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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 12 July 1931

PSALM 130 V 7 AND 8

"Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with  
the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is  
plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem  
Israel from all His iniquities"

Here is a man in the depths and out of those depths he is crying to Jehovah. Here is where true religion is. People may easily acquire, from the outside of things, an idea of a correct religion but none can know what true religion is unless they are brought to cry to God out of necessity and by a secret assistance afforded them by the Holy Ghost. All true Israelites, each and every one of the spiritual Israel, are brought, by divine teaching, to know what trouble is. As distinct from all other trouble, there is the trouble called the day of Jacob's trouble. There is none like it, says the Holy Ghost. Many other troubles there are, the world is full of trouble, but there is a peculiar trouble which comes to every Israelite, every real Jacob. These depths, into which the people of God are led, and find themselves, are some of them, feelingly, unfathomable depths. They are depths of trouble for sin, depths of an apprehension of their depravity, depths of fear, fear in consequence of some knowledge of themselves in the sight and light of God. "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord". Depths of shame for what you are and for the contrary that is in you to what you ought to be. Depths of grief because you have come short of God's glory and image. Only the people of God know these troubles. If any professor here thinks himself fairly well on the way to heaven and knows nothing about these depths and crying to God out of them, it would be well if he lost his religion and his profession. The Holy Spirit opens these depths to the view, to the experience of the people of God and frequently, it may be, with some, these seem unfathomable and bottomless. They sink, sink in deep mire. Jonah was in the depths and he said that the weeds were wrapped about his head; he went down to the very roots of the mountains, and from thence he cried to God, looked to the Lord, toward

His holy temple. And this is one of the great mysteries of prayer that people who are, in spite of their own resources, in utter helpless despair, are enabled, caused to call upon God, to cry to God. Faith, in its strength, may be measured more by the opposition to it than anything else. The more unreasonable it is for a man to exercise faith and in consequence to pray, the more real is that prayer and really the stronger is that faith. The trial of faith is in the experimental removal from the sinner's heart and case of every natural support. Then faith is tested. While we have natural supports, while we have not that trouble that leaves us to sink if God fails us, while I say we have anything that will support us without God's interference, there is no prevailing exercise of faith. Faith is the casting of one's self on God unreservedly. When their strength is gone, when other refuge is gone, when they are compelled to embrace the Rock for want of a shelter, then there is this exercise of true and living faith. Much that goes by the name of faith and that is admired for faith is no faith at all. It is the boast of the flesh, religious flesh.

And this poor man in these depths in his prayer had a difficulty. There were before him his iniquities and God. God was the object of his prayer. God infinitely holy and inflexibly just and almighty to execute His justice. Now this man was in a difficulty here because he saw that this God in these, His perfections, was against him. As those perfections of Jehovah are alone considered, a sinner feels that he dare not come to God. But here this man, by divine grace, asks a question of the Lord, and in it he acknowledges his own state and condition as unworthy and unable to stand before this great God. "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Here I am a sinking man in the depths. I cry to Thee but Thou art holy, But if Thou dost refuse to hear my cry on account of Thy holiness and justice, then how can I stand? Who else should stand if Thou wert strict in this matter? But underlying his prayer was faith in a forgiving God. This is always in real prayer in convicted hearts: "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared". And it is a great thing thus, in such circumstances of soul experience to believe in forgiveness. Without this faith in divine forgiveness a man cannot pray, he is shut up. Guilt shuts his mouth because of the greatness and holiness of God. Immediately there is in his heart the

