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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 17 May 1925

PHILIPPIANS 3 v 10-11

"That I may know Him, and the power of His
resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings,
being made conformable unto His death; If by any means
I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"

This chapter begins by an exhortation to the brethren in whom, as
in the first chapter, he declares there had been commenced a good
work in them; an exhortation to those, so made brethren, to rejoice
in the Lord, the only source and object and reason for rejoicing to a
Christian. That is a true word that you were singing this
morning

Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil

and it would be exceedingly solemn for us if we were left to find
happiness, joy, satisfaction, outside God. Some of you perhaps do
find all that your hearts wish, and that, not in God; are living
without Him; have never yet prayed to Him; never been brought
solemnly face to face with the Almighty God; never had any dealings
with Him about your souls; have never found restlessness in the best
earthly thing; never found an aching void for the want of God. Well,
those of you who are in this case are at present, according to
appearances, outside this company, this family which the Apostle
here embraces in the word "my brethren", and very solemn it is. There
may be some here who feel outside, who fear they are outside, who dare
not place themselves inside, who say, If I might but be brought in in
my soul's feelings; if I might but know that the Lord is my God, my
Saviour; if I might but be assured that the work of grace, that
spiritual life, is begun in my heart, then I should have more gladness
than if all my worldly prospects were greatly increased. Well, may
the Lord help any of you in such a case to follow according to the rule
which you expressed by that acknowledgement. It is the same rule as

Paul walked by and exhorted the brethren, who had had the work begun and knew it, to walk by. "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk according to the same rule". The rule is in your case applied painfully for you feel that none but Jesus can do your souls good, none but the Christ of God can save you, none but God Himself can comfort and satisfy your heart. That is the same rule as is exercised in and by every Christian. This I would observe for, if it please the Lord, your strengthening and encouragement to press on.

Now in the text the Apostle expresses his fervent desire to know the Lord Jesus, and he expresses it in a very vehement way. Says he, I count all things loss, but as dung and as dross; all things that would otherwise be gain to me, I count as excretion; I count as something I would be rid of if that, whatever it is, should come in competition with, in place of, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Is this your mind? Do you sometimes feel and say with the simplicity of the vehemence of your heart's desire, O that I might know the Lord Jesus. If you do, then you have some particular reasons for saying it. The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is something very especial then in your heart, if this is what you say of all things else. And truly, if a man should say, well, I should like to know Jesus Christ; if he should say, I should like not to be quite so ignorant as I am, and was at the same time in the world; of it; at the same time lethargic and held to every maxim and fashion that would be for his worldly advantage, in that person it would be manifested that he had very little esteem for the Lord Jesus, and you may depend upon it it is a truth that every true Christian sooner or later will find, that Christ is not only to be a little wanted - it is not that we should like to know a little of Christ - but He is essential to our life, and our salvation, and our comfort, and our light, and our peace, and to all the well-being of our souls. If you can find an alternative for Christ which will fill up the desire of your heart always, then woe be to you. But it is painful for a person who feels not to know Christ to have this rule in him - "That I might know Him". It is a painful lack, an exceedingly painful lack. It is a death. Ignorance of Jesus Christ to a quickened person is a death. You know what that is, some of you, doubtless. You experience it, you feel it, though sometimes you may feel hardly enough motion in your souls to cause you to stir yourselves to call on God to reveal Christ to you. Yet, from time to

time, there is this death, this painful lack in your soul; ignorance of the Lord Jesus. Paul was not ignorant of Him entirely; No, he had a good knowledge of Christ, and yet the same rule applies in every quickened person; they want to know Christ. And this is true, that the more a person knows of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, Immanuel, the Saviour of sinners, the more he wants to know. If you can limit your desire to know the Lord Jesus, then that proves you are exceedingly ignorant of Him, for every little touch, every little glimpse, every time you receive into your heart by faith the Lord Jesus, you will find your capacity increase for Him. I count all things but dung that I may know Christ. For this reason, first, all things else are unsaving but the knowledge of Christ. We must know Christ if we are to be right, and to know Christ is not to reason about Christ. It is not to have notions as to who He was and is. To know Him to a child of God, to a person who really counts all things else as dung for the knowledge of Him, is essential and he wants to know Him in the power and virtue and sufficiency of His work and of His life and of His Person. To be intimate with Him, to know Him as being his Saviour, his Head, his life. "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God". He wants to know Christ like that; to know Him as united to Him. O, it is not a distant, notional, reasoning notion of Christ that will satisfy a child of God. Why, you need not cry out to God for that knowledge; you need not wait on God for that knowledge; you need not cry and shout and wait and long and languish for that knowledge; you can have it. With your Bibles before you in a Christian land that knowledge is simple enough to all who have the natural intelligence. But O, it does not satisfy; it does not save; it does not comfort; it does not strengthen; it does not humble; it does not fill the soul with living light. No, a child of God wants all those things, those effects, wrought in him. He wants to know Christ. "That I may know Him". How is He to be known? In what particulars is the Lord Jesus Christ to be known in this life? Well, He is to be known in the revelation that He makes of Himself to sinners; first as the Saviour of sinners. If He is all else, but a Saviour, then He would not be the first Object of desire to a sinner; neither would He, as known, be satisfying and saving to a sinner. But He is to be known and He is known as the Saviour of sinners. It is His Name. "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Now my friends, if you are real sinners - I hope there

