

Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
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Psalm 25 v 8

"Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He
teach sinners in the way".

Unchangeability belongs only to God, together with goodness. Sin is unchanging in its nature, but goodness, perfection, holiness, love, wisdom, strength, all unchangeable, this unchangeability belongs only to the Eternal God. And some real believing in our heart of this blessed truth will make God very precious to us, as that unchangeability includes His unchanging love, His unchanging will in His covenant, His unchanging faithfulness and power in respect of all His word. And also this immutability of God is an encouragement to poor, changeable men, as in their changes they are led to consider it, for says God, using this, His great and blessed perfection of immutability, for the comfort of poor, tried men - "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." And the holy God condescendingly teaches men this. O it is a great thing to believe, for men are taught through faith. What God teaches them, they learn by faith, that God cannot change; as He cannot lie, because He is eternally true, so He cannot change in His will, in His love, in His power, in His purposes. He cannot change, and He teaches sinners this; sinners, who, because they are sinners, and because alas they often find the power of sin in them, endeavouring to dominate them and to have the victory over them, do change; sinners who, because they sin often, know what it is to change in their feelings. It is kind of God to teach men what they could not otherwise know, of Himself. If God changed, as we change; if His purposes were altered, because we grow increasingly unworthy of His good purposes toward us; if He changed and repented Himself of His promises made, because we prove unfaithful to Him in our hearts, what hope could we have. But He is pleased to teach sinners in the way thus, and in this great truth. There are many things which He instructs sinners

in and one thing is this - He teaches them how to trust in the promises. He that trusts a promise, we sing sometimes, lives. But there are two ways of trusting promises. One is a terribly deceitful way, a way that will lead men to hell if grace prevent not. It is like men say, you ought not to doubt; you ought to trust the promises; you ought to take the word of God. Of course we ought, but what we ought to do, and what we are able to do, through our sin, these are two different things. If you are left to that kind of religion, and there is plenty of it in this day, whereby men trust the promises as they think, take them, bring them to their mind and go their way, it will be, if the Lord has mercy on you, presently, a serious business. You will get far from God, and not know it, and then you will be alarmed, by Him showing you where you are. He teaches sinners how to trust the promises, namely, He teaches them to take the promise to Him for its fulfilment. That is the only gospel way, the only proper way, the only way in which God teaches men to trust in His promise. He who talks about trusting the promise, who has the promise in his brain and goes to sleep, and is not exercised about the fulfilment of it, that person does not trust the promise, except as a dead letter. But to trust the promise is to trust the Promiser, and to trust the Promiser is to take the word of His promise to Him for verification in your experience. And God condescends to poor sinners and O it needs emphasis; it is emphasised in some hearts; He condescends to teach poor sinners. Being good and upright, He teaches them this. Nothing but His teaching will enable you to do this. If He teaches you, and when He teaches you, your sins, and then, for a time, suspends His teaching, and your unbelief and the devil get at work with you, you will find it very very hard work. And men may tell you to trust the promise, and you ought not to encourage your doubts and fears, and that kind of thing, but they will all be miserable comforters to you. You will say - "My soul is weak through fasting, and I want bread." You will say to God, "I have sinned against Thee and I am weak, heal my soul." And then the Lord will teach you how to ask, to ask what you need, because you need it, and because He has promised it. And it is very blessed, very encouraging and strengthening to a poor sinner, who finds in the

scriptures a promise, it being brought to his mind, into his heart, which meets his need. Ah, the Lord has given great and precious promises in His word, and all of them belong to the people of God, but a child of God cannot take them, take them in the aggregate, and say they all belong to him. No, the Lord will teach you and teach me, if He has mercy upon us, to work out our own salvation; to go through on foot, step by step. He can bring a person a long way in a short time; He can bring salvation into your soul in a moment. When He comes, He does bring it, but you will find it needful more or less to work it out, to tread it out by prayer and supplication. And one great promise in the scripture, which is so needful to us, which we feel is needful, is the promise that the Lord God has made of His good Spirit. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications." "I will give them My good Spirit to instruct them". And the Lord Jesus also repeats that promise, the promise is one for substance, when He says, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Do we feel our need of the Holy Ghost? Do sin and fears, fire of trouble and temptation, make your soul dry? Does bitter bondage dry up your spirit, so that you find no sap? Do you find the truth of God sometimes to you savourless? It is a very solemn place to be in, and we should remain in it, but for the dew of heaven, the coming down of the Holy Spirit. Now the Lord teaches men their need of the Holy Ghost. He wont let you always feel that you can do without the Holy Spirit in your religion, if He gives you a right religion. Yea, He will make you, He has made some here, feel that what we read just now is true, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And that impossibility of knowing the truth of God without the Holy Ghost is a very solemn lesson to learn. And then you will prize the promises of God's word that speak about the free gift of His Holy Spirit to poor men who are sinners, and He will teach you to plead that with Him, that He will fulfil what He has promised, and pour upon you the Holy

