

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton
Sunday morning, 14th August 1966.

"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.

The apostle is writing to them that are called to be saints. It may be that some poor sinner here might feel within himself - then I might just as well have stayed at home. I know the feeling. Especially when you come down a little lower and he speaks of them as that "in everything ye are enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge". You might say well, I am altogether right outside of it. Well, we will turn to the other end of the chapter and see whether you can come inside that: "God hath chosen foolish things of the world, the weak things of the world, the base things of the world, things which are despised and things which are not" Do you think you might come in among that people? Well, they are the same people as at the beginning of the chapter, it is not a different people. But He also says to them that are "called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord".

Well, do you pray? It is written to those that pray. You might feel that is rather an impertinent question to ask in a place like this. Do you pray? I have longed to be able to pray, but this Epistle is written to those that are "called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord". So that if you have ever called upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the things that are written concern you. True, you may only have got as far as the Publican in the Temple, and you may feel all your religion is nothing more than "God be merciful to me a sinner", if that is your religion you will go to heaven. He went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee.

Just one more thing about tried people. When you read the Epistles and feel that things are far above your reach, do you wish that things would be lower? Do you wish that God was less than He is or is there a desire in your heart for the Holy Spirit to take of those things of Christ and reveal them to you. It is a great experience expressed simply in one of our hymns -

"Though we tremble while we sing,
We would not wish Him less".

It is a great point if you can really say that. "Who shall confirm you unto the end". You cannot confirm nothing. It is impossible to confirm nothing, and yet according to this text if you have anything it must be subject to much shaking, the oppositions that come against grace in the heart are very powerful so that you do need confirmation.

Confirmation with respect to the beginning. The church complained in one Psalm, "We see not our signs". The Lord will not allow His people to live upon their experience. Will not allow them to live upon their religion, will not allow them to live upon the means of grace, but to live entirely upon Him, from Whom all the provision of the means of grace flows".

"Who shall confirm you unto the end", and you will feel your need of confirmation the older you get. I quite realise that this word would not enter into the case of young people, but it will if the Lord has called you by His grace as you get older you will find that everything will need confirmation, and those that fear God, they believe the truth twice. You believe the word of God which

if you have the fear of God and grace in your heart, but you have not experienced all of it. You believe it because it is the word of God, and some of it you must have received in order to know that you have passed from death unto life, but you will find that you will not only believe the word of God because it is the word, but you will believe it because you have been led into it, into the experience of it. But it will need confirmation, and it may be just that point with some of you now. O the deep waters, the fiery furnaces, the mighty enemies, the power of unbelief, the dreadful carnality of our nature is such that at times we wonder whether a workd of grace is really begun. Now the Lord has promised to confirm you unto the end, and when He confirms the beginning O it is such a reviving, such a strength, because when He confirms the beginning He cinfirms the present, and when the present and the beginning is confirmed it confirms the future, it must do.

We might look at a case or two of His people who needed confirmation and they who had long experienced the wilderness journey. You take for instance Elijah, no one would have thought that he needed to be confirmed. If you saw him stand before his enemies and declare Who was the eternal almighty God, but it was only the day after that hearing a threatening from Jezebel he fled three days into the wilderness and got under a Juniper tree. It is surprising what changes can take place and the Lord exercises His people for their teaching. But what confirmed him? It was a touch, the angel of the Lord came and touched Him. It would have had no effect whoever had touched him had it not been the Lord, and you know that, he had come to the end of things and the Lord touched him. Some of you would know if the Lord touched you with His divine finger, with His love, with His mercy. Not only so a little further on the Lord passed by him, and there was a mighty wind, but the Lord was not in the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, but there was a still small voice, powerful voice that spoke in his heart and caused him to cover his face with his mantle that confirmed him. It may be that some of you are waiting for that touch, that still small voice.

You take again the case of David, poor David, he was weary of being pursued by Saul, he said "I shall surely fall one day by the hand of Saul" there is nothing better but that I should flee to the Phillistines and he will seek me no more, so he went for sixteen months to the Phillistines, the enemies of God. O how this does describe the experience of a poor weary pilgrim. Some of you may have felt, I have foolishly, O that I could go somewhere where I am not known. But David got into trouble, he well nigh lost all that was precious to him together with his wives at Ziklag, but the Lord had mercy upon him, confirmed him. He said, "shall I pursue that troop?" the Lord said, "Pursue and thou shalt recover all". notwithstanding his backsliding and his fear and unbelief, the Lord said, "Thou shalt recover all". Have some of you lost as it were, everything that is dear to you, seem to have lost your hope, your confidence, and brought yourself into trouble? O the mercy of the Lord, "Thou shalt recover all", and he did.

