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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday morning July 11th 1965

"I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit; out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord." Psalm 40:1-3.

This is a prophetic Psalm. Primarily it belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator. Some things spoken in it could not possibly belong to anybody else. "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire, burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required, then said I." O the mercy, the love that filled the heart of the Lord Jesus, especially when you see the emphasis upon that word, "Then said I!" It was after He had declared, sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire, burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Those sacrifices and offerings of the Levitical dispensation could never take away sins, could never make atonement for sin, could never make the comers thereunto perfect. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, in His love said, "Then!" seeing that these sacrifices under the law Thou hast not required, "Lo, I come!" Those sacrifices the Lord did not require neither did he desire them; but here is the sacrifice that He did desire and would require; "Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." Why? "Thy law is within My heart." That is salvation; that is the Gospel. O to have the Spirit's inward testimony that it belongs to us - that is the point.

Therefore, this Psalm is prophetic, and although the Lord Jesus is to be seen in many of the psalms, yet they express also the experience of David. There is a mystery and blessed connexion between all that the Lord Jesus condescended to become and the whole of His blessed life and all that He accomplished in salvation during that life; a connexion between that and His people's experience and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Indeed the offices of the Lord Jesus would be useless, abortive, and meaningless, if it were not for sinners and sin. It is a very blessed and solemn consideration. If there had been no sin and no sinners there would have been no need of a Saviour, no need of a Redeemer, no need of the incarnation of God's eternal Son. And so you find that His characters would have been meaningless except for His people. No need for a Shepherd if there were no sheep. No need for a glorious Leader if there were no disciples to follow. No need of a Prophet if there are none that need teaching. No need for a Priest if there are no sinners to offer sacrifices for; and it is to my mind a great comfort and instruction if by the Spirit we see, not only this connexion between Christ, His person and His work and His people, but if that connexion is made in our own experience, and that is a result of having a union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

'I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.' O this was eminently the experience of the Lord Jesus. He is called in the Romans, 'the God of patience and consolation.' Divine patience in enduring the cross, despising the shame. O the spiritual patience of love by which the Lord Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, 'and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.' We have it interpreted in the 5th of Hebrews, "Who, in the days of His flesh, when He

had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."- and that is all in this Psalm. O, if we were influenced by the Spirit and got a sight of this patient, divine sufferer! And if the Holy Ghost should bear in upon us a sense of our sins that caused those sufferings, it would dissolve our hearts before Him in repentance and godly sorrow. 'I waited patiently for the Lord; He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit.' Just briefly speaking, O how this refers to the Lord Jesus O what a horrible pit He descended into. He laid aside His glory. He never left it, He veiled it; and He came, condescended to wretchedness and to dust, He condescended to be made that inexpressible, vile thing, sin. He sunk,—in the 12th verse we see the horrible pit that the dear Redeemer sunk into, "For innumerable evils have compassed me about, nine iniquities have taken hold upon Me so that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of My head, therefore, My heart faileth Me." That was the experience of the dear Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane; those innumerable evils that compassed Him about are the sins, the innumerable sins of His people. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He says, "My iniquities have taken hold upon Me." The sins of His people were made His. O the sufferings of One who was sinless, holy, impeccable, harmless, separate from sinners! The Mighty God, the Son, heaven's highest glory, coming into contact with the cesspool of iniquity. O He sunk, He sunk in deep mire where there was no standing.

'But He brought Me up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.' This was accomplished my friends, when He finished the work that His Father gave Him to do. His resurrection from the dead, and His goings were established. We have this in the 16th Psalm. "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." 'And established my goings:' "Thou wilt show Me the path of life in Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." So that this Psalm refers to the Lord Jesus Christ in the first places but at the same time, in measure, it is the experience of His people. It is their experience because of their union with Him. There will be a connexion, as we said at the beginning. Everything that God's eternal Son became and all the work that He accomplished was intimately connected with the lost and ruined condition of His people, from which He came to deliver them.

What particularly led me to this Psalm was the 34th Psalm; and I noticed there, there is a word that some of you need, and I felt to need. A word that nothing else would be sufficient, and the word is "delivered." I think, three or four times in that Psalm, "I sought the Lord and He heard me and DELIVERED me from all my fears." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and DELIVERETH them." "The righteous cry and the Lord heareth and DELIVERETH them out of all their troubles." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." You may get helps; the text speaks of one who is in a horrible pit. If you were in a horrible pit and some kind friend came along and let down to you some food, it would be a comfort and a strength. Or if some friend should sit at the mouth of that pit and speak words of consolation it would be a comfort to you; but it would not be deliverance. You would want something more and it may be that some of you feel to be just there. You are thankful; thankful to be sustained, thankful that you are not destroyed, thankful for your friends and their consolations and their kindness, but it is not deliverance. But if someone should come along with a winch and a rope and let it down into that pit and bring you up out of it; or in other words, as the Lord went to the grave of Lazarus, and

with His divine voice commanded, "Lazarus, come forth" and he came forth, though he was bound with grave clothes. Therefore it was not, only a miracle that raised him from the dead but a miracle that he came out of that grave while he was still bound with grave-clothes; there was yet something else needed and it must come from the Lord; "Loose him, and let him go."

