ENLIVENING AND INVIGORATING

NO. 1350

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"Quicken thou me according to thy word."
Psalm 119:25

YOU will frequently find David uttering this petition. It is a favorite prayer of his, "Quicken thou me, O LORD!" And as David was like the rest of us—indeed, his experience is the mirror of the experience of all believers—you may depend upon it, we all have great need to pray as he did, "Quicken thou me, O LORD!"

If he felt a coldness and deadness frequently stealing over him, so do we. Did he find it hard to endure such a wretched state, so ought we also to loathe and abhor it. And as he cried to the strong for strength, and knew that quickening must come from God, we ought to know—I trust we do know—the same resource under the same necessity. Therefore, let it be our prayer now, and let the like prayer be repeated often, "Quicken thou me, O LORD, according to thy word."

How are we to understand this quickening? It means, of course, making alive, keeping alive, and giving more life—in a word, enlivening. He was alive—he was a spiritual man, or else he would not have asked for life. For dead men never pray, "Quicken me." It is a sign that there is life already when a man is able to say, "Give me life, O Lord!" This is not the prayer of the unconverted. It is the prayer of a man who is already regenerate, and has the love of God in his soul, "Quicken thou me, O LORD, according to thy word."

Quickening, of course, comes to us at first by regeneration. It is then that we receive spiritual life, and as there is no natural life in the world except that of which God is the author, so assuredly in the new world there is no spiritual life except that which God has created.

The first quickening is that which comes upon us when we begin to feel our need of a Savior, when we begin to perceive the preciousness of that Savior, and when with a feeble finger we touch the hem of the Savior's garment. Then are we quickened into newness of life.

But that spiritual life needs every day to be kept alive. It is like the life of a fire, which must be fed with fuel and supported with air. It is like our natural life, which needs food to sustain it, and needs to breathe the atmosphere in order to its continuance. We are as much creatures of God's power in our continuing to live as in our commencing to live.

And spiritually, we owe as much to divine grace that we remain believers as that we became believers. As soon as we get spiritual life, this prayer is most proper as a sacred instinct, "Lord, continue this life in my soul, continue to quicken me. For if You do not, I have no life in myself apart from You, and I should die were I severed from You, as does a branch when severed from the vine. Continue therefore, good Lord, to quicken me."

Obviously, too, some special invigoration and excitement of life must be implied here. The trees all through the winter are alive. Their substance is in them when they cast their leaves. The vitality is not extinct, though our poet of "The Seasons" does sing—

"How dead the vegetable kingdom lies:
How dumb the tuneful choir!"

A divine act of power secretly maintains the life, hidden away till the spring-time comes. Then the chains of frost are broken, the genial warmth begins to light upon the sealed buds, the sap flows, and the

trees in their reviving tints and bursting buds give such promise of returning foliage and flower that in a very special sense they may be said to be quickened. As soon as the sap begins to rise, the buds swell, the leaves unwrap themselves, and the concealed flowers gradually open—a quickening comes over what was alive, and what had been kept alive all through its dreary, wintry time.

So, beloved, you see, first of all, God gives us life, then He maintains life, and then at times and seasons (would to God they were more frequent, and even without intermission!), He gives vigor to that life, so that it becomes more manifest and mighty. And then it is that in a conspicuous manner the quickening is seen.

I would to God that He would lead some poor sinner to pray in the very first sense of the word, "Lord, quicken me. Give me life." It would be a sign that life was coming. I would that every Christian would incessantly pray the prayer in the second sense, "Quicken me, LORD"—that is, "Continually keep me faithful and true to thy Word."

And then, thirdly, I would that we would all go on to the third sense and say, "Lord, inspirit me, revive me, lift me up unto a higher life, fill me with more of Your Holy Spirit, and so make me more truthful and more like Your ever living Son Jesus, who has life in Himself."

Having thus introduced to you the prayer, I would use the Psalm to explain it—to explain, rather, the experience which commends the prayer to our constant use.

