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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Sunday
Morning, 28th January 1968

"And we desire that every one of you do show 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 - 11-12

What a solemn state the world that lieth in wickedness is in. They think of everything but the one thing needful, things of time, are altogether unconcerned about eternity and yet all without exception are moving on to an eternal fixed destiny. In years to come, with some of us perhaps a few years, others it may be more, but in years to come it will matter very little to us what we are passing through now, but it will make an eternal difference to us as to whether we are among those who die in faith, or whether we die in unbelief. It is a very solemn thing that dying men think of everything else but eternity, and lay up for themselves riches on earth. Hew out for themselves cisterns, and those cisterns are broken, they can hold no water. For whatever we may acquire in this world, whatever we may lay up, it is a broken cistern. There is nothing abiding, everything here must be dissolved. Every relationship must be dissolved. All our possessions must be left behind and that is true of every individual person in the universe, yet there is no thought of it, and such were some of us. I remember the time when I had no thought or desire for anything or about anything but for this world, if I only could have enough of it. But has the Lord made us to differ? Have we any reason, any ground to hope that that same grace which called Abraham alone, "He called him alone and blessed him", he was called to go out to a place that he should after receive for an inheritance and he obeyed, "he went out, not knowing whither he went", and for substance every one that is called by grace is thus set on pilgrimage. "He gathers them from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west and they become wanderers in the wilderness". Not rambles, there is a great difference between a Rambler and a wanderer. When people go for a ramble they simply go with no particular object and then they return home. But a pilgrim wanders in this wilderness the remainder of their life and can find no city to dwell in.

They are brought to know that there is no foundation beneath the sun, there is no foundation in themselves, that foundation is discovered to the neck and broken up, there is no foundation in the world, there is nothing safe. There is no foundation in wealth for as we often observe how riches can take wings and fly away, and if it does not we must leave it in the day of death. No foundation here, all is sinking sand. Do you believe it? Do you believe what I am saying is true? If we do it would affect our lives, and we shall seek that which is eternal. It does give a thrill sometimes through the whole soul as we are creatures of a day and crushed before a moth, and everything here is shaking and will one day be shaken down, but it sends a thrill, of sacred joy to realise that there is that which nothing can shake. A kingdom which can never be moved and that because there is an immutable, eternal, everlasting Jehovah. There is the Foundation, there is no other hope and that Foundation is laid in the Person of His dear incarnate Son. What a mercy it is then if we are set on pilgrimage.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". This word diligence is variously mentioned in the Word of God. Have you ever blushed to look at the word diligence and then look at your life and your experience? "Be diligent, add to your faith virtue and to virtue temperance, and to temperance godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness"; "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure". Seeing then that we look for such things, be diligent

that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless". Do these Scriptures make you blush? How near do we come to it in our daily experience? and that is what the apostle has in mind here, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence". What diligence the world shows to its affairs! how safely it locks up its treasures and riches and documents in a safe! O if we were as diligent about our souls and eternity as we are about temporal and material things it would be better for us. What a mercy it is to have things put in their right places! In very simple and yet very blessed language the Lord Himself shows us how to do it! Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you". But it is a hard saying to nature. It was a hard saying to the young man that came to the Lord and asked what he should do to obtain eternal life. But the Lord put him to the test, "Go, and sell all that thou hast and come and follow Me". He could not do it. Why not? Because he was ignorant of Christ. He was destitute of life and destitute of faith and yet he was a moral a good young man. He kept the commandments from his youth up, but he lacked the essential thing. What a solemn thing it is to have everything in religion except the one thing needful. I do feel these things are solemn. Everything he had got except the one thing needful and he went away from the Lord. He turned away from unsearchable riches in order to safeguard his natural material riches. He turned away from life and blessedness, he turned away from the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, for an inheritance here, a corruptible inheritance; and that was what was in the apostle's mind, he was so anxious for these Hebrews.

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". To the end. Well, we read a catalogue of those who were examples, a great cloud of witnesses. The Lord's people are witnesses; we might well consider whether we are, and whether when we are gone such an exhortation could be given to those that are following on because of our example. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence" as so and so. O to leave behind us the influence and savour of the Lord Jesus Christ! Example is important; and it is a good thing to be convinced, to be brought to a pause, a stand still.

"Here let me search my inmost mind
And try its real state to find,
The secret source of thoughts explore
And call my words and actions o'er".

I think it is Miss Steel's hymn and she tells us what the effect will be if we are thus brought to search our hearts, it will bring us to eternity, for the next verse

"Eternity, tremendous sound!
To guilty souls a dreadful wound,
But O, if Christ and heaven be mine,
How sweet the accents, how divine!"

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end", and we feel that our departed friend Miss Bourne, she had an unusual life, but she was kept alive in that wilderness, in France, for 30 years and was brought back again and here was her desire and in her old age she was kept heavenward. It is a good thing to be kept Godward, it is indeed. You are safe if you are Godward, it does not matter where you are, Jonah in the belly of hell was Godward. You may be in Job's ditch, you may be in the low dungeon with Jeremiah, you are safe if you are Godward.