testimony of forgiveness then the man can pray. "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared". Now this believing in forgiveness did not satisfy the man. His prayers were not ended then. His faith in forgiveness was that which enabled him to pray, which caused him to pray earnestly, which gave him strength and patience and diligence and sincerity in waiting for the Lord. There are some people who talk of forgiveness. They say, week by week, in the established church, we believe in the forgiveness of sins. God knows how many do, but if we do believe in it, and if we have on our consciences by the Spirit's convincing work, our own sins, then there will be this pressing after a knowledge of forgiveness in our own consciences where forgiveness is to be enjoyed, where the atonement is to terminate. An idea of the atonement may very well please professors who are dead, but the atonement must be known, must be received and enjoyed for a truly living sinner to be satisfied. And so there is this: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning". A man watches for the morning. A long, tiresome vigil he has through the dark night and the least inkling of the morning coming is cheering to him, but this man had a watch for an object that was much more important to him than the morning. It was the Lord's appearing. "I say, more than they that watch for the morning". It is a great thing to have an object in your search, to have something that you hope for, long for, believe in and wait for. If we have no object we have no fixed direction in our hearts. Our religion will be hazy, moveable, changing continually, but if we are under the Spirit's teaching, though we shall have many changes, many a set back, yet there will be this in the man, there will be a direction, there will be an object, something longed for, hoped for, desired and sought. Now is this with us? It must be if we are right, if we are under the Spirit's teaching, it must be with us. Now this man had, by this experience, the knowledge of that in God that enabled him, as he did by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, to encourage all Israel and he says here: "Let Israel hope in the Lord". Hope is a great grace. It respects things desired, things needed and things believed in as attainable. Have we any soul needs? Have we in our souls a supreme desire? Do we believe that those desires are attainable? If so then we shall be after them and waiting for them. And first I must say this, that while we are able to hope apart from

the Lord in anything in the world, in ourselves, there will be no exercise of this grace of hope of or in the Lord. That is to say, if our desires, if our needs, can be supplied and satisfied from the flesh and from the world, there will be no real waiting on the Lord for that which we want. The Lord makes this world to His people, empty. He turneth it upside down and whatever hopes a natural man has, however much he may realise these hopes in this world, there will be no full satisfaction to a child of God apart from knowing the Lord and from receiving His salvation. This is the principal thing, the thing needed and the thing desired by every grace taught sinner - salvation. Mercy, the Psalmist says, is with the Lord and that is salvation. Divine mercy means divine salvation. It means the help of Almighty God for the helpless. It means the deliverance of those who are captivated. It means that sinners shall be blessed with forgiveness, that they shall be made saints, made saints because the Lord has ordained them to be saints and called them to be saints. With the Lord there is mercy. Mercy is the exercise of goodness, beneficence, love, power, towards a wretched creature. Now it is a wonderful thing that there is mercy with God for such as are sinfully wretched, for such as are in a wretched condition by their own wickedness. If there is no recovery of a person there can be no effectual mercy in God for him, but if God will recover people from their wretchedness and if the Lord, in His infinite grace, has provided a means whereby He will so recover His people, then it may be said, there is mercy with the Lord. With the Lord there is mercy. He is capable of exercising that goodness and love toward a wretch as shall deliver him from his wretchedness, as shall bring him up from these depths, as shall satisfy his needs, his living desires, as shall take away the cause of his wretchedness which is really a sinful distance from God, alienation from God by wicked works. This is mercy, and this is the ground of hoping in the Lord, hoping, that is to say, to realise, to obtain, to receive and enjoy the mercy that is with Him. Now it is plain and logical that if we have no need and if we have no desire we shall not be hoping in the Lord for the thing that is with Him. It is not a little thing to have a desire and to have a need and in that desire and in that need to be led to believe that there is that in God which we need. It is not of course that this is in God. It is by manifestation of the Holy Spirit that men come to believe and to know that there is mercy with the Lord. It is written in the

