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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
on Sunday morning, 6th June, 1965.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

We read that the Lord Jesus taught the people many things by parables. Parables and narratives - the same teaching. The parable is an illustration; a narrative is an actual occurrence. And this narrative we have here, there is nothing very spectacular about it, not viewed outwardly. There is much more spectacular in the visit of our Queen to Germany, and the acclamation she received. Why then is this simple narrative given a place in the inspired word of God? There is a mystery which underlies this narrative. There is no mystery in all the pomp and glory of this world. And you remember that when the Lord was teaching the people by the Parable of the Sower, He said: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." (Mark 4:11) Which means this: that some heard those parables, and heard parables only. You read a parable, and you read a parable only, see no mystery; the reason is for lack of faith. To see light in God's light, we shall see everything as He sees it. We shall see unseen things. And it is well to remember that solemn word: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables."

How have we read this parable, and other parables? I say there is nothing really spectacular about it at all; but if we are led into the mystery of it, we shall see that great is the mystery of godliness. And the first mystery we would notice is this: the foreknowledge of Christ, which manifests His deity, His divine Person. He had never seen Zacchaeus in the flesh, but He knew him. He knew his name; He knew what was in his heart. He knew that he would go to a certain tree, climb up into that tree. It was the beginning of the accomplishment of the purpose of grace in the salvation of Zacchaeus. But Zacchaeus did not know it. Curiosity was the only motive for which Zacchaeus went to see who this Man was that had wrought these miracles; and if it had concluded with mere curiosity, his curiosity would have been satisfied, all his interest would have been gone. Therefore, we see the foreknowledge of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was in the counsels of Jehovah, in the covenant of grace - and He knew Zacchaeus. His name was written in heaven. We have this confirmed later on in the narrative: "This day is salvation come to this house." Why? "Forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Not a son of Abraham in the flesh, but a son of Abraham after the Spirit. To Abraham was the covenant made: "To thee, and to thy seed, will I give, said the Lord, all the blessings of the covenant." (see Genesis 17:4-8) And therefore, Zacchaeus was one that was chosen of God before the foundation of the world. He did not know it. When he went out from his house in mere curiosity to see who Jesus was, this was the leading.

It is wonderful to see how the Holy Ghost gathers the Lord's people: "A period known to God." And this was the point predestinated for Zacchaeus to be called by grace. And to see these two things meeting - that inward influence upon Zacchaeus to go and climb up into that tree; and the Lord Jesus to pass that way.

We have the same blessed covenant, the same sovereign grace, manifested in the woman at Samaria's well. The Lord knew who she was. He knew she would be at the well at a certain time; He met her there, and made known unto her who He was, visited her with salvation, called her by grace. And so the Holy Ghost does still. I thought the hymn we commenced with touched the points:

What! has the Holy Ghost forgot
To quicken souls that Christ has bought,
And lets them lifeless lie?
No, Thou Almighty Paraclete,
Thou shedd'st Thy heavenly influence yet,
Thou visit'st sinners still. (Gadsby's 715)

When He visits a sinner He makes no proposition; He exercises His invincible grace, His irresistible grace. I remember the feeling of this. And O, if this grace should reach our young people and our children, it would be irresistible!

"He sought to see Jesus who He was. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down." There was a multitude about Him; He did not look at them at all, He did not speak to them; He looked up. There was one, an object of His love. He was doing the will of His Father: "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing." (John 6:39) He knows who they are; He knows where they are. Some of them may be in a far-off country, as was the prodigal. The prodigal, he determined to be his own; why not? "I am my own, the world is a large place, and I shall make the most of it. My tongue is mine, my hands, my feet are mine; I shall do as I like with them." And off he goes. But the Lord followed him up, he was an object of the love of God, he was in the covenant of grace, and he began to be in want. A mighty famine in the land; he is reduced to beggary and rags, hunger-bitten. The Lord knows how to deal with His people, to bring them to Himself.

"And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down." Zacchaeus must have been greatly surprised that this man whom he went to see out of curiosity should discover him, speak to him. But: "Where the word of a king is, there is power." (Ecclesiastes 8:4) And when the Lord Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus, it was with the authority of His Deity. His human tongue spoke to him, but His divine power caused that word to enter into Zacchaeus' heart. When the Lord speaks to a sinner with a purpose of calling that sinner by grace, He speaks what He says **into** them. A minister cannot do this. He can speak to you, but only the Lord can speak **into** you. He spoke **into** Zacchaeus: "Make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." It was an appointment. It was a covenant appointment; He must abide there, and the purpose for abiding in his house is this: "This day is salvation come to this house." What a day that was! O I have desired that this might be a day when the same Lord might come! He is the same: "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8) Nothing can alter Him. Eternal He is, immutable. His divine sovereignty controls the universe, and His sovereign providence controls our life's minutest circumstance. It is wonderful when it is manifested in a way of grace.

