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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor

on Thursday, November 3, 1983.

Lesson. Daniel 3. vv.8-30.

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Lamentations 3. 26.

We have read in the Lesson a monumental sermon on the text, and we are certain that the whole subject matter of the Scripture as exemplified in the cases of the three Hebrew children and the amazing issue, would produce in your spirits a hearty Amen to the blessed exhortation to the people of God in all the vicissitudes of anxiety, trouble, need, distress and in relation to salvation, and the accomplishment of all spiritual exercises concerning salvation, as demonstrated in the case of saintly Simeon. I will introduce the subject by reminding the friends of what is so truly divine and remarkable a nature as manifested in the whole subject matter of the chapter. The prophet Jeremiah had been in a bitter experience. The poor, dear man of God because of his faithfulness, was condemned to the terrible punishment, to be let down into a dark dungeon, in the mire. Yet he can now tell us there was a secret in his heart when in extreme circumstances, for that is when the Lord especially increases the living, vital faith of His people. Faith is at its best in the dark, and when we are tried, tempted, and with impossibilities surrounding us. He had a secret as the three Hebrews in the element of fire, and here he gives the divine secret that is exclusive to the living family of God. He speaks from his own vital experience of the compassion, faithfulness, immutability, unfailing goodness of God. He says, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Human nature would say, "Jeremiah, you will never see the light again." The Lord blessed him with faith and he was brought out of the dungeon. I remind the beloved friends and spiritual hearers of an amazing thing in the Scripture of truth concerning His people. We find in various places, and how thankful we are that it is recorded, some did sink in low places. They came into extreme darkness, in great fear and trouble, and they came to certain

conclusions that were erroneous. In the first part of the chapter you will see how low Jeremiah was, and he came to an issue, a climax. He said, and this is the lowest place of all, "And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." Think of it. You know, my friends, however low, dark, tried you are, if you fear the Lord, underneath are the everlasting arms. You will never sink through those arms, and no one can pluck you from the hands of the Lord. But how low His people come! What method did the Lord use to raise him, and what is the principle of it? You will be led a little into the fellowship of His sufferings, and you must remember how low the Lord of Life sank to conquer hell and to redeem His people.

What is the principle of resurgence? One of the good methods of expounding it is to contrast and see the remarkable, ethereal change as between winter and spring; the dark, long, dreary winter as it sometimes is. One day God in His creation causes all to burst into new life. The foundation is the victory and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will never be left in a dark, low place indefinitely: you will come up. Notice how the Lord effected this in the case of Jeremiah. He had said, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." Poor Jeremiah, what will you do if it has all gone? It hasn't gone. You would think in the next verse you read it is all over. No. He said, "Remembering," The Spirit was at work in his soul. He was remembering. Why was he? Because there was something vital and real and eternal to remember. That is why you remember. There was something vital, fadeless, deathless, and the Spirit brought it to his remembrance. See what He does to revive you. He remembered his affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall; the early days of the first work, the condemnation and distress and trouble he was in, and he says, "My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope." The Lord appeared for a poor sinner, the Sun of Righteousness shone in his soul, he saw the glory of Christ in His priestly atonement and glorious resurrection. To take it in depth, what is the method of the Spirit? We prayed together on this vital point. He changed the orientation of his spirit. Instead of looking at self and sin - this is needful, but

"Pore not on thyself too long,
Lest it sink thee lower."

Instead of concentrating on the temptations of the devil, his doubts and fears, adverse circumstances and things so dark, desolating, hopeless, He polarised the orientation of his spirit and he looked to the Lord, to Heaven, and all was changed. Instead of dark winter it is the vernal season; hope, expectation, a little joy. There is a tremendous change wrought in him. You see the movement changes at verse 22. He says, "It is of the Lord's mercies - I am looking at God and His mercies - that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. - I am viewing a compassionate Redeemer. He delighteth in mercy." And he goes on, "They are new every morning." What, Jeremiah? and you said, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord" now, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." There is a remarkable change. We are often in Psalm 31. With all his trial, distress, troubles, David suddenly says, "But I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand." Look away to the Lord and Heaven. It is the work of the Spirit and the activity of holy, living, vital faith. My text is in this section, where all is changed. How can I describe it to you concisely? One way is to use a part of one hymn. Newton knew when he felt Christ in the vessel with him. That makes all the difference. "With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm." The Lord was with Jeremiah. It is no longer dark, it is light: no more bondage, but liberty. It is not misery, a dirge, but a paean of praise. No longer sackcloth, but girding with gladness. The Lord accomplishes this, and He will turn your captivity as the streams in the south. Where do you think you are in this? Are you low, very tried, dark, perplexed, sinking, fainting, troubled? Or has the dear Lord appeared and resurrection power been exerted in your spirit? You are not looking at your trying path, bitter things in the cup. You are looking to Heaven. The government is on His shoulder. Jesus reigns. Everything has changed. O the wonder of it! Without this we should never hold on our way. It is the Lord ushering in the springtime, the power of His resurrection.

