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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed"  
Chapel, Brighton Sunday morning 24th April 1966

"Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord  
there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous  
redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all  
his iniquities".

Psalm 130. v. 7 & 8.

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The burden of this Psalm is sin. Not a very attractive subject especially in this modern age and modern religion. But there are only two subjects connected with vital godliness and that is sin and grace. It embraces the whole of salvation, and the Psalmist speaks here from his own experience. "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption", as though he would say, I have proved it. I have proved it out of the depths.

All would not understand it but I do not hesitate to say that in the mystery of iniquity, that terrible mystery that is in our very being, the dire contagion has filled our veins and spread its poison to our hearts, so that it is in every fibre of our body, yet in the mystery of godliness, God in His infinite wisdom and justice and mercy and love, has manifested such glory as could never have been manifested if man had never fallen. But it was out of the depths, chief of sinners.

It is a great thing to find a sinner, that sacred thing whom the Holy Ghost has made a sinner in experience, not that the Holy Ghost makes sin, even the law of God by which is the knowledge of sin, the law does not produce sin. The law discovers it, convinces a sinner of it. We need the Holy Ghost to reveal to us what sin is. We see some of its effects, we see it in the nation in the terrible murders and crimes, the condition of things in the nation, we could go to prisons and see the effects of sin there, but we shall never know it like that. We shall never know what sin is but by the action of the law, by the Holy Spirit in our own consciences to kill us, and it is a mercy.

I do not know what some would think if they listened to this, it is a mercy. To be ignorant of sin is a terrible thing, but to be convinced of sin and then led to Jesus blood is a most glorious experience that can be known. There are many things in this world, many transactions, much business carried on between man and man, many important responsibilities so far as this life is concerned, but my friends there is nothing so important and so blessed and so full of the unsearchable riches of Christ as is sin and grace.

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee", and there will be depths if we are convinced of sin, and those depths will be in our own experience, in our own soul. How many sinners are there here? It is only such sinners will ever be found in heaven.

"Of that mighty multitude  
Who of life were winners,  
This we safely may conclude,  
All were wretched sinners."

And it is not a theory, it is a condition. Life is exceedingly short and we are apt to think that we are born and live for nothing else but to amass a fortune, for nothing else but to indulge in the deceits of the flesh and of the mind. Well, it is a poor existence. But those who are killed by the law and have the sentence of death right in their very being and right throughout so as to leave nothing alive at all Spiritually, this is the beginning of happiness, this is the beginning of true peace. "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord". We shall sink in self. I know what it is to sink in deep mire where there is no standing. The things of time are but for a moment. We were reading this morning at the Prayer Meeting, "A day

in Thy courts is better than a thousand". Well, see what is there, see what there is in Zion, and the point connected with the text and chapter is that the whole provision, a glorious provision provided in heaven, laid up in the Covenant of grace that will issue in glory is all for sinners, nobody else. But we shall be brought to know what sin and sinnership is. Beautiful Psalm the 51st Psalm. We have sometimes said that this Psalm is in our Bible, I don't know whether it is in your Bible. What I mean is this, we only really have a Bible belonging to us as much as what we have by experience and by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit can enlarge your Bible, can enlarge your coast. Some things you may see in the Word of God and you know it, you have tasted, handled and felt it and walked it out, that is yours. The 51st Psalm is mine. Is it yours? O it is worthy of reading and re-reading, and you will see in those first verses it is all me and my. "Have mercy upon me, blot out my transgressions, wash me, cleanse me, I acknowledge my transgressions, my sin is ever before me". You will be made to possess your sins, it will be yours.

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord". "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves". It seems almost impossible that anybody could say so, but "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". But the point here and in experience is this, it is not merely a constant crying out against corruptions, that might be very cheap, but the thing to watch and to notice is the effect of a knowledge of sin, as to whether it is conviction of the Holy Spirit, and you will find it here, it was in the depths that manifested his life, it was the cry in the depths. "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord", that is where there is the evidence of a living soul. "If Thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?" As much as though David would say, I should not. Who would stand if the Lord should mark iniquity? How many of you could continue to sit in the pew if your personal secret sins were written on that wall? I should not. "If Thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?"

This is a condition, it is not fancy. It is a disease, it will lay us in the grave, it will bring us to corruption. It is a physical condition resulting from sin as well as a spiritual condition, and people are ignorant of it and wish to be ignorant of it, and if possible they would escape the wages of sin which is death, but they cannot.

Well, all this may appear to be very morbid, but out of this grows the beauty, the glory, the blessedness of heaven itself. O the glory I trust I have had a glimpse of in the Lord Jesus Christ as He dealt with sin in His holy, sacred Person and His sinless humanity. But you see these two things put together, "If Thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?", but he does not stop there, O blessed be God there is an outlet, "But", and what a but that is, "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared". What then David? "In the depths?" Why, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait and in His word do I hope", and "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" and if you come to consider the different positions and conditions in and under which the Lord's people have waited for Him it is amazing. Here he waits in the depths. Jeremiah, he waited in the low dungeon, Jonah, he waited in the belly of hell. "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say more than they that watch for the morning." There was an urgency there, he was watching for the Lord, nobody else, he would let everybody else go, but he knew Who he was waiting for and he would know when he found Him. Is that so with some of you? Are there some poor sinners who feel too sinful to pray, too sinful for anything of a spiritual nature? May feel too sinful to sit among the Lord's people and yet you must come. Like the woman with an issue of blood, she must touch Him or die. She had tried everything else, and

"Few, if any, come to Jesus 'til  
reduced to self-despair".

