

Sermon preached by Mr. F. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday morning, 25th August 1963

Hebrews 13 v.13; 14. 1052

"Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp,
bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing
city, but we seek one to come."

We will consider the 14th verse first. This 14th verse is
a confession of faith. "Here we have no continuing city, but
we seek one to come". The 13th verse is an exhortation built
upon that confession of faith - seeing "Here we have no
continuing city, but we seek one to come - let us go forth unto
Him without the camp bearing His reproach". The first part of
this 14th verse belongs to all men universally. "Here we have
no continuing city".

Men generally, worldly people, do not make a confession of
faith concerning this fact. O how solemn it is to be deceived!
Every funeral we see go down the road, every cemetery we pass -
indeed every grey hair that comes upon us speaks loudly the
truth of the text: "Here we have no continuing city". But a
wordly man - he would if he could, shut his eyes to it and even
in the very face of this solemn fact. The 49th Psalm gives us
the attitude of the world to the uncertainty of life. Their
inward thought is "that their houses shall continue for ever,
and their dwelling places to all generations. They call their
lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour
abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish. For when he
dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend
after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men
will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. He shall go
to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.
Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts
that perish". When you come to consider that solemn state of
mind in the very face of this fact - "Here we have no continuing
city" - how solemn that is and how deceived men are who seek
happiness here below. But this, with the people of God, is a
confession of faith.

"Here we have no continuing city". It is true in two ways
particularly. In the first place there is nothing here that is
abiding; change and decay is stamped upon all beneath the sun.
Solomon found this. I have thought in these two verses that we
have for substance the book of the Ecclesiastes and the Song of
Solomon. The book of Ecclesiastes is in the 14th verse - "Here
we have no continuing city" - and therefore, seeing all things
are passing away and the fashion of this world is passing away,
vanity, all is vanity, said Solomon - and if that was all there
was to say, then of all men we should be most miserable; and
perhaps in their self-deceit the world might have some
advantage over us, if that is all there was, this vain world
with all the sorrows and pain and desolations that sin has
wrought. But Solomon, when he had walked through the whole
earth in search of true happiness in all its pleasures and
wealth and fame, he could not find it, and the reason why he
could not find it was because he had a new heart and the grace
of God in his soul. A living faith whose eyes could see those
things that are eternal and, therefore, he could find nothing in
this world to satisfy his soul. But as soon as he had walked
through the earth and stepped into that blessed sanctuary of the
Song of Solomon, it is as though he went forth from the world
"Let us go forth therefore unto Him", and he met Him immediately
he went out of the world. "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of
His lips," he said that to nothing in this world - for here we
have no continuing city, nothing is permanent, everything is
changing and we with it. We must needs die and be as water
spilled upon the ground, whether we want to or whether we don't,
for the Lord is no respecter of persons and the very fact of

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death is certain and inescapable. But it is used of the Lord where it is sanctified - "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." O that that particular teaching might be brought to bear by the Spirit upon the hearts of our young people! "So teach us". So teach us what we are without Christ. Because, what have we? - a body of sin and death that will soon lie in the grave, that is all we have. So teach us, that, and so teach us the truth as it is in Jesus, in the blessed, rich, vital, eternal council of His grace; and so teach a poor sinner that it is possible, by the Spirit through His regenerating grace to bring a sinner into eternal union with Christ so as to possess Him, to live by His life, to be justified in His righteousness, that we "may apply our hearts unto wisdom", all the wisdom of God in Christ revealed in the Scriptures and in the Gospel. That wisdom of His grace, for here we have no permanency, nothing abiding.

There is something very blessed in it. It is the faith of those that see and feel the blessedness of the things of God. It is a mercy if we have had our eyes opened to see it. If we have, then we have also seen this world as God sees it. A poor dark place, full of death, dimness and anguish, sorrow and sin. But then this knowledge cannot be brought into a sinner's heart through mere natural mentality. No, but this is the way the Lord does it - "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness", and she will know she is there then. Two things - "I will allure her", entice her, make myself so precious to her; Reveal my glory to her, give her to feel the sweetness of my mercy, the sufficiency of my grace that it will make this world a wilderness.

