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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Wednesday evening 16 July 1924

JONAH 2 v 7

"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord:  
and my prayer came in unto Thee into Thine holy temple"

When things are smooth with us, when our minds are calm, when circumstances are not troublous, when we live in the midst of comforts and in the midst of a calm profession, we do not realise the value of faith. We do not know, as to present experience, the weakness that unbelief is. Jonah had had a commission from His God to preach repentance to the Ninevites. His unbelief, his cowardice, his self-will, his stubbornness drove him away from obedience. No faith, no exercise, and no painful apprehension of unbelief; so quiet was he in this, his course, that he went to sleep even in the vessel in which he was running away from his God, his Commander. The Lord dealt with him - as He will always deal, sooner or later, with His people when they disobey Him - and cast him, through the men of the ship, into the sea. The Lord, however, prepared a fish to swallow him up and out of, from the belly of, that fish, he cried unto God. This is just the history as you all know of the circumstances before us, and this is part of his observation concerning his experience. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple." There are many things that make men faint in their souls.

Jonah did not faint when he was disobeying God. Jonah did not faint when he was on the ship in the storm, but when God began to deal with him, then his soul fainted within him, and in this circumstance, first of all we have shown to us the faithfulness of God towards His children, even in the midst of their frowardness and backsliding and disobedience. He dealt severely with Jonah, cast him into the deep. "Thou hast cast me into the deep". He looked above the men who did it to God whom He feared and whom he had disobeyed, and it is this that is the

true reason for men fainting within their souls, that God does in mercy and faithfulness deal with them. Their troubles, their difficulties, their fears, their convictions, all of them are from God; they are sanctified to them by Him. God, for instance deals with His people in this way. He leads them into the abominations of their heart, shows them what they are capable of doing, that they have, in the seed of it, in their very nature, every abomination, just as He took Ezekiel from one place to another and showed to him, first here and then there, one and another abomination, and increasing abominations. And so does the Lord with His people lead them into this deep then to show them the unfathomable depths of depravity in their nature, in their hearts, and that makes a man faint. I suppose there is no child of God that has had a spiritual discovery of what, not only, he has done, but what he is capable of doing in his nature, that has not felt a faintness in his soul through the sight. There is this, too, that makes people faint, and that is the constancy of sin in our nature, its constant working. It does not allow us to be quiet, constantly working one way or the other against our peace, against all cleanness of heart, and against God and His things; and that wears a man out and makes him faint. If you do think, through the quietude, for a time, of your nature in respect of some sin, therefore you have obtained a victory and that your nature is a little better than it was, the Lord perhaps will allow you to be plunged down into some ditch of corruption and then you will faint.

He shows too, to His people, how foolish they have been in their actions, in their hearts. Not only what they are, but what they have done. This is very solemn. He may shed a light on some things that you have done years ago, foolish things, things that at the time you did not much consider that they were wrong, but now the motive and spring of them, the aim of them, is shown to you and this brings about a faintness. The Lord makes His people see also in His word His Own exact justice, His Own character. O the solemn Scriptures there are against sin; the description of sinners, and of their doom in the Scripture, and you perhaps, reading them by and under the power of conviction, in the Holy Ghost, find that you are cut off here, and cut off there, so that you are without a refuge, exposed and faint,

without water; nothing to solace you, nothing to give you hope, and therefore you faint. Another thing too that makes men faint is a discovery, not only of the desperate wickedness of their heart, not only what they are capable of, and what they have done, but also this, that there is nothing in their nature, not the least thing, that can help them to be different. Nothing that can enable them to be any more straight with God's law, nothing that can wash out the stain of their nature's blackness, nothing that they can do or produce that will change their heart. Something of the truth in that Word of God is made known, and being made known, makes a man faint. Though I take much soap and nitre yet I cannot wash myself clean. The Ethiopian cannot wash himself white, the leopard cannot cleanse away his spots, but they could as soon do that as we, each of us without exception, can cleanse our nature, make ourselves capable of pleasing God.

