

Substance of Sermon preached by Pastor ~~Walter~~ J.W. Spaulding-Tyler
on Sunday Evening, August 17, 1975. at The Dickler

Lesson. Hebrews 11.

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They that go down to the ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. Psalm 107. 23-24.

It is most nourishing to the grace of faith as the Holy Spirit directs the souls of His dear people in the depths of tribulation to the several paragraphs of this amazing Psalm. I suppose you who fear God have walked up and down in this Psalm for many years. I wish as I open, to lift up the basic, spiritual rudiments that are divinely uniform in each of the paragraphs. What are they? We first find dear souls brought into anxiety, distress, trouble, sorrow: we find them in perplexity, in prison, in afflictions, and in the storm of life. You may well, by the grace of God, identify your case and locate your position at this time in the sacred language of the Psalm. As they are brought into distress, afflictions, incarceration and storm we see the method of God in dealing with His people. What is it? Eventually there is a falling down where there is none to help, and this is a very distressing path to walk, stripped of creatures and only one place to look to. There is an amazing issue; "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble," and the issue to their cry; "and he saved them out of their distresses." The whole issues in everlasting praise in the Church now, joy and gladness filling the heart, and everlasting joy in the third heavens. When the Spirit whispers divine unction and peace to the soul of a poor tempest-tossed soul, and softens his spirit, this will produce an expectation of complete deliverance and holy joy as the issue. It is amazing

I will give you a brief word of spiritual advice. If you are in the depths as the sailors were; "they that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters," and very awesome this is in sorrow, distress, trials; the Lord has a blessed principle of the Kingdom which He always fulfils. It is this: as the affliction or tribulation abounds, so the consolation is commensurate with it. "so our consolation also aboundeth by

Christ." You have the joy of finding you are near God: the Lord is close to your soul and whispers peace. He brings the exceeding great and precious promises of the New Covenant with divine efficacy to your soul, and this is a word of advice. I know you will feel led to adopt this: find the places in your Bible and spread it out before God on your knees. Pray over them, and plead them before the Most High, and you will know what it is to extract nectar from them, and they will be sweet to your taste. This is being brought low, stripped, crying to the Lord, and the Lord hearing your cry and delivering you out of all your distresses. I do not wish to repeat myself, but this brings to my mind a special occasion of deep sorrow and heavy trial in the family: coming back to the Sanctuary to preach, and finding a dear one seriously ill in hospital. When we left the service there appeared to be little hope, and obviously our hearts were wrung with agony, sorrow and distress. Some of you remember the word God gave to his unworthy servant; "Is thy God able?" That is a summary of the verse. "Is thy God able?" and two particular points were conveyed to my spirit; one, that all would seem to fail; but God would hear prayer. "Is thy God able?" I want to discreetly, with all my heart praise God for a living memorial to His goodness. He fulfilled His own sweet word. He always does. O the times in life when the heart is squeezed and sore pained! The Lord will give you to turn to this Psalm, and you will say it all ended in praise and deliverance, the Lord hearing the cries, and delivering them out of their distresses. I wanted to name this basic principle.

Let me remind you, following this afternoon, of one point that emerged. It is the wish and will of the Lord that His people return to Him praise and gratitude. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" If you say; "Very well, I can quietly in my own home praise the Lord." that is acceptable under the influence of the Spirit. Let me remind you of the blessed commandments the Saviour left behind for His Church to observe, obey and fulfil: that is to say; "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, - my heart is so filled, my cup is flowing over with the goodness of God.- and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." I cannot impress on your mind adequately the wonder and joy experienced by your obedient soul when you find the immortal Dove of Peace on your spirit, and this a confirmation that you have honoured the

Lord. He honours faith and every exercise and gift of the Spirit by sending sweet peace. I shall never forget when, after all the tossing and tempest and travail of soul I ~~felt~~ I must venture to name my desire to the deacons, -there was no pastor.- As the time came to sit in the Church Meeting, peace passing understanding filled my spirit. It was one of the sweetest experiences I have ever known. So I remind you, it is the wish, will and pleasure of the Lord that you who know and love Him should keep His commandments. Your willing footsteps will run in His delightful ways. It would rejoice me to let down the net for a draught of fishes, so that some who know and love the Lord do not continue in a path where they are disobedient, but they must honour Christ and obey His royal laws. This issue of praise is the purpose, pleasure, and will of God. It is something that is spontaneous and irresistible. The term 'constrain' is beautiful. It means a divine power and holy influence controls you. It is not a matter of decision on your part: it is decided in and for you by the Lord Himself. I remember a pithy comment by Mr J.H.Gosden in this Sanctuary. He said not long before he died; "That is no love that does not issue in obedience, and that is no obedience that does not proceed from love." If you know the love of Christ it constrains you, and it issues in obedience. How wonderful if to day this ^{has} taken effect in a poor unworthy soul; "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men'." If it has, delay not.

