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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Sunday Morning, November 21. 1982.

Lesson. Exodus 2. vv.23-25. & 3.

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee. Exodus 3. 12.

You may anticipate this has issued as ^{the exercise} of an old pastor concerning a number of important matters that are with us continually, and sometimes with particular weight and concern. Our own son in the faith venturing for the first time at Hastings, to speak in the Lord's Name, is a tremendous matter with me powerfully. And all who seek to honour, praise, adore the dear Lord in obeying His blessed commands and following Him are heavy on my heart, though with sweetness, joy, divine worship and adoration. And the loss of another dear friend and brother. I am concerned with the beloved widow, our dear sister and the dear family. You may see all these things are covered by the divine faithfulness and love and compassion in the blessed promise of the Lord here to His prince Moses. Also there is the added weight of those in serious affliction, so they have a double weight; their poor bodies feeling to be ravaged by a pathological process, and the agony and distress of their immortal souls. It will have a good, triumphant issue. When the Lord puts His hand on His chosen it is not infrequently in a way of comparative severity. There are terrible things in righteousness. A wonderful blessing it is if they are in righteousness. It is love, not vindictive anger, but the Lord smites, and this always brings to my mind the wonderful hymn we sung at Portsmouth in the dugout before the morning service.

"Let me not murmur nor repine,
Under these trying strokes of Thine;
But while I walk the mournful road
Be still and know that Thou art God."

You see, all these matters, and all your cases who fear God, every one of you, converge here in the message of the Lord to us. You will all be jealous over the text in the sense that you will hope the Lord will give it to you; not only to others, to you also. There will be soul jealousy. Wonderful when the Lord works by way of spiritual jealousy. You see others blessed, and this creates in you a desire that you may receive

the blessing too and not be left out. So we may say in the Lord's peerless Name that this blessed Word covers the whole spectrum of His people. Not one of you in the Sanctuary this morning fearing God, but will feel in varying degrees your need of the blessed promise. I am thinking of our dear sister who has so recently resigned her dear husband to the Lord, also of all the dear widows in the congregation, and if there are any widowers and also those orphaned. It is certain when a dear wife and mother loses a dear husband, what a case for this promise; for the dear Lord to come and fulfil the sweet promise. There is no longer your family worship and prayers together. The voice is silent - only the fleshly part. Songsters in Heaven know a wonderful increase, but there is no longer a protector, guide, one to solace, to manage all and to show such great affection. So I am thinking of widows, or those on a condition tantamount to that state. You know what it is to feel bereaved, if not actually, by certain circumstances in life. What a word! what divine coverage! "And he said, Certainly I will be with thee." This is a little introduction to the subject. You see my exercise and how it all has converged in my heart. I needed the Lord to give a word to cover all, and this is the word.

Let us endeavour to open the subject and dilate on it. I wonder where to begin. I will say now that promises are wonderful evidences that God loves you: you are His. He loves you with everlasting love, and therefore with lovingkindness He draws you. These are positive evidences that you are related to Him in Covenant bonds, holy ties, and they are wonderful proofs that you are His adopted sons and daughters and His bride, and He your holy Bridegroom. And to whom does the Bridegroom make promises? To His bride. You will see it in perspective. One of the promises He gives to His bride is, "Certainly I will be with thee." Very wonderful. This promise flows from the fountain source, the great heart of God, through the atonement of Christ, the rich channel of precious, redeeming, shed, vital, sin-atonement blood to the souls of His people, by the power, divine unction, grace and love of the Holy Ghost. As it flows two things take place. One is, living, vital, sacred, saving grace of faith, which is most precious, embraces the promises and will never let them go in the darkest hour or sorest temptation. Faith will never let go

That is why David could say when in great trouble, "But I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God." Faith was clinging to it, though they were devising to take away his life. Faith receives promises. The second thing is, as faith receives and never lets go, so she holds them in your heart, the heart of flesh, as part of her treasure. What about that? How much treasure have you in your heart? It is beautiful, isn't it. If any said to you, "What is your treasure?" Your house, bungalow, car, you look nice, you have a few pounds invested, a good wardrobe, if any asked what is your treasure, what would you say? "It is not what you see. It is above, in Heaven. Jesus, and the indwelling Spirit, and the promises the Lord has given me are laid up in my heart." When God gives promises He writes them on the fleshy tables of your heart with His own finger so they are there. A wonderful thing it is to have promises written in and on the heart. These promises are most sweet. They give birth to great expectations, and to anticipate that they are a display by God of His Being, perfections, His holy, righteous character; also to a wonderful expectation of what the Lord will accomplish in you, for you, through you to His glory.

