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J.W. Sperling - Tyler

Notes of Thres Sermons preached by our Pastor
on Sunday, October 20. 1974.

Morning Lesson. Hebrews 11.

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.

Romans 12. 12.

Our beloved friends will immediately observe, if it please the Lord to grant divine unction and sacred liberty and spiritual blessing and edification, we have here a series of exhortations eminently suitable for the divine Services of the Sanctuary this Day. I wish to say, what has specially drawn my spirit to the Text is the central clause; namely, "patient in tribulation." Here is the divine prescription for the people of God in all ages and for His dear saints who now must feel themselves to be in a time of trouble.

"Though trouble now thy heart appals,
And deep to deep incessant calls." (917)

I believe there are many in the congregation who are perhaps in greater trouble than they can express, and it is undoubtedly clear to those who fear God that we are coming to a time of trouble of greater volume and depth and dimension, and that trouble will be plenary and affect us all. The troubles of the people of God; those who fear the Lord and know the sacred ordinance of prayer, your troubles are really unfathomed. You not only have general troubles that affect the nations and the nations of the earth and the human race, - the inevitable sorrows of God's human race because of the fall in Adam, - and sorrow because of your own transgression in your path and lot and experience. And be reminded, these will not lessen as you go from one stage of life to another. I believe many of us who are parents may have longed in the days of travail and anxiety to bring up a family when they were all at home, - we have longed for the time when the lads and lassies would be old enough to earn their own living and to be independant in that sense, and to be happily married. You go from one stage to another: you thought there would be an euphoria before you. In every stage of life your troubles increase, and they are

peculiar to the stage and state in life. It is impossible for you to be immunised: there are these troubles. We could say, in the sovereignty of God some have far more than others. Some poor souls are bowed down with trouble, and it brings them to the grave. Others are somewhat relieved of undue anxiety ~~by~~ tension. Some have good children who go to the House of God and never give any trouble. They can look round the country-side and say; "They all go ^{to} the House of God, and there is little to be anxious about." Some have a scene that is far removed from this. The balancing of the clouds is with God, and there will always be for His people sweet mercy. The Throne of Grace is open to them. You who fear God have unfathomed trouble, - your poor soul; the souls of your dear ones, and this is greater than anything else. Business is a tremendous worry, - and industry and job. Everything is falling around us, and we are in a certain way. So the people of God have concerns that eclipse everything else: not only the difficulties of life: it is the salvation of their souls.

So you need in trouble to consult, who? The Heavenly Physician. When you have maladies that are compound, it is not long before your name is on the list, and you find yourself in the happy experience of kind reception and consultation, and you try to unwind and let the true position appear before your physician. One of the great ^{troubles} with some people is, they cannot tell. The truth is, you begin to feel better before you leave the room, and you receive your prescription. You need, my friends, an appointment, - all who fear God. You may have it at the Throne of Grace. Seek your appointment with God there, and try to pour out your heart before Him and unwind, so every process in your person that causes anxiety you release in His merciful presence. You begin to feel better immediately if you have an appointment with God. You have His dear Son to take your case in His loving, merciful hands and He will issue His prescription. I have brought it with me: that is why I came, to bring you His prescription.

This is the prescription for ^{your} ills. He says three things. You are to rejoice: this is to those who love and fear God. I have been careful to name that. The first thing for you to do is to rejoice in hope. You need a tonic: something to do you good; to lift you out of your desolate, depressed condition of mind and spirit. You need to rejoice in hope. Wonderful, is it not? And then, "be patient in tribulation." Very clearly;

the exhortation to be patient infers that you have a wonderful prospect: things will issue well. God never teaches you to be patient if there is nothing to look forward to. You are in tribulation: be patient. And thirdly, "continuing, going on by the grace of God, continuing instant in prayer." So this is the prescription I have brought you in the Name of God.

This morning, if it is His divine will, and seeking much needed grace and strength, I am to endeavour to speak to you from the first clause; "Rejoicing in hope." I think some of you will remember recently at the Prayer Meeting we quoted from Mr Stevens in his hymn concerning hope;

"And when the soul to march prepares,
Good hope sends out her fervent prayers,
And dies in peace with God." (242)

It is desirable firstly, to endeavour to define the blessed theological virtue and grace before us in the Scripture. It is the gift of God, and it flows in the stream of holiness and life to the soul. It is known especially in the revelation of God to us; the blessed gift and virtue and grace of hope.

