

1111
LaG692

1111

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton
Sunday morning, 3rd April 1966.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the
righteous do ?".

Psalm 11. v.3.

When Adam fell the foundations were destroyed. As the Lord created man he was created upon a foundation and that foundation was the perfection of His creation. Created in sinless innocence. Created with a capacity to know the will of God, to receive from God a revelation of His will and His purposes. He was completely happy. When he fell there was no foundation left, and all the human race fell in him, and ever since that there has been a sinking, sinking into deep mire where there is no standing. Do we know it? Do we know it for ourselves? It is solemn teaching, really by the Spirit, to look at yourself and to know that you are in complete ruin, and feel that sinking into utter despair, but it is good teaching. Self-despair is where a good hope through grace begins, but as we see the world, especially in this day and also view ourselves as we have hinted, the very word, the very sound of a foundation is wonderful.

Indeed naturally with respect to creation, in the 104th Psalm we read that the Lord has laid the foundations of the earth, and those foundations are the laws of nature and they are God's laws in creation. If they could be destroyed the world would be instantly in a state of confusion and destruction, and that is no small consideration. "The pillars of the earth are the Lord's", and it does put man - or should put him in his right place. We see these foundations of the earth from day to day in a perfection which is inexpressible. If the time of the rising and setting of the sun could alter in the matter of a split second, the whole world would soon be in confusion. It is no small thing, to my mind, to observe the sovereignty and Lordship of the Creator in His works. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those that have pleasure therein". And the very view of those mighty works and the foundations of this earth should deeply humble us, and faith adores the majesty of the Creator. Now if this foundation were destroyed, what could men generally do? It is sometimes a comfort when you see men riding over your head; the great men of this world, strutting about as though they created the world themselves. To view men just as they are, their breath is in their nostrils, and then to view the infinite and eternal God in all His work, it will give us to cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, but we just mention those foundations of the earth because they are not small, but the foundations referred to more particularly in the text are the foundations of salvation.

"If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" Well, they can never be destroyed. Why then does the Scripture suggest the destruction of the foundations? for this reason, because the gates of hell will make an attempt to the destruction of these foundations, and look at the gates of hell today. The papacy and modern religionists, the terrible fraternising with the papacy of our Archbishop, there is an attempt to destroy the foundations, and the first foundation we would name is the Scriptures. If this foundation is destroyed, what have we left? and the firmness of this foundation is divine inspiration, that is what gives to the Scriptures its eternity and its authority. It was not left even to good and gracious men to write their feelings, every word of God is pure, purified seven times. Every word of it is given by inspiration of God and therefore, it is infallible. But O, what attempts there are to destroy this foundation! That beautiful act of creation to which we have referred, what attempts there are to prove that the beautiful 1st chapter of Genesis is a myth. Why, faith sees the glory of God in it, and it is stamped with His sovereignty and immutability. There is no confusion in the works of God, they manifest His undisturbed affairs, and His providence, every leaf, "Each opening leaf and every

stroke fulfils some deep design". If the foundation of the Scripture is destroyed what can the righteous do? There is nothing else, no other foundation. What could we know if we were not given the Scriptures? It is the second best gift to the Son of God, indeed, "The written and the incarnate Word, in all things are the same". What should we know, even of the world itself? What should we know of man? What should we know with respect to salvation?

Then there are the exceeding great and precious promises and how the Word of God in its construction does set the life, the circumstances, the inward conflicts, the condition of self-destroyed sinners and their pathway through the wilderness world? If the Word of God could be destroyed, what would the righteous do? Have you ever been thankful for divine inspiration? It makes every word of the Scriptures infallible, every promise must be fulfilled. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? and the foundation that the Word of God reveals is God's eternal, incarnate Son. This is the Foundation laid in Zion. What a solemn thing it is to be among those who have made a covenant with death, and are in agreement with hell, and who deceive themselves and say, "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves!" Now this is just the condition of the world that lieth in wickedness, and it is just the condition of the Archbishop of Canterbury and all those apostate bishops. He has made lies his refuge and under falsehood he tries to hide himself; but the Lord says. "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, your agreement with hell shall not stand, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it", but He does not leave it there, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold I lay in Zion a foundation Stone". Notwithstanding all that is going on in the world, notwithstanding all the shaking and all the confusion and chaos, yet God has laid in Zion for a foundation Stone, and He lays that same foundation in the hearts of His people, but there is an attempt to destroy this foundation, the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is denied by modern scholars. O if they had a sight of what they are it would kill their pride. They attempt to deny the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus, if that foundation is destroyed there is nothing left, everything falls to pieces. Some of you have felt that, it makes the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ exceedingly precious. He is the eternal God, the eternal Son. He was not made a Son by incarnation, He was set up from everlasting or ever the earth was. This will effect the whole of your experience. It is the foundation of hope, the foundation of salvation, and if that foundation of the incarnation of God's dear Son and His virgin birth falls, there is nothing left; and the knowledge of that truth will be laid in your heart as a foundation. It will be connected with your experience. I believe that, I come exceedingly short, but I believe that that truth of God's eternal Son incarnate has been laid in my very heart. If I did not believe that, I should believe nothing, for nothing else would be of any use at all.

