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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,  
Sunday evening 15th August 1965.

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

'Therefore', looking at this word THEREFORE we shall see why no man should glory in men. It must be a vice or else there would not be this exhortation; but it does seem to be a mystery that this church, so richly endowed as Paul says in the first chapter; "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge." There is a tendency in our nature to glory in men, and whenever we are left to that glorying it is an attempt to be independent of God; and so long as we persist in that we shall be as babes. "And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." He says that to the some church of which he says they were enriched by God in all utterance and in all knowledge.

If we are under the teaching of the Spirit, the direction and rule of that teaching will be this; 'He must increase, and I must decrease.' Everything in our profession, in our religion that is contrary to that rule is not of the Spirit. And another thing, "therefore, let no man deceive himself, if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." It is a mercy if by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we have a real knowledge of what we are in ourselves. It will leave nothing for us to glory in whatever, no not in any view of the case. If we look at ourselves physically, change and decay is stamped upon us, mortal decay is in our being. There is nothing to glory in ourselves physically, and there is nothing to glory in ourselves intellectually, with regard to those most important things of the spirit. The whole of the 2nd chapter shows this: "The carnal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." So, in ourselves, we have nothing to glory in intellectually. The world by wisdom knows not God, and the world by searching cannot find God out. There is nothing to glory in. It is a mercy to really believe it and to know it in our experience by divine teaching.

The apostle Paul meant what he said, again in the 2nd chapter, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." It was not before men, it was before God, under divine teaching. What! he was as a Pharisee; his Pharasical pride had been killed, the beauty of it had been turned into corruption; and therefore, later on he says, "Though I be nothing" and yet with the same breath he says, that he was not a whit behind the chiefest apostle; and that my friends, is an experience. I believe those that are taught of God will in their measure be able to say with all honesty, without pretence, both be able to confess, I am nothing, and at the same time be able to say, I am not a whit behind the chiefest apostle. You may say, 'I don't believe that anyone taught of the Spirit what they are would ever say that.' Well, if you were to go to such who felt their sinful insignificance and nothingness and were to say to them, You know, you are not a w hit behind the chiefest apostle, they would be amazed and put it from them, but you ask them and say, 'What blood do you need to

purge the deep, black stains of your sin and they would declare that nothing less than the same precious blood that the Apostle Paul needed, they need, and not a whit different or below it. The uttermost sinners need the greatest riches and blessings that are in heavenly places in Christ, which alone can reach down to their souls in the depths. Therefore, for these reasons, let no man glory in men.

Of course, they had been glorying in different ministers, Paul, Apollos, Cephas; and the Apostle says, "Who is Paul? and who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man." the Lord will have all the honour and glory and never give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images; and His people will be brought to ascribe the glory unto Him. "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory." "'Therefore, let no man glory in men.' Have we been brought there? What is man? It would be a mercy if some of these men in high places in the religious world were to be brought to realise that they are but sinful men, their breath is in their nostrils. I have felt and do feel that it is salutary teaching to realise exactly what we are without Christ. Have you ever considered it? We go along, with service after service and we hear the truth, but it is a good thing to be brought to a standstill, and to pause, and to consider what we are in ourselves, It would give us to put our mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope. In my measure I believe that the Lord has made me to know that I, in myself, am worse than nothing, worse than nothing.

'Therefore, let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.' And then he enumerates the 'all things' that belong to the Lord's people. But the ground upon which he makes that assertion is this, 'Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.' It would be to no purpose that ye are Christ's and nothing would be yours, but, Christ is God's. He is the only-begotten eternal Son in truth and in love. The blessed Trinity needed nothing, but Jehovah determined that His glory should be revealed to a creature. Therefore there was the creation of man in the image of God, the only creature capable of receiving a revelation of the mind and purpose and counsels and covenant of Jehovah. It is a solemn thing therefore to be a man. The relationship of man to God in His creation makes him accountable to God. But 'Christ is God's,' the eternal only-begotten Son; but God so loved the world that He sent Him, He did not spare Him, He delivered Him up for the church, "and how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things." 'Therefore, all things are your's' because Christ is God's, and because all things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. "The earth is the Lord's" and therefore, if you are Christ's the world is yours and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.

