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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday morning, 14th March, 1965.

"Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an inheritance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:10-11.

We are living in solemn and perilous times, not only the evils of increasing crime in the nation which is very perilous, but also in the religious world. There is a clamour for re-union and every kind of hedge is being taken down and the ancient landmarks are being removed. Every kind of distinction - everything is merged and blurred between that which is spiritual and that which is carnal; very little distinction between life and death. You might say, what has that got to do with the text or with the chapter? Much every way. The apostle Peter, after his serious fall, the Lord said unto him, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." And a good deal of the strengthening is by these two epistles, and in this second epistle he is confirming them in hope of the increase of God's graces and exhorting them by faith and good works to make their calling and election sure.

These things in this chapter are the main things. A social, active, attractive kind of religion is very subtle. I know what it is because I went away at the age of 14 years from this chapel, very much taken up with good music and light and bright religion and sociability. But my friends, that will not do to die with and the only cure for that kind of superficiality is conviction of sin. If the Lord should deeply wound the conscience with guilt, you would find that you would not be able to sing it away, nor to talk it away. You would need one thing - Salvation.

But the chapter opens very blessedly. He prays that grace and peace might be multiplied unto these scattered saints through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. "According as His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." That is the object of your calling, "called to glory and virtue." And He has given exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye may be partakers of the divine nature. O that shows the richness, the blessedness of Gospel promises; and every promise of the gospel must be fulfilled. Then he sets before us the fruits of faith. You are acquainted with this chapter and twice in this chapter He speaks of diligence: "Beside this, giving all diligence" and then he shows the fruits of faith, and so he comes down to the text: 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence.'

When he says 'the, rather,' it refers to the preceding verse. "But that lacketh these things." - That is, lacketh this fruit of faith, whose life does not manifest this virtue and knowledge,, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot seem, afar off and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." 'Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure'. These are the two main things. If the Lord should lay the salvation of our souls with weight upon our spirit, a light and frothy religion will be most objectionable to us.

'Make your calling and election sure.' It cannot be made more sure than it is. Election is the sovereign act of God, and calling follows predestination, and therefore they are based upon the solemn decrees and purposes of God. They cannot be more sure than they are. 'Make your calling and election sure.' Neither can anyone make their calling and election sure themselves because that is the Holy Spirit's work alone. But what does he mean then "Make your calling and election sure"? Paul puts the same truth, the same exhortation to the Galatians in another form: "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another." If we cannot make our calling and election sure, then nothing in our profession, nothing in our religion is sure. How much activity there is in religion,- plausible religion - wherein this diligence is absent and where there is no evidence, either internal calling or of election. O salvation is a serious matter my friends, as we have eternity before us!

Calling is put before election, although calling necessarily follows. But this shows the wisdom and goodness of God in the Scriptures. We cannot make our election sure, except by making our calling sure, and this calling, in the most important form, is secret, internal, calling, which issues in an external call, and therefore our business this morning, if we are to do justice to this word, is to try and trace out what this calling is, that we are to give diligence to make sure.

To be called by grace is to be born again. There is no other calling. What a calling that is! It is secret, internal. It is the inward ear of faith that hears the call of the Holy Spirit. And if we have not this call, our religion is of no use at all. How important this is. The importance of it the Lord showed to Nicodemus: "Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again." But why must we be born again? Because, "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh;" we cannot make spirit of it, whatever we do. We can educate it, we can soak it in religion for 40 years; it will be flesh still. That which is born of the flesh is and remains flesh, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Well then, if we are to make our calling sure, it is to give diligence and examine our profession, those who have made a profession, whether they can trace this calling. I feel that that wonderful chapter of the dry bones in Ezekiel gives to us a right illustration of it. You may be brought under the truth of the gospel and for years just hear a voice, a man speaking, and know nothing of what is said, nor any desire to know it. But do you remember the time when you began to listen, and when there was a time as of a shaking among the bones. There was a noise and a shaking, and bone came to his bone. Do you remember when the word first made you shake, and you were obliged to pay attention to it? And do you remember the time when the truth began to take a form in your understanding, and the Holy Ghost teaching you your sinfulness and your deep need of a refuge, a saviour, a hiding place, that a connexion was made between what He was teaching you about yourself and what the scriptures declared: and then do you remember when you began to seek after that refuge. Flee for refuge unto Jesus in the Gospel. Do you remember too when there was a drawing of your affections? How you went to the house of prayer in a prayerful spirit? Do you remember the aching void which nothing in this world could fill?