Scripture but, O, when a man is in need, when he is on the borders of the pit in his feelings, when he feels there is nothing between him and hell of his own, no goodness that he can hope to obtain, nothing he can hope to do whereby to escape the wrath to come and lies there at the grave's mouth without strength, without strength in himself even to wait there, when such a man has the testimony in his heart that there is in Jehovah that great God, against whom he has sinned, mercy for such as he is, I defy that man not to pray, not to wait and not to hope. He must do it. It strengthens him, it encourages him, it gives him that open mouth, it relieves him from that pent up state of prayerlessness which guilt brings, and some of us know what this means. It is a point, my friends, in experience. "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy". As if the Spirit should say, though He be great, and though if He should mark iniquities none could stand, and though you, a guilty sinner, feel that you, of all sinners, are chief, that your case is peculiar, that your depraved nature is in a sense more depraved than anybody's, when such a thing is revealed to such a man it is as if the Spirit says, there is hope for you in Him. Though He be what He is, though if He mark iniquity you could not stand, the best man could not stand, yet there is truly, verily, with God mercy. What a revelation this is. What an encouragement this is to poor sinners who have not a word to say, who cannot speak for themselves, in a way of excuse or extenuation but just have to wait on God, and now they are enabled to do it. O, says the sinner, it may be that I shall obtain this mercy. It may be after all that the wrath I deserve will be turned aside, that I shall obtain that which will satisfy my soul, which will deliver me, and relieve me of my fears and of my guiltiness and of my distance from God. It may be that this God, with whom is mercy, will even show that mercy to myself. Is there a soul here who argues like that, who has been tempted to despair because of his sins, who finds frequently, through a sense of guilt, he dare not utter a word in prayer, who feels to tremble before Jehovah, because He is a great God and almighty and just? Well, poor sinner, this truth in the Spirit's hands, will strengthen you and encourage you. "Let Israel". The person who has this day of trouble, who is brought to know himself and God. The person in this case may hope in God's mercy for there is mercy with Him, mercy. And it is mercy to deliver a man from his guilt, mercy that, as shown to a wretch, delivers that wretch from his

wretchedness. Mercy, as it flows into the soul, causes the poor sinner to realise that though he deserves hell God has a favour towards him. Mercy, that is God's kindness, kindness expressed in and through Jesus Christ in the covenant. My kindness shall not depart from you. Now this mercy is with God. Mercy which has power to help, to help the helpless, to communicate grace, to strengthen the weak soul, to confirm the feeble knees. Mercy to bring into a sinner's heart the testimony that there is no fury in God against him. There is mercy with God. And this mercy that is with God is holy mercy. All God's works are holy; nothing with God that is unholy. And it is a wonderful thing that this mercy is holy because in His holiness and in His justice marking iniquity there could be no mercy, but in His holiness and in His justice looking on Jesus Christ and receiving from Jesus Christ satisfaction for those perfections in the place of sinners then there is this holy mercy. It flows that way, my friends, no other way. If God had not provided a Surety, a Lamb for a burnt offering, if He had not received honour to His law, satisfaction to His justice by His dear Son, Jesus Christ, for His people, mercy could not be exercised in a saving way toward wretched sinners because it would not be just. Therefore this fact, as faith receives it, it embraces the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. With Jehovah is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption. Mercy through blood, grace justifying freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, almighty power that, exercised in justice and holiness apart from Christ, would consume the sinner. Exercised through Christ in love, this is the mercy. "With Him is plenteous redemption". Redemption is purchase, it is buying back. It eventually issues in deliverance of those who are purchased, in their liberty. And this plenteous redemption is with the great God. It was obtained, this redemption, this right to command deliverances, obtained by God. It is not an act of His arbitrary omnipotence to deliver sinners, but it is obtained, obtained by Jesus Christ. "Having obtained eternal redemption for us". How was it obtained? By a price paid. Redemption. There must be a price paid. God's character must not, cannot be infringed whatever becomes of creatures. Do you believe that my friends, that whatever becomes of you, God's character must not be infringed? His truth must be fulfilled, His righteousness must be vindicated, His law must be honoured, and it was honoured. His righteousness and justice have