I suppose we might say initially there are other forms of hope. There is the hope of man that is destroyed. It is basic in human nature; the hope of man; but the hope of man is destroyed; every false hope is removed. "Thou destroyest the hope of man." that is to say, the hope man has in his own resources. That is the doctrine of Humanism; that the answer to all your trouble is within you. You have only got to learn to draw on your own resources and you will find a panacea for all your ills. It is amazing how people with terminal disease hope to the last hour that they will get better. Some would say; "This is 1974. It has been difficult and trying: perhaps 1975 will be much better." We are not promised that. But this is the hope man has in himself. When God begins the work of grace He destroys the hope of man. Do you people know what it is to have the hope of man destroyed? Have you come to the place in life's journey where you were without hope because God had destroyed it? It was not a good hope, but the hope of man. I remember when God destroyed my hope, and I lived without hope. It is a solemn place: it is necessitous for all who fear God to be brought there, and He will give you a hope, a good hope

I want to locate this in the economy of grace and salvation, and to show the blessedness and efficacy of living hope, and to 'rejoice in hope' "Rejoicing in hope."- not on the ground of hope, but by the grace of hope on the Object. That is how you are able to covet living hope. As you know there are three major graces that are inseparable, closely allied,- faith, hope, love. So really we may say living hope and holy love are fruits of the root grace of faith. If you look at a tree you will see the whole of it is well anchored by the roots, and faith is the root of the matter. Faith is that which anchors the soul in Christ: it reaches out all its fibrous members to Christ, and finds the Atonement, and anchors you and fixes and roots you in the dear Lord's garden. As unbelief is the root evil, faith is the root grace. If you know this nothing can ever move you not all the storms of life; not all the cuttings, distresses, all the vicissitudes of life, all the blasts of temptation: nothing can ever move you. You may come into the deepest adversity: you are anchored and fixed in the dear Lord's garden and in Christ. If you think of Job and all he passed through; nothing moved him. He knew changes in his feelings, and he wanted to die, but, "I know that my redeemer liveth." He was rooted in Christ. Are you? This is why some religious people apostatise, turn back, walk no more with Jesus, because they were never rooted in Him. They have only a superficial, nominal acquaintance with Him.

Look to your roots: are you rooted in Christ? A remarkable thing ~~in~~ concerning God's wisdom in Creation is, how roots have a sensitive understanding of where moisture is, and they strike out until they reach it, and exercise the function of drawing up moisture to the plant or tree. Faith reaches out. It has the spiritual sense named in the Book of Job, "Through the scent of water." It can smell it; it strikes out till it finds it, and it draws in virtue and it goes to the life of the tree. Have you the root grace of faith?

One of the great functions of faith is to believe. If I stay here I would say, you have first living faith which enables the soul having believed, to cling to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the faith of adhesion. You cling to Christ, and in this experience of living faith the Lord grants to you a further degree. You have presently the faith of assurance. But the whole point is, living faith in the soul gives you to know Christ

and to anchor in Him. It gives vital communications and holy communion with Him. Faith believes in Him, in God, in the Holy Trinity, in the immaculate conception of Christ, in the virgin birth, in His sweet Person in the whole of His priestly work. It believes in the perfections of Deity in the gospel, the Bible, His promises, that what He has said He surely will perform. "What faith believes good hope desires." Hope is an anchor to the soul, and living hope is a blessed compound of desire and expectation. All faith believes living hope desires and expects. Very wonderful. Do you believe in Christ? Living hope comes and desires Christ, and living hope expects Him. You believe in Him: by hope you have a capacity to desire what you believe and to anticipate what the Lord will give you and has given to you in the Covenant. O the blessedness of hope!

