

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden on Sunday morning, 6th March 1966, at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton.

"Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore.
Remember His marvellous works that He hath done; His
wonders, and the judgements of His mouth".

Psalm 105 v 4 & 5.

If by faith we are able to follow this gracious direction, we should find the answer to the prayer we sometimes sing,

"Out of self to Jesus lead,
For and in us intercede,
Guide us down to death and there
Banish all our guilt and fear".

"Seek the Lord and His strength". We need to be constantly reminded that real religion is not automatic, a free-will religion is, take the Lord at His word and if it says "Seek the Lord and His strength", well, just do it. But we shall receive instruction by the Holy Spirit in a sense of our utter helplessness. We sing truths which we shall only really know as we are brought to experience them. Very simple in their language,

"No help in self I find,
And yet have sought it well,
The native treasure of my mind
Is sin, and death, and hell".

Nothing else,

Do you believe it? Have you proved it? "Seek the Lord and His strength". And throughout this Psalm we are given the ground of hope, the ground of boldness, the ground upon which we may seek Him, and the 5th verse sums this up, "Remember His marvellous works that He hath done; His wonders and the judgements of His mouth", and the remainder of that Psalm speaks of His wonderful works, His works of old, and that is set before us as an encouragement to seek the Lord.

There are three purposes to my mind in the text. There is to seek the Lord for Himself, because He is the Lord, "Seek the Lord". "Seek His strength, seek His face evermore", and Amos gives us another purpose for seeking Him; "Seek the Lord and ye shall live", so that the direction here carries us above, through and beyond everything of a natural kind, and it gives faith the right direction. "Seek the Lord and His strength". But before we seek the Lord we must have a living faith, and we must have some knowledge of Him Whom we seek, and we will have also, some reason for seeking Him. There are three things there, and we may look within and see whether we have those three things in experience. Have we a need of Him? Do we know Him? If we have no need of the Lord we shall never seek Him. Men, naturally, are independent of Him, or at least they ignorantly think they are, but no man is independent of God, a great truth, a great truth to really know personally. O the darkness of ignorance of God! And where there is ignorance of God there is ignorance of ourselves; and at the same time where there is a knowledge of God there must be a knowledge of ourselves.

"Seek the Lord". Seek the Lord because He is the Lord, because His name is above every name, because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Seek Him because of His divine sovereignty; and as you seek Him and faith is fixed upon God in Christ there will be a connexion between what you are and what He is in the all sufficiency of His fulness, and how this at times will draw out the soul in prayer. Don't you feel it? One great reason that you seek the Lord by faith is because He is the Lord, and another reason is, by divine teaching you

are brought to realise that your state and condition is such that none but the Lord can help you or supply your needs, or save your soul and therefore, He will increase as the Holy Spirit manifests His all sufficiency, His omnipotent power, His sanctifying saving grace, His justifying righteousness; and all those spiritual blessings will be so suitable and fit to the opposite that is in you, and in your experience you will "Seek the Lord".

In the 27th Psalm there is this exhortation. "When Thou saidst seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face Lord will I seek, hide not Thy face far from me". You will realise that there is a mysterious communication between heaven and the soul, and in all true experience there is a reciprocation. When the Lord gives such a direction and exhortation as this the Holy Ghost works in the heart a response, a kind of spiritual echo. "When Thou saidst seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee Thy face Lord will I seek". It is a mercy to find the Spirit's influence in your heart responding to the exhortations and instructions in the Word of God.

"Seek the Lord". And we shall seek Him for some definite thing, and you will find a test as to whether you seek Him spiritually, as to whether those definite things are in your heart whilst you seek Him. As for instance, you will be brought to feel in yourself to sink, "to sink in deep mire where there is no standing". That is true with respect to our depraved and fallen nature. There is no foundation in self. There is in a false religion, but it is a false foundation and it will be swept away. There is a sense in which it is the Holy Spirit's work and a gracious experience to sink in deep mire where there is no standing, I am sure there is. I know what it is; and if there is no foundation laid in your poor soul you will sink and sink lower than the grave, feeling this, when the Holy Ghost reveals the rock the Rock of ages, you will seek the Lord for a foundation, you will confess that your nature is broken down and ruined, and you will seek Him to be your foundation, and know the truth, not because you read it in the Bible only, but know the truth for yourself, "That other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Christ Jesus", and you will seek Him for this, seek to the Lord to lay Christ in your heart the foundation of your salvation, the foundation of your hope, the foundation of your experience.

"Seek the Lord". You will seek Him too for wisdom, when you seek Him you will run into His name, "And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee", and when you see the name of the Lord in the Scriptures, O how suitable, and how attractive it is! "His name shall be called Wonderful", and you will seek Him, run into that name, plead that name. It is in the 5th verse, "Remember His marvellous works" when you are seeking Him and you will need wonders wrought, wonders of grace, miracles of grace wrought in your soul. You will need wonders wrought for you in providence. "Seek the Lord," seek Him for what He is, Counsellor. Who needs counsel? not those who have that wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, devilish. Not those who are worldly prudent and wise, that know their way about. They are wise to manipulate their way past many troubles, they are wise enough, they know their way to wealth and fame and honour, they don't need a counsellor, they don't seek the Lord, But one who is brought to know that their wisdom is foolishness relative to the things of God - and not only so but the Lord will bring you into such tight corners in providence as that you will be nonplussed, and then you seek Him to be your counsellor and your guide.