been vindicated, His law has been magnified, and made honourable, and all this by a price paid, a tale of obedience rendered, and a sacrifice offered once for all. This is the price. When the Lord Jesus instituted the sacrament of His Supper, He said, breaking the bread and blessing it "This is My body which is given for you" and that represented the gift of Himself. Who gave Himself for our sins, a sacrifice to God, well pleasing, well pleasing to God, for when the Lord Jesus came, when the Son of God assumed our nature, and went about doing good and delivering all those who were oppressed of the devil, His Father, sealing Him from heaven by a voice, said "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". And He laid down His life. As you were singing, He spent His life to render a tale of obedience that should be the covering of the whole church through eternity and He gave Himself a ransom and laid down His life that He might expiate sin, satisfy justice, sheathe that infinite sword for His people and remove the iniquity of a land in one day. "Having obtained eternal redemption". And it means this, that He overcame all principalities and powers. He threw down every power that could hold in captivity the Church of Christ, the devil - He overcame him who had the power of death, and destroyed his power, (not his person), broke his rule, threw him down, snatched, as it were, as brands from the burning, His own church. This was redemption. O what Christ's life and death on earth meant and means and what it means to a poor sinner who comes into these depths, only those to whom this is made out by the Holy Spirit, can really enter into. Plenteous redemption. And this plentiness of the redemption comes from His Person, from the merit of His Person. He gave Himself. He could not give greater. There was nothing else to give greater. Infinite is His Person, capable of redeeming them all for whom His gift was intended to be a redemption price. No weakness here, the power of Almighty God here. Though He was crucified through weakness here is the power of the rich value of Christ's Person. Plenteous. When Christ gave Himself a sacrifice to God, when He died as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world but slain actually in time, then He did satisfy all the claims of God that were on and against the people for whom He stood. If we only could, by the Holy Spirit, enter a little into who Christ is, then the work that He accomplished by the commandment of His Father, as His servant, would appear to us as of all sufficient virtue, and we should therefore hope in the Lord. Now there may be some here who do most

solemnly feel at times that their cases, their sins are so peculiar, are so many, that their hearts are so defiled, that their nature is so depraved, that their lack of all goodness is so utter, that they can hardly hope for anything better than a deserved hell. If they could only in some way be a little better, if they could only be like so and so, a little more gracious, a little more humble, a little more holy, a little more devout, if they only had something then they might hope. If their heart was but pure, if they had not these vain thoughts, if they had not unbelief with them so frequently, if they could pray better, then they might hope. All these things that are most desirable to be had are not the ground of hope. May we all desire, covet earnestly the best gifts, to pray and to be devout and to be holy and to have clean hearts, but that is not the ground of hope. The ground of hope is the Person and the work and the office of the Lord Jesus as the great High Priest of our profession. With the Lord is plenteous redemption.

When the Lord Jesus died on Calvary's cross He then bore away all the sins of all the people of God, not a part of them, not the worst of them or some of them, but all of them. He died for our sins, says the Apostle, according to the Scripture. Did not try to redeem His people by offering all He could find, but He did redeem them by offering all that could be offered, and a sufficient offering, an offering prescribed by Jehovah Himself for the purpose. Now Jehovah never prescribes insufficient means and His love, His pity, His goodness, His wisdom, His almighty power, all His perfections were actively engaged in this great work of the Lord Jesus in obtaining this plenteous redemption. It needs therefore to be plenteous. It is plenteous. If the work of Christ had the authority of the Father, if the work of the Lord Jesus had all the virtue of His infinite Person in it, then what can invalidate that work?

But the next point, and the point that all of you who are taught of God will be after is the application, the result of this obtaining redemption. When Christ went to heaven with His own blood, entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God, He did so for His people. He took with Him all the merit of His work. He possesses all the authority that the satisfaction of this brought. He received from His Father all power in heaven and in earth and that, as a Priest,

