

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on  
Lord's Day Evening, Jan. 1st, 1961.

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Text: Jeremiah iii. 19.

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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

This word in Jeremiah concerns exactly the same people as did that word in the 106th Psalm. It is very evident that the people there represent those who are like Ruth, confess that they are not "like unto thy people". When Boaz showed her kindness, she was amazed at it and said she was not like unto one of his handmaidens. Yet that desire wrought in the heart, for nothing different from that very desire but what the Lord bears to His people could satisfy this longing seeking soul. We felt this morning that there are such enquirers here who come into that word of David: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple". And this is one of the enquiries: "Remember me with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy dear people". It is no small mercy if the Spirit's work in our hearts has brought all our desires to one thing, which is Christ, the One Thing needful.

But in consideration of that text and prayer, "That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance", the Lord speaks through Jeremiah; "But I said" - and this is the Lord speaking - "how shall I put thee among the children?" It seems a very discouraging answer to that anxious and gracious enquiry. The Lord says, "How is it to be done? How is your prayer to be answered?" Well, there is no difficulty in this question to a pharisee at all, how shall I put thee among the children? No difficulty with that pharisee that went up to the temple. He had put himself among them. But you may depend upon it, there was a difficulty with regard to that poor sinner who went to the same temple and could not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast. If the Lord had said to him, "How shall I put thee among the children?" he would have said, "Lord, I don't know, I don't see how it can be done". Because there is a previous work before there is this longing, and hungering, and thirsting for God and His Gospel and His grace. We mentioned it this morning. You will never wish to be visited with salvation until you are lost and shipwrecked. Joshua is a type of the church. He stood before the angel in filthy garments. ~~Have you have~~ stood before the Lord in filthy garments? The same we have in Ezekiel in the figure of the infant cast out into the open field in all its filth and blood.

"But I said, How shall I put thee among the children?" Then you may look too at that wonderful Psalm 45, where David had such a sacred experience of communion with the Lord, and saw Him to be fairer than the sons of men, and then began to describe one of the Lord's children. "The King's daughter is all glorious within; she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." How are you to be put on a level, and among and in relationship to the children? How is it to be done? Well, a mercy if you cannot answer the question, because God will never ask this of any sinner but those to whom He will manifest His love, those who are predestinated to the adoption of children.

"But I said, How shall I put thee among the children?" They are

"children of the heavenly King". It was only made possible for any for that relationship, to be children of God, by the Lord Jesus taking flesh and blood the same as the children. I would speak properly, but I feel warranted to say that the Lord's people are related unto Him in blood relationship. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." And so they are born of God, not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. The completeness and the reality of all that the incarnate Son of God became is a blessed truth, because only so are His people complete in Him. He is eternal and immutable, therefore their completeness is eternal, and the relationships that the Lord Jesus condescended to assume toward His people are eternal. The union, that blessed indissoluble union that subsists between them is the secret of their spiritual being. Oh the oneness of the church of Christ with the glorious Head! Such is the oneness that all that He is, and all that He has, and all that He has accomplished, and all that love has laid up, is theirs. "But How shall I put thee among the children?"

Well, may the Lord keep you asking and praying the morning's prayer, and the time will come when He will answer His own question as He does in the text. When He puts a question to His people, He answers it Himself. If you cannot answer it, He will. He may use means and instruments to convey the answer to your soul, but you may depend upon it, if you love the Lord and His truth, and He has made Himself the One Thing needful to you,

"The time of love will come,  
When thou shalt clearly see,  
Not only that He shed His blood,  
But you shall say, For me".

You might think, "Now, I shall never say it; I don't think I could ever say that that precious blood was shed for me; it is so great, too good". It brings to my mind often one dear old pilgrim, not long before she died. I read and attempted to pray with her, and after I finished she said, "These things are too good for me". I said, "Do you want them?" And she said, "I cannot do without them". What then? Pray without ceasing. Pray the morning text until the Lord answers it. Keep praying; you will never weary Him, my friends. "Remember me, O Lord! with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people. Visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen". And there is something so gracious, so sacred, in this longing soul, and the Lord will satisfy the longing soul; He will fulfil the desires of them that fear Him.