Further concerning hope. The first thing concerning living hope is the ground of it. Hope is very concerned with the foundation, - what she build your soul on. So as Christ is revealed to faith as the blessed and only foundation, He becomes the ground of hope. She builds there. In the foundation is all the work of Christ; all His perfections; all His promises; everything God gives you. Just check on this as we go along. And in life your expectations, all blessings, what you do and all your concerns you place on the ground of hope, the Rock. Your soul, life, all, His promises you will build on the foundation. This is the activity of living hope. The expectation of eternal life, of which the Father hath made us meet to be partakers, you will build on the foundation. Very wonderful; the ground and Object of hope, Christ, and the sweet activity of hope all through life.

I will refer to the sweet and beautiful and divine blessing in hope of desire and expectation. After all, you cannot give yourself a holy or a good desire. If you have living hope you have a capacity to desire Christ and heaven, and an unquenchable desire for all the Lord has promised you. There is no such thing as saying to a child of God; "Let it go." You cannot let it go: it is impossible because the Spirit of God formed the desire in your heart and it is unquenchable. Nothing can satisfy you, only the fulfilling of it. So, the activity of living hope and desire. Clearly desires vary in intensity: they are always there. You will desire to be holy: you will desire heaven, Christ, marriage to the Lamb, an eternal

inheritance, all the Lord has promised, all He has written on your heart
A sure knowledge under all your conflict that in what the Lord has
promised He is able to perform. "Who against hope believed in hope, that
he might become the father of many nations."

"Hope long will wait, and wait again,
And ne'er can give it up,
Till the bless'd Lamb, who once was slain,
Appears the God Of hope." (244)

O blessed life!

I should give you time for deep reflection concerning this. Here is an
explicit directive to the Lord's dear people to rejoice in hope. It seem
to be set against the background of all that is dark, trying, sombre;
temptation, sorrow, pain, woe, the fall of man, judgments in ^{the} earth; and
He says to His dear people; "Rejoice in hope."

So if the Lord will, I will speak to "Rejoicing in hope." It would be
well if we went back to the ancient history of the Bible. There was a
first time when fallen creatures rejoiced in hope because God had given
them a hope, and because God had given them One to hope in. I refer to
Adam and Eve, and against the background of misery and their solemn act
of violation of the beneficial law God had given them; against human
misery and woe to the end of this dispensation, the Lord has given the
rejoicing of hope. The Lord God came into the garden, and they knew they
were naked. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the
garden in the cool of the day...And he said, Who told thee that thou was
naked?" It seems, if I may so ~~say~~ name it to you, that God, after the fa
quickly quickened them into spiritual life. He made them coats of skin,-
highly suggestive of mercy and the robe of righteousness. Adam called
his wife's name Eve; "because she was the mother of all living." It was
more than natural life. God had given them new life, but there was the
gift of faith. He told them that the seed of the woman should bruise the
serpent's head. Against all the terrible background there was a first
revelation and mention of One who should assume our nature in order to
crush the power of Satan, and clearly, in all their misery there was
loving hope and a rejoicing in hope in the sweet Person who would bruise
the serpent's head.

I will refer to Abel. He brought of the firstlings of his flock and offered them to the Lord, and he is in the list of worthies we read of in the Lesson; "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." He saw, - I do not know to what degree, - the Person of Christ and His priestly office and sacrifice and he believed in Him, and as he believed he rejoiced in hope. It was the same with Noah: the Lord said to him; "Make thee an ark." and the Lord shut him in. What do you think he felt as he built the ark by the divine plan of the Heavenly Architect? That there was only one place of safety; Christ the Ark of Grace. He rejoiced in hope. Then there is the word to Jacob at Bethel; "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." What was that? The incarnation of Christ; the coming of the Messiah, the Saviour. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." There was the rejoicing of hope.

A word on rejoicing. There are two things concerning living hope that are very afflictive. One is, the devil will always torment you on the ground of your hope, and all you hope in. This where the devil directs his arrows. The other is, we have a sad proneness where there is something to enjoy we tend to cast away our confidence. These things are always afflicting us. The Lord says; "Rejoice in hope. This is your blessed privilege." So I will give a brief word on this. What is so sweetly revealed to you, - the Person of Christ; His divine will and purpose and promises, and heaven, become to you your delight; your Object. Shall I tell you why you delight in Him? Because of who He is: and there is a secret, a wonderful secret, and sometimes you miss the realisation of it. What the Lord reveals to you and it becomes the object of your delight you have the rich blessing of in possession in your own soul. Amen.
