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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed"
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"O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary".

Psalm 63, v.1 & 2.

When you read the Word of God and perhaps especially the Psalms do you ever pause and ask yourself how much of what you read you can really say for yourself? How much of the text can you say as your own? It may be that some of you may not be able to say the first part, "O God, Thou art my God", but how much of it can you say? I believe that it would be a good exercise, profitable exercise in reading the Word of God, and as I said, especially the Psalms because they are so experimental, just to look into your own heart secretly and see how much of the Psalms express your experience, how much you can say, well, I can say that. Look at the text, how much can you get through as your own? If you cannot say, feel you dare not say the first part, can you say this, "Early will I seek Thee?" Can you say this, "My soul thirsteth for Thee"? David puts the same thing in a little different language in the 42nd Psalm: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God". Do you know it? Can you say it?

Can you say, "My flesh longeth for Thee"? and that this world and everything outside of Christ and the Gospel is a dry and thirsty land where no water is, can you say it? Do you believe it? Well if you can then in your measure repeat the Psalm except the first clause, I can repeat the first clause for you. For if you know the secret, the exercise, the experience of the latter part, you are inside of the first part, and if you cannot say, "O God, Thou art my God", the Scriptures say it for you.

It is a point, and it is a point that becomes more and more important the nearer we get to the end. When we are younger, I do believe that even where there is grace and faith there is not that depth of knowledge that there is when we get nearer to the end.

"O God, thou art my God". There may be an anxious soul who would say, How am I to know that God is my God? There is only one way really and that is for God to manifest Himself to you through His dear Son by the Holy Spirit. This He does by His manifestations by the exercises of your mind, and there are some pointed questions which might help you to know whether He is your God or not. One question is this, Do you need Him? He is revealed in the Scriptures, revealed in the Person of His dear Son and that it pleased Him that all fulness should dwell in His Son. Do you feel to need that salvation of which He is the Author? Can you look at everything and everyone else and the universe and see and feel and confess that none but Jesus can do my helpless soul any good? Well, if you need Him there is some knowledge of Him, and there is some connexion between a need and the source of supply.

Another thing is this, do you want Him? Do you desire Him? I am persuaded of this, that if you have a knowledge of God by the Spirit it will not only be to have Him as your Refuge to escape punishment, to escape all the wrath of God, but you will desire to possess Him for Himself. One more thing is this, Can you do without Him? That is not a small question when you come to look at life and how multitudes of people go on, even those that make a profession of His name, they live as though they could do without Him, independent of Him. They may maintain a form of worship, assemble with the assemblies of His people, but go on independently, neither commit their way to Him nor

trust in Him. Can you do without Him? Well, it is a great point to be answered in your own conscience. O blessed is that person that can before God say, I do need Thee. You will be compelled to say it, I do need Thee, and when He is revealed in His word, in His grace and mercy and love in Christ, to feel some drawing after Him though utterly unworthy to possess Him, blessed is that soul that can say, I cannot do without Him. Now if that is so, then this God is your God and this will follow, "Early will I seek Thee".

This early may apply to several things and all be correct. Very blessed if it intends to seek Him early in life, for "It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth", to be satisfied early with the mercy of God. A comely sight to see young people brought to a concern about their souls and to begin to seek for salvation. "Early will I seek Thee" may intend, indeed it will intend invariably to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, to seek Him first, that is early. God will not be sought secondly, He will be first and He will make Himself first. O when these tests are put to religion, how searching it is! It shows us where we are and what we are, it brings our daily life and our daily transactions and our manner of living to the test of the Scriptures. It will at times be a very solemn awakening.

"O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee", and there will be definite things that you will seek Him for, and

"Our seeking Thy face is all of Thy grace"

There will be a beginning of this early seeking of the Lord. A worldling does not seek Him, is ignorant of Him, but

"When Jesus gracious hands
Has touched our eyes and ears
O what a dreary land
This wilderness appears "

It is not a question of opinion, it is the beginning of a work of grace in the soul to create a hunger and a thirst after God. "Early will I seek Thee", and this is the beginning of a work of grace in the heart. The Holy Ghost will give a poor sinner to realise that He must possess something that he has not got. That he must know something that he is ignorant of, give him a persuasion that there is something more than this world, and that something to be of paramount importance, an importance above the things of time and sense. It will make the soul exceedingly more vast in importance than the body. It will bring eternity into the heart and into the conscience. Then a sinner will not only realise that he has to live and will need the Lord to be his guide and his sufficiency for the things of this life, but that all things here below must end. A commencement to seek those things that are above.

