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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden At  
"Galeed Chapel, Sunday morning, 11th June 1967"

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness".

Isaiah 55. v.1-2.

The Lord here is speaking through the prophet unto His people. The characters are those that thirst, and to every one that thirsteth. It does not say, "Ho, every one that is certain they are going to heaven, or every one that has a full assurance that all their sins are forgiven", but, "Every one that thirsteth"; and it behoves us not to add to this, not to add to it any 'ifs' or 'buts'. Here is a definite invitation to a definite people, a character, every one that thirsteth. If the Holy Spirit should bear witness in your experience that you are a thirsty sinner, then all that is said in this precious text belongs to you. We are apt to limit the Holy One of Israel, and it may appear to be humility to add to the word our 'ifs' and our 'buts'.

May the Lord give us to look at this word as He speaks it. "Ho, every one that thirsteth". Not some, not looking at this or that person, but, "EVERY ONE that thirsteth". So it will be important if we are enabled to trace out this character. One thing is this, that thirst is an evidence of life, and as we have so often said, all real Holy Ghost religion is experimental. There is a certain analogy between that which is natural and that which is spiritual. I am not speaking now of a natural religion, I am speaking of a natural life. A natural thirst is a sign of life, and it is involuntary. You do not say, now I think I shall be thirsty; you must be thirsty if you have no water because you are alive naturally. So spiritually, if you have a spiritual life, that will be made manifest by a spiritual thirst for living water.

So that we come again to self-examination, and it is well to commence to mix faith with what we read as well as with what we hear, and to really look inside and see whether we really have a spiritual thirst for spiritual things.

David said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my heart - so panteth my soul after Thee, O God". In another Psalm he says, "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee, my soul thirsteth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is". Beautiful, wonderful description of a spiritual thirst in a living soul, and it will be a great thing if the Lord by His Spirit, bears witness in your heart that you have this spiritual thirst.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth". The world thirsts, it has an insatiable thirst for the things of this world, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. Pleasure, honour, wealth, fame. The world has an insatiable thirst for the vanities of this poor world, and so has every natural man.

"I thirst, but not as once I did,  
The vain delights of earth to share,  
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid  
That I should seek my pleasure there".

So that the secret of this text is the new birth, a new life, a new creature, a new heart, a new nature, and you possess all that if you have a spiritual thirst for God, and this thirst is expressed in many ways. As for instance, Job says, "O that I knew where I might find God"; and if that urgent prayer is in your heart, it has

the nature of this living thirst. Nothing else would have satisfied Job. The Lord had stripped him of every comfort in this life, though he was possessed of much wealth, but the Lord stripped him, desolated him, bereaved him, and yet his faith saw such blessedness in the fulness, love, grace, wisdom of God, that although desolated and afflicted he said, "O that I knew where I might find God". Now that is thirst. "Ho, every one that thirsteth". You may remember when you had an insatiable thirst for the things of this life; ~~The~~ eye was not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. The provision that the devil has made in this world is a tremendous provision, we see it down every street, the devil's palaces and pleasures; yet the fallen nature of man is never satisfied. Whatever inventions, whatever new pictures, whatever comes upon the Television, the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing; and it is all dead, all vitiating, all poisonous.

O what a mercy to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus ! To be given a new nature, a new heart, a new appetite, new desires. To have a new end and object set before us. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," Nothing can quench this thirst but God Himself. With respect to the world, there is sin and death in every stream, and the Holy Ghost will teach a sinner this, will put bitterness into that which once was ~~once~~ sweet, death into that in which once there was life. Well, has the Lord done that much for you ? Can we in simple honesty say, "I thirst for God, for the living God ?" It is because there has been a preparation in the heart, because faith cannot live upon anything but that which is of God in Christ. There is nothing here that can satisfy a living faith. Now it is a mercy if we have been brought thus far.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters". Here is the invitation. If you thirst there is a supply. These waters are the whole of the Gospel, these waters contain the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the teaching, the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, Jehovah in all His divinity, His fulness. "Come ye to the waters". There is no other condition, the only condition here is thirst, and if you are thirsty the invitation belongs to you; "Come", "Come ye to the waters". The other great invitation of the Gospel is, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". If ever the Lord, by the Spirit, sends an invitation into your heart, "Come", you will go to heaven. Two contrary things will never be found in a sinners experience, come and depart. They are opposites, they are incompatible. If the Lord has ever said 'Come' to you, He will never say 'Depart', never.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters"; and this coming is an act of faith, to cast your burden upon the Lord, to come to Him. All your sighs and your groans, the struggling of your faith to get to Him is a coming to Him. You take those disciples who desired of one saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus", There was the character, to see anybody else would be to no purpose. It is to see Jesus by the eye of faith, and so see Him as to believe in His Person, and to see the fulness that is in Him, to realise the all-sufficiency, and the suitability of Christ to every state and condition in your soul, and for the blessed Spirit to draw you; the attractions of Christ, His beauty, His glory, His grace, His atoning sacrifice, so that you are drawn unto Him.

