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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Sunday morning, 12th March 1967.

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises".

Hebrews 6. v.11 & 12.

Among other things, one main desire of the apostle in this profound Epistle is to encourage the saints to persevere unto the end and one encouragement and incentive he sets before them at the close of this Epistle: "Seeing then we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus". He was anxious that they did not stop short, and he warns them too against apostasy, as in the earlier verses of this chapter, very solemn it is. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away..". It looks on the face of it as though it would be impossible for those who have gone so far to fall away; and those solemn Scriptures are not spoken concerning back-sliders, they are spoken concerning apostates. Very strong language it is, they were once enlightened, they tasted of the heavenly gifts, were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, not in their hearts, not His regenerating grace, but in their natural faculties.

Balaam, he was a partaker of the Holy Ghost when the Lord put words in his mouth; and he had to take this back to Balaak, declaring the blessing of the Lord: "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it". It is a very solemn thing to have religion in the judgement, and it may be a liking for it, a taste for it with a natural taste. Understanding it with a natural understanding, and yet never be born again, never know any love to the Lord, know nothing of a condition of ruin by sin. But, says he in this chapter, "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation though we thus speak". One evidence of the things that accompany salvation and the fruit of it was this, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shown toward His name"; and they showed that love toward His name in ministering to the saints, love to His people, "and do minister", and, therefore, he seeks to encourage them: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end", and what an important exhortation to steadfastness this is. It shows, as does this Epistle generally, that it is not easy to go to heaven. Yet, "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me". Though there is much opposition within and without, yet "They go from strength to strength and every one of them shall appear in Zion before God". The weakest shall hold on his way.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". That is, the diligence of faith. "Giving all diligence..making your calling and election sure. You are diligent, and should be diligent, "Not slothful in business, fervant in spirit, serving the Lord". You are diligent to seek for success in this life, and if it is done in the fear of God it is warranted. We need to have diligence in many things and to discharge our duties diligently in the fear of God, but says Peter, "Giving all diligence", for if we are diligent in the things of this life to the neglect of our immortal souls, to what purpose is that diligence? The Lord said to the people that followed

Him, "Ye follow Me for the loaves and fishes, for the miracles ye saw, labour not for that bread which perisheth, but for that bread that endureth unto eternal life". O how foolish it is to be diligent and constantly labour for that which is perishing to the neglect of the blessed eternal things that are imperishable and eternal.

"We desire that every one of you do show", do show it, "Show the same diligence". Peter tells us again how to do it, the Scriptures instruct us, he says, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance and to temperance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity". There is the instruction; and here he says, "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". It is good for the Word of God to shine within and to search us. If we look at this verse and look at how we live, how do you feel about it? Do we manifest this diligence? "To make our calling and election sure". Are we as diligent relevant to our souls as we are to our bodies? ~~Oh~~ O my friends, a consideration of this will cover us with shame and yet, if it is sanctified, it will do us good.

I know that it may be said, but our life demands it of us; to speak about labouring not for the bread that perisheth is what everybody must do. We see people start out in the morning, "Man goeth forth unto his work until the evening", they are labouring to get their living, and quite properly too; but the Lord in speaking thus to His people, ~~He~~ knew their hearts, their covetousness and that the things that perish used their diligence, all their powers all their life was brought to bear on things that are perishing; and if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He knows we have need of perishing things for perishing bodies. But O how for the most part men are entirely and wholly occupied with the things that perish and that is their end! The Lord Jesus was showing the true end of our existence, and it is very solemn how short life is. Paul said, "This I say brethren, the time is short, it must be that those that have wives be as though they had none, they that rejoice as though they rejoice not, they that buy as though they possess not, they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away"; that is what I say brethren. You must be in view of eternity as though you possess nothing and as though you have no relationships, for they must soon cease. What then? "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence", as those that have gone before.

"For God is not unrighteousness to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed to His name", and ye showed the love to His name in that ye have ministered unto the saints and do minister. Writing to the Thessalonians he says this; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father". So that we have to consider in our own individual experience whether we show forth our faith by our works, "For faith without works is dead", and whether we manifest our love by the labour of love. If there is no labour, there can be no love; and if we make manifest our hope by endurance, the endurance of patience. Paul is concerned about their continuance and he encourages them to hold fast that which they have. "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience that after ye have suffered the will of God, ye might receive the promises".

