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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Sunday evening 11 July 1926

HEBREWS 4 v 14/15/16

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"

The greatness and the glory of the Person of God's Son can never be comprehended. Equal He is with God, coequal. He is God, glorious in holiness, perfect in all His attributes, infinite in His knowledge and power and wisdom. He is very great. The only knowledge that we can have of God is by and in and through the Son, yet though He is so great and holy and glorious, has eternally been God with the Father, the Son in the Father's bosom, though He did create all things with His own hands, making heaven and earth and all things that are, and does by His own word of authority uphold all those things He made, though this is so, yet He is condescending, compassionate towards poor men and He is more tender than any words can express to those who are full of sorrow and need and felt poverty; who, being grieved for sin, broken by the law, flee to Him for refuge. O, the mediation of the Lord Jesus is very wonderful. In it immeasurable compassion is and love that we can never express. Even the little that a sinner from time to time feels of that love can never be expressed and since the great and eternal God is, as I observed this morning, so holy as to be inaccessible in His essential glory by sinful men, it is a very great wonder and condescension in God that He should have set up and set forth and sent forth His Own Son to be in this position as the great High Priest. It speaks the willingness and the determination of God to have communion with sinners and allow sinners to have communion with Him. It expresses His goodwill towards men and this,

revealed in the gospel to a sinner, is to him an amazingly encouraging truth that there is a way wherein poor, lost, undone sinners may treat with a holy God respecting their case, their sins, their needs, their poverty, their fears, their guilt, and all things which exercise their minds, for sooner or later all created resources are dried up to a child of God, to one with whom God truly, savingly deals and he finds this, he finds it solemnly in his experience, that God he must have to do with, that he must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and that he in his own name and person considered cannot, dare not, think of appearing before that great God. Now when a person is brought into an experience of drawing nigh to God through the Name and merit of the High Priest, he finds that wondrous feeling in his soul that nothing else can give him; he finds power to lay out his case before God; he finds a strength put in his heart to freely and fully acknowledge to God all that the piercing, living Word of God discerns of himself. He is enabled to go under the shelter and in the Name and by the merit and conduct of this High Priest into the Holy place. My friends, this is very wonderful for it means that such a person is permitted an audience of God, is allowed to speak to Him who has in His hands his destiny, and who knows the end from the beginning and who knows all his life. Now when you - and I know many of you have had this great and gracious experience - were enabled to draw near to the Lord Jesus and by Him to believe in God, there was created in your soul such a faith in Him as produced from your heart a real profession. There are some things we professed, we confessed to the Lord, and one thing was this namely, Lord Thou art sufficient. The sufficiency, the completeness of the Lord Jesus for all the dire necessities of our case we realised, felt and confessed. Hold it fast now you are in trouble, now you get new experiences of your insufficiency, and all the deeper needs of your souls. Hold fast to that, poor, trembling professor; child of God, hold fast to that, the sufficiency of Christ. Were you not brought to a submission to Him? Did you not freely commit to Him your whole concern to be saved by His power? Did you not, as you were near to Him and with Him, entirely relinquish all your claims and merit and tell Him that you feared you would sin and ask Him to keep you from it? Did you not, with a freeness you could not express, lay the whole weight of your interests upon Him? O, the familiarity, the holy completeness with which a poor sinner does roll his burden on the Lord when he is

brought by Him to God as the Mediator or the High Priest. And my friends, new experiences and feeling of necessity and insufficiency though they do make up this difficulty of which I spoke this morning of holding fast, they are really in themselves great reasons why we should hold fast to our profession, for if we give up this, if we give up the completeness and fulness and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus then we are undone. It is not a man tenaciously asserting that his case is alright without any serious enquiry, but it is a person with all the questionings that arise by new experiences of necessity and insufficiency, of sinfulness and temptation, going to this same Person, fleeing to Him as to a refuge and seeking for a renewed experience, feeling and knowledge of what He is. There are some instances in the Scriptures of holding fast which are greatly encouraging and instructive as well as descriptive of the experience of some in this day. You have the case of Job, that man who was perfect and feared God and eschewed evil; who walked before God, and concerning whom God permitted that the devil should tempt him, and he came into great trouble, great darkness of mind, and evidently, according to his Book unbelief prevailed and he imbibed in his mind the errors, some of them, of his mistaken friends and he was in a sad plight. Well, unbelief in him testified to this, that God had forsaken him, that God had set him up as His mark. Faith - his profession, faith in him, - held fast and held him fast and enabled him to hold his profession fast and he did it thus: "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him". Did not you, when you were near to the Lord, so confide all your case in Him as to feel for the time a rest? Did you not feel that there was nothing for you to do? Did you not say to the Lord Jesus out of a full heart, claiming Him

