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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden, at "Galeed" Chapel,
Brighton. Sunday morning 11th September 1966

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the
power of the Holy Ghost".

Romans 15 v 13.

In this profound Epistle Paul has been treating of the fundamental doctrines of salvation of the Gospel, especially with respect to justification by faith, and then he makes application of these doctrines and shows how there is required the fruits of the Spirit, as we were trying to show on Friday. James comes to practical religion. If we tell James that we have faith, James says, very well, show me your works and I shall believe your faith, "For faith without works is dead".

But this beautiful chapter, the spirit of it. If the spirit of this chapter should flow across a congregation how refreshing it would be. Shows us how we should deport ourselves, behave ourselves in the Church of God. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves", and he shows the example that Christ gave, "Even pleased not Himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon Me". Then he makes that comfortable and important observation: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." It is well to remember, that whatsoever part of the Word of God we consider or read, that it is written for our learning, that it is of no private interpretation. When we read the Old Testament, the old Testament saints are gone, in heaven, and if the Scriptures were of private interpretation then all the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, indeed all the Psalms, they would be obsolete, but they are not.

The Word of God is inspired and the apostle brings forward in this chapter some of the most gracious characters and titles of God, God in Christ. Speaks of Him as the God of patience and consolation, the God of hope and the God of peace. Well now, these titles which the Lord in much mercy assumed are only suitable to characters that need them. The God of patience. O what patience the Lord Jesus manifested, spoken of as His long-suffering. What patience He endured in His life when He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself! and what patience He exercises toward His people! and this patience is a grace of the spirit, it is a spiritual patience. Natural patience is very commendable, but there is a difference between all that is natural and all that is spiritual. There is a natural meekness, very nice it is to see a natural meekness, but there are some very meek characters who have no evidence of grace at all. So this is a spiritual patience, and there is a spiritual meekness and spiritual humility, and therefore, we are to seek it of the Lord, as much as to ask of Him spiritual wisdom, wisdom that is from above, and this patience is a patience that is from above, consolation that is from above, hope that is from above. We shall live to prove and feel it in a sense of our needs as taught by the Spirit that whatever can do our souls any real good must come down from heaven. Are you conscious of that? Is there that teaching in your soul and that teaching by a discovery to you of your absolute need and dependence upon God, that whatever you receive that enriches your soul must come down from heaven? O it is a truth we have been singing -

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

and when we are brought there we have to look up, and O what there is to look up unto ! The apostle brings some of those things before us in this chapter: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Jesus Christ." Beautiful exhortation. I say if the spirit of this chapter was breathed by the Spirit across this congregation, what a refreshing breeze it would be ! "That ye with one mind and one mouth glorify God", even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But then he comes down to the text. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." So that the text is a prayer. A prayer of the apostle, he was a man of prayer. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." God is the God of hope because everything that can be hoped for is alone to be found in Him. In this same Epistle, Paul says, "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for ? but if we hope for that we see not then do we with patience wait for it." O what a blessed grace is the grace of hope ! It has its rise in the eternal Jehovah, in eternity past. I know that is a contradiction of terms to speak of past eternity when eternity cannot pass but there are those things accomplished before the world to the glory of God in the Church, and there was the rise of hope, and the source of hope is in the everlasting love of God the Father, and that hope was brought down to this world by God the incarnate Son, and that hope is brought into the heart by the Holy Ghost, so that, if I might so speak, the source, the glorious source of hope is in the eternal Jehovah, in the counsels of the Covenant of grace, but it is brought down by the eternal Son of God incarnate and applied by the Holy Spirit; and the other end of it, we have mentioned the source, the other end of it is within the veil whither our Forerunner hath for us entered, even Jesus. Look what it embraces ! look what it gathers up ! and this is a prayer.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Outside of this great God, and it is God in Christ, for there is no hope in an absolute God, there can be no hope in a consuming fire, and therefore, it hath pleased the Father that in His dear Son all fulness should dwell, and O what a hope there is to an empty and emptied sinner in the fulness of God in Christ!

