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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on 14.2.51
"Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before
Him: God is a refuge for us." Psalm 62.8

51/H

The language of the psalmist here is very emphatic, definite and conclusive. The author, David, was no stranger to the exercise of that grace to which he exhorts the people of God. It has very personal bearing on his own case and experience and what the Lord was to him, so that he says, "He only is my rock and my Salvation: He is my defence: I shall not be moved". He had many things to move him, and sometimes he was moved in his feelings, but he was never moved from the foundation upon which his hope was built. So he exhorts himself here, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him". All his soul needed, all that he looked for, he knew must come from his God. That must also be the case with us, for there is no fulness beside that fulness that resides in Jesus. "Wait thou only upon God", is wonderful advice for the Lord's exercised people when things press hard upon them, when they are brought to a pass and know not what to do or what course to take. Remember this word, "My soul, wait thou only upon God". Whatever you expect or need must come from Him, whatever means He may dispose to use to convey it.

How frequently the psalmist uses that term "my soul". His own ease was of great importance and necessity to him. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation". "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy name". "Why art thou cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" So we find it more or less day by day; it is what my soul needs. "Let my soul live before Thee". What a wonderful thing it is to possess a need of God in that measure or degree whereby in the light of that need we can put our trust in Him, which is the exhortation here in the text. This may be very relevant in certain conditions, especially when there are things which put that grace to the most severe test. "Trust in Him at all times; ye people"; not just now and again when it suits us, or when things are going comfortably with us; when nothing presses; when we have no particular burden. We may think we trust at these times when

after all there may be no real trust. O is there not something wonderfully sweet when, being perhaps pressed out of measure, you find a power moving in your poor soul which, in a way surprising to yourself, enables you to approach God with your case, your sin, your burden, your need, your affliction, your difficulty, your trial, and just lay it at His feet. It is, as I have said before, the nearer in your soul's feelings you get to God with your concerns, the more relief you will find in your soul. When the Lord draws you, to His throne of grace; when He draws you very sensibly, and indulges you with fellowship and communion with Him, then you lose your burden and can enter into what the psalmist says, "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee". You see that is so much better than trying to sustain yourself, is not it? Better than saying well now, I will brave this out as best I can; here is this difficulty and I must get through it, manage it somehow as well as I can. Always beware of trying to manage your things without God. It is a very dangerous path, because even if you are successful, and you may be, it will invariably tend to self-confidence and trusting in your own heart more than to humility of spirit and brokenness of heart before the Lord. But when you see the Lord go before you and raise the valleys and level the mountains, when you can stand still and see the salvation of God, it breaks your heart. You can have, at such a moment, such a sense of the Lord being on your side that you can say, "If God be for me who can be against me?" "Trust in Him at all times".

Now in this trusting there is, I think I can say, one of the most choice experiences that the Lord's people can have. What is it to trust in God? Why, it is the firm reliance of your soul, with all that may be involved in it, upon the faithfulness of God to His word concerning you. Have you ever felt as though you could lean on a promise and say, Here is something that I feel will not prove to be like a broken reed, but will be like a strength to me in my felt weakness and dependence? There is no real trusting in God, you see apart from a consciousness of our dependence upon Him and helplessness to perform things in our own strength. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help". It is wonderful to have a moment when you are shut up to God, and when His voice, like a still, small

voice, whispers with remarkable power in your heart. You hear it and know it to be His voice and it may be something like this, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else".

There is knowledge in this trust, Although you may have some knowledge, yet you can be shaken almost to pieces by Satan's temptations. Yet you cannot trust Him unless you know Him. You would not trust a stranger naturally, neither can you exercise this grace without a saving knowledge of God. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee". Even so you cannot exercise this trust in your own strength much as you may try; but there are occasions when the Lord does so manifest Himself to His people that their faith is strengthened and they can commit their cause unto Him. "Trust in Him at all times."

This trust, the confidence of faith, is peculiar, in its spiritual bearing, to a child of God. It is an experience peculiar to those who know the opposite and who sometimes feel that they could not produce a spark of grace if the world was given them for it. O the helplessness and dependence when we are brought to the right place before the Lord! We would not have it otherwise. Nature would be independent, but not grace; grace would say, "Lord give me to lie at Thy feet, to draw my supplies from Thy endless store.

