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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel,
Sunday morning, 5th June 1966

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Romans 1 v.16.

I have desired that the Lord would make the gospel a refuge to any poor sin distressed, sin desolated, sin destroyed, sin crippled sinner. There is the law, and why did the law enter? that the offence might abound. Why did the Gospel enter? that grace might abound. O the consolations in the chapter that we read. "The law entered that the offence might abound, but where sin abounded grace did much more abound".

One of the most blessed sounds of the Gospel trumpet! but what we want is to prove it in our own experience. A great thing if we know sin by the entrance of the law, for we shall never know we are sinners unless the law enters. Where there is no law there is no transgression, so that it is a mercy for the holy, good law to shine with its solemn light, discovering to us what we are. The law does not make a man a sinner, it discovers that he is, and it enters that the offence might abound. One said, "I have seen the end of all perfection, but Thy law is exceeding good". It is a great thing to be taught that, not generally, but particularly concerning our own case. Really to see the end of all perfection and for the law so to enter that it is exceeding broad that it claims the whole person, the whole of our life, our strength: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy mind and with all thy strength". It is exceeding broad, it claims the whole being, the whole person. And the law entered that the offence might abound until it leaves nothing, nothing but what is impregnated with sin, and that will make a sinner fit for the Gospel. We shall never be fit for the Gospel until we are made sinners universally. Not only by what we do in actual transgressions, but what we are in our nature.

Now this is the mystery of iniquity and if we read the third chapter of this Epistle, it shows us faithfully, exactly what we are. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one..their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." I know a Pharisee would say, well, surely that is a description of somebody else, that is not a description of me. But one convinced of sin would say, that is me, those are my features. It is a great part of the work of the Holy Ghost and of a good religion, of a good work begun, to be made a sinner.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation". There was the power of God unto creation. The exercise of the same infinite, omnipotent God we find in a different way. We have that in the 20th verse. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead". So that they, who are ignorant of God, who deny Him, so that they are without excuse because of this revelation of Himself in creation. But the works of creation, the power of God unto that end to create, to produce things from nothing, and He is to be adored and faith will adore Him as a Creator. It is only God that can create. Men can invent but they cannot create, and it is well to see men as but men and put in their right place. The greatest attainment for a man with respect to himself is to know that he is a sinner, and when he is made a sinner, then he will need the Gospel.

But the Gospel is the power of God in another direction and it

is a power using different perfections from what He used in creation. In creation there was no Redeemer, no love. In creation there was no regard unto mercy, it was a direct, naked act of omnipotence, glorious it was. I have admired the first chapter of Genesis, admired every days work, how it is concluded with that stamp of divine sovereignty, "And the Lord said...and it was so", all the way through. At the beginning of the day, "And the Lord said", and at the end of the day, "It was so", that is His sovereignty. "His counsel shall stand and He will do all His pleasure". But O the work of redemption is greater ! Therefore, a concise definition of the Gospel really is this, the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost. That contains salvation, the Gospel.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ". Well, I wonder how many here need it. It is a provision, a covenant provision, it was necessary because of the fall of man. If man had never fallen there would have been no need for the Gospel, so that all the way through there is a peculiar, mysterious relationship between grace and sin, and you will find that in your own heart. When once one is born again and taught of the Spirit, you will more or less distinctly realise as you go along these two kingdoms. They are kingdoms. One is spoken of as the kingdom of this world, the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of darkness. The other is spoken of as the kingdom of God's dear Son, a kingdom of His marvellous light.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ". It is a mercy to be able to say that much and to add to it, I need the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the 1st chapter of Mark, when the Lord began to preach, it is said that He preached the kingdom of the Gospel, or the Gospel of the kingdom. The Gospel is a kingdom, it embraces the whole of salvation, the whole of the purposes of God. It was contrived, if I might use that word reverently, in the Covenant of Grace. Nothing that the Lord does, or that He has purposed has a beginning. The Lord never knows one time what He did not know before. He is exceeding great and that is what makes salvation and the Gospel great, and what makes Him to be a comfort and consolation to a great sinner.

Therefore, in the first place, there is the infinite foreknowledge of God the Father. O I pray that we might not speak of these things nor hear them as a mere lecture. I have often said, and I expect if I live I will often say it again, one of the most vital things in hearing the Gospel and trying to speak of it for that part, is to feel within as to whether the Holy Ghost has made a connexion between you and every declaration of the truth of the Gospel, otherwise we may hear it in a way of logic, and I am sick of religious logic. What we want is salvation, and salvation is an experience, it is a work, and therefore it is connected with the whole of the purposes of God. The infinite foreknowledge of God and His eternal love is the source.

