

13-10-1974

Afternoon Lesson. 1 Chronicles 21.

TEXT ISAIAH 26.20

In the context of the pouring out of the Lord's righteous indignation against sin on the earth, we have here a blessed directive to His dear people and the holy activity of faith in their souls. So this afternoon I wish to look at various steps in the holy exercise of living faith in relation to the Person and glory and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the steps in the holy activity of faith. The first, "Come, my people," was dealt with in the discourse this morning. Come: a view by faith of the Person and glory of Christ; an advance to Him; nearness of approach; and then the sweet arrival.

I do not wish to be unduly repetitive, but take the case of the spend-thrift son as an illustration. With divine life in his soul his back was on the world, and his face to his father's house and the loving father. If you are facing the cross, your back is to the world. It is a solemnity with us to day that there are so many, and this is something that sadly penetrated the professing Church of God; our backs are not altogether on the world. My friends, let us face it. The work of the Holy Ghost is efficacious, and clear, and irresistible. It is not moving a few degrees away from the world: it is with your back to the world if you are facing ~~Christ~~ the cross of Christ. There would be a wonderful manifestation of life and liveliness in our souls were we to know more abundantly what it is to be looking towards the cross of Christ. We should be dead to the world. We must face this: if there is no deadness to the world then the world obtrudes. All that obtrudes brings death to the soul measurably. You know the things that deaden your soul. To have your face to the glory of Christ in His incarnation and suffering Suretyship means the overwhelming and overriding spiritual desire in the soul will be to have daily communion with Him; daily repentance; daily washing in Calvary's blood. Your soul becomes dead to the world. I ask you, with myself, humbly, faithfully to examine yourselves on this point.

So I proceed. The prodigal was seeing his Father's house, having a sense of his father's heart, with his back to the world. I will go aside to say this. When we speak of a hope of a glorious Reformation in Britain, reformation needs to be begun in our own souls and Churches.

The trouble through the ages has been,- it was in J.C.Philpot's time, and before, the Church and the world are married, wedded: there is no difference. It is not just mumbling a few prayers. (Do not misunderstand me. I am not cynical relating to the beautiful terminology) but the Church is married to the world. This is one of the great objectives of Satan. Here is a note of alarm. "Come, my people. Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins. Come out."

So the son's face was to Christ; his back on the world. The devil would never get him back to the world: he is dead to it; he has finished with it. Once he is facing home he begins to advance. "Come, my people,.. advance." You walk, run, fly. Beautiful, is it not? The hymn says, "Foul, I to the fountain fly," Once you know there is a fountain you will fly. You are black: you want to be whiter than snow; you want to be as wool. So he advances, draws near. The Father runs to meet him, and he arrives. Arrives where? In the chamber: he is in the embrace of his father; as it were, cradled in his arms. He had arrived. Where? On the breast of Christ: he had entered. If I pause, it will be to say I do hope and believe there are those yet to arrive at home in this Sanctuary: to return; they will arrive. So he is coming, and it is the activity of faith.

Listen to the steps, the blessed exercise of all the graces of the Spirit, especially faith, hope, and love. "Come, my people" and then "enter". What is it to enter? It is to come right in; enter. and I want to say to you it is the very wish and will and pleasure and delight of the Lord that His dear people should come and enter. "Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors." "Enter; now, shut thy doors about thee hide thyself/as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." So take the beautiful steps. They are quadrupled. Come, enter, shut, hide: and it is for you, "My people." I did feel the help of God this morning, and I hope it may be extended to this afternoon, so I trust to continue in the word.

"Enter thou into thy chambers." There are two main things: chambers, and entering into them. I want to be explicit, and to speak with clarity and grace. Chambers. What is the meaning in the Bible? It is a very simple word, and it means particularly in Scripture as here and in

Matthew 6, a closet: an inner, secret room; an inner place. A room that is devoted for a special purpose; an inner chamber. As the term is in the plural I will try to show you what some of these chambers are. It is very sweet and sacred: a special inner room; a chosen place. It is a place of complete safety, security, comfort, peace, joy, happiness. It is a place the people of God may enter into and know complete, safety and security: to be withdrawn from the world, the turmoil and distress, and to hide themselves until the indignation be overpast. Entering is the highest degree of faith, and how beautifully it is set forth in the Canticles: Christ to the dove,- a beautiful term! The dove found room in the ark. I should think it would touch your heart to see a dove. He speaks to her in the sweet, beautiful language of love. He says; "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock... Thou hast entered, come in."