There are other things that make men faint. Some especial sin, some hardness of heart in departing from God in some particular way either, it may be, externally or in spirit, and the soul is awakened to see its folly, the evil spirit it has indulged, the guile, the jealousy, the anger, it has nourished against some person, the pride it has pandered to in various things, and these things revealed especially in some particular thing, make a man faint. Perhaps some of your best things, as you would call them, you look back upon and can see in them your sin. Though the Lord may have blessed you and helped you and done you good, yet you see, in the light of God, there was sin in your heart, sin that made you swell with pride, sin that made you guileful, that made you look upon others with scorn. These things are brought to light and they make you faint. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint" when God teaches a man what he is, what he has done, what he is capable of doing. Ah, and there is this too, He shows to a man the utter futility of all sorrow to make him better; shows to him that he cannot undo what he has done, but that his iniquity is regarded and the Scripture comes very close as the commandment is exceeding broad and that word may come into your very heart - "For every idle word will I bring you into judgement". Hard thoughts of God indulged, these are charged on the conscience and they, as perceived to be wicked, awful, make a man faint. Circumstances

ometimes are of such a nature to make people faint, because when God deals with men in circumstances, as they fear God, their troublous circumstances they see<sup>o</sup> to have some relation to their sin. You may say, in some of your bitterest and heaviest and most perplexing circumstances, O if I were not guilty it would not be so heavy. But guilt on the conscience and trouble in circumstances, these two meeting do make people weak and faint. "When my soul fainted within me". The sight of God's glory by Isaiah made him faint. He cried out in his faintness, O wretched man, O miserable I - "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" - for mine eye hath seen the Lord of Hosts. There is one principle in the fainting in the trouble of every child of God that is different from the fainting and the trouble that is in the world. "The sorrow of the world worketh death". You may sometimes feel greatly to question whether your sorrow and trouble and faintness is that which the Lord's people have, but there is this principle. Whereas the flesh, the old man and the whole world, desires God to be less holy, less strict, and less just and less pure than He is, faith, the principle of grace in the soul, wishes God to be what He is. There is a distinct principle and it is this that makes a man so weak and yet it is this that does draw him to God. Because God is, because God sees him, because God is dealing with him, therefore he faints but at that time, when all his natural powers in religion, when all his natural faith, gives up the ghost, when his historical faith cannot support his fainting soul, when none of his past excellencies and obedience can be any solace to his heart to prevent him fainting, then does a true believer find the value of living faith. "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord". He did not remember the Lord and then faint. He fainted and then remembered the Lord. That is the order in experience. He whose faith prevents him fainting, he whose faith prevents all his powers being proved to be but weakness, he whose faith prevents him coming painfully into a knowledge of that word: "Without Me ye can do nothing", his faith is valueless though it may save him at present the painful experience. But the man who faints, the man who gives up the ghost of all his natural powers, is the man who comes to know where faith is in its fountain, where the power of faith comes from, and the value of it. "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord". O, this

remembrance of Jehovah; let us look at it for a moment. When nothing but darkness and dimness is in you, faintness that dulls all your powers spiritually, when you feel as if you must sink, when the burden of guilt, when a solemn sense of your own weakness through sin and unbelief is on you, then to have some reviving of that grace of faith to remember the Eternal God. God is remembered at such a time in various ways. First, He is remembered as the Holy Spirit, the Remembrancer, afresh stirs up faith, and afresh manifests Him in this, that He is the same. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever". Easily quoted is that word, O but the truth of it - when your state has so much changed as to your experience; when, instead of finding your mountain standing strong, and your conscience clean, and your confidence strong; instead of all that, you find that you are utter weakness and that that Scripture is true: "Without Me ye can do nothing", then to have that made out to you so as that you remember it, remember it in the light and power of the Holy Ghost, that the Lord is unchangeable. I suppose most of the people of God know the sacred, soft influence of such a remembrance. O how it comes in, how the heart goes out to the truth, how it brings, though not a deliverance, a little bit of reviving to the fainting heart - there is a God, there is a Christ, and He is the same. The same, first, in His eternal power. O, the power of God; what cannot He do. Faith, remembering His power is changeless, His infinite power, says in the soul that is likely to faint, there is strength in God; there is help there; He holds the world up; how can I then sink? His arms are underneath all His people. O, there is plenty of proof they are under me. "I remembered the Lord". He is remembered too, particularly in this - and it will always come to this, there will always be something of this about the remembrance of Jehovah in a fainting soul - in His blessed work of redemption. Remember the Lord in what He has done. O what a support that is to a fainting heart. No matter what makes you faint - though it is guilt, the worst of all causes of faintness - if you are brought to remember the Lord in what He has done even that He has by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified; that He has paid the debt His people owed; that that justice which you saw and see, and that made you faint, He has absolutely satisfied by His obedience and death; that He has

