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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton
Sunday morning, 14th January, 1968

"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me
early shall find Me. Riches and honour are with Me,
yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit
is better than gold; and my revenue than choice
silver."

Proverbs 8 v 17-19

It is an amazing thing that a poor worthless sinner can possibly love the glorious Lord, co-equal with the Father, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person, the Creator of the universe. O what a Person speaks through this chapter. The Lord Jesus Himself speaks as wisdom and shows His eternal Sonship. "By Me kings reign, princes decree justice, counsel is mine, sound wisdom, I am understanding, I have strength". Says of Himself, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was". What a Person! Yes He is knowable, has made Himself knowable. He says, O the amazement of it! "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and 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." This mighty One, meek and lowly in heart!

"I love them that love Me". Often in the Scriptures you will find the affect put before the cause, and it is not accidental, it is wisdom and mercy. "I love them that love Me". But the Lord does not love His people because they love Him, no, we love Him because He first loved us. I have sometimes mentioned it and to my mind it is a source of consolation to exercised souls, that God will be first in everything. If you love Him it is because He first loved you. If you receive Him it is because He first received you.

Well, let us look at this word: "I love them that love Me". What evidences shall we look for as to whether we love Him or not? Are you going to look for a sinless condition? Do you look at yourselves, I have done very solemnly lately, look at your past life and when there are secret sins that you have forgotten, forty, fifty sixty years ago, they are resurrected and your iniquities are set before you, not in the light of man, but in the light of the Lord's countenance and you are made again to realise that apart from Christ and His grace you are simply a mass of corruption, of sin and death; and then look at this word, "I love them that love Me". Well my friends, if you are going to wait until you are sinless before you can lay hold of any comfort of the Gospel, you will never do it, for the Gospel is a refuge for sinners, it is a provision that love has made, "O how great is Thy goodness that Thou hast laid up for them that love Thee". Well then, what shall we look for? What evidences shall we look for that we love the Lord Jesus? Well, how are you affected by His word - take for instance that most sacred chapter, 53rd Isaiah, have you ever loved Him when you have read it? O it is sacred language, a suffering Saviour, "Despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...He was bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, with His stripes we are healed". If the Holy Ghost should make that over to you by faith you would view in Him your suffering Surety. Have you ever loved Him when you have followed Him to Calvary? When you consider the majesty, the dignity, the sovereignty of His Person, that omnipotence allowed wicked hands to take Him and crucify Him. That He, Who is infinite Wisdom had His judgement taken from Him. To see Him in His majesty as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, taken into a common hall, set among rude soldiers. To see His sacred brow smitten with a reed, crowned with thorns, have you ever loved Him?

"And what can poor lost sinners say
When once they get a view,
And hear the blessed Spirit say
All this was done for you."

"I love them that love Me". Have you ever loved Him as you have traced a suffering Redeemer? Then it is an evidence that He loves you, and where there is love there will be obedience. Disobedience and love cannot go together, and therefore, He speaks to His disciples in the 14th John, that blessed chapter: "If ye love Me, keep my commandments, and he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him and will manifest Myself to Him." Therefore we shall keep His commandments, that is the Word of God. These are His commandments, His precepts, His statutes, we shall seek to walk in them. That prayer of the Psalmist will be ours: "Show me Thy way O Lord, teach me Thy paths, lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation, on Thee do I wait all the day"; and those Scriptures will have a place in our experience.

"I love them that love Me". Where there is love you will not need to have a notebook to remember the one you love, no, there will be a remembrance of Him. As you go about, even in your ordinary duties there will be times when you will be able to say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". It is a very great profession to make. Have you ever said it? We come to points again, and I do think it is important and so much the more as we see the day approaching, to come to points. You look at that height of love: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". Have you said it once in your life from your heart? I will tell you what, if you have, the Lord was first there. He can say the same of you: "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee", and what had the church said before that, "I am black but comely".

"I love them that love Me", and if you love Him, you will seek to do His will, and where this love is there must be a knowledge of Him. If you know Him you must love Him. If you know Him as He manifests Himself to you, it is impossible to know the Lord without loving Him. But then this love will have its fruits. "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". Not in an automatic way for sin will dwell in us as long as we live, but if you love the Lord you will hate evil, although it lives in you, you will not live in it, and there is such a thing as departing from sin which will not depart from you. This love too, will be in your faith. Faith, hope and love go together and you will manifest your love to the Lord. He manifests His love to His people and you will manifest yours to Him.

