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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer, Clapham on
Wednesday evening April 6th 1955.

Text: Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. 1 Peter 5 v7

This is one of the many timely exhortations in the Scriptures; and I suppose it could hardly be possible to find a condition or circumstance in our lives to which no word of timely exhortation could apply. Some of these exhortations in the Scripture are to guide us in our ways; some of them are to support us in our trials, to show us to whom to look in our troubles; and others, how to deport ourselves in our lives, walk and conversation; so that it may be said that gospel exhortations cover our lives, as well as a great many more important concerns in our souls. These are often designed to be for the comfort of the Lord's people when they are harassed by the devil, and come to such a pass at times as to wonder where the scene will end: and if we look at the exhortations in the comforting aspect of them, it would seem that the Lord's people need never be in any trouble, or have any trouble about any thing but be lifted above it all and just walk in the confidence of their faith and put their trust in the Lord - but the Lord has never designed it to be that way. You will never find it to be that way; rather they are supporting and comforting exhortations, as they are in the gospel and in the precepts, indicating a path of trial and of difficulty; fiery trials, trials of faith, walking in deep waters, and sometimes in great uncertainty about things too, so that, were it not for the Lord condescending to speak a timely word here and there to His afflicted and tempest-tossed people, it would seem, at least in some cases, as though they might sink and never rise again; but that will never be with a vessel of mercy. It is true, he may sink very, very low, you will; possibly you and I have done so, we have passed through some sharp and heavy things, so that we have felt as the children of Israel of whom we read recently, "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." Well that is just the very time for the Lord to come in and give that divine support which only He can give, and give you to feel it, and make it as an anchor to your soul in a storm, or, as it were, a secret strength holding you and sustaining you in the face of all inward and outward opposition. It can be a very sweet moment when, by His grace, we can, and do, cast our care upon Him. Have you ever known such a moment as that? I believe I have once or twice in my lifetime. If you have really been able to do this - then you have not had a trouble although you have been in the midst of trouble. Well, say you, that is a paradox altogether. I quite agree, but the Lord's people often

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live in paradoxes, they are a paradox to themselves in many respects. Sometimes they are never so strong as when they feel their weakness. Moreover the Lord has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness". But when you can cast your care upon Him you can walk in the fire, even if you are not able, at the time, to see the other end of the furnace any more than the children of Israel could see the other side of the Red Sea.

But this "casting all our care upon Him" is an act of faith. You might read the exhortation a hundred times over and feel more burdened than ever, in fact, it can, if it so work in your spirit, even seem to mock you; because sometimes it may be the more you have tried to cast your care upon Him, the heavier the burden has become. We have to prove that we cannot do these things in our own strength and yet when we are helped by the Lord, nothing is sweeter than to be able to cast our care upon Him. O when this is the case faith has a single eye. In the first place, to cast our care upon Him, we must possess a knowledge of Him. You do not usually put confidence in strangers, unless at least, you hear something confirming of their character and reputation, and even so, you would want to know them personally, before you would feel very safe and happy to commit any matters of importance into their hands. So it is with the Lord's dear people and the Lord Himself; a knowledge of Him is necessary in order to this exercise of faith, and even where there is a knowledge of Him, He Himself must give the faith to cast our care upon Him. But this can be a very choice and a very sweet moment in a believer's experience. It is just that time when you see the Lord above everything else and above every one else too, and getting a hold of Him by faith you feel supported in the storm - and not only so, but see the storm made a calm. It seems as though sometimes the Lord leads His people in certain ways of providence to put them to a most severe test, and then, when He has brought them to that test, enables them to cast all their care upon Him. How wonderful His ways have been! Even in that chapter we read (Genesis 37) Joseph went to see his brethren and they conspired against him, and would have slain him but for the intervention of Reuben. Eventually they sold him to the Ishmeelites and he was carried away into Egypt. He was his father's choice boy; it did not seem then as though the Lord was taking much care of Him. Sometimes it may seem to you that the Lord is taking no care of you at all, especially when you have tried to pray (and perhaps with all urgency) for the Lord to appear in that particular matter, and yet have to see things grow worse and worse and become darker than ever. But we have to remember that our ways are not the Lord's ways nor His thoughts our