"O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee", and I would say this, there is a seeking Him before you seek what He has got to give, it is not seeking first His gifts, but it is seeking Him. We might ask ourselves that question, I believe it does good to find a voice within asking questions. Balaam would have received the gifts of God, he would have had all the benefits of salvation, but he would not want God, he did not want to live the life of the righteous; he would like to have died the death of the righteous and had all that was provided for them. O but, "Early will I seek Thee", that is it, and when the Lord makes Himself precious, makes Himself known to you, it will be Himself, for it is Himself makes His gifts what they are.

"My soul thirsteth for Thee". Seek Thee and thirst for Thee. Therefore, "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors, for whoso findeth Me, findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord". If you find Him you find it all. If you seek and find Him you find everything that He is, everything that He possesses. It is a wonderful thing that

He is seekable and findable. "My soul thirsteth for Thee". This can never be in a carnal mind, a carnal heart. You cannot thirst for the living God and still thirst after the things of this world. The two things are incompatible, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". If we are called by grace, we are pilgrims, we are wayfaring men, we are passing through Vanity Fair. Bunyan gives a beautiful description of it. Christian and Faithful going through Vanity Fair, they did not so much as look at the goods that were presented to them, and those at Vanity Fair thought they were strange people. The Lord's people are a peculiar people.

Well, I don't know how much we resemble these pilgrims that are recorded in the Word of God, but we cannot water things down. Compromise is a thing of today, try and make things not look quite so bad as they are, try as far as possible to live with the world and make a profession at the same time. The religious world is full of it, but O, it is the end my friends !

"O God, Thou art my God,". Not that I have a stone to throw to any and when at this time of the year we see thousands going down to the sea shore, "Such were some of you" and who hath made you to differ ? But every man will walk in the name of his God, and they are today, they are walking in the name of their God. There are Gods many and Lords many, there is the God of gold and of silver, the God of pleasure, the God of sport, and so on; "But we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever". That cannot be said of their Gods. Ours is the eternal God.

"O God, Thou art my God". And He may be your God by choice before you have the assurance of your interest that He is your God, you may perhaps not be able to receive that, but you look at every other God. Moses speaks of Him with such majesty, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders", and you may look at every other God, but you look above them all and say, whether that God will ever be my God or not, He is the only God that I need, the only God that can save my soul, the only God in Whom I can find any rest, any happiness. "Early will I seek Thee, my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is" It may be that some of you wonder how this can be mentioned, "My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land", but it does. Those of you who perhaps remember before you had a hope on the mercy of God, before you sought Him, your flesh, that is your faculties, your will your mind were toward the world, the things of the flesh. Your legs, they took you to places of amusement, the devils palaces, your hands wrought all manner of evil, you used your eyes in beholding vanity. That was your fleshly faculties, but when grace reaches the heart, then it does not alter your nature, but the same legs that took you to the devils palaces, take you to the house of God, and your eyes which once beheld vanity and read novels and all kinds of trash, now those same eyes search the Word of God. Your ears which once would lend themselves to foolishness and jesting, now your ears are bored to the doorpost, so that your flesh, your body thirsts and takes you now to the Sanctuary of God, and sometimes your very flesh thirsteth. You might feel at times even your mouth water under a sense of the sweetness of the Gospel. So that grace does affect the members of the body, indeed the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which ye have of God and ye are not your own, therefore, glorify ye the Lord in your body and in your spirit which are Gods. Tasting the sweetness of His mercy, seeing the beauty of His righteousness and the all-sufficiency of His grace.

"O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee". He enlarges on it in the 8th verse. "My soul followeth hard after Thee", that is when he is seeking Him it is ardent, there is some anxiety in this seeking, some violence of faith. "My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is". It does not mean to say that we are to despise the temporal blessings and gifts of God

in His providence, really we are not worthy of the least of them, but there is nothing for the soul. We have need of the things of this life, things that are shown in shop windows, we have need of them and the Lord knows it, "The Lord knoweth that ye have need of these things", but to be taken up with them and the fashions of this world is vanity of vanities.

"Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see"

It is easy to sing, it is easy to sing, I know you won't live here, I don't suppose David lived in the exercise of this text every day and every hour of the day, but you will know something about it, and there is another thought comes like this, you know what it is when you would be quiet, it may be in the sanctuary of God as you sit professedly listening to the glorious Gospel, that unexpectedly something will come into your mind, something you ought to have done, or something very interesting that you are going to do, something on the morrow and you begin to work it out so that carnal things come into the midst of your spiritual worship, well, that is very trying. But put it the other way round, have you ever found this and this will balance it, have you ever found this that when you have been in perplexity, responsibility, care and trouble, when you have had to attend to the business of this life which has taken all your time, have you ever known the reverse that unexpectedly something from heaven comes through, penetrates, makes its way through all your anxieties and distractions and reaches your heart and you feel your soul like unto the chariots of Aminidab, you still go on with your work, you are still able to cope with your difficulties, but your heart is in heaven.