to give out, to communicate, this redemption to the experiences of His people. Redemption would be no redemption if the slaves were not set free. If you pay a debt for another as that other's surety, that other must be set free legally, and while he is not set free, though you have paid the debt, the redemption is not effectual. Do not mistake me, there is nothing ineffectual about Christ's work, but the point is this, if Christ has redeemed you with His precious blood, and you are in the depths, you are in trouble for sin, you feel the power of sin in you, and you fear that sin will undo you utterly, you feel far from God with no peace in your conscience, then this is the point, that redemption that the Lord Jesus obtained must be communicated to you. And this is what the Apostle refers to in the ninth chapter of the Hebrews. The Word will encourage you to hope who receive it in the Holy Ghost, and when the word is fulfilled in the experience this satisfaction is known. The word to which I refer is that where the Apostle speaks of the blood of bulls and of goats cleansing, ceremonially, a Jew, so that, as he was ceremonially defiled, when this blood and these ashes were sprinkled on him, he was ceremonially cleansed, and allowed to enter the public worship of God. And the Apostle uses that and then speaks of that great work of the Lord Jesus and of that virtue and efficacy of His sacrifice. He says "How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God." Now that is redemption, that is redemption made known, when the conscience is purged from sin and liberated to serve the living God. There is no service, free service of God with guilt. There is no coming comfortably into the presence of Jehovah, unpardoned. But people come to God through Jesus Christ and it is a mercy that this blessed Person who obtained this plenteous redemption, is established to be the Mediator between God and man, to bring them together, and He does bring them together by communicating to their experience, to their souls, by faith the efficacy of His blood. He, the Just, died for the unjust, that He might bring them to God. Now that is liberty. Having liberty, says the Apostle in the tenth chapter of the Hebrews, having liberty to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He hath consecrated through the veil. That is redemption. When you are shut out from God, that is bondage. When you have liberty to approach God and to come into His presence, sometimes it may be even with joy, and

with thanksgiving through Jesus Christ, and the virtue of His precious death, that is liberty, and it is a liberty desired, longed for, hoped for, waited for. Would that be liberty to you? O how many people are after liberty, and what is liberty to them? Liberty to do as they would. Liberty to forget God really is what they mean. To live as they like, to have no restraint, no authority. Defiance for all authority marks this evil age in which we live. Liberty to sin with impunity, liberty to live, liberty to enjoy yourselves. This is what nature is after, and everything that cramps you from the enjoyment and satisfaction of your natural appetites, this is bondage. But take a man who is born again, he has other aims, he has other feelings. His bondage is sin and guilt and distance from God. His bondage is because his soul is cramped, because he cannot praise God with his high praises for fear. This is bondage, because he cannot bless the Lord for redemption, because he seems to be like a slave. Because he fears death and fears that death will be his ushering into eternal death. Now liberty from this, access to God, delivers from death, knowing that it is abolished by the death of Christ for you. The forgiveness of sins, the removal of guilt, the subduing of iniquity, these things comprise the liberty that is desired by every child of God, and says the Lord here, by His servant, "With the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption".

Mercy includes pity. His pity was exercised toward His people when they had no pity on themselves, and will it be less now? "In His love and in His pity He redeemed them". And if He pitied you and loved you when He died on Calvary will He not pity you in the depths of soul trouble, when you say: "No man careth for my soul". When you say that you sink in the deep mire, will He not pity you? He can, He can do it justly. He can pity you so as to send help as "He has laid help on One that is mighty". "With the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption". This plentiness of this redemption relates to everything that would bind the sinner. It relates not only to guilt but it relates to the power of depravity. Redemption would not be complete without that. Do you look for that sinner? Do you find yourself not infrequently inside the last two verses of the seventh chapter of Romans. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He looked for redemption, you see;

deliverance from this that continually balked him, that when he would do good, he found this law of sin in his members bringing him into captivity. Then in faith he said "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He looked for that redemption he hoped for, he waited for, as it is in the Galatians: "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith". What a thing it is to have your eye and heart turned from the borders of the pit to Him who has plenteous redemption and to find, as a consequence, your heart go out with earnest prayer and your soul graciously determined to wait on and for the Lord until He shall redeem you from all your iniquities, all of them.

AMEN.