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Sermon preached by Mr F.L.Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on
Wednesday evening November 1st 1961.

"Give ear to my words O Lord, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto thee will pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Psalm 5:1-3.

Our afflicted friend, Mrs. Anscombe is so weak that they are unable to operate but it is remarkable how calm she is kept in her mind, evidently stayed upon God, and this word was a comfort and strength to her: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul." When I heard that that word was made useful to her, the text seemed laid upon my mind. You may not perhaps at the outset see much connection. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul." Well, as I feel it, this word, "Consider my meditation" is the same thing as a multitude of thoughts within me. Meditation is variously described in the Word of God. Perhaps the most blessed degree of meditation is spoken of in the 104th Psalm. The Psalmist there had made a survey of the whole of the wonderful works of God. He opens the Psalm: "O Lords Thou art very great"; and then describes His greatness in creation, and in providence, and in grace, and concludes like this - "My meditation of Him shall be sweet." All spiritual meditation will issue there. But don't intend this evening to take just that line, but rather I would look at the text in this order: 'O Lord! consider my meditation' 'Give ear to my words,' 'Harken unto the voice of my cry.' And for this reason - these words, and this cry, and his prayer were the expressions of his soul that came out of from his meditation. And therefore we would look at this word first: 'O Lord: consider my meditation,' - this meditation in a general way, yet not in a general way of religion, but in a general way to faith.

Now what I mean is this. There will be a multitude of thoughts and meditations both with respect to our inward case, our soul concerns, and there will be meditations about our pathway in providence, as well as our bodies. I do feel that many of our friends have different views before them as they are affected in soul, and body, and circumstances. So that these meditations are those particular exercises of soul that those who possess faith are brought into in every direction through the pathway of life. Paul really comes to that point where he said: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Also Job in the midst of his heavy afflictions and calamities said he went forward, and backward, on the right hand, and on the left, but could not find the Lord. There was a meditation that which came into the life that altered the whole scene. Worldly men of course have their meditations. They look down the Stock Exchange and meditate on profits, and how they can increase their wealth. The man of pleasure looks at the sports pages and meditates upon that. But those who are pilgrims and living a life of faith - God in His sovereignty leads them about as through the 107th Psalm and different dispensations come to them and pass over them. Therefore the Lord knows us each, and what there is that occupies us in such a way, such a concern, such anxiety, that it constitutes a meditation.

'Consider my meditation.' You see the urgency here. He says, 'Give ear, consider, hearken.' Well where can we commence, as this takes in the whole of our life? Let us commence then with the

conflicts and exercises of the soul. There are some of our friends very distressed in mind, deeply exercised in their souls. Some of the Lord's people have been brought very near to despair. Now, upon this point of meditation, you will see the connection with David in the Psalm. You see what was before him. There is a meditation in the truth very blessed, and it is necessary especially in a minister. We read in the Revelation of an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to men upon the earth. Well, that was not a heavenly angel. That was one of those angels spoken of in the Revelation, those stars that were in the right hand of Christ, a minister of the Gospel flying in the heavens of the Word of God, in the firmament of the Gospel, in meditation in order to preach the Gospel. That is a blessed meditation. But what I want more particularly this evening to speak of is, if the Spirit may help me, to show that those things that come to His people, that the sovereignty of God has ordered all things concerning the pathway of His people, and brings them into such conditions that their minds are brought into a state of exercise and conflict. You cannot get away from it. Some of you may have something laid upon your mind that you cannot dismiss. It is with you when you go to bed and when you get up. It may be relative to your families, as in the case of Micah.

But with respect first of all to the soul. 'O Lord; consider my meditation,' and there was David's meditation. Life was the spring of it. He commences, in the Psalm we read (42): "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Then he tells the Lord of his meditation, and what he sees and feels of his present condition, and he commences with his tears being his meat day and night, and that he was under persecution and reproach, and when everything was out of joint and his bones scattered at the grave's mouth. There were those that said to him, "Where is thy God, David? You boasted of Him, you have said He is infinite in wisdom, omnipotent in power; but look at your state. You are walking in darkness. The Lord has forsaken you," as in the preceding Psalm (41): "An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more. So that David in these blessed Psalms for substance repeats the text. 'O Lord; consider my meditation; this is the present state of my soul. I am in the midst of Thy waterspouts, deep calleth unto deep.' Well, you know your own case, you may be under the temptations of the devil, the power of unbelief, and everything about you may contradict that ever a work of grace was begun, and you may be ready to conclude with the church in Isaiah: "But the Lord hath forsaken me." Or with those in Ezekiel: "Our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." It is a meditation. It is a particular condition of soul into which the Lord permits His people to come for their teaching.

