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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer Clapham on Sunday evening 17th. January, 1971

Hymns: 1129, 99, 191

Reading: Psalms 42 and 51

Text: Psalm 4. 5 and 6

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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us".

It may be remembered that this morning I made some observations upon this Psalm as it relates to David and the things through which he passed and as it may relate to you or myself in the things through which we may be called to pass. It is beautiful to notice that, however severe those distressing things were, he never appeared to lose sight of his relationship with God, as in Psalm 42 we find him saying, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me". Dear friends it is an evidence of a real religion when people have dealings with God in their trials and afflictions and distressing things through which they may be called to pass; and there are sure to be these. No believer has any ground to assume he will escape trials, afflictions, difficulties, and sad things sometimes. They come to us, and they come to worldly people, but the great difference is that the Lord's people who believe in Him have the sacred privilege of His gracious help and His presence in them, so that sometimes they are made very favoured seasons with them. How often this has been in the Scriptures. What remarkable things resulted from some of David's distressing things as when he came Ziklag and found the city smouldering in ruins, everything carried away, and the company with him threatened to stone him; yet it is said he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God". This is a wonderful thing; and it is a wonderful thing for a poor sinner to have a God to encourage himself in when he comes into these distressing things. We find also that good Hezekiah who was immersed in trouble said, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord,

I am oppressed; undertake for me". Do you know anything about this kind of religion? It is a mercy if you do. The Lord did undertake for him and it was in a remarkable and wonderful way. Some of you may know something about this in your trials, burdens and difficulties.

So here it comes to this, this exhortation that I noticed, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness". This can be a sacrifice of self, or the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit, as we read in Psalm 51. There is the sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of our lips, Hebrews 13; the sacrifice of obedience to His Word and ordinances in honouring Him, walking in His ways as in hymn 427

"His institutions would I prize;
Take up my cross, the shame despise;
Dare to defend his noble cause,
And yield obedience to his laws."

Then there are the sacrifices of righteousness. I have been thinking of this this afternoon, and of those thousands and thousands of the Lord's dear people who have made great sacrifices for their Lord's sake. I have been thinking of that noble army of martyrs, millions of them through the ages of time who have laid down their lives for Christ's sake. What a sacrifice of righteousness that was indeed, many were burned to death at the stake, many suffered a cruel death in the Inquisition. This was a sacrifice for His name's sake. To those godly people who went cheerfully to the stake, the honour of their Lord and His name and cause was more than their life which they cheerfully laid down for His name's sake. I know in these days in which we live we have our Gospel liberties and privileges, and we are not exposed to such persecutions as they were, but even so it appears to me that those who follow the Lord will have to make some sacrifices for His Name's sake. Some have had to sacrifice their positions because their conscience would not allow them to consent to certain things. This was a sacrifice of righteousness for the Lord's sake. I have a dear friend who was years ago in a good position as a commercial traveller but the firm brought in a method of advertising in the gift of gambling cards to all

customers who gave an order, customers were to be presented with this pack of cards; but my friend could not consent to do this for conscience sake, consequently he was removed from his position to a very inferior one; he suffered a great deal, but in the end the Lord honoured him in it. He is still alive today and I know that he has no regrets for what he was called upon to endure. This has been the case with many of the Lord's people, and although we have our liberties and are allowed to assemble together to worship the Lord as we desire, yet even so many come into trials that are a test of the reality of their religion; and where they have been enabled to make a stand for the Lord's sake they are to be very highly commended. I have known some who have made a stand before they have accepted a position, they have said that they must be free on the Sabbath; and this is to be highly commended, but it can be a sacrifice. Many have had opportunities of advancement in life but have not accepted them because of what was involved. These things come into the lives of the Lord's people more or less, but these are sacrifices of righteousness for Christ's sake. Even our dear young people may be called upon to make sacrifices for the Lord's sake. To refer again to Mr. Ramsbottom's address, he says some of you dear young people have had to come into things that we did not know in our young days; that is perfectly true. Different things have come in, and if a stand is made a sacrifice follows in some way. This can refer to the pleasures of this world, and the vanities of this world. I was reading a very short testimony from a friend who said that when she was a girl her mother said to her, "Do not ever go to a place where you would be sorry for the Lord Jesus to see you". She said although she was only a girl it made a great impression on her. There are many things in these days which you may need grace to withstand. This sad fashion of cutting off the hair with some women, and wearing long hair with men, is not according to the Scripture; it is wrong, for the Scripture says that if a woman has long hair it is a glory to her and if a man has long hair

it is a shame to him. O what do we see today? May the Lord look upon our dear young friends and preserve them and bless them. You will not be the losers for honouring the Lord. There are sacrifices; but what you may have to bear for conscience sake is a sacrifice of righteousness when the desire is to honour the Lord therein. I know of some dear girls who have suffered a lot in their school life because they would not consent to this unscriptural fashion, they have endured a lot of ridicule, but I am sure the Lord honoured them, in fact I know He did.

