something to say. Amen? Then our words will have power. Remember what we just read, in Acts 4:31: "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Look back in the preceding chapters of the book of Acts. This had been their focus all along...prayer, and a ministry of the word of God. In chapter 1 they all pray. In chapter 2, the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in a marvelous way on the day of Pentecost. Listen to Peter's powerful ministry of the word in Acts 2:36-40. "....." That's powerful preaching!

And don't think that a ministry of the word is limited to preaching. In chapter 3 a crippled man cries out to Peter and John for alms. Notice v. 4-8: "....." Is that not also a ministry of the word? Yes indeed. For Jesus is that life giving word. And in His name they healed the sick and set the captives free. And as faithful ministers of the word, the Lord still calls us to a healing ministry.

Then Peter preaches another sermon in Solomon's colonnade. Talk about powerful ministry of the word. Acts 3:17-20. "....." As a result of that sermon, the membership of the church tripled!

And then in Acts 4:33 we read: "....." And after their flogging, having been called in a second time before the Sanhedrin we read, Acts 5:41-42: "....."

They were an unstoppable power for good. They were men of prayer and they were ministers of the word. And when this challenge arose over the daily distribution of food, the apostles re-evaluated their focus. They saw there was a real need to distribute the daily allocation of food in an equitable way...but it was becoming an overwhelming task. And so they delegated responsibility to the deacons. And in so doing they affirmed the God-ordained focus of their ministry as spiritual leaders. It would not be right for us to sidetracked...we must give devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

How often have we rationalized our lack of prayer by saying, "Oh well, the Lord understands. After all, I'm busy doing His work." My brothers and sisters, God is not impressed with that kind of logic. It was not right back then...and it's not right now. We need to keep our focus on track. We too must devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

But let's move on to the third section of this passage. We've taken a look at the challenge, and we examined the consensus. But what about the consequence? What was the outcome of their decision? We read in v.7 the marvelous result. v.7: "....." There was a three-fold consequence. Firstly, what? The word of God spread. Secondly, the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly. And thirdly, a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Isn't that what we all desire? That the word of God might spread? We're not in this work just to make a living, are we? We desire that the Word of God might be spread, Amen? And that the number of disciples in the area where God has called us to serve might increase rapidly.

And yes, that by the grace of God, even a large number of Christian ministers might become obedient to the faith. Isn't that what we all desire?

How does it happen? Some people say that the key is to get everyone involved through delegation of responsibility. And that's certainly an important part of the answer. But only a part. I believe that this passage identifies the primary key for success. It is resisting the temptation to become side-tracked and keeping our focus on track: like the apostles, we must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. We must realize that our first work, our first priority, our primary responsibility is to listen to God in His Word. Only then can we speak the Word of God with holy boldness. Reverent listening is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of interviewing Chaplain Barry Black, chaplain of the United States Senate. Perhaps some of you read that interview in MINISTRY magazine. The interview was entitled "Preaching out of the Overflow." If anyone has a demanding ministry schedule, it's Chaplain Barry Black. It would so easy for him to say, "You have to understand. I'm so busy serving the Lord in a position of great responsibility, I don't have time for personal prayer. I'm too busy writing prayers to read before the Senate. I don't have time to listen to God in His Word. I'm too busy preparing sermons to preach before world leaders.

But the reason God has blessed Barry Black's ministry is clear to me. Barry Black is a modern Daniel. Barry Black has determined to be more than a man of the clergy. He has determined, by God's grace to be a man of God. And if we are to speak boldly in the name of God, we must first take time listening to God ourselves. Reverent listening is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

How does Barry Black take time to listen to the Lord in the midst of a demanding daily schedule? Listen to his testimony: “I get through the entire Bible three or four times a year. The way I do this is I listen to Scriptures. I have a forty-five minute to one hour commute to get to the Capital. That gives me an opportunity to listen to CDs of the Scriptures. Right now I’m listening to the New International Version. You can listen to the Bible in 70 hours—the complete Bible! When I’m commuting, or when I’m flying on an airplane, I always have the Word in my CD player. I keep a pad of paper on my passenger seat, and although I’m not listening to find sermons, sermons find me! Fifty lifetimes would not be enough to preach out of that amazing reservoir of Scripture. I get enough sermon material for five to six sermons a week easily. So I am constantly being fed from the Word. It’s an amazing experience. It’s something that I look forward to. I can’t wait to get in the car because I’m going to listen to the Word! You receive so much wonderful material when you expose yourself to the Word. Then, when you get up to preach you are literally preaching out of the overflow.”

