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GOSPEL STANDARDS

Morning Sermon preached by Mr F L Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> 1960

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” 2 Corinthians 9:15

We need to be preserved in our spirit on this occasion and to be saved from mere custom and formality which prevails generally at this season of the year and may we be gathered among those who worship God in spirit and in truth.

‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.’ Where there is a gift there must be a giver and a receiver. This is God’s greatest gift. The cause of this gift is his eternal love – God so loved the world and the emphasis is upon the ‘so.’ The manner, the nature of God’s love was such that he did not withhold, did not spare his only-begotten Son in whom he delighted who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”(John 3:16) That well-known scripture is full of profound truth and heavenly grace and salvation, and it gives us to see the blessedness and importance of being a believer. The great point is as to whether we have ever received this gift. “He came unto his own and his own received him not”- but there are some who receive him - “and as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”(John 1:11-12) So there is the importance of believing and of possessing a living faith. ‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.’ Every other gift is expressible: but for a thing to be unspeakable it must be inexpressible. We have another divine quality referred to the Lord Jesus, although in his divinity he can know no qualification; but as here he is an unspeakable gift, so his riches are unsearchable riches. If the Holy Ghost should make some connection between this unspeakable, glorious, divine person in human nature, Immanuel, and our poor being, our soul and our salvation it will be exceedingly great.

‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.’ The unspeakableness of the gift is because of his divine Person, his divinity. He is God. Therefore “Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.”(1 Timothy 3:16) It is all unspeakable and the manner of the gift is unspeakable. O my friends, if by the Holy Spirit we have any right conception of the glory of this Person we should realise, as far as can be realised, the unspeakableness of the gift! In Hebrews 1 we read of the Son being “the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power.” It would be a mercy to know him – not merely to read about him or hear about him. His disciples said unto him “How is it that thou wilt thou manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?”(John 14:22)

‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.’ Not only so but it is a full gift. “How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32) If we receive the gift of grace, the gospel and the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, we receive that treasure in earthen vessels. Our earthen vessels contribute nothing to the virtue of the treasure; but that is not so with the Lord Jesus. All the fullness and things that are given to the church in Christ derive their eternity and unsearchable riches, and life,

and vitality, and virtue from the Person in whom all that fullness is. The manner by which this gift was conveyed in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus is unspeakable, inexpressible, and incomprehensible.

*How it was done we can't discuss  
But this we, know, 'twas done for us. (Gadsby's 88)*

Oh happy are they who from the heart can say that.

The importance of the manner, the nature of the birth of the Lord Jesus, can never be exaggerated because he never contracted the least taint of sin from Adam. It was a creation by the Holy Ghost. The virgin Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, that sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. Some of you may have felt the vital importance and sacredness, and blessedness and effects of it. When you come to consider, with respect to the Lord Jesus, that in everything, from his conception to the grave, he was a Substitute, you will see the importance of it, and will seek to know that importance in your experience by the Spirit's witness and your union with Him. Substitution can only be of benefit to us as we are united to the substitute. Therefore as the virgin Mary conceived that sacred thing, so with his people in regeneration Christ is conceived in their heart by the Holy Ghost. A vital union in wrought that nothing will ever dissolve, and from that union all life, all spirituality, all vital religion, all prayer, all sanctification, all holiness, all righteousness are derived. 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift.'

But what we want to keep before us is that where there is a gift there is a receiver of the gift. Have we received him? I do feel it is warrantable to encourage any poor sinner to hope that he is Christ's, if Christ is precious to the soul. "Unto you therefore that believe, he is precious" (1 Peter 2:7) and he is precious therefore unto you that believe. And to believe is the will of God - "This is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son and believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 6:40) Well, if you have the slightest intimation that you have received the Lord Jesus, if that is the reason why you come to the sanctuary from time to time, that you might receive him, and receive from his fullness grace for grace, oh happy art thou! There is more, infinitely more, in this treasure than in ten thousand worlds. Oh to view this poor crazy, disturbed, sin-cursed world, as it is seen when you get a view of this unspeakable gift of God to his people

