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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton  
Sunday morning, 19th February 1967

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him."

11 Samuel 14. v.14.

"We must needs die." The necessity for death is sin. Another reason why we must needs die is because it is a divine appointment. "It is appointed unto men once to die". It may appear a very sombre kind of subject, but there is nothing more real, nothing more certain and if we are possessed of grace and a living faith, there will be that in death, as the Holy Spirit may open it to us, which is solemnly attractive.

The Scriptures show there are two heads to the human race: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". Adam is the federal head of mankind, but there are those who in the Covenant of grace and in time, experimentally, by the Holy Ghost, are under grace and therefore, Christ is their federal Head, and that divides the whole of the human race. It may divide this congregation. We come sometimes to close points, but the things of God and eternity are exceedingly blessed but exceedingly solemn.

Do you ever consider how you really stand for eternity? There will be those on His right hand and those on His left and we shall be either on the one side or the other, there is no middle way, there is no neutral ground in the things of God. It is something solemnly definite, we are either lost or saved, we are either moving on to eternal glory or to eternal woe. These statements may sound very ordinary, but O how solemn they are when we come to our dying day! I do feel, and felt in the consideration of it myself, that it is profitable to bring our dying day to view.

" How stands the case, my soul, with thee,  
For heaven are thy credentials clear ? "

"For we must needs die". We were not created mortal, we are mortal because we have sinned, and yet my friends, where there is faith, the Lord can use, as we were reading just now, even our mortal condition for the good of our souls. "While we look, not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal", and when those things are seen, then a poor afflicted sinner can say: "Our affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory".

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again". This does not deny the resurrection, that precious chapter, 1 Corinthians, 15 gives a most blessed description of the resurrection and is enforced by very strong language. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen. If Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins, our preaching is vain, your faith is vain"; but O he says, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept". But the intention here, "And are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again", means this, that none can bring back life. All the skilful surgeons and doctors in the world can never restore life to the dead, it is "as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again", and when you come to consider, this is before

each one of us. I feel it is a great mercy where the Lord gives grace, so "That we may number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom". That is, to live our lives unto Christ Who is infinite Wisdom. To seek those things that are eternal, the things of the Gospel, the kingdom of His grace in our hearts, all of which can never die, can never decay, imperishable they are. O what wisdom it is to apply our hearts to these things that will bring us safely through life and into eternal glory !

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person." He is no respecter of persons, His sovereignty is absolute. He alone is an independent Being. "He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou ?" The absolute sovereignty of God is very terrible for the wicked, it is the greatest comfort to His people, and Paul, upon this point says, "If God be for us, who can be against us ?" And therefore, the inference is this, If God is against us, who can be for us ?

"We must needs die and be as water spilt on the ground". That is the conclusion of the whole matter concerning the things of this life. Solomon says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man". Well, that will be the conclusion of everything concerning us in this life. We go through and we have our responsibilities, our cares, our duties, our joys, our comforts, our calamities, our conflicts, but the conclusion of all is death, and if this is impressed upon our hearts by the Spirit, it will have an influence upon our lives. O how differently we should act in many things if everything we did, we did with our latter end in view !

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again". It is an absolute conclusion. The absolute destitution that is evidenced in death shows to us the absolute destitution since the Fall that there is in us of anything spiritual. But the mercy is this, that with respect to His people, death is the last enemy to be destroyed. It is not the last enemy to the wicked; the last enemy to the wicked is a just and holy God. A very solemn thing to enter into eternity and to find that God is our enemy. But the last enemy to be destroyed for His people is death.

"Neither doth God respect any person", high or low, rich or poor, or any age for that matter. O how many young, how many middle-aged, especially it seems in later years have died suddenly! Death goes up into King's palaces as well as into humble cottages. God is no respecter of persons in any matter whatever, He is above all and He doeth all things according to the purpose of His own will. These truths, when they are opened to us, will put things in their right places. If the true light shines upon this text, we shall see things as God sees them, we shall see men as God sees men, we shall see ourselves as God sees us, and we shall see God as He ought to be seen. Wonderful thing to have things put in their right places by the true light shining into our consciences. Then we shall do all things to the pleasing of God, walk according to His will.

"Neither doth God respect any person". There is a good deal of respecting of persons here below, but death puts everything upon one level. There is only one difference that will be known at death, and that is the difference between the righteous and the wicked. That distinction which grace alone can make, but what a difference ! What a solemn, and on the other hand a blessed distinction ! And I do feel that consideration of these things can bring a great blessing. They can enter into our everyday life, it will not influence us to do things carelessly. I know the wicked would say, "Let us eat and

drink, for tomorrow we die", but a child of God, in view of the end will say, "Teach me to do Thy will, Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness"; and as you draw nearer to your journeys end you will find that this mighty truth, this inescapable fact will enter into your ordinary things. You will discharge things as you go on, as though you were doing them for the last time and you will do some things for the benefit of those that out-live you, and you will seek so to live and discharge every duty and sustain every relationship so that you leave behind you a savour of grace.