What about his experience with prayer? Again, listen to his testimony: “I cannot preach without praying. I cannot study without praying. I cannot live without praying. I had a dramatic experience with the Lord fifteen or sixteen years ago which took my spiritual life to another level. It took me to the place where I began to be aware of the constant presence of God. And so I talk to Him! He is my companion. He is there. And He talks to me. That experience had a transforming impact on my personal life and on my preaching. When I get up in the morning, before my feet touch the floor, I swing out of my bed on my knees. From that moment on, there are not many seconds of the day that I am not aware of the blessed presence of my Companion. That’s what prayer is all about. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says “Pray without ceasing.” Each

morning when I open the United States Senate with prayer, I am praying while I am praying. And when I am preaching, I am praying while I am preaching. While I'm going along, I'm receiving instructions, I'm receiving guidance, I'm practicing the presence of God. That's what prayer is to me. Prayer is not just something that you do. It's something that permeates who you are."

My brothers and sister, if you would speak for God before kings, you must first kneel in reverence before the King of Kings. If you would preach in Jesus' name to the leaders of this world, you must first kneel humbly before the One who spoke the world into existence and learn of Him. Reverent listening is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

One way that I hold myself accountable is this: I am part of a men's group that meets every Sunday evening. They will be meeting without me this evening. But they will be praying for me. We have committed to listening to a chapter of the Gospel of John every day, not to amass more Bible knowledge, but in order to listen to God in His Word. We take one chapter per week, and listen to that same chapter every day during that week. It's amazing how the Lord can catch your attention. I decided to memorize the words of Jesus found in each chapter. Do you know the first words of Jesus recorded in the Book of John? They really caught my attention. Jesus says, "What do you want?" His next words, "Come and you will see." What a promise that is! Come and you will see." His next words? "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas." And then it hit me. The Lord Jesus knows everything about me, just like He knew everything about Simon. He knows my present. "You are Simon." He knows my past. "You are the son of John." He knows my future. "You will be called Cephas."

We see the same truth revealed in Jesus' encounter with Nathanael. He knows your past.

“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” He knows your present. “Behold, an Israelite, in whom there is no guile.” He knows your future. “Most assuredly, I say to you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

It is this Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, the One who knows your past, the One who knows your present, the One who knows your future, it is this Jesus who calls you to preach the good news of His life, death, resurrection, ascension, heavenly ministry and soon return as King of Kings and Lord of lords. And if you would be a faithful preacher for Jesus Christ, you must first take time to sit at His feet and listen to His Word. Only then will you speak the Word of God with holy boldness. Reverent listening to the Word is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

And so, one of the greatest needs in preaching today is the spiritual revival of preachers. Preachers need to be converted! Preachers need to be revived. John Stott, in his book *Between Two Worlds*, tells the story of a preacher in the south of England who was converted in the preaching of his own sermon. Rev. William Haslam had been ordained to the gospel ministry in the Church of England in 1842 and was serving in a parish in North Cornwall. By his own admission, he was dissatisfied and spiritually dry. One day in 1851, while preaching a sermon entitled “What think ye of Christ?” William Haslam began to listen to the Word himself. The change was so obvious that a local preacher visiting the church that day jumped up and shouted, “The parson is converted! Hallelujah! Three or four hundred members of the congregation broke out in spontaneous praise to God. Even Reverend Haslam joined in the symphony of praise to God. He then suggested that they all sing the doxology, which they did, over and over

again.

The news spread like wildfire through north Cornwall that “the parson was converted, and that by his own sermon, in his own pulpit!” And William Haslam’s conversion was the beginning of a great revival in his parish. And so it will be for each of us. When we realize that we are first called to be men and women of God, we are first called to reverent listen to Him, to sit at His feet, and learn of Him...that we will go out with Holy Spirit boldness to preach powerful Biblical sermons. Reverent listening to the Word is essential for powerful Biblical preaching.

I have been deeply moved by the words of a song that Steve Green sings, entitled “Revive us, O Lord!” It expresses the prayer of my heart that the Lord would breathe His Spirit into me that I might know Him more deeply than ever before and listen more attentively to His Word than ever before.

Revive us, Oh Lord.

Oh Holy God and King
Hear your people as we sing
Revive us , oh Lord
Grant us this our one request
That we may walk in holiness
Revive us , oh Lord

Humbly Lord we now confess
Wandering hearts and selfishness
Revive us, oh Lord
We recognize our desperate need
For purity in thought and deed
Revive us, oh Lord

Melt us...and break us...mold us...and remake us

Do, oh Lord what You must do
To turn your people's heart to You
Revive us oh Lord

Fill us, Lord, this very hour
Infuse us with your sacred power
Revive us, oh Lord
That as your people we might be
All that You would have us be
Revive us, oh Lord

Melt us and break us
Mold and remake us

Do, oh Lord, what you must do
To turn your people's hearts to you
Revive us, oh Lord
Revive us, oh Lord

That's the prayer of my heart as a preacher this morning. Revive me, oh Lord. What about you? Revive us, oh Lord. Do, oh Lord what you must do to turn your people's hearts to you. We confess that nothing is too hard for you. Have mercy upon us, O Lord! Breathe out

Your Spirit upon us. Revive us, O Lord.

I am happy to take the remainder of our time for some questions.