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Sermon preached by Mr. F.L.Gosden, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, Sunday morning
3rd November 1963.

"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him." Isaiah 56:7-8

These chapters, especially 54, 55 and 56 are calculated in the hand of the Spirit to be a comfort to troubled people; for the Lord only comforts those that are in trouble, and those that mourn. He only helps the helpless; He only strengthens the weak. Therefore, we must experience just the opposite in order to appreciate the blessings, the promises of the gospel.

In the 54th chapter it is directed to the barren. I know literally this refers to the Gentiles, but throughout these three chapters and indeed the whole Word of God, it is clearly declared that in Christ, in salvation, there are no distinctions of any kind. There is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Syrian bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. This is no small comfort to one who looks unto Him and sees every objection in himself to God, every reason why he should not be blessed. But in these three chapters we are given to see that the Lord disregards all distinctions in nationalities, all distinctions socially, and that there is one distinction with respect to God; except that which He Himself makes by His grace and Spirit's work in the heart and therefore, there is brought against all these impossibilities and objections and infirmities the very opposite: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child."

Well, a poor barren sinner has not much to sing about in himself; and certainly one that has no hope of any family has no reason to enlarge the place of the tent. But they are exhorted to do both "Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes."

It is wonderful in the gospel how the infinite wisdom and omnipotent power of the Almighty can step right down in the midst of all your infirmities and trials and perplexities and impossibilities, to give you such faith to look at them all and then look at God and 'laugh at impossibilities and say, it shall be done.'

Then in the 55th chapter, there is another character; and the important thing for us my friends, in considering these characters recorded in the Scriptures is to examine ourselves, whether we have any evidence at all of being such a character. Some of you may really feel to be like that barren woman.

*O Lord, with shame, I do confess,
My universal emptiness
My poverty and pride.*

(Gadsby's 904)

But here is another character: "Ho, everyone that thirsteth." This is really the beginning of an evidence of the life of God in the soul, to thirst. One says,

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

It is no small mercy to thirst for the things of God, for the living God. Then may the spirit make application of these characters and encourage any, who in their secret heart can find evidences of these characters.

Well, we come to the chapter in which is the text. The chapter is opened by the prophet in the spirit of prophecy: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgement and do justice; for My salvation is near to come and My righteousness to be revealed." All the prophets prophesy concerning Christ. All the Old Testament saint's faith was directed forward to the coming of the Messiah; and this is a prophesy of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and "blessed is the man that doeth this and the son of man that layeth hold on it," - the man that keepeth judgement and doeth justice and layeth hold upon the righteousness to be revealed. Paul say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, and therein is revealed the righteousness of Christ from faith to faith," - and blessed is the man that layeth hold on it;" and then he comes to characters.

"Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from His people." This refers again to the Gentiles. That woman at the well of Samaria was one of these. The Queen of Sheba when she heard the fame of Solomon, she came from the utmost parts of the country to prove Solomon. She heard of his majesty, his riches and his glory and she was a stranger. You remember also that Solomon in his prayer at the consecration of the temple, prayed for the strangers.; "Moreover, concerning the strangers; which is not Thy people Israel, but is come from a far country, for Thy great name's sake, and Thy mighty hand, and Thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house, then hear Thou from heaven, from Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger crieth to Thee for." A very blessed word for strangers. Paul reminds them in writing to the Ephesians. He says, "At that time ye were strangers from the covenants of Israel." And this is an experience with many, they feel to be strangers; and, indeed, all are. First they are strangers to God in the years of their unregeneracy, strangers and foreigners to God. But by divine grace and effectual calling they are made strangers with God, Strangers and pilgrims in the earth; but first to feel, and that by divine teaching, that we are strangers by nature. Ruth passed through that experience. Before she was established, she said unto Boaz, "I am not like unto one of Thy handmaids; why hast thou shown grace unto me that am a stranger."

Well, some of you may know what that experience is; and this stranger had come from a far country because of the name of the Lord. You may attend a chapel from your infancy, and yet be brought in God's time to realise that you are a stranger to the gospel and to the things that you hear. O, how some have been brought from a far country! "The sons of the stranger, to join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him and to love the name of the Lord." It is a very sacred experience and a part of effectual calling which is consequent upon predestination. All the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart derives from the covenant of grace; those "whom He did predestinate, them He also called;" He calls them from a far country. Do you remember that experience, when you first began to realise that there was something to be known of which you were ignorant; and that there was a people who possessed that of which you were destitute; and yet, together with that feeling, there was a mysterious, a strange work going on in your heart that brought you from that far country to hunger and thirst for the living God? Very sweet are those days of spiritual growth. This really is taking place; "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me; and he that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." But O the far off countries that some are brought from! From the world, its pleasures, its vanities. It is a wonderful thing my friends, if the Lord puts death upon that in which we once thought we found life; if He puts misery, where we thought we had happiness. To have the eyes opened.