"Trust in Him". What a sweet peace it brings into the heart when you can. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee". It is true we do not always, or perhaps often, enjoy that peace, but it is the privilege of the Lord's people, at times particularly, to feel it. Even under the most disturbing conditions, you can, when the Lord comes and speaks in the heart and brings some reassuring promise, trust Him without a cloud between.

"Trust in Him at all times." That is to say when the path is dark and confusing, as at times it is with the Lord's people. He shows them hard things, things which in themselves stagger them.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

But however dark and perplexing and bewildering the path may be, when

the Lord comes and puts forth His power in your heart, you can look beyond the darkness and all the confusion and stay your soul and your circumstances too upon your God. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." The experience is peculiar to faith and is wonderfully choice. Does he walk in darkness, has he no light? Let him trust. Is the path dark and bewildering? Let him trust. It will be dark at times, for we walk by faith and not by sight, and a great test of this faith is to trust Him even where we cannot trace Him. Faith will rise at times in the soul above all conflicting circumstances, opposite voices, and the reasoning of nature, and anchor in divine faithfulness.

"Trust in Him at all times". Trust in Him when mountains are before you. What did the Lord say to the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness? He said to them, Be not afraid when you see chariots and horses more than you have, be not afraid, for I am with thee, that brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt. Let that be your strength, be not afraid of all the horses and the chariots that your enemies have, for they are nothing to me. The Egyptians had chariots and horses in abundance but God was above them all. "Trust in Him at all times". Trust in Him when enemies attack you, for they will attack you, and when that is the case there is in us a disposition to turn back, but when faith is brought into exercise there can be no turning back. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only". "Trust in Him at all times". "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." It is only this faith that can enable you to rise above the fears of nature and the temptations of the enemy and believe that you will prevail and overcome at last. No harm was found upon Daniel although he was cast into the lions' den, because he believed in his God.

"Trust in Him at all times." Have you something now that you are passing through, that may be a great trial to your faith, and you have in it many suggestions, some of which may appear so reasonable and relevant? O how unable you will be of yourself to withstand them; but when the Lord mercifully breaks through the cloud and puts His

hand upon your enemies you can come forth of them all. "Trust in Him at all times", even when your soul is fainting within you, as Jonah's was when he was being tossed about up and down in the depths of the ocean. "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple". Often faith rises the highest when nature sinks the lowest. It has been said, and rightly so too, that the only way of flying from the rod is to fly to it. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble". Even Job could say, when afflictions lay so heavy upon him, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him", as though he would say I have none else to go to, no other refuge, no other means of relief but my God. "Though He slay me". Have you ever been brought to such a pass as that in your spiritual life, brought perhaps as low as you felt you could be brought, and then have had something come upon the top of that well-nigh to crush you; yet in spite of all those overwhelming things, faith in your heart has turned to God and you have said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him". He has brought me near to death, and if He brought me to death itself I have no one else to whom I can turn, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life". "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him". There is at times a sweet joy in this trusting, when you can feel that the Lord is your God, when you can feel that with a gracious confidence and can say, "The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in Him".

"Pour out your heart before Him". This is good advice to troubled people, who feel at times as though they cannot pray, cannot exercise faith, cannot bring any grace into exercise. Yet although we know we cannot, the exhortation is relevant, because amidst all your weakness there is just this cry goes up, Lord, help me to pray, Lord I cannot pray. Though you feel you cannot pray you may pray more when you feel you cannot than at any other time. You cannot really be too weak to pray, that is to say when a spirit of prayer is given.

