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Substance of a Sermon Preached by our Pastor on Thursday, July 7. 1983

Lesson Genesis 42

When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up.

Job 22. 29

One of the divine, heavenly principles of the Covenant of Grace and the everlasting Gospel is before us in this very beautiful, lovely, kind, tender text, a word from our merciful, faithful, compassionate Redeemer. I think you are well aware of the nature of the sacred principle because on many occasions we have endeavoured to enunciate the same. Let us be specific. I have said categorically speaking, on many occasions in the Holy Scriptures the Lord Jesus reveals to His dear people the nature of their pilgrim journey to Heaven. It is this; to follow Him, and consequently to have fellowship with Him in the days of His humiliation and glorious exaltation. The particular point with us is, very clearly, concisely does he tell His dear people, in no uncertain terms, that their experience in travelling to the happy land of pure delight will be of tribulation. All through the Scriptures, by various terms that are synonymous he reveals the same to His dear people. Take the word, "Many are the afflictions - no two are alike - of the righteous" - it is the Lord Jesus primarily and all His dear people. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," full stop? No. he goes on to give what I have sought to point out; the glorious panacea for all your ills:" but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Not ninety percent. One hundred percent. So, we have here the same blessed operative principle, operated by the power of the Spirit, and the application of the fruit of the dolorous, vicarious Passion of Christ.

"When men are cast down," Godly people are often. How many days of your life are spent in this condition? You do not reveal to others your feelings. You try to be brave before your family and friends. It is not mournful colours always line your faces, but under it godly men and women, and children if they fear God, are often cast down. Is that true? See the beauty of the operative principle derived from the great heart of God, the glorious Trinity in boundless, ineffable love, and the work of the Lord Jesus as Great High Priest in work of atonement, the fruits of His glorious victory and His ascension to Heaven. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And it is derived from His priestly intercession now, and His advocacy and mediation. What shall we do with da souls when men are cast down? God has made wonderful provision from the time of Pentecost and by the prophets; by Spirit-endowed, anointed, baptised, ordained ministers to go forth and preach the gospel, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. He sends them forth, and they have a wonderful work to do, and part of it is in our text. When they look at the congregations from the pulpit and see cast down souls, "then thou shalt say." It is the glorious gospel of our blessed God. Thou shalt say with heavenly authority, power, unction, with the authority of Father, Son, Holy Spirit. It is not talking; it is the voice of the Lord through us. "Then thou shalt say," It is good news from a far country. "Then thou shalt say, there is lifting up." Obviously, this is derived from the boundless love of God, from the resurrection of our glorious Lord from the dead. So, "thou shalt say, there is lifting up" with God.

So we have established what has already been named to you, the principle divine. The Lord never leaves the tribulation of His people in the abstract. He never leaves it cold, dark, stark. He surrounds it with a beautiful, bright, glorious, cheering promise of deliverance, His presence and help. It is right through the word of God. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." He begins with peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He clothes the unique form of trouble known to His people as tribulation with peace and victory. It is not alone. Always joined to tribulation is the promise of His presence and blessing. When you come into trouble you prove the beauty, glory, wonder and fulness of it, the efficacy of it. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." It is established in the Book of God and in the hearts of His dear people in all ages: trouble is never left in the abstract. You know, many of you who are cast down, has God given you anything? Have you a promise > a sweet, sacred, apposite word? "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word hath quickened me." Has the Lord given you a word to hope on? If so, He will fulfil it. You may have to wait but it will not be in vain. Let us seek to praise and bless God for His wisdom, love and infinite goodness in never leaving tribulation stark and dark, but clothing it and annexing to it a promise of love, goodness, power. You will have seen the connection between the text and the Lesson. Jacob was cast down, very, and he uttered one of the monumental sayings the church of God has been thankful for ever since. It is sombre but real. "Me ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is now, and ye will take Benjamin away." That was the last straw, the darling of his heart. He said, "All these things are against me." Have you said it? Poor heart if you have been in it or are in it. "When men are cast down," and no human power can lift up one who is cast down. Only almighty, heavenly power can do it. Look at the provision of the gospel. Is it not worth all the travail, pain, temptation the Lord's servants pass through, to have the favour and honour of being ambassadors of Christ and to go and say, "There is lifting up"? Even to one soul it is an honour. I will turn to another section of the subject. Many inquiries rise in the mind concerning the question of being cast down, in tribulation, passing the depths. You will echo at times the language of the patriarch taken up in the hymn, "And must it, Lord, be so?" do you ever pray it?