I desire to speak further to the beautiful, vital facets of the two verses read. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." I feel a very wonderful sermon on this Scripture has been read to night in the Lesson. With each one of the worthies the prefix to the short account of their case and life is, living faith. "For by it the elders obtained a good report." While all else fades, that which is of faith is fadeless: it never dies. Whatever was by faith relates to their view of the immaculate conception and virgin birth of Christ and the whole of His priestly work of atonement. Think of Abel. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Think of the case of Abel: obviously he viewed by faith the sacrificial death of Christ: that the only way to God was by

sacrifice, and by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus there be a righteousness for His dear people. So he 'brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." and we have the testimony and witness that he was righteous. As by faith he offered a sacrifice, so God imputed righteousness to him. "For by it the elders obtained a good report." It is perennial, fadeless. Living faith in the Lord Jesus is referred to as a ship. You go down to the sea, to tribulation, to all the trials of the passage of the storm of life. It may be sweet to you to think of particular experiences, as marriage, following the Lord in baptism, living exercises brought to fruition. With much deep prayer and exercise the day came when you stood at the altar of God, and the Lord granted you His presence and a blessed promise. You went down to the sea in a ship; in the Lord in a promise. At your baptism or your reception into the Church of God the minister was moved to speak in the Name of the Trinity, and conveyed a word of the Lord to your soul. You went down to the sea in that ship. I know, and I give God the glory, I have felt inspired sometimes to give to the candidate a word of the Lord, and you went down to the sea in that ship. The exercise was fulfilled that had rested on your spirit for many years, and the Lord gives you a word of divine promise and blessing and you went into the office as minister, or into the diaconate in the Lord in that promise. I hope I shall not weary you, but this often comes to my spirit. I was preaching at Galeed from; "My grace is sufficient for thee." and Mr Paul said; "I went into my office as deacon with that promise." It is His faithfulness, fidelity, goodness, mercy to hold you, sustain you, and bring you through. It is a wonderful consideration. It is not for me to rehearse, but I think of a number of you who went down to the sea in a ship. "They that go down to the sea in ships." On a Lord's Day, or at the Prayer Meeting the Lord spoke a word to your soul and you could say; "This is my special day. It is my day. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It was for you from morning to night. You got into the ship by faith; the Lord in the promise; your God, Saviour, Father, Friend, Bridegroom. It is a wonderful word; "They that go down to the sea in ships," With some of you it is; "Many days have passed since then." but the Lord has been faithful. You went down to the sea in a ship, faith in Christ, in God in the promise, His sweet presence, and holy,

righteous character, and the ship will never go down. You will never sink. In the cases of many when they come to a deeper path, practically all the time they are sinking, and they cannot tell others. They are sinking, and their fears rise: there may be physical illness or disability that greatly worries them and distresses their minds. They wonder if they are going to die: they feel unable to breathe, and feel to be on the borders of eternity. Wonderful it is if you are in the ship! you will never sink. When the time comes Christ will fold you to His loving breast, and you will sweetly sleep in Jesus, "blessed sleep, from which none ever wake to weep." You have your sorrows, difficulties, problems, but the ship never sinks.

Concerning the experience of the disciples on the sea of Galilee, the waves beat into the ship but it did not sink. Your poor heart may be in a place where there is a swell on the surface; there is the gathering up of the waves and they seem to fill the ship, but it does not sink. O the wonder of it! Some of you come to the House of God hanging on the word of His grace, feeling your ship is full and you will sink, but you have not. The Lord has been with you. God bring it out of your breast, so there will be a testimony to His glory!

Think of Moses, 'when he was come to years'. He was forty. This refers spiritually to when the Lord was pleased to reveal Christ to him and he knew a measure of spiritual deliverance. What a time it is when the Lord brings a young man or a young maiden to know their sins are forgiven, and the Lord completely delivers their soul. This is a coming to years. How far has the Lord brought you on the way? Have you known what it is to experience a law work to strip you and kill you; to make you to know deeply your sinnership? Have you known the special act and grace of the Holy Spirit in the years to reveal God's Son in you, so you cast your anchor within the veil? Would you say you have been brought to the day when the Lord has plunged you in the crimson ocean and you have experienced the pardon^{of} sin? your soul has been brought into happiness, liberty and peace? This seems to me to be an exposition of 'coming to years'.