brought in an everlasting righteousness, and that He has ascended up on high, I say a remembrance of the Lord, a look, that is wonderful. O, but who can help you, who can produce the exercise of faith? None but the Holy Ghost. This remembrance is the work of God the Holy Ghost in the heart. A historical faith, a man believing, as all the people of God do believe, in Christ and His death; that ordinary, if I might so speak, ordinary faith in the death of Christ is not the remembrance meant here, but a special remembrance, a powerful, moving remembrance in the soul, whereby that comes to be true - "Faith is the evidence of things not seen" There is evidence here when this remembrance is had; evidence of Christ's atonement, of His Person. It is like when He makes Himself real. Faith sometimes is so dim in the soul as that nothing seems real, but in a case of necessity, when the soul faints, then the Eternal Spirit does what the Lord Jesus declared He would do, takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the fainting soul; holds up the cross of Christ before the soul. And what does he say? Well, he may not say anything, but he cannot help hoping; and he will find this too, he cannot help praying. You see here that when Jonah remembered the Lord in his faintness, he says "My prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple" You are sure to find that, whereas through faintness you were dumb in respect of prayer, when you remembered the Lord in this lively way, you began to pray. "Lord, save or I perish", "Lord help me". And the Lord stretched forth His arm and saved Peter when he thus prayed.

The everlasting virtue of Christ's death, as expressed in His Own dying words, that is remembered. "It is finished". It seems to suit unbelief; it seems to suit despair and fainting feelings to have that brought into the heart, that the work is done. O to remember the Lord in what He has done. Then again, there are times in faintness when the Holy Spirit helps a poor sinner to remember the Lord in this, in what He has done in their heart; how He has helped them, how He has blessed them in days past, and comforted them and spoken kindly to them. How He has delivered them and pardoned them and visited them and remembrance of these things is a wonderful help, a wonderful support. When David's soul was cast down within him he said, "I will remember Thee from the hill Mizar, from the land of Jordan." That is no

effort of a natural will, but it is the exercise of living faith in the light and power of the Holy Ghost that will do a poor, fainting creature good.

I remembered the Lord when my soul fainted within me, in what He has said. If you remember in any necessity and distress, any word that the Lord has spoken in your heart with a lively spiritual remembrance, you will find power in your heart to plead that that the Lord has promised before. Lord, do as Thou didst tell me Thou wouldest. Has He said He would never forsake you? Has He said He would be with you, that He would help you, that you should not be utterly destroyed and cast down, but that you should be held up? Has He declared these things to you in days past? Has He said He will not take away His covenant of peace from you? Then, when you remember this, no matter how guilt presses, no matter how circumstances conspire to bring you into ruin, no matter how, through temptation, you are faint and fear you will be left to turn back to Egypt, when you remember the Lord in what He has said, you will be sure to look forward and beg of Him to do in and for you what He has promised. Faith does eye the promise - God's promise is its object - for every promise of God is in Christ. Christ contains all the promises of Jehovah and He will see to it - and it is through His merit and by His power - that they are fulfilled. And so faith, remembering Him, asks for the fulfilment. You remember perhaps too in this particular trouble, directions that you have had in days past in other troubles. Take this direction - how helpful it may have been to some - when the Lord directs a sinner to pray and confess his sins. You have the word in the Scripture - and the spirit of that word is brought sometimes into the soul of a fainting person, fainting under his shame and guilt - "Take with you words and turn to the Lord". How kind it is of God to so direct a poor, fainting, guilty, shamed sinner, who must lie down in despair but for divine help; that He should give strength to the soul, and direction to the understanding, telling him what to do, and where to go - to take with you words. You may have said before, I do not know what to do; I do not know what will come to me; I am oppressed. And perhaps that is all you could say. No prayer, no shelter; shame and guilt and confusion. And then the Lord kindly directs you to do this - to turn to Him. Not

