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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 1 February 1948

JOHN 16 v 33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me
ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have
tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have
overcome the world

It is therefore foolish for the people of God to look for peace anywhere but in Christ, and yet how apt we are to seek peace and satisfaction and rest in this poor, sin-cursed world. This peace, which was spoken of a little this morning, is a peace that flows into the soul, irrespective of circumstances and there are times when the child of God feels it to be like a sacred river, flowing into his soul, so that his mind is stayed on God, and there is a strength in his mind, fortifying it concerning all the difficulties with which he is exercised in his pilgrim way. The Lord Jesus spoke many things in these three chapters, not only to encourage and strengthen His people, but also to warn them what to expect. If they followed Him they were to expect, not only His promised blessing - the blessing of the Holy Spirit - but they were to expect persecution from Christ's enemies. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". And, as I tried to speak this morning, a good portion of that tribulation is hidden in the heart; the separating work of the divine Spirit, when a sinner is brought under conviction of sin, and there is a conflict within, between the old man and the new. It may be in many cases of the Lord's people, that they are tempted at times to patch up some kind of inglorious peace, and, being weary of that conflict between sin and grace, to make a compromise. O, but the tender fear of God, the dread of being deceived, together with some apprehension of the blessedness of being right with God for eternity, will prohibit that peace which is false, and prohibit any peace which is not related to the work and merit of Christ.

"In Mepeace". It is a peace of victory. All that the child of God ever enjoys is the effect of Christ's victory in His work of

nailing to His cross the handwriting which was against His people (Colossians 2 v 14), so that it is a very sacred peace that Christ gives, very sweet and very solemn. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me", says Christ, "ye might have peace." Peace in your consciences, even with trouble in your circumstances. Peace by My cross by which I made peace, for it is by My peace-making, and peace-speaking blood, sprinkled on your conscience. Peace in realising that your mighty debt of sin is discharged by the price I paid to ransom you. It is a peace; I wish we might know more of it. You may get a few moments of it sometimes and feel a calm in the midst of tempestuous motion, as the hymn-writer speaks, because of faith being made active upon a risen, once crucified, Christ. You stay your mind on Him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee". Faith is a grace which does not make a person strong and unbending, but it is a grace which enables a poor weakling to rely upon the mighty arm, merit, wisdom, and goodness of Christ.

"In Me peace". This tribulation also relates to the separation that is made by the Lord's grace, in the heart and life, between a child of God and the world - the religious world as well as the profane world. It is a separation and this is tribulation and persecution. Do we love that separation? Do we delight to consider how narrow the way of life is, and how few there be that find it? Is there no clamour in our own hearts for a little broad-mindedness? How solemn are the days in which we live! What an apprehensiveness there is in the religious world! And to have the reproach of narrow-mindedness, to have the reproach of holding those old-fashioned doctrines, which the religious world today hold up to ridicule, is troublesome, not pleasant. And as often as a child of God meets with a worldly person, so often will he feel that reproach. "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy" (Isaiah 8 v 12). There is a grave danger, so to speak, in days of declension, when the power of the Spirit is largely withdrawn and vital godliness is at a low ebb, for the most part, and there is a danger of turning aside from that good and narrow way. A word in Jeremish comes to my mind as a gracious direction. Said the Lord, by that prophet, "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find

rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6 v 16) The reproach which attaches to a profession and practice of the truth of God is painful to nature; yet, said the Lord: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." (Matthew 5 verses 11 and 12). We need much gracious discernment in this matter lest we should mistake things, but there is a reproach and at times the child of God really fears more the escaping of that reproach than the trouble which the reproach brings. The old man would evade it somehow, even by forfeiting the truth, but the new man of the heart will make the choice which Moses made. He esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

