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LS 26

Sermon preached by Mr. G.M.Shaw
at Hope Chapel, Nottingham, on 23rd February 1988

Reading I John 5

Text: Hebrews ch.10 v 36

Hymns ① 509
② 247
③ 721

For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will
of God, ye might receive the promise.

In John's epistle, ~~as we read this evening~~, the promise is set before us
very clearly: "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life,
and this life is in His Son". And in the epistle to Titus we read this
concerning this same matter, "In hope of eternal life which God, that
cannot lie, promised before the world began".

Now let us have no strange ideas concerning the promise. The promise that
is recorded, the promise that is made, is the promise of eternal life. We
are not left to suppose that it is anything less than that. We are told
in whom this life abides and we are told also that we shall come into it:
there is nothing uncertain, there is nothing that can touch that promise
to lessen it, shake it, or take it away from those to whom it is made.

I want to stress, and stress importantly, that promise was made before the
world was, and God not only made the promise but also decreed that the heirs
of promise, those to whom it should be brought and given, might have a strong
consolation, God, because He could swear by no greater, swore an oath by
himself that "By two immutable things in which it was impossible for God
to lie, we might have a strong consolation".

So we have the promise and Titus reminds us it is an impossibility for God
to make a promise and lie, but knowing our weakness, knowing the trials
that come upon His people, feeling for them, desiring to comfort them He
swore by an oath "by two immutable things in which it was impossible for
God to lie". For God could not swear an oath and swear it falsely.

Now this is the promise, the promise of eternal life, and this life is in
His Son. In John's gospel, ch.10, we read concerning these things. "And
I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall
any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater
than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Now consider: the heirs of promise have ever been in the hand of Him, the
only-begotten of the Father, to whom the promise was made in the covenant
of grace. That we are heirs of the promise consists in that we have a
union unto Christ in the purposes of God before the world began. These
things are confirmed "For it is written".

You know sometimes we repeat familiar words and they do not seem to convey
unto us the exactness of the meaning because they are so familiar. We
repeat those words many, many times concerning this promise: "For all the
promises of God in Him are Yea and in Him Amen". The promise of eternal life
was to Him and is in Him to be given unto the heirs to whom this word is
addressed.

Over/

This verse divides up into three parts. First of all "Ye have need of patience" which sets before us the spirit and the manner of our behaviour, and this is following on from an exercise "After ye have done the will of God". So we have an exercise, we have a manner of behaviour consequent upon it, and we have an expectation of receiving the promise.

First of all then let us try and consider for a few moments what it is to do the will of God.

It was, I felt, a wonderful confirmation and a sweet agreement in the whole matter to read that ~~first~~ hymn and that which is written across the top of it - "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord". Surely these are the very things that John said in that chapter we read together.

No man can truly say
That Jesus is the Lord,
Unless thou take the veil away
And breathe the living word.

John reminds us that they, this people, believe the record that God gives of His Son. You know that the Lord speaking to Peter said "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you but my Father which is in heaven".

And consider what John has to say concerning this belief. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself". Now a man that does not believe it makes God a liar, because he believes not the record that God gives of his Son. If you and I are rightly taught - and consider, the Lord has given that undertaking "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" therefore they shall be taught this precious truth, they shall be brought to believe the record that God hath given of his Son and what is written, "God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth upon Him should never perish but have everlasting life". This is the record.

Now I believe we must consider firstly, in respect of doing the will of God, it is to believe the record that He has given of his Son. O, dear friend, do you and I believe the record that God has given of his Son? If we do the will of God we consider that we do that which is pleasing in His sight. Now it cannot be pleasing in the sight of God to deny the record that He has given of his Son. Conversely, it is pleasing unto God to believe the record that He has given of his Son.

Again, we read "Without faith it is not possible to please God". Now to believe the record He has given of his Son is to exercise faith. And consider, if we believe the record God hath given of his Son, he declares that He has sent Him to redeem his people. If we believe the record that God hath given of his Son then, surely, we must know the necessity for redemption otherwise we can see no purpose in, no need for Christ to be

Over/

sent and to come to redeem his people. Therefore, I believe those that do the will of God believe the record that God has given of his Son as they are taught of the Holy Ghost that they are sinners, and their need for a Saviour, and their view of Him whom God hath sent even unto that end.

So while there are many who perhaps may say - well, I have done my good turn for today, that is doing the will of God. Or there may be those who are like Saul, who have done all those things that pertain unto duty. He was satisfied with what he had done, yet ultimately when his eyes were opened he had to count all those things as dung and dross "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord": to be brought to see the glories and the beauties that pertain unto Him whom God hath sent to redeem poor sinners.

