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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Sermon preached by Mr. F. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,
On Sunday Evening 8th September 1963

"My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." Psalm 104, v.34.

David must have had a good heart; otherwise his heart could not indite a good matter or speak of things that he had made touching the King. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit. "A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit." is a simple Scripture declaration but very solemn to consider; and when you read of David and his meditations and how his heart was inditing a good matter concerning the King and look into our own cases and life and see things so very different there, it may cause you to have many fears and to join with Jeremiah and confess - "My heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Therefore it brings us of necessity to realise that great truth that the Lord taught Nicodemus - "Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again", - and only that new creature, that new heart wherein dwells living faith, can meditate - meditate upon things that are spiritual, things that are unseen and eternal.

This morning we just glanced at the works of God in creation which declared His eternal power and Godhead. A meditation upon those works, together with some apprehension of our complete dependence upon God's creation to maintain us in being and in His wonderful providence, will greatly humble us at His footstool.

Two things I have thought of, if they were really impressed upon the heart of man, would humble him before this infinite God. One is this - "In Him we live and move and have our being"; and secondly, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." To have these two facts impressed upon our hearts individually, we should understand what again Jeremiah says - "Let no man glory in man," and the blessedness of the portion of God's people - for "all things are yours" - and the apostle takes up the same thing - "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God," so that there is a meditation upon the Creator, which as sanctified, will be a great strength and encouragement as you pass through this world, and give you to sing with understanding, "With heaven and earth at His command, He waits to answer prayer" and as our souls may be confirmed to rise a little higher and say -

*He that hath made my heaven secure
Will here all good provide;
While He is rich, I can't be poor;
What can I want beside? (Gadsby's 247)*

These are meditations and they are the secrets of the Lord. These things are hidden from the wise and prudent but are revealed in our experience.

We concluded this morning after meditation upon His Person, of the blessedness, the glory of the Person of Christ - it grows in my estimation. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect!" He is an everlasting rock, immutable, omnipotent. The gates of hell shall never prevail against it. They

attempted to; Satan attempted to overthrow Him in temptations. He was a tried stone. God tried Him in His holy law. His people tried Him, He was a tried stone, a tested stone; and "unto you therefore which believe, He is precious." Precious in consideration of His eternal Person;- He in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and that is a point for meditation. All the divine perfections of Jehovah dwelt in God's incarnate Son, and when we come to consider this - and yet at the same time He was made flesh, made flesh that it might be possible for Him to become a substitute, a mediator for His people. All that He did; and partook of the virtues of those divine perfections of which He was full, so it makes a great salvation and you will feel to need it. You will realise that in this divine power is the strength of the everlasting arms that are underneath and that this eternal God is our refuge and strength.

Now don't you feel to need such a one both with respect to your soul's salvation and with respect to your journey, your pathway through this life. O the oppositions, the contradictions, the enemies, the anxieties, the calamities, the disappointments and if we had not this Captain of Salvation my friends, O what should we do, because under divine teaching we lose all our natural strength. It will not reach our souls, there is nothing here that can support a pilgrim in the wilderness; all wisdom, power, strength, and grace must descend from heaven.

We concluded this morning by meditation upon His great office as a High Priest, and this seems to me to include redemption work. He offered Himself without spot unto God. I would again remind you of the importance upon every point of the blessed gospel; to consider whether you are joined unto the Lord in the gospel. As for instance, as faith may view Him as a great High Priest upon Calvary, for there was that offering without spot. In His lips was never any guile, a sinless, holy, perfect life. Yet he offered Himself a spotless, sinless sacrifice and His eternal Person was in that sacrifice. Therefore, because He is eternal He had an unchanging Priesthood and needed only to make one sacrifice, and by one sacrifice He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. This shows the blessedness of His eternal Person, that everything He is and all that He did is immutable and eternal.

O my friends, is your case such that you need such a Saviour? I would again remind you that everything was accomplished for this one great object, the removal of sin from the church. My meditation of Him as a great High Priest shall be sweet. Perhaps you, in your meditation upon that, and as it affects your soul's salvation have found your heart drawn out toward Him in love by that words - Himself, He gave, he offered Himself. If He offered the whole world it would have been utterly contemned, utterly useless, utterly inadequate; nothing less than to offer Himself without spot unto God. If the Holy Ghost shows you your interest in that great sacrifice you will need eternity to thank Him.