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness" - but this evening my mind is more concerning the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He offered this sacrifice of righteousness, and it was such a sacrifice as that no one else has ever offered, in fact there has never been such a sacrifice as the dear Saviour offered when He was crucified on Calvary's cross, this was a sacrifice indeed, for He freely shed His most precious blood as the ransom price to deliver His poor dear people from the wrath to come, He suffered in their stead, and bore the punishment instead, O what are our sufferings compared to His, yet many of the Lord's dear people have had sweet fellowship with their suffering Lord when they themselves have passed through severe trials, circumstances and afflictions. I am sure they have. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness" in honour to your Lord Who offered Himself for you and paid the ransom price to deliver you from the wrath to come. His holy Word says, "Them that honour me I will honour".

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord". I have already spoken a little about this great matter of putting our trust in the Lord. This trust is experimental, it is an experience with the Lord's people who are blessed with some knowledge of Him; and there must be some knowledge of Him to put your trust in Him. You would not put your trust and confidence in a stranger that you had not proved and did not know, but if you have a reliable, trustworthy friend,

you may honour him with your confidence. My dear friends, no one has ever had such a "trustworthy friend" as the Lord Jesus Christ; He never has, and never will fail us. He is absolutely worthy of our trust and confidence, for that is what this means, it is putting our confidence in the Lord and not in ourselves. This trust is as we read, with all the heart. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding". It does not say, 'Do not exercise or use your understanding', but do not lean upon it by going away from your trust and confidence in the Lord. It is very sweet when you can put your trust in Him, as I have hinted this morning. It can bring a sense of security, which appears to link itself so to speak with the last verse in this Psalm, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep". What is it that helps one to do this? It is when we put our trust in the Lord, feelingly, that we can say I will lay me down in peace and sleep. You can enjoy this composure of mind, this sense of security when you are graciously helped to put your trust in the Lord. I believe I can say that practically every night when I am at home, before we retire to bed, I pray that the Lord will watch over our home in these terrible days, and preserve us in safety through the night, watch over us that no harm may come nigh our dwelling, Psalm 92. As we commit ourselves unto Him in this way we are putting our trust in Him, for we cannot defend ourselves. In these days of burglary, murder and violence there is something that can give a measure of composure of mind to the Lord's dear people. The Psalmist said on one occasion, "I will trust and not be afraid". Sometimes this is very particular, and you are favoured to feel that you are safe in His hands although naturally speaking we need to realise these are times of danger; but even so it is sweet when we can commit ourselves into His hands. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep" Our safety is in Him. Put your trust in the Lord.

This is also a confidence in His blessed promises; these promises are said by the Apostle Peter to be "exceeding great and precious". Why so? Because they are yea, and amen in Christ. They are sure promises, the sure mercies of David. These are the

promises of the blessed Gospel, and the Lord will be faithful to them. Often a promise has been made precious, it has just come into the mind or heart and there has been such a sweetness in it. I remember reading of a young man who said that many years ago he believed the Lord said to him, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee", and now, in my old age said he, I have proved Him to be true to His Word, for He never has. It is great when you can really feel that the Lord is your God. Can you feel that? Do you know anything about what I have been relating? Put your trust in the Lord, trust His Word and promise. I have been thinking of it like this, it is putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, His power to save us, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him". "Able to save" - not just a few of the best, a few of the choicest, the sweetest characters, or who have the most amiable dispositions, but poor, guilty sinners - "to the uttermost". How true that was in the case of the poor dying thief, but it is true in every case for we are all uttermost sinners.

"We ran the score to lengths extreme,

And all the debt was charged on him".

It is good to read what the Lord Himself says, although I have mentioned it many times; it is this, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". That has helped me sometimes when I have tried to come to Him; and it is also said that He receives sinners and eateth with them. It is good to trust in His power to save a poor lost soul. I spoke about this power this morning, and it is very sweet; this divine power is above all our difficulties, hard and trying things, it is trusting an omnipotent God, and we can never get higher than this. This God is the God Who fills heaven, He is omnipotent, to Him the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers. I do love to feel in my soul that the Lord is my God; sometimes I hope I have, and when we feel this we can put our trust in Him for we know that He will never fail or forsake us.

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord". This is also a trusting in His wisdom. What does

James say about this? He says, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him". That is a great word is it not? Do you feel your need of wisdom? Are you in some difficulty in which you do not know what to do, in which you feel you have come to the end of your own wisdom and can only say, "Lord help me, appear for me, go before me, bless my soul". Many a child of God has had to come to the end of his own wisdom, but that is the time to seek the Lord's wisdom, and His strength as well, for He makes His strength perfect in our weakness.