You see, I want to take it in steps. Entering is by faith. It is because you have already dwelt there for ever. "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation." That is to say, the people of God entered; dwelt in His heart,- that is a chamber,-throughout eternity. There never was a time (though language is lame to express it) when the people of God were not in His heart. Because they are in His heart, and because of the Antitype of the type, the Ark, Jesus Christ, and the Covenant of Grace, they have ever been in this chamber; the Covenant of Grace in Christ, and because of this He says; "Come, my people enter thou into thy chambers. It is thy sacred privilege, thy happy portion, thy blessed inheritance. Come, my people." So as I have already quoted, He looks on the Church, on the sweet dove, and says; "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock. My dove, you have entered. You have found the clefts of the rock and you are in." So you see the beauty and glory of it. When Christ's precious side was pierced, as in the Communion discourse last Sunday, His dove entered, and they all find this chamber. It does not matter where the dove is on the earth; all the children of God; quickened sinners by divine teaching and grace find the clefts of the rock. It is amazing with the dove; by the spiritual instruction the Lord will give you, you will never rest until Christ looks on you and says; "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock." This is it. How it warms my spirit to think of the early days when I found the wounds of

Jesus and entered. I was home. I would think this is the most beautiful word in the Bible concerning the dove who has entered. "Thou art in the clefts of the rock." What of it for you listening to the gospel? Have you entered the chamber?

Another word that expresses it is, where John was leaning on Jesus' bosom. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock. Come home. You are there now. By faith you have entered." This is forgiveness, perfect bliss, happiness, joy, peace, eternal security, everlasting safety, oneness with Him; all your sins swept away; you are clothed in righteousness and sanctified: you are in the clefts of the Rock. "Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers." You can see this is the blessed exercise of holy faith in the soul. You fly straight to the wounds of Christ: you are not diverted.

"The wounds of Jesus, for my sin

Before the world's foundation slain." (96)

This is the very foundation of your hope, so you have entered. I hope to make a few comments on chamber, or room. It sets forth a place of privacy, seclusion, peace, meditation, prayer, and communion with God: a place of complete safety and great sweetness to your soul.

So I will try to name to you some of the chambers Christ will welcome you to enter. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." I have spoken of the Being of God; the great heart of God you have entered. You dwell there for ever. Then these are chambers His dear people enter by faith; The perfection of God: His immutable love is a chamber you enter into; His boundless, everlasting, immutable, divine love. This perfection of God's is a chamber you enter by faith. A wonderful chamber it is to enter. This word expresses it; "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." You enter the chamber of His love, I believe this did drop from my lips recently; when the Lord looks on you and says; "I love thee well, My child," you will enter that chamber of His love. "Enter thou into thy chambers." When He sheds abroad His love in your heart you will enter. When He leads you to Gethsemane to 'hear the sighs and groans of God' you will enter.

"A second look He gave, which said,

'I freely all forgive'." (1025)

and you enter that chamber of His love. I believe for a few moments last week I entered. Probably you will come back to me and say; "What is it like?" You have complete assurance of your eternal safety and security in Christ. You could go home: you know you will go to glory. You know He is yours and you His. O this chamber of love! "O Love divine, how sweet Thou art!"

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." Another chamber is the chamber of His divine faithfulness.