Coming is a movement. O it is a mercy when the life of God in the soul is exercised in a coming to the Lord Jesus, and it is a coming away from every other source. So that a sinner is brought to the end of himself, the end of his own wisdom, the end of his own strength, the end of his own righteousness, and sees in Christ such a fulness. Glad enough he is to be brought to the end of all things that Christ might be the beginning and He alone who can carry on, the Author and Finisher of faith. "Come ye to the waters," is a movement of faith. The case of the Queen of Sheba is somewhat to this point. She heard the report of Solomon's grandeur and of his glory, and it moved

her. She did not just believe the report and stay where she was, but she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to prove Solomon, whether the report was true. O that the Gospel had, by the Spirit, such an influence upon the hearers, as not to leave them where they are, but to create such a thirst, such a desire for the living God as to come and to prove His mercy, to prove the sufficiency of His grace, to prove the efficacy of His atoning blood ! She came.

"Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters". So that these waters represent the whole of the Gospel and the whole of the kingdom of God, and that kingdom is within you, said the Lord Jesus. The kingdom of grace. "Come ye to the waters". Now these waters are the same as that river that was shown to John: "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal". It was living water. Ezekiel saw the same water. It proceeded from under the threshold of the house and wherever that river ran it brought life. It ran into the sea and brought life to the fishes of the sea, and it is the same river that the Psalmist saw: "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God". So that these waters are all the same, and they derive their virtue, their life giving virtue, from their source. It is because of whence they come that they have the virtue of healing, of life, of salvation. They proceed from under the Throne of God, therefore, partake of all the divine properties of Jehovah; and so the streams of the Gospel, communications that the Holy Ghost makes to the soul, partakes of all the divine perfections and attributes of Jehovah. O what a fulness ! and here is an invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters".

These waters flow through the Word of God. There are places where there are drawing of waters. We read in the Judges about places of drawing of waters, and the Word of God is one principal place of drawing, the wells of salvation in the Scriptures. Come ye then, to the Scriptures, to draw this water. It is not in the letter of the word. You may read many chapters and understand the letter of them, but you will receive no water. The woman at the well said unto the Lord Jesus, "The well is deep, and ye have nothing to draw with". She made a mistake with respect to the Lord Jesus, but that is no mistake with respect to the well of salvation, the well is deep and the only thing by which we can draw up water is by living faith. When the Holy Ghost reveals the truth in the Scriptures, and your thirsty soul comes with an empty vessel, and that empty vessel attached to faith, then you can draw from that deep which coucheth beneath and draw out the truth, the virtue, the nourishment, draw out strength for your weak soul. Draw, as it were, down into your poor heart, streams from Calvary.

"Come ye to the waters." The Word of God, the Scriptures, are only second in gift to the unspeakable Gift of Christ. Indeed it is true what we sing,

"The written and the Incarnate Word,  
In all things are the same".

Therefore the Lord blesses His people according to the Scriptures. There is sufficient between these two covers to "thoroughly furnish a man unto all good works". There is sufficient in the Word of God, if the Holy Spirit shines upon the sacred page, to make a man wise unto salvation. "Come ye to the waters". Thirsty souls will come and drink, drink water from the Holy Scriptures as the Holy Ghost reveals the things of God.

"Every one that thirsteth". Then we might ask ourselves this question, How often do we come to the Scriptures like a thirsty ox, or like a wounded hart that panteth for the water brooks ? How often do we thus read the Word of God ? We do well to examine ourselves as we go along. "Come ye to the waters".

Another place of the drawing of waters is the Throne of Grace, of prayer. Prayer is a channel.

"Prayer was appointed to convey  
The blessings God designs to give"

Prayer is a wonderful exercise. It would be right to say that the Lord does not need us to pray, He has appointed it, but what I mean is this, He needs no information from us as to what we need, for He knows us better than we know ourselves. We do not pray to give the Lord any information at all, and not only so, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; but prayer is a divine method, it is an appointment, and very blessed too, because where the Holy Spirit is in prayer, there is communication between heaven and earth; and those communications could never be except that the Lord Jesus Christ became the new and living way to God. Except that He took human nature into union with His divine Person and that He is now exalted in heaven in the same human nature, an Intercessor, an Advocate above, a Living Head, a living High Priest. Therefore, when a poor thirsty soul comes to the Throne of Grace, look at the fulness that is set before him.

"A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,  
And ever abides to answer our need."

O what a blessed place of drawing of water ! the Throne of His heavenly grace, where the Lord meets with sinners, where He lets down from His fulness the riches of His grace, the sweetness of His mercy, the warmth of His love. "Ho every one that thirsteth". Every one. If any of you here thirst you are in the text. "Come ye to the waters".

