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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
Sunday morning 21st January 1968

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Hebrews 9 v.27 - 28

There are two appointments in this text, one appointment in the 27th verse and another in the 28th. The appointment in the 27th verse respects all men without exception. "It is appointed unto men once to die" We must necessarily die, and the necessity of death is through sin. "By sin death entered into the world," and those that are taught of the Spirit know it in their own being, in their own soul, in their own person, and perhaps some of you have felt a solemn response to that word, sin not only entered into the world but it entered into your very being. It is a most expressive line in a hymn, I do not think it could be expressed more real.

"The dire contagion filled the veins
and spreads the poison to the heart"

I wonder how many there are here who really believe it in their experience, and know it. We are dying creatures, mortal decay is stamped upon us, and we are hastening to eternity. "As it is appointed unto men once to die", and "We must needs die and be as water spilled upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again." That does not mean to deny the resurrection, but when one dies life can never be returned to that dead body. Physicians are finished when death comes notwithstanding all their skill and transplanting of hearts and different organs, when the time appointed comes men must die, and there is no respecter of persons. Death has no more respect for the monarch upon the throne than the lowest in society, no respecter of persons. It is a very solemn reality is death and yet I do believe that it can be sanctified to us as much and perhaps more than anything living. "O that the people were wise", said Moses, "that they would consider their latter end". O I know the world would consider that to be unwise, to consider the morbid fact of death, but it comes, it comes to young people. O how unexpected it came to those dear children, my heart ache for them.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die." Well the great thing is to know our sinnership, what has caused death, and the chief concern of fallen mankind should be to gain God's favour and therefore, it make some of the simplest prayers to be most effectual. You take that in the 35th Psalm: "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." In view of eternity and of the blessedness of those who are in heaven, the apostle said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, I count all things but dung that I might win Christ and be found in Him at last." So the conflict really through life in the heart of one under the teaching of the Spirit is between the power of sin and grace. O it has been a comfort to me and I need it as being the chief of sinners, that grace is greater than sin. It will help you to pray. Sin will be the greatest burden and only trouble really that you have. I have felt that, whatever trouble you may be in, whatever the nature of the trouble, however low you may sink, a sense of blood bought pardon will take the weight out of every trouble and the bitterness out of every cup. But still, we must needs die.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ did not abolish corporeal death. It did abolish death, it abolished eternal death, "But we must needs die and be as water spilled upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again" and there is no respect of persons. But the Lord in the covenant of grace has made provision for His people, and made that provision in Christ and that appointment we have in the second verse. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement." We were

reading just now of that judgement. Solemn day that will be, the judgement day. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." A solemn thing to read is that. We read that and do we consider that we are involved in it? I only have to look at myself and my past sin-stained life, and this text, "That every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad". It made David cry out, "If Thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand?" Not one of us would stand, if He marked our iniquity. "According to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad", and you see, we forget many things. O the sins we have forgotten. But there are books, books written where there is not a single sin omitted. There will be books opened, and another book, the Lamb's Book of life, and if our names are there then all our sins will be blotted out of those books. "To be found in Him, to die in Him, to be sheltered in Him as a Substitute, beneath His precious blood. You know people live as though they are going to live for ever.

"As it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgement"; and the Judge that is set upon that great white throne will not be a poor man, but the almighty God, Who knoweth all things, Who knows our thoughts afar off, not a word in our tongue but what He knoweth it altogether, and every thought and every imagination. Be a solemn thing to stand before that great white throne naked, with no covering, no shelter, no Surety, no Substitute, no Refuge. Well some will be there and we must not take it for granted that we shall not. The Scriptures tell us what it will be and the figure of the sheep and the goats, the goats will be on the left hand and the sheep on the right. To the one He will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father", to the others He will say, "Depart ye cursed". One thing or the other.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement. It will make that enquiry to be very urgent:

"When Thou my righteous Judge shall come,
To call Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I
Who sometimes am afraid to die
Be found at Thy right hand?"