"In the world ye shall have tribulation". There will be this tribulation, this separation within, and consequently, without. Then there is the tribulation that attaches to temptation. Temptation to the child of God is different from the temptation that the worldling experiences, for the worldling is under the power of Satan and led by him at his will. "The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not". But the Lord's people get, from time to time, little inklings of the gospel, little inshinings of the glory of Christ, of God in the Person of Emmanuel, and these inshinings and inklings influence the heart, draw out the exercise of faith and of reliance, and make a man follow hard after the Lord, and the devil will follow hard upon his heels. O what an assailant to faith is Satan, and what tribulation he causes! He assails faith, our hopes, ridicules our profession; he laughs at our dearest experiences; and the end he has in view is to cast us into despair. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Temptation, being a solemn experience, requires, for a right bearing of it, and not falling under it, a greater power than we have, and therefore, even in temptation, we are compelled to look to Christ for deliverance, and He is able to give it. He can, He has, and He will deliver His people, and make a way for their escape. They shall not escape temptation, but they shall not be utterly cast down. "Though a righteous man fall" says the Psalmist, "he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand." (Psalm 37 v 24)

This tribulation tries a sinner and makes the grace in his heart look to Christ, and to seek more and more those tokens and evidences of his interest in Christ.

Then there is the tribulation that comes in common to the whole world, because of our mortality. We have affliction and pains and trials in our circumstances, and this is, to the child of God, tribulation. To the world it is not so; it is judgment; and the worldling is not separated by those afflictions, to God. No, he either rebels, or he faints, and we have the same disposition in our nature, to one or the other. Tribulation is separating, if there are two things to separate in us. Afflictions will either do good, through sanctifying grace, to prove the Lord's favour and love, or they will do us an injury because of our prevailing sins.

Afflictions make us see
What else would 'scape our sight
How very foul and dim are we
And God, how pure and bright.

And if that be one effect of affliction, and we are brought down to feel the connection between our sinnership and our afflictions, and are brought to confess the sin which procures all our trials, then there will be a good issue to the tribulation, and this will be the issue - we shall be brought to realise that the Lord, by His dealings with us, is proving to us His particular care and His love. "Jesus ... having loved His Own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end". He loves His people through all the vicissitudes of their lives, and watches over them to do them good. They have to learn that, when their faith seems likely to fail, and their little strength is gone, and when they are made to see how they have provoked the Lord, and walked in pride, in carelessness and in independence of the Lord, He has rebuked them by some affliction. O, how many times, perhaps, some of the Lord's people at least, become fat, and kick; become stout-hearted and rebel; become independent and prayerless! Then, it is a mercy for the Lord to send some trouble. But troubles, in themselves, will never make us pray, will never produce love or humility, or repentance. But the Lord does use them for those ends. He does condescend to wait to be gracious to His people, when He sees that

their power is gone and there is none shut up or left. They are brought back from their pride and wanderings, brought under conviction, and made willing to return. Then there is profitableness, then there is prayer and some measure of humbling one's self under the mighty hand of God. And then, when peace is restored, even if the affliction and trial remains, it is a peace passing all understanding, a submission to the will of God, and a feeling that what the Lord is doing is in infinite love and mercy. I do believe there are times when the child of God is enabled to ascertain himself, his own relationship to the Lord in the sanctifying power of grace in affliction and trial. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." What a gracious word that was of Christ's, and if He spoke such a word as that to you in your affliction, there would be no rebellion left, but real submission. And submission to the will of God is accompanied with peace in any circumstances.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". What is that to us? If Christ has overcome the world, and we are in the world, battling with difficulties, sins, temptations, with enemies, afflictions, and trials, with mighty unbelief, with Satan, what is that to us, that Christ has overcome the world? It is this - He has overcome the world for His people and they are to overcome through faith in Him. Our little, feeble faith, can never, in itself, overcome the world - neither the world within, or the world without, nor the world of Satan's temptations. It is Christ who overcame - in whom a poor sinner is brought to believe - Who has overcome for the believer, and ensures his final victory. Faith unites to Christ, it adheres to the Lord Jesus. Faith lives upon the merit, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore there will be, and there is, from time to time, a victory over the world, a victory in the heart. One has said: "Faith gains a thousand victories". Well, doubtless it does, but O, what difficulties there are confronting a poor believer, and how weak faith often is! What can bring us through and enable us to stand fast? Only the power of the Spirit, in bearing fresh testimony of Christ in our hearts, making Him real again to us. It is a great thing to feel that Christ is real, to feel Him near, and a comfortable thing when you hear His voice and feel His presence in your hearts. But even when it is not

so, faith's exercise is to get to Christ; it lives upon Him. Do you not find this to be true, in your experience? Is there not, from time to time, in your trouble, a refusing of deliverance apart from Christ? Do you not find, at times, a resolve in your heart to wait upon and for the Lord? And are there not times when He draws near to you and whispers peace in your heart? It is a great thing to know it.

