

1048
249 692

1048

Sermon preached by Mr F L Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on Lord's day Morning,
March 3rd 1963

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:24-25

In the first chapter of this Gospel John says: "Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not:" and here in this chapter the Jews are cavilling at Jesus because He healed on the Sabbath day, and more particularly because he made Himself equal with God. What a solemn thing it was to receive Him not, to reject Him! And of these Jews He said: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." Could that be said, will it be said of any of us here at last, "Ye would not come unto Me that ye might have life"? Are there not some poor sinners who daily seek Him? It is a mercy to be a seeking soul, my friends.

But in this answer which the Lord Jesus gave to the Jews He established His sacred equality with the Father, as He says: "I and My Father are one." And in these verses, which are full of blessed truth and importance, He shows that He can do nothing of Himself. Although the Son is equal with the Father in omnipotence and eternity, yet as the Mediator He does nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do. And the works that He saw His Father do were in eternity in the covenant of grace; then He shows how that He is one with the Father: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.'

Now while these verses show forth the eternity and co-equality of the Son with the Father as a very blessed doctrine, yet all gracious experience flows from this doctrine. Some of you may feel, 'Well I like experimental things.' So do I; and when the Lord helps me to come into experimental preaching, it is very blessed. In the opening verses of this chapter, some of you might say, I am more amongst those blind, halt, and withered people; I am weary and want rest, I am a sinner and need salvation. I wish you would speak about those experiences! But there must be a foundation for them, even with respect to those around Bethesda's pool. It was the Lord Jesus who said to the man, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." All the virtue that was put into those waters when they were troubled was that which came from Jesus Christ. When you come to the blessed experience of the woman who pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of His Garment, it is said, "Jesus knew in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him." He knew in Himself, and she knew in herself. Well, if you take that blessed Person out, where would have been the experience, the healing, and the deliverance? It is the same with respect to the forgiveness of sins. In the Acts we see how this blessed Person is the very foundation of all gracious experience: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins – it is through this Man! And you will find as you grow in grace and become more firmly rooted and grounded in Christ, that your whole being, your whole soul and salvation and happiness, are wrapped up in this glorious Person. Hence the importance of the text: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word.'

These two verses really are a repetition of the same thing. The 25th verse amplifies, reinforces, the 24th, 'He that heareth My word.' The 25th verse says: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' Well, the Lord Jesus speaks. The opening words of this Gospel are, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Paul opens that profound Epistle to the Hebrews with the same truth, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the prophets, hath in these, last days spoken unto us by His Son." The Lord says everything He has to say to His people through His Son.

Therefore in the 14th chapter He speaks the same thing to Thomas: "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." He says to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hest thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." It may be a great comfort to troubled sinners in approaching the throne of grace. It is a glorious truth, the oneness of the Son with the Father. If you have seen the Son, you have seen the Father also. If you believe in the Son, you believe in the Father also. And if you have seen and believed in Him, it is by the Holy Ghost, who alone can reveal Him. Now I believe that you will find increasingly, and need the support of it, that all real vital godliness and experience centres in the Son of God.

'But he that heareth My word and believeth.' This is not an external hearing of the Word, for the Jews heard Him with the outward ear and believed in what they heard. They saw Him and yet they believed Him not; "but us many as believed Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."- "Therefore faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But it is an inward ear, and the first essential is to be born again, to have a completely new creation, with a complete, if I might so speak, set of faculties. For the new creation, the inner man, the new man of grace, has faculties as we have naturally. As there are the five senses of the body, so there are the five senses of the soul, mentioned variously in the Scriptures. There is sight, and hearing, and taste, and feeling and smell. 'He that heareth My word and believeth.'

It is the same truth as in the next chapter: "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that whoso seeth the Son," not with an outward eye, but with the eye of faith, and so sees Him as to behold His glory, 'and believeth in Him.' Oh what a great thing it is to be a believer: now the word is the whole of the Gospel, everything that the Gospel declares; and to hear it with the hearing of faith is for that Gospel to come, not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. So that what we have to consider is, as to whether we have heard the Gospel and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of the Father. It is. Not a mere proposition, but this circumcised ear is accompanied by a prepared heart. If you hear His word your heart is open to receive it. And not only so, but there will be an inward teaching and experience of what we are, which will make the word of the Gospel suitable to our case, Therefore blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, They hear it, and it is the hearing of faith.

'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me.' Now in your hearing, whether through reading the Scriptures or the preaching of the Gospel, is there a reception of it? For this hearing and believing go together. The believing is a reception of what you hear. Therefore we read this, "Take heed how you hear." "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates,

waiting at the posts of My doors," There will be an influence in the hearing of faith. There will be a waiting on Him to receive the things declared, that provision that He has made in the Gospel for sinners; the reception of it in a prepared heart.

Let us then try and speak of some of the things spoken by the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, and see whether we have heard, and believed, and received. Take for instance that blessed declaration that contains the whole Gospel in it "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Now do you believe in Him, that He came into the world as sent by the Father to save sinners, and that you are the chief one of them? Have you ever heard like that and believed Him, and say that it is through Him as God's coequal and eternal Son in human nature, that has made it possible that He can be a just God and a Saviour? This hearing and believing is very blessed as you sit under the sound of the Gospel. Difficult to describe; but very blessed in experience. You hear; the word enters into good ground, you receive it, and you believe in Him that sent Him, and therefore you believe in Him who is sent, for 'They are one.' There is a very blessed strength here, because as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, Strictly speaking, the Son can have nothing given to Him since He is eternal in His life; but that is not the life that His Father hath given Him to have in Himself. It is that life which is a part of His fullness as a Mediator.