"And must Thy children bear
Such various kinds of woe,
Such soul- perplexing fear?
Are these the blessings we expect?
Is this the lot of God's elect?"

"And must it Lord, be so?" If you are in the day of prosperity you are not in it at all: you will be later. So this is known by the people of God, and you will see the wonderful connection between tribulation and things that are so painful and trying, and you are cast down. I remind you of what is worth reminding you of; what is of intrinsic worth and excels all beside. It is our Saviour and His path, and the response of the most godly and princely of His

people to what He experienced from His birth to the cross and to His resurrection. What was the fervent prayer of the prince of the Church? Is it yours? "That I may know him." How could he preach Him unless he knew Him? How could he be made ready for Heaven unless he knew Him? There must be continual progress of divine revelation and teaching. Paul had been in Paradise, and he says, "That I may know him." It shows there is eternity to know Him. He will lead to living fountains of water; ever deeper into the knowledge of Christ, of God. You with the deepest experience, I ask you, is it your prayer? "That I may know him." I know Him so little, I want to know far more. "And the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." You might have thought that would have come before the other. There are many facets of interpretation of the word, all harmonising. "That I may know Him, and the fellowship of his sufferings." We may say with divine authority and the background of personal, spiritual experience of the eternal value and blessedness. Having known the power of His resurrection, and been fully delivered, in joy, happiness, pardon, peace, Pentecost, the anointing of the Spirit how does this follow? Your path from the time God delivered you and anointed you will become far deeper and rougher than before in fellowship with Him in suffering. The hymn says,

"When his pardon is signed and his peace is procured,
From that moment his conflict begins."

Your path will be much deeper after you are delivered. It will be summed up by the word, the fellowship of His sufferings. That is how you will know Him. If you are cast down, and think of it in the context of the holy doctrine enunciated; I remind you if you are praying for the fellowship of His sufferings, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And He went a little further, and fell on his face." You will be tasting it in fellowship with him, not riding high on the horse of vain glory. You will go further and fall on your face. "being made conformable unto his death." Some understand because you are in it. Some will see it as a prophecy. You never thought you would walk this path. "being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Does that provide a satisfactory answer to the inquiry of men cast down who fear God, as to why they walk this path? Being brought to Christ's cross will make yours disappear. I hope you will assimilate this. It will help you. If you are cast down, prostrated, think how Christ fell on His face in Gethsemane. That is the way to go to preach, to know both sides. People get into a place and the minister must know it to be able to come after them. If they have never been there they cannot. Do you pray for fellowship? If so your eyes are on Christ, Heaven the day of death, and the immortal glories of the first resurrection.

"When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, there is lifting up." Two things emerge. One is, cast down, in a low place, thrown down by the violence of temptation. If you fear God I say to you, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," and you will never fall through those arms. You may find when you are cast down you fall into those blessed arms and you are near deliverance. When you are high up you are far from the comfort of the everlasting arms. You would settle in those blessed arms. The second observation is, the spiritual experience of a child of God is like a thermometer. You

alternate, and you have a range of movement. When the pressure is low you are cast down. When it is high you are lifted up. It is dark, and you are cast down. The sun shines and you are lifted up. You move through a range bounded by His everlasting love. So a child of God alternates; there are spiritual feelings and in the midst of them the great prayer of those well taught of God is to be established so they enter the language,

Though with no sweet enjoyments blessed,

This covenant stands the same."

Your salvation does not depend on an ecstasy of joy. You are on the rock and the Lord's pleasure is for you to be lifted up. He will lift you up himself.

"Once in Him, in Him for ever;

Thus the eternal covenant stands."

If you are established you feel the rock beneath you. Are there things in you that cast you down? You will be cast down because of what you are; because of your nature, heart, life; because of the proneness in you to leave the God you love; because of the bitter, painful, persecuting things you pass through; because you feel despised. "He was despised and rejected of men." Scorners despise you. You are cast down because of the roughness of the way; because your prayers are not answered; because of backsliding. Many things cast these people down who fear God, and they are so low and nervous and apprehensive and troubled. David with all his strength and confidence, said after twice delivering Saul from death, "I will perish one day by the hand of Saul." The people of God are so fearful, troubled, tempted, devil-hunted and pursued. They meet with many things. Their load digs into their shoulders and hearts and they are cast down. "Then thou shalt say – and the word is as the face of an angel – There is lifting up." Why? My Saviour rose on the third day. "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Blessed be God.