O my Jesus Thou art mine

Now what about it? Is He changed? You are in darkness, in trouble; have had discoveries of evils in you that then you did not suspect. Is He changed? No. Hold fast then to your profession. Hold fast to this that He is unchangeable in His love. Ah the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have felt it on your heart will hold you. You will never finally turn away from Him whose love you felt, but the difficulty, especially when the devil and your own reason argue that you can have no interest in His love else He would not permit this

trouble, this affliction, or would not Himself hide His face so from you as at present He does. His wisdom you professed, you relied on it. You utterly, in the spirit at least, renounced your own and were willing to be guided by His wisdom as well as defended by His power. Has His wisdom changed because you are in darkness and trouble? Has His wisdom changed because you cannot put things straight and see how your present troubles and difficulties can be for your good? No. His wisdom is the same, infinite, and His power that is the same. So hold fast to Him sinner; hold fast to Him afflicted saint. And what about temptation? We enter into it; the devil tempts us; he threatens our overthrow; he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour and sometimes he tempts us in some very tender points. He tempts us with respect to the very Person and Being of God and His Son. Ah my friends, it is not having no infidelity in your nature that will enable you to hold fast to your belief in God. No, but it is having in your soul from time to time some more or less distinct manifestations of His Being, some true apprehension given to you of Him whereby you are brought again to say in your heart, there is a God; I know that God; I believe in God. And when you are brought, as every child of God sooner or later is brought, to that blessed, that strengthening point: We, by Him, Jesus Christ, do believe in God, how comforting that is. O hold fast; let unbelief say what it will, let the devil come against your most tender point, even against the foundation of your hope; hold fast. And the difficulty of holding fast one's profession arises often from that temptation which Satan often brings to a child of God, to be satisfied with a general religion, and respecting some errors he may say to you, why should you be so particular? Why should you be so troubled? Why should you want these things made out so to you? Why cannot you believe? Why cannot you rest? What, cannot you take such and such things for granted? Well, hold fast to this my dear friends, namely that the Holy Spirit of God's Son is the only Person, the only Teacher in the Church, that can effectually teach any sinner any saving truth. A Holy Ghost religion the Holy Ghost is the Author of, and if your religion began with the Holy Ghost, if the power of God descended upon you at the first and moved upon you at times, you will find this, that you will be as dry as Ezekiel's bones with all your formality unless that blessed Spirit breathes upon you. Now when you are dry you may find the temptation here, namely that you are out of the secret, that you

have no union to Christ, that all your profession is but an empty vapour, or the temptation I have named; not to trouble, you know the doctrines of grace, you believe in the Scriptures, and it is alright - either one or the other; he will squeeze you. Well what does God do to one to whom this exhortation is made a life? He does this; the poor sinner by necessity, by the secret power of God, is compelled to seek for that power which cometh from above and he is helped; the Holy Spirit helps his infirmities and enables him, leads him, brings to his mind the Word of God of which I spoke this morning and in which he believes, brings it to him and that puts in his heart such strength as enables him to hold fast. Even that which I have named, the relation by the Holy Ghost of Ezekiel's bones may be in you such a strength as will enable you to hold fast when you feel dry and barren and dead.

What is it to hold fast here? It is not to do as you are tempted to do, say, well it is alright. No, it is to seek that the Holy Ghost would descend upon you in the Spirit of God's Son, and take of his things afresh and show them afresh to you; that He would let you once more receive into your soul virtue from the living root; it is that He, the Holy Ghost, would again give you to feel His upspringing in your heart unto eternal life. Without the Holy Spirit's power we cannot have any feeling unction in our souls or any sweet savour of Christ and it comes to this, unless the Holy Spirit is poured upon us, unless He does breathe upon us, we cannot move. Hold fast our profession, a profession that the Holy Spirit alone is our teacher, our leader and quickener. And all this exhortation to hold fast is founded upon the living Person of Him who has passed into the heavens; that is the source of it and the foundation of it, and it is upon this blessed foundation that poor sinners do stand and hold fast - "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever." And to hold fast is a difficulty in regard also to erroneous teachers and men; to hold fast in a separation from them in a profession of the truth is a great difficulty. A man that will live godly, in a godly separation from ungodly professors, will get trouble. He will get persecution; he will have reproach. But, says the Spirit, here, hold fast. Why? Why, because of the great and gracious and blessed Person whom we have professed; that is the motive. A knowledge of the Lord Jesus, a sweet, spiritual sight of His glorious Person, a sense of His

sufficiency, a feeling of His love in your heart, some true experience of His blood on your conscience, these experiences, as you have them, will make Him, in His Person and in His work, so dear to you as will be a motive, from time to time, for you to hold fast no matter what it costs.