"Who shall confirm you unto the end". We need our hope to be confirmed. Why my friends, hope is an anchor, but it anchors down beneath the mighty waves. The rock into which the anchor holds is immutable, but the ship itself might be tossed with waves, the anchor is unseen, and so the Lord often brings His people into darkness and not into light. It was the same teaching with His disciples, when they launched forth to go over the lake the Lord followed them up with a tempest and their lives were in jeopardy. O there is teaching in this, they needed confirmation. They were very near shipwreck. Now have these things any relation to your souls experience? we need confirmation

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end". We need our faith to be confirmed. A natural faith needs no confirmation because a natural faith can be maintained by nature. A natural religion can be continued by mere dint of human intelligence, but where the salvation

of the soul is concerned, there is nothing in self, no foundation, no help in self, no merit. Therefore, faith lives upon things that are unseen and eternal. Faith operates by the power of the Holy Ghost in the soul, and when the Lord for wise ends is pleased to suspend the operations of the Spirit and to bring a poor sinner into the depths as was Jonah in the belly of hell, we shall need confirmation, and Jonah's faith was confirmed even when he was in the belly of hell. He was there that he was confirmed in that truth, that "Salvation is of the Lord", and thus to grow in grace and in a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there was none of this conflict where would be the trial of faith? Where would there be any evidence of the life of God in the soul?

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end". So that we shall need confirmation upon confirmation. We are ever sinking and yet His people will swim. The secret is the love of God. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end". The strength of this confirmation is the faithfulness of God, the immutability of His love.

"Whom once He loves He never leaves
But loves them to the end".

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end", and so they go from strength to strength, from confirmation to confirmation, but it is in between the strengths that is the trial, when again you sink in deep mire. Look at the 107th Psalm, beautiful Psalm, expresses the pathway, the pilgrimage journey of all His people. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses". They were all in trouble and yet they were led forth by the right way. It was the right way, when they went down to the sea in ships and did business in deep waters, it was the right way when they were brought to the shadow of death and were bound in affliction and iron, but He confirmed them right up to the very end, and "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord".

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end". He will confirm your faith also in God. The first act of faith is to believe that God is, and O how that faith is often shaken by the power of unbelief, by the things that we pass through that appear to contradict everything that the word of God declares. Sometimes the Lord will confirm a poor sinners faith by things that are seen. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead". I do believe in my little way that I have been confirmed in the glorious Being of God in beholding the works of God. There are the fashions of this world, and O what an artificial world it is today! nothing seems real, people seem artificial in every walk of life, but nothing can alter the works of God, they remain exactly the same as when they were created, they are stamped with immutability and ordered and controlled by His divine sovereignty, and sometimes when faith beholds it, it rejoices in the Lord. Nobody can see the glorious works of the Lord, the benefits of His creation, the fields covered with corn, and receive their daily benefits and food in the same way as those that have faith in God.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end", and how we shall need confirmation when we draw near our journeys end. We shall indeed look back upon a past life, see all the stains of sin, what a catalogue there is!

"Had we not Thy blood to plead
Each sight would sink us in despair".

The confirmation that we need is a fresh application of the atonement of Christ. A fresh application of the whole Gospel in its fulness, in its liberating power. When the Gospel comes it confirms

everything in the soul. It is sin and a body of sin and death, together with the temptations of the devil that causes so much consternation and trembling, but a drop of atoning blood upon the conscience will bring that peace which passes all understanding, and this will confirm the soul. A fresh sight by faith of the Lord Jesus, God's incarnate Son, in all His offices and characters, so suitable for the worst of sinners, to look out from self and everything in self that would sink us in the gloom and into despair, to look out of such a case and behold Him "Coming upon the mountains, leaping upon the hills", to view by faith the all-sufficiency of His fulness, of His divine ability, the perfection of His righteousness, the immutability of His love, the sweetness of that mercy that endures for ever, it is a great thing. To look out of self and behold Christ, that will confirm you.

Another thing that will confirm the soul is the Word of God. Not the letter of it, thousands of people read the Word of God, it is a dead word to a dead soul, but to the living in Jerusalem it is a living word in their experience and when by the Holy Spirit a word is spoken to the heart, where that word of a King is there will be power. It will be a transforming, a reviving, a translating word in your soul. "Thy word was found and I did eat it and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart".

This word is living, everything in this world becomes old, all the works of men decay, but the word of God is as Himself, He is the ever living God and this is an ever living word. "Jesus the same yesterday, today and for ever," and His word is like Himself. When He speaks you will know it. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". O how that would confirm a poor drooping sinner's faith!

"Who shall confirm you unto the end". And this is another thing. We read in Jeremiah that the Lord made a covenant with His people that He would not turn away from them to do them good and that He would put His fear in their hearts so that they should not turn away from Him, so that they are secured both ends, and that Hymn expresses that -

"He will never never leave us
Nor will let us quite leave Him".