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence," of those of whom we were reading. I think with respect to young people the example of Moses is wonderful. O how the Lord was with Moses from an infant, He was with him when he was in the ark of bulrushes Why did Pharaoh's daughter just at that time go down to the river to

wash herself, Who ordered it ? Divine sovereignty. "The lot is cast into the lap and the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Why was it that his sister should be there ? and Pharaoh's daughter wanting a nurse for this babe that she had adopted, had his very mother who was engaged to nurse her own son, Who ordered it ? Divine sovereignty. Then the Lord was with Moses, he was in the luxurious court with abundant riches and honour, the Lord called him by grace. It was exactly the opposite to that young man, he refused the honours and riches and glamour of a earthly court, he parted with everything and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. A beautiful example that was. But had he a reason for it ? Yes. What was it ? "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward"; and what was that ? Heaven. He believed God. Grace had touched his heart. The love of God was shed abroad in His soul, his faith looked beyond the veil into that that was within the veil, and he saw that the kingdom of grace here and the kingdom of glory hereafter and the unsearchable riches of Christ, and His eternal glory, eclipsed that Royal Court, made it look poor. I fear that we have observed some that have known the truth and have been brought to very high attainments in the world and in the medical world and even been associated with Royalty, that they have given up. Given up the profession of the truth in order to maintain their status among the Royalty.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence" as these pilgrims. Look what they suffered. I know carnal reason would say, why, if that God is a God of Love and these are children of the heavenly King and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, how is it that He allows His people to walk in such a path of tribulation, losses and crosses. As we were reading, some were sawn asunder, they were stoned, tempted, slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheeps skins and goats skins, How is it He allowed it ? There is a mystery of godliness not only in the blessed source of it in the incarnation, the sacred virgin birth of the Son of God, but it is the mystery of godliness in experience. The methods of grace as well as of grace itself, the methods of grace, and this is the will of God in all these things that befall His people, even your sanctification. For they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end".

This full assurance shows the contrast between "those who when for the time ought to be teachers have need that one teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God, and have become such as have need of milk and not of strong drink, but strong meat belongeth to them that are of a full age, Even of those who by reason of use", that is important, "Who by reason of use", the exercise of faith and that exercise of faith is under trials, testings. O what a trial to faith are the changing scenes of this life. Mysterious providences. But if you have faith it will be tried and "By reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Now perhaps we shall see, some of us, who feel to be so short, so stunted, such children in the things of God, why it is. "Those who by reason of use have their senses exercised, to discern both good and evil". Now this is a part of this diligence, "That we may come to a full age", To a full assurance of hope unto the end. Peter says, "Grow in grace and in a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ". Well, it is only living things that grow. You can accumulate, heap up dead things, you can keep accumulating them but they will never grow, and the apostle here is anxious that these Hebrews should grow. "Desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". This is the full assurance of faith. But there are two degrees of a full assurance. You may say well, that is a contradiction in terms. I know it is. But there is a stage of experience where a poor convinced sinner, brought to feel what he is and a need of salvation and is seeking it, has a full assurance in this way, he is fully assured of the ability of Christ to save him. Some of you may be fully assured of that ability of Christ fully assured that if His precious blood was applied that it would take out the deepest stains of sin, you are fully assured of that, and you are fully assured of the intercession of Christ prevailing on behalf of those for whom he interceded. You are fully assured of that, but you

want to possess your possessions. You cannot be satisfied unless you possess the things you believe, it is not enough to believe them. You will want to possess them and until you do, it is not believing to the saving of the soul. But I would say this, that if you, by the Spirit, have a full assurance in the ability of God through Jesus Christ, His ability to save, fully assured of the sufficiency of His finished work and its infinite merit, of the virtue of His sin-atonement blood; if you are fully assured of that, the day will come that you will be assured of your interest in it. What do you really need? I do like to come to points. It is the Gospel, complete, completed by the Lord Jesus, by His blessed Person and His finished work. Well, what is salvation? It is the application of that work to the soul. You need that grace should save you, that a Redeemer should redeem you. That the precious blood of Christ should pardon and cleanse, heal you. That the Lord Jesus might be your Substitute, your Mediator, Your Surety. It is the application of Christ.

