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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Sunday Evening, January 17. 1982.

Lesson. Acts 10. vv.9-48.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. John 5. 2-3.

It is with us by the revealing grace and inspiration of the Spirit to speak further by way of exposition on the beautiful, comprehensive language, "waiting for the moving of the water." Probably you who fear and love the Lord have already seen the glorious connection between the subject matter of the Lesson and the Text, in particular the moving of the water. Although we have five porches and God's dear waiting, praying people in them I want to speak further of, "waiting for the moving of the water." We may understand this language relates to the sovereign, almighty, unctuous, efficacious, divine power of the Holy Ghost exerted in His Word, in the souls of His beloved people. Let us show the sequence. The Lord Jesus before His ascension in one of His last words to His dear disciples said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem." What for? The moving of the water. "until ye be endued with power from on high." And in obedience to their blessed Lord and Master they tarried. There are many precious souls here who may be tarrying for a specific blessing. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," tarrying in the city of Jerusalem, and suddenly the words of the Lord Jesus were fulfilled. He said, "For John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." So on that memorable day there was the amazing, all-powerful moving of the water. The Holy Ghost descended on them and they knew the baptism of the Spirit; a mighty effusion of the Spirit and heavenly anointing. There was a moving of the water.

Let us follow the sequence. Peter, the spokesman and preacher chiefly, began to preach a powerful sermon, and as he preached there was the moving of the water. The power of the Holy Ghost was so vital and effectual that in the souls of three thousand there was a moving of the water. Do you

know what it is to feel it in your soul, to feel the divine, unctuous, heavenly power of the Spirit descend on you from Heaven? So three thousand knew the moving of the water in their souls. There was a demonstration of the goodness of God and His faithfulness in fulfilling His word, and as there was the moving of souls by divine power, so there was the moving of the baptismal waters. So we see the holy sequence. I felt led to read the Lesson where I did to night, for we have Cornelius and his household, devout, gracious, godly people waiting for a special blessing, the moving of the water. You know the force of the vision the Lord gave to His dear servant; the great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, "wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and ~~things~~ fowls of the air." there came a voice to him saying, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord." You know the blessed issue; the Lord saying, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." So he courteously, lovingly received the messengers sent to him. The next day he went with them, all his bigotry and prejudice removed, and with great liberty he preached the gospel to the Gentiles. There had been a moving of the water in his soul and the activity of the Spirit in his soul as he preached. He felt that liberty, unction, power flowed through him to the Gentiles, and as he preached the Holy Ghost fell on them. This is the moving of the water. He said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord." This is the moving of the water.

From a few other aspects I will speak of the moving of the water, and the dear souls who wait for it. I feel it would be wise to endeavour to name to you the five porches before going into a further section. What are the porches in the colonnade where the Lord's people wait and stay in expectation of specific blessings and favours because of the Lord's promise? If you wait, you are waiting in hope because you believe the Lord has put in your heart that which you believe He will accomplish. So "Blessed are all they that wait for him." (What are the five porches? I believe you will move from porch to porch and be found in all of them, waiting for the moving of the water. Before the preacher tries to continue) I will ask the godly here, what are the porches you wait in for the Lord?

God's people are a waiting people. I believe we may name the porch of prayer, for immediately the Lord quickens a soul into divine life there is the blessed exercise by the Spirit of living prayer, and you will wait in the porch of prayer. Wonderful it is to wait in the porch of prayer with the people of God praying and pleading. Try to examine as to how you will pray. It is amazing the intelligence that is spiritual the Lord gives His dear people in prayer. There is a way to God, to His heart, into His ear: it is through the adorable, peerless Name of His dear Son incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ. You will know that, and through His precious merit and sin-atonement blood, His obedience and His intercession and mediation. The Lord will give you wisdom to plead thus, and as the Hymn says, "I can no denial take," Why? Because I plead for Jesus' sake. How amazing is the liberty of the people of God when the Lord draws near for them to express to Him their petitions and requests. (Some of you know I have mentioned on a few previous occasions how on one Christmas morning, having enjoyed the sweet, blessed presence of the Lord in preaching His love flowed as a river into our souls, yet we were in the midst of trouble and anxiety. Reaching home the blessed unction and sweetness and savour of the Lord's remained; it did not abate. I remember falling on my knees in my bedroom, full of the love of God, His blessed presence, and before I could begin to pray the Lord spoke to my soul. O that sacred morning! He said to me, "What is thy request? and what is thy petition? It shall be granted thee." I thought, what a sacred heavenly occasion for a soul and for a pastor of a Church. So I felt led to ask the Lord for a precious soul, deeply exercised, dearly loved to be powerfully constrained- the moving of the water- to honour the Lord. That was my first petition. Two others for the sake of propriety I shall not name. I knew God would grant my petitions. I was in the porch of prayer where we wait and anticipate seeing His appearing. It is a blessed porch where you as Manoah and his wife, look on as the Angel does wondrously. The remarkable nature of it was that it was from the mouth of the Lord. "What is it? It shall be done." I watched, and in a matter of days I received a letter of joy, solid joy in answer to prayer. So you see, who are waiting in the porch of prayer, waiting for the moving of the water for the Lord to perfect that which concerns you, waiting

for Him to accomplish His divine will, waiting to see the Lord's work, the Lord has given you patience and a wonderful expectation. Contemplate,-- I could say my holy joy; I say our holy joy when that precious soul passed through the water of baptism. Are you waiting in the porch of prayer for the Spirit to work powerfully, to constrain, make willing, manifest His sovereign efficacy and influence, assured that He will not refuse? He cannot refuse because you have pleaded by faith the Name of Jesus, and the Father delights to hear His dear wonderful Name.)