It is very solemn that men should be left to such delusion, religious men who attempt to destroy the very foundation of vital religion and godliness, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The death of Christ is a foundation, His work. The law must be honoured, the glory and holiness of God must be vindicated, and therefore salvation is a work, creation was a direct act of naked omnipotence, God said, and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast, but salvation was not effected as was creation. Salvation is a work, a mighty work, and therefore the first foundation we have mentioned is in the Person of God's incarnate Son, and there is the foundation of His finished work. His work would have no value, no validity, no virtue, except that it derives that virtue and authority from the Person of the Son of God Himself. And when you come to consider that the Lord Jesus in all that He became and in all the completeness of His finished work was a substitute for every one of His people, what a foundation He is and what a foundation He laid in accomplishing that work! What a foundation is His perfect obedience to the law, so perfect that He went to the end

of the law for righteousness, to the very end of it, nothing of the law can ever be forfeited, He rendered unto the law perfect obedience and that obedience is set over for His people. And then the death of Christ is a foundation. His death was voluntary. If His death had been of necessity it would have been no foundation, because it would have proved Him to be a sinner. It is a great point and an encouragement to faith that whereas God can know no necessity of any kind at all because of Who He is, yet in love to His people the Lord Jesus laid Himself, voluntarily under a necessity in the covenant of grace to save them, and that is a foundation, and the last demand of the law was death, it is the wages of sin, and the Lord Jesus as a surety for His people undertook to pay that debt. Therefore, says Paul, "Therefore we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh", but the Lord Jesus paid the debt of His people in His life. He rendered to the law everything that it demanded. He paid the mighty sum, but the last payment was death. "The wages of sin is death" and the Lord Jesus paid those wages.

The nature of His death is beautiful. His life could not be taken away from Him; "I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again". And therefore, the death of Christ was the death of deaths. If we have union with the Lord Jesus we were in union with Him from the manger to the cross. In union with Him in the tomb and when He arose. These are foundation truths, and if they are removed, what can the righteous do? Have you ever felt to be built upon these foundations? Have you ever felt your need of it? been enabled to say with good Mote,

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness" ?

It is a good religion, it will hold our souls when we can hold nothing. Very solemn to come to the end and find that we have no foundation, no resting place. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a foundation. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption". If the Lord Jesus had not been raised from the dead it would have been very solemn. I could not express the solemnity of it; But the glory, the beauty, the infallibility of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is beautifully described, as you know, in the Corinthians, and you see the union between His people and the resurrection. I feel it is some of the strongest language in the Bible. "If there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. We are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, Whom He raised not up if so be that the dead rise not"... with what majesty Paul declares.. "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead". What a foundation that is! what a foundation for hope! The Resurrection of Christ declared Him to be what He was. It declared that the great transaction of salvation was finished, it declared that He was justified in the Spirit; it declared Him to be acceptable to the law. Acceptable to God, and in His resurrection His people are accepted in the Beloved.

We read these blessed doctrines in the Word of God, but my friends they must be accomplished in our personal experience. These things make up salvation. But these are the foundations of the apostles and prophets, the foundation of the doctrines of the Gospel, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. What a solemn thing it is then to be left to delusion, to believe a lie. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" When the Lord Jesus died He sealed the covenant of grace with His precious blood. When He rose from the dead He brought into effect all the benefits of the covenant of grace. If Christ had never risen from the dead there would be no covenant blessings bestowed upon His people. We little realise my friends in our experience

how that it all flows from the high decrees of heaven. For we might well and should include the covenant of grace as a foundation that can never be moved. If the foundation of the covenant of grace should be removed, what can the righteous do? A covenant is an undertaking, an obligation, a promise, and Jehovah entered into that covenant between the glorious Trinity. When man was created it was a bi-lateral covenant, a covenant that was entered into between God and man, there were conditions; but the covenant of grace has no conditions, and it is unalterable, it is ordered in all things and sure, and so, in the covenant was laid the foundation of the salvation of His people. In the covenant of grace there was the electing love of the Father, this can never be moved. In Him there is no shadow of turning, no variableness. If His love could alter, if His love was not an everlasting love, if His love was not immutable, what could the righteous do?