You may meditate too upon your case and be brought very low, and feel that you have quite mistaken the way, and your iniquities like a heavy burden are too heavy for you. And you may have that meditation with Asaph. He made a diligent search; his sore ran in the night, and he said to the Lord, "Are Thy mercies clean gone for ever? Wilt Thou be favourable no more? Hast Thou in anger shut up Thy tender mercies?" Now some of you - each must fill up for themselves - have your particular meditation, your condition of soul, a certain stage of experience. You may feel that really it is no use to continue to come and go. You get nothing for your soul. Well, tell the Lord so. Pray without ceasing.

'O Lord: consider my meditation.' But then this is applicable too, to our circumstances, our movements. Doubtless all of you who have been long in the wilderness way can look back to some

very important and serious changes in your life. I can. They have been so overwhelming that I have felt a kind of mental paralysis, as if I have been numbed, and have not known what to do or which way to take. It is a meditation. You have got to do something, a move has to be made, 'O Lord: consider my meditation,' - what is before me. And such things may be before you, it looks as though the Lord is angry with you in the way things are going. But it reminds us of that kind word in Ecclesiastes 9: "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him." And what is before you and is there is an experience. It is a meditation. It has got to be dealt with. And it is a mercy to handle matters wisely, and this is the way: 'O Lords consider my meditation.'

Well that word, "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him," means just this - what is before you? Are there difficulties, enemies, oppositions, closed doors? Are you brought to a standstill? Does the Lord seem to refuse to give you aid? Is that before you, your meditation? You cannot by-pass it; it is in your pathway and you have to go through it. Well, you cannot tell hatred upon everything going wrong and falling to pieces. "No man can tell either love or hatred by all that is before him." And on the other hand, a man who has no fear of God before him may have prosperity, everything working according to his plan, no opposition, brings wicked devices to pass. You cannot stamp love on that easy way, on that prosperity. Oh what a paradox is the life of a child of God! But this is the instruction - 'O Lord; consider my meditation, my case.' I have a matter that must be dealt with, and I don't know how to deal with it. Consider it, Lord. And he is before God who is infinite in wisdom, can find out knowledge of witty inventions. He can fill empty places, open locked doors, level mountains. 'O Lord: consider my meditation.'

You may perhaps have meditation which suddenly comes to you by news. I have known this. I look back at January, 1930. Things may be going on very smoothly, and a letter comes through your letter-box, and the whole thing is whipped up into a tempest. It is a change of scene and outlook altogether, astonishment, hard things. And it brings you so that you are compelled to look at what has come and how to deal with it. It is a meditation. 'O Lords consider my meditation.'

Then I was thinking too of our afflicted friends, especially Mrs. Anscombe. Her meditation, as she must know what is before her, is very solemn, but the Lord has considered her meditation. A most gracious word, I feel, in her condition: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me." Ah, your thoughts may be weakening, driving, confusing, painful thoughts, but "in the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul." And to my mind the first comfort that the Lord conveys to such a troubled soul is to give them to feel that what He says is true - "My thoughts are not your thoughts." For you may depend upon it that what we read in the 29th of Jeremiah concerning the captives, they had a meditation before them. The Lord had told them by Jeremiah that they were to go into captivity for seventy years. That is what they had before them; but the Lord gave them this word: "I, know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

Well my friends, the Lord knows your meditation; He knows your heart. And it is well to remember that, "Whatever cross lies at thy door, It cometh from the Lord". He needs no information from us at all. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Shall there be pain and affliction in your body, and the Lord hath not done it? Shall there be disaster in business, shall there be sorrow

and grief in the family, and the Lord hath not done it? It is His permission, and whatever He does with respect to His dear people is in covenant love.

'O Lord; consider my meditation; give ear to my words.' So the exercises of soul, and body, and circumstances, where faith is, will have a mouth. Oh it is a mercy to have that evidence of a living faith that speaks: 'Give ear to my words.' Therefore real prayer -one important part of it is to express before the Lord your complaints, to order your cause before Him, and to fill your mouth with arguments. It is a wonderful thing that a most unworthy sinner is permitted and directed to fill his mouth with arguments in coming to the mercy-seat. "Take with you words, and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously." It is a relief, when you have that which lies heavily upon your mind, if the meditation of your heart has an outlet in prayer: 'Give ear to my words.' And that is just what the Lord intends. Oh how kindly He looks upon His people, as in Solomon's Song: "O My dove: that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Now what is there sweet in the voice of a troubled sinner? Well, listen to it throughout the whole of the Psalms.