thoughts. If they were, where should we get to? We are continually misjudging the Lord and coming to premature conclusions; but the Lord never judges us wrongly or comes to premature conclusions in any matter. The Lord was watching over Joseph and foretold that he would be honoured in such a way that his brethren would go down on their knees before him. Speaking after the manner of men, it would seem to have been wiser if Joseph could have kept those dreams to himself, because it only stirred up wrath against him, yet poor, dear boy, he could not see what lay before him; he dreamed of his preferment, of his brothers' bowing down to his sheaf, of the sun, moon and stars, but he did not dream about the prison, of being cast into prison and having to dwell there a long time; he did not dream about the irons; he did not dream about the forgetful butler. No! So it is with our providences. The Lord brought His will to pass by things which appeared as dark and black as they could possibly be, so that with Joseph and his father too, all seemed to go against them. Trial after trial came, and poor Jacob rent his clothes and was so distressed that he said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." and later, "All these things are against me." At such a time he might have said, 'What care has the Lord for me?' He is not watching over me; if He were things would not have come to such a pass as this. But they do come to 'a pass' which in the end proves that the Lord was watching over us all the time. He says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry." Yet things at times have gone so opposite and contrary, that it has seemed as though there were no God, no control over things at all - just drifting on in a sea of uncertainty. Yet, in the midst of all this and perhaps much heaviness in your spirit on account of matters, you may suddenly feel rising up in your heart the power of faith, and get a glimpse of the Lord God of Jacob, of His almighty power, grace and wisdom, and feel, in a way surprising to yourself, to cast your care upon Him.

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." This casting of our care upon Him has a wide scope because it leaves nothing out; it takes in everything in our lives, soul and body, everything here. After all, what a wonderful mercy it is to know this God! to be favoured and privileged in times of trial and difficulty to cast our care upon Him and to prove Him to be a wonder-working God for us! And have not His people proved that at times, here and there? When you can cast your care upon Him, as I have hinted, you find a rest, a rest in your soul, and you can feel a rest in your body too. One minute, as it were, we may be 'careful and troubled about many things' and the next minute, if the Lord appears, just able to be still and prove that in "quietness and

in confidence shall be your strength" - casting all your care upon Him.

The apostle Peter, in the verse before, exhorts us to 'humble ourselves under the Lord's mighty hand, that He may exalt us in due time To humble ourselves is not according to poor, proud human nature - it is His grace alone in us that can rightly bring us to humble ourselves before Him. I do not believe we shall ever cast all our care upon Him until, first of all, we humble ourselves before Him. But this casting of our care upon Him = all our care - takes in, in the first place, the care of our souls, and that is the most important of all considerations because of the tremendous issues. No matter can be on the same level of importance as the salvation of our never-dying souls; but how are we to cast this care upon Him? We can only do this as we are blest with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and can take our poor, needy, sin-stricken souls to Him, wait upon Him, and plead His Person, blood and righteousness, which is the only means and way of deliverance from the wrath to come. But if you and I are favoured, at times, to get just a little light here, have some manifestation to our souls of the Lord Jesus Christ in His all-sufficiency in our salvation, can rightly realise that He is "Alpha and Omega" in it all, "is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him"- if we can get hold of that by His grace, there can be perhaps, for a few minutes, a very sweet casting of all the care of our soul upon Him, renouncing all beside, placing no merit on anything of our own or on any works of our own, however commendable they may be of themselves, realising we are poor nothings and that if we were dealt with as our sins deserve we should be banished for ever. This casting our care upon Him as concerning our souls is putting our whole trust in His finished work; it is to be brought to the place which Toplady speaks of in that wonderful hymn:-

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling;"

this is casting our care upon Him!

I know what it is to cast my care upon Him, and that without speaking "cunningly devised fables." I believe the Lord brought me to a place once, where I felt I could just leave this world, resting my soul on His blessed atonement; He gave me such a view of that and my interest in it, that I felt as though I could pass from time into eternity resting my soul upon it - that is what I mean by casting the care of our souls upon Him.

Some people in their religion think such a lot of what they may be doing and build their hope upon some accomplishment of their own, but a poor sinner, stricken and wounded by the law in his conscience, brought

to know that "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all," is brought away from all such "refuge of lies" to the cross of Calvary and is stripped of all fancied righteousnesses, and feeling them to be nothing but filthy rags, falls at the Redeemer's feet and trusts alone in the merits of His wounds and blood, and will glory in nothing but the cross of Christ: and this, I believe, is casting the care of our souls upon Him. We need His grace to commit them to Him. Then indeed they are very sweet moments when faith gets a view of Him; He is seen then to be sufficient, absolutely, and in the confidence of faith in the heart, you can throw your burden on Him, and to a point, the burden of your sin and guilt by confessing your sins in faith and hope in the redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord help us then to cast the care of our souls upon Him!