'My meditation of Him shall be sweet.' Meditation of His resurrection. Why, you have a meditation of his resurrection in that beautiful chapter to the Corinthians - and what a solemn thing it is to deny the resurrection. "If the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen." O but says Paul, "Now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept." O the blessedness and importance of a union with Christ! For if we believe that Christ died and rose again - "Even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." O sacred union! In union with Him from the very manger to the Cross. For he was a substitute for His people the moment He was born. He was a substitute for them the whole of

His life. He was a substitute for them when He was made a curse. A substitute when He took that cup filled with the curse of God, a substitute for them when He died and then in union with Him when He rose. 'My meditation of Him shall be sweet.' This is an amazing wonder, that His people are made complete in Him. There are two 'completenesses;' first the whole of mankind are complete in the ruin of the fall. That completeness is absolute. Nothing can be added to the ruin, the wreckage that sin has made of the human race, so complete and absolute is that ruin that it is manifested in death and corruption. But there is another completeness which is as absolute and that is the completeness of His people in Christ Jesus. Complete in Him; and if in Him then all that He did He did for you. 'My meditation of Him shall be sweet.'

We may consider too the characters that He assumed as for instance, He is the great Shepherd of the sheep. How David meditated upon this. The Lord Jehovah, infinite, omnipotent, immutable, that "Lord is my shepherd, I shall not - I cannot - want." O the comfort of it, beautifully referred to by Ezekiel as you know in that 34th chapter, how that He sees out His own sheep in the cloudy and dark day and lie feeds them a good pasture upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers.

A shepherd's duty, a shepherd's office is very extensive. He is responsible to take care of the sheep, to feed them, to protect them and to lead them. O my friends, have we any evidence that we are one of Christ's sheep? What was the evidence that He gave "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. A stranger will they not follow for they know not the voice of strangers." Have you ever heard do you know the Shepherd's voice? Has the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures or through the preaching of the gospel ever given you to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus? Has He made Himself so precious to you that you sat in a pew; your meditation of Him has been sweet in the need of Him, in the desire after Him, and you have inwardly sung, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds"? It is a great thing to hear His voice. He speaks in the promises; He speaks in His invitations, Has He ever spoken to you? If He has, it is an evidence that you are His. He speaks when His people are in distress, He says this - "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God; I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Have you ever heard that? Has he ever said this to you - "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest."? Has He ever said this to you when you have been far off and at your wits end and have not known what to do - "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else"? Has He ever said this to you - "Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."? He speaks in the scriptures. Have you ever spoken to Him? Perhaps in the language of what we read - "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Have you ever spoken to Him and prayed that He would regard the prayer of the destitute, and have you spoken to Him, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? Because the two things go together. What we are speaking upon at the moment is Himself as a shepherd, and evidences of being His sheep. I can say this, I feel warranted to say it, that if ever you have spoken to the Lord by the Holy Spirit in faith, He must have of necessity first spoken to you. My mediation of Him, as a shepherd, shall be sweet.

And my meditation of Him as a refuge. We said this morning that spiritual meditation connects with the thing upon which you meditate in your experience of need and therefore, if He is our refuge and strength, we must of necessity be weak in ourselves and be pursued and exposed and it is these

things that are so contradictory which enhance the wisdom and goodness and grace of God in the gospel. 'My meditation of Him shall be sweet.'

Again a meditation of His divine power. A special kind of power, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. As He is God nothing can be given to Him, for He is God equal to God Himself, but as a Mediator He received gifts and this gift of divine power is given to Him to communicate to His people. The fullness of Christ as Mediator is not the same thing as His infinite fullness as God. The fullness that dwells in Him bodily is to be embodied in the experience and for the salvation of His people. He empties Himself. He receives nothing that He needs for Himself, but power, power belongeth unto God. Well, now, what a meditation this is for weak people, people who can in no wise lift up themselves. O what a blessing and comfort it was to the man that fell among thieves and was wounded and half-dead when this good Samaritan came to him! He communicates this power to a sinner's heart, gives him power to pray, power to believe, power to confess his sins.

Why my friends, we must find everything in and receive everything from this glorious eternal fountain. 'My meditation of Him shall be sweet.'