'Christ is God's.' He is God's servant; "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth." O for the Holy Ghost to reveal the Lord's Servant, will touch your heart! What we need my friends, is for the Holy Spirit to bear in upon our hearts a sense of our interest in the love of God in Christ, in all that He became, in all the work that He finished. Love ran through the whole. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." And it was love that moved Him to take their nature. He loved them then, He loved them in all His sufferings, loved them when He paid their mighty debt, loved them when for them he paid the law that they had broken, loved them in the Garden of Gethsemane in His agony; loved them when hanging upon the accursed tree "Who His own self, in His own body, bear our sins on the tree." He loved them then, and He loved them as He ascended into heaven; for He has raised them up together, so that they sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. 'Christ is God's,' and 'Ye are Christ's.'

His people belong to Him in the first place as given unto Him by His Father. "Chosen of God." "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and causes to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy house." "He shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thine house, even of Thine Holy Temple." and the fullness is there. 'Christ is God's and ye are Christ's.' Very solemn! It behoves us, my friends, in reading the Word of God, to pause; and I feel that we might well repeat what we have sometimes said, consider whether we have an inner man, a new creature, a living faith that responds to the Word of God; a faith which asks questions. How do we read the Scriptures, is it of vital importance? When we read this, 'Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's,' is it the end of the chapter, do you shut the Bible and go home? O, I do feel that we should examine ourselves as to how we read the Word of God and as to whether the Scriptures read us. I say again, look at this, 'Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.' Have you ever paused and said, Have I any evidence that I am Christ's? It is a mercy to believe that Christ is God's. Peter did: when the Lord asked them, "Whom say ye that I am Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God; blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah ,for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but My Father which is in heaven." And if you believe that Christ is God's by a living faith, it is a revealed knowledge, a revealed Christ, and you will feel your need of such. 'Ye are. Christ's.' A mercy if we manifest this in our life.

Writing to the Romans, Paul says, "No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself; therefore whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." Well, my friends, we cannot live to ourselves; we must be an influence of some kind to the people with whom we meet. We cannot live without being an influence, and if we are the Lord's we shall be an influence, a gracious influence, and it is no use coming to conclusions and taking things for granted. 'Ye are Christ's.' Does our life declare it? Our conversations declare it? Have we the secret of the Lord in our tabernacle? Has the Lord Jesus made Himself not only precious, but the One thing needful? Has He made Himself to us that refuge to which we fly, that living refuge, that path of safe retreat? Is He our rest, our everlasting All?

'Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Therefore let no man glory in men for all things are yours.' So that His people are the only rich people in the world. You may possess many thousands of acres of land and be exceedingly poor; you may dwell in a little humble cottage and be eternally rich; "For a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." All things are yours because ye are heirs, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." What do these things mean to us, are they just statements and declarations of the Scripture? We said just now, it is well to take heed how we read the Word of God, and it is well to take heed how we hear it. Application is important; and there will be no application unless there is a case to which the word can be applied.

'For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.' That represents the ministry of the Gospel; indeed the whole of the provision that God has made in the church is embraced by this word, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,' it is yours. It is a method that the Lord is pleased to use and connects the salvation of His people with the preaching of the Gospel. It makes the preached word to be a divine institution, a divine appointment; and therefore, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And if we feel that, my friends, we should come with exercise to the services. How do we come? You may not in the very words, but in spirit you may bow before the Lord and remind Him - He has an infinite mind, He needs no reminder; O but it honours Him for poor

sinner to come and remind Him of His word; 'Lord Thou hast said that Thou wilt, through the foolishness of preaching, save those that believe, O grant me the hearing of faith.'

'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.' They were different, different men, different personalities, and we must expect it. Indeed there is wisdom in it. In all the things and works of God there is nothing uniform, nothing equal, infinite variety, there is complete unity but no equality; and if we look for equality we shall be disappointed, But whether it is Paul or Apollos or Cephas, there will be a lot of contention avoided if the churches were to remember this; but if they were to cast out Apollos because he was not Paul; or Paul because he did not preach like Cephas, what confusion! And says the Apostle "Is Christ divided? But He gives unto such severally as He will." 'Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.'

Well, have you ever been thankful for the ministry? We are exhorted to magnify our office, not ourselves. O we are brought so low; tremble to enter into that door into the pulpit, that we would not magnify ourselves; but it belongs to us to magnify our office and to seek the honour and glory of God in the church, the edification of His dear people; but the ministry belongs to His people. O the great wonders that He has wrought by that divine appointment!

'Or the world,' - the world belongs to His people. Not the vain world that lies in wickedness, but what they need of the world they shall have. Had it pleased the Lord He could have ordained that His people should be the great and noble and rich of this world, but it is not His purpose, because He has provided some better thing for them, much better, and they will acknowledge it. When they are given light to realise the difference, the distinction between the spiritual provisions of the Gospel, and as is the inheritance so is every blessing that is in Christ Jesus, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. Nothing of the work of the Spirit, no blessing that is in Christ Jesus, no promise of the Gospel, can fail. And they are given a spiritual nature that can only feed and live upon spiritual things, therefore, they will not desire the things of this world, but what they need, they shall have. "I have been young", said Solomon, "and now am old, yet have I not seen the seed of Jacob begging bread."