Things may appear to be very solemn, but whether they are or not we shall be exercised if we have the life of God in our souls, to the very end.

"Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood,
And bear Thy witness, with my heart
That I am born of God".

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgement." Then there is the other side, O this precious text! "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many", and this 'so' connects this appointment of death with the appointment of this offering, this Sacrifice, the appointment of a Saviour, the appointment of a Redeemer. O to have a hope in this 28th verse. My friends, I would not set you down short, take nothing for granted, we may be strict baptists, that will stand us in no stead at the end, we shall not be asked whether we are strict baptists or not, the great thing will be as to whether we have the oil of grace in our lamps vessels with our lamps, the life of God in our souls, and therefore, that should be our concern while we live, and yet this is true happiness. One would hardly expect to find happiness in the consideration of these things, but they grow out from a knowledge of self and sin, destruction and woe, it grows out of that by a revelation of Christ, a sense of the richness and the eternity and the immutability of the love of God in Christ. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many": Offered for this ve

purpose. It meets the case, that is the point. The whole of the blessed everlasting Gospel is provided to meet the power, the kingdom of sin, and the Gospel is greater. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. Micah had a view of this: "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity?" He could have said, who is a God like unto thee who hath formed the universe and created all that is in it, Who is a God like unto Thee that hath set the glorios sun in the firmament and the stars, who is a God like unto thee that bringeth forth the fruits of the earth? but no, "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity?" and you will feel it. The work of redemption is infinitely greater than the work of creation or the control of providence, it is. The work of creation in the new birth and covenant of Grace which controls the life of one who is thus called by grace is greater than the whole of the work of creation.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many". That is why He came, "And it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. So that if you are not a sinner the Lord Jesus did not come into this world for you, if you are not a sinner. It will not make you glad that you are a sinner, but you will be glad, seeing that you are one, that there is a provision in the Gospel. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many". "Who Himself, bear our sins in His own body on the tree", is a most blessed declaration. It does show both His humanity and His divine Person, "Bear our sins in His own body", there you have His humanity and it needed all that in order to the removal of sin from the Church.

"So Christ was once offered", and He offered Himself. O the love that filled His heart. He presented His sacred body a sacrifice for His people. Presented it. He presented His body to His enemies when they came out with staves and swords and spears. "Whom seek ye? Jesus of Nazareth...they fell back to the ground". He could have destroyed them with the word of His mouth, but He presented His body a living Sacrifice. He allowed them to get up, allowed them to take Him. Omnipotence allowed them to take Him. He offered Himself. He offered His work, He offered His body. I have thought of the blessedness of that expression, "He offered Himself without spot to God". An offering can either be accepted or rejected. O what love was there. As though He would say unto His divine Father, here I am lifted up upon the cross, I offer my work which I have finished, I offer Myself, that work that was wrought in my human body, sinless. O how acceptable was that offering unto God! How acceptable was His blessed life, His sinless life, how acceptable and sufficient was His work, His sufferings. He was made perfect through sufferings. When you come to look at these two verses and these two appointments, what should we do if there were only the 27th verse? "And as it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgement so", O this 'so', it covers it, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many", and that many is the whole election of grace.

"The Saviour knew for whom He died
And gave Himself a Sacrifice".

"The Foundation stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." He will make no mistake. O how abominable is error, arminianism, freewill, free offer. The Lord knows, He will make no mistake. We make mistakes, but He will make no mistake. I wonder what will be said to us at last? Come or Depart? It will be an eternal, final destiny, it will make sin a terrible thing, and yet we are sinners and sin, but His people are predestinated to depart from iniquity, they are predestinated unto good work, they are predestinated to be sanctified, holy, body and soul, and therefore the whole of inward experience is a work of salvation wrought out by the Spirit in the conscience, is being predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. O what a display of heavenly wisdom, of divine grace, of immutable love in the redemption of poor sinners from the fall. So that you see the highest bliss, glory and happiness is derived from a work of redemption which lifts a poor sinner from the dunghill and from the dust, and it is a creation. The work of the Holy Ghost in re-generation

