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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday, September 1. 1983.

Lesson. John 14.

Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Psalm 107. 30.

This blessed Scripture has now been abundantly fulfilled in the case of our beloved sister Ruth Hickman, after a long journey and many trials and sorrows and great weakness and frailty in childhood and adolescence, so for several years she was unable to attend school. I have always known her as frail. The Lord has richly blessed her and granted the forgiveness of sin in the early part of my ~~ministry~~ pastorate, and it is a joy to have the memory of baptising both husband and wife in the early and happy days of sealing and confirmation. The Lord has given her to prove a journey of almost ninety years. There is "a time to be born, and a time to die." So she is glad because she is quiet. No more agitation, distress of mind; no more feeling of loneliness and desolation in her spirit. No more days of darkness which are many; no more sore temptation or sin. "Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." For all of the dear ones here tonight and those dear to you whom the Lord loves with an everlasting love, the day will come when it will be your blissful, heavenly experience for ever. Contemplate it as the Lord grants seasons of foretastes in your souls. We are coming to the blissful day at the close of the voyage. "Then are they glad because they be quiet; so" in this manner; according to divine faithfulness, immutable love, unfailing goodness, covenant engagement; by His wisdom and lovingkindness and sweet mercy. So, by His divine fidelity to His promise, when He put the ring on your hand of everlasting love, banished your complaints, forgave your sin and clothed you in the garment of heavenly beauty, your wedding garment. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." A haven is a place of safety, the harbour of eternal rest which is the highest form of activity. Holy rest will be the highest form of spiritual activity. What a day!

I will mention to the dear friends, you will get a good inkling of

the interpretation of the text when the Lord leads to the Canticles and you know the time of love, and look forward to being brought to your desired haven. No more mental agitation, distress, fear, dread. Nothing more to grieve, distress, wound; no sore temptations; eternally peaceful; sweet peace that passeth all understanding because it is not produced by human nature or the prevailing circumstances: they produce the opposite. He fills you with peace, and not a wave of trouble rolls across your peaceful breast. "Then are they glad." There is an expectation, which is a great part of the exercise of faith in the Person, glory, priestly work of Christ and His Kingship. There is something to expect, and your expectation shall not be cut off. "My soul anticipates the day, - do you dear ones? - Would stretch her wings and fly away." There is something serious about your religion if you have no blessed expectation. What prevents you from enjoying? If the Lord sends His love into your heart what is the communication? You are one with Him; you will never be parted because in love there is oneness. "Then are they glad." The day is coming, I do not know how soon. It is opposite to the condition of this sinful world with its hatred, violence, malice, seething unrest. The Lord has a people who know what peace is. You come to the enjoyment of peace and peace is preached to your heart. Do you know what it is to come to the Sanctuary and peace is in the atmosphere? The Prince of Peace is there, and the peace of God is preached into your soul. All anxiety and fear melts, disappears. What a favour: what a blessed people you are who know the joyful sound! You will have foretastes of eternal enjoyment. "Then are they glad because they be quiet." So: filled with the Trinity, with the Covenant of Grace; all the blessings and promises of the Covenant. All the office characters of the Lord Jesus in the Covenant; in His exercise of them. So: something that is congruous with God, with His promise, nature, perfections, gospel. "So he bringeth them." They would never get there unless He did. As at the Prayer Meeting recently the two things. The Lord would go before you, and with you.

"So he bringeth them. - It is a lovely word - into their desired haven." If Ruth could speak she would say, "Tell them I am Home, in my desired haven." What must it be to be there? Can you contemplate it? to be at

Home in another world, the fair world of bliss, in the third heavens, in Paradise. No sin, no sorrow, no sighing, all trouble over. No more tribulation, no body of sin and death, but a glorious body raised at the first resurrection and united to your glorified soul. "So he bringeth them." My friends, I will speak a word for God. He is faithful. He will bring you to your desired haven. Immediately, and I speak spontaneously, immediately you get a spiritual sense of a hiding place for your soul, and for your soul it is the riven side of the Lord Jesus, the cleft Rock; and a sense of His rich atoning blood, you will know your desired haven. And His loving arms and breast a refuge, a desired haven. You want to dwell for ever in His embrace, feeling you are resting on the bosom divine. I ask you as a loving, gracious people, have you this desired haven? What is your desired haven? You say, "It has been named. I wish to be with and like my Lord." And I am sure you will want to know your dear ones are in a place of safety and refuge too. "So," according to His glory that He should be eternally praised and honoured. All the perfections of His in a blaze in performing: in such a way that all the promises are fulfilled, all expectations are exceeded. All the wondrous, finished priestly work of atonement and work now in intercession and mediation shine forth; the everlasting, ineffable love of God in a blaze. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