But is there not also the care of our poor bodies? These mortal bodies of ours occupy much of our thoughts at times, different weaknesses and afflictions; and much of our conversation turns upon this and that ailment of our poor bodies. After all we must all realise that they are mortal bodies - that our bodies are destined to die. What then? How can we cast our care upon Him concerning these things? Well, I believe the body is part of the purchased possession; that when the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross He redeemed us, soul and body, and that one day with us "death will be swallowed up in victory" and these bodies will be raised again, spiritual bodies, and "this mortal will put on immortality". We are in a mortal state here but O, you can cast your care upon Him, even in regard to your body, when you can feel a sweet hope in your soul - nothing will help you to commit your body to Him better than this. If He should be pleased to come and bless us in our souls, give us a sweet hope of eternal life, let a little of His wonderful love flow into our poor hearts, we can commit our poor bodies to Him and feel resigned to His holy will. We are not to be careless about our bodies; they are the Lord's handiwork and when affliction comes upon us, it behoves us to seek relief and recovery subject to the Lord's divine will. But although all this we do, and place much reliance upon this or that remedy for this or that complaint or disease, after all the sweetest moment is when you feel that you, soul and body, are the Lord's property, and that some day both will be with Him to dwell with Him for ever. Sometimes I have felt that was a wonderful statement in Philippians where the apostle says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." If you are laid upon a bed of affliction you have deep and great concern for your body, whether or not

it may please the Lord to raise you up. Naturally speaking, almost all our concerns rest on this point, shall I get better or not? and, if left to ourselves we may, perhaps, think little of the Lord in it; but if the Lord should come and bless your soul in affliction, you can lie upon your bed, even with a suffering body, and feel it sweet to be there if the Lord is there too. O when He comes into the thing, when His sweet presence is felt, then you can, just at that time, lie passive in His hands and know no will but His; and this is casting all the care of your body upon Him. Why, you can say, Lord, this poor body is Thy property, it belongs to Thee, give me grace to live as long as Thou art disposed for me to live upon this earth. Make me to know my end; do not leave me to rebel against Thy sovereignty in this - if some should live longer than I, or I should live longer than they. Grant me submission and a gracious preparation. And if He is pleased to answer your poor pleadings, you can commit your soul and body into His blessed hands, I do not think you will think me to be speaking lightly or carelessly respecting our poor bodies. It is right for us to take this care of them that we are exhorted to do in this way but when afflictions come upon us and we are filled with apprehension as to their possible issue, nothing can be sweeter than to feel a sweet and sacred sense of the Lord's kindness and mercy in our souls; then we can commit our bodies rightly into His Hand and say, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done - This I believe, is casting our care upon Him.

Some of the Lord's people have much concern and care about their families; It is quite right that they should too. What godly, exercised parent having children could be otherwise? because realising they are his children and have immortal, never-dying souls, his prayer, above all beside must be that they may prove to be vessels of mercy, of the Lord's own family. What a wonderful thing it is when the Lord in His mercy answers prayer in this particular, as in some cases He does. But even with regard to this, this exhortation 'casting all your care upon Him' may be very timely. I know I cannot say much about this, but perhaps parents have had just some rare occasions when they have felt they could lay their own dear children at the Lord's feet, commit them to Him, and watch and pray and hope that they may see answers to their humble pleadings that the Lord may be pleased to bless their family. - This would be casting all their care upon Him.