"Whom He did foreknow". This is a mystery, the Gospel is a mystery and therefore, every point of the Gospel we need revealed to us. And I would emphasize again the difference between a mystery and a difficulty. This perhaps may be useful to our younger people. A mystery must be revealed, a difficulty may be unravelled. You may work out a difficulty. May be wrought out by algebra or by some calculations. You may overcome difficulties, but you cannot a mystery, they are not the same thing. Things may be difficult, I would say this, that salvation is not difficult, yet it is impossible. Salvation is a revelation, and what we need is the Holy Ghost to reveal to our hearts the Gospel.

"Whom He did foreknow". That foreknown people He chose, and every spiritual blessing in the Gospel is given to them according to that rule. We shall never receive a blessing, we shall never have any knowledge of God unless we are foreknown, for it is according as we

are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. This is a glorious source of salvation, it makes everything in it infallible, certain. It makes everything to be as stable as the Rock of Ages. It is impossible, but we may imagine a kind of religion that simply depends upon the conduct of a person, a good many people's religion depends upon their conduct and their works, and their beliefs. But O salvation and the glorious Gospel proceed from the eternal love, the infinite mind, the foreknowledge of the eternal God. And what a wonderful person is that here in this Chapel whom the Lord foreknew, whom He loved, whom He has chosen. Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth", and if we are such a favoured sinner it will be made known, the work of the Spirit, in causing us to approach unto God. For all the work of the Spirit in experience is the effect of and flows from the eternal decrees of Jehovah. O the solidity, the eternality of it !

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ". You may be - you will be ashamed of yourself, not in a wretched mock-humility which I hate, but knowing yourself from day to day you will be ashamed of yourself. But you will never be ashamed of the Gospel. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ". We ought to mention that little word "For". It refers to the preceeding verse: "So, as much as is in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also", the heart of the Apostle was very big, very enlarged, his love of Christ, and therefore, his love of the Church is very manifest through his epistles. Well then, the Gospel contains, or is contained in the Covenant of Grace. The Covenant was a covenant between the eternal Three, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It was never made with man but it was made for men, for sinners. The covenant under which men were created was a bi-lateral covenant, man had his part to keep. "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou mayest not eat". That was the covenant. It was breakable, and man broke it.

The righteousness in which man was created was a perfect righteousness, it must have been, because he was created in the image of God and yet that righteousness was losable and he lost it. But the Gospel reveals a righteousness which can never be lost. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ", and therefore, in the Covenant of Grace the Lord Jesus was set up. In Him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, that the Lord Jesus should be the Head of the body the Church. In the Covenant of Grace the Father gave all the people that He foreknew and that He loved with an everlasting love, gave them to His Son. As said the Lord Jesus, "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me". All these things that are declared in the inspired Word belong to you if you are His, and you will see the importance of the Holy Spirit's witness to unite you and to connect you with the Lord Jesus in the whole of the decrees of Jehovah. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me". And they were given unto the Son as His Bride. So that God's eternal Son was set up to be the Bridegroom of the Bride. All the relationships that He assumed to His people are covenant relationships, all the promises, exceeding great and precious promises are in Christ Jesus, they are covenant promises. I am not ashamed of it. You will say, I need it, and you may be able to go further and say, I believe it, but O I want to possess it. Therefore, the great manifestation of the love of God in the Gospel is the sending of His dear Son into this world to save sinners. It would not have been necessary for the Father to have sent His Son to condemn the world. The terrible act of condemnation could have been effected from heaven itself, condemnation; but salvation could not, and this does show forth the majesty, and glory, and holiness of God. There is only one thing the Scriptures declare that God cannot do, "He cannot deny Himself", and therefore, if sinners were to be saved a way must be found for the saving of sinners without denying God's justice, infringing His holiness and sullyng His glory. And there was only one way to be found and that was for God, the eternal Son to take that human nature which had fallen, which had sinned, which had become dead, dead in trespasses and in sins, to take that nature in relationship, in reality.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ", and what is a great wonder the Lord, the Most High and glorious Lord is not ashamed of sinners. You are ashamed of yourself, but He is not ashamed to call them brethren. If we are brought to know His majesty, that He needs nothing, to realise that His Being is infinite and eternal, we shall see how amazing it is that He has devised a way by which poor sinners can be united unto Him, related unto Him and brought into union, a union that nothing can dissolve, an eternal union with His dear Son. This is a great salvation. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The mystery and the mercy of the Gospel is that the whole work of salvation was wrought out in human nature. He came and took the same nature, came in the exact place as a Surety and a Substitute for sinners. If you think of it, if those assertions are true and you are through grace inside of them, what a kingdom it is. Human nature sinned and therefore, human nature must suffer. Only human nature can fulfil the law of God. An angel could not. There is no merit in an angel. The innocence of an angel is a created innocence, they are created beings, and what makes it so wonderful is that in one person, and we like to come to single individuals, that in one person can be known by the teaching of the Spirit what it is to be a corrupt, ruined sinner, and therefore, in the midst of such a condition what it is for the glory of God in sending His dear Son "In the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh", that sin in his own flesh, that a poor sinner might be made a partaker of the divine nature. All this takes place in the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul and to my mind there is a great force in this expression, it is the power of God in that direction. "The power of God unto salvation," and every act, every part of the Gospel, not only has the power of God in it but is the power of God, and it will move toward salvation.