Calling! An inward calling. O the importance of it! I say again, there can be much external bodily exercise where there is not this secret beginning of a work of grace. And there will also be an external calling, because this internal call will have a separating effect. "Come out from among them

and be ye separate, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing and I will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." Therefore, in this internal call there is an internal separation. A separation made between what you were once and what you are made by grace. It makes a truth of what we sing.-

*There is a period known to God
When all His sheep redeemed by blood,
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
Turn to the fold, and enter in. (Gadsby's 76)*

And do you remember the first glimpses, very much as Bunyan depicts it in the Pilgrim's Progress, when Christian was out of his way and got near to the mount Sinai, Evangelist found him, A true minister of the Gospel will find you sooner or later, and directing Christian he said, "Dost thou see yonder wicket gate?" Christian said, 'No, 'Dost thou see yonder shining light?' 'I think I do.' 'Follow that light, and it will bring you to the wicket gate.'" Bring you to Christ. Do you remember the first days' dawn in your conscience, when the true light began to shine and when Christ was first made precious to your soul?

'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' And there is an anointing in all this. John speaks of it in his first epistle. He says, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." It does not mean to say that by this anointing ye have no need of teaching, but it does mean this that when in your experience you are confirmed, when Christ is made precious to you, you need no man to teach you that he is precious. Or when He breaks your heart and dissolves you in humility before His throne of grace, you have no need of any man to teach you your need of Christ and His all-sufficiency and suitability that you feel to be in Him.

O this gradual opening of the understanding. Well, if those few feeble remarks are true, have they a place in your experience? If they have, nothing can dislodge them. The work of grace is imperishable because grace is invincible, and grace is invincible because it is the grace of God; and that shows the blessed union and the effects of union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence.' Twice in the chapter - in the 5th verse, "Give all diligence." Add to your faith the fruits of faith. Make your faith manifest that it stands in the power of God. Make your faith manifest that you have a union with Christ by bringing forth the fruits of it. Well, if we can make our calling sure, our election of necessity is sure also, because election is through the foreknowledge of God the Father. "And whom He did foreknow, them He also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His dear Son." O what a predestination that is, and it will be accomplished. Nothing will frustrate those purposes. Whom He predestinated, them he also called. Every one of them will be called by grace, and the connexion, the union, is shown: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." In no wise, for no reason whatsoever!

'Make your calling and election sure.' There is another way of making our election sure. Paul speaks of it - "Knowing brethren your election" – knowing what? "that the gospel came not unto you in

word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." That was a token of election according to the scriptures. Therefore to make your election sure is to consider how the gospel comes to you, if the gospel comes in word only, it simply comes in the letter, in the paragraphs of the Bible, ink and paper. Anybody can read it, and for the most part an ordinary intelligent man can understand it. But there is no power in the letter. It is a dead letter. There is an important distinction as to whether we receive the gospel in word only, or in the demonstration of the Spirit and in power. Now then, which has it been with us? We have listened to the gospel for years., and it may come in word only for years so that you can write volumes upon it, but bodily exercise profiteth little.

Has the gospel ever come in power? You will never be satisfied without the power if you have got anything for God to do. If you have got nothing for Him to do then you don't need power. The word, the letter, will be enough. But O, if you know what it is to sink in deep mire where there is no standing, if you know what it is to be brought into the depths, with David, and to cry out of your depth;, if you know experimentally and spiritually what it is to be in the belly of hell, you will need power. The letter, the word, will never lift you out, and you won't need it. Therefore how important is the work of the Spirit in conviction of sin. It is the next greatest blessing to divine pardon, is conviction.

Well then, do you need power? There may be a good deal of criticism of ministers, but the great thing will be this, whoever the man is, he is of no use to me if there is no power, because I want something done. I need the power of the divine Physician of the soul, and deep are the wounds which sin has made. Do you need power and do you feel after it? Have you a case which needs the power of God 'in Christ? Beautiful expression it is, the power of Jehovah in His incarnate Son. He could never exercise divine power except in a way of destruction out of Christ; but when He exercises power in Christ it is the power of love, the power of His grace, and the power of His mercy. It is power exercised through a substitute. It is power exercised through a Mediator. It is just power. It is the power of a fulfilled law. 'Knowing therefore, brethren, your election of God the gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power."

These things I feel important in these solemn days, and I will say this, if your religion is such that you have no need of power, it is a dead religion and the dead letter will be enough and to such people activities and social religion go well together. 'Make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' It does not mean that a man will never fall into sin, for Peter himself fell long after he was called by grace, seriously fell; but it means this, that you will not fall to your ruin. You will never fall out of the hands of Christ. You will never fall out of the covenant of grace. Micah felt this, although he said, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, but rejoice not against me O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise."