"Seek the Lord". There is everything to seek Him for and if we have that precious faith and live by faith we shall realise that we cannot move without seeking Him. It is the very nature of prayer to go out of self unto Christ; and He will bring you into such positions both spiritually in your souls, and in the pathway of providence, that we shall be shut up to Him. "They fell down and there was none to help". The great difficulty is my friends when through our legality and independence of God we attempt to carry our own burdens,

and they bow us down and we are neither up nor down, but the Lord will see to it that we will fall down and there is none to help, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses".

"Seek the Lord". And this will be repeated in your heart by the Spirit and you will be led into such extremities as the purpose of God will be to try your faith. "That the trial of your faith which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth". The whole life of a pilgrim is a life of trial. Very mysterious that that good King Hezekiah, as the Lord had lengthened his life and had remembered him, was gracious unto him, yet the Lord left him to try him and he proved his insufficiency. He was lifted up with pride and sent for the Princes of Babylon to come and see his treasures and his mansion. Therefore, it is a mercy for the Lord to take that trouble so as that we shall constantly seek the Lord.

"Seek the Lord, too, for direction". The Lord says, and He will let us know it, "Ye are not your own", and it is a great mercy if He makes that known to us, because we must belong to somebody. It is a very solemn thing if we belong to ourselves, if we are our own, if we attempt to make our own way, to be independent of God is very solemn, it will be when the last day comes. But seek the Lord for direction. "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee". "Seek the Lord and His strength". We shall need strength. Paul exhorted Timothy, "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus". "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand". We need strength, spiritual strength. If we are strong naturally we are really weak, we are weak people. It is a mercy to really see things as they are. They are breaking down that substantial building up the road; very substantial building but there is an evidence of all things here below, a fire gutted it, and now it must be reduced to rubble. There is nothing better than that in this world, it will all come to it, this Chapel is scheduled for demolition, so is the world. Therefore, there is nothing here we can seek. We can derive no strength from anything or anybody in this world.

"Seek the Lord and His strength". His strength, spiritual strength. The difficulty is to nature that this strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore if the Lord is to be our strength we shall be brought to weakness in ourselves, and that is a painful thing. What would you be if you could? I should be wise and strong and independent if I could, it looks very attractive to nature, it was to Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" We all say the same naturally, but "Seek the Lord, and His strength". He can reduce people to utter weakness in every sense. He can reduce a strong man to infirmity. And we read that a rich man's wealth is his strong city, but the Lord can break down that strong city and cause his riches to take wings and to fly away; and if a man has a natural religion, the religion of a Pharisee, he is strong, strong in himself, strong in self confidence, but the Lord can break it down, "That no flesh should glory in His presence" and what a mercy it is to be brought down, broken down. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it and will give it to Him whose right it is". It is a mercy to be overturned and overturned. The flesh will shrink from it, but what a mercy if through covenant grace and love, if we are the Lord's, if we are His right. The devil has no right to mankind, His authority is a usurped authority, but if we belong to the Lord we are His right, and He will come and disarm the strong man armed in the castle of the heart and overturn and overturn and overturn it and give it to Him whose right it is. And in this overturning it will discover our own foundation to the very neck and sweep away the refuges of lies and lay us prostrate in the dust before Him.

"Seek the Lord and His strength" and we shall need it. We have a type of it in David going forth to meet Goliath. Saul's armour

was of no use to him. One would have thought well, that would have been just the thing to meet that Goliath, but David was taught, he put it off and he went in the name of the God of Israel. "Seek the Lord and His strength". You will need strength to overcome enemies within. Fallen nature, the lust of the flesh, the mighty power of unbelief and atheism, carnality, pride. Who can overcome and subdue these things but God Himself? "Seek the Lord and His strength". Power belongeth unto God. Job learned that, he learned it through painful experience, but it is a mercy to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

We need strength against our enemies, we need the strength of faith to pray. We need strength to hold on our way. "He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved". O we need enduring strength, and we have nothing that endures in ourselves; and I like this word "Remember" in the 5th verse. As much as to say, "Seek the Lord and His strength and remember His marvellous works that He hath done" - that will help to strengthen and fortify your mind, and not only remember His marvellous works, but He hath remembered His covenant for ever. The Lord remembers His covenant, ever mindful of His covenant, His covenant love, His immutable purposes which nothing can frustrate.

"Remember His marvellous works that He hath done" as you seek the Lord and His strength. "Seek His face evermore". To seek His face is to seek His favour. You will not be satisfied with a representative, you will need to see the Lord Himself. It is good that the Lord has sent His messengers, his ambassadors, but it is not them who can do you good, but He Who has commissioned them to bring good tidings of peace, to say unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth". To seek His face is to seek His favour, to pray with David, "Remember me, O Lord with the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people, visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen".