First, brethren, I would assign *some reasons why you need quickening*. Secondly, I would point out *some motives to seek it*. Thirdly, we shall mention *some ways in which it is wrought*. And fourthly, we will *suggest pleas, such as the psalmist used, for obtaining it.*

I. THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY WE SHOULD SEEK QUICKENING.

You cannot overlook that confessed in the text—because of *the deadening influence of this world,* "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word." We are surrounded with dust. We are associated with dust. The best and brightest things that are in this world are made of dust. And as for ourselves, although we have within us a new and higher life that has no fraternity with the dust, there is an old life belonging to us which is brother to the dust—which says to the worm, "Thou art my sister." "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," is true of every one of us.

Yet, beloved, we cannot feed on the dust—that shall be the serpent's meat—it may not be ours. The new life in us craves for something higher, but the old nature tries to be contented with dust. It clings to it—the dust cleaves to it, and it cleaves to the dust.

You know how the care and cross, the work and worry of a busy day will often dampen your ardor in prayer, and disqualify your thoughts for devout meditation. You cannot think much of treasure laid up in heaven if you think a great deal of this world's goods. Riches are often a dangerous encumbrance to those who seek after righteousness. They steal the heart away from God.

Matthew Henry, in his own racy style, warns us that the care in getting, the fear in keeping, the temptation in using, the guilt in abusing, the sorrow in losing, and the responsibility of giving account for gold and silver, houses and lands, accumulate a heavy burden for him to bear who would have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

And yet if you have but little of this world's wealth, you will find poverty a trying ordeal. The cares of poverty, like those of property, often break the calm repose which our faith ought to enjoy. If things go smoothly with you in business, then those smooth, deceitful streams bear you away from God. And if they go roughly with you, then in the deep and in the storm you are too apt to forget the Lord or to murmur against His providence.

There is nothing in this world to help a Christian—it is all against him. The world holds us to itself as tightly as it can—it acts like bird-lime to us. When we would mount on the wings of eagles, we are often like the eagle that you see in the gardens where they keep such creatures—there is a chain on our foot and we cannot rise. Our soul cleaves to the dust.

Now, as this is the case, and as you cannot get out of the world, do pray that you may rise superior to its influence. You men of business, you heads of families, you who guide, and you who follow, you who

are sociable, and you who are solitary, all of you must still be in the world and mix with men of the world, therefore cry to God, yea, cry mightily, "Lord, deliver us from the deadening influence of the world in which we live! Quicken us, we beseech You, from day to day!"

A second reason for our need of quickening lies in *the influence of vanity*—of that which is actually sinful. Refer to the thirty-seventh verse, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

As we go about in the world, we see a great deal of that which is injurious to us. The sins of others leave some kind of stain upon the conscience. I question whether you can read a newspaper and scan the story of a murder or a robbery, or survey with more distant glance in any book of history the sin of your fellow men, without being in a degree injured therewith.

Much of vanity and sin we are compelled to see in our daily callings. We do not merely read of profanity, but we hear the oath. You enter into a railway carriage, and you cannot always avoid hearing conversation which is the reverse of pure. You go into your house, and unless you are happily situated so that all are Christians, there will be a great deal of which you cannot approve, and which can be of no benefit to your soul.

Besides, the whole world runs after its own idols—men each seek man his own, and not the things of Christ, and all these things are vanity. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity." Our eyes are often fascinated by the glitter and the glare of these vanities. The world puts on a very beauteous complexion. She attires her head and paints her face like Jezebel, and it is not always easy, like Jehu, to detest her, and to say, "Fling her down, and let the dogs consume her."

We have nought to do with this vain world. We are not citizens of this land. But truly, Madam Bubble, as Bunyan calls her, with her purse and her person, continually presenting herself, is enough to make even Standfast himself to stagger, and he need to fall on his knees, and cry, "Quicken me, O LORD, and turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." There is thus a second good reason why we should seek for quickening.

Sometimes we shall have need to cry for quickening because *we are surrounded by deceivers*. Turn to the eighty-seventh and eighty-eighth verses, "They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts. Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."

If you are often assailed by foes, and if those foes happen to be the men of your own household, if they jeer at your faith, if they make a jest of holiness on purpose to pain you, you will need a great deal of grace not to be ruffled.