How are we then to account for the stability of these foundations? It is to be found in the infinite and eternal Being of God Himself, and that foundation can never be moved, and in that covenant of grace there is this foundation laid, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" and that cannot be moved. The Lord confirmed this when He said, "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," for this is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all those whom Thou hast given Me, I should lose nothing". The foundation stands sure. Stands sure throughout the whole of time and the Lord will make no mistakes. O these blessed foundations! And yet they are attacked. The gates of hell rise up against them. The blessed covenant, everything was laid there. The Lord Jesus was set up there, He was chosen as the Father's first elect. He was chosen there to have been the Redeemer, the Mediator, the Surety, the Substitute. He was laid there in the covenant of grace. The church of God was given to Him. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me".

If these foundations were removed, what else is there? everything would fall to pieces, and there may be a response in some of your poor hearts, which says, I am sure if those foundations were removed I have got nothing else to rest upon, nothing at all. It is very solemn, very sad to see the multitudes to be completely ignorant of this God. It does make that question important, have we really, whatever else we may feel to lack in knowledge, have we really been brought to that point that we have no salvation in ourselves, but we deeply need one? If you were to speak to a man of the world and tell him he needs a foundation, he would wonder whatever you were talking about; whatever is the matter, I have got good health and am strong, I am blessed in this world, what more do I want? What a mercy it is to be broken down, to have our own foundation discovered to the very neck. For it is a Scripture that I believe in my experience I sadly know, it is that in the 69th Psalm, "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing", and a superficial religion will be of no use then. You will begin to dig very deep and yet in simplicity, there is a beautiful and urgent sincerity and simplicity in religion, it will be just this, "Give me Christ, or else I die". It is one or the other, it is Christ or death, nothing between the two and it is surprising how much religion there is that will attempt to find something between, some neutral ground, some religion which would not be too much like the world, but not too much like Christ, compromise.

O the Lord will bring us to definite points, you may depend upon it, bring us to consider at times what reality is. Sin will be a reality to us, not a theory. Death will be a reality, and eternity, and we shall need something real, real, to lay beneath our sinking souls, and blessed be God, there is a Rock, an everlasting Rock. I feel more and more to need - and you will constantly flee for refuge to that hope set before you in the Gospel. "But if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?". The righteous can do nothing because if these foundations have gone, they are gone, but the religious

world can do plenty; they have got substitutes, alternatives. A solemn thing to be left with. When the Lord brings a man face to face with what he is and Who God is, and eternity, it will kill that theory of arminianism and free-will. It is an impossible error to a soul when once the Holy Ghost has declared the sentence of death in our conscience, in our souls. No place for free-will, anymore than there is a man shut up in a prison and condemned to die. It is not a question of free-will, he will need free grace, unmerited mercy; and what a foundation that is ! sovereign grace, a foundation this, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!" Some of these declarations of the Gospel are a joyful sound to sinners.

Another foundation is, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". There will be times when you can rest in Him. When you can rest on this foundation. Rest upon divine immutability and faithfulness of God. I do pray that the Lord will make these foundation truths to be a support and comfort to His dear people. They are brought into conditions to greatly need it. You can find it nowhere else. If we look in self, we shall despair. I think of His troubled people that are in distress, in distress of mind, who feel to be walking in darkness and have no light. You may feel that His mercy is clean gone for ever, and that He will be favourable no more. O what would raise them up ? it is for the Holy Ghost to bring into their hearts the authority of the Word of God and manifest afresh the Lord Jesus Christ in His saving grace, His finished work, His vicarious sacrifices and death, His glorious resurrection and His ascension into heaven. That is no small foundation.

It is a foundation for prayer, as Paul said to the Hebrews, "Seeing then we have a great High Priest that is entered into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly", there is a ground of boldness. He has finished His work, He has fulfilled the law, He has paid the debt, He is raised from the dead and that human heart He still retains, O what a foundation that is; that there is a Man, a real Man in heaven, Who ever liveth. Ever liveth by His own underived life and Being, and by His own immutability He ever maketh intercession for the saints. What a foundation is the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. This comes down to uttermost sinners, and that 'ever living' takes in every moment of the day and night.

I remember on one occasion feeling to be sinking lower than the grave and I tried to pray but could not, can you pray when you like ? But I remember, it is 2.45 in the afternoon, and that word came into my heart, the Lord Jesus, ever liveth and I said, Lord, this is 2.45 on this Thursday, and Thou dost live now at this moment, "Ever liveth to make intercession". What a foundation it is !

Well, "if the foundations were destroyed, what can the righteous do ?" O He is their all, He is their life, their righteousness, their hope, He is their heaven, and so He said in that sacred intercessory prayer, "Father, I will, that they also Whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory". That is the prayer of the Son of God which must prevail, nothing can alter that. If we have an interest in the 17th John we have heaven before us; if we have no interest in the 17th John, we have no interest in Christ.

O may the Lord lay that foundation in our very hearts.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).