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Sermon preached by Mr F L Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
Lord's Day evening 22nd September 1963

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful that promised)." Heb. 10 v. 22-23

This morning we attempted to lay the foundation of the hope of those who eventually shall be brought into the holiest of all, heaven itself; and that foundation is nothing else, no other, than God's eternal, incarnate Son. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid" (1 Cor. 3 v. 11), and a poor sinner who is taught of God will refuse every other foundation.

This evening we come more to experience. Having laid the foundation, the blessed heavenly doctrine, the doctrine of Christ, we come now, as did the apostle, to experience. 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.' This is a solemn point, because we will either draw near, or we shall go away. Asaph saw this. Undoubtedly he saw it afresh when he went into the sanctuary, for he said "They that are far from Thee shall perish ... but it is good for me to draw near to God" (Ps. 73 v. 27-8), so that there is only one alternative to drawing near to God, and that is to be far off from Him, and perish.

'Let us draw near' – and the apostle has given grounds, reasons, why the worst of sinners might draw near, and he concentrates that truth in the 7th chapter: "This Man" – so different from Aaron and the Aaronic priesthood that changed hands and did not "continue by reason of death" (ch. 7 v. 23); so different from those Levitical sacrifices that were "offered year by year continually" (ch. 9 v. 1), and made nothing perfect, never reached the conscience at all, never took away sins. "But this Man," this blessed Man who condescended to tabernacle here below, who went about doing good, Emmanuel, God with us, who worked miracles, cast out devils, raised the dead, healed the sick – "this Man, because He continueth ever ..." Oh, what a sight for faith to behold the eternal God in Christ! Therefore everything that He did, all the work that He finished, was an eternal work, and that was the one reason why He offered only one sacrifice. It had an eternal validity in it. "This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore" (there is the ground of boldness and of hope) – "wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (ch. 7 v. 24-5).

Oh, do you ever come unto God through Jesus Christ? 'Let us draw near.' What hindrances are there? It is as if the apostle would say 'Let us draw near whatever our condition may be. "It is good," said Asaph, "for me to draw near unto God," and the mercy of it is that uttermost sinners, the vilest of sinners, may draw near; and it is amazing that the heavier your case, the more it honours Him. We have not to wait, my friends, until we have something that we can present to Him, but we are to take everything that belongs to us; and *that* is to come, to 'draw near with a true heart.'

We might look at one or two examples of those who drew near; and what case so desperate can you find in the Word of God as that of David in the 51st Psalm? He did not attempt to leave his sins behind! Oh, that precious Psalm! Let us draw near as he did, and

look at the language of that Psalm, and see with what a true heart he came. We said this morning, and would repeat it for the comfort of real sinners, a true heart is not a sinless heart. You won't find one. David was under a sense of guilt; burdened he was with sin; but he said "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow" (Ps. 51 v. 6-7).

Let us draw near and take our worst things, make our worst condition known. Oh, how it will magnify the riches of His grace! How it will honour Him as the great High Priest who offered Himself! Oh the sufficiency of that offering! It has been attractive to me, and in my worst condition has enabled me to venture to draw near to Him, the Mediator between God and man.

'Let us draw near with a true heart,' and this true heart is a *new* heart. Only those that are born again have a true heart. Born in sin and "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. 51 v. 5) is the whole human race. Oh the necessity of being born again, being created anew in Christ Jesus! What an infinite mercy it is to have the life of God communicated by the Holy Ghost, for whatever He gives, whatever He does in the heart, is immutable, is unchangeable. Nothing of the work of grace can ever be destroyed. None of the fruit of the Spirit can ever fade; nothing can decay or die. Oh, blessed is the man in whom is such a kingdom – a kingdom of grace that will issue in eternal glory!

'Let us draw near.' I say again, there is no alternative but to perish. Queen Esther – she was brought to that point. She was not called in unto the king, and if any should presume to go in unto the king uncalled, it was at the risk of their life. But she ventured. "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish" (Est. 4 v. 18). Have not some of you in the conflict of your mind and in the distress of your soul been brought to that point, that if you must perish, you would perish at the throne of grace? But none ever did, and none ever will perish there.

