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sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel,  
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"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here ! or lo there ! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Luke 17 v.20-21.

The Lord had more trouble with the religious world than ever He had with the profane world. The profane world had nothing to do with Him; He had nothing to do with them. It does bring to mind that solemn observation in Zechariah concerning the three parts. Two parts were cut off and died, those two parts represent the profane world and the religious world. Very solemn if we are in the religious world. And you notice how solemnly discriminating and searching were those parables of the Lord concerning the kingdom of God.

But the Pharisees were always finding fault with the Lord, especially because He received sinners. The reason was that they knew not that they were sinners, they were righteous, self-righteous. They were whole, they needed not a physician. They had no need of Christ. Very solemn to be in that state; thousands of people are and therefore, it shows the vital importance of conviction of sin. I feel that this needs to be emphasised more and more. It is the lack of deep conviction of sin, the sentence of death in self, that there are so many light and vain professors of religion.

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come," They spoke that in a way of derision and yet they had seen the miracles that He wrought. I thought when we concluded that chapter just now, what a solemn thing if of any person or of any place it could be said, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Solemn consideration for a people or for a person. "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." The people were always expecting a kingdom to be set up on this earth and they were offended at Him. His meek look, they despised Him. As we were reading just now "Is not this the carpenters son, is not his mother called Mary, his brethren James, and Joses and Simon and Judas ?" As much as to say, he is no more than anybody else, we know his mother and his brethren, and they were offended in him. The Lord, when He sent a message to John said, "Blessed is he that is not offended in Me".

And they demanded when the kingdom of God should come. They were looking for a Messiah, they were looking for a kingdom - but a kingdom in this world. "He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation". O what an answer this was to those Pharisees. They did everything to be seen of men. They did everything with observation, their religion was loud, noisy, self-seeking, self-applause. But, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation".

You notice in those parables that the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning the kingdom, that each one of those descriptions of the kingdom, they were without observation. They were without ostentation, without outward show. If you look at those parables at your leisure you will find that they were all unseen. The parable of the sower you are well acquainted with; "So also is the kingdom of heaven", we read in Mark, as if a man should cast seed into the ground and it should grow and spring up, he knoweth not how. It was unseen; it worked in secret, in silence, and the secret was, it was a living seed. The secret of this kingdom is that it is a living kingdom. Deep in the heart it lies, Then He compares the kingdom of God like unto a woman that hid leaven in three measures of meal. It was hidden in the meal, and that leaven worked and worked until the whole was leavened. It was silent, it was unseen; and if we look at our own cases, our own beginning, our own religion, we may see what kind of

a religion we have by these parables. There is a beautiful simplicity about them. The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds. May be a day of small things, a small beginning, but it does not matter how small it is if it has life in it. I think there is something very sacred about the hidden, secret, quiet beginning of a work of grace in the heart.

We have this same thing in the Lamentations. "It is good for a man to quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord, he sitteth alone, and keepeth silence because he hath born it upon him.". These things have an importance because they show to us the right beginning of vital religion. Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure, hid, hid in a field, hidden. O I do wonder sometimes as I look upon the people whether there is this secret of the Lord, this hidden work, this incorruptible seed.. It is the mighty power of life, nothing can suppress it. It will work. It is under the power of the Holy Ghost. "Like unto treasure hidden in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." You look at that and your experience if you want to know what a real beginning in true religion is. It was a treasure, it was hid; but the man found it. He was not looking for it; he might have been ploughing his field and he happened upon it, and it was shown to him of great value. And he ceased his ploughing and took possession of the treasure and he hid it. O if the Holy Ghost should so reveal Christ in the Gospel, that hidden treasure, to some poor sinner who might not be looking for it, yet revealed to him. "And he hid that treasure, and goeth and selleth all that he had and bought that field". This is a true beginning of religion.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea. It sunk down, out of sight, fishes were out of sight, there was no noise. Perhaps you have seen the fishing smacks. They have been fishing. Nothing was known until they drew the nets in. O what a mercy it would be if by the Holy Spirit we should cast the net the right side of the ship, and that there should be that ingathering of the Lord's people according to that word, "He will gather others unto Him beside those that are gathered". "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, there shall be one shepherd and one fold". These things show us the inward, silent, mighty workings of the Holy Spirit in a sinners heart. It comes without observation, there is no sounding of a trumper or banging of drums.

Again you remember how even the Lord Jesus Himself came without observation. "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion, for thy King cometh, having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, the colt the foal of an ass"; and so this lowly One was God's coequal and eternal Son, yet He speaks to poor sinners, weary sinners, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, take My yoke upon you for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls". No outward show. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say lo, here or lo there." If you read the 24th Mathew you will see that that refers to false prophets. They said He is in the wilderness, or in some secret place, and so false prophets may come who are ignorant of the Lord altogether and say He is in this city or in that company, among that company, that denomination.