So the gift itself is unspeakable; and the manner of the gift is unspeakable; and the purpose of giving him is an unspeakable purpose. We were also reading of that just now, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17) So that there was a great purpose to be served in this gift. He is given as a witness and as a leader to the people. He is given, and partakes of flesh and blood with the brethren, in order that he might be their Mediator, their Redeemer, their Intercessor, their Saviour, their Forerunner, their Righteousness and their all and in all. Oh my friends never were the heavens so rent as when the Lord Jesus condescended 'Lo, I come!' What there is contained in those three words: 'Lo, I come!' "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but a body hast thou prepared me..... Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it to

written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God!" (Hebrews 10:5-7) The will of Jehovah is one; three glorious Persons, not three loves - one love. Not three wills - one will, -and that one love and one will sovereign toward the election of grace.

Therefore all the purposes for which this gift was given are unspeakable purposes; that is to say, there is nothing human that could express them. There is no human science of the highest order that can penetrate them, or can affect them, or produce such effects. The purpose for which Christ was given and sent, and came are unspeakable purposes, and have unspeakable benefits and effects in the hearts of sinners. He brought immortal blessings down; He brought light and life to light through the Gospel. 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.'

And look at the love - unspeakable love that sent him. The same love which brought him - suffering love. His sufferings were unspeakable and inexpressible. The intense sufferings of the whole aggregate of the church or God met in his sacred soul and his body. Unspeakable were his sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane. "He sweat was as it were great drops of blood." (Luke 22:44) I would not express any unwarrantable observations, but it comes into my mind, and I believe it is true, that the Lord, Jesus sweat as it were great drops of blood, which shows the purity of his sacred humanity. Oh the perfection, the holiness of a suffering Saviour! 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' and if we by the Spirit, are given a bearable entrance into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, there we shall see the nature of sin rightly; there we shall estimate its guilt.

'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' There is that which is unspeakable and inexpressible concerning Christ - but mark this, although inexpressible, and in the nature of things incomprehensible, yet his people receive the benefits of unspeakable and incomprehensible things. That is what makes it so rich, so powerful in its effects, so eternal in its benefits. Oh this full gift, this rich gift! The offices derive their authority from the Person of Christ; an angel would have no authority. If an angel could come, if an angel were set upon that pole instead of a brazen serpent, sinners would sink in despair. The authority of the offices which Christ occupied for his people is derived from who he is. Is there something in your heart that goes out in response and says, 'Well now that is the Christ I must have.' You know him, you can distinguish him and can feel him. There is a feeling in a living believing in him. When faith believes in Christ, then there is a reception of something of that which is believed. I venture to say this for the encouragement of those who have a living desire, that where the living desire is in exercise, I am warranted to say that that desire has in it an element of the things desired. When you believe in him, do you taste Him, feel Him, and behold the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth? Is it a transforming belief, does it renew the spirit of your mind, does it attract you? Oh what a living person he is! the mighty attraction of his blessed life. But it will only attract the same life in his people. Be thankful then, my friends, if ever you feel attracted, drawn, moved toward this glorious Sun, this Sun in the firmament of the Gospel.

'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' It is a gift, a free gift. There could be no necessity brought to bear upon God. Had he not been pleased sovereignly to give his only-begotten Son, then the whole of mankind would have perished in the ruins of the fall. Hell

would have been full, and heaven empty of the human race. What is really the secret cause? His own glory. It could never be for the glory of God that the whole mass of the human race should be lost. To what purpose would be the creation on the world? The cattle and the beasts of the earth could bring him no glory except as creatures. But oh the glory that accrues to him in the redemption of fallen men, and in order to redemption there must be a ransom found, one equal with God, and yet one equal with man, a Mediator,

Therefore in his mediatorial office he is unspeakable. There is one God, terrible, glorious, dreadful, holy, blessed God, a consuming fire, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, an unspeakable Mediator. And one great part of his work - indeed the whole of it really, is reconciliation. When man fell, righteousness and peace, mercy and truth, fled from the earth. But when the Lord Jesus Christ came, righteousness and peace met together, mercy and truth kissed each other. There was reconciliation through the Person and work of the dear Redeemer in his mediatorial office. It is unspeakable. But consider, was all this for us? If it was, the Holy Spirit will work in us the effects of it and bring the benefits of the gospel into our hearts. Then we should break out 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift.'