Another place of drawing of waters is under the appointed means of grace. I wonder how many here have felt any thirst in coming to the service this morning. Any that feel they want God and must have Him. Any who feel their poor souls thirsty in a dry and thirsty land. This world can give you nothing, not a drop of living water from this world, and you feel it and yet you have set before you that illimitable ocean of Jehovah. All that is in and from God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, and you are thankful for the Sanctuary and for the appointed ministry of the Gospel. Do some of you, have some of you come this morning, come, as the hart panteth after the water brooks, you have come panting after some manifestation of God in Christ to your poor and needy soul?

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters". Then we would try and look at some things that are in the waters. It comes from heaven, nowhere else. This is a beautiful chapter and it is full of encouragement, not to sin, but full of encouragement to sinners: as we see later in the chapter, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon". But then it anticipates graciously that some poor sinner may look at himself and say, well, I am too wicked to pray, I am too wicked to come, my case is extraordinary. I feel to be like a leper, I am possessed of devils. Ah, but says the Lord, you come, because "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord". O it is a gracious chapter, if only you are the character and have that manifested life of God in your souls that you cannot be satisfied without Him. You must have HIM, nobody can take His place. Is it not sweet, even to feel this thirst, and we need this thirst to be kept alive in us. "Come ye to the waters".

Then there are some particular things that these thirsty souls come for, and the most important is the forgiveness of sins. Where can sinners come to ? Why to the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. How suitable it is. Just the very thing, sin and uncleanness. That means original sin in which we are born, uncleanness means our actual transgressions every day, for we are sinners. But there is a Fountain opened for both, sin, original, and transgressions, our daily transgressions. "Come ye to the waters". From whence does this flow ? From Calvary. O the love of God in Christ upon Calvary's

Cross. Yes, that same love that brought Him. "Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will O my God, Thy law is within my heart"; and so He came, and He opened that Fountain. It is filled with divine merit, but it is opened upon Calvary, and He was the sacred, Holy, Incarnate Son of God, in Whose mouth was found no guile. There was no spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing in all His life. He hung there in a sacred, sinless humanity, and He offered up Himself to God on behalf of His people. He was their Substitute, made sin for them that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "Come". "Come ye to the waters".

"Come ye sinners, poor and wretched,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore".

There is water. "There is a Fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins". Every one, every one that is thirsty, "Come ye to the waters". Then come ye to the waters of His grace. Grace is in it all. It is the grace of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, and it is "By grace ye are saved", not of works, lest any man should boast". You will be thankful that it is all of grace. Thankful that the responsibility of your salvation is not upon your own shoulders, but the "Government is upon His shoulder". Grace, free sovereign grace, and when a poor sinner comes to grace he comes empty handed,

"Nothing but sin, I thee can give,  
Nothing but love shall I receive".

We have a definition of grace. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich. What an exchange ! exchange of grace, grace for sin, strength for weakness, unsearchable riches for poverty.

"Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters". Another thing you will come for and that is wisdom. Because under divine teaching, we shall prove that natural wisdom will not make a man wise spiritually. It is a point I do trust the Lord will teach our young people. You need natural intelligence, of course you do, and may the Lord enable you to persevere in your studies, and if you have an ambition, that He might give you to attain to your ambition so far as it will be for your good. We must have natural wisdom, but, and it is a but, that natural wisdom can never make a man wise unto salvation, toward God. It can never know the things of God, they are different. A different nature altogether, and when you realise that you will come to the waters. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God Who giveth unto all men liberally and upraideth not, and it shall be given him". Well, do you lack wisdom, that wisdom which is from above ? It is a beautiful description by James, speaks of both wisdoms. Speaking of an earthly wisdom he says, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish, but the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy". What a beautiful description of heavenly wisdom, and you will come to God for it. I am persuaded that the most intelligent man, the greatest scientist, if he was called by sovereign grace would bow before God and confess that he is a fool, ignorant of the things pertaining to godliness, salvation and eternity, and how we do need heavenly wisdom.

Well, here is water then, everything that we can need, an ocean full of virtue, all proceeds from heaven and it will take you back to heaven. Everything that comes from heaven will go back there. O to have any indication that we have anything in our souls that is the work of God. If we have the least, we have it all. That is the blessedness of it. You cannot have a little of Christ, you must either be destitute of Him or possess Him. You cannot have a little of the Gospel, if you have a little of it you have it all. You cannot have

one grace of the spirit without you have every grace of the spirit. O the fulness of it ! and when the Lord has emptied you from vessel to vessel and given you to realise that out of Christ you are completely destitute and dead, O how attractive will be this fulness that is in Christ. It will fill your heart, to establish in your soul His kingdom, to open your eyes and reveal unto you the beauty, the glory, the eternity that there is in Christ, and that you may behold those things which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, things that have never entered into the heart of a natural man, "Which the Lord hath prepared for them that ask Him", that love Him.

Well, are you thirsty ? The few feeble things I have said, I believe they are true, but do you want them ? Is there something in your heart that opens out to receive them ? Do you almost feel the arms of faith stretching out toward Him ?

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
All in all in Thee I find".

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not  
edited for publication).