O that the Lord would thus begin a work in some poor sinner's heart, that they might confess, "I have no continuing city here"! All is passing, all is hastening to dissolution; and to be brought into concern about eternity, and for the Holy Ghost to set before the eyes of such that blessed word to the Corinthians - "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man what He hath prepared for them that love Him."

"For here we have no continuing city". A city is the centre of man's interests. It does not mean of course that we have no interest in this world. We have our families. The Lord has granted us the blessings of this life, His kindly providence. We have our duties, have to carry on our business. There are lawful interests in this life and there are right ambitions, but when we have done and said all, the best we can possibly say about the interests of this life - they are passing away. "Here we have no continuing city", that is, for a living soul.

Those Scriptures that we referred to in the Psalm makes up the centre and the end of a worldly man. Poor affair, my friends, poor affair! O that the Lord would open the eyes of our dear young people! Be a great thing - I know we can sing hymns easily, but O to sing them honestly from the heart as in the sight of God - and to sing that prayer and be willing for the Lord to answer it -

"Emptied of earth I fain would be,
The world, myself, and all but Thee.
Only reserved for Christ that died,
Surrendered to the Crucified".

50 years ago - 55 or more years ago when I sat in the back seat of this Chapel I should have responded to such a remark as that and said - "However do you think I am going to get through life? However do you expect a young person to pray to be emptied of earth myself and sin?" I do understand the feelings of young people - but the Lord to reverse things - to "Change the heart, renew the will, turn the feet to Zion's Hill"

- and I will tell you this, if He empties of earth, yourself and sin, He will give you something infinitely better, because really this 14th verse is a negative, "Here we have no continuing city"; the 13th verse is a positive, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp". It is something positive to go after - and says Paul, "I reach forth unto those things that are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Here have we no continuing city", but what a mercy if we are amongst those that "seek one to come". The 11th chapter is beautiful. It gives Abraham for an example. He was called out. These people who realise that everything is passing away; but as we say, that is not all. If that is all that we have got to tell people we might as well shut the Bible and the Chapel too. If all we had to speak about was sin and nothing else what a dismal affair it would be, but there is something else. "But we seek one to come".

Abraham was called, called to go out and if we are called by grace we shall be called out, out of the world and its things. We shall still be in it. The Lord in His intercessory prayer, prayed - "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." What a mercy to be called by grace. Be called out from this poor world, not into a blank. O the Lord is faithful! He is good, He has a fullness, a Kingdom eternal, immovable, an inheritance reserved in Heaven for those who are called out of the world. I say not called out from sin and self and the world into nothing, but to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, he went out not knowing whither he went and he became a sojourner, a pilgrim.

"We have no abiding city here". I remember when that was a sad thought to me. I wished I could have lived for ever. I enjoyed this world, its things, its sports. What a mercy if grace has made a change, so that we become pilgrims. He sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country. We shall be strangers to the world, strangers and pilgrims in it. Strangers with Paul, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker was God. There is no foundation here, my friends. It is all sinking, and it is a matter of fact. If we were to bring the most covetous man with all his greed and all the wealth he may amass - why in a very short time he must just leave it, when he sinks into the grave he takes nothing of it with him. There is nothing abiding. But we "seek one to come" which hath foundations. Even the good things of this life, the providences of God have no foundation in it. It is secured, the providence of God has a kind of immutability in it while God himself sustains it. We read in the 24th Psalm: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. He hath founded it upon the seas" - not upon a rock. The whole of providence is founded upon the seas, it is up and down, sinking and rising, may be poor this year and rich next year, in health today, in the hospital next month. It is founded upon the seas. "Here we have no continuing city", but O the blessed sight of faith, "We seek one to come", that is Heaven, Glory, an inheritance! We know but very little of that city here, excepting what is revealed in Holy Scriptures, together with that much of Heaven that we will have enjoyed in communion with the Lord. In Zion where He has placed His name and where He has made a provision of things that are imperishable, things that are eternal. Sometimes you can feel it, and it will give you a hope of Heaven and that you are "Seeking one to come".