Well, coming down to the text, although the next character is the eunuch, and the eunuch is something comparable to the barren: "For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give within my house and within my walls a place and name better than of sons and of daughters," of which they are hopeless. But there is this promise; "Even unto them;" - and the text, "Even them will I bring" and this "Even them" is for the comfort and consolation of extraordinary cases, out of the way cases, something different. You may feel that you have some secret lacking in you, something different in you, even from any other sinner. Some particular reason why you can see no possible hope of being brought among the Lord's people and being made one of His children: "But even them." To my mind there is very sweet mercy, lovingkindness in those two words of the 5th and 7th verse concerning the eunuch; "Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place better than of sons and of daughters." It just touches the grief, the trouble, the disability, the impotency. When the gospel comes, when the promises come, they fit the case, the divine plaster is put upon the right sore and so the promise to the eunuch is "even them."

I have wished that the Lord would speak these two words to some seeking soul, even to you who might be looking at yourself, seeing your deformity, your barrenness, your hopelessness of any fruit, your unlikeness to the people of God, your lack of grace, your fullness of sin. - "Even them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and name better than of sons and of daughters." Have you ever so loved the habitation of God's house where His glory dwelleth, that you have asked Him to give you a place even in the chapel? I have. I have been brought very low at times, and I have asked the Lord that if ever my preaching should prove presumptuous, if He should put me out of the pulpit, would He grant me a place among His people? O, to sit in the assembly of the saints! Though you feel to be most unworthy and feel almost beyond hope of what they possess, yet do you feel a love to them and can say - not parrot like - but from the very affection of your heart -

*I love to meet among them now,
Before Thy gracious feet to bow,
Though vilest of them all!*

(Gadsby's 938)

"Even them." Why my friends, if the Lord comes thus to you, you would respond in the amazement of faith and say - "even me!" and then you would say

*Why me, why me, O blessed God,
Why such a wretch as me?
Who must for ever lie in hell,
Were not salvation free.*

(Gadsby's 680)

So that these 5th and 7th verses really are joined together. "I will give in mine house and within my walls" - bring them right inside; and His house essentially is the Lord Jesus. All the provision that is in Zion is Christ. It not only comes from Him; but it is Christ. The church is the fullness of Christ. If you think of it there is nothing in the gospel, nothing that we are occupied with as we meet together but which is only to be found in the person of Christ. "A place and name." "A name." Well, this same prophet speaks of several names that shall be given unto the eunuch. "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth

in thee, and thy land shall be married.-...and they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken."

What blessed names for a eunuch - and another blessed name which is the greatest of all, John says "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." - "Even unto them." Even unto these poor eunuchs that are tempted to speak saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from His people. "Neither let the eunuch say, "Behold I am a dry" - a useless "tree." O, poor useless, barren sinner, and yet who would join himself unto the Lord that hath joined himself to the Lord in his heart's affections. I believe there are some that attend upon the services who long for the Lord's appearing, who long for a token for good, who come up to the house of God with this prayer, "O that I knew where I might find Him" or "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people." Well, they are joined unto the Lord in affection, but what they need and seek is for the Lord to perfect that which concerneth them.

"I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." An everlasting name, because the bride takes the name of her husband and, therefore, the name of the Lord belongs to His people. It is said of the Lord that He is called "The Lord our righteousness," and, therefore, all the names that are given unto the Lord Jesus as a Mediator belong unto His people. O the honour that He bestows upon poor sinners as they are joined unto, united unto the Lord Jesus. These unlikely cases, 'Even unto them,' and in the 7th verse, 'Even them' - that is the strangers that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants.

Well, you look at that and then ask yourself whether you would if you could. Do you come with a hope that upon some occasion the blessed Spirit will so unite you unto Christ that you may have an indubitable evidence that you are His, and your interest in all that He has accomplished, an interest in the blessed, glorious, everlasting gospel of His grace? 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain.' That is, to the church of God. It is called a mountain, and the house of God is established upon this mountain: "Upon this rock will I build my church'." It is a mountain too for its stability, its permanency and it takes all this permanency and stability and strength from God Himself. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." Do these declarations have any weight with you? any attraction? O you see poor weak, trembling, dying sinners, surrounded, preserved and secured by such omnipotence, immutability, infinity, divine sovereignty, what a mountain it is! The church of God. It is sacred to feel the foundation laid in your heart. I feel to need more ability and grace to set it forth. There is nothing like it. The things of God, the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart are immutable. They are unique! and you will feel this in a gracious way, Therefore, it is said "Happy art Thou O, Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord." Can you see any like them? We should honour all to whom honour is due, We should honour the Queen and those in authority; but after all my friends, you look at the greatest potentate in this world, they are but creatures of a day - and the body of the Queen is of no more value as to the flesh and blood, than that of a poor pauper. O but the things of God! Whereas the riches of this world can be put into your pocket or into the Bank and can demand the perishing things of this world, they will never, can never, enrich your person, not even naturally. The money of a millionaire cannot affect his personality. O but the riches of divine grace will affect a person's natural personality, and it will enrich them unto all the intents of bliss and all the provisions of the gospel. Enrich them right up unto the eternal inheritance.