are some real sinners here, and I hope you are not all sinners in notion; I hope you are not all living secretly satisfied because you do not live in open sin - you who are real sinners, real sinners in secret before God, know you want a real Saviour, a living Saviour. You want One who, being known by you, will be known as sufficient to save you from your sins. O, this is an intense want, a want that will bring you sometimes, in the spirit of it, to cast away everything from you but this knowledge of this Person. You will say, in your walk, in your spirit, in secret you will say from time to time of everything else, it is short, it is insufficient, it cannot satisfy me. And you will say too, everything that you are brought to believe is calculated to keep you from this knowledge of Christ; to hold you back from that discovery of Him that you long for, you will cast it away. "Laying aside every weight" comes into this rule. The person says, now if this is in competition with Christ, if this blinds my eyes, if this diverts my attention, away with it. Let me seek the Lord with all my heart. That is the spirit of a person who really wants Christ. Why my friends, unless we know Him as our Saviour then we shall be terribly, fatally short. It wont do for us to have a notion about the Lord Jesus; that wont make us Christians; that wont be a passport into heaven; that will be nothing of a certificate to bring to God as a reason why we should enter. We must know Him. Eternal life is wrapped up in this. If there are any here who are satisfied with notions about the Lord Jesus, I hope the Eternal Spirit may make those notions unsatisfying to you, and make the Lord Jesus so necessary to you as to bring you to this rule. He is known as the Saviour, as able to save, and as saving. "That I might know Him" in His salvation in my heart. What is salvation? What would salvation to you be? Comfort? Yes, it would bring comfort, sweet comfort. But what is it? It is the separation from a person of his sins. It is the communication to a person of a holiness that is perfect. It is a meetness for heaven. That is salvation. Now Jesus Christ is all this. It is He, as known; He, as received in His precious death, and blood, and righteousness, who becomes, by the Spirit, as He reveals Himself to the sinner, righteousness, and redemption, and sanctification, and wisdom and strength. These are not mere definitions of what Christ is, but they are truths of what Christ is in the soul. That I may know Him as such in my heart, as the salvation of God. Is this with you your desire? Have you ever known

Him as Paul knew Him in this? In the Corinthians he says that Christ is made all this to us, that is himself and the Corinthians to whom he wrote. Has He been made such to you? Well, when He comes, He brings all this salvation with Him. "He will come and save you", is the promise in Isaiah. And when the Lord is known in this His character as Saviour for substance, He brings into the heart of the sinner righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He Himself is it all, and the sinner knows Him. It is wonderful what the knowledge of the Lord Jesus does; that knowledge that is, if I might so speak, first-hand knowledge. I speak of faith, of course; I do not speak of visions, but of the powerful visit of the Lord Jesus to the heart, whereby He communicates Himself and is in the heart, and brings peace, and brings forgiveness, and brings light, and brings comfort, and brings the sweet fruits of His death, and makes the soul know and feel that He has, in Christ, a precious Saviour. Well, if it is so, and I am sure it is so with some of you - you have known the Lord Jesus in that way - then you can go with the Apostle and say: "That I may know Him". I, from the experience of the past, do count all things else but dung. The rule is the same throughout. You will be sure to find this so. Whatever comes in to divert you from this rule, you will find to be a clog, a darkness, and weight and hindrance and a guilt, sooner or later. When the Lord deals with you, you will find yourself brought back to this rule, and then to feel all is dung, all is worthless, but the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Let us look at one or two particulars here. "That I may know Him" That I may know Him to be the Son of God. And this is to be known. It is received by faith; for you will find, we do find, that none less than God's almighty Son such loads of guilt and sin can remove from our hearts. This is a truth. No Saviour, no Redeemer, no Advocate, no Surety, who is not God's almighty Son is sufficient for me, to wash my soul; neither is it sufficient for you. But then the truth of His being, this is known; and how is it known? Not by speculation, not by notion, not by guessing who He is; but it is known by the powerful light and teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. You may find sometimes, to your heart's satisfaction, and to your great humbling, and to your soul's inward rejoicing, a living light shining upon the descriptions of the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures in your heart. He is described there; only we can never receive the knowledge