"Seek His face". That is seek communion with Him when you go to the throne of grace. The opposite is this, when the Lord hides His face. True, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour", and therefore, Job, he could not be satisfied unless he came even to His seat, and when you seek the face of the Lord you seek the light of His countenance. When the Lord causes His face to shine that shining is the light of His countenance, the light of the living. It is the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams. Therefore, said the church in the 80th Psalm, "Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved". You will be sensible of this at times as you seek the Lord and His strength under a sense of your deep needs, and it is His countenance. It is for the Lord to be for you, to save you. In His countenance, in His face, are His lips, a word from the Lord. O would not some of you be thankful to have a word from the Lord Himself? You look at those that have sought Him and His strength in the Scriptures. The woman with the afflicted daughter, she sought the Lord, there was none other that could deliver her. She sought His face, that is His favour, and she obtained it.

Jabez, he sought the Lord and no other blessing than a spiritual blessing could satisfy him, "O that Thou wouldest bless me indeed". He answered his prayer. "Seek His face evermore". The church said, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His lips". Has the Lord ever kissed you with one word, with one text, with one verse of the Scriptures and pressed into your heart a sweet promise, a warm promise upon your heart by which He has kissed you with the kisses of His lips? Seek His face. His eyes. O a look from the Lord! It overcame Peter, it broke his heart, it brought him to repentance and godly sorrow. "Look upon me as Thou usest to do those that fear thy name". "Seek His face". His divine favour. His ears are in His face. "Incline Thine ear unto me, hear my cry for I am brought very low". "Seek His face", O what a precious Christ He is!

Do you sometimes feel drawn to Him ? Can you sometimes feel there is none other that can answer your hard questions ? Only He, and His divine wisdom and sovereignty can direct you safely on your way ? And have you been made willing ? "He shall choose our inheritance for us". So it is a direction to seek the Lord and for the Lord Himself to become the portion of your soul. You take it this way. There was Martha and Mary, and Jesus loved Martha, He put her first when He said that, He did not put her last. "The Lord loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus". Martha was cumbered about with much serving, she was troubled and careful about many things, well, the Lord put over those many things against one thing, "One thing is needful" and seek it. If you seek the Lord and find Him you find everything. I know the world looks full - and so it is, it is full of evil, and we may say and that truthfully and thankfully, it is full of the blessings of God in His kind providence and in His wonderful creation, it is full, but those things cannot reach the soul and you will need that which shall never be dissolved and that kingdom which is not of this world.

"Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore".
"Remember His marvellous works that He hath done"; and remember too, remember that He is the same. O I have been thankful, and together with a friend we mentioned it I think yesterday, the works of God in creation are a great encouragement to faith. The fashions of this world are changing, modernism bringing everything up to date, but what is it ? The more advanced education is the more crime. O what dimness, darkness and anguish is in this poor world and the works of man, but look at the works of God, they have not altered. They are exactly the same as when they were created, there is no confusion. There needs to be no revision and it sets forth the immutable God. "Remember His marvellous works that He hath done, His wonders and the judgements of His mouth". Now to my mind that 5th verse is laid down for an encouragement and a ground upon which poor helpless dependent sinners may seek the Lord. He is seekable, He is findable and I think it was last Wednesday we mentioned it; "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors, for whosoever findeth me, findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord". There is the promise to those that seek Him, and O how empty will everything else appear when one's faith is fixed upon the Son of God incarnate, and you remember His marvellous works.

What an encouragement that was to Asaph in the 77th Psalm, when he feared that the Lord's mercy was clean gone for ever and that He would be favourable no more, but faith springs up, living faith, "I said, this is mine infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High", I will remember that. O what a sufficiency there is in Christ! Do you need Him ? Do you need His great salvation ? Do you need Him as your Mediator ? Do you need Him as your Advocate above ? Do you need Him as your great High Priest ? Do you need His sin-atoning blood and sacrifice ? Do you need Him to become to you the Way, the Truth and the Life ? Well, seek Him. Because all that He is and all that He became and all the work that He accomplished is for none other but for the chief of sinners, the chief of sinners. It is my only hope.

"Remember His marvellous works that He hath done and the judgements of His mouth".

"Wonders of grace to God belong"

and His judgements are in the earth. Not only His threatened judgements upon sin and upon sinners, but His judgements which represent His wisdom, His methods. He is a God of judgement and "Blessed are all they that wait for Him".

Well then, just look at the text, and look at your souls, look

at your circumstances, look at your pathway and then seek grace to walk in this direction. Of course, if you do not need Him, you do not know Him and you do not know yourself, but if you know Him and you are in difficulties, if we have internal conflicts, if you are much in darkness and wonder where the scene will end, if you are in difficulties in the pathway through the wilderness, then, "Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore, and remember His marvellous works that He hath done, His wonders, and the judgements of His mouth".

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).