"But I said, How shall I put thee among the children?" Well, He will put you among the children as He did all His children. It is all accomplished by His Spirit. But there is this to be said, regeneration does not make you a child of God; it manifests that you are one predestinated to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. You are sons already, and because ye are sons He will send forth His Spirit, own the kindred in your heart. How shall I put thee among the children manifestly? He has begun to do it, as we said this morning, if that prayer comes from your heart by the Spirit. It is because the good work is begun. Paul recognized this in the Philippian Church,

and was confident of it: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. And the beginning of this good work is turning a poor sinner to destruction, undoing him, taking him to pieces, and laying him low in the dust. And if the Lord comes to such and should ask this question as the poor sinner lays there self-condemned and self-aborred, "How shall I put thee among the children?" the Lord will have to answer His own question, and He will.

"But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land?" This pleasant land is just the same thing that was prayed for - "that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance". "And give thee a pleasant land." The margin is, "a land of desires", and that land is the Gospel. There were those - indeed they were spoken of in the 106th Psalm - there were those among the Israelites that despised the pleasant land, and there are those to-day who despise the Gospel. In the times of the Galatians there were those who entered in and turned the Galatians away from the simplicity of the Gospel, and tried to persuade them that there was something additional needed. Oh but you do not despise the pleasant land! Is the Gospel a pleasant land to you? It is only faith that can behold it, a land that flows with milk and honey. The Scriptures constitute one part of this pleasant land. Here is the whole counsel of God. All His purposes and decrees are revealed and recorded in the Word of God. All the exceeding great and precious promises, all that the covenant of grace contains, is revealed in the Scriptures, the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, the work of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever found the Word of God to be a pleasant land?

It is connected with these children. You take for instance the 2nd of Hosea. There is the church first spoken of in all her unfaithfulness and departures from the Lord, and yet in His love He deals with that church, takes away her vines, her milk, her wine, impoverishes her and brings her into the wilderness. And then He says, "I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness". Oh divine faithfulness is a rock upon which faith builds and hope anchors!

"To give thee a pleasant land." The Word of God belongs to His people. The Word will be vindicated in its fulfilment, and that will be in the experience of the salvation of His people. So that it is a pleasant land, a great work, an amazing experience to be made a child of God. And not only so, but "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ". And that brings us to the heritage. There is a pleasant land here. Oh my friends, did you feel that that chapter that we read was a pleasant land, a goodly land? (Eph.1). You look to have a part and lot in that chapter, to be possessed of those spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, for the reason of being chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. And to have any evidence and testimony of the Spirit that we are predestinated because we are called by sovereign grace, that is a pleasant land. And so is union with the Lord a pleasant land, and you will know it if you have had it. Referring again to Hosea, the Lord says, "Behold, I will allure her, entice her, use every means to attract and draw her, into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her and give her her

vineyards from thence". And if He gives you a vineyard, it will be a pleasant land, for He walks in the vineyards. It is the same thing in experience as being brought into the King's chambers. "Draw me; we will run after Thee. He hath brought me into the King's chambers. Thy love is better than wine." That is a pleasant land if you know it in your experience.

"But how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land?" The church of God where He walks and dwells, where the Gospel is preached, is a pleasant land. Have you ever felt when singing that hymn in which there is this - "How sweet Thy entertainments are" ? Oh haven't you ever been gathered up in your soul by the blessed Spirit into this pleasant land? And the eye of your faith has been lengthened so that, whereas you may be walking in the midst of trouble and tribulation, yet going into the sanctuary you have delight in that experience, "In the midst of tribulation, Oft we cast a wishful eye, To our future habitation, And by faith the shore espy". I believe in my little way I remember this pleasant land when I was favoured to sit in the pew. Yes, when the Gospel came down as rain and as the snow from heaven. So was the Word of God in those days, streams from the river of God, streams of mercy, life, grace, sanctification, redemption, pardon, peace. "A pleasant land."

"But how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of the nations?" This more particularly sets before us eternal glory. We have the earnest of it, as we were reading just now: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light". We have this inheritance in Christ.

"This inheritance, believer,  
Faith alone, makes thy own;  
Safe and sure for ever".

"Though thou here receive but little,  
Scarce enough, for the proof  
Of your proper title.

"Urge thy claim (or case) through all unfitness,  
Sue it out, spurning doubt,  
The Holy Ghost thy witness."