Are you an unspeakable sinner, an inexpressible sinner?

*To see sin smarts but slightly,  
To own, with lip confession,  
Is easier still; but O to feel,  
Cuts deep beyond expression.* (Gadsby's 806)

Inexpressible sin. It is a mercy, because when you are brought into an inexpressible condition of ruin and death nothing less than this unspeakable gift will meet your case; but this does. You may look at yourself and feel,

*Can blood such horrid crimes atone?  
Yes, blood so rich as thine.* (Gadsby's

And there is a very blessed connection between the birth, and death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. You cannot speak of His birth unless we speak of the purpose of it. "For this purpose was the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8) and you will know something about the works of the devil, not only in the Bible, not only in our persons, but in your own heart. Oh, I have long believed, and increasingly believe, that real experience is made up for the most part of deeper discoveries of the unspeakableness of our ruin in the fall, and deeper discoveries of the love of God in Christ, that this unspeakable gift contains everything - nothing lacking of all that constitutes salvation. I have felt the preciousness of it, and I like to use the expression the divine ingredients that were possessed in Christ for salvation; and if the blessed Spirit takes them and brings them into your heart, then you will know what salvation is. Oh what a coming then was that of the Lord Jesus!

'Thanks be unto to for his unspeakable gift.' He is called 'The Lord our Righteousness.' The righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which the Holy Ghost imputes to the soul, is the benefit of what we have tried to show you - the benefit of Immanuel; the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ - God with us. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift of righteousness. That righteousness takes in every thought that he thought, every act that he did and every breath that he breathed. There was no sin in a breath, in a look, in a thought, and not only no sin, but his human nature and soul were incapable of sin. Isn't it unspeakable that sinners can be married to him? That unspeakable office that he has been given of his Father to be the head of the body, the church; and an unspeakable mercy to be the least member in that mystical body and to receive from that glorious head such eternal life, and wisdom, and grace. Have we received him? How gladly would some of you receive him. There were those in the parable who sent a message saying "We will not have this man to reign over us" and so do many now with regard to the Lord Jesus. But when you look at the Word of God, you may be able humbly to confess before him that there are little things in which you feel you have some intimation of your interest in him. You would not say 'I will not have this man to rein over me.' would you? This fullness of this gift is a fullness of righteousness, sanctification, redemption, unsearchable riches and divine merit. And we need it.

And what an unspeakable gift is his priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood changed hands. There was nothing unspeakable about it. The sacrifices they offered were not unspeakable at all. They took the blood of goats and lambs and the ashes of a heifer - nothing unspeakable. Therefore its effects were not unspeakable. It never reached the conscience, and they never took away sins; indeed, them was a remembrance made of sin every year. . But this is an unspeakable priesthood offering an unspeakable sacrifice. My hard heart has been a little touched by that word in the 9th of Hebrews: "How much more" - that is than these Levitical sacrifices - "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself."(v.14) This is the gift; He offers it back to God. Offered himself; but where there is an offering, there must be a reception, and we read that he did not go into heaven, but was "received up into heaven." His Father received him. He was acceptable; God was well-pleased for his righteousness sake. Oh what an offering: the law scrutinized that offering; and passed it. It was perfect. The debt was paid, sin was removed, reconciliation brought in and everlasting salvation finished. Some of you feel what there is in that expression - 'offered himself without spot' - that he offered it for you that are his, for you that have received him. Spotted sinner; black, black sinner, thanks be unto .God for such a great High Priest, and for so unspeakable an offering for sin! His unspeakable death, inexpressible death - he bowed his head. Sometimes his death.is spoken of as passive, but really he was never so active as upon Calvary when he was paying the debt when he was there a Surety and a Substitute. He cried, "It is finished." Oh may the Lord give us to receive from this fullness, grace for grace! And may we never be satisfied unless we have the Spirit's witness that we have received that unspeakable Gift, with all the merit and benefits it contains. Amen.