is as much a work of creation as when the world, the earth was created, and nothing less will do, and if you are the chief of sinners, made to feel the disease, the malignant disease of sin to the very core of the heart, nothing less than creation, a new creature, a clean heart created will be of any use to you. Notions are no good here. No, traditions are no good here. We need the work of the Holy Ghost. We need divine life, and the Lord Jesus brought these things. There would be no salvation, no grace, no Gospel, no church, no communion if it were not for the matchless condescension of God's dear Son. It will make you go home and pray to be put inside of the 28th verse. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many". A remnant there is really, yet a number which no man can number. If these things are brought to bear upon our hearts and conscience it will affect our lives, it will affect you in business, it will affect us in the family, it will affect us in the nation. O how different things would be nationally if this precious Word, inspired Word of God, so full of wisdom was our rule, our guide, our foundation. It is because this Word is rejected that we are in a state of confusion and chaos. Unprecedented chaos and confusion in the country and nothing really will bring us back if indeed we are brought back but a returning unto God and a return to His holy Word and this would, if He would raise up men, put grace in their hearts, open their eyes and place them in responsible positions in the country. That is the only hope of salvation from our present state of utter chaos.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many", and how you will seek to be one of that many. We ought really to consider some evidences as to whether the Lord was offered for our sins. Whether we are inside of that many. A mere acquired knowledge of the truth is no evidence at all. To be orthodox in the truth is a blessing but you may be orthodox and yet dead, ignorant of God and destitute of the things you know. Well then, what right evidence can we give for some indubitable evidence of the Lord Jesus Christ bearing our sins in His body on the tree? Well, the Scriptures tell us, "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But if we confess our sins the Holy Ghost must have convinced us of them. It is not lip confession, but a broken heart, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise". Now I do feel that we need a standard of confession, a Scriptural standard to give us some intimation that Christ died for our sins. Real confession is one evidence but where is the standard? The 51st Psalm; I consider that if you can pray the 51st Psalm from your heart by the Holy Ghost then you are inside of the Scripture, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But mark this, even so it will not render us sinless, that is the trial. A forgiven sinner is not sinless. He will be, but the sting is taken away, taken out of sin. We would live without sin if we could, but sin continues, it will we shall be nothing better than sinners while we live, and I have sometimes said and I believe it is true that the apostle Paul was never better than a wretched man in himself as long as he lived., but he viewed and participated in the blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many". Then we come on to another evidence of those who are inside of that many. "Unto them that look for Him". We said just now that if these things are sanctified to us they will influence us in our every day concerns and transactions and business. Have you ever found at times when you have been exceedingly busy and taken up with the duties of this life unexpectedly a very sacred and solemn feeling come into your heart? It does not hinder what you are doing, it helps you, it is walking with God in the midst of all the affairs of this life. It is very blessed when it is so. "Unto them that look for Him". Well then, the thing is, do we look for Him? Paul speaks of this at the end of his journey; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only but for all those that love His appearing, that look for Him". Now we come to points again, and we must be honest with ourselves because God knows. He said to the seven churches, "I know thy works". Now ask the question in

your own hearts, Do you love His appearing ? Do you look for Him ? David said, "Lord, what wait I for ?" He had been viewing the worldling, those who are indifferent of the true religion, who walk after the flesh, who ask nothing but the advantages of this world and its wealth and pleasures. But he comes to himself and says "But Lord, what wait I for ?" Is there anything different in me ? He was waiting for none of those things, things are the end for which the worldling loves, it is their end, and really that end is self, to satisfy, to indulge self, and that is their end. "Lord what wait I for ?" Do you ever find it in your heart to appeal to God in the midst of this poor crazy world with everybody rushing about, seeking portions and pleasures and fame, ever find it in your heart to appeal to the Lord, Am I different, what wait I for, my hope is in Thee, my happiness is in Thee, there is no happiness anywhere else but in God. Every other kind of happiness will cease and that is another reason why a consideration of death is profitable. It must come and everything must cease. But the blessed Gospel is everlasting and therefore in all our searchings in the things of this life can we say that we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ?

