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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel Sunday
evening, 14th May 1967

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 1, v.8-9.

You will see a connexion between this text and the morning text. "O Lord, Thou remainest for ever...Who shall also confirm you unto the end". Could never confirm a soul unto the end except that He abides, remaineth for ever, and what a consolation and strength that is. The ever living God, to be the Refuge, the Security, the Hope, the Salvation, the Habitation of a poor trembling dying sinner.

The chapter is directed to those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. Well, that is a high calling, but still there are others gathered in. "Called to be saints with all, that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours". So that if you call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ you are inside of the text. "He that calleth upon the name of the Lord", says Paul to the Romans, "Shall be saved". It shows the importance of real prayer, real prayer indited by the Holy Ghost is the most clear evidence of the life of God in the soul and we are often very much tossed about as to whether we really possess the life of God in the soul.

Well, if you can examine yourself upon that point, as to whether you pray, it will answer the question. I do not mean repeat prayers, but pray by the Spirit from your heart. No dead sinner can ever do that. O the importance of the prayer of faith, and there are many degrees of prayer, although there are no degrees or qualities of life. Life is exactly the same, the life of God in the soul, and therefore, whether you may be enlarged by the Spirit in pouring out your heart before Him, or whether you are reduced to a groan, or the upward glancing of an eye, or the falling of a tear, it is the life of God in the soul and the Apostle here writes to such, "With all, that in every place", and there may be some places that you know, some spots, some corners, some secret fig tree where you have poured out your heart before God: "With all, that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, Who shall also confirm you unto the end".

Confirmation. There is one thing to be said at the outset, you cannot confirm nothing. It is a great thing to have something to confirm. Another thing, the Lord will never confirm anything but what is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, and you will not want anything else to be confirmed, but rather you would pray,

"Detect, destroy what's not Thy own".

"Thou", this Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever", and therefore, Who shall also confirm you to the very end. Well, a few things then that need to be confirmed. One thing particularly the Lord's people need to be confirmed and that is the beginning. Paul was confident with respect to the Philippians that the good work was begun in them, and he was persuaded that He that had begun it would carry it on and perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. That is the same thing exactly as the text, but the great point with you now is, Was my beginning right? You find as you go along as the Apostle in his voyage to Rome, that in the very storms that overtook them they had to cast overboard first this and then that and at last the tacklings of the ship, the very things that would appear to be necessary for safe navigation. They cast the tacklings out and at last they cast the wheat into the sea. What an

emptying it was. You may have many fears about your beginning. You fear it might be just imagination, or emotion. It is surprising what a lot of emotion can be mistaken for grace, especially perhaps where one is exceedingly influenced by music. Stirs the very soul to the depths at times. Now you have gone on, learned more and more, been emptied from vessel to vessel, you look back and wonder whether the beginning was imagination or emotion or just tradition, or all those things put together. You cannot be satisfied by taking it for granted, and a good thing too. Now what you need is for the beginning to be confirmed, you cannot be born again twice, but I believe there are some here that will understand me, that in subsequent years, in the midst of the wilderness and conflicts and temptations, when you are called to walk in darkness and not in light and your way is hedged up, you cannot see your signs; you need the beginning confirmed. Therefore, you need the same grace that was exercised in your regeneration to be exercised again. You may have used these simple words, I believe at one time I did; Do it again Lord.

When poor John the Baptist was in prison and he was so tempted and was in such darkness and trouble, he sent and asked the Lord, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" The Lord sent back the disciples to say, "Tell John again those things". Well now, if the Lord should tell you again the things that He spoke to you at the beginning, it would confirm your beginning, and really if the beginning is confirmed, it will confirm the present, and if the present is confirmed it will confirm your end and give you a good hope that you will be safe at last. "Confirm you unto the end".

The need of this confirmation mainly is because of two things. First because of our carnal nature, a body of sin and death, and secondly by the wilderness conditions without. We are in the world. Now the mighty influences of a depraved nature together with the influence of the world, especially in these modern days, causes much shaking. Well, some would say, surely if you have a faith that stands in the power of God, that faith will never shake. If you read the 107th Psalm which shows a life of faith, you will see that it is very different from that, and I would say this, although it may seem a contradiction, that it is only a God given faith that does tremble and shake. A false faith never trembles. Those pilgrims there, they staggered to and fro like a drunken man and were at their wits end. They were real pilgrims, and they were those who won the race. They were under divine teaching. But O what confirmation they needed and they received.

Apparent contradictions in your circumstances often shake your faith, and this is the Lord's teaching. Often He works quite contrary to His promise. This is very evident in the case of Joseph. Joseph had a vision and a promise of his advancement and of the honour that would eventually be bestowed upon him. Right upon that promise he was put down into a pit, and the next thing he was brought under severe temptation in Potiphars house, and the next thing he found himself in prison. The word of the Lord tried him, tested him. He needed confirmation. Perhaps some of you are in a pathway and under some pressure and temptations, pains, astonishments, perplexities, calamities, which seem to contradict every promise. What you need is confirmation. But the Lord confirms His people too by the Scriptures. "Those things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope". Have you not found the Word of God to confirm your soul especially when you have read of those who have gone before, and have been compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses and found that your exercises are in the Word of God. It is indeed a lamp to your feet, a light to your path.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end". You will need your hope confirmed. In Ezekiel, the dry bones which were the whole house of Israel, are brought into such a state that they concluded: "Our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts". Have you ever been there?