It is wonderful, I know it touches the heart, but it is wonderful when one whom you have loved is removed from you, you go about the house or about the places he has gone and see evidences of his doings, especially when there has been the savour of grace; some of you may know that. I believe I know that, indeed I feel the influence now of my godly Mother, a life, a suffering life of conflict, but a real pilgrim.

"We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again, neither doth God respect any person." The proud, those who defied Him and His laws, those who declared, 'I will not have this man to reign over me', those who say in their actions, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" they will not escape it, He is no respecter of persons. So it brings this great and eternal God before us, and there is something very salutary, I feel, in the influence of it:

"Great God, how infinite art Thou,  
What worthless worms are we ! "

You will feel that, and yet as a dying mortal you will be thankful if you are brought to feel how unsafe you are out of Christ, and to realise, by the Spirit, that all the divine perfections of Jehovah are round about you for your eternal safety wherein alone you can rest. Rest under a sense of divine security, His immutable love, His invincible grace, His plenteous redemption, and to realise that all the mighty debts you owe are paid, fully paid, by the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"Yet doth He devise means". This word, yet, is full of consolation, it takes in everything that is a terror in death to His people. You take the preceding part of the text and then look at this word YET. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again, neither doth God respect any person," YET, notwithstanding all that, "doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him".

"O ye banished seed be glad,  
Christ your Advocate is made,  
He to save our flesh assumes " -

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This is the way that He devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him. When were they banished? They were banished from Eden. A terrible word was that: "He drove out the man", could not bear fallen man in His sight, drove him out of Eden. When that pair was in Eden unfallen, they had everything there for true happiness. Communion with the Lord, immediate communion with Him. The fall of man is a mystery. It is unprofitable to presumptuously to attempt to penetrate the reason why God permitted sin to enter. It needs no stretch of imagination to know that it has entered. O look at the havoc that sin has wrought in the world, and some of you poor sinners will say, and look at the havoc that sin has wrought in my soul! O really to consider the condition that sin has wrought! If there were no sin we should need no locks and keys, no need to lock our homes, our cars. There would be no need for the Police Force, The Air Force, the Army or the Navy. Even looking at it in

an external way like that, O the tremendous mystery of iniquity !  
But it has entered and therefore, we must needs die. But 'yet',  
and this yet takes in all the woe that sin has wrought, all the  
wreckage it has wrought within your poor soul,

" O thou hideous monster sin,  
What a curse hast thou brought in ! "

Yet, yet, notwithstanding the power of the devil and his temptations,  
notwithstanding a body of sin and death, "Yet doth He devise means  
that His banished be not expelled from Him". They were expelled  
from Eden. A beautiful line of one of our hymns takes that up,

" Banished thence, we flee to thee,  
Garden of Gethsamane."

Jehovah devised these means in the Covenant of Grace. It  
proceeds from the everlasting and the immutable love of God. The  
Covenant made between Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A Covenant  
ordered in all things, without exception, and those favoured sinners  
who were interested in that Covenant of Grace, everything concerning  
them, from the cradle to the grave, is in that Covenant. All your  
providences, all your movements, all your infirmities and afflictions,  
all your disasters, calamities, conflicts and sorrows, all in the  
Covenant of Grace, and it was "Ordered in all things and sure". This  
is where this device was made, by the infinite wisdom of Jehovah, and  
in this device it pleased the Father that all fulness should be in  
His dear Son. He was set up from everlasting to be the Head of the  
Church and to be Head over all things to the Church. He was set up  
from everlasting to be the Foundation of all the purposes and  
counsels of Jehovah. The names of all His dear people were in the  
Covenant, written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

"Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled  
from Him". Solemn thing it was to be banished, but O my friends,  
grace makes our standing more secure than it was before we fell.  
Seems impossible, but it is true, and the relationship that His  
people are brought into by the Holy Spirit is a closer relationship  
than ever could have been if man had never fallen. This is a truth  
I really receive in my heart. The closest relationship that could  
have been if man had never fallen would be as creature and Creator,  
and this brings in the mystery of godliness. "Yet doth He devise  
means that His banished be not expelled from Him".