"I love them that love me and those that seek Me early shall find Me", and that is the connexion. If you love Him, you will seek Him, and seek Him early. It is good when it is early in life, for young people to be brought to seek the Lord early in life, but it goes further than that, they that seek Me early it is to seek Him first, that is the early, First. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness", and this love and seeking Him will go together. "Seek the Lord and ye shall live, and what a mercy it is then to be made a seeking soul, and here comes in the work of the Holy Ghost leading a poor sinner to Christ. Those that are brought to seek Him in truth, are taught their need of Him and therefore, the beginning of a work of grace is a knowledge of self, a knowledge of our sin. It is for the law to exercise its solemn condemning power in the conscience. O how important this part of the work of grace is! When He, that is His Holy Spirit shall come, He will convince of sin and as you go on you will see the importance of conviction of sin. There will never be any need of Christ felt, there will never be any seeking for Him until there is the sentence of death in ourselves, and this is what is lacking in the religious world today, there would not be so much controversy, religious controversy in the world, and so much criticism if people were killed, the sentence of death in all that they are. It is a mercy for the Holy Ghost to thus quicken and convince of sin and it is the same blessed Spirit that leads a poor sinner unto Christ in the Gospel, the Gospel of His grace. It proceeds from Him, everything in the Gospel partakes of Him. Everything in the

Gospel is eternal, His grace is invincible, His love is immutable, His precious blood is infinite in its merit. His righteousness is to full perfection; and when a poor destitute sinner has this opened up to Him then, love in his heart to the Lord Jesus, together with a sense of his deep need of salvation, he begins to feel after if haply he might find the Lord, and there is love in this. You will seek Him in love. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." O it is a mercy to be brought into that faith and the activity of faith. But here is the Object set before us in the chapter and in the text: "I love them that love Me and those that seek Me early shall find Me". So that when we read a Scripture like this and search our own hearts and ask ourselves the question - and not be satisfied until it is answered: "Do I love the Lord or no?" Am I really seeking Him? Have I been brought to feel my need of Him? Do I realise that if I do not partake of Christ I am undone to all eternity, and is He first, is He before every other consideration in life? and come to that Scripture again, can we really say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee?" They are pointed questions, but how vital, how vital as to what answer we shall receive from the Lord, for the Psalmist said, "Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence, let Thine eyes behold things that are equal".

Some things are unequal because they are hypocritical, but the Psalmist wanted the eyes of the Lord to behold that that was equal, and there will be that that is equal in your seeking Him early. There will be an equality or a proportion between the teaching of the Spirit of your deep need as a ruined sinner of a precious Redeemer, a Saviour, it will be equal.

"I love them that love Me, and those that seek me early shall find Me". There is this, if we are really seeking the Lord, not seeking religion, but seeking a Saviour, a poor soul sinking in deep mire where there is no standing, seeking and seeking after the Lord. Then this is true. He is seeking them. He is first, and all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus are bestowed upon His people according as they are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, and

"Our seeking His face
Is all of His grace"

we should never be brought under these exercises and experiences unless we were in the electing love of the Father, no. If we are in that secret place of sovereign election and the foreknowledge of God, then we are predestinated to all the blessings of the Gospel, and we are predestinated to depart from iniquity. We are predestinated to holiness of life, and therefore, predestinated both to seek and to find salvation.

"I love them that love Me", "And those that seek Me early shall find Me". Some of you may have been seeking for years and have not found what you want. Well, what should I say about that? Ought I to comfort you and settle you down because you are seeking, a seeking soul? No. That would be to encourage a man to live upon his hunger. But if you are seeking Him through the life of God in your soul, you will never give it up until you find Him and in that seeking there will be hope. In that seeking there will be desire. Have you got it? These things are not full assurance but are things that accompany salvation. Is your seeking the Lord with desire? I feel sure that two things will go together if it is real, and that is need and desire. You look at that for a moment. I would be careful what I say, I would not break a bruised reed nor quench a smoking flax, but I venture to say that if your need of Christ is wrought by the Spirit it will not dwell alone. Now those of you who want to know really what the state of your soul is, look at this point. Your need of Him, but with that need is there also a desire? I think that the 142nd Psalm will help us on that point. David was in a dire condition, refuge failed him, no man cared for his soul, "But I said, Thou art my Refuge and my portion in the land of the living". He did not say, "Thou art my

Refuge to which I fly for safety, I not only flee unto Thee for safety but I flee unto Thee to possess me. Do you find this in your heart? These are evidences of life, evidences of love, I love them that know these things, I love them that seek Me, I love them that cannot do without Me. "I love them that remember Me, "And they that seek Me early shall find Me". This is a promise and it cannot be forfeited. "Seek and ye shall find", must be honoured by the Lord and as surely as you are a seeking soul you will find Him, the responsibility is on Him that you should, and I can tell you this, that if you are seeking Him He will find you. There is the secret and this is the secret why you will find Him, He will find you. He seeks His people in the cloudy and dark day and this makes up the exercise of soul and experience. Seeking Him is to consequently come up out of the wilderness, a constant labour to go out of self and all that self is to all that Christ is.