"Who will shew us any good?" - there are many that talk like this, I have heard them. This can be said in a way of mockery or a kind of challenge. They may say, what good is your religion doing you, you will get no good by it, there is nothing in it.

"Who will shew us any good?" I will tell you who can show you something good, and who does too; it is that blessed Holy Spirit. What the Lord says of Him is very beautiful, He says that "He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. He can show you something good. Sometimes we sing,

"No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in Thee."

There are many talk like this; they see no good in anything, "Who will shew us any good?", or give us any satisfaction? But the Lord's dear people know Who can show them good things and give them to experience these good things too, and can bring a sweet satisfaction into the heart. I know I have mentioned Isaac Levinson who was a Russian Jew; when he was but a lad he could not find any satisfaction in the Jewish ceremonial or the Jewish faith, although at that time he hated Christians, eventually he left his father's home, and travelled right across the Continent and eventually came to England; but he found no satisfaction for his soul until he was brought by divine grace to believe in that blessed Person Whom he had despised and hated, but when he came to

know the Lord Jesus Christ and that He was the true Messiah he found that sweet satisfaction for his soul in the Person of the Son of God. "Who will shew us any good?". The Lord is able to reveal these things. Our friends may help us, and be amazingly kind to us, they are; but when it comes to the soul no one can satisfy that need but the Lord Himself. This is a blessed soul satisfaction. "Who will shew us any good?". Where can we go for it but to the Lord Himself? It is remarkable what experiences the Lord's people have of the Lord's goodness to them, He can show them what is good and do good to them too. How good He has been in His providence and grace. Let us look up to Him, for every good thing "cometh down from above from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

"Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us". By the Lord's countenance we understand His favour, approbation, presence, blessing. It is summed up in the blessing of the priests to the children of Israel, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!" What are we to understand by this countenance? I shall not forget my father's countenance once when I grieved him, I shall never forget his countenance; I remember it as though it was only yesterday, it was severe; but I also remember occasions when his countenance was beautifully attractive. He could smile as well as frown. So it is in grace, is it not? By the Lord's countenance we understand his favour. With the Lord's dear people often the days of darkness are many, it has been as though there would never be any deliverance, never any lifting up of the Lord's smile upon them, but the Lord does lift up the light of His countenance upon His dear people at times, He does favour them with sweet communion with Him as their Father, not only as their God, but as their Father. He lifts up the light of His countenance upon them, and when thus favoured however dark you may have been it raises up a little sweet hope. This light of His countenance revives faith, hope, love and other graces, it is like a light

shining into your heart, bringing a sweet sense of the Lord's favour.

Often this may be a prayer with us, it was with the Psalmist here, "Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us". Is it your prayer? I can say it is my prayer. What darkness may sometimes seem to cover you, how distant is the Lord from us; but even so sometimes He draws near to us and lifts upon us the light of His countenance. There is a Scripture that says, "His eyelids try the children of men", as though so to speak His eyes are closed but He will lift the light of His countenance upon us. To see the countenance of a person he must be looking toward you. So to a point it is in grace; the Lord is looking toward you, and you are looking toward Him, you see a little of the light of His countenance, and hope springs up, and you inwardly say, will He have mercy upon me after all? The light of His countenance brings peace. Do you feel that God is as an enemy to you, and are you under sore temptations? When a little of His favour flows into your heart, when a sweet touch of His love and mercy softens you, and brings a broken, contrite spirit then you prove that He is a friend instead of an enemy, and the best Friend you can have too. This is a prayer, "Lift it up, Lord". The light of His countenance brings a sweet solemnity in the public worship of God when His people gather together to worship Him. There has been prayer that the Lord's presence might be felt in this little sanctuary, and I hope we have not been altogether without some lifting up of the light of His countenance upon us.

I shall have to close now, may the Lord grant us something of this precious blessing, help us to put our trust in Him, to offer the sacrifice of faith and love; and may it please Him often to lift up the light of His countenance upon us. And what then? Why, it will bring more gladness into your heart than any increase of worldly goods or position. So the Psalmist says, here it was the case with him. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased". Then you can lay yourself down in peace and sleep feeling that you have a sovereign protector. Amen.

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The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy verification of the data.

In the second section, the author outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze the data. This includes both primary and secondary data collection techniques. The primary data was gathered through direct observation and interviews, while secondary data was obtained from existing reports and databases.

The third section provides a detailed description of the data analysis process. This involves identifying trends, patterns, and anomalies within the dataset. Statistical tools and software were used to facilitate this process, ensuring that the results are both accurate and reliable.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the findings and their implications. It highlights the key insights gained from the study and offers recommendations for future research and practice. The author notes that while the current study provides valuable information, there are still several areas that require further investigation.