"Make haste, and come down. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully." He was called by grace. That was not merely an external call; he was called in his heart. He was converted there and then, and it had an effect. But of course, the Pharisees "murmured, saying,

That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Well, He could not be a guest with anyone else – there are none but sinners! "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." (Luke 15:2) Evidently the Pharisees did not know they were sinners. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Doubtless he had; he was a rich man, and undoubtedly he got much of his riches by extortion and oppression, robbed the people. He was a tax-gatherer, but grace had reached his heart; and he did not say this in order to claim some remittance of his sin; he did not say: "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" to atone for his sins. No, it showed how that the word of the Lord in calling him had changed his heart – changed a covetous man, a man who was full of self, who lived to himself – how that now he was willing, willing in the day of this power of God, to give half of his goods to the poor, and to restore any thing that he had robbed fourfold.

It is a mercy, my friends, to be created anew, a new creature in Christ Jesus. I was thinking yesterday – very solemn thought to me – how solemn it is to make a profession of religion, and never to have had a change of heart; to be the same person, no different, but just take up with religion, learn all about it, learn its doctrine, associate with the Lord's people, hang about religion, and be no different, never a change of heart – very solemn! But here, Zacchaeus was a changed character. And Jesus endorsed it, confirmed it, and said unto him: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Sometimes such a person is spoken of as a son of Jacob. To Abraham was the covenant made, and confirmed unto Jacob; and so the Lord says: "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Malachi 3:6) And then that brings us to the text.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." There is one thing to say at the outset: if we are not lost, the Son of man did not come to seek and to save us. We **are** lost, but only those that are convinced of sin know it. "For the Son of man is come." There could be no salvation any other way but by His coming. There was no need for the Lord Jesus to become incarnate to create the world; that creation was an act of absolute omnipotence. The eternal Jehovah determined to create, and the purpose of creation was for His own glory. Not that creation could add to His glory – nothing could be added to the eternal God – but He determined that His glory should be known, and therefore, He created the world, and He created man in His own image. A different creation from any other part of it. It is a wonderful thought. It can be seen in a measure, very small measure naturally. It is observed that the human race is different from any other creature. If there had not been human beings but only beasts, there would have been no sin. They have no concerns. You send sheep out into the fields, or horses to graze, and they are satisfied; they build no cities, there would be no science. But man, he was endued with a reason, created in the image of God Himself; and the purpose for which God created man was for His own glory, and that He might form a people for Himself to be with Him in eternal glory, a people upon this earth to worship Him.

If men had a right conception of the end for which they were created in the image of God, what a different life they would live, what a different outlook, what a different end! It is very solemn to see the masses of mankind. Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people, and therefore

man, by human wisdom, can find out everything except God. Man is now going up into space, science is advanced in almost an uncanny way, but it is not advancing toward God; and all his science will end, there is nothing in it. When man dies, his science dies, his objectives are at an end, his attainments are reached and finished. And yet man lives as though to amass wealth, or to attain to some fame or honour, is what he is born for. Well, it is a short-lived joy. But the purpose for which the Lord created His people anew is for Himself, to live a life of faith upon the Son of God; and in order to this, He comes: "For the Son of an is come." O what a tremendous mystery is there! Not an archangel, but the Son of God. He is spoken of as the Son of man in His humanity; but He is the Son of God. He comes, the Creator of all things is come. He who has the fullness of creation, under whose authority the whole creation is. He under whose sovereignty all creatures are at His command. "He is come." He, who has the fullness of grace, the fullness of the Godhead bodily in Him, is come, and come for that purpose: "To seek and to save that which was lost." Well, everyone that was given to Him by the Father He will seek, and find, and save – every one of them, whoever they are, however rebellious they are, however proud they are.

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down." Come down! What a mercy that is! "For the Son of Man is come." In one of the Epistles of John we read this: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true." (1 John 5:20) O what a mercy that is! For this is how you can say: "I know that the Son of God is come – come into my heart; I have received the benefits, the power of it." When He came, He brought immortal blessings down; He came and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. He came to a ruined world – O how important that is, to be well instructed in the fall of man! It accounts for the condition of the world, the curse that is upon the world, the abounding iniquities and sins and murders, the immorality. O this poor, defiled, corrupt world! And there is this – and some of you will agree with it – our nature is not a wit better than the world. I believe I am being gradually taught that, that my nature is not a bit better than the worst in this world. Man ruined himself in Adam. Adam ruined the whole human race. But says the Lord Jesus, or it is said of Him: "The Son of Man is come," full of life, full of grace, all power given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He who is infinite, infinite in wisdom, omnipotent in power, He who is immutable is come. What a blessed people that is for whom He thus came! It comes to individuals.