In the midst of it all we find our text. I hope the Lord will help

me to dissect and to open it up to you. It is a word from Heaven for His dear people waiting for spiritual blessings and for answers to prayer; waiting for providential deliverances, for healing, for the Lord to make crooked things straight and rough places plain; waiting for Him to do things He has promised to do in His Word and what He has spoken to you of. I^{will} dwell on the opening terms. "It is good." Why? "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Why good? Because it is His will and pleasure, and it is acceptable and pleasing in His sight. Because it is rendering to the Lord the glory due to His Name, showing you trust Him, believe in Him; believe in His immutability, omnipotence, compassion and faithfulness and you are honouring Him. I could say in a spiritual sense, the Lord favour^{you} to prove Him, and try as enabled to cast yourself on Him. It requires living faith. He loves to be proved. "Prome me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. I have given you My word. You have proved Me over all the years to be faithful. Now trust Me. Cast yourself on Me." I have proved Him and the blessedness of it. That is how you will die. You will not have a vast amount of religion to talk about. The last blessed work of faith will be to commit your soul into the hands of a faithful, loving Creator and Redeemer.

"My soul into Thy arms I cast,
I trust I shall be saved at last."

So "It is good." Give Him all the glory. If He has helped you for seventy, eighty, ninety or an hundred years, child of God, is it not with you by faith to trust Him?

"He who has helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through;

I do like the language.

"And give me daily cause to raise
New Ebenezers to His praise."

So "It is good" because it is rendering to Him the glory due to His Name. It is an acknowledgement of His glorious Being, character, perfections; rendering all the praise and honour and glory due to His blessed Name. It is good. It is pleasing to Him, placing the crown on His adorable head. And it is good for us by faith in the soul,

establishing, strengthening, comforting, relieving. That is how the soul is wonderfully established. "It is good." You may say to me, "What shall I do?" and you bring your little tale. The answer from Heaven for you is, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." If your soul is in great trouble, most of it is because you are trying to carry it yourself. You have got your mountains before you and you are trying to carry them yourself. What makes all the difference? When the dear Lord comes and enables you to cast all on Him, knowing that He careth for you. "It is good." You drop soul, body, spirit, family, dear ones, business, the Church, all your preaching into His dear hands. "It is good." It is good for you and it is good for His dear people and your loved ones and friends. They see the change in you and the reality of the work of grace in your heart. They say, "A remarkable change has come over you. You look so different from what you did. You are cheerful. Your face no longer wears mournful colours. What is it?" You say in glory to God, "It is because the Lord has fulfilled the language of the text on Thursday evening. "It is good for me," What is good? "It is good for a man that he should quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." and you drop all in His dear hands. It is not in your hands. "It is good." See the atmosphere in the home. It is like sunshine because of the vital change. You have entered into the secret of the text.

I will refer to the Graces, and faith is the first, and you can only believe by faith, I think you will remember I have mentioned a discourse with the late J.K.Popham on faith, and he was saying, "I believe it needs faith to believe you are a sinner. It is not saving faith. You need faith to believe in God, in His Being." Faith is a living, vital instrument in the hand of God. Saving faith cometh by hearing. Immediately you believe you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." You see how it comes in the text. When you believe, immediately you hope. The Lord gives you faith to believe the promise, what He has done, or what is relevant in your case. You believe what He speaks. What faith believes good hope expects. That is where our text comes in. Why hope? Because you believe, and the Lord knows what you believe. You believe in His Son Jesus Christ,

in His Word, and in the promises He has spoken to you. You believe in His faithfulness, in all His perfections. You believe what He has revealed to you He will fulfil. This living hope expects. What do you feel the scope of good hope in your souls? First, Glory, and here below deliverance and the forgiveness of sin. What do you expect because you believe it? "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." God gives you faith to believe so living hope expects it. There is sweetness in this. There is the long period of the trial of faith, but you know it is good that a man should both hope. You hope on. Do not cast away your confidence.

"Hope long will wait, and wait again,
And ne'er can give it up."

It is good to wait. I will demonstrate in the case of Simeon. Divinely, profoundly simple it is. The Lord had revealed to him that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait," That is where he was. Living faith gave him to expect and anticipate that he should see the sweet Babe, and he could quietly wait. To wait is to rest in the Lord and His faithfulness and love and goodness. You repose on Him; on His goodness, lovingkindness and compassion. You have got the best to come, good things to come. Did Simeon prove it was good for a man to both hope and quietly wait? He knew his expectation would not be cut off. How good it was waiting in Jerusalem; one of the few who were at Jerusalem at the birth of Christ. "It is good that a man should hope," Wonderful faith and expectation, having a secret in his heart that no one could take from him. He quietly waited. How many of you can give a little testimony on the text concerning your own case? "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait." O this expectation! We have proved it. The Lord has given us abundant proof of the text in our experience. It is as though the Lord says to you, "Go on hoping, as My servant Abraham, who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. Do not cast away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait." I like that. Presently he came by the Spirit to the temple, quietly, peacefully, full of anticipation, and they brought in the child Jesus, the little

Babe. You elderly friends, quietly wait. The best is to come. He will not disappoint you. And for those answers to prayer. I know you feel disheartened, as on Lord's Day, because of waiting so long, but quietly wait. Try to be humble, peaceful, quiet, submissive to the path, trial and sorrow. Quietly wait. You have got the secret. When they brought in the sweet Babe, Simeon recognised and identified Him, and there was nothing for it, after the blessed expectation of hope and the wonderful revelation that created love in his heart to the dear, sweet Jesus - the nature of vital godliness is revealed in him. Did he just go and look at Him? No. "Then took he him up in his arms," This is what he was waiting for and expecting, and he would enjoy it to the maximum. "He is mine, my Saviour." "then took he him up in his arms." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait." You wait for your great blessing, my friends, the crowning blessing of your life. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now - I have got all I waited and hoped for. It is all done. It is enough.- Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Amen.