The same with His righteousness, He has the fullness of righteousness in Him by virtue of His incarnation, and by virtue of the perfection of His finished work. It is the righteousness of a Mediator; not His essential righteousness, which He can never give to anybody. And yet this is a very blessed point of importance. although this life of Christ which he has as the infinite God cannot be given to a creature, yet the life that is given to Him of His Father is eternal life because of His person, and the righteousness that is imputed to a poor sinner which justifies him, while it is not the essential righteousness of the Deity of the Son, yet derives all its validity from His Person, I believe that truth. It is that which makes the Gospel infinitely rich. Some of you will say in yourselves that you hear this word and you believe on Him that sent Him. Therefore you believe on Him that is sent, and He not only gave His only-begotten Son, but with Him He gives everything to the church. The fullness of the Godhead is in Him bodily, and you hear it and feel your universal emptiness, and believe in His fullness, the fullness of His grace, the infinite virtue of His precious blood. You hear it as needing it as the chief of sinners, as a loathsome leper. This believing is receiving and there will be an influence in it, a coming to Him to receive out of that fullness. There will be a coming to Him and a cleaving to those spiritual blessings in heavenly places that are in Him.

'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life.' Now listen, those of you who fear to presume, those brief references we have made to hearing His word, and believing and receiving it, do you find that you hear like that? It was the same in Lydia's case. She attended unto the things spoken because her heart was opened. Well, have you felt while we were making those brief remarks, 'I need that Saviour, I need that divine mercy, that pardon, I see that it flows through Calvary; thanks be unto God for so unspeakable a gift.' And you feel the arms of your faith go out to receive Him. Did you feel something of it? If you did you have everlasting life; the Scripture saith so. 'He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.' O what a mercy if this blessed Man is our Substitute! If we live by faith upon Him, we shall die in Him at last. 'Shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto Life.' Why? Because "there is therefore

now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Oh but you might say - it is to be in Him! Well, if you hear His word and believe on Him that sent Him, you have everlasting life; you are in Him. If the truth is in you, you are in the truth. Oh I wish the blessed spirit would make this out to some seeking soul! It is a great thing to be a seeker. I would not that you would stop short and only seek; but if you are a real seeker by the Spirit, you will never end your seeking until you find. And then you won't end it. No, such fullness is in Him of life, and truth, and righteousness, and redemption, and unsearchable riches, and divine glory, that there will be something for you to seek throughout eternity. You will live on Him by faith here, and live upon Him in heaven.

'Shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Then He amplifies it: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' That was literally so, a corporeal resurrection, as in the case of Lazarus, and Jairus's daughter, and the widow's son; but at the same time this particular place refers more particularly to those that are dead in trespasses and sins. "and you hath He quickened, which were dead in trespasses and sins." The hour is coming, and now is. Therefore in praying for His dear people in the 17th of John He says: "As Thou hast given Me power over all flesh, that I should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Take notice of this, my friends, with respect to your experience Oh how valuable it is! As to whether you find increasingly that your all is in and from, and will be unto the Lord Jesus Christ; whether in your experience you go this way — "He must increase, I must decrease."

It is a powerful voice, and when He raised those several from the dead, it was to show His divine power; everything that He did upon the bodies of men while here was to show forth what He is able to do unto the souls of His people. It has been more than once a consolation and encouragement to me to come with my worst condition unto the Lord. Oh if it were not that He is the Saviour of the lost, that He was sent, that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and if it were not that the diseases of the soul are enumerated in the Scriptures, and that He is an infallible Physician, what should we do with all our diseases? But you can go to Him if you are possessed of devils, of unclean spirits; if you feel to be lepers quite throughout, if you are withered, halt, and blind. They are all recorded in the Word of God. Sometimes you will find access to this blessed Man upon the throne of grace, who receives sinners, and you say, 'Lord, here comes a leper. I am not fit to be with Thy people.' You see in the Word that He put forth His hand to touch him, and your faith will go to Him and say, 'Lord, touch me with the same touch.' It says of the woman that she knew that she was healed of the plague, and the Lord knew in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him. Well now, you have every warrant according to the Scripture to go to the Lord in the same way for your soul,

'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' What authority there is there! He hath given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man. You listen to that; that He is the Son of God in His Deity. There is the virtue, there is the omnipotence, the Godhead; but He could not - I say it with reverence - He could not exercise mercy and grace as an absolute God. Therefore He hath given Him authority also to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Oh this is matchless condescension! He brought life to death. He abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. And what authority there

Is in His word by the Holy Ghost, when the Holy Ghost takes of the life of Christ!

'And the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' Oh that this might be made manifest where it is His purpose, that that voice by the Holy Spirit, the living voice, might raise some dead here! They *would* live! *become* living souls, delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It is a real resurrection, and it is directly connected with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That word in the Ephesians is a blessed truth: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." -- it is the same people, believers -- "according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." It is according to that mighty power, and the Holy Ghost takes of that mighty power of the Lord Jesus and exercises it in regeneration in the hearts of everyone that is Christ's, and they live; and that is the beginning of real religion.

Oh what a mercy to have that inward ear of living faith, that faculty of the new creature that alone can hear the voice of God, to receive His Word, His Gospel, with divine power by the Holy Ghost and in much assurance! it brings assurance; it must do, whatever the Lord speaks is a word of eternal life. And you will feel that assurance when you hear the voice of the Son of God, not only when you are quickened into life, but with every subsequent hearing you will live afresh. Some of you know what it is to live afresh. As the river which Ezekiel speaks of; wherever the streams came, everything that liveth lived. That is, it lived afresh. And so this brings us to the foundation fullness. God the Father in all His glorious outflowings through His dear Son, conveyed in streams of living water by His blessed Spirit. And he that heareth the word and believeth hath everlasting life,' for the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.'

Amen.