To be a dove always, to be a dove in the midst of ravens, to be a lamb always, to be a lamb in the midst of wolves, is not so easy. He must have much spiritual life who shall be able, wisely and discreetly, to behave himself in the midst of those who lie in wait to entrap him in every word that he says.

Remember how David acted in the court of Saul, when Saul eyed him. Unsullied purity is the safest policy. Though Saul eyed David, he could not see any fault or rake up any charge that he could bring against him. Oh, that all of you young people, especially those of you who are subjected to scorn and contempt because of your fidelity to Christ, may be doubly girt with grace—may you be, indeed, quickened to the full spiritual life, that you may stand the test of persecution and reproach, of suspicion and disparagement, of misrepresentation and slander, which is sure to come upon you. Do not pray to be rid of the grievance—rather rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for your Savior's sake.

You may pray, if you like, that the distress may be lightened, because your strength is small. You may pray that your flight be not in the winter, but do not make that the special object of your petition. Rather pray for grace to endure it. Pray for life, spiritual life, that you may throw it off.

I suppose that, in order to prevent disease, it is a good thing to remove the cause of the disease, and take away everything that produces ill savors in the air. But the sure thing is for the man himself to be vigorous as to his own life. I have no doubt many die in moderately healthy localities because they have no stamina, they are constitutionally weak, while the young man who is in robust health may even pass

through a pestiferous district, and be for hours in the midst of miasma, without falling a prey to its deadly influence, simply because the life that is in him resists the malaria.

Your business, dear friend, if you live in the midst of those that are set on fire by hell, who pour out venom against you, is to pray, "Lord, quicken me that I may have so much spiritual life that these deleterious influences may not be ruinous to me. Deliver me from them when it is Your will, but meanwhile let me have such a full tide of life that I may be able to endure what I must encounter without being injured thereby."

Another reason for seeking quickening will be found in the hundred and seventh verse, "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word." *In seasons of affliction*, we are very apt to fall into a dark, cold, dead state of mind. We have known many persons in poverty—I have often been sorely pained by it, when members of this church who have become very poor, have given up attendance at the house of God. I could understand their reasons far better than I could appreciate them.

Their pride was doubtless wounded, because they could not dress as they used to do, though I am sure nobody here thinks any better of you for dressing yourselves in fine clothes. I do not think so much of you myself. As they could not dress quite so well they felt they could not mix as they did with some with whom they were once equal in circumstances. So they have gone out of the way.

It is a sad thing when they do so. I am much saddened by it. I hope none of you ever will. You ought to think that you will be more welcome at the house of God when you are in trouble than you ever were before. And if you lose your earthly possessions, it is all the more reason why you should seek to hold the faster to the riches which are above.

If you are in pain, too, that kind of affliction has a great tendency to distract the mind. Who can think when the brow is throbbing? Who can be calm when every vein becomes a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on? It is not easy.

Well now, we have reason, when we feel weak, when we feel that the mind is suffering in sympathy with the body, to cry, "Lord, let grace triumph over nature. Let Your Spirit have power—Your blessed comforting Spirit—to lift me up above the weight which now is laid upon me, that I may glory in tribulation also, because the power of God does rest upon me."

You look upon a weight as a heavy matter which keeps you down, but mechanics know how to make a weight raise you. A little adjustment of ropes and pulleys and such-like contrivances, and the weight shall lift you up.

And the Lord knows how to make our afflictions minister to our quickening, as we shall have to show you directly—but in themselves they deaden us. They do not assist, but rather hinder, and so, whenever they come, then is the time for us to pray with special emphasis, "Quicken thou me, O LORD, according to thy word."

Thus have I endeavored to show you from the psalm itself some of the reasons why we need quickening.

II. Now, let us pass on to describe SOME OF THE MOTIVES FOR SEEKING QUICKENING. There are very many.

Seek it because of what you are. You are a Christian, and therefore already alive unto God. Life seeks more life—it is its natural tendency. If there is life in a tree, it seeks to put forth its branches, and when it has had its spring shoot, you will notice that it then begins to seek for its midsummer shoot. And when the midsummer shoot is over, the tree always has an eye to the shooting of the next spring. And before the old leaves go, there is every preparation made for the new leaves.

