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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor  
on Sunday Afternoon, June 1. 1980.

Lesson. 2 Corinthians 1.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. John 16. 22.

There are three things I seek grace to deliver to the living family of God at this season from this precious word of divine grace. The first is, and we spent a while on the foundation truth this morning, a most blessed, glorious, eternal relationship. Mr Grant has a word in his Hymn that preaches an abundant sermon on the wonderful truth. "I feel at My heart all thy sighs and thy groans," Why? "For thou art most near Me, My flesh and My bones." That is the sweet, sacred, soul-melting foundation of the Text; a living, vital, spiritual, gracious, eternal oneness with God in Christ. So those He addresses and speaks a word to in all ages down to the end of this dispensation are His unworthy, eternally loved sons and daughters, and being in perpetual relationship nothing can make it void or negative or annul. Nothing can sever the bonds: they are the bonds of the everlasting Covenant of grace, love, truth, peace, mercy. They are His sons and daughters, and in the relationship the beautiful words named are the result. "I feel at My heart," And listen to the content of it,- "all thy sighs and thy groans." A considerable ~~manifestation~~ manifestation of the work of the Spirit in the soul will often be the emitting of sighs and groans. Yet he goes on the Hymn, "All are most needful; not one is in vain." It is the purpose of God to make the dispensation a blessing. "In all thy distresses thy Head feels the pain." Could you have anything more blessed than such a Jesus, Father, Friend, Holy One? Thinking of His Deity and essential glory, yet as the incarnate Son of God once a Man of sorrows, now a Man of joy,- "In all thy distresses thy Head feels the pain." What about it? Is not the secret of your presence here to day because of His presence, compassion and loving sympathy? You are inseparable from Him and He from you. "Yet all are most needful; not one is in vain." So we have brought to you the whole body of divinity, the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, in

suffering relationship with Him. There is a glorious prospect: no child of God is destitute, knowing the Lord Jesus, of the joy set before them. He will do this. Is He not setting joy before us in the message? Whenever the Lord comes there is a postscript. When He touches your soul and draws near,- and He does often,- He leaves a postscript. "I will see you again." What of this? what is the result? "Your heart,- you have been sorrowful, troubled, tempted, tried, perplexed, bewildered, ready to sink.- your heart shall rejoice." It spells out for the dear friends the Lord knows what He has in store for you so your heart shall rejoice. But it is a promise and the Lord fulfils it. If there is one word I could speak to you with all the strength and grace God gives me it is, "He is faithful that promised." There is no cogent reason for servile fear: we often do fear. God is faithful. Every day, every night, every hour, every moment, in every phase of life, every chapter written in life down to Eternity, God is faithful. The Text exudes this love of the blessed Father. "Ye now therefore have sorrow." There is nothing detached about it: it is in His heart; feeling for you what you feel. It seems incredible: it is a wonderful promise.

I will stop to say it is clear and obvious to my mind that not all the people of God are in the same place at the same time: there are those who rejoice and those who are sorrowful. I believe this is a word God has given me, because I believe there are those where the word is a perfect expression of their case. It would be true to say all through the journey to Glory we are seldom without some degree of sorrow. There is nearly <sup>always</sup> something to bring a taste of bitterness or gall in the cup. Get a taste of the Saviour's love and for a little while you are gone from the earth. It is not long before there is something that is bitter: you have got a trial, difficulty, anxiety, sorrow. It is true for me to say there are times when the people of God are in great rejoicing. The Text tells me this. At the same time there are those in deep sorrow. God sends pastors, and they have a heart given them to share in the joys and sorrows of the people at the same time.

First, relationship. Have you not, who know and love the Lord, an abundant proof of the meaning of relationship in reference to those God has given you in the earth,- your children, sons and daughters, grand-

children, and the dimensions are always increasing? and you feel, don't you? Why do you feel? Because they are your flesh, bone and blood. O the tenderness and love of a devoted mother and father! especially where there is double love and the appreciation of difference in temperaments and infirmities. The Lord knows, and you know what touches you. So the foundation is relationship, and the Lord never lets one go. This was made a tremendous word to me in my life, concerning the Shepherd losing one sheep and going after it and finding the one who had wandered. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." Look at the cardinal truth concerning relationship. Some have said foolishly and coarsely concerning some, "Let them go." They are not theirs: they are yours. There is no blood relationship with them; there is with you. Do you think the Lord will ever let one go? If His love were not immutable surely we should have been let go, will all our backslidings, follies and sins. His Spirit will not let us go; His love will not. "Ye now therefore have sorrow," He feels it now: you cannot grasp that. If you have got a great weight on your spirit, a pain in your heart, you cannot grasp that the dear Lord Jesus feels it. You will prove it because He will send suitable relief to you. "I will see you again." "Cheer up, ye travelling souls." it will be only for a little while. The fundamental nature of the subject is filial, Father and child.

The other point is His infinite knowledge of all His dear people, all things. You may say in response to the words of the preacher, Does He really know what I feel? Yes, He knows all in your heart; the trials you are in, the things that are great mountains to you, that are dilemmas to you, and all concerning them. He knows your perplexities, the bewilderment of your mind. O what a truth this has been to me; the Lord knows. For there will be seasons in life when you realise that others do not know: and there may be seasons in life when others misjudge you because they do not know. Eli misjudged Hannah. We should be tender how we think or speak of others because we do not know what they are passing through. The Lord knows. Under the blue sky, or the atmosphere on a starry night it is wonderful to look up into the heavens and realise the Lord knows, and as we have said, His knowledge is infinite. It is an amazing truth.

Will it bring relief or comfort to you to realise that the dear Lord knows? I am sure it will. You have got trials, sorrows, anxieties in providence, and to look to the heavens and feel that the Lord knows, and in impossible situations. Some may remember an expression of Mr F. Gosden's in this pulpit. He said the Lord brings His people into ridiculous situations in order to manifest His glory, and you may be in one of these situations. It is an impossibility; your mind is bewildered; you do not know what to say. What can you do? "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." There is an issue to it. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble." The Lord knows.

Relatives do not understand. It may be you are a poor soul no one understands: the Lord knows. It is sweet to know a measure of understanding, and if the Lord has brought you into a deep path and sanctified it, this has given you a tender spirit to others. I try to exercise this to children and teenagers because we have all been in the same place. But "I know their sorrows." That is the second point. I will say this as I close: when the Lord said, "I know their sorrows," He said, "And I am come down to deliver them." Blessed be God.