'For so an inheritance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Now this shows to us the way to heaven. It is through much tribulation while we are here right to the very grave; but this effectual calling which as we said, is a calling to glory, every circumstance in life, and all the leadings and dealings with the Lord in His providence are all made subservient to this great end which is the salvation of your souls and an

abundant entrance into heaven. You look at it, and you look and read this chapter, my friends. If we lived in the perspective of eternity, we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, as we were trying to speak last Wednesday. "This I say brethren, the time is short, it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not. They that buy as though they possessed not, they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away." Full of instruction that is, and it takes you through the whole of life's journey. Everything is passing away. The only things substantial and that remain, are the things of God. What a mercy to have that immovable kingdom in your heart: what a mercy to have imperishable grace in your soul! What a great thing it is for the true light of the spirit to shine and to enlighten the eyes of your understanding, and for you to be led through life's journey under the influence of these heavenly realities. 'For an inheritance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

In experience, especially at some periods, your salvation may hang as it were upon a thread, and as we read in one place, you may be saved as by the skin of your teeth, or in another place, you may be saved as by fire, just as a brand plucked from the burning; and as Peter elsewhere says, "If the righteous scarcely be saved." But although there are these expressions which would make it appear that it is only a very brittle thread upon which salvation hangs, yet my friends, that thread is unbreakable. And that brand plucked out of the fire is a vessel of mercy, and that scarcely-saved sinner is one that is abundantly saved, the scarceness is in the method that God uses to save a sinner. But this is the point, when you come to the end, all this scarcely saved, all this being saved as by fire will be left behind, and there will be an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, There is abundance here. His redemption is plenteous redemption. If redemption is compared to the oceans, although it is incomparable, we are given to understand that there is sufficient water in the ocean for the earth to be submerged, the whole of the land; and with respect to the atonement of Christ, His plenteous redemption is so abundant that it can overflow and submerge all of nature and all its ruin, even while we are here.

Conflict is a part of the trial of faith, but when His people come to the end, then there shall be ministered unto you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we truly believe that our dear late friend Mrs Keeble has been ministered that abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. A hymn comes to my mind

*In vain the fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.*

*One gentle sigh their fetters break;
We scarce can say, "They're gone!"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne*

*Faith strives, but all its efforts fail
To trace her in her flight,
No eye can pierce within the veil
Which holds that world of light.*

*On harps of gold they praise His name,
His face they always view;
Then let us followers be of them
That we may praise him too. (Gadsby's 1155)*

'Abundant entrance.' Dropping a body of sin and death. No more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain. My friends it is beyond our imagination that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But there will be this. If we are thus being led, if we are thus called by grace then to make your calling and election sure you will have known something of that eternal kingdom in your soul here below; Paul says, "wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." and O that is a blessed evidence of calling and election. Have you entered? I do not mean now particularly joined a church; there are many people in heaven who never joined a visible church here below. O but has the kingdom of grace here been made attractive to you? And the kingdom of grace is the gospel, and the gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His 'Person,; all virtue, all power, all that is eternal and imperishable, derives from the Person of Christ. Had it not been God's eternal Son who thus condescended to take upon Him human nature, there would be neither power, nor validity, nor virtue, nor hope, nor faith. It all centres in His blessed Person. So that there is an entrance into the kingdom of grace here; there must be before there is an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory hereafter. But this is the end of our calling - heaven.

The Lord calls those who are predestinated, calls them to His eternal glory and if He does then he will make that glory to be the object of their faith and the object of their life. O how differently we should live! It seems for the most part that men consider the purpose of life is to amass a fortune. It is very solemn to be so overwhelmed with the things of this life beyond what is necessary in order to accumulate a fortune to the neglect of our immortal souls. But O to enter by the Holy Ghost into the kingdom of grace here, by that kingdom of grace entering into our hearts bringing the gospels revealing a Substitute! For Christ to be made to us our great High Priest. To receive into our hearts the efficacy of His precious sin-atonement death and sacrifice, and brought to be clothed in His righteousness, saved by His grace.

Now if these statements are true, what a wonderful pan on is a child of God! Not wonderful in their own eyes. "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" Can you answer that challenge? Is there a people that you could prefer to Israel, the excellent of the earth? Do you not feel this - "Remember me, O Lord, with the same favour that Thou bearest unto Thy dear people. Visit me with exactly the same salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen and glory in Thy inheritance." Well, if so, an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly. It will be ministered. There is something sweet about this word to dying saints. There might have been kind hands that have ministered to their wants in their weakness, in their pain, in their sufferings, but immediately their breath is out of their bodies there will be another ministration. "The angels of the Lord, are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those that shall be heirs of salvation?" Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

'For so an inheritance shall be ministered unto you abundantly.' O there is plenty of it, and some of you perhaps long for it. Now the Psalmist said, "Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live." Lord, it is a lot that I come for, it is a lot - and you will feel that you need the whole of the Lord Jesus. You need all His precious blood. You need the whole of the gospel. O the abundance of it! Like Paul, you will feel a monster of sin, but when you see Christ and He is revealed to your heart, you are so swallowed up. Blessed be God, Christ swallows up sinners, swallows up his sins and his guilt and an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.