Life is always aiming at more life. It is a law of nature. There is a propagation continually progressing in which life develops and multiplies itself. Now, if you have the life implanted by the Holy Ghost, you will long for more. If you do not long to have more life, it surely must be because you have no life. The living man will be sure to cry to God that he may have life more abundantly.

The next motive is not only because of what you are, but *because of what you ought to be*. Here is a question for you—I will leave you to answer it, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy

conversation and godliness?" We like sometimes to work out a problem. There is one to solve. Draw a picture, if you can, of what you ought to be. I will tell you, if you draw that picture exactly, what it will be like. It will be like Jesus Christ. That is the answer to this question, "What manner of persons ought we to be?"

Now Christ was full of life. Although He did not strive or cry, or lift up His voice, or cause it to be heard in the streets by way of seeking after popular notoriety, yet what life was in Him. He was brimful of life. There was nothing stagnant, indifferent, or purposeless in any of His actions or in all His career.

Why, the life of Christ was so full that it seemed to flow out, even onto His garments, so that when they touched His garments, virtue went out of Him. How full must He have been of the living force—the inward power!

O beloved, we ought so to be. As we are redeemed, as we are quickened by Christ, as we are members of His body, as we belong to Him, we ought to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God by Jesus Christ. Above all men that live, the Christian ought to live at the most vigorous rate. We have a race to run. We must not creep and crawl, or we shall not win the prize.

We have a battle to fight, should we sheath our sword, put off our armor, and go to sleep, how can we overcome our enemies? We have an agony to endure, according to His power that works in us mightily, and there cannot be this resisting unto blood, striving against sin, unless all our passions be aroused, and all our powers be stirred for the wondrous inward strife. We ought to ask for quickening because of what we ought to be.

Then, we ought to ask for quickening *because of what we shall be.* "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Brother, you are to be a pure spirit in heaven. Be spiritual now. Brother, you are to sing among the angels. Rehearse the music now.

Brother, you are to see His face that is as the sun that shines in its strength. Let not your eyes be sealed with dust now. Let them be clear, as clear as they can be in this misty atmosphere of earth. Brother, you are to sit upon the throne with Christ, for He says, "As I have overcome, and have sat down with my Father upon his throne, so also shall you sit with me upon my throne."

See where you are to be, and behave yourself accordingly. You cannot maintain the dignity of your high calling, or your heavenly destiny, unless you have an abundance of spiritual life, wherefore pray, "Quicken thou me, O LORD."

Now, to come back to the psalmist's own confessions and reflections. He gives us another motive for seeking this in the eighty-eighth verse, "Quicken thou me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."

We want quickening in order to obedience. If our life decays, then the power of sin will get the mastery over us. We cannot go in the way of obedience, and punctuality, and scrupulous care, and inward heartiness, unless we are daily quickened. I am sure you want to be holy, brothers and sisters. I am sure you do. Well, then, pray, "Quicken me."

There is no such thing as dead holiness—it must be living holiness, and you must be made alive in order to be obedient, for there is no such thing as dead obedience. Up to the altar of God they brought birds, and they brought beasts, but they never brought fish, and why? Because they could not bring fish alive there, and there must be no sacrifice presented to God but that which has life. Ask for life, that you may have obedience.

Look at the one hundred and seventh verse and you have another reason for seeking quickening, because *it will be your comfort*. "I am afflicted very much: quicken thou me, O LORD, according to thy word." Or better still, at the fiftieth verse, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me."

Do you want comforting? Get quickening. Do not so much ask the Lord to give you sweet promises, as to give you inward life, for in life there is always light. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." As the light is the life, the life is the light—and when you get the life of God within your soul,

you will get the comfort of God. I urge you to seek quickening, then, if you are under any distress, because it will be the readiest means of your finding consolation in it.

Look also at the eighty-seventh and the eighty-eighth verses, to which we have already referred, and you will see that we ought to seek quickening as *the best security against attacks of enemies*. We need not examine how we can meet the foe, or with what argument we can refute his sophistries, or with what weapons we can overthrow him.