It is a good thing to get to self despair, it is the beginning of a good hope, self despair is. "Let Israel hope in the Lord for with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption". We have the same connexion in Isaiah, it may be a great encouragement to an uttermost sinner, if there is one, a burdened sinner, you look at the text, "Let Israel hope in the Lord", why shouldn't he? Let him. Isaiah 55 tells us why, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him turn to the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon", why? upon what authority may we encourage a poor sinner to turn unto the Lord? "My thoughts are not your thoughts, (neither are your ways my ways), poor convinced self-condemned sinner his thoughts are that he deserves, and so he does, eternal destruction, his thoughts are that he is beyond the mercy of God. His thoughts are that he is too ragged, in too shameful a condition, self destroyed, but the Lord says, "Let him", "Let the wicked forsake his way", "Let him return unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon him." "My thoughts are not your thoughts, I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end".

O this is real, and this is only possible through the love of God "Who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all". This is only possible because He, the Lord Jesus, "Who was rich in mercy yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be made rich". This is only possible because "He was made sin, that His people might be made the righteousness of God in Him". O what arose out of the mystery of iniquity as it has come against the mystery of redemption! O that is the ground of hope, that everything in Christ is greater than everything in a sinner, that everything in Christ is greater than everything in the devil, that grace is greater than sin. There is the beauty, there is the glory, there is the salvation, that is in the text.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord", Let him. There is nothing to hinder him since we have a great high priest, He has offered Himself here below, without spot, unto God; and that same great High Priest has entered into heaven itself, ever living to make intercession for poor sinners. He still retains that human heart, all the virtue, and power and efficacy of His finished work is with Him. There are none of the offices which the Lord Jesus occupied, none of the characters which He condescended to assume which were so suitable to sinners, none of them would have any meaning at all if it were not for sinners. The Son of God would never have become incarnate. There would never have been any need for grace or mercy, there would never have been any need to find a Ransom, no Redeemer needed, and yet of God, the Lord Jesus is made unto His people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. It all relates to sinners and sin, and so you find that they are, "Raised up together and sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

"Let Israel hope in the Lord". Now what is there in Him for a sinner to hope in? The first thing to hope in is in the Lord Himself. He is the ground of hope as well as the object of hope, and what a provision this is. There would have been no ground for hope if any other had attempted salvation. An archangel could never have effected salvation. This is the hope, the Person of God's dear Son, united to a sinless human nature. "Let Israel hope in the Lord". So that He is the ground of hope. We have this in a figure, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life". If Moses had lifted up the emblem of an angel upon that pole, there would have been despair, if he had lifted up an emblem upon that pole of an unfallen, innocent Adam, there would have been despair.

"Serpents are the beasts that bite them,  
Make of brass a serpent like them,  
That's the way I choose to save."

So that when the blessed Spirit begins to lead a poor sinner into the mystery of godliness and all the rich kingdom there is there, then

sin and grace are the only themes worth calling real religion. "Let Israel hope in the Lord", and this hope too is in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, there is the foundation. I believe that I have learned that truth in my experience. The eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, if He were less than that He would be useless to me, because the whole of the work of salvation is effected by His Person uniting to human nature, also the blessed doctrine of the virgin birth is of vital importance, a blessed truth in the heart of a poor sinner, because everything that the Lord Jesus became and all that He did was in a way of substitution, a perfect Substitute, and all this is in this word, "Let", "Let Israel hope in the Lord". He has come for sinners. "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom", said Paul "I am chief".

We do well to look at these points. We can get so used to quoting Scriptures and we need to look at ourselves as we look at the Word of God, are we the chief of sinners? Can you find anybody worse than yourself? You might say to me, well I could and you could find people worse than yourself. Look at the crimes, the murders, you are not so bad as them. I believe that I have seen in my heart and nature every crime that has been committed, and if I should go by a prison I could not point my finger and refer to the wretches there, the only thing that I could say, "It is of the Lord's mercy that I am not consumed" Sin. Salvation. See the wisdom, mercy and grace of God bringing out of the vilest thing inexpressible, the most blessed and glorious experience possible.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord". So that we hope in His Person, in His virgin birth, and then you hope in the Lord in the work that He accomplished in that humanity. I would say it with reverence, but the Lord Jesus as in heaven, the eternal Son of God, He could never have saved sinners from heaven. The holiness and glory of God must be vindicated and it is only so that He can be a just God and a Saviour. It is an amazing thing when a poor sinner gets a glimpse of hope in that. He could understand, looking at himself, if it should say, 'A just God and a destroyer', but no, "A just God and a Saviour". O how these opposites do blessedly meet in a poor sinners soul who has felt that he is really too bad ever to be saved.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord". So that you will hope in what He has done. "What the law could not do", and we are under the law as we are in sin, and the law could never liberate a captive, the law could never bring life, the law could never exercise mercy, the law knows no mercy. It is a glorious law, holy, good law. It reflects the character, the glory of God. Invincible it is, it must be, otherwise it would lose its glory, and therefore, it knows no extenuation, its punishment would never be mitigated, it is too glorious. O but "What the law could not do in that it is weak through the flesh", the dear Son of God did. So that the law has nothing to do with those who are in Christ Jesus. The law is fulfilled. The debt is paid. The Lord Jesus is made perfect through sufferings, the curse has cursed Him. He has endured the hell that His people deserved. What then? Why, Let, "Let Israel", there is nothing to prevent him, the way is opened, the victory is won. "Let Israel hope in the Lord".