I should like to pause. Have you gone along with the exposition? You believe you can say you have by divine grace participated. You have treasure which is invisible, and if you could see your heart you would see the writing of the finger of God on it. It is well known in Heaven and in your soul How beautiful and blessed, and they are attended by divine sealing and confirmation and the oath of the Lord, and He will fulfil His promises according to His everlasting love, manifesting His immeasurable grace, enduring ~~mercy~~, wondrous faithfulness, immutability, a sovereign efficacy and power. They are fulfilled, In every promise is enshrined His divine faithfulness to fulfil, because if He failed to fulfil one of His promises to His people He would sully His Name. I say it reverently. You do not adequately realise how much God is bound up in it as well as you. Promises are laid up in the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, to be communicated, spoken, revealed, applied to His people. You always know when you receive a promise. It comes with sovereign efficacy, boundless power, love and unction, and your soul rejoices in it. So you see the miracle and wonder of a promise. I have always felt an

affection for the hymn, (628)

"Like streams from the fountain they flow,
And Zion preserve from despair."

Do you see? You will if you are in it because, in relation to the trial of your faith, fiery trials, water trials, floods, flames, the promise preserves you from despair. When you are ready to despair the Lord makes the promise so sweet. The preacher has proved it innumerable times.

You all know well, as prayerful, spiritual readers of the Bible, the circumstances round the text. Moses was eighty years of age. Surely this is heartening to the people of God if they read it with the eye of faith. The Lord heard the ^{groanings} ~~groanings~~ of His people by reason of their ^{groaning} ~~taskmasters~~. Do you give forth sighs and groans? I am sure you do. You try to study others, not to overburden them with your troubles. You try not to come to the House of God with a long face and be so miserable. It would be sinful with so much to bless the Lord for, to give way to inordinate grief. Why art thou so cast down?

"Why so cast down, dejected soul?
A loving Christ is near."

You try to put up a pleasant countenance if possible. Under it all you give forth sighs and groans. You will, if you do not now. You may have had periods when there was not so much to distress you, and then you go down to the depths. It is before God, my friends. It is your sin, what you are in, the path you come into. God heard their groaning. It is wonderful that Almighty God, the glorious, infinite Being, hears the groans of His people, poor specks of dust and so insignificant, but we cannot really assess the solemnity of our accountability to God. We are God's creatures, and I hope through grace His dear children, and so all are dear to God.

"Though of myself I nothing am,
I'm dear to God and to the Lamb."

You see, your God is omnipotent. If He hears your groans one day He will deliver you. What does He say concerning it? He looked on the children of Israel and came down to deliver them. Moses had been in seclusion for forty years, and He was going to send him to be their deliverer. He was very reluctant. In those forty years from the time he made the decision by the grace of faith and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,

I see the Lord greatly deepened His work in Moses' soul. Is there not a purpose behind the dispensations of the Lord? In those forty years Moses knew more concerning his own sinfulness and sinful nature, and more concerning God and His holiness and righteousness. This is salutary. So he was reluctant. He saw his disabilities, infirmities, and he looked on them, dwelt on them and in a sense pored over them, and he was not eloquent. My friends, apply this. The time comes when the Lord greatly blessed His dear people and favours them. They quite think and feel they are soon going to Heaven in joy. Some of them do. There is a time of great blessing and they never come out of it: they go to Heaven. With some, after they have been highly favoured there comes the time as when the Lord was baptised, they are led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. This may cover a period of years. You have been greatly favoured, and God deepens His ^{vital} work in your soul, and as He does you will feel and know more than before concerning filthy, corrupt, sinful nature. This goes on for a while, and the Lord keeps saying to you, "Turn thee yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations than these." worse than you have seen before. The child of God usually feels to be in distress, in a dilemma, and you will write bitter things against yourself. You will feel as if it is all against you. It isn't at all. It is the work of the Spirit, deepening His work, showing you what you are because He shows you more of the holiness of God, and you have days, weeks, months of going down to the dungeon and seeing and feeling dreadful distress in your soul, knowing what you are. I believe the Lord did that for Moses during those forty years. He was not the same man: he was in a different frame at eighty. How reluctant he was! He felt he could not go; he was so sinfully unworthy. I wonder if there are any here in that place where the Spirit has shown you much of the desperate wickedness of your heart? A few years ago a minister ^{I knew} was forgiven - he was between eighty and ninety - a good, able minister but never one to go deeply in the ministry into the plague of the heart, said to me, "The Lord has shown me more of my sinful heart than ever before in my life." What about you? Has the Lord done that for you? It is not against you, brother or sister. It is the deepening of His work. You will need the Lord Jesus more than ever feelingly. If you are in this you will know what it is to enter

into the hymn concerning the heart:

"Swarms of ill thoughts their bane diffuse,
Proud, envious, false, unclean;
And every ransacked corner shows
Some unsuspected sin."

It is vital work and teaching from the Lord, and Christ will be more precious and you will be humbled in the dust. You will not be the man or woman you were; too haughty, proud, independant. It brings you down to the dust and you put your mouth in the dust. Are you surprised that I should preach this? It is necessary, and the Lord will strip you of self-righteousness, spiritual pride, and you will see your sinful unworthiness. You will be where Moses was when he felt he could not go. These things stared him in the face, so the Lord had a good word for him, a kind word. He said, "Certainly I will be with thee." Blessed be God.