Spirit, teach you to do it. And when you are in trouble, He will teach you, teach you in trouble and by means of trouble. He teaches sinners in trouble. His teaching is not a piece of wisdom given to a man whereby he can do without God, but His teaching is to make a man feel, more or less continuously, his dependence on God. And O, when we get into trouble, then we do feel that dependence on God. And then if there is no faith in exercise, it is very heavy work. If you are in real need and trouble, and your faith, if you have any, you cannot find it, it is not in exercise, that will be very serious. You may still hold fast to what you believe, but there is no exercise of faith, and the Lord at such a time will teach a sinner, teach a sinner to go to God, to pray to Him, to pray even to Him for faith to believe in His overruling power in this trouble. "Neither know we what to do" said one of old "but our eyes are up unto Thee." That was by the teaching of God, and that is how the Lord will make you act when you are in some necessity, some trouble. He makes men pray; He allows them to pray; He gives that instruction in their souls so that it is true of them sometimes in some particular things, "Mine eyes are up unto Thee O God the Lord, leave not my soul destitute." Then that blessed word is fulfilled "Call upon Me in the day of trouble" You, a poor sinner, are honoured to be in your experience, a witness of the fulfilment of that promise, that word - "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me". And then the poor man says "I trusted in the Lord", not with a dead trust, but with an active trust, which the Lord gave me and instructed me in. "I trusted in the Lord and I am helped." "I called upon the Lord in trouble, and He heard me and delivered me from my distresses". He does this for sinners. It is wonderful what He does for sinners. He deals with sinners mercifully, but sinners who are filled at times with a realisation of the solemnity of being sinners. Said the Psalmist, and you know, some of you, what he meant, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me". It is not wallowing in sin; it is not sinners rolling sin under their tongue like a sweet morsel; it is sinners who know the ignominy of that enemy, who feel what a terrible thing it is to be a sinner in some degree. Beware of

holding the truth of God in unrighteousness. Any easy sinner here, who knows nothing of the bitterness of what it is to sin against God; who knows nothing of what it is to be ashamed because of his sin, that person has no right whatever at present, to consider that God will teach him. It is very solemn for men to have religion in one hand and sin in their heart in the other hand.

He teaches sinners also to choose; gives them instruction in what is more excellent; shows them things that differ; causes them to approve of things that are more excellent. Yes, He will show you that His kingdom is better than the kingdom of this world; He will show you that the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures in Egypt of this world. He will give you this teaching, put it before you, show you how that these things last but for a time, and perish, and that His things, spiritual things, last eternally. And then He will bring you to that choice to which Moses was brought - "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." You choose it in your heart, because the Lord teaches you the comparative valuelessness of the things of this life, when compared with those of the life to come. O, did the Lord ever teach any of us this, make the people of God, and the heritage of those who fear His Name, and some little thing, some little of those great things that are laid up for those who love His Name, glisten in our eyes, so that we could say that for these things we esteemed the world as dung and dross? He will give you wisdom also to choose Christ as your portion. Yes, Christ, with whatever else the Lord may give you; with whatever He may withhold from you. He will teach you to make this choice. The Apostle Paul was under the instruction of the Holy Spirit eminently, and this was what he was taught and enabled to say. He said "I count all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffer the loss of all things and do count them but dross, that I may win Christ and be found in Him." It is a very great blessing to so apprehend the worth of the Lord Jesus; to so feel the want of the Lord Jesus in your soul, as deliberately,

earnestly to choose Him as your portion, if He will be yours.