of Him as the Son of God but by the Holy Spirit. And how sweet it is to have this knowledge brought. When you read of Him as the Son of the Father; when you hear Him speaking to His Father and calling Him Holy Father, and My Father, and as you hear the Spirit by the Apostle Paul declaring of Him that He is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Father's Person. When you find - Paul again in the Philippians saying that He was equal with God and thought it not robbery to be made equal with God, but was made in the likeness of sinful flesh - that these truths convey to your soul the reality of the Sonship, the divinity of the Person of the Lord Jesus. Now the peculiarity of spiritual knowledge is this, that though it may be known savingly and be known in some particulars today by the light of the blessed Spirit, we need continual instruction. O sometimes it may be with you, as it is with myself, it is as if I have never known the truth, never felt the truth, never realised that Jesus is the Son of God. Why, sometimes, so slothful and dark and dead, as if one had not a soul. Well then we need the same quickening. And what was learned may be painfully to your sense blotted out and you cannot attain to the knowledge of it. And this is, therefore, the cry of a child of God; from time to time he is brought to it most deliberately and solemnly: I count all loss and all dung, all unsatisfying, but the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. "That I may know Him".

"That I may know Him" in the unchangeableness of His love. How can we know Him in this? Why, by feeling it. You cannot know the love of Christ any other way. You may talk about it; you may look upon it as it is described in the Scriptures, but you cannot know Christ in His unchanging love except you feel it. If you are satisfied with anything short of this it is a sad mark. O, but how the heart aches for this love sometimes. If you felt it, you felt your heart well up in a sweet response to the love that is manifested to you. You felt your heart going out in worship, in satisfaction. You felt your soul resting in the love of Christ. O there is a satisfaction, a consolation in love. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love". There is. Now if you felt that once you will want to feel it again. And if you have never felt it then, as you are a child of God, your heart sometimes will ache to feel the love of Christ. O make Thy love known to me. Melt this hard heart with the love Thou bearest to sinners. Holy Spirit, shed that love of

Christ abroad in my heart. "That I may know Him" as the lover of my soul. What are other loves to Christ's love? Very sweet some loves may be, but O, the love of Christ, what a flame it is. How absolutely faithful He is in His love. But then, you want to know it; you want testimonies of it. The Lord has not promised, you know, that His people should always have the comfort of love, but His people are not satisfied without it. He does not upbraid a person for coveting this constantly. He might upbraid some of us for our slothfulness in respect of seeking it, but sometimes there is love sickness. There is a sickness to feel the love of Christ. "Tell Him" said the Church in the Song of Solomon - "Tell Him whom my soul loveth that I am sick of love", that is sick to find Him and to enjoy His love again. "That I may know Him". Know Him in His sweet communion. If you have ever walked with the Lord Jesus, if He has ever walked with you; if you have ever felt Him near so as that you could worship Him, and speak to Him and confess to Him and adore Him, and tell Him how you long to be conformed to Him and to keep near Him and never part from Him, then I say, if you have felt that, and are not enjoying it at present, you will want it again. You will want that experience again. Dark and cheerless is the morn without Christ. And though it is a rich experience perhaps not often enjoyed by the child of God, yet he would fain enjoy it every day of his life. So says the soul sometimes - so vehement is his desire for this - I count everything else unsatisfying, as worthless, that I may know Christ.

That I may know Him as the Mediator between God and my soul. To draw near to the Eternal God is one of the greatest experiences that any son of Adam can have. O, it is a great thing to draw near to God. Now no person can really draw near to God without the Lord Jesus, and in different degrees of clearness this is known. He is known as the Mediator between God and men. Why, my friends, if you know Him like this, you will find it to be very wonderful how your soul is filled with a humble confidence in prayer. You will be sometimes quite amazed to find what you are able to ask God to do for you when you go through the Mediator, in the Name of the Son of God, to God. Why, it gives really, it gives to the soul the power of God. It is the power of God in the sinner when he, by faith, mentions the Name of the Lord Jesus, and knows and feels that the Lord Jesus is between him and God. When you have the Saviour, the Son of God, with you in prayer in your

feelings, it is no difficulty to pray; it is no difficulty to ask impossibilities of God; it is no difficulty to confess your sins; it is no difficulty to look into the worst case you have, into the greatest difficulty you have, it is no difficulty to you then. You can take it all to God and you can believe that God can deal with you in a way of grace and that He can help you and deliver you from your heaviest trial or greatest perplexity. He can deliver you from the blackest sin. And if you have known Him in this way, you have felt you would like to live and die praying. You felt you would like to stay at the throne of grace, bow at the holy footstool of God. O it is a sweet place. It is better, if I might say such a word, it is better to be there than to have, as it were, some degree of satisfaction and be not at the throne of grace. It is wonderful to have answers to prayer, and they come through the Mediator. But when we get answers, how often we go our way and how little we thank the Lord, but it is very sweet. And sometimes we have known Him, have we not, as the Mediator and found acceptance with God when we have gone in His Name. That is, the Lord God, the Father and His dear Son have both been with us. Have you known Him like that? This is to know Him as the Son of God, as the Mediator. When you have in some measure had fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. You would not leave the Father out if you have known Him like this; you cannot leave Him out. "He that hath the Son hath the Father also". But there are times when this is more or less distinctly perceived and felt and it is a very sweet knowledge, a very confirming and establishing piece of experience.