O how many are waiting for that liberty of the Gospel And if you are under divine teaching nothing less than that will really satisfy your soul. You will be thankful for touches, you will be thankful for sips, you will be thankful for crumbs, but O, it is deliverance that you want. Well, here is a case for patience. 'I waited patiently for the Lord.' In the margin it says 'in waiting, I waited.' There is a kind of waiting by compulsion in which there is no waiting at all, but rebellious fretfulness. Some of you may know what that is. That is not really waiting there is no patience, you simply wait because you have got to wait. But O, see the submission of the Lord Jesus! See Him led as a lamb to the slaughter. He was dumb, opened not His mouth. His judgement was taken away from Him; when He was reviled He reviled not again; and this mind of Christ is made over to His people. There is a natural patience; there is a spiritual patience, which is different. There is a natural waiting, there is a spiritual waiting. Therefore, David speaks from his experience in the 130th Psalm; "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord, if Thou shouldest mark iniquity O Lord, who shall stand?" So it shows that the depths he was in were the depths of his own corrupt nature and sin. But why did not he sink? "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." What then? "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope." This is the waiting of the text. A wonderful thing to be waiting upon the Lord in a horrible pit; in the depths. It is only the life of God and living faith that will thus wait, and while this waiting is submission to the Lord, yet it is very active. In this waiting there a spiritual waiting a seeking, there is a labouring.

'I waited patiently for the Lord.' "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." It is a great thing if we are waiting for the Lord, because it is of no use to wait for anybody else. That is the point here. Have we been brought to that point? You take the 39th Psalm: "And now Lord, what wait I for?" In the preceding verses of that Psalm he had been showing the many things that a natural man waits for. "Every many walketh in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain. He heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them." He sees that natural men of the world are waiting for all kinds of things. They are waiting for honour and riches and fame, waiting for the things that perish. Then he appeals unto God. "And now Lord, what wait I for?" Thou that knowest my heart, Thou who knowest my downsitting and my uprising, Thou who knowest my thoughts afar off. Why in my tongue there is not a word but Thou knowest it altogether. Now Lord, am I different? Am I waiting for something different from what the world is waiting? "And now Lord what wait I for? my hope is in Thee." O blessed appeal! Can we say it? can we look at everything and say, 'Lord there is nothing in this world that I am waiting for. There is nothing in this world that can do my soul good. There is nothing in the whole of this universe that can bring peace, nothing that can forgive one sin; nothing that will stand me in stead when I come to the swellings of Jordan and face eternity. There is one thing Lord I wait for; my hope is in Thee.'

'I waited patiently for the Lord.' O this spiritual patience! We spoke last Wednesday; "Not only so, but we rejoice in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience," and tried to show that it was not the tribulation itself that works patience, but the sanctifying effects upon the heart, the patience of faith. 'I waited patiently for the Lord.' Sometimes you see Him, trace His goings. It is very

blessed in a service when by His Spirit the Lord Jesus is revealed and you trace His goings in the sanctuary. You lose sight of the creature, and your own deep needs and experience as a needy sinner, together with a tracing of the goings of the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary, such that you are unconscious of anybody else in the Chapel but yourself. O it is a good time my friends, when we lose the afflictions of this world and for a little while are all taken up under the influence of Christ in the Gospel, by the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Christ and bringing them into our hearts! it will give this patience.

'I waited patiently for the Lord.' And there will be particular things that you are waiting for. Not all the same, although it will be of the same nature. Some of you may be waiting for pardon. In experience a child of God may be possessed of real faith and the life of God in the soul long before He is satisfied that his sins are forgiven. But you will never be finally satisfied until they are, because in the forgiveness of sins is the whole of salvation. If we are given to look at what forgiveness is, we shall see that it contains the whole of the merit and benefit and effect of the Person and work and sufferings and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In forgiveness is salvation. The forgiveness of sins is the purpose for which the Lord Jesus came to the earth, to destroy the works of the devil. But you will wait patiently for it. Some of you may be waiting for the Lord to manifest Himself to you. You believe in Him, you believe what the Scriptures declare of Him; you have a deep need of what He is and has, but you want Him to manifest Himself to you so that you may know Him; know Him by His own manifestation to your heart. It is a good thing to be brought to particulars. A general notion of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, will do us no good, even if those notions are correct and Scriptural. O you want to possess Him! that is the thing and it is a mercy if this deepens! How many professors are satisfied with a nominal knowledge of Christ, but what makes the difference is conviction. I believe that conviction is one of the most vital parts of experience, and you can usually trace this, that where there is a superficial religion there has been a superficial conviction not of the Spirit. It makes the difference to the whole attitude of a sinner to the Gospel. Thank God for that conviction that kills, that sentence of death that leaves nothing alive at all. Thank God for that conviction that strips so as to leave a man completely destitute. Such sinners wait for Him, wait for His salvation. "My soul fainteth for Thy salvation."