"Pour out your heart before Him". In the Scriptures we see how some godly men, and women too, have found wonderful relief at a throne of grace. When poor Jacob heard that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men he was greatly afraid and distressed. He seemed to be coming to the death; but he knew his God; so, after

dividing his families into three companies, he goes alone to seek God and wrestles with the Lord and prevails and brings the blessing down. "Let me go, for the day breaketh. I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.... And He blessed him there." "Pour out your heart before Him". Well, you say I have, I believe, many times, at least I have tried to; and sometimes in my distress and disappointment I have groaned and cried before the Lord, yet I am still in this darkness and bondage. Well, continue to groan and cry as you may be helped, "Pour out your heart before Him", He cannot always be silent, "Our Joseph turns aside to weep, but cannot long refrain". Hezekiah too poured out his heart before the Lord in his distress when the message came to him to set his house in order that he might die and not live. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and perhaps you have done so once or twice in your life, or more frequently. He turned his face to the wall, and poured out his heart before the Lord, the Lord regarded him and added to his days fifteen years. So with Hannah, when Eli rebuked her, saying, "put away thy wine from thee", she said, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord." O sometimes prayer has to be squeezed out and then you find yourself praying before you realise it, as if your very breath has to be prayer, as the psalmist says, "I am prayer". But it is wonderful when you can walk with God with your burden, when you can feel to have an importunity to urge your case before Him. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily". And if there is something very special that you are waiting upon God for do not be discouraged if the blessing is withheld, apparently unduly so, because God has appointed the time; if you are enabled still to continue to urge your case upon Him, "The time of love will come, When we shall clearly see, Not only that He shed His blood, But each shall say, For me".

"Pour out your heart before Him". O some of you say, if only I could feel a gracious persuasion that the Lord is my God, that Jesus is my Jesus. He is; but when He shines into the heart He brings the witness of it; then you can say, "The Lord is my God". "Pour out your heart before Him", you cannot do better than that.

Have you got something particular that presses upon your heart, that weighs your spirit down, something before you, something that brings great perplexity of mind? Take it to the Lord. "Pour out your heart before Him". When the princes came to tell Ezra that the people were making affinity with other nations and giving their sons to their daughters and so on, we read that Ezra fell on his knees and spread out his hands before the Lord and prayed. So at times when things come to distress your spirit in certain ways you find that the only place of real rest to your soul is at a throne of grace, that is when you are really helped to pray. "Pour out your heart before Him", you need not be particular about the words, the Lord understands and perhaps at times you cannot get much further than to say, "Lord, help me", "my groaning is not hid from Thee".

"Pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us". What is a refuge? It is a place of safety to fly to or to run to in a time of danger, as we read of the cities of refuge to which the manslayer could flee when pursued by the avenger of blood, and where his case would be tried, and if it were proved that he did slay another without premeditation or intent, he could abide there in that city in safety during the life of the high priest. And so it is with a child of God, when pursued by the terrors of a broken law and avenging justice; the only refuge to which a sinner can fly is the Rock of Ages, the atonement of Christ, behind the sprinkled blood; as when the children of Israel were in the wilderness their refuge and protection was behind the doors that were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb. So it is with the Lord's people; their refuge and protection is only to be found in the merit of the Saviour and the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice and His atoning blood.

How many Scriptures there are to direct the Lord's people as to their procedure in times of particular need. "Trust in Him at all times". This is not a lazy thing, not just a matter of letting things take their own course, of being careless and indifferent about things of this life, but looking above that to the Lord Himself, to order and manage your concerns. "Be not afraid", said the Lord to His disciples, "It is I, be not afraid". "Put not your trust in

princes nor in the sons of man"; put your trust in Him. We all have times when we are afraid, have these inward emotions, apprehensions of mind; but the Psalmist said "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee". In another place the Psalmist said, "I will not be afraid". Well here is a refuge, and the only refuge too. "Rock of Ages cleft for me; Let me hide myself in thee".

"Pour out your heart before Him", He will not fail thee, and yet how short we come in this, "Wrestling prayer can wonders do", and yet how short we come. Perhaps you say, I get no answers, but would it be right to say you get no answers? If you are helped to continue praying you have an answer, even in that, that the Lord is favourable towards you; but He will set His own time and will answer in His own way. O how some may long for answers to their prayers, long and pray for them, for some breaking of the sun through the clouds. Yes, but remember there is a "needs be" for it; but in the Lord's time He can and He will make crooked things straight and rough places plain. May He help us to lean upon Him, to be coming up from the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved. Amen