The wicked will be. "Depart from Me, ye cursed", "Depart from  
Me, I never knew you". Solemn thing to be outside of this means  
devised by infinite love and wisdom. But this means of grace, this  
device entailed the unspeakable Gift of God's dear Son. It was the  
only means by which His banished should not be expelled from Him.  
There was none other who could undertake such a heavy responsibility  
but God the eternal Son. It makes salvation exceedingly great and  
it shows us the exceeding greatness of sin, that it needed such a  
provision, such a device in order to remove it and for the salvation  
of the elect, but it is accomplished. Therefore, "God so loved the  
world that He gave His only begotten Son." The estimation of the love  
of God to His unworthy people is in the Gift of His own Son. He  
could give no greater Gift, anything less would have been ineffectual.  
Therefore He did not spare His only begotten Son, but freely delivered  
Him up for us all. He did not hold Him back, He gave Him up.  
Delivered Him into the hands of wicked men to be crucified. He gave  
Him up to suffering, to shame, to ignominy, to reproach. This is the  
means He devised.

What value then, does He set upon His people ! I have sometimes  
said, and I would say it reverently, if we are given by the Spirit to  
know ourselves thoroughly, what we are, and then consider this  
unspeakable Gift of God in all His glory, His majesty, His holiness,  
we shall say, "I am not worth it". Do you feel to be worth such a  
provision, such a Gift, such a salvation, such a Saviour, such a  
heaven ? Well, you may be surprised if I say, you are worth it,

otherwise God would have never given His only begotten Son for you; but your worthiness is in the Lamb. O what a work is wrought in the soul of a poor sinner that he might be made worthy of this calling, to be called to His eternal glory! So that a child of God is a rich person, possessed of all that was in the Mediator, partaking of His fulness, of His life, of His revealed light, of His saving grace, of His mercy that is from everlasting to everlasting, of His plenteous redemption, of His immutable love; this is how a poor sinner is made fit for heaven. "Yet", notwithstanding all, is the meaning of that word YET;

" He saw me ruined in the fall,  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all.  
He saved me from my lost estate,  
His lovingkindness, O how great ! "

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"Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him". Well they must be expelled from Him unless their sins are expelled from them, and how did the Lord deal with it ? "He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". That was the device there. "Yet", and that yet looks at your sins, the chief of sinners, the uttermost of sinners, those in the deepest debt. "He hath made Him to be sin". He sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh. To possess of these most sacred and blessed truths will enrich your faith. See Who it is was sent, that lovely One, that glorious God, the eternal Son, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. The Father sent Him in such an image, in the image of sin and there is something complete and perfect in every part of the Gospel; and if ever it is revealed to you that you are complete in Christ, you will realise the importance and blessedness of the completeness of every part of the work of Christ. For He was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and if you have an interest in that Saviour, then He was sent in the likeness of your sinful flesh, the very likeness of yours.

"Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him". You will love Him if you trace this device, the device of infinite wisdom and love and grace. If the Holy Ghost leads you through the Scriptures as we have on record, the goings of the Lord Jesus from the manger to the cross;

"And what can poor lost sinners say,  
When once they get a view,  
And hear the Holy Spirit say,  
All this was done for you?"

You will hate sin when you see it as represented upon Calvary. As you see the Son of God lifted up, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness". O the condescension of Christ in the Gospel ! You consider, if there was anything else lifted up upon that pole other than that emblem of sin:

"Serpents are the beasts that bite them,  
Make of brass a serpent like them,  
That's the way I choose to save."

If there had been an emblem of unfallen Adam, what despair a sinner would be in to look at it, if there had been lifted up an emblem of an angel, what despair would a poor guilty sinner have when he looked at that angel. But when he looks at that precious, glorious, sacred Son of God, made sin, upon Calvary; my friends, He was suffering then the penalty of all your sins. "For the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all". He was judged by the law as though He had committed every sin that you have committed. Think of it, so was the Lord Jesus judged by the law, and He was brought under the curse due to your sins, "He was bruised for our iniquities and with His stripes we are healed". This is the device.

"Yet", O this YET, it embraces the whole compass of a poor sinner's unworthy life, and you know more about your life than anybody else. "Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him."

Well, is it anything to you? We were trying to say last Wednesday, to consider how we hear. You have been hearing about this device of salvation for many years, we are coming to the end, and what advantage would it be if we attained to the highest position in this world, or if we had amassed the greatest fortune? It would not do us a bit of good. Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but O to die with a spark of divine life, with a grain of saving faith! It will take you to heaven.

"Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him". That is, they will never hear that word, Depart, that is to be expelled at last, depart. I have sometimes said, and it seems to come in just here; Has the Lord ever, in your experience, said, "Come"? "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden", if He has by His Spirit ever said that word "come" to you, He can never say "depart". Depart belongs to the law, come belongs to the Gospel.

"Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him".

Well, we miss our dear old friend Mr. Holder, <sup>He</sup> sat in the seat there I remember in that pew from the time I was a little boy. During his lifetime he said but little, but he knew the truth in the inward part, and in his last few days he gave evidence that the secret of the Lord was with him. "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory", and he was, almost with his latest breath, able to say, VICTORY. O may the Lord bring us honourably through to the end.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).