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Sermon preached by Mr F L Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton on August 22nd 1976

"Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou gavest Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world." John 17: 24

This chapter is essentially the Lord's Prayer. I hesitate to read it and I hesitate to consider so sacred a part of the text. The prayer is most sacred but the text is the most sacred part of the prayer, and it is connected with the prayer in the Hebrews. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He had a joy set before him and the joy was the whole of the church and this text expresses that joy. 'Father I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.' Some of you may understand when I say there are things in the word of God that have caused me to tremble, things concerning His judgements, not only upon nations, but upon persons. The solemn characters such as Saul, Ahithophel and Judas; on the other hand there have been some sacred things that have made me tremble, and this chapter is one. If we are not inside this chapter and prayer then we are outside of the covenant. If the Lord Jesus did not pray for us individually when He prayed to His Father, then what a solemn prospect is before us. There are about 43 references in this chapter to the Lord's people as - they, them and those: and about 15 references to the world, and every one of these references show the separation from God, and a separation between those that were given to the Father and those that were reprobates. It is a solemn but blessed chapter, it shows to us the separation of the wicked and the eternal union which subsists between the Lord and His people, and the most sacred thing of that union "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." But there is this about it my friends; may we have a witness of the Spirit, that when the Lord thus prayed, that He prayed for us. It is a very vital connection with those three words, three vital words of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. "It is finished."

Finished! Those three words belong to every one of His people, and for those of us here, either it was finished for us or it was not. "It is finished." Not all the work of the Holy Spirit in a sinner's heart can add one iota to it. Not all your prayers, nor your reading, nor your hearings can add one iota to it. "It is finished." "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." Poor world, poor world! nothing my friends to covet in the world, since the fall it is under the curse of God, their pleasures are cursed, their health and strength, if they have it is cursed, their wealth is cursed, their honours are cursed, everything is cursed. "I pray not for the world."

Are you concerned as to whether the Lord prayed for you? That when he cried, "It is finished," it was finished for you? There is another thing we noticed from the 14th chapter, the sacred connection the Lord had with His dear people. You will find that He does not address His Father as God, and right through this prayer, it is not God, but Father. He finished His work, He was the Father's servant while He was the Father's servant, He addressed him as God. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" He did not say, 'My Father, My Father,' He was the Father's servant.

He condescended to come under the law, O, what a great work is salvation. How great is the love of the Lord Jesus in His condescension and with what holy and sacred joy He prays for His people. There is just another thing of importance in this prayer it says, "Neither pray I for these alone," not for these immediate disciples that are with Me but for all those who shall believe on Me, through the word. Therefore it is a declaration that the preaching of the gospel shall be perpetuated through all time, and with the Lord Jesus his prayer reaches right through to the end of time, end will be accomplished through the preaching of the gospel. Therefore it does make the preaching of the gospel of first importance. I do not say that the man that preaches is of any importance, but the gospel that he preaches, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ whom he exalts. To my mind it is a touching point that He no longer uses the name of God in addressing His divine Father, He knew all things were accomplished and therefore this is the intercessory prayer, praying to His divine Father, His work was perfect, He is the Rock, His work is perfect, and the Lord was satisfied. The Father declared of Him, and He viewed Him as His servant. "This is beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And in that sacred eternal union they are accepted in the beloved. 'Father I will that they also.' And this is connected with the preceding verse. Look at this union. "I in them, and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." O the sacredness of it. 'Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me,'