Well then, there is a meditation of Him in the Church. He is the Head of the Church. -The Church is His body. The Church is His bride. O how sacred this is! It may be that some of you as you have been gathered together, as I believe many are by the Holy Spirit, with your various exercises of soul, come in as into a sanctuary, it may be weary, tempted, oppressed, distressed, and yet you come into the sanctuary as did Asaph; he left his burdens behind. He had renewed a right spirit within him and when he came out he said - "Whom, have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

The gathering together of the people in a Church state is very blessed. Blessed because it is a divine institution; and we read just now, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." O it is a great thing to have any real evidence of the presence of the Lord among His people! To have a people who are gathered together by the inward call, the inward work of the Holy Ghost. It is indeed! and this constitutes Zion. It is impossible that every congregation who have a religious service should be the body of Christ. My friends, the Holy Spirit leads His people about in their unregeneracy, brings them to realise what they are in themselves, gives them to feel their need of a refuge and hiding place; reaches them what this world is in all its vanity and that the fashion of this world passes away, that there is nothing abiding, that there is no abiding city here; and when this is impressed upon a sinners heart as a real truth together with his state as a ruined sinner, in a ruined world, and then he is brought to seek a city out of sight and begins to feel his way, to feel after God, the Lord leads that sinner about and brings him to Zion to sit under the proclamation of the glorious gospel, which contains in it every ingredient of salvation which can make a poor sinner eternally blessed; brings him to find a righteousness to full perfection. O it is great to be brought to Zion! The secret of the Word of God and meditation in the House of God is very sacred. There is nothing like it.

There are things that we should think about in this life. Our young people in their studies should be diligent and should seek their success so far as it is necessary for them in this life. We have our families and our business which need our natural mind and attention; but O it is different in its

nature when you come to the house of God and there you partake of that provision that He has promised to bless! Has it not gathered up your affections from time to time and set them upon things above? My meditation of Him in the Church shall be sweet. Sweet that there is one place in this sin-cursed earth where He dwells, different from how He dwells universally in his omnipresence. It is a special presence in the Church. His presence in the Church makes effectual His divine power to save, to direct. It is the exercise of His infinite wisdom, His saving invincible grace, and as He has chosen Zion for His habitation to dwell there for ever, so every individual that makes up Zion has in possession the same blessings. Whatever is said of Zion is said to all His people. You take that wonderful word concerning Zion: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it for His habitation" - a great thing if the blessed Spirit should go along the pews and stop at some anxious seeking soul and say; "I have chosen this sinner, I have desired him for my habitation;" for He dwells in the hearts of them that are poor and humble and tremble at His word. "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell."

A sacred place Zion; and He says this, and it is true of every individual that belongs to Him, 'this heart is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.' Therefore, all the streams from the river of God flow to the Church, all the streams of life and grace and mercy and divine pardon and redemption and sanctification flow to the church of God. Sacred meditation!

We did just speak a few feeble things about it latterly. "Be thou my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort." The strength of the habitation being the Lord Jesus Himself, or the church of God which is His habitation, or heaven itself, the strength of it in Christ Jesus; and O you will feel that strength at times and say

*The gospel bears my spirit up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood. (Gadsby's 83)*

Well, what do you think of these things? O the Lord has provided a full and an eternal portion for His people here - and it will issue in heaven itself, that inheritance reserved in heaven for you that are kept by the power of God and it is no other power that can keep a sinner, keep him safe through this waste howling wilderness. It is an inheritance incorruptible not only incorruptible but undefiled and that fadeth not away. There is nothing in the things of God that can fade. There is nothing in the gospel that can decay. All, all is imperishable and therefore those who have union to the Lord Jesus Christ are imperishable. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die believest thou this?" O, what a great thing it is to be a believer by the teaching of the Spirit!

Well we might just pause and repeat what we said this morning before we come to a conclusion. "Is it anything to you, all ye that pass by?" What we attempt to say in our poor way about the glorious Person and the gospel, is it anything to us? Does it mean anything to us? O to be able to say honestly,

Thou, O Christ, art all I want! (Gadsby's 303)

It is a tremendous thing to say, and it means this -

*I could from all things parted be,
But never, never, Lord from Thee. (Gadsby's 1105)*

You need to say that slowly; if we were put to the test.

'My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Will rejoice in Him. There is something mutual about this rejoicing and gladness. In the 31st verse we read, "The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works. Rejoice in the habitable part of his earth."

I will be glad in the Lord, and there is enough in Him to rejoice in. You will be glad that He is the Lord. You will rejoice in Him as your King; you will long for Him to reign over you. There were those that sent a message after Him saying "We will not have this man to reign over us." You would not send that message.

*What was there in us to merit esteem?
Or give the Creator delight?*

Nothing! O may the Lord reveal Himself to us that we may go out of self and find Him to be our everlasting all!

Amen.