Then there are also cares of the business or vocation in life that sometimes press very heavily upon the Lord's people - It does not seem that the Lord's people can walk as lightly in things as worldlings do because they have to do with the Lord in them and are often tried about

them, have exercises about them which the worldling has not. There may be a number of things, more or less involved, in your vocation in life; some things may seem so very necessary and you pray about them and yet meet with disappointment, at least for a season, and you feel the Lord is dealing hardly with you. This may or may not be the case but it is often so, and where that is the case there is a trial of faith, and you may look at a verse like this and say, 'That is what I have been trying to do, I have prayed about this and asked the Lord to go before me and now all seems confusion and I meet with disappointment.' You say 'The Lord has no care for me; I cannot be one of His or He would have regarded me and given me success, gone before me and caused His goodness to pass before me in the way.' Yes, but when thus melted down there may be another reason, and I believe there is: the point is to be enabled to cast your care upon Him when things go so against you, when the Lord deals hardly with you. Imagine poor Joseph lying in prison with his feet in irons, as we read, and someone coming along lightly and saying, Well, Joseph, cast your care upon Him. How resentful he would be! We may sometimes say things very easily to others in trial if we are not in the same trial, yet, at the same time, the Lord's people who have passed through trial and know what it means may sometimes, as helped, speak a very timely helpful, fitting word to others in tribulation, which has sometimes been of much help and blessing as the Lord has been pleased to use it.

"Casting all your care upon Him." Many things come into this which I cannot enter upon now, in the positions and circumstances in which we are placed in the church of God. Ministers have the care of the ministry, and they know what the burden is to some extent. What wrestling there is before the Lord about it, and how, at times, they go down into the depths and feel they cannot preach again. (Perhaps some may not feel as much as I do like this at times). Well what then? When we are come to the end of everything, as helped and enabled it can be very very seasonable and timely to "cast our care upon Him". Why? Because we are casting our care and our own unworthiness upon Him who has all fulness. You cannot cast your care on anyone better. If you were in the depths of poverty, to what purpose would it be going to someone else in the same straits and casting your care upon him? But when the poor minister who feels to be in the depths of poverty in his soul is enabled to cast his care upon the Lord, he casts his care upon Him who has all fulness to supply his need. Moreover this has been promised in some particular things. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". There is the care of the church too,

and of those who bear the burden and are made helpful and useful in their sphere, and exercised members who may sometimes feel the need of this exhortation, as we all do, and when enabled to follow it, it is good and strengthening to faith and honouring to our God.

"Casting all your care upon Him". Why? Here the apostle seems to give a reason and answer to this, why cast all our care upon Him? "Because He careth for you"! That is the reason. You would not cast your care upon a person who had no care for you, but if you had a friend who had great concern for your welfare, a friend in whom you could confide, who had your interest at heart, you might feel disposed to put some confidence in him, to commit your matters to him, which might be right and proper in a business way, or a private capacity; but when a poor sinner is brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ in some humble measure and is given to see that in Him all fulness dwells, he can, here and there, as helped, cast his his care upon Him because he feels and believes that the Lord cares for him. "For He careth for you". This might take in a number of things. To a point we can go back to the eternal council and decrees of our covenant God and see, as we may hope, where and how He cared for us before the world was, in His purposes of love and mercy toward us in placing us among His people there is the covenant of grace and giving us an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Has not God cared for us in providing for us in the gospel, in the gift of His beloved Son who in the fulness of time took our nature upon Him and offered Himself without spot to God? Did He not care for us there? And has He not cared for us in the provision of all needful things for our souls? For the church is said to be blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". He cares for His people. O how many times this has been seen in the Lord's providences over His people! How many times!

I was reading the other day about a dear man at Mayfield, greatly tried in providence; everything went against him on his farm; rain came and it kept raining, and the more he tried to pray the more it rained, so he came to be near despair. One day on the way to chapel he looked at the fields and saw all going to ruin and he felt desperate, but when he got to chapel he felt enabled to pray for the Lord to appear. The Lord did appear and rolled away the clouds and the sun shone and continued to shine and after all he had a better harvest than for years and he had difficulty in finding sacks to put the corn in. So I believe the Lord's people have many times in their life had to prove the Lord cares for them. We have, in our business life, seen some remarkable things. After all, it is not when things go smoothly for us that we realise the Lord is caring for us - we may wax fat and forget the Lord in that way - but when brought into trials and difficulties, we go down into the depths and are overcome with fear and apprehension, have to struggle and try to pray to the Lord in our distress. That is where we prove the Lord cares for us, when He appears and "turns our captivity as the streams in the south".

May the Lord give us grace to cast our care upon Him and not to be unduly moved by what may seem to be disappointing things, knowing that the Lord sees the end from the beginning and is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. Furthermore, although sometimes He may seem to pass us by and take no notice of us in our matters, yet the truth remains - "He careth for you. He careth for you - for you".

May the Lord give us to feel it in a right way and to cast our care upon Him.

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