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Substance of Two Sermons preached by our Pastor,
on August 25, 1974, Sunday.

Morning Lesson. Philippians 2.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Acts 5. 31.

All you who fear God will find this to be a complete and most blessed body of Divinity. Two things immediately occur to my spirit: the first is the principle theme in the souls of those who know the Lord Jesus Christ and have received Him by faith in His exaltation. A touchstone and an unerring guide and manifestation of union with Christ is found in an overwhelming desire that you may be favoured yourself to exalt your blessed Lord as He is by the right hand of God. He is exalted in heaven.

For a moment let us take the sacred Ascension gift of Christ to the Church of the public ministry of the gospel of redemption. There would be no ministry unless the Lord gave holy anointing to men chosen by Him and a desire in their hearts that in the ministry they might exalt Him. To come to true, vital Christianity, a true Christian is a dedicated person: soul, person, life is completely consecrated to the worship, use, and service of God, and one of the manifestations of grace is, the Lord bestows an obediential spirit, and it is their delight by lip, feet, and spirit to exalt Christ. I must say to you, one of the greatest joys and privileges and honours He has freely bestowed on all His people is that with the heart they should believe unto ~~salvation~~ righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. One believes there is a lack of confidence undoubtedly, in the minds of many: you are afraid to venture. If only you could venture! if only the Lord enabled you to venture wholly on Him! Notwithstanding age, circumstances, temptation, if only you could venture! It is a venture to me this morning. If only you could venture to testify of the preciousness, worth, and value of Christ to your soul, to declare His Name, and so profess Him as your Lord, God, Saviour, Father, Friend, and that your hope for heaven is in Him! You would find

an amazing sense of courage, strength, peace flowing into your soul. It is a question of venturing on Him. You are afraid to take the first leap. If only the Lord enabled you by His sweet, constraining Spirit to venture then the blessings would flow. I feel many people have got things the wrong way round. They set a course for themselves. They say; "Well, I want to advance to a higher degree or level of spiritual experience, then I will open my mouth and declare Him." It is a prerequisite to have the new birth, to know sin, condemnation, a revealed Christ, a taste of His mercy, a hope in Him. You may set yourselves a high standard of spiritual experience and come to a conclusion; "When I receive something more, I will open my mouth and exalt Him before all the people." You have got it the wrong way round. I feel in many cases if you are left with that concept you will never come at all. The thing is for a poor, guilty, needy sinner, who has known condemnation and Christ revealed so you are not ignorant of Him; you have tasted His sweet mercy, divine love; it is for you to venture all on Him, and the blessings will flow. This is God's order. He honours those who honour Him. It is strange that I should need to preach in this way to a body of people professing to be Strict Baptists, because from your earliest days when you became aware of the letter of truth, you were aware of the doctrine of Baptism. The whole point is, it needs divine love, and less than a grain of faith. If you had a grain of faith you would come; a little degree of faith, and you must come. This is God's order. It is not generally recognised by many who have the life of God in their souls, the great honour, privilege, and joy He has given you to exalt Him in the earth. If this is not the theme of your life and soul, what is there in life? Nothing. If you have the Spirit of Christ it is to exalt Him. That precious One who has given you heaven and redeemed you from death, is He not worthy to be exalted in this sense by you in your life by your feet and spirit and lips? This is quite spontaneous: I had not premeditated naming it. It is so abundant in relation to the exaltation of Christ. I came here this morning with this subject, and thought, is there the spirit in our heart to rejoice in the exaltation of Christ? Are we capable of spiritual joy in relation to the holy doctrine of the ascension, and exaltation of our blessed Redeemer? Does it mean anything to us? It is so obvious to

me, if we are in union with Christ the victory and ascension of Jesus will fill us with joy and a holy zeal to proclaim His Name, love, preciousness abroad. I am glad the Lord has led me to preach this. I confess to the fact that it remains to this moment a profound mystery to me as to why many we believe fear God should remain silent. After all, if you think in this way and use an analogy, as God's creatures there must be ^y first time you venture. If you never venture you never gain holy confidence. Some would say the thought of a man going to the front of the Sanctuary and speaking in prayer before a congregation would be so formidable that they felt they could not come. There is a first time, and when you venture on the Lord the first time is a blessed time. There is a little of the sweet confidence of faith. You say you are a poor sinner, as black as midnight; you cannot see your way; you are tempted and pursued by the adversary, but you will venture on Him, and you get a smile of divine approbation. I have said and I will reiterate the substance of it; you do not know the joy there is in exalting Him in the earth. There are a few people, a very ^{few} people whose hearts and lives seem to be filled with a spirit to exalt Christ. "O what shall I do my Saviour to praise?" There you are; you linger on the brink, if I may so express it, and there you will stay all your life if you are in that spirit. If you take the ministry of the everlasting gospel, the time comes when one has to launch into the deep, or jump into the sea. The pulpit is like a diving board, and you do not know whether you will sink or swim, as we shall sing presently in the last hymn; (237. pt. 1) It is wonderful to launch into the deep; to venture in Him. This brings us by the grace of God, to the field of joy beyond all contemplation, to live only to publish His praise to exalt Him. Really surely this is like a searchlight on our hearts and lives. It shows how little professed Christians live to the glory of God; how little desire there is to publish His praise.