Now these things tell us how to live, how to endure. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". Now what is the full assurance of hope? Well, it is to endure until you possess what you hope for, and "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the very evidence of unseen things". Paul, writing to the Romans, says this, speaks of believing unto righteousness, by which means there is a continuance in faith until you possess the righteousness you are following after. Or to put it in the words of the first verse here; "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;" He does not mean to leave the principles of Christ or

to neglect the foundation of repentance, but he means this, — you cannot erect a house if you constantly lay the foundation and there is no superstructure. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence", as those that have gone before. The same endurance. "Seeing we are compassed about with witnesses", examples, and at this time we cannot but remember our departed friend, Mrs. Bridgeland, and the grace and strength and patience that was given to her husband. It was an example and an influence. It is a witness to the enduring grace that sustains under every load. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence" as those that have gone before. The same endurance, "To the full assurance of hope unto the end".

For there are many who draw back, who draw back unto perdition. Something comes to such a test and a breaking point that proves they never possessed the life of God in their souls. Proves that their faith was a false faith and did not stand in the power of God. Are you confident that you will endure unto the end? "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Have you ever feared that you will make shipwreck? Has that word to Elijah ever been a help to you? For Elijah came to a standstill, he did really, but the Lord came with a kind word, He said, "Elijah, arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee". Have you ever felt and feared that the journey is too great for you? you will never get to the end? Perhaps under the power of unbelief and dreadful deadly carnality, together with the lusts of the flesh, the fiery temptations of the devil, you fear that

"In some sudden hour of fierce temptation  
you will fall  
And yielding to the tempter's power,  
Faithless will prove, and give up all".

A Pharisee would say, well, that is a poor religion, and these are the people that endure unto the end. "Ever sinking, yet to swim". But this is an encouragement to faith: "Give the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". It is to -

"Press your case through all unfitness,  
Sue it out, spurning doubt,  
The Holy Ghost your witness".

It is only faith that will thus survive and "They that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"; they that shall be saved, the same shall endure unto the end; and "The righteous shall hold on his way". It is a promise, and the secret of that perseverance is that that SHALL is God's, it is an omnipotent shall, it is filled with immutability, divine sovereignty. O it is a great thing if God is for us, we shall endure unto the end; and yet such people are weak in themselves. They know and constantly learn, "Without Thee, I can do nothing", and therefore, there is a need of perseverance, of diligence. "Strive to enter in at the straight gate". Let us therefore, labour to enter into this rest. You see, you will feel, that the secret necessity is life. This is life moving, an eternal life. It is faith, faith realising that there is nothing between being lost and saved. Nothing between heaven and hell. What a great thing it is to believe. We might believe generally, know the truth generally, notionally, but what a great thing it is to know the truth in experience, in the heart.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". And this point comes to mind, it shows the importance of example to others. This same diligence refers to those that have gone, who have got the victory. When we are gone, could it be said concerning us to others, "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence" as was manifested in him and in her? "To the full assurance of hope unto the end." It is an important point as I view it, in the text, really it underlines it, "The same diligence" with the pilgrims; and this diligence shows that there are to be difficulties, many enemies to be defeated, many mountains to be lowered, valleys to be exalted. Sins, sins, like mountains, and yet where there is the life of God and therefor a living faith, that life will press through. Faith, the more

burdens that are laid upon faith, the more diligent it will be. Life, the nearer it comes to death, the more it struggles. O, that is the point, the life of God in the soul ! You can have no substitute for life. You can have all the knowledge, you can have an immense amount of natural faith, you can attempt to rest upon a false hope, but there is only one thing that will stand, life. O what a great thing life is ! So life is the secret motion, the motive power through all the pilgrimage of His people in the wilderness. Paul to the Romans, shows the victory: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." To be a conqueror is a great thing, but it is not enough, to be more than conqueror is not only to defeat the enemy, but to lay hold of the possessions, to lay hold on eternal life.

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". Before we pass from "This same diligence", I would press it upon myself and you. How are we living ? Are we witnesses for God ? Do men take knowledge of us ? Are we patient in tribulation ? This is the order, "We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost".