"My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is". I know what a covetous heart is, the interests of this world, some of them are very lawful, there are lawful interests, and you may have lawful hobbies which are very useful, but the point is this, Christ must be first, and when He is, sometimes He will even put out for the time being those interests that are lawful. You might have an occasion to go out and to do shopping, go round the shops, sometimes you may seem to be taken up with everything you see, but another time, I remember such a time as this, you may be so sanctified in your soul, so tender in your spirit, the fear of God in such exercise and Christ so precious, that wherever you look there is no attraction, and there is just this, "O that I knew where I might find Him", I don't mind what else I don't find if I could but see Jesus. Well, it is good to have those inward evidences of a work of grace.

"My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Thy power and Thy glory". His power can be seen. His glory can be seen, but the exclamation is this, "So as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary". If you see Him you see His power, you see His glory. Now it is power that you want, and increasingly. Why? Why is it that some people are quite satisfied with a religion that has no power in it? why, the simple reason is they have nothing, need nothing to be done. If you are brought down by divine teaching to a self-condemned, self-destroyed sinner, in the very depths, you will need power. Notion will be of no use. A social religion, pleasant as it may be to the flesh will not reach down to the depths. O there is something in that word power which is attractive, it is a magnetic power in one sense. It is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A power which is transmitted by His condescension to become man. Power. God is great, He is great because He is infinite. He would have been great if His eternal Son had never become incarnate, but that greatness of God out of Christ could only have been transmitted to men in their destruction, but His greatness is, if I might use that word, transmitted through His eternal incarnate Son in a way of grace, communicating the power of His life, the power of His righteousness, the power of His

invincible grace, to see Thy power is to receive influence, and it is this power and glory that is seen in the sanctuary, it is in the ministry according to that wonderful word of the Lord Jesus in the last chapter of Mathew, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore", He said to the disciples. I know we are foolish enough to think it would have been rather better if it was said, 'all power is given unto you', but it is not, it is "given unto ME". But that power is in heaven and in earth. To see is to feel it, to have the mighty effect of it in your soul in a way of salvation, it is the power of Christ, the power of His Person, the power of His life, the efficacy of His finished work, the power of His mighty death, the power of His glorious resurrection. O there is something to seek in the Lord ! there is indeed.

"To see Thy power and Thy glory". It is glorious power. There is glory in everything that Christ is and everything that He has done. There is no glory in this world at all. Moses said, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory". "So as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary". The sanctuary doubtless is the church of God, the place where His honour dwelleth. But the sanctuary also is in every place where He manifests Himself. You may be walking down a country road, and some of those surprises are very sacred. Without being aware of it you may be conscious of a mysterious dissolving of your spirit, a breaking down of your hard heart, a drawing up of your affections toward God, it may be going across a field or it may be in a busy thoroughfare, makes no difference, it will be a sanctuary if the Lord's presence is manifested to your soul, and you will see the power and feel His glory, something different from anything in this world, a different sensation, a different effect. O it is a mighty strength to faith and hope ! it is that that will bring heaven before your eyes, it will strengthen faith to believe in God. It will open to you the glory of Christ in the Gospel, and it will dissolve you in thanksgiving that there is such a provision, that there is such a kingdom, and that that kingdom can be within the heart of poor sinners in all its power and glory and authority.

"To see Thy power and Thy glory as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary". He is seeable. I know some who are ignorant of these things and ignorant of God might say to you, now look here, you talk about seeing Christ, where is He ? show Him to me. "Great is the mystery of godliness", but the mystery of it is a reality. Haven't you ever seen Him ? You will see Him in the Gospel, You will recognise Him in the work that is revealed in the Gospel, as it is revealed in your soul. You will know Him and see Him in His preciousness. You can taste Him, taste that the Lord is gracious, faith will feel after if haply it might find Him. O He is a reality to faith in the soul of a poor sinner, and I do believe this, that you will so know Him, so behold Him, that you will know Him when you get to heaven; "It shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God", this is He. You have tasted Him, you have felt Him, you have had a sense of His love in your heart, the power of His grace in your soul; "It shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, He will save us, this is the Lord" Sweet surprise.

"O God, thou art my God". Sometimes faith will say it for you in your heart. You might say well, I really feel I dare not say it, but it will say it for you. Sometimes you will feel it spring up in your heart. If you look into the heavens at times, when you see a glory in creation, you look above creation and you will say, "O God, Thou art my God". Something like good Richard Dawe, he went down the road and he came to a standstill and looked up to heaven and said, "There is a man in heaven that loves me, and Whom I love".

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).