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Sermon preached by Mr F.L.Gosden at Galeed, Brighton, on Lord's Day Evening
December 2nd 1962.

"Wisdom hath buildeth her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." Proverbs 9:1-5.

This morning we attempted to say a few things upon the first two verses, but oh what these two verses contains The whole church of God, with all the provision that infinite Wisdom has laid up in the church for His people. It is a living building; every part of it is living. The foundation is a living Christ. It is built up of living stones, and the life in those stones is derived from a living Christ. It is His life. It is only the life of Christ that will draw, attract the name life where it is. If we have not the life of Christ in our religion, we shall never know what it is to be drawn, never know what the attractions of Christ are in their heavenly influence, never know what it is to have our affections set upon things above, Therefore it is very solemn, as we said this morning, to build a house upon the sand, a house built with hands. And as I view it, these two houses that we read of in Luke, one that was built upon the rock, and the other upon the sand, you would see perhaps no difference in their superstructure. My friends, we may so live under the truth and acquire a correct knowledge of the truth, and understand the whole plan of salvation from A to Z, so that we could draw a picture of it. Doubtless Judas knew about the truth and drew a correct picture of it in his preaching, but he never possessed a single thing of those things he knew. Very solemn! In considering those two houses you will have noticed that the difference between the man that built upon the rock, and the man that built upon the sand, the first evidence shown there was this; "He that cometh unto me and heareth my sayings," he was the man that built upon the rock. But of the other man you hear nothing of his coming unto the Lord and hearing his sayings. Therefore it gives an important meaning to the word, "Blessed is the man that heareth," heareth me in faith, and hearing of such excellent things. For I will speak of excellent things, and the opening of my lips shall be right things; and blessed is the man that heareth in such a way as to "watch daily at my gates, and wait at the posts of my doors." That will be some evidence as to whether our religion, our profession, is a building upon a rock, and whether we have a living root of divine faith in our souls and have been planted by the Lord in the house of God, and that root to have contact with Christ and strike down and at times get a scent of living water and bear fruit upward. These are the evidences as to whether we are living stones

attracted by Christ, "to whom coming." And to see those comers influenced by the grace of Christ, as we were singing:

*There is a period known to God,
When all His sheep, redeemed by blood,
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
Turn to the fold, and enter in.*

How attractive is this provision to such people! In the parable of the supper there were those full souls that loathed the honeycomb, needed nothing, had no desire, no hunger nor thirst, and therefore "with one consent they began to make excuse." These things are written both for our warning, and the encouragement of seekers. You look into your hearts. Would you make an excuse not to come to this provision that God has made in Zion? But He sent His servants into the highways and hedges where wayfaring men were, weary and heavy-laden, and compelled them to come in.

Well, in these three following verses we have the method that the Lord uses for gathering people to the provision, this furnished table. And the first thing is the ministry: 'He hath sent forth her maidens.' Beautiful illustration is that in the 24th of Genesis; Abraham sending his servant to find a wife for Isaac and it would reward us to read that chapter and see there the exercise of a true minister of the Gospel, and with what anxiety he watches the Lord's hand, and watches for souls, But he was to take one of Abraham's country, of God's elect. He does not know who it is, but he watches. This servant watched every indication and every token, until he was directed to Rebekah. And when the question was asked, "Wilt thou go with this man?" She said, "I will go." So "My people shall be willing in the day of my power." And it is power that we need; the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the only influence that is saving, and His work in the soul is the only thing that God will recognize at last. There may be other influences. We may exercise an influence upon a congregation by a personality, by mannerisms, and all kinds of things. May we ever be kept from it. But oh to know the power of the truth by the Holy Ghost!

'She hath sent forth her maidens.' Paul speaking to this point to the Romans says: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, But how shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent" As it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." So it comes to pass that through the foolishness of preaching the Lord

designs to save those that believe. Oh what an emphasis is placed upon believing in the Word of God, especially as we read just now: "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." It is a kind good word to those seeking people who fear to presume and I feel it safe to say for the encouragement of such, that if Christ is precious to you, then you are a believer.