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with excuses, not with self-pity, not with a desire that He should deal leniently with your sin, but that He should take it away. "Take with you words and say unto Him, take away all iniquity". Faith, in asking that, does not wish God to be lenient with sin, but that He would remove it by the blood of Christ. I do believe in that principle in all vital faith, it will have God to be what He is, holy and just. And how that Scripture then comes in to the aid, to the support of a fainting sinner - "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" Do you remember Him in His word? Has He caused you to do it when you fainted? How gracious it is of Him and how valuable is a grain of living faith in exercise

Faith in the bleeding Lamb  
O what a gift is this

My friends if you possess, if I possess, faith in Christ, why how merciful and good and beneficent God has been to us to give us this faith. Nothing else will hold us up. Nothing else will help us. Nothing else will prevent us despairing but this faith in that which is unseen.

I remembered the Lord. Remembered too this, what He has done for men of like passions with you. How He has delivered them. How through faith He has kept them. You may read that chapter we read just now in the Hebrews (11) and so your faith may remember the Lord in that chapter in your fainting condition. Oh, and faith will argue well. It will say, if the Lord would do and did these things for those men of like passions with myself, though I am the vilest of all sinners perhaps He will do it for me. Mine is an extreme case, but theirs were more extreme in some particular circumstances. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" These Scriptures are written for the encouragement of fainting souls, for the Holy Ghost, by Paul, says in the next chapter - "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." And then again you may find this word

remembered in you and by that you remembered it, and how living the Word of God is when so remembered, and how comforting and how strengthening, where the Lord says by Peter's mouth, "The God of al grace who hath called you to His eternal glory, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you", and you say, Lord do help me to endure these troubles, and bring me to this establishment, this settlement.

I remembered the Lord, remembered Him too in this - O, the divine truth of it - even that He is on high and that He is there a representative of poor pilgrims, weary and faint. You may sometimes have in your heart a suspicion like this, my weariness and my faintness is because I am a sinner, because of my sin; is that the weariness and faintness of a child of God? If it were not for the guilt then I might hope to come well through to the city of God. But what does the Lord say, referring again to that chapter in the Hebrews? He says, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin". Ah, that is the battle, that is the fight of faith. ~~It is in that strife with sin, against sin,~~ that men become faint, and it is then, in that good fight, that the lord strengthens them and enables them to remember Him, the Captain of their salvation, and in this particular point, their Forerunner entered heaven and victory. "He" it is written of Him, the Lord Jesus, "He is able to save" - and O, how you need salvation when you faint - "He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them". O, an interceding, living, once crucified Christ in heaven. Why, my friends, if you remember Him, you will hope and you will pray and you will believe. You will open, sometimes, according to God's gracious direction - when you do believe this - you will open your mouth wide in petitions. Your faintness will be gone. You will say to the Lord, Lord bless me; Lord save me; Lord come to me, enrich me, reveal Thyself to me. Unite me to Thee. You will ask Him to come in and dwell with you and walk with you and guide you and give you victory and come and bring you at last to Himself. It will go right through into heaven, your prayer will, from the faintness and the depths that you were in before. You will say in your very heart, by faith you will say, "Yes, I to the end shall endure" How can you faint with Christ in heaven

communicating something of Himself to you on the earth?