He will not allow it, you think you will, you think you must let go, you cannot cleave to Him any longer, your heart and your flesh fails, your eyes fail with looking upward. but

"He will never never leave us
Nor will let us quite leave Him".

Confirmation. "That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ". It seems impossible, so it is in ourselves, O when we come at last, when I come to look at my life every day, every hour, everything is worthy of condemnation, and can only say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed", because His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is His faithfulness, It is the only thing that we can and would humbly and thankfully confess. But is it possible for the worst of sinners to be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? It must be because none of them that will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ were anything but wretched sinners. There is no different quality in sin. Sin is sin, and we are all under sin. "That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ". O this brings in the Lord Jesus as a surety, as a Substitute, as a Mediator. This brings in the holy sinless life of the dear Redeemer. The secret is union with the Lord Jesus. Union made by the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost when one is born again. To be in Christ so as all the spiritual blessings that are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus belong to this people according as they were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world". O what a foundation! "That ye may be blameless," Another word is unblameable. That seems almost more, for a poor sinner to be so

complete in Christ, complete in His righteousness, completely cleansed by His precious blood, beautified in His glorious righteousness that he is unblameable, nothing can blame him. The law, the holy law of God cannot blame him because it was fulfilled by the Mediator, the Redeemer. O what a blessed people the Lord's people are ! This is the only way that we shall be made blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul saw such a glory in it and so longed for it that he counted all things but loss for it, that he might win Christ and be found in Him at last, and only so are "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord". O what an experience, what a truth that is ! we must needs die but there are those saved sinners who die in the Lord. Die in a Substitute, die washed in His precious blood and made whiter than the snow. Die in His righteousness.

immutability
"Who shall also confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ". God is faithful. This is an explanation of this confirmation. God is faithful. Why your soul can hang upon divine humility and faithfulness. This faithfulness of God has the authority of His Being. Different from the faithfulness of a creature. The faithfulness of a creature is restricted to his capacity or circumstances, but everything with respect to God is sovereign, His sovereignty is absolute. O how faithful He is to the earth, you can see His faithfulness in His works, faithfulness, by the sun, how punctually it has risen and set through the ages. Of course it does, it is not of course, it is by the divine power and sovereignty of the creator; and He is faithful to the covenant of grace. Faithful to His divine Father in finishing the work that He gave Him to do. Faithful to His unfaithful people. It is covenant faithfulness. God is faithful.

"By Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ", which means this, that when the Lord by the Spirit calls a sinner by grace, He separates them from the world, "Come out from among them and be ye separate". He calls them away from the pleasures and pursuits and earthly honours, but does He call them out from these things and give them nothing ? He gives them something better than He takes away. Some of you dear young people might not think it; if you have the world taken away from you you say well, what is there left ? O to have faith to see the portion and say, "The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him. To have the same faith with Moses, when he became of age he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Well, a worldly person would say what a fool he was, he was a King's son, he had the honours of the court, the luxuries of the court, the riches of the court, and he refused it and went among a poor few miserable people, what a fool he was. Well, it would be a mercy if you are made such a fool. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward. His faith saw something better than a royal court. So God is faithful, "By Whom ye were called", but not to nothing, salvation is not saving people from a shipwreck and standing them down upon the sea shore and saying to them, now, be thankful you are saved from that shipwreck and be careful in future, that is not salvation. We are not only saved from self, from sin, from the world, but we are saved unto an inheritance, we are saved unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, and all that Christ is, the kingdom is His, He is the glorious King. The Gospel and all its unsearchable riches, the works of the Holy Ghost in the soul. Who can express it ? To feel the life of God in the soul so that your very heart becomes a land of the living. To know God, to know Him. To know the Holy Ghost by His quickening operations, by His revealings, and to know what it is to enjoy the provision God has made.

"God is faithful by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord". And that fellowship of His Son means you are called to all that God has given the Church in Christ Jesus.

"For ¹¹he that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things". Called unto the fellowship of the Son, everything that salvation is and everything that it contains. O you think you may be losing everything if you lose the world, but says Paul, to these same people, "Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas", that is the ministry, you want all that is decalred of the Gospel, "Is yours, or life, or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs and Christ is Gods". That is what you are called to.

You look at what you are called from; and O there is such a blessedness, look at the pilgrims, while they had opportunity to go back to the world, they did not go back. We could go back to the world if we wanted to, for there are the devils palaces, all the way down Queens Road, there are the multitudes on the Lord's Day, you could go back. But there is a reason why they did not and the reason was, "Knowing in themselves that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance", they lived by faith.

O may the Lord confirm His dear troubled people unto the end and grant that we may know in meeting together the mystery of the fellowship, the fellowship of the Son of God in divine worship, it will sweetly confirm us of being with Him to the end, unto that Sabbath that knows no end and that congregation that will never break up.

Amen.

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