Though temptations seldom cease
And frequent griefs I feel
Yet His Spirit whispers peace
And He is with me still

A sinner can say that sometimes, not always, perhaps, not often, but it is an experience to be marked.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer". "Good cheer". Do not despond, yield not to unbelief, listen not to Satan's temptations, but hear what Christ says: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world", so the world cannot overcome the child of God, but he must be an overcomer and there is much to overcome. Often, it may be in your experience, and in mine, a very serious matter whether we shall overcome. Faith believes the promise, faith sometimes is enabled to look right on, and faith sometimes gets a glimpse within the veil. What does that do? It makes a person of good cheer. And there may be moments, transient moments, when you have in your heart an almost transporting anticipation of heaven and final victory. Why, if we never felt our hope of heaven revive, if we never felt the Lord's presence, never heard His voice, never realised the light of His countenance, never had communications of His grace, what should we do? We should despair. O, the patience that we need. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye should receive the promise." Then there are times when faith gets the victory by some sight of the fulness and blessings in the promises, and in the covenant. A word in Jeremiah is very wonderful: "I will bring it health and cure." (Jeremiah 33 v 6) You know that a sickly state of Zion is a tribulation and trial to those who love her and desire her

prosperity. I hope you pray for Zion. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee". Psalm 122 v 6. O how lean is the Church today! What a little remnant seems to be left! and that remnant does not seem so firmly united as in better days, and it becomes a tribulation, but the Lord has said: "I will bring it health and cure: and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth." Sometimes faith gets hold of a promise like that, and pleads it with the Lord. Do you not find in those circumstances a little relief from the heavy reproach that lays upon you, in your sorrow over the Church of God? Is there not a little of the sacred quiet in trusting the Lord to fulfil His promise?

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer" Christ lives, Christ is still the sinner's Friend, Christ is still the Head of His body, the Church; Christ is still the Intercessor at His Father's right hand. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". What did the Lord Jesus say? - It is recorded in John - "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One."

"Be of good cheer". Omnipotence is on the side of a pilgrim; infinite mercy regulates his path; He weigheth the path of the just. (Isaiah 26 v 7). Unfailing faithfulness and undying love are exercised in all providential dispensations which the saints of God undergo.

"Be of good cheer". If you look at circumstances you will be dejected. If you look at self you will be further depressed. If you look back you will see so much that makes you fear. But if you look up where Christ is, at the right hand of God, if you are enabled by faith to plead His Name before the Father, and to open your mouth wide, you will get a surprise, for instead of dejection you will be full of hope, and may find a measure of that word fulfilled in your heart "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15 v 13). That would be enlarging and would enable you to look past your circumstances and difficulties, and entertain a lively hope of one

day getting that blessed final victory. And then - let me just name this - one of the things which Christ spoke: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself". O, sometimes that promise is attractive! it fills you with hope, and yet there will be in your heart such a trial of your patience and of your faith, because of the difficulties of your way, that you fear. But the Lord does renew that from time to time and He draws near and says: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You find immediately a stirring up of your mind, and a fresh looking forward with hope, and looking through your troubles, with a belief that the Lord will bring you off a conqueror. We need patience, we need constancy, we need grace to be communicated to us, we need wisdom and strength. We are full of needs, but not fuller of needs than the Lord is of supplies. Nor are we more full of sin than He is of grace. That is a mercy, is it not? Do you not have to plead it with Him? "More full of grace than I of sin" - That is how we shall get the victory; that is how we shall be saved by grace. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Be of good cheer", nothing can really hurt you. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job 5 v 19). What does it mean? It means that the worst of our troubles - even all of them together - will not undo us. There must be a last trouble; the last affliction, the last temptation, the last reproach and - Oh best of all - the last sin; then death, which, for the believer, is the end of all his trouble.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer". When Paul was shipwrecked he said to the people: "Be of good cheer, for I believe God". Sometimes you may be able to say this, and it is a great thing to really say it: "I know in Whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day". Then what? You will be of good cheer; troubles will not unduly affect you. Sorrows you will have, temptations and trials, but there will be an enduring of that as James says "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation", and he says this "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let

patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." How can it be possible? Only by faith in Christ, by that endurance which comes from a believing view, from time to time, of invisible things, and of Him who is invisible, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the Apostle, writing to the Romans, speaking of the peace which is in the heart of a believer, at times, says that there is a state of peace, and an experience of peace. The experience flows from a state of peace, for experience is intermittent. We may lose our peace, as to our experience and enjoyment of it, but not the state of peace, which is set up in Christ between His redeemed people and God, to whom He offered sacrifice. (Hebrews 9 v 14). Let us ever remember that; nothing can change that state. The Apostle says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ". O what a sweet thing it is to feel faith going out and peace flowing in, and the mind stayed on the Lord Jesus! Then he says, "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also". O, how difficult it is to look at that word. You may say, tribulations and troubles stir me up and fill me with rebellion; they weaken me, bewilder me, confuse my mind and I feel sometimes enmity rising against God for allowing such things to come. I am full of fear as to what I may be left to do and say - tribulations work patience? Yes, when faith is in exercise, when grace is communicated, when submission to the will of God is produced, and when you are enabled to see that tribulation is different from vindictive judgment; that tribulation is to do you good, to separate between flesh and Spirit; to show you what you are and what God is; to show you your worldliness and the freeness of His grace, and the infinitude of Christ's merit which must prevail. So that ultimately tribulation works patience, and sweet it is to feel that grace of patience wrought in the heart. Unbelief is always in a hurry; we have a hasty spirit which is ready to conclude against God, and it may be, against ourselves and our state, if it be in a time of trouble. But when the Lord sees that it is doing you good, bringing you out of the world, cleansing you from your idols, and making it more manifest that your treasures and rest are not in this world, that your treasures and rest are in heaven, and your citizenship there, that will draw out your patience. "Tribulation worketh patience and patience experience" - experience of the faithfulness of the Lord, experience of the profitableness of waiting patiently and diligently at the throne of grace, experience

of His wisdom in turning, what in itself is evil, to a good spiritual account in the soul. Have you not been sometimes thankful that the Lord has sent some mortifying, some humbling, some painful trouble to you to stir you up, bring you back, and cleanse you from your entanglements? You have the experience of the Lord's skill in managing your case, and His condescending jealousy over you. There is nothing which can really touch the heart of a child of God like some realisation of the Lord's jealousy over him, in sending after him to bring him back to Zion, saying, if not in words, by His dealings: "My son, give Me thine heart", and He enabled that sinner to do so and to say

"Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it
Seal it from Thy courts above

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world". You may be afraid of what is coming. The stouthearted have slept their sleep and will presently wake up to eternal terror, but the child of God may be afraid of what is coming. The Lord has a controversy with the nations in general, and with our nation in particular, undoubtedly. What will He do? What shall we do in the time of judgment? The Lord says: "In Me ... peace". And what is that? In times of evil He has said that He will be a Refuge for all His people. "Be not a terror unto me; Thou art my hope in the day of evil", said Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17 v 17). What does the Lord say? "Come My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast". (Isaiah 26 v 20). That will bring peace, quietness, confidence. "In returning and rest ye shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength". (Isaiah 30 v 15). It will be our mercy to believe and to follow that word.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace" - peace by His cross, peace with the will of God, peace that is independent of circumstances, peace that is enabling, peace that is to result in victory, and peace which will be everlasting.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer I have overcome the world".

May the Lord make the word of the text of some help and encouragement to you and pardon what is amiss.

AMEN.