If we are truly sinners, convinced and taught and see a need for and a beauty in Christ, then I believe that we come to the Lord and we come in confession. It may perhaps seem strange to say that this is doing the will of God, yet if you go back and consider what is written concerning the covenant of grace, its purpose and its intention, as we view Christ coming into the world, consider that he came to bring "life and immortality to light", to make it known unto men that "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared".

O dear friend, if it were not made known that there is forgiveness with God, if God himself had not made the way, how should a sinner draw near, what hope could he have of being heard, of being received? The covenant of grace and the sending of Christ was to this end, to bring sinners, to show unto them the way, to make it open to them that they might draw near, that they might confess their sin, "For if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness",

Dear friend, do you view it as God's will that sinners should come and plead for Jesus' sake and plead Jesus' precious blood for the forgiveness of their sin? But it is so. If you and I have walked this way then I believe we know what it is to have "Need of patience after we have done the will of God". There is in us by nature a supposition that everything will be all right, and yet oftentimes we have to prove that while we have been through these trying exercises, and we have sought to trust and depend solely upon Him, the peace, the quietness we might have expected has not necessarily been our portion, indeed sometimes we have been more tried so that we have wondered whether we have misjudged or presumed.

I believe that as a consequence of that we come more and more urgently in prayer, and you know I believe that prayer is an exercise in patience.

In the Epistle to the Romans, in the 5th chapter, the Lord himself sets the order of all these spiritual exercises. "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us". You see the Lord here sets

Over/

before us, as it were, a series of circumstances and consequences, and we begin with tribulation. Now tribulation in every man does not work patience. In some men it works bitterness, in some men it works railings, in some men it works apathy, in some it works hatred.

What is it then that makes one man perhaps out of a great number to react differently under tribulation? Well, we have it in this quotation: "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts". That is what makes the difference. It is not what you and I are, or what you and I strive to be. Tribulation worketh patience where the love of God is shed abroad in the heart.

Then not only patience but experience, and experience hope. Now the Lord says unto his children, "Hope thou in God". If we hope in God even as He has bid us hope, then we do His will. Dear friend, do you and I hope in God? Do we see that this very act is according to His will and the consequence of love shed abroad in our heart? A man does not hope in and trust upon that which he hates and despises and belittles. If there is a hope raised up in your heart, a hope that is nourished even by means of tribulation, it is because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. You may question whether it is, but God says it is.

We need to exercise patience to continue hoping - you think of what is written concerning Abraham, "He hoped against hope". O what a wondrous display of patience in his hoping against hope! We might say that he put on one side of the page all the reasons and grounds why there was no hope, and they mounted up to such a great catalogue, they were all rational, they could be supported by all wisdom and natural understanding. But in spite of all those things, because the Lord had spoken, because the Lord had undertaken, because the Lord had promised, no matter how great the catalogue that spoke to the contrary, there was that spirit of patience that promotes "Hope which is not ashamed". He hoped against hope and he walked that way.

I suppose in the day in which we live the greater majority of men and women follow the crowd. If the majority do this and say this and behave in such a way, so do the others. It is not easy to walk against the crowd. Dear friend, it is not easy to walk against logical argument and reasons and grounds that can be put forward, but they that love the Lord are enabled to do it because God is greater. In that word we read together this evening "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in them". But, O, it needs a patient walking out, a patient holding on, a patient prayerful disposition.

Well, he says "After ye have done the will of God ye have need of patience". In the 10th chapter of Hebrews and the 11th we read of those who all died in faith "not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth". If you and I walk as these walked then we shall have need of much patience: patience because we have a view of that which is at a great distance and while we never hold these things in our hands, yet by reason of God's unalterable promise and his oath

Over/

we are assured that we shall come into them. Not only the world without but the world within our own hearts will laugh at us, raise up doubts and fears within us and say "Show me the evidence, give me grounds for your certainty". O, we are hard put to it at times to find any ground ! But, dear friend, consider how we began: "The hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began".

You know, Satan cannot overthrow it, all the logic of men can never overthrow it, and there are those indisputable evidences concerning that promise, for Christ came into the world, He suffered and bled and died, He procured for us the entering into the promise and He ever lives and reigns. His word is this "I will come again and receive you unto myself". And will He fail ? The Word of God says concerning him "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" until every heir of promise is come into the fulness of it.

O, dear friend, never mind what your heart says: it is what God has said, it is what He has promised, it is what His oath has confirmed, and if we can by His grace with patience continue and endure "They that shall endure unto the end shall be saved".

May the Lord add his blessing.

Amen

Hymn 721