

Afternoon Lesson. Matthew 6. SUNDAY FEBRUARY 10 1980
TEXT 1 PETER 5 V 6,7

Let us as assisted and graciously helped by the Spirit, call over with the beloved friends four cardinal points of the blessed message which is so relevant to the cases of pilgrims on the way to Glory. I will name therefore the four vital things. First, the wondrous foundation the filial relationship as between a loving heavenly Father and His beloved, adopted, unworthy sons and daughters. It is vital, everlasting union, so His dear children are continuously beneath His loving, watchful eye and under His wings and care. As we read in the Lesson the sweet word that is so comprehensive; "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Your Father; and built on the wondrous foundation three things follow: the powerful, loving exhortation, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," followed by the promise; "that he may exalt you in due time." There is no other way to exaltation: it is to be humbled under the mighty hand of God first. Followed by a royal, heavenly blessing; "Casting all your care," What a

word! "all your care upon him."

So by His gracious aid I will begin with, "Humble yourselves therefore I will say immediately there are many facets of the subject in relation to the mighty hand of God. I will name a few,- afflictions, difficulties trials. The Hymn in an amazing, concise way expresses it;

"Whatever cross lies at thy door,
It cometh from the Lord."

There it is. Obviously through the goodness, grace, love of God you are under my pastoral care, so there is an intimate relationship by God. At the same time I am not to know all the details of your path. It is certain in various ways you find at your door a cross. What is your attitude? There are two things: you may look at your cross and feel you cannot bear to take it up. Alas, when there is an element of rebellion or fleshly determination not to walk the path! an unwillingness, as if one would flee from it. You will understand, dear friends, what it is that is at your door. The Lord ever deliver us from looking at secondary causes. Dear Job came into an avalanche of adversity and he went to worship. He did not mention the elements; the wind or the fire, or the Chaldeans, the Sabeans: he only named God. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." He humbled himself under the mighty hand of God. Here is shining grace, losing all as he did, yet he worshipped God. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." He humbled himself at once. It may be affliction, frustration, disappointment, some painful trial, a cup that is filled with gall; it is abrasive; it is indeed traumatic. What is your course? what is right before the Lord? "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

There is another point I hope the Lord will ^{give} grace and ability to expound to you. I would speak discreetly under His influence. It may be the will of God is revealed in your life, and you resent, resist, oppose it. Inside, and it may be externally, you declare you will never go that way: you are not willing. He says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." Even a child of God may say, "Not this way, Lord." and he may give a negative reply. They have no intention of walking in the path or complying with what is before them.

"Love brings to compliance the will,
And causes the deed to be done."

While these souls oppose the purposes of God, deep in their hearts they know that one day ~~they~~^{it} will be brought to pass. He says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." I wonder if I speak to a soul in this? "Not this way, Lord". "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." There is another case; it may be cases. You will know the beautiful Hymn on faith and love; in the verse relating to love there is a beautiful expression,

"Love all defects supplies,
Makes great obstructions small."

Now then, take following, obeying, honouring the Lord. There is such a thing as being left to unbelief and Satan's temptations, raising up obstructions and putting them in the way. It may be some of you are doing that. The devil and the flesh raise up obstructions. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." I used recently the term excuses: now it is obstructions.

A further step. What is it will enable a child of God to humble himself under the mighty hand of God? We cannot produce it; it does not grow in the barren soil of nature. It is effected by the Holy Ghost; it is a divine gift. Some of you noticed a particular, wonderful foundation for this in our morning lesson. What is it that is the principle of humility? It flows from the Lord Jesus in His humility. Think of His glory and majesty, His omniscience and omnipotence, the glorious power of the blessed Redeemer in His incarnation and suffering Suretyship. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That is the principle root, foundation for humility. In all the perfection of the humility of the Lord Jesus He stooped so low as to be buried. You see the foundation the sweet, sacred principle of humility in the household of faith. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto a death of public shame. He condescended in His infinite stoop to be despised and rejected, a poor Man, a servant, though the Lord of all, - and to die and be buried. These are the dimensions of humility in all its glorious perfections. It flows into the soul of a child of God, and he is blessed with the Spirit of Christ and the holy, sacred influence of the blessed Spirit. Sweet humility, one of the outstanding, infallible proofs of oneness with the Lord Jesus, is manifested in the soul. They humble themselves under His mighty hand. How does the Lord bring this into their spirits?

Not by the sheer exercise of His omnipotence. He could, and compel us. No: this is how He does it; by His love, divine love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and as love begins to permeate your spirit it softens and melts your heart before the Lord, and in a few moments you

"Drop into His sea outright,

Lose yourself in Jesus quite."

It is done. This is being humbled under the mighty hand of God, and then you can say from your very soul, "Thy will be done." And you have got a delight in the will of God that it should be done. As we have said, the Lord Jesus being born in Bethlehem ^{in a stable} because there was no room for them in the inn, and being laid in a manger, in itself reconciles a child of God to his or her lot. Whatever your lot of trial or difficulty this would reconcile you. "Whatever my humble lot below," So likewise, the blessed principle enunciated from the Lesson this morning, to see Christ humbling Himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and being buried, produces by the Holy Ghost a willingness in your soul. My friends, this is one of the sweetest spots on earth. You in affliction under the stroke of His chastening in love are humbled under the mighty hand of God. O the brokenness of spirit and the blessing that flows to your soul!