I remembered the Lord in this, that He has prepared a city. He is not ashamed to call His pilgrims His people, not ashamed to be called their God. They confess by their spirit, by their inward walk and by their outward practice, they confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They might have had opportunity to have returned - plenty of temptations to have returned, O plenty, and that makes you faint because you realise that what the devil tempts you to do, your nature would be only too willing to do - Ah, but there is this city, this heavenly Jerusalem, this Mount Zion, where the Lamb is and the company of redeemed shall be, and you are seeking that city, and the remembrance of it, the remembrance of the name of it - The Lord is there - that encourages you to press on. You say

His track I see, and I'll pursue  
The narrow way, till him I view

Prayer often comes out of hearts that are just ready to faint. When we are easy we may pray, as we think; we may keep up the form of prayer; but I am inclined to believe that most prayer comes out of oppressed and faint hearts. A needy case, a tempting devil, sin working, soliciting your acquiescence in some things, guilt oppressing you, these things, necessities in circumstance, all combine, and the Lord helping you, you pray, you pour out a secret speech. There is some reason for your prayer, even an urgent need. There is another reason, you remember the Lord's infinite resources, and these two things meet in the power of the Holy Ghost in your heart and you pray. O, what a relief it is to rise up from your heaviness and pray. "And my prayer came in unto Thee into Thine holy temple". The Lord hears prayer; He has promised to do so. The Mercy-Seat on which He sits is sprinkled with His blood, and men approach that Mercy-Seat in the Holy Temple by faith. Relief comes, communicated strength; hope is raised up, the enemy is rebuked. "There hath not taken you any temptation but such as is common to man, but God is able to deliver you and make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it" and that is proved when your prayer comes in, into the Lord's holy temple, and He sends His succour

delivering you from the temptation by His gracious power. Temptation to give up. When that temptation is broken by some renewed strength, some fresh view of the blessedness of the saints of God, the blessedness of being a follower of the lowly Lamb of God and being one of the company of the redeemed, you say, I will be a pilgrim by the Lord's mercy; I will still be a pilgrim; nothing shall turn me back from that; and you know the Lord has heard you because He has done in you what you ask. It is not only and always a distinct perception of the Lord's hearing you because He speaks; there is not always a great noise when your prayer comes in into the holy temple of the Lord, but what you ask is more or less done. Either He will give you strength to bear and to wait for full deliverance, or He will deliver you. He will direct you, He will allay your fears, He will come and enable you to set, as you desire to do, your affections on things above. He will subdue your iniquities and He will cast your sins behind His back. He has promised to do all this, and He does it sooner or later. There is not one good thing that He has promised that He will neglect to fulfil in the experience of His poor, fainting people.

If we do not faint ever it is not because there is nothing in our case calculated to make us faint, but because we have no faith in God. Fainting is a painful thing, a weakening, a shameful thing really, but I believe that the saints of God, when they realise what they are, and who God is, cannot but faint at times in their souls within them. You will notice that Jonah said - "When my soul fainted within me". Men in a profession may not be left, especially those who have been in a profession some time, may not be left to faint in a way to bring reproach upon the cause; they may be enabled externally still to pursue the ways of God, but your soul may often faint. You may often come to the house of God and feel so faint and so ashamed as to think that you are quite unworthy and unfit to be there. O but why did not you give up? Because "your life is hid with Christ in God". Because you have union to the root, and when you remember the Lord and cry to Him, and He hears you, you have evidence of unseen things, evidence of that union, and what a great thing it is to have the least evidence of having union to the Son of God.

Well, may the Lord help any here who may be fainting. He can - O, in a moment - He can help you to remember Him and remembering Him to pray to Him and He will cause you to know, sooner or later, that your poor prayer, pressed out of your heart by the Holy Ghost, and by necessity, entered into His holy temple and that will bring you near, that will make you a stronger believer than if you did not faint. O, it is by these things men live and in these things is the life of the spirit of all the saints. May the Lord pardon what has been amiss.

AMEN.