So that these people were given unto the Lord Jesus, "Thine they were and thou gavest them Me." They were a people ere time began, chosen by the sovereign love of the Father and chosen in His Son, quickened into divine life, brought into the sacred union by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. What a people, I wonder how many of us in this chapel belong to him? Given unto Him, by the Father, in the covenant of grace. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me." And the whole of the interest of the blessed trinity is in the church on earth, the church is His inheritance. In the first chapter to the Ephesians you will see that that inheritance has two ways to it. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance," And down lower we read this. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance in the saints." So the saints have an inheritance in Christ, and Christ has an inheritance in the saints and this is the same inheritance my friends. Blessed people, "Happy art thou O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord." 'Father I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with me where I am.' So that everything in this life is subject to the sovereign will and purpose of God concerning His people. He maintains the creation, and the all-sufficient fullness thereof. Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, day and night shall not cease, and He will be faithful to that covenant. But His delight is in Zion. The 132nd Psalm is connected to this text, we are speaking about this inheritance, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." And this is a word from Him who is the glory of heaven, whose presence is infinite, whose glory is above the heavens, yet the whole of His interest is in the church of God, His people, and this is the people given to Him, for Zion is not made up of bricks and mortar. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, Zion exists of his dear people, "And here will I dwell, for I have desired it." And that can be said of every one given unto Him by the Father, and it has a foundation, "the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." He knows them, he knows those in this chapel that belong to him, and of every one of them it can be said. "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell." He dwells in his people by faith, and it can be said by every one of them. "This is my rest

forever," He can go along the pews and stop at everyone that was given unto Him by the Father, and could say of that person, 'This is my rest for ever. In this heart here will I dwell for I have desired it.' This is the people in the text. 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' Now if that is so when the Holy Spirit quickens such a sinner into divine life, then He will never be satisfied except he is satisfied with the presence of the Lord. Nothing will satisfy the soul, a living soul, but some manifestation of the Lord. Nothing else can satisfy, and nothing will. I would say it with reverence, nothing else can satisfy God's eternal Son than to have His people with Him. That was the joy that was set before Him and the joy that was set before his people, It is the same joy, it is for Him to present the church to His divine Father, "Behold I and the children whom Thou has given Me," for want of a better expression I feel that there is a blessed mutuality between the desires of the Lord Jesus and His dear people, and their desire to possess Him and be where He is. Do you know it? Be honest in view of eternity my friends. Can you say "Thou O Christ art all I want."? Do you live answerably with that confession? Would you be willing to submit if he took everything away but himself? That young man was a sad case; he was a good living man morally, he kept the commandments from his youth up, a better living man perhaps than some of us here, but on hearing the words of the Lord Jesus, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." He went away; he would rather keep his possessions and lose Christ. Would you my friends, would you?

'Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.' This is also the nature of divine faith, to be with him where He is. Yet you are a sinner, and you wander from the Lord you love, sin against Him, even rebel against Him, and bring into question His wisdom when things go cross-wise with you; but at the same time faith in the heart cannot live without Him. Do you ever feel that simplicity and in secret you confess it upon your bed. 'Lord I cannot live without Thee, I cannot die without Thee.' Now, if this is the case that is some evidence that you are in this 24th verse. 'Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' O to be that man! The Lord can never be satisfied without His people, and I say again, that was the joy that was set before Him and it is the joy set before His people. And there are times when he did so warm by the Spirit, that such a sinner can, say. "Come Lord, come quickly." 'Father I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.' And that takes in the promise "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." It is a wonderful mystery that this glorious Lord has such a vehement desire for his people and that the Holy Spirit works in his people's hearts the very same desire to possess the Lord Jesus and to be where He is. Now you will feel this at times, even in this wilderness world. If we are gathered together by the Spirit then this is a part of Zion and this rest. – "Here will I rest for I have desired it." It is a rest of complacency, rest of a terminus, that is to say, terminates in the salvation of sinners, and when that so reaches a sinner, he knows the preciousness in the forgiveness of sins and is sanctified and made meet for the inheritance above. He rests, and it is in such a way that He sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied. This blessed satisfaction of the Lord Jesus as He sees His own work carried on by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people. He is satisfied; satisfied and rejoices that His work of redemption is effectual, rejoices as He sees in people that His grace has saved them, that his precious blood has cleansed, healed and pardoned them; to see that His righteousness has justified them and to see through His sufferings He has been made perfect, and they are made perfect in Him. This is the satisfaction that His people feel. If everything that comes from heaven as the work of the Holy Spirit in your hearts, returns there, it is like a ladder.