'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain.' O, what a sweet surprise it is! Sometimes like a ray of light passing over your mind and heart. There will be just momentarily a sweet sense of the blessedness and glory of Christ and His things. I believe I had it for about a moment walking down the street yesterday morning. The effect, the nature, the invincibility of divine grace in its effect, in its kingdom, made everything else look so shabby, so inferior, so unimportant. 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain;' and what is there then, in that holy mountain, to bring them to, and to give them such joy? Well, this same prophet tells us in the 25th chapter: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined;" and 'even them, even them,' these outsiders, these peculiar people, these that have got something the matter with them, those which have such obstacles, such hindrances, 'even them.'

O, if there is a poor outsider here who feels that they have every reason in them for despair, look at this word and may it look at you! 'Even unto them.' 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer.' Well, you might think it impossible. 'To make them joyful,' how? "He gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." There we see the opposites again. It has been a strong consolation to me to truly believe that there can be that which is greater than myself, that can swallow up all that I am and bring into my soul all that Christ is, and all that He has. 'And make them joyful in my house of prayer.' This joyfulness is the joy of the Holy Ghost, spiritual joys as I think we sing

*Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil;
All we can boast, till Christ we know
Is vanity and toil.*

(Gadsby's 933)

But have you ever felt your heart rejoice in the Lord? Paul sums things up and says, "Finally brethren, rejoice in the Lord." There is something very expressive in Paul's 'finallys.' He has several of them in the Epistle. "Finally brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Therefore, He will have exercised people to make a reckoning; to reckon all the losses, and crosses, and disappointments and calamities, and fears that you are the subject of and reckon them up; then finally faith will rejoice in the Lord, for faith will see more reason to rejoice in the Lord than there is for despair in all the conditions and circumstances of this life. Or you may reckon on the other side, reckon up all that you possess, all the comforts of this life, all that the world calls good and great, reckon them upland faith then would say, finally, rejoice not in those things, but rejoice in the Lord..

It just comes to my mind if this stranger and this eunuch are joined together they will rejoice, as when the disciples came back from their preaching and the spirits were made subject to them, the Lord said, rejoice not in that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. That will take in the promise, a promise of both. 'I will give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters.' and their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life and therefore, 'They shall be joyful in my house of prayer.' This joy, the joy of the Holy Ghost communicating the power and substance and life of the gospel to the soul personally.

O, what a joy it is when one first realises the inward moving of divine life. Do you remember when you first said something like this -

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.*

(Gadsby's 135)

I remember when I said that in the midst of a congregation. And when you have this joy of the Holy Ghost by the Spirit's inward sanctifying influence, your heart will ascend, ascend unto the Lord and, therefore, this will be true: "Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar;" for wherever this joy is in the heart, the Lord will be precious. It is the joy of a believer. "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." That is what that joy is filled with; it is the joy of a believer. Therefore, it is the joy of divine faith; and there is the joy of receiving the things declared in the gospel? receiving them as you feel your deep need of them.

Look at the character to whom this great promise is made: 'Even them.' I do like to find hidden ones; sometimes we do - out of the way kind of people, odd ones these are, odd kind of people. The Lord knows where they are. O, if He should point with His divine finger and say to some poor sinner here 'Even you' will I bring to my holy mountain and make you joyful, joyful under a sense of your interest in Me and have a part and lot in the matter of salvation and a taste of the sweetness of the streams of the river of God! Sacred well of Bethlehem! Do you ever rejoice in the Lord? It is very, very distressing to lose that joy. So precious was it to David that when he lost it by his sin, he included it in his prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." O that we could see more evidences of the joy of salvation.

I know what it is to be bowed down; I know what it is to have to pray "Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead, shall the dead arise and praise Thee?" But O, to have a little of the joy of salvation, it does honour the Lord! My friends don't honour unbelief; don't honour your sin above the atonement of Christ. It dishonours the Lord; I was looking again last night at hymn 755 concerning the forgiveness of sins. I know the burden of the weight of sin is exceedingly heavy, but to be brought to this point;

*Thy wondrous blood, dear dying Christ,
Can make this world of guilt remove;
And Thou canst bear me where Thou fliest,
On Thy kind wings, celestial Dove.*

(Gadsby's 480)

You would have joy then. It is in Christ. It is declared in the gospel, in the church of God. O what an assembly is that of sinners called by grace, gathered out from the nations, pilgrims on their way through the wilderness to heaven! I long for the same grace and life in my soul as I have seen in some of His people; real a love to them at times, as you look down from the pulpit upon a few people with their faces Zion ward. There is nothing like them. And how kind, with what love do these chapters come down to odd ones, to despised ones, the nothings. 'Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters.' 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.'

Amen.