'Let us draw near.' Look again at the case of the publican who drew near with the burden of guilt and sin heavy upon him. His eyes were upon this great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ – faith in His divine Person, faith in His virgin birth. My friends, this comes into it vitally. I feel the importance of emphasising these foundation truths of the Gospel. It is only upon this that faith can build, and for faith to behold Him, "the Mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim 3 v. 16). I believe that the publican, by faith, saw Him, saw this great High Priest, beheld by the Spirit his Redeemer, his Substitute. 'Let us draw near with a true heart.' Oh, how true his heart was! And there will be a drawing near unto Him constantly; we shall need Him. We are in the flesh; we contract fresh guilt; we are backsliders. How any person can deny that the people of God can backslide is a mystery to me. I am bound to believe it because of my own experience. But this backslider drew near with a true heart.

Look at the prodigal. "I will arise and go to my father." He was prepared for it. As we mentioned this morning there is a preparation for this boldness; and the preparation that he had was that he came to the end of everything - came to the end of his riches, of his supplies, of his wisdom. He was hunger-bitten, ragged, a beggar. "I will arise and go to my father." Did he go with a true heart, or did he go with excuses? No: "I will say unto him, Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." "Bring forth the best robe" (Lk 15 v. 18-22). The father did not allow him to finish. He saw the sincerity; he saw a broken and a contrite heart.

'Let us draw near,' says the apostle, as though there is a kind of challenge in it, as though he would say, 'I have set before you this great High Priest, and shown you the infinite merit of His Person and of His priesthood, His precious blood; now tell me any reason why you would not draw near.' It cannot be sin. Indeed, that is the very reason that a Saviour, a Redeemer, a great High Priest, a Sacrifice, is provided. It is a blessed mystery, and well deserves repetition, that if it were not for sin entering into the world (and for yourself you will say, entering into you, realising that the root of sin is in your nature by birth, and your actual transgressions) – if it were not for sin, the ruin and death which it has brought, there would be no Gospel; there would be no Word of God; there would be no salvation (none would be needed); there would be no Church of God; there would be no Mediator between God and man. Oh the mystery, that the infinite God has been pleased to manifest His greatest glory in the salvation of sinners!

'Let us draw near.' Would you object your ignorance? You noticed what we were reading just now: "He" (this great High Priest) "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (ch. 5 v. 2). My friends, if the eye of faith is upon this great High Priest, there is no possible reason why the greatest sinner out of hell may not draw near; and if he does it will be with a true heart, it will indeed – true confession of sin.

'Let us draw near with a true heart,' an honest heart, 'in full assurance of faith.' This full assurance of faith is the gift of God. It is the same faith, although possessed in different degrees, but it is the same faith, and therefore there are two degrees of a full assurance of faith. But the great point is, whether we possess faith at all. A mercy if it is but "as a grain of mustard seed" (Mat. 17 v. 20), that will remove mountains! A grain of faith, by the Spirit,

*"Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done."*

(C. Wesley)

But have we faith? Faith is a grace rooted in the new birth. It is faith that makes the distinction between a dead professor and a living child of God. Faith is that spiritual faculty which receives testimonies of God. Faith is the eye of the soul which can penetrate to spiritual and unseen eternal things. Faith is an ear which hears those things which the natural ear does not hear. Therefore, if we want to know whether we possess the faith of God's elect, the greatest test is this: "What think ye of Christ?" (Mat. 22 v. 42) Or to put another question, as in the Lamentations concerning Christ and His blessed sufferings and death, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" (Lam. 1 v. 12) The preaching of the Gospel (we are so often occupied in it) – is it anything to you? What I am trying to get at now is whether we possess the faith that is the gift of God. It is faith that makes contact with God through the Spirit. It is faith in the heart that responds unto Christ in the Gospel. It is the life of faith in the soul that feels its need of salvation. It is faith that knows God; God is revealed to faith; the righteousness of God in the Gospel is revealed from faith to faith (Rom. 1 v. 17). Then just for a moment, my friends, look into your own case, and consider whether the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, which is the wisdom of His grace, has any connection with your soul's experience, even if it is only in your sense of a need of it. It is not to be rested in, but I should