"Now the God of hope". I say you look outside of the Lord Jesus in Whom is all the fulness and there is nothing but darkness and anguish and death and despair. Do you believe it ? Do you believe it ? That outside of Christ in the Gospel there is nothing but death destruction and despair ? It is a sweeping statement to make but I believe it, not only because the Word of God declares it, but because I know it in my experience. I know what it is in my own soul but apart from anybody else I have been brought to it. I know what it is for the pains of hell to get hold upon me, to look at everything in this world, and while we would be thankful and feel undeserved of the blessings of this life, yet there is nothing that we can look upon in which there is any hope whatever, nothing at all. It is good teaching, it is very painful but it makes hope very sweet.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." We would look a little as enabled then at this hope as it is brought to this poor world by the Lord Jesus Christ. When man was created there was no need for hope. A consideration, if the Spirit should help us, of the blessed condition of man as he was created and before he fell must have been beautiful in the garden of Eden. He had no need of hope, he had everything to see. God communed with him. He had no need of mercy, no need of grace, no need of salvation, no need of the Gospel. The need for hope came in the fall. O to believe in the doctrine of the fall is most important. But who believes it in the religious world today ? and there is only one way to believe it aright, not only to read it in the word of God, it is revealed there, but to believe it aright is by the Holy Ghost convincing us of our ruin in the fall. Things fit together, hopelessness in the fall

is connected with a good hope through grace in Christ Jesus. What a mystery godliness is ! O I have desired that the Lord would teach our young people the truth, it must appear a mystery to them. I remember when I was a youth I used to think as I sat in the back seat of this Chapel, whatever is Mr. Popham talking about. But when the Holy Ghost begins a work of grace in the heart, He will teach to profit, and really and simply there are only two things that He will teach a poor sinner that is one whom He intends to take to heaven, He will teach that sinner what he is in himself as ruined, He will teach that sinner Who and what the Saviour is in all His redeeming love and grace, that is what He will do. You cannot learn the one without the other and they fit, they fit like a mortis and tenon. An experience of despair is a preparation for hope, a good hope, and I venture to say this, nobody has a good hope through grace until they are reduced to self despair. I am sure of it, and that will kill all light religion. Things may have perhaps a useful place, but I do fear, especially in these days, there are many social activities in religion that are dead branches, and of course, they are more entertaining to fleshly religion, but my friends, what we need is salvation. That one word SALVATION, and young people do not want anything different from older people, they all want salvation and therefore the apostle prays, "Now the God of hope", in Whom there is everything to hope in, and that door of hope was opened, opened at Bethlehem. Simeon, by the Spirit, waited for it. He waited for the consolation of Israel. It was revealed to him that he should see the Lord Jesus Christ before he died. When he saw Him, he saw hope, he saw salvation. "Now Lord, lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation". He saw by faith in that Infant, Almighty God, and He is the God of hope, so that everything that you are brought to experience in yourself which sinks you in despair, you will find an anti-type in the blessed Redeemer, and it is a good thing to sink.

I have peculiarly, especially in late years, found much sweetness in the saddest parts of the Scriptures. I have found much comfort in the 88th Psalm, the most miserable Psalm in the Bible, and yet to me one of the most blessed Psalms. Well, let us look at what there is to hope in and it will meet its opposite and you will need this anchor all the way along, because you have got to pass through storms,

"The christian navigates a sea
Where various forms of death appear"

Therefore, David needed this hope and he made use of it, He made use of it when there were water spouts, deep was calling unto deep. He brought up the anchor and cast it overboard. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me ? hope thou in God", this great and eternal God was proposed by the Spirit to his faith, then water spouts and deeps lose their significance.

"The God of hope". So that this hope in the fulness of it, is in the Person of God's dear Son, and O to see that door opened. "Lo, I come...to do Thy will, O my God." I have felt that the door of hope as is set before us in the Hebrews is most blessed. "Lo I come.. to do Thy will O my God..He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. Above when He said, sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein which are offered by the law", could never do anything, it was divine institution for the time then present, they were figures, they were types, but this sacrifice could never make the comers thereunto perfect, they never reached the conscience, they never took away sins, and if that had been all there would have been no hope. But this is the door of hope, When the Lord Jesus heard Jehovah say that He had no pleasure in those offerings and offerings for sin, "Then said I, lo I come to do Thy will O my God.". The blessed anti-type, and it is the door of hope opened to a poor self destroyed, self condemned sinner, in the coming of the Lord Jesus, and this will be more than a mere doctrine to you. I know I have repeatedly said, and will so long

as I can speak, impress upon myself and upon you the necessity of a connection being made by the Spirit between your soul and salvation, the doctrines of the Gospel and the teaching of the Spirit in your heart. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, there is the connection.

A little while since we were speaking about the heart and the mouth, "I create the fruit of the lips" and that creation is the Holy Spirit's inward teaching, faith receiving the teaching and receiving what the Holy Spirit reveals of the things of God and that adds learning to the lips. So the apostle says, as it is written, "I believe, therefore have I spoken, we also believe and therefore speak". It is believing first and speaking in consequence of believing. And so you see the connexion here between this hope and the joy of it. It is the believing, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing", in believing what there is in God in Christ to hope in, there is everything there.