You will feel the two things in your very being as infirmities increase and old age comes on. "As the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day" - and so you feel that while here is restlessness and sinking, you will feel the solidity, the eternity, the immutability, the glory of the wisdom of grace as is known in the heart. You will know it, you will feel it is solid and the object of it is God. Its eternity and solidity based upon the

Infinite Being of God and God in Christ, who alone is the foundation of that City, the foundation of a sinner's hope.

For "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come". "Let us go forth therefore" - let us go forth out from these changing dead things which are full of decay, gold which becomes cankered, garments which become moth-eaten. Let us go forth unto something different, something better, different in its nature. "Let us go forth therefore, unto Him without the camp". Here is a fresh centre, here is a fresh objective of this blessed Him. "Let us go forth therefore, unto Him".

The apostle has declared Him through this epistle and others, all to know Him. That beautiful 3rd chapter of Philippians, I have often considered that to be a test, the balances of the sanctuary. When you read that chapter you put yourself in those scales and see the way those scales turn. Whether you can truthfully say - "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. I count all things but dung if I could win Him". He is winnable, possessable, approachable, knowable. That is wonderful. Mighty God in Christ Jesus.

"Let us go forth therefore, unto Him without the camp". This going forth unto Him in the first instance is when one is called by grace, and that is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a beautiful expression 'called'. In Zechariah it is, "I will hiss for them and gather them, for I have redeemed them", - and therefore it has the infinite foreknowledge of God in this. He knows His people. Knows those that are His. Knows them in their unregenerate state when they are ignorant of Him. O what a mercy if He should make manifest one, who being dead in trespasses and sins, it is His purpose to quicken! "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins"; then there will be the first going forth unto Him, "Leaving the world's deceitful shore, leaving it to return no more". It is to be set upon that race - the race that is set before His people and the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Let us go forth unto Him without the camp", and a great proportion of this going forth is in prayer. The prayer of faith. So you will go forth unto Him as what He is in the Gospel, and it will be so suitable, there will be such a drawing, such an attraction, because opposites meet. You may have felt this. This very expression, "Let us go forth unto Him", because "Here we have no continuing city"; but in Him everything is eternal. Go forth unto Him, in the first place, as a great High Priest. Indeed we have it in this chapter. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle"; and the High Priest that serves at the altar is he who offers the sacrifice, and the Lord Jesus is the High Priest, He is the altar in His sacred humanity and He is the sacrifice for sin, so in Him a sinner sees everything complete. O what a sight it is! It is only so that He is able to swallow up death in victory, swallow up death - it needs that to swallow up things that is greater than the thing swallowed, and to see in this Great High Priest and the Altar and the Sacrifice, that which is greater than you are in all your ruin, in all your sin and depravity, how it will draw you after Him.

Let us go forth unto this Great High Priest. Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace. Yes, everything is set before this sinner, he not only goes forth unto Him, but flees for refuge into that hope set before us in the Gospel, which hope, that is Christ, we have as an anchor for the soul both sure and steadfast and entereth into that which is within the veil, whither our Forerunner is for us entered, even Christ Jesus. This is the object of faith. This is the race set before a people, this is the haven. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp".

Let us go forth unto Him also a Redeemer. We sold ourselves, sold ourselves for nought. I know there are some who object and say, but Adam sold us when he fell; that is true, but we confirm the sale by our own iniquities and give evidence that we are in union with a fallen Adam - and therefore, to go forth unto Him as a Redeemer. To redeem a thing is to buy it back, a thing that is pawned to be redeemed - and the price that He paid for redemption was His precious blood. He did not pay that price to him who took us captive. Thou shalt be redeemed without money, without price. Yet says He, "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ"; but that price was paid to the Law, the Law of God.