value a real sense of the need of Christ in salvation by the Spirit. If you have such a need, that need will one day be fulfilled and satisfied. But this faith may not be a full assurance of your interest in Christ, and yet it *is* a full assurance; and I believe there are some here who have that degree of faith. It *is* a full assurance with respect to the sufficiency of Christ, a full assurance that He is what He declares Himself to be. You take, for instance, the blind man that was cast out from the temple, and the Lord opened his eyes. The Lord “said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him ... He it is that talketh with thee.” The blind man said, “Lord, I believe” – and did not turn away from Him, but “Lord, I believe. And he  worshipped Him” (John 9 v. 35-8). There was the evidence of his faith. Do you ever worship the Lord under a sense of your need of Him? Is He precious to you – precious to you in your necessity? Well, you have a full assurance of faith in the ability of Christ, a full assurance of Christ that He is the Son of God. “Whom say ye that I am” said the Lord to His disciples. Peter’s noble answer: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mat. 16 v. 15-6). A sinner may believe that before he knows his interest in that Christ; but if we have been brought thus far, that work will be completed. Yes,

*“The time of love will come,
When we shall clearly see
Not only that He shed His blood,
But each shall say, For me.”*

(A Toplady; Gadsby’s 330)

Blessed day!

‘Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.’ There is something very sweet in that assurance of a seeking soul. You may depend upon it that those around Bethesda’s Pool had a full assurance that if they could but be put into that water, they could be made whole. They knew that; otherwise they would not have continued there. “An angel went down at a certain season and troubled the water” (John 5 v. 2-4). That is a type of the Holy Ghost putting virtue, divine energy and power, into the preaching of the Gospel. There was one there that had waited 38 years, but he had a full assurance of the efficacy of that living water.

*“Wait then, my soul, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful seat.”*

(S Medley; Gadsby’s 9)

And there is

“Some sweetness in waiting for Him.”

(A Toplady; Gadsby’s 293)

There is knowledge in a need of the Lord Jesus; there must be. There must be a knowledge of Him whom you need, and believe in the fulness that is in Him. It makes Him exceedingly precious, and traces the whole up to the covenant of grace. It is said of the Father that He did not withhold His Son, but freely “delivered Him up for us all. How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8 v. 32)

‘Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.’ And you are fully assured too, that the provision that is made in the Gospel is an all-sufficient provision. “With Him is plenteous redemption” (Ps. 139 v. 7). O my friends, if we did but by faith realise that the Lord Jesus is more willing to save us than we are to be saved by sovereign grace! We are so apt by legality to seek about to find something to make us more presentable at the throne of grace. It dishonours the Lord, and I feel it is true what we sing:

"The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here."

(J Hart; Gadsby's 155)

'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' The heart usually in the Scriptures intends all the faculties of the soul. Here is a heart and an evil conscience – a very great burden, a great distress, this. We are sinners, and we contract fresh guilt, fresh defilement, and therefore we need that fountain that is "opened for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13 v. 1).

'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' This is beautifully described by Ezekiel in the 36th chapter: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." What promises! Do you ever plead them? God knows I have opened that 36th chapter of Ezekiel and laid the Bible open before Him, and asked Him to accomplish in my soul just what that declares. The point we are on at the moment is this: 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek. 36 v. 25-7). Oh, if the Lord was to fulfil that scripture in the soul, we should rejoice! Is there something in your heart that responds to it, as Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, prays: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful He is that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thes. 5 v. 23-4)? He will do it; and as you draw near unto Him and see these divine deliverances, full of life, full of grace, full of salvation, full of heaven, in the urgency of your soul you will lay His Word before you and say 'Do it, Lord; do it!' You will want something to be done, and for anything to be done there must be power, and "power belongeth unto God" (Ps. 62 v. 11). And faith draws near with her eyes up unto the Lord, fixes them upon the great High Priest in heaven, who "ever liveth to make intercession" for His people (ch. 7 v. 25).

I remember on one occasion I felt, with David in the 38th Psalm, that my sins were a heavy burden, too heavy for me; they had gone over my head, and in my loins was a loathsome disease (v. 4 & 7), and I could see no way of escape at that moment; but it just came into my heart, "This Man – *this Man* – receiveth sinners" (Lk 15 v. 2). He does not receive anybody else.