You take for instance the Lord Jesus as the Substitute for His people. Do you see there is any reason for hope in that? I mean, you come to look at yourself that is the point, and see whether you have that teaching of the Spirit that needs the Gospel. Whether you have been brought to complete hopelessness, wreckage and ruin in yourself and yet to see by faith that door of hope in the Lord Jesus; and to my mind the substitutionary nature and work of Christ is one of the sweetest doors of hope, because if all that the Lord Jesus became and all that He did was ^{not} done for His people of what use would it be? What hope would there be if He was not your Substitute? So the thing is joined together, believing and joy. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" in the substitutionary work of Christ. Not in believing in the work of the Substitution of Christ, but in believing that it was for you. It is a personal application of the Gospel where hope comes in. It would be to no purpose so far as you are concerned if everybody in the Chapel was saved and you were left out.

O I do feel we need to be more particular in seeking a personal application of salvation. That is it, an application of salvation, and the more you look at salvation the more it will expand. Everything is in it. Christ is in it, the covenant is in it, the love of God is in it, the grace of God is in it, the power of God is in it. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing".

Another thing, the door of hope with respect to righteousness, and that is what the apostle has been treating of in this Epistle. Justification by faith of sinners. Those of you who are sinners, you look at this. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace" in believing that. Not believing it because it is the 5th Romans, but believing it because it is in your heart, in your experience. If we stop short of that application then we are fatally short. You might believe the whole of the Gospel and understand it by mere natural effort but it will make no difference to you, you will have no joy and you will have no peace.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing". And what will precede this imputation of righteousness that justifies a sinner? Filthy rags, and the Holy Ghost will never strip a sinner naked to leave him naked, if He strips you He will bring you, bring forth the best robe and put it on you, but you will be stripped first. Self-righteousness cleaves to us like our flesh. Free-will Arminianism is suitable to the flesh, it gives authority to the flesh to have a will of its own. The apostle Paul had it when he went down to Damascus. The Lord brought him down to the very earth, He killed his free-will. Free-will was struck down, he was raised up by free grace. He found more hope in free grace than he did in free-will. There is a free will and that free will since the fall will take you to ever-

lasting destruction. But hope is in the free grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him". This is an experience, the Holy Ghost does this, and what joy. What joy there was in the heart of the Prodigal when the servant brought forth the best robe and put it on him.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" the witness of the Spirit that the Lord is the Lord your righteousness. You will have a righteousness to stand before God, but what a wonderful thing, this salvation and all its ingredients are to be possessed and experienced in your life, why, it is the sweetest part of life, there is no portion, there is no happiness like it. O I do, I do pray that our dear young people may be brought to know it. I can remember when I found happiness in everything else. But O,

"Compared with Christ in all beside
No comeliness I see,
The one thing needful dearest Lord
Is to be one with Thee".

And you will rejoice in hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" in the atonement of Christ in redemption; and these things would have no meaning if it were not for sin. That is the mystery of it, that through that fatal apostasy, by reason of that inexpressibly filthy thing sin, which makes our beings like a cesspool, yet in the midst of all that corruption is displayed the highest glory of God in Christ in redemption.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" that He is your Redeemer. Poor Job, afflicted Job, Job in the dust, he learned two things - and we shall learn them if we are under the same teaching. He said, "Behold, I am vile" but he said more than that, "I know that my Redeemer liveth". Two things, and if you are taught that you are vile by the Holy Ghost, you will sooner or later be taught and declare with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth".

"Now the God of hope". O what a light ; see it shining in the God of righteousness, see the Lord Jesus coming forth from the counsels of the Covenant of grace, the decrees of Jehovah, as a strong Man to run a race. See Him competing with the law, made manifest to destroy the works of the Devil. See Him coming and all that He did and all that He became. He unravelled the work of the devil and set His people free. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" that your Redeemer lives. Why there is a hope in His Person because He ever lives. Really, that is what we ought to have commenced with and what we ought to have continued with and what we shall have to end with. This is the hope, the Lord Jesus is God's eternal Son, His Person. I love it, I am bad enough to need it. But there is the door of hope, the Person of Emmanuel because He is what He is. His Being is underived, immutable, divine. So is all that He has done, and to think that a poor unworthy sinner can be brought into absolute indissoluble union with such a glorious Person, so that all that He did a sinner did in Him, and all that He possesses a sinner possesses in Him. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing".

Well, I must leave it. I have not the ability to speak of it, but I need it.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and
not edited for publication).