The Lord said to Nathanael, "Thou shalt see greater things than these; ye shall see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man."

Now this, is very sacred in experience, it has to do with the text. It is the mutuality of the effect of the life of the Lord Jesus in His work and sufferings for His dear people, when He sees the success of it and this travail of His soul, He is satisfied. These are the angels of God, these ministers, not angels from heaven; His ministers are called angels in the Revelations, chapter 14 verse 6. The seven letters were written to the angels, and another thing that comes into the word is this, there was an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the gospel to preach unto those that dwell on the earth. Now these mutual manifestations of the Spirit to your heart are in the text. 'Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me shall be with Me where I am.' The same thing in a lesser measure is reached in their hearts, to be with Christ which is far better. Paul says to the Philippians "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I think it is a beautiful expression in the hymn, "Now I feel an aching void, the world can never fill." And you long for Him "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," so it is a mercy if we can trace in our experience these desires for the Lord Jesus, and his gracious manifestations, and he uses the preaching of the gospel. Yes sometimes He will so make His presence felt as to transform your soul and to bring you near to the very gate of heaven. O His presence can be known and felt and what a satisfaction it is. Simeon felt it when he saw the baby, his faith knew it was the Son of God, he waited for the consolation. "Now Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." O to be brought to that same point of satisfaction – let him come when he thinks best. 'Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given he, be with me where I am.' And in an earlier verse it says, "And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them;" and the result: that they may be one, even as we are one." His then was the glory that was given to the Lord Jesus, and in His mediatorial capacity everything was given Him. His Father did not withhold Him but delivered Him up for us all, and shall He not with Him also give us all things. So that all things were given to this church and to this people in the Lord. Jesus. As He brought these eternal blessings down, He brought life, immortality, righteousness, holiness and grace. 'That they may behold My glory.' And in the first place this glory was the glory of Immanuel, God with us,

It is a mystery, a mystery of godliness, 'that they may behold My glory,' the glory of God in Christ and that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwell., He did not cease to be God, when He became man, and all divine perfections met in Him. Although His humanity was human, yet in that humanity there was omnipotence, omnipresence and that is what gave validity, power, and authority to everything that He did. There is such a thing as faith beholding that glory, and such a view will join you to the Lord. I do not want to speak a word presumptuously, but I do believe in my measure I have been joined to the Lord, in His incarnation in this sense, that He is the only foundation of my hope. If He were not who He was, and declared himself to be, you may say, burn the Bible; it would be no use. O the sacredness of the glory of God in Christ, in taking human nature, and see the great eternal effect of it in His people. When He took human nature He made it possible for his people to be made partakers of the divine nature. There is union, "that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me."

Then there is the glory of His grace and this is expressed in the Corinthians, "For ye now 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 rich." Eternally rich! These riches are bestowed here, these things came down from heaven, this glory must come down from heaven, revealed by the Spirit, and therefore faith looks up. There is nowhere else to look, if we are looking at this world, what is it? If we are looking at ourselves, what do we see there? A sickening sight but "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to together in unity." This shows this connection with the Lord, through the incarnation of God's dear Son. This is the union of the Spirit. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." I say again it descended. Now have you ever felt this sacred union and communion with the Lord? And under the preaching of the gospel have you ever felt the Lord Jesus ascending and descending from heaven to earth (John 1:51) whilst the minister, by the Spirit in preaching? The angel was flying in the midst of heaven to preach the gospel to men upon earth, and there are times when faith by the Spirit will raise you up and you will be unconscious of anyone else in the chapel - transformed by the renewing of your mind.

*Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;
Say poor sinner, lovest thou me?
(Gadsby's 968)*

Amen,