*"Not the righteous;
Sinners Jesus came to call."*

(J Hart; Gadsby's 723)

'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' We noticed in the preceding chapter that the sacrifices of the law could not reach the conscience in the 9th verse, speaking of those figures "in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." Now we want something to reach the conscience: but "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (v. 14); and for all this, it is to be found alone in Christ Jesus.

Paul says 'Let us draw near.' Oh to feel the drawing power of the cross! "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12 v. 32). We referred this morning to the brazen serpent. It was only those that felt the bite of the serpent that looked, those that were bitten and stung to death; and so it is, and you will know it in your experience. Oh, the Lord Jesus comes to be made the very centre of your soul, and the glorious Substitute of faith!

'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' So this is an inward and an outward sanctification, and we need both. I have thought of that word (we need to be very careful): "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are His." Now that is a secret known only to the Lord; but that is not the finish of it, but "Let him that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 1 v. 19). That is the outward seal, the outward sign; and if we have this secret of the Lord, that we are His, and He knows it, there will be a subduing of iniquity and a departing from all iniquity. Why, though this may try us, and does try us, because we shall sin as long as we live, but, my friends, it is a departing from iniquity when iniquity will not depart from us. We shall never be anything different from sinners. Sin is within us, and will remain within us; but oh, there is a departing from that that will not depart from our nature! Every confession of sin, every sigh and groan on account of what we are, and every view by faith of the Lord Jesus and His glorious righteousness, His sin-atonement blood, is a departing from iniquity; so that we need this internal and external cleansing.

Oh, I believe a sinner feels this distinctly, and it is for this that a fountain is "opened for sin and for uncleanness." I am glad it gives the two things, sin and uncleanness. As I judge, that intends sin in the nature of it, in which we are born as sinners – "open for sin"; and "uncleanness" is our actual transgressions; and it is open for both, and therefore it cleanses inwardly, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. The Lord uses various means to sanctify His people. His chastenings are used in order that the gold might be tried and the silver refined; and for this purpose there are many changes - our downittings, our sinkings (as we were speaking last Wednesday), sinking "in deep mire, where there is no standing" (Ps. 69 v. 2). Oh, the Lord will purge His people, sanctify them inwardly, purge out from them all pride and carnality, subdue their unbelief, and purge out all malice and guile and all hypocrisy. What a mercy it is to be under the teaching of the Spirit even in His chastening!

'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.' Here is another "let us," and the only alternative here is to let Him go. 'Hold fast the profession of our faith.' We have feebly spoken of what faith is, and the Object of it. Well, there is to be a profession of faith. A profession of faith proceeds from the inward work of the Holy Ghost. A profession of faith, in the first place, is the reception by faith of the Gospel, unseen by any. Indeed, a profession of faith is to come to the house of God. We all here, that attend upon the means of grace, by that attendance make a profession of faith. But there is more intended in the text. A profession of faith is to "let your light so shine before men, that they may ... glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5 v. 16). It is not only a profession as we sit in a chapel pew, but a profession of faith when we are in the midst of the world; and that is difficult; it is indeed. To have a real pilgrim's heart is to have in that heart the ways of the Lord, of repentance, confession of sin, faith, prayer, and *there* is a profession of that faith; but more

particularly there is the obedience of faith and keeping of the commandments of the Lord and His ordinances. Some might say 'Well, baptism is not essential to salvation. I love the place where His honour dwells (Ps. 26 v. 8), love to meet among His people, but I really don't feel fit or worthy to walk in the ordinance of baptism, and utterly unworthy to come to the Lord's table.' Well, what hinders? Paul says "Let us." 'Let us draw near.' 'Let us hold fast.' What are you waiting for? Waiting until you are more fit? Waiting until there is something that will make you more acceptable unto God? Oh, in beautiful, simple language the hymnwriter answers the question:

*"All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.
This He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."*

(J Hart; Gadsby's Sel. 723)

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1 v. 8). Elijah, when he was about to show who was the true God, said to the people, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kin. 18 v. 21). One or the other.

Oh, are there not those here that love the Lord, His people and His ways? Oh may the Lord enable you to honour Him and to join with the eunuch, and not say 'I have so many hindrances in self,' but rather 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith' with the eunuch; "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" Philip gave him the qualification for this: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8 v. 36-7). Amen.