The other facet, where the will of God is resented the Lord breaks it all down and makes one willing in the day of His power. I should like to issue a warning: it is this. The Lord may have opened up His way before you. Deep in your heart it is as clear as noonday that it is God's will but it does not suit your pride. It is not the way your flesh wants to walk, If God has convinced you that it is the way, don't try to run in another direction, or God will meet you and it will be a wonder if you escape with the skin of your teeth. Beg of the Lord that ~~that~~ you may know the sanctifying power of the Spirit in the message to day. Do not resent, resist it: do not run in another direction, as Jonah did. The devil is an old hand, together with the flesh, to get all the obstructions possible and you may think you have made a fair job of it and can excuse yourself. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." The child of grace falls under it: love removes obstructions. Is there one left when the love of Christ fills the soul?

"Dear Lord, the ardour of Thy love
Reproves my cold delays;
And now my willing footsteps move
In Thy delightful ways."

So "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," That is the exhortation: now the promise; "that he may exalt you in due time. It is desirable to bring Biblical characters to demonstrate, and the spiritual experience of it in our hearts. This is vital for the preacher I was thinking of those in Scripture who came into a very painful, sad path indeed. They were graciously contented and happy; their spirits were bright. We have the outstanding case of Ruth. She had a sad path; she lost Mahlon, but there is a demonstration of a soul filled with the spirit of the Text. It appears from the tenor of the chapters that she lived in sweet humility. I could put it in this way. It would appear that leaving Moab, the land of her nativity and her people she was so filled with humility that she lived at the feet of Christ. I will say something else to you. Being filled with sweet humility there is always a most blessed expectation. You know the Lord has something in store for you, and here is the promise: "that he may exalt you in due time." How does a soul know when there is something in store for him? Some of you have recently been humbled, and you can see as clear as noonday the Lord has a blessing to bestow on you. You will never enter into it, only as you are humbled. It is when souls are humble and honour Him that they receive the blessing. Some think they have got to get the blessing first. The Lord favours you and you honour Him and you get the blessing. You have got an expectation; the Lord has blessings in store for you. That is where Ruth was. She had so fallen in His blessed hands and was so filled with the sweet grace of humility, she cheerfully anticipated the Lord's appearing. She could go; it was her delight to go with Naomi and she is not indolent. She was off to the field. God knew where she was going. He did it for her. He led her to the very field. Presently he comes, and I am going to say her heavenly Boaz. "Whose damsel is this?" He receives information and he speaks to her. "Hearest thou not, my daughter?" If only I can get it over to you by the power of the Spirit, it is the soul that is humbled that has such an expectation. Humility is accompanied by complete filial submission to your blessed Lord and His perfect will in Jesus Christ. Submission is to your Beloved

and consequently to His blessed will. His way, His will is perfect. If any said to you, "What is your mind for the future?" you would say, "The will of the Lord be done." Your soul is swallowed up with the will of the Lord whatever it is. I have said to you, submission relates to two things; the passive and the active part. The passive is to drop into His hands and know no will but His. The other is the activity of all the graces of the Spirit in the soul in active delight in the will of God. The second thing is, and it is often named in prayer,- contentment. Why are you contented? Because you have got Christ, His blessed presence. You might see something taking place in the parish or in the earth and you are completely contented. "Having Jesus, I have an immortal store." I have got my Beloved. You are not always after this, that, and the other in the earth. The third thing is, you have divine peace in your soul. You may say to me, "Is this possible in the path of tribulation?" It is the very secret of it. It is wonderful to know the will of God and you are so contented and have such peace you do not want to lose it. I said inwardly on the way home, Lord, I do not want to lose it. That is how you will be. "Let me be in the place of submission, contentment and peace, and my soul, person, wife, children, concerns all in the loving hands of my Father." Do you think it is a blessed thing and a wonderful gospel? Indeed it is. See the peace of your soul if you have got Christ and feel in your spirit all is in His blessed hands. It makes me think of a time years ago when I was to baptise several on the Lord's Day. Instead, in the early hours I found myself in the ambulance on the way to hospital. All the family were at home; there was the Church, my practice, everything. Whatever could I do? The dear Lord said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." and I dropped all in His hand and lived in that peace for days and nights. I had not a care or anxiety in that sense. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." and I know that is how I could well die when the time comes. We read in the Lesson this afternoon concerning, "Your Father knoweth," When dear Mr William Vine was dying he was so favoured with the first two chapters in the Song of Solomon. He had his dear wife and family with him and he read from our chapter this afternoon for them, as to how the Lord would watch over them and care for them. My friends, the Lord never forsakes His servants and people.

Mr Vine was humbled under the mighty hand of God: he was dying on it; he was going to bliss. God gave him a word for the family and he left them in His hands. You have got the example of the Lord and His saints and the dear children of God who have formed this Church through the generations.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Did He not exalt all His people? Job saw it before he came into it, when he saw he would come forth as gold. The Lord began to exalt him, and he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." That is exaltation, it is resurrection. He exalts you in due time. Your soul has a blessed future. The Lord will turn your captivity presently. The Text at Worthir was, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." That is how the Lord works.

"Casting all your care upon him," Care is composed for the Lord's people of trial, sorrow, affliction, difficulties, responsibilities that are heavy; also, deep exercise of soul. So you have got three main sections. "Casting, - dropping." You have heard the expression that is explicit; shedding the load. As people get older and enfeebled they have to shed their load according to health and strength. Casting means shedding the load. Go to the Throne of Grace, and the Lord favour you to cast your burden on the Lord, and be as the thrush in the oak tree, singing and praising the Lord. You will feel you can praise and bless Him, and call the people of God to join with you in holy adoration.

Amen.