'She hath sent forth her maidens.' So the Lord sent forth seventy disciples, two by two, to every city and place where He Himself would come. I believe this, if a man is sent to preach, he will be sent to those places where the Lord Himself shall come, where He has a living people, a hungry and thirsty people, people who come seeking a portion for their souls, A wonderful congregation that. It becomes more and more to be wondered at in these days, my friends, when our religious leaders are but blind leaders of the blind, that there is yet to be found people taught of God, whose hearts God has touched, whose eyes He has opened and there ever will be a remnant of such according to the election of grace, But the Lord will gather them, and the main method He has been pleased to use is the preaching of the Gospel, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Gather them together. Right from Genesis it is declared, "Unto Him" that is the heavenly Shiloh, "shall the gathering of the people be." It might have been otherwise. The Lord could have called His people by grace by the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, teaching them individually, without instituting church state. But He will have His people gathered together, and there is something very blessed about it, and the gathering is blessed too. Especially when there are cases so evident that are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. You will find this connection too connected with this ministry. Some of you will remember the first days that whenever the Holy Ghost, either at the outset or in subsequent experience, blesses the soul or gives a sense of deep need, there will always be a connection with that experience and the gathering together of the saints. If in your daily walk and responsibilities and cares, you are brought into some extremity or anxiety, if you have the grace of God it will issue in soul exercise, and be an exercise toward godliness, the things, and people, and worship, the sanctuary worship. You will find that there will always be some attraction in your soul toward Zion in all the afflictions, both without and within.

'She hath sent forth her maidens," Very solemn occupation and causes me greater trembling in these days than it did 25 years ago, It was not easy then, but it is more difficult to continue than to begin and you may find that too in your own experience and profession. For where there is an increase of knowledge, there is an increase of sorrow. You know more about yourself and other people than you did at the beginning. But oh He has promised to give more grace!

"She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth in the highest places of the city.' This is spoken of in the 8th chapter; "She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." No other part of the creation does God speak to - only to men. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" He is the highest part of God's creation, created entirely different from any other creature, a distinct creation "In the image of God created He him." Yes, he had dominion over all the beasts of the earth, over the whole of creation, and yet it is man alone which is vile and is sunk beneath the beasts of the earth. And while the Lord alone speaks to man, and there is the dignity of humanity as he is created in the image of God. Yet my friends, in, all the other parts of His creation there is no sin. No sin in the sweet birds or in anything of the works of God. Man alone is vile. Yet look! He says, "Unto you, O men! I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." She crieth in the highest places of the city,

"This is the city of Zion, and those who are brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit in their souls, for "He turneth man to destruction and sayeth, Return ye children of men." Those who have had the sentence of death in themselves, those who have been brought out of the world and are wandering in the wilderness in a solitary way and could find no city to dwell in, and yet who are being guided and are asking their way to Zion with their faces thither ward" -- they shall come and sing in the height of Zion.

'She crieth upon, the highest places of the city.' Well, *when faith is lifted up the highest, she sings of none but Christ*. But all the ways of the Lord in salvation are above to the wise. Solomon, in these Proverbs, tells us that the way of life is above to the wise. Therefore David prays, "Show me Thy ways, O Lords teach me Thy paths." They are altogether above human intelligence and human reason, and therefore we need a revelation of Christ, of the truth; we need Him to send out His light and His truth into our hearts, and to be led by that heavenly, vital, unctuous power of the truth to His holy hill and to His tabernacles.