"Neither shall they say lo here ! or lo there ! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you"; and there might be added to this what the Lord Himself said when He was before Pilot, He said to Pilot, "My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, but now my kingdom is not from hence". And this can well be added to this description of the kingdom of God, it comes without observation and it is not of this world, and it is within you. How this does shine a light upon true religion. Some of you perhaps long to be made right and pray, "Send out Thy light and

Thy truth"; and the Word of God is light. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple". But we do need the entrance of the word, otherwise it is dark. There is no light in the letter, the ink and paper, there is no light in the mere word, but when the Holy Spirit lights the word up with a living light and brings it into the heart with a divine power, reveals the things it declares, is not that just what some of you long for? as you read the word, as you hear the Gospel, that it might do the things in your very soul's experience of what it declares. To my mind it is a vital point if we are rightly exercised before God as we read chapters.

How do we read the word of God? You might say that is hardly a proper question to ask in a congregation that knows the truth and has heard it, but I ask it again of myself and of you, How do we read the word of God? How have we read it this last week? When last was it a mighty power in your soul? When last did you hear the voice of God in it? It is the entrance of Thy word that giveth light. O blessed entrance when the things come in! the treasures come in! What treasures they are in the word, what riches, durable riches! What a Person revealed therein! This is the mouth of God. He speaks through the Scriptures and no way else really, this is His lips with which He kisses His people. He is a counsellor and these are the words of wisdom that He speaks to give counsel.

"For behold, the kingdom of God is within you". Well, I remember on one occasion although I do not want to speak of myself, be a miserable affair if I did, but, as I often am, very near the brink of despair, going on a journey to preach at Coventry in the underground, I felt the biggest fool to continue, all I had was one of my painful heads, soul as dark as midnight and completely destitute, but this word seemed to penetrate through all the multitude of people and reached my heart, "The kingdom of God is not of this world", and on top of that, "The kingdom of God is within you". Well, it was a transformation, a translation. O it is the entrance of the truth when it does in you what it says, and if you are anxious and concerned you will not be satisfied in just reading a chapter, you will say with reverence, do it Lord, do it, and you will have Scripture authority for that, to the Thessalonians it is said, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God that your whole soul and spirit be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, faithful is He that calleth you, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT". O you will feel so anxious sometimes as you read the Bible, you will come to a standstill, a text, and say, Lord do it.

"Neither shall they say lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you". Well, the point that will exercise the mind is, whether this kingdom of God is in us. It is of no use in the Bible, it is of no use in the pulpit, it is of no use to us being in the one sitting next to us, but it must be in our own hearts, personal case. We must die alone, we must enter into eternity alone, "The kingdom of God is within you". It just comes to this, that the kingdom of God is a work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, and every individual that was given to Christ in the covenant of grace will come unto the Lord Jesus for this kingdom. "Thy kingdom come". The emphasis is upon THY, "Thy kingdom come". You look at other kingdoms, Kings and Queens are raised to their thrones, they live, they die. Whatever you look at in this world it is in a state of decay, there is nothing continues. One generation passes away, another generation cometh; and yet, individually those who are taught of God, they will be brought to realise that they need something that is eternal, something that can never decay and this kingdom, which is an everlasting kingdom, a kingdom which can never be moved. But where there is a kingdom there will be a King, and this spiritual and heavenly kingdom is every way different from earthly kingdoms. The subjects in a kingdom do not derive anything from their King or Queen, our Queen can convey nothing to her subjects that can contribute anything to their well being, especially anything spiritual; but the King of Grace God's dear, eternal, incarnate Son, He is such a King as that He is a

living Head and His subjects are His body, He communicates of His virtue, His glory, His authority, He communicates it to us His subjects. Another thing in an earthly kingdom there is the reverence which is derived from the subjects that maintain the throne, but in the heavenly kingdom it is not the subjects who through their labours maintain the King, but it is the King Himself from His unsearchable riches that enrich His poor subjects. But this is within you, and there is something so attractive, so desirable in this. It will be to every exercised soul; and I am sure that you will find that you will agree with what we have stated that that kingdom is of no use to you unless it is established in your own soul and that is what you long for; and that kingdom will put down every other rule and every other authority for its king is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To have this kingdom within is to have the authority of God in Christ in your heart. It is a kingdom of love, a kingdom of grace. It is established in the soul when one is born again. That is the only right beginning of true religion. It is then that the foundation is laid, that this kingdom comes into the heart, and then the soul begins to live, and this kingdom of grace supercedes the kingdom of sin. You see the two very blessedly contrasted in that great promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace". That promise begins with a kingdom, the kingdom of sin, mighty kingdom, universal in our nature, a kingdom that will reign, the king is the devil, he will pay wages, his wages is death, his wages are misery, but "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law but" - under the authority, the reign of divine grace.

