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An address by Mr. F. Gosden at the funeral service of Mrs. Jesse
Delves on Tuesday 18th. May, 1976

My dear friends, we are gathered here by divine appointment and, as we have read, "It is appointed unto men once to die". Death is a real and solemn fact. The cause of it is sin but you notice in the last paragraph (Hebrews 9) that not only is it appointed unto men once to die but a sacrifice was once offered - that appointment we feel has comfort for our dear beloved brother with respect to his dear departed one, that that second appointment was on her behalf.

On these occasions I do feel that it is an opportunity to pause in the midst of the confusion of this poor life, and if we might be given the wisdom as Moses said, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end". With respect to our dear departed friend, our dear brother, and those who mourn, the brother in law, and those who have known them for so many years as I have, may sorrow - sorrow is not forbidden - "Jesus wept", but they have not to sorrow as those that have no hope.

What a solemn thing it is to live as we were born, no change, without hope, without God, and without any sense of a need of Him; and this is a consideration which causes much heart searching, there is a connection between how we live and how we shall die. It is very solemn to come to the end and to be like those foolish virgins, to find that we have no oil in our lamps. To my mind these virgins thought they had, they were orthodox, they were correct, their lamps were manufactured in the same factory, they sat under the same ministry, sat under the same truths and believed them; but oh my dear friends, I do feel that when we come, as we are now, in the very face of eternity and an eternal God it would be a blessing if it should create in us, and quicken us into, a fresh exercise of soul. With regard to our dear departed friend these Scriptures that we have read are now

fulfilled in her and therefore her best day was the day of her death, a better day than that of her birth, better because the work of grace was done; not only was she redeemed, - that was completed when the Lord Jesus said "It is finished"; but the work of sanctification was done. She not only had a right to heaven through the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus but she was made fit to be there; and those who knew her life, it was a life of faith in the Son of God and therefore we do feel that these Scriptures describe the abundant entrance that His people have into His eternal kingdom. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" and that exclamation sounds in heaven when every one of His dear people are gathered there. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?" "These are they which came out of great tribulation". That is not the reason they are there; but the reason they are there is this, they "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" - that is the glory of heaven "He that sitteth on the throne" and oh to have some manifestation of Him to the soul while we are here, to have those three all-consuming desires that the Apostle Paul had "that I may know Him", "that I may win Him" and "that I may be found in Him" at last, I believe that those who are thus brought to know Him will know Him when they see Him. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them". The glory of the Lord as revealed to His people here is wonderful; the glory that they will have in heaven when they are in His immediate presence we could never bear here. We see through a glass darkly, we know in part, but there, those who are favoured to enter into that glory will see Him as He is and be like Him. O the blessedness of the dead which die in the Lord.

This too will give us to consider what influence we have been while we live, on other people. Speaking for myself, I have known our dear brother and his dear departed one for 40 years, and they

have had an influence on me. No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. You cannot live without being an influence of some kind on other people and when we look back, I know these things will search our hearts; but I do feel that it is profitable to consider our latter end. How solemn is the alternative.

"Blessed are they that die in the Lord" and there is only one alternative, if we do not, by the grace of God, die in the Lord, we shall die in ourselves; and if we have been given to know by divine teaching what we are, the completeness of our ruin, our corruption, that completeness is such that nothing can be added to it. It is a solemn thing to die in ourselves. To die in our sins is to perish. If you die in your sins there will be the wrath to come, and in a million years there will be the wrath to come, and in another million years there will be the wrath to come; and when these things are brought into our heart and conscience it puts things in this world in their right place, and it would be a mercy if we were quickened into fresh exercise to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world?" Perhaps some of you have really felt it, and what a mercy if the influence of the power of the truth should be so manifest in our lives as to enable us to say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord", and he not only thought of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, but he said "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him".

I do feel that we need from time to time, especially in these days of confusion, and in a world full of immorality and chaos, to be brought to a pause, a stand-still.

"Pause my soul and ask the question,
Art thou ready to meet God?"

It seems a simple statement but it is very profound

"Am I made a real Christian,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood"

Although, as we have said, sorrow must be in the heart of those who lose their loved ones with whom they have lived for so many

years, I do feel in this case that it is a time of real sacred rejoicing. You see "Where your treasure is there shall your heart be also" and those who are made wise unto salvation lay up for themselves treasure in heaven. You must die and go to heaven to possess your treasure, you must go to heaven to enter into the inheritance incorruptible that never fades away. I suppose most of us have been under the truth all our lives and we preach about things and hear about things that are concerned with eternity; but we must die to possess them. Do you not feel at times, even here, that you want to possess what you believe and possess what you profess, otherwise of what use is it? Therefore my dear friends I think that this is a time of sacred rejoicing but oh that it may be made a voice to us.

"The Lord knoweth them that are His". Not only is the soul redeemed but the bodies of His dear people are to be redeemed also. What we have read concerning the soul and the glory into which our dear departed friend has entered is now fulfilled; the promise concerning the body will be fulfilled - "sown in corruption, raised in incorruption". "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body". Then if we know this change "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly". So that the prospect for His saints is glorious with respect to soul and body, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body". Think of it, dear friends, it will not be changed back into a sinless condition as in Adam before he fell, but far more glorious than that, fashioned like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the prospect of God's dear people, and the secret of being thus changed into the likeness of His glorious body is to be brought into eternal indissoluble union with the Lord Jesus by the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost and also by that miracle of miracles the incarnation of the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. These two miracles make that vital union with Christ; apart from which it would be impossible. The condescension of God's dear Son

taking a sinless nature whereby His people are made partakers of the divine nature, what a profound, blessed truth! If we have that union it is such a real union that we possess Him, all that He is, all that He has in His infinite fulness, all the benefit of the work that He has accomplished, and those two great questions will be answered, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Faith can answer both - "O death, where is thy sting?" - look to Calvary and see the sting extracted there - "O grave, where is thy victory?" - faith can look at a risen Christ and say there is the victory over my grave. Amen.

"My soul, with joy attend,
While Jesus silence breaks;
No angel's harp such music yields
As what my Shepherd speaks.

"I know my sheep," he cries;
"My soul approves them well;
Vain is the treacherous world's disguise,
And vain the rage of hell.

"I freely feed them now
With tokens of my love.
But richer pastures I prepare,
And sweeter streams above.

"Unnumbered years of bliss
I to my sheep will give;
And while my throne unshaken stands,
Shall all my chosen live.

This tried almighty hand
Is raised for their defence;
Where is the power can reach them there,
Or what can force them thence?"

Enough, my gracious Lord.
Let faith triumphant cry;
My heart can on this promise live;
Can on this promise die.