'She crieth upon the highest places of the city.' Those who have the heaviest burden, my friends, need the greatest help. and this is the highest place of the city, where we read even of those who were dead in trespasses and sins, "but God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." When He thus sees a poor sinner come into the sanctuary with his mouth in the dust, then such are raised from the dust, lifted from the dunghill, and gathered among

the princes of His people and inhabit the throne of glory. Oh what a transformation this is! I thought I should never remember prosperity again, when I saw not my signs, everything had been in a mist and blurred; but I remember a few occasions when I have been favoured to sing in the height of Zion in the days of my spiritual youth, and by faith have been raised up as upon the wings of eagles, been unconscious of anybody else in the chapel. That is to be brought right into His tabernacles, to be given a vineyard in the wilderness; and this is one of the blessings of the church of God under the dispensation of the ministry.

‘She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple.’ Now this simplicity is a spiritual simplicity. Very beautiful it is. To my mind it is a singleness of eye. The opposite of this simplicity is duplicity, and a doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways. Berridge understood these simple folk. ‘Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.’ This simplicity, this sincerity of faith, is wrought in the heart by a sense of helplessness in self. Oh there is no ornamentation in the religion of one who has been reduced to dust and ashes in himself! There is a simplicity of truth. I think perhaps you will see this in the 9th of John illustrated as beautifully as anywhere, in that blind man. The simple, straight answers that he gave to questions. When the Lord Jesus found him cast out of the temple, the Lord said; "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Now, He did not say, "I should think I do believe on Him; He has opened my eyes." He simply said, "Who is He, Lord that I might believe on Him?" Simplicity! The same as the poor dear man with an afflicted son. The Lord said, "If thou believest, I can do all things." He said, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Simplicity! Not hypocrisy or duplicity. People that are simple are those that want something done. If you break your arm, you will not go with a lot of fine language to the doctor; but there will be simplicity because of experience.

‘Whoso is simple’ – sincere - and this simplicity is very gracious and is influential among the people of God, There are no manipulations, trying to command some special attention by ridiculous conduct. That is not simplicity. ‘Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.’ This simple man is one whom Christ has made a fool, that he may be wise. I have said before and believe that it is true, that the greatest scientist living, if he was called by divine grace, would be made a simple soul, would bow before the Lord and say, "Lord, I know nothing but what Thou dost teach me, I have nothing but what Thou dost give me, I am nothing but what Thou dost make me. Let him turn in hither, these simple ones who feel their ignorance. "Who by searching can find out God?" "The world by wisdom knew Him not." Well, let them turn in hither.

'As for him that wanteth understanding.' Paul says, "Let the Word of the Lord dwell in your heart richly in all wisdom," and "the entrance of Thy Word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." Oh this simplicity is very different from that simple one at the end of chapter: "A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple and knowing nothing." 'Whose is simple let him turn in hither.' The exact same words in a very different connection. And yet those simple people that are in the midst of this world that lieth in wickedness, and are taken captive by the devil at his will, they don't think they are simple. See them strutting about the earth in all their paint and lipstick. They don't think, they are simple; but they are. But oh this blessed simplicity of faith that views this provision in God's house; that sees there is wisdom for the ignorant, grace all-sufficient to save to the uttermost, a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, a change of raiment, a glorious robe of righteousness, to be obtained free, Oh the simple enter in! and yet this simple folk **do** understand. There is an understanding in their simplicity; and so we read: "Let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth Me." Why! some might feel that is the very opposite to being simple; but it goes well with it. That simplicity has this in it. 'David said, "One thing" -- there is simplicity - "have I desired of the Lord and that alone will I seek after."' And I believe there are some seeking souls here that understand the Lord, although if you should ask them they would bemoan their ignorance. But they understand Him in this degree, that He is all-sufficient to supply their needs. They understand as a hungry man understands food. They understand Him as a drowning man understands a lifeboat. They understand Him as a man exposed to a storm understands a shelter. Don't some of you understand the Lord like that? That is simplicity. 'Who so is simple let him turn in hither, As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled.' That is to set before this hungry, thirsty, repenting, coming sinner the whole provision of the Gospel, So Isaiah takes up the whole and says* 'To, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he- that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price". Oh may the Lord gather us in, and may He gather in those who love His name.

Amen.