"The kingdom of God is within you". O you would rejoice if you could feel it! those of you who are waiting for the kingdom of God. It is within you, an internal work, a secret work. It comes without observation, it comes in a moment. If the appointed time arrived this morning and if it should be in the purposes of grace, of God, that one of His people here should be brought under the power of His saving grace; that would be accomplished in a moment. Just as a seed is cast into the ground so the Holy Ghost could and would deposit eternal life into some poor dead soul, and that kingdom would be established there and nothing would ever move it, nothing would ever kill that life, and then that kingdom would grow. It would be made manifest and the first manifestation of that kingdom in the heart would be prayer. Prayer to the King. "Thou art coming to a King". Prayer for what is revealed to that poor sinner of his needs. O this is no small part of the working of that leaven which a woman took and put in three measures of meal. I do like that description of the kingdom, like yeast, it works and works and one of the sweetest and most powerful influences of that leaven, the life of God in the soul, is prayer, and it is the prayer of faith, for when this kingdom comes, faith comes with it, and the eyes of faith look out from the condition revealed of darkness and death poverty and misery, looks away unto the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus, where there is no darkness at all. No decay, no death, no desolation. Sees in the Person of the Lord Jesus a completeness of righteousness, of holiness, unsearchable riches, riches which are sufficient not only to redeem but there are sufficient riches, unsearchable, left over after redemption to purchase an eternal inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away; and a sinner begins to pray for it, believes it. Not only believes it but believes it with the feeling of faith. Believes it with such a faith as unites that sinner to what he believes and brings in what he believes into his heart.

"The kingdom of God is within you". O blessed kingdom! Sometimes you will be amazed when you begin to meditate like this; after you have been in prison, in darkness, in death. When you have looked within you and looked without you and all you could see were your prison doors, only conclusion you could come to was that you were a reprobate; then for the Lord with His divine authority - for He has the key, the King has the key, comes and unlocks your prison doors and brings you out into liberty, gives you a little respite, to behold His glory. Like coming out of a dungeon into the blessed sunlight, in all its benefits, and the blessed things that that sun reveals.

"The kingdom of God is within you". And this life of God in the soul will be continually manifest by praying without ceasing. The whole of religion really in a living soul is prayer. You might think perhaps that that is not so completely, but I believe that there is prayer in a renewed soul continually under every condition. Even in a backsliding state. Some of you may know what it is to have been brought - or brought yourself into such a state of earthliness and carnality, so turned aside by some vanity, that your religion has become just formal. Well, I wish I did not know it, what it is, but you will feel it, there will be something underneath, O this burden of, my leanness, my leanness ! You try and read a chapter and you can see nothing but the letter; you go to hear and everything seems barren and stagnant, but the barren-ness and stagnation is in yourself, but you feel it. You groan under it, there is prayer, there is prayer in those strugglings, in those groanings; there is the authority of grace the kingdom of God is within you, and the blessed King is in heaven, so that this kingdom is not of this world at all. O that has been a comfort to me ! It seems to me to be a relief under every condition in the nation and internationally, it will be by God's permission, but when at times we become exasperated by injustices and cruelties as well as iniquities which run down the streets like a river, this, this will help us to hear that still small voice come through all the confusion and commotion and speak to your heart. 'Now, my kingdom is nothing to do with this world, nothing at all to do with all these disturbances, it is not of this world. When the Holy Ghost lifts you up away from all the confusion of the world and away from the influence of your depraved nature and a body of sin and death, and gives you to feel the eternal working of the love of God, the grace of God, the sweet mercies of God, why, my friends, it is heaven begun below. Then you can for substance - because when you are there you will be in the height of Zion and you will look down upon this poor world and say, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing ?" Because you will see the world, and its things, and its confusion as God sees them, and you will also see your own case and circumstances and afflictions and your sorrows, your distresses and your calamities, you will see them as God sees them.

"The kingdom of God is within you", and it is not of this world, and therefore, His people are not of this world, they are in it, and this kingdom is in this world although it is not of it. Because this kingdom also represents the church of God, where He reigns, where He rules, where He exercises His grace. It is in this world although it is not of it; and if this kingdom is in our hearts we shall be in the world, but we shall not be of it. Sin will be in us, but we shall not live in it; and O when a little of this heavenly authority is in our souls, it makes Christ precious, how attractive heaven is ! "I would not live away" said one.

"Weary of earth, myself and sin,  
Dear Jesus set me free,  
And to Thy glory take me in  
For there I long to be".

O the contrast between the things of this world, the authority of this world, the pleasures and treasures of this world, and what is known by experience of the kingdom of God in the soul. Can you make that contrast out in your own experience ? Can you feel it ? Taste it ? See it ? "Behold", there is something in that word behold, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you", as much as to say, take your eyes off from everything else, and in the midst of all your affliction, doubts and fears, look at this, the authority that is in you is the authority of grace, the power of God. He is made unto His people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

O may the Lord make this over to us. These three things, namely, that this kingdom comes without outside show, and that this kingdom is not of this world, and the kingdom of God is within you.

Amen.

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not edited for publication.