"Quicken thou me, O LORD," is still the prayer, even though they threaten to consume us from off the face of the earth. We have but to keep close to the precepts of God and pray for quickening, and we shall be "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

The use of the word "quicken" will be seen in the ninety-third verse. "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." We are always in danger of forgetting God's precepts, but *to invigorate our memories* and to fortify our hearts, we must get quickening. Nothing can make a man so secure of walking rightly, and defying all the attacks of his enemies, as the reception of spiritual life. The young man can only cleanse his way by taking heed to it according to God's Word, but he cannot take heed to his way if he is not alive in the way.

Life is the great thing. Look at a pool of water when it stands still—how it becomes mantled over with weed, how stagnant, and defiled it is. But give it vent, and let it run down yonder brook among the stones, let it leap in little cascades on its way down to the river. It is alive now, and see how pure it gets, refining as it goes, dropping all the filthiness it had accumulated before, becoming itself sweeter and clearer, because of life.

So it must be with us. We must have life. We shall forget God's precept else, and lose the purity of life, unless quickening is given to us abundantly.

If I wanted some one thrilling motive to rouse the reluctant, I would resort to this—*the terrible consequences of losing spiritual life*. I do not mean the effect of losing it altogether, but of lacking it in its manifest display. Alas that it should be so easy to give obvious illustrations! But I could tell you of many congregations and churches where there is no evidence of vitality, growth, or increase, than if they were all dead. I do not say that there is no spiritual life, but there is none in the sense in which I am using the term.

They have fallen into a dead sleep, and the members of the church are cold, apathetic, spiritless. Life among them is at the lowest ebb. You cannot be sure they breathe—breathe—I mean—a breath of prayer. Some of them have not been to a prayer meeting they could not tell when, do not know when they ever did go. And when they attend Sabbath services not a few of them literally sleep, and the rest of them sleep with their eyes open.

The minister is dozing, dreaming, snoring, talking in his sleep—that is what his preaching is like. There is plenty of preaching like that—an inarticulate snoring of the everlasting Gospel. The preacher, perhaps, reads, or else he repeats what he has laboriously committed to memory, and says it as a school boy does his lesson—and he is glad when it is over—for he considers that preaching twice on Sunday wears him out, dear man! And well it may, as he does it. It wears his people out as well.

They have no enterprise. The surrounding neighborhood is not evangelized by them, they do not increase, they do not think of increasing. In fact, they get fewer as the good people go home to heaven. Any attempt to do anything there would be looked upon as "an innovation."

Yet they do something—they have a disturbance every now and then. They hold what they call a "church meeting," which means in their case a spiritual bear-garden, in which they show their life, and one minister is driven away, and another and another—not that it is a fit place for anybody to desire to go, you know, for there is very little to be had except abuse. But still, that is the style of the thing—and there are hundreds of churches in England in that condition.

O that the Lord would quicken them! May this place be reduced to ashes and may the congregation be scattered to the four winds of heaven, sooner than it should become a huge mausoleum, a catacomb

of which it may be said, "The dead are there." Ah, it is ill to have "the means of grace" without the grace of the means—to have a name to live and to be dead. God save us from it.

Take heed to yourselves. Some of the members of this church, I fear, are getting into that condition. Yet not, I know, you that are present this evening. You would not, most likely, have been here on such a wet night as this if you had not some care for the things of God, but I refer to those that are not here.

When you get home tell them so—tell them what I have said about it—and then perhaps they will say, "Well, if the pastor always speaks severely of those who are not there we had better go, so as to escape his strictures."

III. Now let us mention briefly SOME OF THE WAYS BY WHICH THIS QUICKENING MAY BE WROUGHT IN US.

Of course the Lord Himself must do it. In prayer it must be sought, because by His power it must be wrought. The prayer is, "Quicken thou me, *O LORD*, according to thy word." He does not expect the quickening from any but a divine source. Whence can life come but from the ever living God? How can we expect that we should get life if while we seek the gratuity we totally forget the divine energy of Him who alone can bestow it?

In the thirty-seventh verse, we are told how the Lord often quickens His people, namely, by turning off their eyes from beholding vanity. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

The Lord sometimes takes the vanity away of which we made our idol—or else He takes us away from the idol, and does not permit us to find any contentment in it. Oh, it is half the battle to be weaned from the creature. It is half the battle, I say, to get the eyes off vanity, for then you are likely to get your eyes turned upon God. May He be graciously pleased to quicken some of you in that way.