"Let us hold fast our profession". What an awful thing it is to feel that you are tempted to yield to those things which are easy and which, if you yielded to them, would be tantamount to denial of the Lord Jesus. My dear friends, you who value communion with Jesus Christ, you who could, and did, this morning say that your spirits moved to Him with infinite desire, would you entertain anything that would lead you away from Him? Would you hold fellowship with those that deny Him? Hold fast that proper and gracious separation from all known error. We profess the truth, we profess what God has revealed to us concerning His dear Son, and there is a necessity in this day of holding fast. If you yield a point you will find yourself, if you are a child of God, in trouble here, for the Person of Christ, as He is discovered in the Scriptures, and to the hearts of believers; the Person of Christ, what He is, comes to be to a sinner in His experience a necessity. You are compelled to believe what He is, and if He be not what the Scripture declares Him to be then you are undone. So, says faith in your heart, I will cleave to Him whatever men say. Though I may not understand His mysterious Person, I cleave to Him, Jesus the Son of God. Who can understand eternal Sonship? Who can understand infinite affiliation? No person can understand it, but O the glory of it and the necessity of it for any sinner's hope, that He, who is the eternal Son of God, is Emmanuel God with us, the Friend and Redeemer, Saviour and Intercessor for sinners. Seeing then, seeing that He is, and that nothing can change Him, and seeing that He is a changeless Priest, that He is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, and that He is such a great High Priest as to be in His Person the Son of God incarnate; seeing that we have such a great High Priest let us hold fast our profession. Now my friends, one more word respecting the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus and it is this, that as we have Him, as God has given Him to be a Priest, this expresses the possibility, the privilege of continual communion with God; that God has not given access to Himself just for a time but that there is to be continual communion with Him. We shall always need a

Mediator between the eternal Majesty of heaven and our persons and that blessed Mediator is the High Priest, Jesus Christ, and He is passed into the heavens. And this sets before a poor sinner a great refuge for all time to come; that in all necessity, in all temptation, in all tribulation, in all ignorance and darkness and weakness and in every time of need there is a refuge, there is resource in God accessible. I wish I could make the matter plain; it is greater than any thought and much greater than any expression of mine, that God, in and through this sacred Person, can be approached by poor sinners and it matters not what your case is; if you come to God by Him you will find mercy; you will find help; you will find deliverance; you won't find a frown.

A further description of this High Priest follows. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities". "We have not"; "which cannot"; two negatives which make a most emphatic positive in Christ. This, that He can be, most emphatically is, touched with the feeling of the infirmities of His poor sinful, tried, tempted people whom He has redeemed. O the tenderness of the Lord Jesus in His sympathy in that He knows what temptation, what weakness, what weariness, what pain, what suffering, what soul travail, what desertion are. The sympathy that this holy Man, this God, Jesus Christ, is able to show, is not this encouraging? You could not perhaps, or, if able, would not dare to express your case in some of the bitterness of it to a fellow mortal, but you need not, in word, express all that you feel to the Lord Jesus for He knows. Not by bare omniscience; He does, as God, know by omniscience what you feel, but He knows it as a Man, as having experienced it, yet without sin; yet without sin. If these two things are put together as a revelation as they are in Christ, in your heart, they will greatly strengthen you in holding fast your profession; that He can feel for you in your deepest distress; that He was never defiled by sin. No, He bore it. O, it is an encouraging truth. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities". We have not to deal with omniscience alone, but with omniscience and omnipotence clothed in humanity and that, once suffering humanity. This, as you receive it into your heart, will give you such courage to confide in the Lord Jesus and will make you, at times, feel more intimate with Him than with any

other person. You will go to Him and in the simplicity of your heart tell Him what you feel, what you fear, what your unbelief says, and what the devil says, and what you fear will be the conclusion. You tell all and then tell Him that because He is what He is, and what He has done and where He is, He can help you, He can bless you and O, the confidence that faith gains by going like this. We have not an High Priest who cannot sympathise. We have not one who, in His glorious throne, knows nothing of what it is to battle with the powers of hell. He knew; He knows more than ever His Church all put together shall know of what that conflict is. Therefore in your conflict look to Him, sinner, and hold fast your profession of Him. Hold fast to Him as you are enabled. Go to Him with your doubts; go to Him with the tempter and his temptations and with your own sins and with your own unfaithfulness to Him; with your sinful weariness of His way. Go to Him and ask Him to come to you and when He comes to you and reveals Himself to you again, you will find Him the same as He always was. "What thou findest Him at thy best He's at thy worst the same". The same Jesus, the same compassionate High Priest, the same Redeemer, the same God. O, what a blessing it is to have any knowledge of the Lord Jesus by experience, to know what it is when you are in a great strait to fall into His ever blessed and Almighty and compassionate arms. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin". Are you tempted to give up? Are you tempted to despair? Are you tempted to rebellion? And do you find such temptations gain a hold on you and some compliance? Do you find a giving up feeling? Do you find a hard, bitter, rebellious feeling against God? Well, what shall you do? How can you deliver yourself? How can you get past this difficulty? What is to prevent your entire apostacy and calling no more on His Name like the hypocrite, for the Scripture says of the hypocrite, will he always call upon God? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? And you find your unbelief and your rebellion so high as that you are tempted not to pray, you are tempted not to delight yourself in the Lord. Of what value is it? What gain do you get by it? your unbelief and the devil together may say. Well the Lord knows that and He knows the pain you feel in consequence. He suffered, being tempted. It was no pleasure to Christ to be tempted; it is no pleasure to faith and to the grace in your heart to be tempted. It is the pain and sorrow and shame of your