'For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; or the world, or life.' Life is yours especially spiritual life; but this life belongs to His people. Indeed, "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Especially it means the life of the Spirit in the heart, the experience of a work of grace in the soul. 'The life that now is.' A life of faith upon the Son of God. O, how sweet it is to realise an inward, secret, spiritual life, a living faith upon a living, Christ: To pray living prayers, to have living and spiritual desires; and where that is so then a natural life is theirs in this sense; it is only a living faith that can appreciate the works of God. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those that have pleasure therein." You take two farmers looking over the same gate across the cornfields as they are at this present time. One of the farmers, a man of the world, by his skill and knowledge, could look at those fields and reckon how much money they would bring him in and be able to envisage the prosperity of the harvest. A man who feared God would look over the same gate to those fields and would feel, as I believe I once felt looking across the fields -

*With heaven and earth at His command,  
He waits to answer prayer.* (Gadsby's 132)

And also there is this - if that God who has produced that food for man and beast, those works of creation which praise Him, "If that God is for us, who can be against us?" So that his very enjoyment of the lawful things and pleasures of this life are to a child of God what they are not unto the world. It is yours. Yes. Why? 'Because ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.'

I remember in 1917 when I had not long been invalided out of the Hospital and was very weak in body, having to walk a long distance in the snow. I went into a barn to eat a piece of bread and cheese, the sweetest piece of bread and cheese I ever had; and I made my way through the snow and the moon shone above and I felt that the snow was my Father's snow and the moon was my Father's moon, the earth was His, and I was Christ's and Christ was God's. O said Jeremiah, "The Lord is my portion;" my soul said so, faith in the soul said so, "therefore will I hope in Him."

'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death.' Death is yours. The death of Christ is yours. Precious, sacred death of the Redeemer. He died for His people, it belongs to them. His death was the death of deaths, it was hell's destruction. O to have union with Christ, union with Him when He was born a babe in the manger; for Him then to have been a Substitute, for His precious, holy, sacred humanity to be a Substitute for us who were born in sin and shapen in iniquity! Death. If Christ's death is ours we shall know something about this - "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." It will have an influence; the Apostle said, "I die daily", and if we die with Him we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

Who can express the eternal blessedness of an eternal union to the Lord Jesus Christ by the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost. Death is yours, the death of Christ. But our own death, our mortality is ours. Why? Because Christ, if he is ours, has taken away the sting; the sting of death. There are some who are so favoured with a full assurance of their interest in a crucified Redeemer that they have an assurance that the sting of death, of their death, is removed. "O death, where is thy sting?" is a great question. I often think of it in burying a saint. There is an answer to it, faith looks at Calvary and says 'The sting of my death is there. The dear Redeemer when He bowed His sacred head and said, "It is finished", extracted the sting of death; that is where it is.

"O grave, where is thy victory?" Faith will be enabled by the Spirit to point to the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, and declare, there is the victory; "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory."

'Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours.' O blessed people. 'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death.' O this is the hope of a dying saint! True, there is an end, it is an end to sin, and what a mercy that will be, an end to sin. It is an end to all the effects and consequences of sin. It is a beginning. Paul so had a glimpse of that glory that he desired to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.

*And dying saints can sing, 'tis well.'* (Gadsby's 470)

'The world, or life, or death, or things present.' You may say, I wish things present were not mine, especially if you are in trying circumstances and everything contradicts as it appears, the promises

of the Gospel; for you may depend upon it that death comes upon living things, but living things never die; but there is a death brought upon them. I do not know what Job would have said about present things, things present. What Joseph would have said when he was put down into the pit or was sold a prisoner? There are those present things, present troubles, present calamities, present conflicts, present sorrows are yours. "We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." It is all yours.

'Or things to come.' O, it is things to come. There is the promise of the Holy Ghost that will show His people things to come. There are some very solemn things to come to the wicked; there is the wrath to come. His people are delivered from the wrath to come, and that will never be altered through the ages; there will still be the wrath to come. O, but things to come! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man what He hath prepared for them that love Him." What then is to come? "An inheritance, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God." "I go to prepare a place for you." When you come to consider these things and then come back to the first assertion, 'Therefore,' under all these considerations, 'Let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, because ye are Christ's and because Christ is God's.'

Amen.