Well now, faith in its diligence, lives by a searching, a seeking after, following hard after the Lord Jesus, to possess Him. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence" to those that have gone before. Abraham, Isaac, and the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, O what a long cloud of witnesses there are! and we shall soon pass the gloomy veil, my friends, comparatively this world and its things are of little importance. Now in order that the young people would not be deceived I purposely said comparatively, because this world is important, our duties are important. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, and in your examinations, seek to be successful in your ambitions, if they are right ambitions, may the Lord give you to attain to them so far as it will be good and necessary for the pathway in your providence. Yes, this life is important, but comparatively life is so short that it is of little importance. As we said, it will be of no importance to us in a few, or in other cases, more years to come.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved", and if you take that text in reverse, you will see perhaps the meaning more clearly, for we are not saved because we endure unto the end, but we endure unto the end because we shall be saved. This is a different matter, and the righteous shall hold on his way, not because he says so, but because God says so and because there is omnipotence and divine faithfulness and immutability in the shall and that shall is God's.

"We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope", right unto the end. How is it? You look at some of them in the middle. It looks as though they will never get there. Look at Job's experience, why I really think that some of his friends thought that he would not last another day. Hear the language of the Psalmist, "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I am shut up and cannot come forth. Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe. They staggered to and fro like a drunken man and are at their wits end", They got through - and what was happening in all that tempest and conflict? divine teaching; teaching to profit. Teaching them what they were, showing them their ignorance, their weakness, their sin. Demonstrating to them the infinite wisdom of God, His omnipotent power, His all sufficient grace. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope". O to be able to sing, I think it is the 96th hymn:

"Now I have found the ground wherein
My anchor hope shall firm abide (remain)".

It is a wonderful thing to be brought there -

"Now I have found the ground wherein
My anchor hope shall firm remain
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the worlds foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay
When heaven and earth are fled away"

That is the object. "A full assurance of hope unto the end", and the object of hope is God in Christ. O what a mercy it is to have a good hope through grace in Him. If we have we shall have been brought to self despair, self despair and a good hope through grace go together. O what a mercy is a work of grace in the heart !

"That ye be not slothful". It is very sad to find so much sloth, at least I find it to be so. Why is it ? carnality. We have a carnal nature and we have to carry that to the end, but it is one of the enemies against which faith fights. Fight the good fight of faith and don't stop when you have fought it, we need to be more than conquerors. It is not enough to conquer our enemies, but to take possession of the prize, to fight for and lay hold on eternal life. Slothful, sluggish, I wish I did not know it. O it is our carnal nature, even the Lord's people are charged with it, they said, what a weariness is in it. It is sad to be weary of the things of God. Taken up it may be, turned aside by some vain jangling, some new interest appears to enter into your life. There are two lines of two different hymns, if I could think of them for they are well worth considering in this connexion: one is this -

"Vexed with trifling cares"

and this one,

"Pleased with trifling joys"

both ways, and when we are thus entangled then material things in this world seem near to us, looks as though we are laying up treasure here and the things of God are distant. Do you know it ? Do you believe it ? Are you sad about it ? Then look at the reverse, when the Lord mercifully blesses the soul, when the Holy Spirit is poured upon us. When He answers that prayer, "Drop down ye heavens from above, let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open and bring forth salvation", what then ? Why the world is beneath our feet. All heaven is before our eyes, what a difference ! "Be not slothful". What importunity we read of in the Gospels, those that came because they had no bread to set before their friends, their importunity overcame and they obtained what they asked for. Sanctified trial will give this importunity. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force". You look at that, but it is not enough to look at it. We need it to look at us. How much violence and force has there been in our faith. When did we last pray as did Jacob, "I will not let Thee go except thou bless me". When was it ?

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful." well, so far as I am concerned I do need a lot of stirring up and the Lord knows how to put diligence and importunity into our prayers, sometimes by terrible things in righteousness. When things go easy, as we read in the 32nd Isaiah, those that were at ease in Zion, there is first easiness, things are going well, not a ripple on the surface and we become carnally secure, then there is carelessness. Carelessness in attending upon the means of grace. No exercise. A careless reading of the Word of God and a sickly formality at the throne of grace. I am sorry I speak from experience. But the Lord will know how to shake you out of it and to bring you to flee to Him for refuge. Bring you to the 143rd Psalm. "My spirit faileth, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul; be not silent to me lest if Thou be silent unto me I become like those that go down into the pit". The Lord can bring us to it. What a mercy, what a mercy when we are brought to say: "I know O Lord, that Thy judgements are right and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises". That is, the promise of heaven, that is the ultimate end of faith, heaven.

"That holy, happy place
Where sin no more defiles."

O sometimes to have a glimpse of it, a taste of it ! it can be tasted, yes, a little heaven experienced as we are brought into the sanctuary of God, and trace His goings in the sanctuary, in the Gospel, and the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ and brings them into the heart, and that will establish your heart with grace and strengthen your faith, then we shall know in experience our first hymn:

"Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil and see
The saints above, how bright their joys
How great their glories be".

Well, I must leave it, but may it not leave us, and may we consider this because here is an exhortation to follow those that have gone before. Could it be said, when we are gone, an exhortation to follow us ? These things come close, and so they should.

O may the Lord give us this diligence and help us to be brought to a full assurance of hope, right unto the very end.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not
edited for publication).