That I may know Him in His ability to deliver out of trouble; to know Him in His ability to come into trouble and take away from the trouble the bitterness of it. That I may know Him as that sweetness that can put sweetness into the bitterest cup. Christ is this to a child of God. He can enable you to bear, what your flesh would rebel against, with submission. He can bring sweetness into that which you cannot drink and that will enable you to say that you drink the cup freely and thankfully This is what Christ can do and He is known as being able to do it.

"And the power of His resurrection". The power of Christ's resurrection is His eternal victory over death, sin, and hell. He

died unto sin; He did die a victor. He conquered though He fell, and He was raised again from the dead. He was necessarily raised from the dead and in His being raised from the dead it was declared that He is the Son of God. And it also declared that His work was complete, His work was satisfactory. It was openly displayed when He rose from the dead that He had conquered death, and the power of this is to be known. It is to be known in men's hearts. What is it? It is the act of a Spirit wrought faith. Every time a person truly rises from himself, with all the depression that self-knowledge brings, to God through Christ by faith, that is the power of Christ's resurrection exercised. O my friends, this is very blessed and it is the result of union with Jesus Christ, and the soul longs to know this. Our faith may be, and is very often, most feeble. Often as to its exercises and actings it seems smitten down to the ground and unable to rise. Now, says the soul, O I count everything useless and dung but this power. I cannot live, I cannot pray, I cannot look up, I cannot hope, I cannot go on, I cannot stand still, I cannot look back, without this power. That I may know the power of Christ's resurrection in my heart. You know an exhortation by one man to another to exercise faith and act faith will probably result in no more than the exercise of notion. But when the Lord calls forth faith from the heart, then there is virtue, power, the power of Christ's resurrection. This is the Spirit's work. It is He who takes of this victory of Christ and communicates it to the poor, feelingly vanquished soul, and says the sinner then, I will go to God in Christ's Name.

Why should I then poison cherish
Why despair of cure and perish;
Look my soul, though stung to death

That is the spirit of this faith in the heart, and it is wonderful power that does it. O, if you find this in your hearts at any time when you are confronted, as it were, with a thick, black cloud, impenetrable, and then the Spirit in your heart conducts you this way, and strengthens you to go this way, it is a wonderful act of God. May the Lord help you to thank Him for it, and you will thank Him for it too, because you will get the victory over unbelief this way, and over Satan this way, and over sin this way. "The power of His resurrection." The world holds us down often; it binds us. It has in

our hearts a great effect. The cares of it, the allurements of it, the pleasures of it; these things hold us down. Now what is the victory that overcometh the world; even our faith, says John; and this is the power of Christ's resurrection. Ah my friends, if you attempt by the power of your own hearts to overcome, you will fail. Why, I know what it is to be so care worn, so pressed with cares and sins and so drawn about by temptations and allurements that they have been like entanglements to my feet, that I could not by any means obtain liberty from. Well then what you want is power, the power of Christ's resurrection, and that let down in your heart lifts you up and you rise above it all to God and to Christ who is at the Father's right hand, and you say the world has no charms for me. The cares of the world, my cares, I have them, but I cast them on Thee. It brings about a conformity to this: "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." It looks simple, does not it? Ah but you live to prove that you need the power of God to follow this and He gives it. Why, some of us have had impossibilities, many of them; difficulties great, cares heavy, sins persistent, temptations subtle and mighty, and these at times we have been enabled to take to God and have had some deliverances. And it is the resurrection of a hope. When faith looks to God your hope that has been buried perhaps, as to any sweetness, for a long time, is raised again. This is very wonderful. "Hope thou in God", said one who felt this power. "Why art thou cast down O my soul? Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." The power of Christ's resurrection in the heart gives that heart to believe well of God. It gives that heart to trust implicitly in Christ, and it gives the soul power to ask of God great blessings.

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Here I must leave the matter. I hope the blessed Spirit may give to many of us here a fresh knowledge, unctuous, satisfying, sanctifying, saving, strengthening, comforting, humbling knowledge, of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing to be compared with Christ crucified known, felt, possessed, worshipped. May the Lord grant it to us.

AMEN.