Things were brought to an issue with Moses: he went down to the sea in a ship. He was favoured to view Christ in His humiliation; to see the Lord ~~Jesus~~ Jesus, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, condescend to be 'a servant, though the Lord of all'. He had not a place to lay His

head, and the position and condition of Moses was incompatible with this, so he entered one of the best spiritual businesses in the Scriptures: blessed business he knew in great waters! What sort of business? The world would say; "Insanity! the extreme of foolishness! I tell you it was the most precious business in great waters. First, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." He divested himself of the pomp, pride, ambition and expectation of human life, for he was like the heir to Pharaoh. He counted it all loss. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." How is it possible for one to do that? How could he be brought to the place to renounce his expectation of the throne and all the wealth, fame, pomp and exaltation of Egypt? This is business. Try to go before me. How could one be brought there? There is a blessed answer. I will tell you. You will never renounce all he did until and unless you have found something better. That is what he did. He found a heavenly Kingdom and riches, and oneness, and union and communion with Christ. He found a heavenly crown, a Kingdom of immense delight, something infinitely better than the best the world affords. You will never renounce the world apart from that. The world would say; "Look at the man's prospects! all the riches, fame, learning, preference, and all that would gratify his mind!" He had found something better. Have you? He had found that which is fadeless, imperishable, eternal everlasting in the heavens. He had found Christ, a glorious Kingdom, heavenly riches, exaltation in Him. God had dealings with him, and he had dealings with the Lord.

And this is borne out in another facet.

"Each seeming loss improves their gains;
Each trouble comfort brings." (966)

There is business there. You lose something, and your poor heart sinks in you. You begin to understand the purposes of God in the dispensation; It is a seeming loss, and it improves your gains: every trouble brings you comfort. So Moses did business in great waters. Foolishness, says the worldling, to give up earthly things! Rich, favoured, wise man! his treasure is in heaven. Have you found that which is infinitely better than all the pomp and glory of the world?

A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pardoning love,
A hope that triumphs over all.

A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above." (933)

This is business. He gave up the world because he knew God had given him treasure,- Christ, grace in his heart, a crown and a prospect, and he knew the way to it. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." He knew what Paul says; "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." This business embraces a life of faith on the Son of God: all the living, spiritual exercises of faith, hope and love; a path of prayer: business. The Lord dealing with you and you with Him. The Lord dealing with you according to this principle; "I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit," which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." and issuing in the honour and glory of God: that which redounds to His glorious Name and infinite Being. Business in great waters.

Just a brief word on; "These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." There is one thing that is striking; there was ^a sequel to the storm experience the disciples knew on the sea of Galilee. You may ask what was the purpose of the Lord in causing them to go at His command and to come into a violent storm where they feared that they would sink and the ship go down? This is not a matter of going back two thousand years. It is well if we are led to go back, but what took place is translated to current terms of experience. Some of you are in it now, and you wonder why you are. "Why has the Lord allowed it? Why has He seen fit that I should come into this? It is so mysterious. I am in the path of His own bidding. He constrained me." But He is now asleep on the mountain top and His poor followers are in a terrible storm. Why? It is a wonderful thing to know; "Bow down, sense and reason, faith only reign here." The answer to bring to you is, we see in the gospels the great purpose of the Lord. It was in one case in the fourth watch of the night before He came to them on the sea. This means they had passed three watches and come to the final, between three and six a.m. You will do business in great waters when you go through three watches and the Lord has not come. It is true what the Hymnwriter says;

"He tarries oft till men are faint;
And comes at evening late." (893)

but He comes. I do not know whether there is a universal rule in the Kingdom of God concerning this, but in a survey of the journey and path I have come to a conclusion that in the ~~early~~ early days of spiritual experience the Lord seemed to appear for me fairly soon. A prayer, a cry, a look, and He came soon. Now it is a matter of ploughing my way on business in great waters for quite a while. But He comes. The disciples did not get immediate deliverance, but He came in the fourth watch of the night. This is the great purpose of God. There were two things. He commanded the winds and the waves, and there was a great calm; and He gently chided them. He reproved them in love. "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? Why dishonour Me so? Surely you know Me. You have proved Me over the years. You know My faithfulness, My fidelity. Why dishonour Me? How is it that ye have no faith?" "Be of good cheer. It is I; be not afraid." When they experienced the wonderful calm; the wind and the waves were rebuked and they were in blessed tranquility, they expressed this wonderful truth; "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." This appears to be the purpose of God in bringing us to this experience, so we should have a further view, a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Deity, sacred humanity, almighty power and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.