It is a real experience, it is not notion. But how did the Lord confirm their hope? "Prophecy Son of man and say, O My people", why that would do it in a moment if the Lord should by His Spirit whisper in your heart "My people", and give you the assurance of faith to respond, "My God". "O my people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves"; and that is just what would confirm you, to be brought up from the depths, from the horrible pit, the low dungeon, the miry clay, and by this process you are established more than you ever would be if you were not brought through such changing scenes. You will realise that there is change and decay in everything within you and about you except in the immutable God.

"But Thou O Lord, remainest for ever...Who shall also confirm you unto the end". You will want to be confirmed in the profession of your faith. As we tried to speak a little lately: "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering". Well, it is good to be brought to self-examination. I think we said on that occasion that whether you belong to a Church or to the congregation, when you come to the services you make a profession of the name of God, and some of you may need a confirmation in that profession in two ways. In the first place, there are those that fear God, who could say that "In my best room" would gladly receive Him, but ~~fail~~ fear to presume". You have a full assurance of His sufficiency, a full assurance of His infinite merit, a full assurance of His grace, but you have not a full assurance of your interest in it, therefore you want to be confirmed in a full assurance of your interest in and the profession of the things that you hear, things that you believe, but as yet things you feel you do not possess. O how good it would be even in this feeble service, if the Lord would confirm such seekers, confirm seekers by finding what they seek. Confirm seekers by receiving what they feel to need and to confirm those that are knocking at mercies door by setting before them an open door.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end". Well then, there are those who have made an open profession, put on the Lord Jesus Christ openly, and you need confirmation. You realise that to walk in the ordinances of the Lord's house, although it is a blessed privilege, yet that is not an end in itself. I do fear that people might be left to think that when once they are baptised and join a Church, they have attained to the objective, but they have not, and therefore the Lord will try it. The trial of faith is very precious and you will need your entrance into the Church of God confirmed, and how will He do this? He will bring to your remembrance whatsoever He has spoken unto you, He will give you to remember all the way the Lord Thy God has led thee these forty years in the wilderness, and He will bring into exercise again the exercises of soul by which He brought you to venture upon Him. In other words, David said, "He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake". He restores the joy of salvation. He says to you for substance, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown", I remember it. And when He tells you that, you will remember it. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end".

So we shall need repeated confirmations. If He was only to confirm you half-way you would never go safely the other half. O what enemies, what oppositions within and without! And then again, how we do need confirmation when we are brought in His providence into weakness and affliction. How many of our friends have been afflicted, been surprised. Healthy perhaps this week, next week perhaps find themselves in hospital and look around in a hospital ward. How we need confirmation there; and how does the Lord confirm His people when He calls them aside and lays them upon a bed of affliction? There is only one way really and that is by His gracious presence. I do not know anything that will confirm a poor afflicted, distressed soul in pain and shut away from the people of God but His presence. But here is the promise, "Who shall confirm you unto the end". It means

wherever you may go, in whatever condition you may find yourself, whatever surprises overtake you. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end". It has this in it, that word in the first verse, 13th John; "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end". Mercy, precious truth and the sweetness of that truth that the Lord Jesus the Bridegroom says, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end", as though He would say, I know where they are, the evils, the abominations, the snares, the gins, the oppositions, but having loved His own which are in the world, He loved them unto the end, and that love is in this confirmation. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now this seems to be almost impossible but Jude tells us how it is. He says, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy". This is the divine ability of that great God Who remains for ever. He is able, and this ability is His divine sovereignty, and immutability and omnipotence and omniscience ^{are} all in this ability, and it is by virtue of union with Him. "That ye may be blameless". In another place it is unblameable, it seems almost more, incapable of being blamed; and when we come to consider ourselves, at least myself, it seems impossible, and so it is. We are not only spotted but as the Church confesses, "I am black",

"Black I to the Fountain fly".

But this blamelessness is as they stand in the Lord Jesus Christ the Substitute, and they were ever blameless, my friends, in the covenant of grace.

"Then in the glass of His decrees
Christ and His Bride appear^{ed} as One;
Her sins by imputation His,
Whilst she in spotless splendour shone".

What a wonderful person is a child of God ! They are men to be wondered at, they are really. There is no greater wonder upon this earth. I know there are natural wonders, many earthly honours, many sportsmen are honoured nationally, but there is no wonder upon earth like a sinner saved by sovereign grace. You think of it. Doubtless there are some in this Chapel in whose heart is the Kingdom of God, whose hearts are the Temple of the Holy Ghost. People in this congregation who are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. It is a wonder my friends, we need to consider these things, it makes the things of God exceedingly sacred, solemn and blessed.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ", that is, when He comes a second time, without sin, ^{unto them} unto salvation; and these people are among those that look for Him. "They that look for Him shall He come the second time, without sin, unto salvation". He came the first time in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, but He does not come the second time like that, because He has done away with sin. He has abolished it. He has abolished death. O what a coming that will be !