All its force, all its influence is to that end and therefore, it is called a perfect law of liberty. Wherever the Gospel comes it liberates.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, it is the power of God". His birth was the power of God and it was the power of God directly unto salvation. It was a miracle, but in that miracle in providing, in preparing a Body for the Lord Jesus there was love divine; "But in this was manifested the love of God toward us, that He sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him". O we can never express the mighty contact that was made when the Lord of life and glory took human nature and made contact with sinners, brought immortal blessings down, the sure mercies of David, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. When He came and became the light, the spiritual light of the world, the bread, the water of life.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, it is the power of God unto salvation". And it was necessary that in that humanity the Lord Jesus should unravel the works of the devil. O the ramifications of sin in our being ! It is a significant expression by Isaiah, when he saw the King, the glory of the Lord of Hosts, "Then said I, woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips and dwell among a people of unclean lips". What a revelation, how it does express our own experience. "I am undone". It is most expressive. May be like a parcel the string comes all undone, lets everything out. Or like a horse that is not properly harnessed to a cart, it all comes undone. You are weak, everything comes to pieces, and that is how a poor sinner feels in himself before God. "I am undone" I have seen perfection, the Lord of life and glory. And when the Lord Jesus came, He came to make up every breach that His people might be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He came to destroy the works of the devil.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God". It is the power of God in the working of salvation out by Christ, but it is the power of God of working that same salvation in the heart by the Spirit. And see how you will need power. "The

kingdom of God is not in word but in power", and that is just what we feel to need, and nothing but power is of any use to a helpless sinner. Sometimes you might feel a vehement desire, a zeal, a violence in your soul for power, and you cannot receive anything less than power. It is the Gospel. Everything that comes from God comes through Jesus Christ:

"Every grace and every favour
Comes to us through Jesus blood".

What a kingdom this is ! what an experience ! what possessions ! what unsearchable riches ! Why, my friends, they are the only true riches. Paul speaks of it in the preaching, "Unto me, who am the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the unsearchable riches of Christ is just the Gospel. And Paul in this same Epistle speaks of this Gospel and the unsearchable riches of it where he says, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out".

And yet all this is exercised in a poor sinners soul unto salvation. "It became Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory", in bringing many sons into heaven, "To make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings", in bringing them to glory, that is to salvation; and he speaks there of the dignity and glory of the Redeemer. "It became Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things", shows His glory and His dignity; and yet that He might bring many sons unto glory it was by this power "that He may bring many sons unto glory the Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings." The power of God was in His sufferings. In His sufferings He exhausted, swallowed up the sufferings that His people should endure in hell, the power of God was in it. The power of God was to deliver them from the sufferings of hell.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, it is the power of God" and, poor, weak sinner, you will be glad of that. Sometimes you will lay your weary head upon the power of God, your sin-burdened soul. I have thought much about sinners because - and I would not say a word, a word extravagantly, because I am the chief. Sin burdened, sin-distressed, sin-desolated, sin crippled sinner.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, it is the power of God". A power beyond sin, a power above self, a life that will swallow up death, a power that at last mortality will be swallowed up of life; the Gospel will swallow up the law. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation". And see this power of God in the dear Redeemer, in the Substitute, in the Surety. It is only unsearchable riches that could pay the debt His people owed, and that not in silver and gold. O what a distinction is made between earthly riches and the unsearchable riches of Christ! You will not covet much the riches of this world if you have any inkling of the riches of Christ. The difference is this, that whatever we may possess of wealth in this world, it makes no difference to our persons. I do hope our dear young people will remember that. It does not make a bit of difference to you if you were put in possession of a very large estate, not a bit of difference. You could have a large banking account, you could fill your pockets, but it would not touch your body, your soul, O but a drop of atoning blood is infallible ! A touch of the mercy of God, a grain of living faith and of grace will alter your person, it won't give you riches, it will enrich you, make a difference. There will be a new creation, a new heart, a new will, a new affection. O this is to be made rich, "The blessing of the Lord that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it". This is the Gospel of His grace.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not
edited for publication).