**“Revived”**

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Psalm 85

Advent Midweek 2

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There is a television personality who’s hosted a number of different reality shows. Discovery Channel’s Mike Rowe has (most memorable to me) presented himself taking on (and the show’s named for it) “Dirty Jobs”. How many of you have ever seen it?. The premise is that there are certain unpleasant jobs that need to be done so that in civilized societal life remains clean … and somebody actually has to **DO THE CLEANING … DO THE WORK OF IT ALL**. **He** takes on some of those tasks … and **films himself doing them**. He’s put on gloves and a mask, grabbed shovels, and showed the world not wanting to touch those necessary duties what **DOING THEM** looks like … and even smells like … and we remain sanitized (clean of mess and smell where we’re at) in a easy chair in our TV room.

Mike has attempted to be a sewer inspector (try to picture the full implications of that duty), a snake venom researcher (having to, also, gather his own deadly snakes to, then, extract venom to research, and a road crew worker tasked with the job of scraping dead animals off of roadside pavements. There was, apparently, one episode that he filmed deemed too gross to put on the air yet can be seen on Youtube. I recommend you not seek it out, but it is there apparently. I didn’t look for it … and you who are inquisitive have been warned. ….

“**Roadkill**”. That’s about the stuff that God’s people looked like to Him at the time our second “Resounding Psalm for Advent” got written. For people **captive** in Babylon (the Temple back home destroyed, walls of the city broken down, the place entirely burned and them hauled away, nothing seemed to pleasant or beautiful or fragrant about their days. Nothing (with this exile after defeat) seemed hopeful or, even, in any way, well … or, even **living**. In Psalm 85, the people pleaded to God, “Will You not **REVIVE** us again?” And, from those desperate words, the Psalm gives also us a robust answer to such a reality, that

**GOD IS FAITHFUL TO REVIVE HIS PEOPLE**

**1**

One of the worst jobs Mike Rowe forced himself to do was be an “anti-shark-bite-suit tester” (and, yes, there is such a job available … that maybe have been a booth at high school “Career Day”) but the job apparently exists. If interested, you’re all **qualified**. You just need skin and a willingness to have strapped on to them a suit-for-testing then dive into a shark’s feeding frenzy and see what happens, so that experience can be documented. You’d be live bait, so how’s that for a hostile work environment.

Babylonian exiles one feeding frenzy to get into another: back home in Jerusalem when they were allowed to return. A hostile environment had taken over in their absence. But, in that, they were to rebuild the Temple and the city’s walls … amidst challenges … and embattled while doing it.

Last week, Pastor Craig reminded of the Assyrians hauling off Israel’s Northern Kingdom’s people, never to return or be heard from again for their their idolatries, but the south (Judah) got sustained for attempted faithfulness to God for another hundred and some years. But, then, even in them, God gave them over to their own rebellious self-interests …

… yet God had mercy on **them … and solely for the sake of salvation through their Seed**. He heard their Psalm 85 cries: “Lord, You were favorable to your land; You restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin. You withdrew all Your wrath; You returned from Your hot anger”. God called back His people (and **His Son, the Seed within them**) You **REVIVED** their eternally-useful duties.

But those duties would, then, always be in the midst of a fallen home that would, for a good long while, be not much different than a shark feeding frenzy. Enemies held and surrounded what was meant to be home, and in that context people God’s people had to build … and learn the significance of that city for a saving sacrifice and a Temple place-setting until the arrival of God’s Son.

For those in Psalm 85’s time, Nehemiah 4 tells of **enemies to the project** (a couple of them named). Yet **God would want HIS CONSTRUCT IN THAT PLACE, no matter the resistance**.

God’s people are (most times) in **difficult contexts for God’s work**, yet **given that work (that divine work to do), Templing God (constructing His “locale”) in challenging places**. Mike Rowe probably never dreamed of a “Dirty Job” like that ,,, even though he did do the shark suit.

**2**

What are **your** hostile environments? Maybe it’s a workplace or school or maybe your neighborhood or home and even family … or your health. Maybe it’s even in Church or your own wants and expectations. Where you have a “Dirty Job” to do cleaning up whatever messes you’re struggling in **for God’s sake**, **Psalm 85** speaks of **HIS REVIVING from your plea**.

Your prayer, then, may sound like the Psalm’s: “Restore me (and us all) again, O God of our and my salvation, and put away Your indignation toward us! Put it away toward me! Will You be angry forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? Will You not **REVIVE** me and any and all of us who want that again, that me with all Your people may **rejoice in You**? **Show** **Your steadfast love, O Lord** (and, **again,** **Christmas comes to remind us of Your doing that**) … **granting then (birthing) Your** **SALVATION**!”

**3**

For the returners to Judah, there was Nehemiah to help and focus them in their work for God. He directed and encouraged with his own version of “praise the Lord and pass the ammunition for the fight while we’re doing the work”. People worked, then, with a shovel or trowel in one hand and a weapon in the other to fend off the challenges. And things progressed. The city wall got repaired and the Temple was under way. Psalm 85’s “Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase” could be imagined.

**You, too**, know that God will give **you** what is Good. **You know** that He’s brought **you** this far and blessed you overall in the blessing of a promised Good eternity … and security and hope until that’s realized. It’s not Nehemiah who needs guide and encourage us these days, because we have the **One so the more**. **The Messiah saves us from our sins and is our Lord and King**.

Yes, God will give you what is Good. Tonight we’ve gathered to **recall that** in the **gift of Himself (“steadfast love and faithfulness” in the miracle of a birth among humans)**. Such the better than the stone Temple is the **flesh One in Jesus**. Such the better is the **walls of the city of our bodies stepped into by His indwelling baptismal presence inside of us**. Jesus was born to **REVIVE** sinful bodies to life with His life and body. It’s what angels sang about at His birth, and what Mary treasured up the hearing of it in her heart.

The “**Dirty Job**” **Jesus had come to do**. **Thorns, whips, nails, spear, a cross and the Father’s curse upon sin**, God’s Son Jesus overcame every challenge to **“finish” salvation for you and me**.

It’s **His righteousness that “goes before you and makes for your footsteps a way in His”.** The **Means** are **simple for you** (Word that you have heard and believed, water, bread, wine, forgiveness), yet **toughly won** by the babe born to Bethlehem. So may the words of this psalm resound over you: “Righteousness (God’s in Christ Jesus) will go before you and make His footsteps your way”.

In +Jesus’ name. Amen.