When you come to look at these Scriptures, how blessed they are, and I say again, the secret, internal secret, is divine life. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises". "That ye be not slothful". Well, we are often slothful, it is very solemn when we find a kind of stupor come over us and there is a weariness in the things of God. Perhaps you do not know what that slothfulness is. I do. You read the word of God and you have no relish for it and perhaps you drop asleep over reading it. You don't often drop asleep reading the newspaper. A slothful spirit is an evil condition of soul. "That ye be not slothful". Slothful at the throne of grace, when prayer becomes a drudgery, a formality. You might say, well, surely you don't get there. I wish I did not know it, my friends. We are carnal. Paul knew it, after he was called by grace; "I am carnal, sold under sin", and the apostle did not give this admonition if it was never an experience: "That ye be not slothful".

Often in the Scriptures, you will find that the things of this life are contrasted to the things of eternity, things concerning the body are contrasted to things concerning the soul, and when we come to consider how much more time and strength and mind is spent upon the body and things that perish, compared with the things of eternity and the soul, it is very solemn to consider. But then I know it may be said, especially by young people, but all day long it is necessary for us to consider the body that we may do our duty, earn our living, maintain those that are dependent upon us, That is true, but O, if we have this life, this secret life in our hearts, that life will go with us in all of it. I do think it is a mistake that some young people make, they seem to think that religion has nothing to do with the things of this life, but it has, and if you are diligent in business and at the same time diligent to the full assurance of hope unto the end, well my friends, it will sanctify your labours, sanctify your blessings, your successes, and I might say that it will sanctify your failures. Sometimes a failure is a blessing. But the life and grace of God and true religion will enter into all the things of this life; and you can give diligence to make your calling and election sure when you are in the midst of business. Your conversation can be in heaven when you are doing business with a worldly man. I believe I have known what that is. To feel a tender heart and conscience and the fear of God operating in what you are transacting, in what you are saying. Feel your heart up to heaven while you do business on the earth. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them". It brings it in again,

When we are gone would it be warrantable for anybody to say of us 'Be follower of him'? I feel that to be brought to books and to points is a great thing, because the time is short. One generation is passing away, and to feel a love to the souls of the people, I do sometimes have those before me and are constantly carrying them to the grave. I think I have buried 76 people in 9½ years since I have been Pastor here, and I expect several hundred since I have been coming to the place, and soon we must all die, and if we are giving diligence to those things which perish, I say again, to what purpose is it ?

"Followers of them who through faith". O how essential it is to have faith ! the faith of God's elect. "Without faith it is impossible to please God", without faith it is impossible to know Him. Without faith it is impossible to get a victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. O faith is a mighty grace, the grace of the Spirit! It is a faculty of the new man. It is implanted when one is born again, and faith is infallible, the faith of God's elect. All the graces of the Spirit are imperishable, immutable. Everything that comes from the Lord is unchangeable and it is such a blessing. Everything here in this poor crazy world is changing, passing away.

I thought this morning, the beautiful sun, it puts out men, their artificial lights, however powerful they are, well, they look a miserable affair when the blessed sun shines, and it is good when God puts out men. I wish He would put me out and fill me with radiancy divine: "Be not slothful", you wouldn't then, no, you would press toward the mark.

"Followers of them, who through faith and patience". We will need it. Endurance, and that endurance will not be in your own strength. You will come to where the apostle did, and the Lord alone sustained him, "My grace is sufficient for thee". "Who through faith and patience". Have you ever known tribulation work patience in your heart ? I believe it is true to say that before it works patience, it will work up the scum of rebellion until that rebellion is broken down - and how does the Lord sometimes do it ?

"He loads their shoulders well with woe  
And thus obtains His ends".

Have you ever known what it is to have load upon load, sorrow upon sorrow, disaster upon disaster, until at last it is sanctified, and you are brought to bow; like a weaned child, you will cease your rebellion and plunging and kicking and lie passive in His hands. "That ye be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. They are the promises of the Gospel, there are promises for this life. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come. But really even the promises of the Gospel you receive here will not be fully known until you get to heaven. Receive the promises. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also". To receive the promises, to possess them, and to possess the promise is to possess the inheritance. It is a promised inheritance. O the riches of it ! Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away ! It is to possess God, "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ".

This is worth pressing toward, and yet how foolish to neglect and to forsake such a way of salvation, such a well of salvation and hew to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of faith unto the end, that ye be not slothful but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises", an abundant entrance into His everlasting Kingdom.

Amen.