In the fiftieth verse, we find that God quickens His people *by His Word*. "Thy word hath quickened me." And the part of the Word which He often blesses to this end is remarkable, for, in the ninety-third verse, it is written, "I will never forget thy *precepts*; for with them thou hast quickened me."

Promises are quickening, doctrines are quickening, but David says, "Thy precepts—with them thou hast quickened me." If we preach frequently and earnestly the precepts of our Lord, there are hearers who will complain and say, "The minister is getting legal." Nay, brethren, it is you that are getting dead, for when you are alive you will love God's precepts, and those precepts will quicken you.

"But they pain me," says one. That is often how people are quickened. While a person is drowning, we have heard that his sensations are often really delightful. But when he is fished out of the water, as soon as he begins to recover life, the blood begins to tingle in the veins, and the pain is intense. The pain of returning life is something terrible. Well, so it is with God's precepts when He quickens us with them. These precepts pain us because they show us our shortcomings, expose to us our faultiness, and humble us.

Brother, that is the way to be quickened. When you are numbed, you know that is next door to being dead. But when that numbed flesh of yours begins to come to life again—you have felt it, you must have felt it—when the blood begins to circulate by rubbing, a sharp pain is excited in the part that was numbed and painless before.

Be thankful for the pain—that is an index of life. "I love thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." May the Lord apply a text of Scripture to your soul with power, or let Him send a word from the minister as he speaks in JEHOVAH'S name with a divine force, and you will soon feel the effect. Though you appeared to be dead, you will start up and begin to live again.

Have you not found it so full often? Have you not often found great revivings come to your sinking spirit? Pray the Lord to make His Word always thus vivifying and inspiriting to you.

In the hundred and seventh verse, we have another means of quickening which God frequently uses, namely, *affliction*. "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy word." God frequently employs adversity as a black poker to stir us up that the flame of devotion may be brighter.

When you observe the fire in your sitting room getting dull and going out, you do not always put more coals on, but you stir it. And sometimes affliction does that for us. It stirs us and makes the life which was languishing to burst forth briskly. Be thankful if God stirs your fire.

Then, again, this quickening is sometimes wrought in us by means of *divine comfort*, as in the fiftieth verse, "This is my comfort, for thy word hath quickened me." The great flush of comfort, the sudden inflow of supreme joy, when you were much depressed—this has greatly cheered and invigorated you.

At least I know it has often been so with me. When very despondent and sad at heart, I have felt a soft stream, as though it were the Gulf Stream with its warm, genial temperature, flowing into my soul, melting all the icebergs that had gathered round my heart, and I have wondered what it was. How has my gratitude turned to my gracious God and found sweet expression in that hymn—

"Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart,
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart,
Dissolved by Thy goodness, I fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found."

You will often have proved, I doubt not, how God uses the comfort of His Spirit to quicken His children.

IV. Our last point is to inquire WHERE ARE OUR PLEAS WHEN WE COME BEFORE GOD TO ASK FOR QUICKENING?

What arguments shall we use? Well, brethren, use first the argument of *your necessity*. Whatever that necessity is, particularize it, as David does in the hundred and seventh verse, "I am afflicted very much; quicken me." Or take our text, "My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken me."

Plead your necessities. Your wants shall be the argument for the oil and wine. Your emaciation and your hunger shall be the argument for a festival. Show the Lord what you are and where you are. Confess it before Him, and this shall be good pleading.

Also plead, if it be in your power to do so, the *earnest desire* that God has kindled in you. Read the fortieth verse, "Behold I have longed for thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness." This is as much as to say, "Lord, You have given me great longings after You. You gave me these cravings—will You not satisfy them? Do You torture me with the miseries of Tantalus? Do You grieve me with a thirst which You will not gratify? Have You given me a hunger for the bread of heaven only for the sake of torturing me?"

Beloved, if you have got a desire, you may depend upon it, the desire of the righteous shall be granted. God does not excite the appetite without providing the aliment. If He makes you hunger and thirst after righteousness, recollect the promise, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

They shall not have merely a little, a crumb or two to stay their stomachs, but they shall be filled. Go and plead that before God. "I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness." There is the second plea.