"How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land?" Well, I will ask a question. Answer it honestly before God; it is important. As we have tried, and we attempt from time to time to unfold this pleasant land before you, is it to you a pleasant land? The blessed Gospel -

"The Gospel bears my spirit up;  
A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation of my hope  
In oaths, and promises, and blood".

Is it anything to you? Is it desirable? It brings us to that word which is in my experience, if I can think of it, concerning Christ:

"The one thing needful, dearest Lord,  
Is to be one with Thee".

But this is it:

"Thou, O Christ! art all I want".

You think of it, can you say it? If you can you are a child of God, and you will be put among them to your satisfaction one day.

"Thou, O Christ! art all I want,

All in all in Thee I find".

If you confess and believe it, it may be required of you to lose much in order to possess it. Paul was made willing: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". Do we? These are questions to ask, and in a measure they will answer the question in the text. It is easy to make a profession, but oh to have that tender conscience and living faith that will ~~be~~ urge questions in your conscience! "I count all things but dung, that I might win Christ and be found in Him." Do we? What made Paul thus confess before God? Because he saw how terrible was the alternative. If he esteemed all else as ~~dead~~ did that young man who went to the Lord Jesus, and he had done much, had kept all the commandments from his youth up - the Lord said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast and come and follow Me. He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions", and thought more of them than he did of Christ. And why was that? Because he did not know Him, did not behold His glory, so ignorant of that blessed truth that Paul spoke to the Corinthians: "Let no man glory in man, for all things are yours, because ye are Christ's". He was ignorant of it. But do not some of you see that this pleasant land and this goodly heritage is more than ten thousand worlds? That would be but ten thousand deaths and dungs, but here is a pleasant land. In another place it is called "a land of far distances". "And a goodly heritage"; that is to come.

"The hope that such a day will come

Makes e'en the captive's portion sweet."

To come to it we must pass through much tribulation. It appears strange, but oh the pain, the affliction, the oppositions, the contradictions, the perils that the Lord's people are called to pass through!

But this goodly heritage is that inheritance in corruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And speaking of the same seeking longing character who really cannot see how they can be brought to heaven, we would say this, and it is true what we sing:

"Of that mighty multitude,

Who of life are winners,

This we safely may conclude,

All were wretched sinners".

And that sacred and blessed exclamation of the heavenly host and the elders, "What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" These are they that have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". I know it is very sacred, my friends, and these blessed things cost me much searching of heart, and for the most part I join with these in the prayer; "Remember me, O Lord! with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people; visit me with Thy salvation". But it is a mercy to be a seeking soul. It is a mercy to be brought to need salvation, and to desire the Lord Jesus Christ, to know Him, and knowing Him to love Him. It is indeed. Oh be thankful if you can honestly say, "I need God in Christ"; if you can truly say, "Object of my first desire".

"A goodly heritage, of the hosts of the nations." There will be in

in heaven those from all nations of the earth, from the four corners of the earth. "They shall come from the east, and the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Shall we among that throng fall low at His feet, join in the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all? It is one thing or the other with us, my friends. But the Lord here answers His own question.

"And I said, How shall I put thee among the children?" And I said, Thou shalt call Me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from Me." Well, in the 32nd chapter of this prophecy the Lord interprets this answer of His. He says, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them". He does it, and if He makes a covenant with you, that covenant will be made. "That I will not turn away from them to do them good." Through all the changing scenes of life, wherever they may backslide to, whatever their condition. As He saw the wretched infant in the field. He did not turn away from it to do it good. "But I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me." So the Lord secures a poor sinner at both ends and gives the truth to the hymn:

"He will never, never leave us,  
Nor will let us quite leave Him".

So if He puts you among the children, He will make an everlasting covenant with you, show you the covenant, show you that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Some of you may fear that you would bring a reproach upon the name of God if you made a public profession of His name; but here He says, "I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me". No child of God can apostatize. But if He puts you among the children, you will be made willing to be an obedient child, and if you see what your redemption cost Him, and that love of which we were singing touches your heart (1053), you will bow before Him willingly and say unto those that fear His name, "Come and hear what God has done for my soul". Oh may the Lord put His children manifestly among the children, and give unto them the obedience of faith! Amen.

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