There are important points in the paragraph. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." Two things emerge. Why did you go down to the sea and get in a ship? It signifies that you left your native land. Why not stay in it and not get into the ship? Your native land is the world. Do you want to stay in it? There are a number of you people have some dear to you in the family who are still in the world. I hope they will not die in it. That is where they are, in a state of consternation and confusion. They do not know what they want: there is nothing that satisfies. They are in this land. Only divine grace, the quickening of the Spirit, regeneration, having their eyes opened and their ears unstopped, and the Lord taking the stony heart out of their flesh and giving a heart of flesh will achieve what is desired. Why did you leave your country? You left it because -

though you did not realise it as you have done since - you were made a citizen of another country. Your citizenship is in Heaven. So the words of Christ obtain. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." You could not stay in the world, could you? And it is not just a voyage to another country: it is another world, a bright world of bliss you are bound for. I am bound to say that probably a degree of terror, distress, fear, condemnation in the law made you feel you must get out of your native country before the Lord destroyed it. A really wonderful motive and precious thing in leaving the land will be when you get a taste of the love of the King of the better country, the blessed world of bliss. When you get a glimpse of His love and see His dear face you will be finished for the old country. There was a time when you were so alive to the pleasures of the world. It is wonderful to find you are dead to them. There is nothing in them to you. And you come to the time when you taste that the Lord is gracious, and the heavenly sweetness of it kills you to the world. "O taste and see that the Lord is good," and it is good to have a taste of the divine love of Christ, and you are increasingly dead to the world and alive to Christ and Heaven.

The Lord constrained you to get into the ship. By faith in Jesus Christ you got into the ship. Going down to the sea and getting in the ship is an apt simile for the Christian life. Water is liable to change from a placid nature to a stormy one. So you left the world no more to return, and you hope to arrive in your desired haven. Some are not far off. It is true, "Why those fears? behold, tis Jesus holds the helm" - the tiller that steers the ship. He is there. It is a remarkable consideration that in surveyance only a small area of the world has been surveyed. Only the areas that are sea lanes: a vast area of the sea has never been surveyed. So with all the dangers, the surface of the sea, the rocks and quicksands, the mountains and valleys you will need Christ to be your Pilot, don't you think? With all the uncharted area of the ocean bed which only the Lord knows you are bound to foul the rocks or the sands, but He is at the tiller. You have gone to sea in a ship. I expect you have had times when you thought your little vessel would sink. These people melt because of trouble. All their

strength and wisdom melts. "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." the end of all their wisdom. It is not pleasant to stagger; to know what it is to have dizziness of the brain. Trouble will do it. You have no wisdom left. It is wonderful that the Lord is with you. These people 'do business in great waters'. All they pass through is so dissimilar and unexpected; such a variety of experiences as they sail. In every experience in the Lord's hands there is spiritual business; praying, pleading with the Lord, soul travail; pleading for wisdom, sanctification, blessing, and that you may know the Lord's will; that God will bless your soul in the voyage and the souls of your dear ones; that good may come out of it.

There is contact with Heaven. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble." It is spiritual business. "These see ~~the~~ the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." How many wonders have you seen this year? Think of it: or the last five years? We cannot count them before the Lord in order. Some have been raised up from affliction, the depths. Some have been led to His Church. O the wonders He has wrought! Our God works wondrously. One of the great wonders is for the Lord to come and make the storm a calm. He rebukes the wind and says to the sea, "Peace, be still," and there is a great calm. The wind is so beneficial. We are only on the fringe of knowledge of the functions of the various winds which cleanse the earth's atmosphere. Apart from the wind the earth's atmosphere would be so polluted that hardly any human life would be possible. And the wind cleanses the atmosphere of our souls. There is the beautiful South wind. You spread your sails and get wafted through the deep to the port. You will see His wonders in the deep. You will know what it is to find the South wind blowing softly. The Lord has visited and blessed you, and you feel the sweet influence and you spread your sails. You feel at the end of the day you are nearly Home. You will see His wonders in the deep. One of the wonders is that the ship does not sink. You will reach the Harbour.

"They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble." This alternation: do you know it? Some are happy at times, and then they go down into the trough. "Their

soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." It comes in life, the end of all wisdom. You may say, "Pull yourself together. Surely you can find a solution." You have got to the end of it all. When you get to the end of things God will intervene. He will do something. It may be by terrible things in righteousness in the manifestation of His delivering power and love. "Then they cry," This is a good thing. It is not polished rhetoric; it is inarticulate, from the bottom of your heart. It is the internal intercession of the Spirit. "but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." You cry unto the Lord in your trouble. You may say you cannot pray. I understand. The Spirit of God is making intercession for you. Words fail you. There are inarticulate groans, and you cry to the Lord in your trouble. It is good to know, "Lord, help me," with worship of the Son of God incarnate. He gives you liberty to pray, and you say, "Lord, help us." "And he bringeth them out of their distresses." It is in the plural. Has He brought you out of your distresses? "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." You are thinking of the waters when you get near your journey's end. There is no violence, no Atlantic rollers, no gathering up of the waters to a crest and dashing over you, breaking over your head. No. The waves are still. "Then are they glad." You can have foretastes before you get there; more than one. "Then are they glad because they be quiet." Really in the ideology it is the soul rounding the breakwater. "Then are they glad because they be quiet." It is the journey's end. No more storms and tempests. It is the end of it all. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven" - Christ, His bosom divine, the everlasting arms, the cleft Rock, to His embrace.

"With what raptures He'll embrace us,
Wipe away each falling tear!
Near Himself for ever place us."

Peace, perfect peace!