You may be in the porch of prayer for a long time; you will be as long as you live, and you keep pleading for the moving of the water. This really covers all that concerns the people of God, because it means the power of God and the manifestation of His goodness, mercy, faithfulness to you. You are tried in the recession, and because of the weather you are tried providentially, and you wait in the porch of prayer. The Lord knows. You will never suffer lack, never want any good thing, for "my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (You may receive an envelope, and the Lord has written on it, "A token of love." You wait in the porch of prayer.)

There are many of these spiritual mercies and favours rise before us. I would speak to the glory of God. You will wait for the moving of the water, for the Lord to appear in the porch of prayer. You are burdened and tried and the Lord gives you sweet access to Him through Jesus, and you will know the Lord will give you to see the moving of the water. All His dear people waiting in the porch of prayer may ask as to what your language will be. You will say, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." You will see His appearing. It shows the Lord cares for His people; He loves them most dearly. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Are you in the porch of prayer? I know you are. We have made reference to beloved parents and grandparents praying for their dear families. My friends, you may think of the father and the son had departed into a far country. If we take this for a moment and use it in relation to a godly father or mother, waiting in the porch of prayer, the significant thing is, there was the best robe waiting for him. There is for all the Lord's people, even those in a far country, far from the Lord in their way of life and so on. If He loves them with an

everlasting love the robe is reserved. One day in the time of God's appointing, there was the moving of the water and in it the lad knew a supernatural change wrought in him. He began to feel in his soul he was in want. Nothing in this dark world could satisfy him. It is the gospel, it is the Lord, His mercy and grace. There was a moving of the water. I wonder if you in your souls hear the ripple of a spiritual movement of the water? the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees? You may have seen a son or daughter, and you come back feeling the Lord is beginning to work: there is a moving of the water. It is so precious and vital and you are not disappointed. My friends, there is no power like the power of prayer, the power the Lord exercises in answer to prayer.

I remind you, "Wrestling prayer can wonders do;
 Bring relief in deepest straits!
 Prayer can force a passage through
 Iron bars and brazen gates."

Beautiful! There is a moving of the water. Soon the lad is on his way, and the father runs to meet him and kisses him. I know some are greatly exercised concerning the spiritual doctrine of forgiveness of sins and wonder if they have experienced it. You see in the beautiful narrative that the Lord is able to forgive all your sins by giving you a kiss. All are put away, all gone in a kiss of dying love. That is forgiveness. He may not say, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." So in the blessed porch of prayer you will wait. It is a wonderful porch. You may be in a deadlock, a dilemma, an impasse: there is no way, nothing man can do; it is beyond man. The Lord puts this in your soul from Job. "But I would seek unto God - I am resolved to, - and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number." While you pray He will nourish your faith by the great things He has done by His Being, character and perfections, and you fix your eye of faith on God. You will pray and you will believe your prayers will succeed through the merits of Christ, notwithstanding the temptations and oppositions of the powers of darkness. Blessed porch, prayer.

I put it to you, you come in a path where the door seems shut, you are exercised spiritually. You will pray by the help of God, and you believe the Lord will open the door that is closed. You will wait in the

porch of prayer. You see, my friends, all creatures are at His command and He waits to answer prayer. He opens doors. You wait in the porch for the moving of the water. I could stay in this porch, and I shall. How many times in the day do you pray to the Lord from this porch and wait to see His appearing? Very precious.

So they wait in the porch of prayer, and what a company they are! They are impotent, powerless; they cannot do anything for themselves. They are blind. It does not mean they are blind as to their state and standing before God and the holiness of God, but they are in a path that is so dark they cannot see. It is dark as midnight, but they walk by faith. They are blind, halt, disabled by sin, and you are, aren't you? and withered, dying, drooping, as if all vital in you is withering. You will know the resurrection power of Christ, the bud.

And there is the porch of the Word of God you will wait in. O this precious Bible! You will open it in the morning, in the night. You wonder when you come to the table and read what the Lord will say to you, and whether He will favour you in the porch of His Word, so you see the moving of the water. And how the Lord speaks to His dear people from His Word in afflictions, trials, difficulties. He may say. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." He may say to you, "Is thy God able?" He may say to you, "Have faith in God. Only believe." The Lord has favoured me with those words in the porch of His Word. Think what the Lord has written on the fleshy tables of your heart. He has gone before you in grace and providence. O precious Bible! the porch of His Word.

And there is the porch of the public ordinance of the ministry, the ascension gift of Christ to His Church, where you wait to see what the Lord will say to you, fill your soul, and whether you will know the blessed experience of handfuls of purpose. You wait under the gospel. It is so wonderful as the Lord answers you and you see the moving of the water. In your diary you have written the occasions that have been monumental as you wait in the porch of the gospel, and how the Lord spoke to you from Heaven. He has spoken a word of reproof, demolished your projects, encouraged and cheered you, given a word of direction and of

salvation. You wait in this blessed porch. What a porch it is, and to look out and see the moving of the water. Remember, you who fear the Lord, you will wait in the porch of His holy ordinances. You will wait to see the glory of God in the sacred ordinance of believer's baptism, and you wait in the porch of the communion of His body and blood, that you receive sealing, pardon, peace, joy and deliverance. The Lord bless you. Amen.