'I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.' This is a beautiful expression, because you see the character here is in a pit; and then this Lord of life and glory bowed His head, He inclined His ear, as it were put His ear to the mouth of the pit, and heard the cry of the poor sinner. Are you there? Have you ever been in a pit? In a horrible pit, miry clay where there is no standing? We have got nothing to stand on - and I can tell you this, if you are there it is the work of the Spirit that has put you there, you will find no standing. That miry clay, you try to get one foot out and the other sinks deeper into the mire. This is our nature, our sinful polluted nature. I know of no pit more horrible than my nature; and it will come personally, not generally. It is a great thing to have the Holy Spirit work in the heart. You may depend upon it, He will kill before He makes alive. He will empty before He fills, and if ever you know the joyful sound you will hear a dreadful sound before you hear the joyful sound.

'He inclined unto me.' O think of it! In experience some of you may have cried and cried to the Lord and He seems to take no notice. Very painful, and Satan tempts you to give up and call no more upon His name. You never would, except that the life of God and the life of faith is in your soul.

God's silence is one of the most solemn afflictions that a soul can experience. Some of you may be just in this pit; but look at this, 'He inclined unto me,' bowed down His divine ear at the mouth of the pit. O that the cry of a poor sinking sinner came into the ear of a dear Redeemer. This is the Gospel.

Jeremiah knew it and when was in the low dungeon he said "I called upon Thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon; Thou hast heard my voice, hide not Thy ear at my breathing, at my cry; Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee, Thou saidst, Fear not." What an experience: Who does He thus favour? A man full of self-confidence that can make his own way? A man who can act faith, can turn on faith like a tap; believe when he likes, hope when he likes, pray when he likes, preach when he likes? No; a poor helpless, sinking sinner. I have been thankful for these scriptures. "I called upon Thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice, hide not Thine ear at my breathing." He got so low he could only just breathe, "And at my cry; Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee, Thou saidst, Fear not." Is that what you are waiting for - and waiting for it in a horrible pit? You will need patience, patience to wait; but there is something very blessed, very living in this waiting. O, it is here where the life of God is made manifest. This is why in the footsteps of the flock you find yourself in these deep places; through deep waters, in a fiery furnace. Why, my friends, it is for this reason that the last stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it. But O, the mysterious paths of grace. Here is a pilgrim, running with patience the race set before him, and a part of this race is in a horrible pit. It is not a flat race, it is an obstacle race, and there are pits, and His people are brought into the pit. Joseph was put down into a pit, and you know what these pits are in your experience.

'He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.' Perhaps some of you think He never will. You have been crying for years. What you need is the patience of Christ. A natural patience would never hold out. If you have Christ's patience it is because you have union with Him; and that patience will hold out.

'He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit.' Well, this is something to wait for. You may say, 'Well now the text has gone by me; I can go no further.' But are you waiting, waiting for Him to incline His ear and hear your cry? If you have to wait until your dying day He will be faithful to His word. I believe there are some who have waited all their lives; but if He does not bring you up out of the horrible pit until your dying day, He will bring you up then and take you to heaven.

I remember the case of a woman; she could not get what she wanted, but O her longing soul! She seemed to be a longing soul all her life, but she was taken with a stroke, and I went to see her although she was unconscious. As I looked upon her, that word came to me, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." and I believe she found rest in being taken to heaven. But He will bring you out, and it is a mercy when He brings His people out in life. 'He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay.' None can understand this language except those that have been there. I will make a statement, but would be very careful - it is a mercy to be a lost and ruined and helpless sinner; if you are never that, you will never want a mighty Saviour. I feel sure of that. 'He brought me up also out of a horrible pit.' It brings to my mind the case of His people in Ezekiel's day. The people there said "Our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. The Lord said to Ezekiel; Prophesy, son of man and say, O My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves." He can do it in a moment,

*Wait then, my soul, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful seat;
And midst the terrors of His rod,
Trust in a wise and gracious God. (Gadsby's 6)*

'He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock.' O the contrast! O the blessedness of a poor sinking sinner when he is brought out of himself, and the feet of his faith, faith and hope, two feet, are set upon Christ the eternal Rock. It is the Lord that can bring up out of the pit, and set the feet of a trembling sinner upon the immovable Rock of ages, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is very important that in that parable of the Lord Jesus, there were two kinds of hearers, and if what we have been saying is true it should give us to examine ourselves. Those hearers heard the same truth, the same Gospels one built his house upon the sand and when the rain descended and the winds blew that house fell and great was the ruin of it; but there was another that heard the same truth says, "Who cometh unto me." That was the first difference. You will notice there that the first character did not come to the Lord, "But he that heareth these sayings of Mine and cometh unto Me, he is like a man that diggeth deep." O we shall be brought to dig deep, deep down beneath notion, beneath all imagination and dig down until we find the Rock, Christ Jesus! And you will sink until you find Him. I believe that good Mr Mote knew this when he wrote that hymn;

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name. (Gadsby's 1106)*

Amen.