You will hope, too, in His righteousness. We must be righteous, and "Except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, we shall never enter into the kingdom". The righteousness of the Lord Jesus is the consequence, the benefit, the virtue of His Person and His work. I like that to be joined together, His Person and His work, for the validity and virtue of His work derives from His Person really. O you will love Him! and when you come to consider that the whole of it is for none else but sinners,

"For with the Lord there is mercy". Divine mercy. Mercy which endures for ever. Mercy and grace represent usually in the Scriptures every grace of the Holy Spirit, every spiritual blessing that there is in heavenly places in Christ is represented by mercy. And it is just

mercy. Human mercy is very beautiful, but it can be very unjust. If a judge should exercise mercy to a criminal so far as human beings are concerned, it would indeed be a blessing, but it would not be just. So that the mercy of God is in exercise not in a way of excusing sin, and if you are a sinner you will not want it excused, it would not be any good to you, you would not ask for it, nature would, it attempts to bring any extenuations, but you will want to be as bad as you possibly can. Do you think that is a strange remark? have you ever known what it is to fall before the Lord and want to be as bad as you are, for the Holy Ghost so to discover yourself to you and turn you inside out that you may pour out your heart before the Lord and make your worst condition known, but then He knows it. He knows it before we confess it. O what a glorious God He is! What need is there then for all this prayer and confession and repentance if He knows about it and has made provision and removed sin? Ah that salvation that He wrought out and finished is wrought out, carried on and finished in the soul in a work of grace by the Holy Ghost, and that is a kingdom, that is where we shall know the blessedness and glory of it, the sweetness and the beauty of it. It transcends anything in this world.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord for with the Lord there is mercy". His mercy endureth. It has much to endure from sinners, but it endures. His love is in His mercy. Many floods cannot drown it. Not all the floods of His sufferings, ignominy, shame, nor all the agony of His soul in Gethsemane, nothing could drown that love, unquenchable love, and this is manifested in the removal of sin. "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption" poor sinner. Those of you whose sins rise high, high as the skies your guilt. Plenty of it, that is to say it is eternal redemption. Why, you may feel that your sins are such that you wonder there is ever a sea big enough to lose them in. O what a blessed word that is in Mica, "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of His heritage, He retaineth not His anger for ever because He delighteth in mercy". O this will help poor sinners to approach boldly to the throne of grace. With Him is plenteous redemption, and redemption is a price. If you redeem a thing you recover it. We sometimes read of the remission of sins, that is a beautiful expression, "Sin is blotted out as a thick cloud". Remission is to send back a payment. If you receive a bill you may remit by return post, you send back the payment, and the Lord Jesus has remitted the payment for all His peoples' sins, and this payment is His redemption, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold". O it does show the nature of the riches of Christ, rich they are, and they are not tokens. We are living in a very artificial age, everything and everybody seems artificial, nothing is real. Money in pound notes, well they are nothing but paper, they are only tokens. Really the only riches of a natural kind are that in the fields, the Lord's works, the grass, the corn, the fish in the sea, they are real riches. If you was to crash in an aeroplane on some desert it would not be much good to have a sackful of sovereigns, but it would be if you fell in the midst of well cultivated gardens. The works of the Lord even in nature are great, it is those that sustain, but how much more that price of redemption that is in His precious blood, and there is plenty of it. O you big sinner, those of you who feel saturated with sin, there is plenty of redemption. Infinite He is and everything He has done is infinite, His love, His mercy, His grace, His righteousness is all infinite.

"Plenteous redemption". "And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities", not some of them, not all of them except one. Have you ever felt like that? I believe I have more than once, but once in particular in the middle of the night many years ago. I believe I was given a spirit of confession, poured out my heart in confession to God and I remember mentally saying this, 'Lord, find the last one, let not one hateful lust survive. There is plenty of it. O blessed Gospel! Do you think it is morbid now? Is there anything you would change for it?

"Boast not ye sons of earth, nor look with scornful eyes,  
Above your highest mirth, our saddest hours we prize,  
Although our cup seems filled with gall,  
There's something secret sweetens all."

Amen.