Let us go forth then unto the Redeemer. Let us go forth unto Him the glorious substitute. O have you ever felt the goodness and wisdom, mercy and love of God in allowing a substitute - and not only allowing one, but providing one - and a perfect substitute!

He could never have been a substitute had He not become Man. It was man that sinned and it must be a Man who obeys the Law, that vindicates the justice, honour and glory of God in the Law. O our case would be hopeless! When you have prayed sometimes, or you might have felt and seen such a burden - yourself so defiled, you have felt as though you could not pray. But this will help you to pray. "Let us go forth unto Him, the blessed HIM, Emmanuel, God in human nature, a complete and real substitute.

I think perhaps the greatest declaration concerning salvation is in that description, that declaration of substitution. "He hath made Him"; this Him in the text, "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we" - who knew no righteousness - "might be made the righteousness of God in Him".

"Let us go forth," as though the dear apostle would say - there is nothing to hinder you from going; sin is no hindrance, for this Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. Your ignorance is no hindrance, for "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God". Your weakness is no hindrance, for "out of weakness He can make strong". There is no reason, my friends, why the vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need may not go forth unto this blessed Man. But it will be "without the camp". He suffered without the camp. Without the gate - the same thing, without the city is the same thing. Literally when He went out of Jerusalem to be crucified it was not long before Jerusalem was destroyed, but this camp is the world. Both the religious and the profane world - and to have to go out from both of it, to find the divine benefits and virtue and salvation that there is in Christ Jesus who suffered without the gate upon Calvary's cross.

"Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come". What a blank life must be if we are without hope, and without God. You consider - I think we have considered it before, but have you ever felt it? It is a solemn thing. It is a very solemn feeling to be left to feel a reprobate. If you were cut off from Christ, if you were completely destitute of His life with neither need nor desire for Him. Lived without Him, no need for prayer, no use for this sacred Volume, no desire for the means of grace where His people meet together - what is there left? A worldlyling would say, everything; look at the wide, wide world.

I remember at the age of 14 years, I left this Chapel, I thought, "I have got the wide, wide world to go into" - and I intended to go into it. Should have been in New Zealand now if I had my own way, and I expect a rich man. "Ye are not your own". O what a mercy for the Lord to come to a poor sinner and say, "Ye are not your own"! You thought you were, but you are not, "I have bought thee with a price" - and then He makes Himself so precious.

"Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach".

O there will be a reproach to bear! Then said Orpah, "I will not come, no." It was Orpah and Ruth. Naomi told them what they might expect. "If you come with me you will have a path of tribulation, you will have to bear reproach." "O", said Orpah, "I am going back, I have got plenty of friends, plenty of interests, I am going back to my country and to my kindred!" "O", says Ruth, "entreat me not to leave thee". Let us go forth - Do you know it? Do you know this sacred, indeed attractive cry? "Entreat me not to leave Thee, nor to return from following after Thee, where Thou goest I will go" - don't mind what the road is, how rough it is, "Where Thou goest I will go, where Thou lodgest I will lodge, Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God."

"Let us go forth unto Him without the camp". You cannot take the world with you. O we should have a lot of followers if they could take the world and their treasures and everything with them, but the way is too narrow! "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way". Well then, says a worldling - "I don't want it, you can keep it". But have you looked through that gate and seen the glories prepared, the inheritance of the saints in light? Then there would be a change, you would strive to enter in at the straight gate. Let us therefore labour to enter into that rest.

Well, these thoughts have come into my mind because of the bereavements that are upon our friends - and does it not even make the hope that such a day will come and such an inheritance is prepared and such a city - "The hope that such a day will come makes e'en the captives portion sweet". O may the Lord set this so before our eyes that we may "Go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach"!

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