"Unto them that look for Him". Do you look for Him ? There were two disciples that heard Jesus speak, there was a multitude heard him, but there were two disciples that heard by faith, the preaching of John entered into their hearts, and it had this effect, they followed him. Jesus knew it, Jesus knows who it is that believes on Him and those that believe in Him, "He turned and said, what seekest thou ?" If He turned and said to us what seekest thou ? what would we say ? "They said, Lord where dwellest Thou ? He said unto them, come and see.

"Do you look for Him ? Do you look for Him in the Word of God ? He is there revealed. O what a gift is the Holy Scriptures ; He is found in the Word of God. Perhaps in earlier days when one is more lively in the things of God, a seeking soul may remember sometimes when looking and seeking for the Lord in the Scriptures, He finds them in certain chapters, in a certain Psalm. How lately have you been brought to a stand still in reading the Scriptures and found the Lord showing Himself through the lattices of some verse, some scripture, and you have found His word and it has been nourishment to your faith, a light has shined upon it and shined into your heart ? It is the Lord Jesus, the light of His countenance, the whisper of His love, of His Spirit.

"And unto them that look for Him". Well, do you look for Him when you pray sometimes ? Job said, "O that I knew where I might find Him", he was looking for Him. Have you ever prayed that of Job, "O that I knew where I might find Him ? Would you rather find Him than find anything else ? You may depend upon it that if we are looking for Him by faith that we shall be prepared and willing to lose things for His sake. You might not find a fortune, you might not find success, you might not find honour, but O to find Christ, you would have it all. "Whoso findeth Me, findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord. Riches and honour are with Me, yea durable riches and righteousness". Faith believes it, and you look for Him, seek for Him, follow hard after Him.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and they that look for Him" is really an evidence that you are among the many. Then do you look for Him at times when you come to the services ? Those godly Greeks said, "Sirs, we would see Jesus". O what a mercy it is to have formality broken up, fallow ground broken up, and made anxious, exercised, looking for Jesus. If you saw Him you would with Simon say, "Lord lettest now Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." If you see Him you will see heaven. It is only faith that can see Him. Do you look for Him in a service, look above the pulpit to heaven and yet seek that by the Spirit for the Lord Jesus to come into your heart through the ministry, "For by the foolishness of preaching it pleased God to save those that believe", and you come looking for Him, seeking Him. Well, if you do, according to this Scripture you are one of those for whom Christ offered Himself for your sins. "And to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time

without sin". He had finished with it and you will be finished with it. He came the first time in the likeness of sinful flesh Ah, an amazing thing, we shall be amazed at the truth if it is revealed to us, especially when it is given us to see the glory the dignity of God's dear Son. Inexpressibly holy. Divine beauty, heaven's highest glory, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, sent in such a likeness.

It has amazed me, it is the only hope of sinners; "Was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh", and there is that in salvation and in the Gospel which is perfect. There is nothing haphazard in salvation. "He was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh", for every one of His people and if He was sent in the likeness of your sinful flesh it was the exact same likeness of your sinful life. We read that He blots out the sins of His people like a thick cloud, and that cloud as though coming out of a chimney would be the exact likeness of you as a sinner and all the sins that you have committed. He was sent in the likeness, He took that likeness away from you and the purposes of God in predestination was fulfilled. "Predestinated to be conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son". What a change! what an exchange! The likeness of sinful flesh into the likeness of God's dear Son. It is a marvellous thing that this mighty work of salvation and purification and glorification should be wrought out, in the wisdom of God, from the very cesspool of iniquity.

"And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation". O it does not stop merely in the removal of sin but in the kingdom of glory, "Unto salvation". As we read just now, "If the house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Well, there are the two verses and at last we shall either be found in the 27th verse or through grace we shall be transferred from the 27th verse to the 28th verse.

Amen.