"When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come,
To call Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand ? "

It is a great question, and when your heart is affected by the Spirit in this glorious Gospel it puts other things beneath your feet. Eternity is near and at times the eternal God is near and enables you, permits you to draw near unto Him, and you will see how it is possible to be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. He took the

blame. He took the sins of the Church. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all". O how perfect was the substitution of the Lord Jesus when He was made sin! But we need to have ~~the~~ Spirit of wisdom and revelation in these truths, otherwise they are mere theories. But what a different thing it is to have the Spirit's witness in our hearts that He was made our particular and personal sin, that we individually and personally are made the righteousness of God in Him. It is the only way that we shall be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is able and will confirm you unto the end, to this end.

"God is faithful", divine faithfulness. Human faithfulness is dependent upon circumstances. A man may be faithful and yet not be able to carry out an obligation or a promise. But the faithfulness of God is divine faithfulness. Nothing can frustrate His purposes or decrees. Nothing can alter Him, no-one can stay His hand in any matter and say unto Him, What doest Thou ? Divine immutability and faithfulness is a Rock, and it is the foundation in Christ upon which every sinner shall build for heaven.

"God is faithful." In the first place He is faithful to His divine Father. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do". He was faithful in His work. "His work is perfect". Not only perfect but complete. There is nothing left undone. It is perfection because of His Person, the perfection of His Person in His work. It is perfect because there is no spot, wrinkle or any such thing in His humanity, in His life. Guile was never found in His sacred lips. He was faithful to the law, the holy law of God, terrible, inexorable, yet good, just and holy law. He was faithful to the law. We broke it, when Adam fell the law was broken. But the Lord Jesus Christ restored that which He did not take away. O how faithful ! He went to the end of the law for righteousness and therefore, He is able to confirm His people unto the end, because He satisfied the law, magnified it. Wonderful word, magnified it and made it honourable. That word "magnified" is very beautiful in many cases. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together". When you magnify a thing you do not make the thing you see any bigger. The Lord cannot increase as to His Person or to His humanity, but He can increase and does in His gracious manifestations to His people, and they do magnify the Lord when in the perspective of faith they look upon Him, magnify and delight in Him. Magnify His grace, scrutinise His mercy, trace His goings.

Now in the opposite direction, the Lord Jesus magnified the law to bring into clear perception every precept, every demand of the law, and He made it honourable in obedience. He is faithful, faithful to the law of God. Faithful to the word of God. The word of God was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The written and the incarnate Word, in all things are the same".

He is faithful to His promises. The promises of God are yea and amen in Him. Not one is forfeited, every one will be faithfully fulfilled. God is faithful. He is faithful to His people, and this is wonderful. We read in Timothy, "If we believe not, yet He abideth", remaineth, "faithful", "He cannot deny Himself".

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord". "Called." This call is not first external, it is internal, an internal call, and it is consequent upon predestination. "Whom He predestinated, them He also called". Therefore, says Paul, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Now it may be well to give diligence

to this: Have we any evidence that we are called, first inwardly? If we are, we shall come to that touchstone as I call it, in the 3rd Lamentations: "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, he sitteth alone", he sitteth alone, "And keepeth silence; he putteth his mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope." That is an inward call. A mysterious, strange action comes into the heart unknown before, and a poor sinner wonders what is the matter, when gradually there is bitter put into that which once he thought to be sweet, when there is death put into that in which once he saw life, disappointments stamped upon those things in which he had expectations, and leaves him with an aching void the world can never fill. That is calling, inward calling.

In my own case, although I do not want to speak about myself, I remember three words as I walked a country road, "I want God". It may sound crude, but look where I would, consider anything else, it seemed as though I could not be satisfied until I knew where I might find God.

"By Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ". What a wonderful thing to be called into fellowship with the Son of God! What a mystery that it is possible! The love of God, to His people, to His church. Called out of the world and all its pleasures and vanities and called unto the fellowship of His Son. That is an inward call, and by the same Spirit there is an outward call, and as it leads that soul about, causes him to pass under the rod, under the authority of the Gospel, then that word that we read just now becomes experience: "Through the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe". There is the outward call which is in harmony with the inward call and a beginning to live by faith, to live by faith in search of those things that accompany salvation. A life in the soul which can only be satisfied from heaven.

"Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord", and how sacred are those first days! When we come into a Chapel differently from how we have come before, when at one time you merely had heard a noise, heard a man speaking, knew nothing, and would not want to know anything of what he said; and then the blessed Spirit takes the veil of ignorance from off your heart, opens your blind eyes and ears, and you find a connexion between the exercise of your soul and the declaration of the Gospel.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord".

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).