"A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation of my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood." (83)

He is faithful, as our friend's Text recently; "He is faithful that promised." The faithfulness of God will be a chamber you enter. Sometimes you enter the chamber in secret, as the Spirit of God gives you a sweet glimpse of the dear countenance of Christ, it may be through the Scriptures that are brought to your spirit, and through the Hymnal. In a sharp experience of trial two and a half years ago the Lord favoured me to enter the chamber of His faithfulness, and there was a rage in the world. I do not mention in the pulpit those things I pass through, but the Lord dropped a verse into my heart, and the effect was I entered, - I ran to the chamber of His faithfulness. I have the hymn-book open on the hymn of Dr Doddridge's. "What though the hosts of hell engage"-and they did. "With mingled cruelty and rage." That was just it. It was as though Dr Doddridge had written the lines for me.

"What though the hosts of hell engage  
With mingled cruelty and rage?  
A faithful God restrains their hands, That did it.  
And chains them down in iron bands." (332)

I ran and entered the chamber of His faithfulness, and hid myself. Day and night, whenever the storm threatened, and it did for weeks; whenever I heard the storm raging it would come back to me; "A faithful God restrains their hands," and I entered. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." O the wonder of it! You have to get in the storm and distress to know the value of it. "Hide thyself," and you need to hide

yourself.

Another chamber is that of His immutability. Let me put it to you in this way. You obviously know the days of espousals. You were very favoured: you ran the Lord's ways with delight, and the candle of the Lord shone on you. After a while you came to the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and you come into days of darkness that are many, and you walk in conflict. I will speak a word to you who are in this. When you come into these days it will be as though you have lost your religion, you are so low. It is impossible to lose what the Lord has done for you, but you lose the comfort and joy of it; not the reality. You feel so dark and destitute, as if you have lost your religion. Do you know what He will do for you? He will lead you into the chamber of His immutability. I will quote two Scriptures He may speak to you. One is; "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." This will break your heart. You will enter the chamber of His immutability. The other is; "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You will enter the chamber of His immutability.

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." I would wish to dwell there, but I will name to you two other chambers. The precious blood of Christ and His obedience, His righteousness. What a chamber! the precious blood of Christ. The destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood was. They did not go out of their houses; they stayed under the blood; they entered into their chambers. What a chamber is the precious blood of Christ! "Beneath the shadow of Thy cross." And His righteousness; His spotless obedience to cover your naked soul. You will enter this chamber.

Another is the Bible; the Holy Scriptures: the promises and blessings of the New Covenant; the precious words the Lord has spoken to your heart. What a chamber! You will think of the promises the Lord has made over to you this year; sweet words of promise He has put into your heart with divine power, and as He renews it. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers."

Another chamber is prayer; to abide at the Throne of Grace; to do as Christ did. He sought a place of seclusion on the mountain top. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and cast himself down on the earth, and put

his face between his knees. What a chamber! prayer. "Come, my people, ~~xxx~~ enter thou into thy chambers." I have already named the truth of God in the Hymn-book. It has occurred to me as to some of the beautiful chambers I entered into. Probably the first was;

"The vilest sinner out of hell,  
Who lives to feel his need,  
Is welcome to a Throne of Grace  
The Saviour's blood to plead." (527)

and I entered that chamber. You know it. Another was in my deliverance; beautiful words in Hymn 11, especially the latter couplet of verse 2.

"Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,  
Who opened the channel of mercy for me."

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." and I entered that chamber, my friends,

Another chamber is, and I shall only just get to the fringe of it.- Another chamber is the manger at Bethlehem; the incarnation of Christ. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." What a chamber! I will tell you another; that is the sepulchre, and there is another to mention, allied to it: that is the chamber of the grave. The hymn gives thanks to God

"For calling thus Thy children home;  
And shortening tribulation days  
To hide them in the peaceful tomb." (844)

There their bodies will rest, till the storm be overpast, and they will rise gloriously in the first Resurrection.

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." All of the Trinity; of the Father, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost; all of His character, being, His glorious gospel; all of the Covenant of Grace, ordered in all things and sure; all the work of Christ and of the Holy Ghost; the Bible; the divine ordinances, as the ordinance of prayer; all these are chambers. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." The whole sense of it is

there is safety, security, peace, so you are unmoved amid the turmoil  
and the destruction, the pouring out of the indignation. You in perfect  
peace and safety abide. Amen.