We were reading, I believe, last Wednesday in the 8th Proverbs: "My delights were with the sons of men." (v.31) What a wonderful person in this parable of whom that is true! That the delights of Jehovah were with respect to that person; that He has come in order to seek and to save that which was lost. And this is beautifully unfolded to us in the 34th Ezekiel, the same truth. There is a very sweet harmony that runs through the word of God: "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I" – there is something in that – "I, even I" – not the greatest man on earth, not the most mighty angel in heaven, but – "Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, in all the inhabited places of the country. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away." (v.11-16) Now these mighty 'shalls' and 'wills' must take effect; and that is what we desire to see when we pray: "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children." (Psalm 90:16)

"For the Son of Man is come," come to take human nature into union with His divine Person, in order that He might be made a perfect Substitute, in order that being Man as well as God He could be a Mediator, and put one of His mighty hands upon men, and the other upon God, and make reconciliation for the sins of the people. "The Son of Man is come," come in human flesh. He is come, come to take a kingdom for Himself. Come, come to take a bride, a church given unto Him in the covenant. "He is come," come to take that relationship with the church which could never be, unless He became incarnate. "The Son of Man is come." But O, what we need is for Him to come to us personally! And He does. He did to Zacchaeus: "This day is salvation come to this house." That in the first place meant Zacchaeus himself. It might – we are not told – it might have meant all that were in his house, and that is a mercy. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." (Isaiah 54:13)

"But the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." So that we must be brought to know what it is to be lost. If we are never brought there, then we have no ground to believe that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save us; and it is well to look at our experience as to whether we ever have been lost. There are plenty of people that can talk very glibly about being saved; but as we have sometimes said, if a person cannot tell me how they were lost, I don't want to know anything about how they were saved. Have you ever been lost? It is the Spirit's work. It does not appear to be so to a poor sinner that is lost, lost his way, feels unfit for the church of God, and yet cannot still remain in the world. He is neither in the world nor in the church; in a state of self-confusion and self-condemnation. You remember the gaoler, and how the prison was shaken. Not only was that prison shaken, but the soul of the gaoler was shaken. It is the same power: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) You speak to a worldling like this, and they would say, 'What do you mean by saved? There is no need to talk about being saved; I am all right; I am in health and strength, a good banking account, a very good position; what do you mean about being saved?' But when it comes to the soul, when one is taught: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12) When one is convinced of sin, and brought to see the wreck and ruin that they are in, when one is brought to know that there is a holy, just, almighty, infinite God, it is a mercy to be lost, my friends. It is the next best thing to being saved, and it is next-door to it. A person that is being brought to a lost condition in himself will never be left there, never be left there. If any here should be in that state and condition as a lost soul, you may not feel to be able to hope; but I can hope for you. As sure as you are lost by the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart, so surely you will be saved.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He says "to seek", but He has no need to seek. His omniscience, His eternal foreknowledge, knows who His people are, and where they are. But He takes that method, that attitude as though He does not know, and seeks them. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." (1 Timothy 2:19) He knows them to the last individual, and "not a hoof shall be left behind." (Exodus 10:26) O I have desired that this grace, this blessed Lord, this Son of Man, might seek and save some poor lost sinner here today! He will, if it is the appointed time. He came and stood still at that sycamore tree, and O, if He should come and stand still by some person in some pew! You take the case of Nathanael; the Lord had never seen him in the flesh, but: "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." (John 1:48) "I saw thee." I wonder if the Lord sees any here, whether they are under a tree, or whether they are up a sycamore tree?

"For the Son of Man is come," is come. O what a coming! What a Person! What a fullness! What divine ability! What infinite wisdom! What blessing! What an inheritance! What a releasing! He is come. I wish I could speak of it as I ought. "Come to seek and to save that which was lost." Salvation; that is the whole thing in that great word, "Salvation!" I have sometimes desired the Holy Spirit to direct that word, and bring out the whole of its contents. It would fill eternity.

"Salvation" may be just a word to some of us, to some of you. But O, if ever you are lost, it will be more than a word, it will begin to grow and enlarge; and all that accompanies salvation is the whole of the Person and work, the doing and dying, the sufferings, the glorious resurrection, the ascension into heaven! It takes in the kingdom of grace here, and the kingdom of glory hereafter. It takes in the blessed inheritance of the saints here below, for it is an inheritance. And if you see by the eye of faith its blessedness, its beauty, its riches, its honour, feel the savour and power of grace in your soul, why, it will make this poor world look dim, it will put it beneath your feet, you will see that it is passing, the fashion of this world is passing away, it is not enduring. And that is a truth that every atheist must know. O how Satan has bound his slaves with iron chains! Whatever a man may amass, he must leave it, and "sometimes short's the warning." Not always in old age. The best we can do with it then is to make a will, and leave it – must leave it to somebody else. Solemn to have our name written in the earth, as we read in Jeremiah: "All that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord." (ch.17:13) To have our name written in the earth is to have a name left behind of an earthly kind. It may be an earthly honour, a great sportsman, a great politician, or a very rich man that has left an immense fortune – written in the earth. Well, what a mercy to have a name written in heaven, and a treasure there that, when we sink into the arms of death, we enter into an eternal inheritance. The Son of Man is come for this; He is come to bring it. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Amen.