"I love them that love Me", and those that seek me early shall find Me". May the Lord help those that do love Him and yet they have many doubts as to whether they really love Him with a spiritual love. May He manifest His love to them, shed abroad His love in their hearts and that will confirm them, and what a mercy it would be too if it should by the Spirit enable them in love to walk in His commandments, to hear His voice in the ordinances of His house. That beautiful, beautiful description of the ordinances that we usually read at the Lord's table, beautiful they are, O the love of God! "This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of Me." Ah I would not wrongly influence a soul, but my friends do beware and not allow your unworthiness to be more than the worthy Lamb. Do not dishonour the Lord by honouring your sinfulness above the infinite merit of Christ's precious blood, as though that is not sufficient to remove the deepest depth, the deepest dyed sin, and as though that is not sufficient to remove the deepest dyed stain, and if you are led to Calvary and see there the Sacrifice, the Lamb of God offering Himself without spot unto God for you, spotted sinner, black sinner, to see that Holy One. "If ye love Me, keep my commandments."

"I love them that love Me and those that seek Me early shall find Me"., and what will they find? "Riches and honour are with Me, yea durable riches and righteousness. They are not ordinary riches; He qualifies them, they are not silver and gold which perisheth, "Yea, durable riches and righteousness", This is what a seeking soul will find, but there will be a sacrifice, ye cannot serve God and mammon, and inordinate love of this world and riches cannot go together with this text. O how Paul warns Timothy of this where he says, "But thou, o man of God, flee these things, follow after righteousness, goodness, faith, love, patience and meekness, for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some covet after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows, but thou, O man of God flee these things". "So that if any man will follow Me, let Him deny himself," the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, himself, his own body, crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, "If any man will follow Me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." Poor worlding thinks he is going to lose everything, but a poor sinner who by faith has believed in the Lord Jesus to the saving of his soul, he can see that he has everything to gain, "Riches and honour, and with Me, yea durable riches and righteousness", therefore, Paul says to the Corinthians, "Let not man glory in men for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos or Cephas", that is the ministry ~~is~~ yours, the Gospel is yours, life or death, everything is yours and for that blessed reason that ye are Christ's and Christ is God's..

"Riches and honour are with Me". O what a poor portion is the best portion in this world. How the case of that young man constantly comes up as a warning; he went to the Lord Jesus, he seemed very zealous and he went with the right thing, "What shall I do to obtain eternal life?" that is what he asked for, very warrantable thing it was, his case looked well, but the Lord said, "Go and sell all that thou hast and come and follow Me", This ME in this chapter. 'Sell all that you have and come and follow Me, he went away

sorrowful,' one thing he lacked and that was the one thing that Mary chose; and how do we stand? "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her". She had faith, the same faith with Ruth. Ruth was willing to leave her people, her God's her possessions and follow poor Naomi with no prospect of any natural benefits at all, but she saw the text, "Riches and honour are with Me."

Well, these things are written for our instruction that we may compare our own soul's condition, our standing before God, and what a lot of general religion this cuts out. Do you not feel sometimes that these main vital things grip your very heart. You feel the vital contact. It is really a uniting, it sets up a standard of hearing, a standard of taste. "Riches and honour are with Me", and these riches are the unsearchable riches of Christ. All earthly riches are searchable and they are all losable and they all decay. "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold.." O it is good at times when faith can say, can see the contrast between things that are natural and things that are eternal. Especially when it is traced right up so that you gather all these riches and honour in one inheritance, that is where they are laid up, "For you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away", and what is said of that inheritance belongs to every particle and every part in the Gospel of His grace, and all the work of the Holy Ghost, everything in salvation can have this said about it, "Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

"Riches and honour are with Me, yea durable riches and righteousness", and these unsearchable riches are the riches of His grace, are the riches of the Gospel, all that the Gospel contains, and therefore it has in it the riches of the Person of Christ. He is rich because He is God, and it is the virtue of His Person that all His riches derive from. If He was not Who He was there would be no spiritual riches, there would be nothing but that which decays and fades away. O how it does exalt Him, I wish I could speak of Him as I ought. I know I need Him and I believe I desire Him, but O I am such a sinner, I need all the riches of His Person, the riches of His blood, the riches of His righteousness, the riches of His wisdom. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." His wisdom and knowledge are full of riches and this was demonstrated when He was here upon earth. How unsearchable are His judgements, His methods, and therefore, as He went about doing good, the riches of His Person, of His omnipotence, of His wisdom, of His divine sovereignty, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, healed the withered hands, they are riches, and He can do the same today, "The same yesterday, today and for ever."

"I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me; riches and honour are with Me, yea durable riches and righteousness." Here is a portion, O does it not put the world in the shade! it does indeed, I wish I could feel it every day, but we are carnal, and I have to say now perhaps with greater emphasis than ever I did, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, but there is the answer, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).