heart that there are things, that there is a principle within you to fall in with the temptations of the wicked one and follow his suggestions, and that is your pain and your shame, and the Lord sees that; He knows what pains you feel and the struggles there are in you between grace and the spirit of compliance with the devil. He knows that the spirit of the flesh and the Spirit which He has given are opposite the one to the other. He sees the conflict; it goes on unseen by the world, unknown by your nearest and dearest friends, but not unknown, not unmarked, by the Lord Jesus. What a privilege, what a mercy, what a refuge it is to be enabled in such a case to turn from all else to Himself. Though He was without sin, you have to go to Him full of sin. You cannot go with temptation as an innocent person; you must go guilty, must go sinful for there is compliance in your nature, and that is your pain, and you will find succour. "Therefore" - the Apostle in this chapter sums all up in respect of holding fast in this, giving a direction as to the manner in which men are to hold fast. Says he, because the Son of God, the great High Priest has passed into the heavens, and because He is able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Therefore let us come boldly unto the throne of grace. A great foundation in God for prayer. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace". Let us pray, as if he should say; let us go where the King sits, where the Son of God sits, where the compassionate High Priest sits. "Who is able to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way". He sits to redress people's grievances; He sits to deal with sinners; He sits to bless poor, repenting sinners; He sits to dispense His grace; He sits to give blessings; He sits there to communicate that salvation of which, by His precious death, He has become the eternal author, for He has become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace". Prayer is the life of every believer. It is that in which he experiences union and communion with the Son of God. Ah many saints have gone out of the world by prayer, as the Son of God Himself did. He died praying and many children of God die thus and they live thus. We need to pray, we need to come to the throne of grace for this great Person, the Son of God sits there. O sinner, listen to this, He sits there to pronounce forgiveness; He sits there to declare justification; He sits there to receive repenting sinners and to deal with them in mercy; He sits there to satisfy the longing soul

and satiate the weary soul; He sits there as a King. If He has sat in your heart as a Refiner and a Purifier by His dissecting and discerning word, you will find it sweet to turn from that fire to this sweet warmth of the throne of grace from whence He sheds His love and grace and mercy abroad. "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace". He has a sovereign right to do what He will with His own, and His will is to bless them. His will is that they shall come to Him for blessings. "For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do them for them". What do you want sinner? Are your needs deeper than the world? Are they greater than any natural thing? Are they needs that only God can supply? Well, God in Christ not only can, but will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. There is not a necessity of a spiritual kind, not a need of soul, that a poor sinner can ever have that has not a full supply in and from this King, the Lord Jesus. He is a crowned Prince on the throne of grace. "Let us come boldly", and O we need to come boldly. It is boldness for a sinner to come, and nothing less than living faith will give a person sufficient boldness who feels himself a sinner and has any apprehension of the necessities of his soul to come. But if you apprehend the Person who sits there, you will come boldly; your sins wont keep you back; your fears wont always hold you back; the devil will not always frighten by his horrible suggestions that it is presumption to come. But you will come and it is no presumption when you come boldly thus; boldly because He is what He is; boldly because you are so unworthy; boldly because your needs are so pressing and so deep. He has them all to supply and that freely. It is the throne of grace, the grace of God of which He is the foundation, and in Whom is the fulness of grace. The throne of grace, grace which set Him up; grace which was given to the Church in Christ Jesus before the world was. O the grace that is in Him. He, says John, is full of grace and truth. It was by the grace of God He died: "By the grace of God He tasted death for every man", and He is full of grace. He liveth for ever and has the commandment which is life evermore to give to His poor people. I know, says He, that His commandment is life evermore, and He has life to give to ruined, dead, condemned sinners. He has justification to give to those who feel that they deserve to be condemned. He has forgiveness to give to those who cannot forgive themselves but who long to be pardoned by God. He has grace to help and mercy to bestow, divine, heavenly mercy

to bestow upon sinners. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need".

May the Lord make the text, the truth of the text, real in us and pardon what has been amiss.

**AMEN.**