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Prayer Meeting Address given by our Pastor
on April 30, 1974.

Lesson. 2 Corinthians 12. vv. 1-11.

For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. 2 Corinthians. 12. 11.

I commend to you in the Name of the Lord three amazing claims made by our own apostle, St Paul, that we greatly covet what he expresses in three Scriptures. The first is, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. What follows? "of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1.15) This means he claimed to be the principle sinner of the human race. That is number one. Number two; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Ephes. 3.8) Ponder it: "less than the least of all saints." 'Least' means in a degree so that he took the lowest position; the very least of all saints. Number three is in the Lesson. "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

Very well, let that form the basis of our meditation for a short season. I want to present these Scriptures to you in several ways. First, as I have named, they were his claims. If you are taught of God you only claim what you know and believe, what God has shown you, taught you and given to you. He claimed he was the principle sinner of the human race, he was lower in degree than the least in the whole family of God, and he was nothing.

I want to inquire into the meaning of 'nothing'. It is this; a thing of no value and no importance: nothing, and you cannot be less surely than nothing. He claimed this, So I will pause. Do we really from our souls find it possible to claim these three things? Would you really feel before God you felt to be the principle sinner of the human race? lower in degree, and nothing? of no value, no importance?

The next step. These things do not stand in the abstract: they are not

naked expressions. They are united to something. In the first place, he claims to be a saved sinner. Jesus Christ came to save him: a redeemed, saved sinner. The love of Christ in your soul will produce such a sense of absolute unworthiness, you can never get low enough. The next instance is associated with this. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." He was a man amazingly enriched by divine grace.

What will grace do for you? One of the fruits of grace is you feel a sweet humility; "less than the least of all saints." The Scripture before us is at the first sight very complex. He is making a claim. "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." Dear friends, the teaching of the Spirit, the grace of God brings into harmony two things; a warrantable derogation of self, and at the same time, first, Christ must increase. You claim to be one of God's sons and daughters, and you must be something though nothing. The term 'something' means the Lord's portion in this sense. How amazing it is to derogate self, and at the same time be something, dear redeemed sons or daughters of the Lord Almighty.

There are several things to be said. First, it is a claim because it is the Spirit's teaching and the fear of God, the grace of God in the soul, and it is a posture, a stance. It is a God-honouring posture to the glory of God, and it is our proper place before Him. Less than the least, the chief of sinners, nothing: then we are in our right place. How does a regenerated sinner come to know these things? First, by a revelation of the majesty and holiness of God as in Isaiah 6. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and his train filled the temple." He had such a sight of the majesty and holiness of God, and he said; "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." That is the first point. Shall I leave it there? Shall I say to you that a sense, a sight, an understanding of the majesty and holiness of God will give an awareness of our true condition as fallen creatures and dying sinners? No: I cannot leave it there. A realisation of the live coal, an application of the precious blood of Christ, especially to be led to His dear wounds

and bleeding side, To Gethsemane and Calvary will produce in us all that has been declared,- humility, repentance, in a low place at His dear feet, Favoured to claim that He is ours, and believe He died for us. Amen.