'Give ear to my words, O Lord: Harken unto the voice of my cry.' A dear troubled soul, one of our number, was speaking to me a few days ago that had been pleading the same thing as we have in Isaiah: "Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you; therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for Him." But this is the point connected with the text - "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry. When He shall hear it, He will answer thee." But whatever does the Lord wait for when people are in urgency, when they say, "Hear me speedily, O Lord My spirit faileth?" Why does He wait? He waits to be gracious, and He will have mercy upon His people in such a way and in His own time, that He may be exalted. Why my friends, we are apt to think that as soon as we pray, we should receive an answer. We should look for an answer, but the Lord waits to be gracious. And oh what a trial of faith is the waiting: But blessed are they that wait for Him; they shall not be ashamed. And there is a good deal of discipline in that waiting time.

'Harken unto the voice of my cry, My King, and My God.' So that David knew to whom he prayed. It was the prayer of faith. He knew that this King, and God, and Lord of hosts had infinite wisdom and divine power and ability. It is a great thing to believe that in distress. I know by my own unbelieving distrustful heart what it is to be filled with how's, and why's, and if's, and but's. And I believe this, my friends, the Lord will wait until these are withered up. There is nothing will swallow up those doubts and fears like the mighty shalls and wills of Jehovah. And when faith fixes upon Him, then it "laughs at impossibilities, and says it shall be done."

'O Lord: consider my meditation, give ear to my words, hearken unto the voice of my cry.' There is a voice in the cry. You know, if a child should be hurt in the street and in some distress and cry, the Mother would recognize the child's voice in the cry. Some of you may have known that. And the Lord knows His people's voice in a cry. You may hear another child that is hurt, and would do your very best to help; but you would not recognize that cry as the voice of your child; but the Lord does. I wish we could take comfort; that faith would be strong enough to believe what the Scriptures declare: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are His." We are apt to look upon the Lord's people as a mass. So they are; but the Lord does not look at

them like that. He recognizes them individually, and He knows each of their cries, and why they cry. No need really for Him to bring them into such extremities for them to cry. But oh the teaching!

'Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King, and my God.' Oh how some of us would feel it a relief to be able to say that again! You may say, "Reign o'er me as King" and if He answers that, He would let you know that every other kingdom must come down. 'My King, and my God.' The changes that came over David are for instruction. You see him crying in those two Psalms we read (41 & 42); but you come to the 48th Psalm where you have a description of this great God in Zion as her defence, and David felt his faith strengthened in a meditation of God, and breaks out: "This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide even unto death." "Trust in Him at all times, ye people." What people? Why, those that have meditation, walking in darkness and distress - "ye people". He does not mention the elect; but it intends the elect. "Ye people" who need Him, who have no other to trust in. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before Him. God is a Refuge for us."

Well, can you find anything like it anywhere else, my friends? Do you feel a little of the strength of it in your heart? Are you almost ready to join with David, "This is my God for ever and ever; He will be my Guide even unto death"? If He is, you must not be surprised at some places into which He guides you. He may bring you into darkness and the shadow of death. He may bring you into distress and hedge up your path; but

*The way I walk cannot be wrong,
If Jesus be but there. (Gadsby's 812)*

'My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and look up.' Well, in the 46th Psalm it says, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." In the margin it comes to the text: "God shall help her when the morning appears." Well, it is good, my friends, even in a literal morning to call upon the Lord. 'My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord!' But also this makes a morning, when He appears, when He lifts upon a poor soul the light of His countenance, when He shines forth from between the cherubims; that will make a morning in your soul. Otherwise you say,

*'Tis midnight with my soul till He,
Bright Morning star, bids darkness flee. (Gadsby's 427)*

Some of you are longing for the morning. 'My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord! In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee.'

There is something very blessed in that expression. If we might use an illustration reverently, it is like putting an arrow in the string of a bow and sending it winging its ways to heaven. 'My prayer will I direct in the morning unto Thee.' Now this is the same as with Daniel. He said, "I set my face toward the Lord God." He set his face there, and this is when there are some very particular exercises of soul which cause you much trembling; or in your circumstances, calamities and difficulties, a way hedged up in your family sorrows. Micah says, "A man's enemies are the men of his own household." And

you may be under reproach and persecution. But Daniel said, "I set my face toward the Lord God by prayer and supplication."

There was a case brought to the Lord Jesus of a poor young man who was thrown down, you remember, in convulsions, and the Lord said concerning that case: "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." And you may have a kind, you may have a meditation, you may have something before you or within you. What a mercy it is to take that special thing in secret before God and say, 'In the morning will I direct my prayer. I will set my face toward Thee, and will look up.' What for? Answers! When he sent the arrow, when prayer has gone out from a poor burdened soul, they won't have done with it. There will be a watching unto prayer. Afflicted Job said: "I would know what He would answer me."

'In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.' Oh may the Lord help His troubled people to bring their meditation, and ask Him to consider it, and to hearken to their cry, and direct their prayer unto Him and then look up!

Amen.