And then you may find a third in the very righteousness of God, as we have seen in the fortieth verse. *Appeal to His righteousness*. Do I see you start back abashed? Do I hear you say, "Oh no. I could not appeal to that, for the righteousness of God must condemn me." Stop a minute. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins."

Why, the justice of God is on the side of the man who has received God's promise, because it were unjust of God to break it. He will not alter the thing that has gone out of His mouth. The Lord has given His Word for it, that He will give His people life. The very fact of His having made them live at all is the proof that He means to continue to make them live.

Go and plead it, then. Say, "In your righteousness, oh Lord, quicken me." David is very often harping upon that string. As I showed you in the reading, he twice appeals to God's judgment, or His justice, that He would quicken him.

Another, and a very sweet plea is that of *God's loving-kindness*. Read the eighty-eighth verse, "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness." Look at the hundred and forty-ninety verse, "Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment." And so again in the hundred and fifty-sixth verse, "Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments."

"Thou pitying God, give me more life. O Thou who wills not the death of any, give me more life. O Thou that loves as a father loves, give me more life. O Thou who hast graven me upon the palms of Your hands, quicken me. Quicken me, I beseech Thee." Are they not blessed pledges to lay hold on—His loving-kindness and His tender mercies? With such promises you will be sure to prevail.

And then what a comprehensive plea is that of our text, "Quicken thou me according to thy word." You have it in the twenty-fifth verse, and you have it in the hundred and seventh. He pleads *the Word of God*.

What that Word was that David had to appeal to, it would rather puzzle me to tell you. His Bible was not so large nor near so full as ours. I do not find any promise of quickening before David's time. Perhaps a special promise had been given to him, or at any rate, the promise is virtually in the Pentateuch.

But certainly to us there is abundant testimony to be found in the Word of God, for our Lord Jesus Christ Himself has told us, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "I give unto my sheep eternal life."

The Son of man has come not only that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly. Plead the promises, brother. Plead the promises, and as you plead them before the Lord, you may rest quite certain that God will be as good as His Word, and if you can plead the promise, the promise will be surely fulfilled to you.

Beloved in Christ, do tenderly watch over your spiritual life, or otherwise you are hypocrites when you pray, "Quicken me." Take heed lest you neglect the food of your souls. Do not go where your life would be in danger. Do not seek worldly company, do not indulge in worldly amusements. Keep out of all the deadening influences of the world as much as ever you can.

Have you ever seen the Grotto del Cane near Naples? It has a deadly gas at the bottom of it, and they take a dog and throw him in, and when they drag him up again the dog looks as if he were dead. But by the aid of a fresh water bath, he comes round again. As they thus kill the poor dog half a dozen times a day, I do not envy him his experience. Indeed, I rather think if I were that dog I would lose no time in seeking another master.

Yet there are some professing Christians that will go into bad company—get into the bad gas of temptation—and then they go and hear a sermon, and get back their spiritual life again. I would advise you not to be like that poor dog, but to keep out of harm's way. If you have life, do your best to maintain it, and do not run the risk of suspended animation.

Knowing the worth and joy of life yourself, pray very earnestly that God would give it to others. Look on the dead in sin, but not with stony eyes. Look on them with tears. Even if I knew that my hearers must be lost, I would pray God to help me to weep over them, because our Savior's tears over Jerusalem, you remember, were accompanied with a distinct indication that Jerusalem would be destroyed. "Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which make for thy peace! But now are they hid from thine eyes." Still He wept.

We have no such terrible knowledge about the destiny of any man. We look hopefully upon you unconverted people, and we exhort you because we expect you to believe in Jesus. We sincerely trust that yet you will be saved, and therefore we pray for you in hope.

May the Lord in infinite mercy lead you to feel for yourselves, and pray for yourselves, "Quicken thou me." Do you feel that prayer welling up from your soul? Does it rise from your heart? Then, already, there is something of spiritual life there. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall have life, for He who said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die," said also, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

God give you that living faith which is the token of the life divine. To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
PSALM 119:1145-168

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.