I will take a further step. The subject is patent and clear to you; it is the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is something involved and inferred. If Christ is exalted, then Christ descended. "He that descended is the same also that ascended... He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." This is the bedrock of our salvation, and it is before us as an example, and it is before us as the pattern and

guide for every child of God. That is to say, it is how the Spirit works in every quickened sinner. First they are brought low. God only knows how low they are brought. This is the pattern for us for life: it is not only the initial work, it is the work of the Spirit all through our lives. Immediately the flesh begins to gain ground, the child of God has something that is damaging to the soul, and the Lord again proceeds to bring that child of His low. If I may suggest that if you could see a spiritual graph you would see up and down, and how the ^{Lord} brought ^{down} and took you up. You would see the line; down you go, lower than before, then the Lord gives a little exaltation. This will interest you. You think of it spiritually. You go down; the Lord brings you low, and He exalts you. After a while, down you go again, and He exalts you. There is more to it: not only does He bring you down, perhaps in every way, - spiritually, physically, mentally, relatively, circumstantially, providentially you are brought low. This cannot be strange language: you cannot be ignorant of this. It is a Father's hand. In afflictions, calamities, sorrows the line drops down. There is more to it than that: not only does God bring you down, but you humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; you are made submissive. Instead of resenting and rebelling against it, the Lord gives you a thankful heart and a willing spirit, and humility and submission. A person can be brought down in health and circumstances and be full of rebellion. The Lord gives submission. The same pattern is true for families; for young and older friends, for nations and communities. If only the Lord gave us as a people in the land the spirit to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and to discern the hand of God He would surely lift us up. If the Lord gave it in the Churches things would be very different.

You never know how low God will bring His people before He gives exaltation. Job must have felt he had touched the bottom: the Lord exalted him....It is tragic surely, for a man to lose his job and go home to his wife and family round the table, and say; "I am redundant." It is easy to look on. This is being brought low. In many ways there is a being brought low. Things collapse and run adversely, and you are brought low. If the Lord sanctifies it, you feel it is a Father's hand and it is in love. Come, my friends, there are a number of you in the Chapel who know

what it is to be brought low, and you^{do} not know how low you will come. If you feel it is in love to your soul, presently He will exalt you. I feel a sweetness in this because there is a range of ages here. Some are getting on, and some who are younger know what it is. The whole point is, my friends, the Lord knows how to deal with His children. Wise parents, if they have special sagacity given, know far better ^{than others} how to deal with a variety of temperaments in the family. You can well leave it to the Lord: He knows how to deal with His children, and the preacher knows it. The hand of the Lord comes and you are brought low, but He helps you. When you see light on it, that it is the Lord's hand and in sweet love, how you fall into the hand of the Lord! You will look back on things that were bitter and painful, and you will say they were among the greatest blessings of your life, You did not know at the time that the Lord was dealing with you as a son or a daughter, in love.

This is the pattern. Christ descended and ascended, and His people see this blessed pattern etched on their lives; they are brought low. When the Lord brings you low you find though you are stripped of all creatures you are close to One who loves you, and whom you love, the Saviour. If you have no companion on earth, you will find fellowship with Him. So it is a wonderful pattern. I did not anticipate preaching in this way, but I am happy to do so. You want to know it for your own soul, it is so blessed. One day those who know what it is to be brought low will hear Him say, "Come up higher." If you can see with a little spiritual light and discernment your life and the various dispensations of God toward you, you will see this is the purpose of God. It explains things you pass through, whether comparatively trivial or major. You see with spiritual light, and you see it is the Lord's way of bringing you off the flesh, the world, time, and all below, and endearing Himself to you; making Himself more precious than before. You say; "I see, Lord. I can see Thy purpose; Thy hand. There is no terror; it is love." Things are marred here below.

The other side is, He displays to a sanctified soul His beauty. If you look on the world, self, afflictions, trials, and you have seen things in His heavenly light, you will not envy any. Why? Because the Lord is dealing in love with your soul and fitting you for heaven. This is where you wanted to be, and it is where you are. How amazing that we have

spoken in this way, but I wanted to reach you, if the Lord will, and to show you the pattern. It is wonderful to come into the fellowship of His sufferings. You are close to Christ and weaned from this dark world and the flesh. If the Lord has granted to you a degree of this you will desire to go further.

So I have presented to you the pattern. It is wonderful that those the Lord loves He chastens, brings low, and there is exaltation. I will give you one facet of it. Ruth knew what it was to be brought low. She lost her husband. I do not know her age, but she was a young widow. Mahlon had gone, and she was very low. She was submissive, and the one overwhelming wish of her soul was to exalt Him. All she sought was Christ. So as we have observed, she had poverty and happiness. She was very poor, she gleaned, she was happy: she reaped Bethlehem. The Lord exalted her, and it was right. He led her step by step until Boaz was hers. You can look on and every step shines as a sunbeam; it is transparent with beauty, purity and honour. The Lord exalted her, and the Lord knows how to honour those He has given submission, so that they humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and they will be exalted in due season. Amen.