He will teach you how to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; how to put everything else on one side that comes into competition with this search. That is to say, He will teach you very practically to walk so as that you do not, by any conformity to the world, by any undue knowledge of the world and contact with it, impoverish your soul. He will teach sinners to do this. He will make them so value the presence of the Lord, so value His love, so deprecate His absence, so see how that the world lies in the wicked one, as that He will give you wisdom, teach you that your wisdom is to eschew the world. All its fashions and maxims and ways and pleasures, the Lord will teach you to eschew, and that, not in order merely, not at all in one respect, to escape hell; but He will teach you this, by putting before you something that is much better. The Lord teaches people a proper value of things. What you once disesteemed, and thought was for old people, now perhaps some young people here, in your very hearts, esteem these things, the things of God. And perhaps He has given to some of you such a taste of them, such a taste of peace in your conscience, such a taste of the sweetness of His love, such a taste of the precious hope, through grace, of good to come, as that the things of the world, which you once much esteemed, and which, perhaps, sometimes now you are tempted to think you may go into, and in which there is no harm, He teaches you that those things are death. They wont mix. We live in a day dear friends, when people would have as much of the world as they can, and be as little different from the world as they can, as they think consistent with the possibility of getting to heaven. But if the Lord teaches you, He will teach you very differently from that. It is a great mercy for a sinner, who loves sin, and who is tempted to sin, and to whom it is sometimes suggested that this little one might be spared, it is a great thing for the Lord to show to such a person, that communion with God, the love of Christ felt in the heart, the ways of the Lord, nearness to Him, these things are better, infinitely, they are his life, and therefore he eschews that contact with the world. He teaches men this.

And He teaches also, sinners who are convinced of their sins, and who are led to know the Lord Jesus and His precious atonement and His pardoning love, He teaches such people as we read, to love one another. "Ye are taught of God to love one another." You cannot learn it unless He teaches you it. O, but one may say, I know whom I love. Yes, we do, naturally, but the Lord must teach you to love the saints. You cannot otherwise. He teaches sinners to love one another, sinners saved by grace, and how does He do it? Why He unites them in heart in the knowledge and love of Christ, so that wherever a person who loves Christ and who feels His love in his heart, whenever a poor sinner is brought to trust alone in the merits of the Lord Jesus, meeting another person who has the same hope, the same desire, the same sorrow for sin, the same longing after Christ, there is union. O this love is something very particular. "Ye are taught of God to love one another." Loved by the same God, redeemed by the same precious blood, instructed by the same Holy Spirit, saved by the same Trinity, men, as they know one another in this way, love one another. What a mercy it is to be taught this, so that in your very heart sometimes you feel a glow of love to the people of God throughout the world. The Apostle Paul felt this. He was well instructed in this, knew what it was. And how did this love work with him? Ot it was not that sentimental business which is merely natural. It was a practical, a spiritual love. And what did he do? Why he prayed for them; he prayed for all who call on the Lord Jesus Christ both theirs and ours, and that is what you will do if you love the saints. There will be times when in secret your heart will go out to every one of the elected people of God on the earth. Those who are dead in sin, and you will pray that the Lord will quicken them and bring them to light. Those who are mourning over their sins, that the Lord would comfort them. Those who walk near to the Lord, that He will bless them still and keep them near, and those who may have gone out of the way, that He will be merciful to them and bring them back. You will pray for the prosperity of Zion. You will love, as the Lord loves, in your measure, purely the gates of Zion, the people of the Lord.

And therefore will He teach sinners in the way, and He will keep them in the way too. Perhaps some of you may greatly, at times, fear lest that will come upon you which came upon some in Christ's own day. We read that from that time, many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Him. He will teach you how to overcome all the allurements of the world, how to overcome Satan. He will teach you how to persevere. O it is no little thing to be in the way, if we are in the way, but you will find, all the people of God do find, that in the way they meet opposition. Why, hell itself, and all the miseries of Satan in the world are like a flood against every person who is being led by the right way to a city of habitation. He will teach you how to lean on His arm, how to trust in His Almighty power; how, when you feel that you cannot go forward, when you cannot stand another hour, to cast yourself on Him

A guilty, weak and helpless worm
On Thy kind arms I fall

and when the tempter comes to you then He will teach you to cry to Him, for it is the Holy Spirit's work to lift up a standard against the enemy, and to direct the poor fainting heart and failing eye of a sinner to that Blessed One, the Lord Jesus, whom He lifts up. He will teach you to cry continually, to plead with Him continually, to hold up and hold you on and to keep you near to Himself.

The meek will He guide in judgment." A meek man is not a man who is sinless; a meek man is a man who, being taught by God his unworthiness and his sin, is brought to submit himself to God's truth, to fall under what God teaches him of himself, not to reply against it and excuse himself and cover his sin, but receive the teaching. He opens the ears of His poor people to discipline and they receive it. That is a meek person; a man who feels his poverty and his need; a man who cannot in anywise lift up himself; a man who loves sometimes that blessed scripture, for it becomes so suitable to him and powerful in him "Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth". And

the poor sinner says, I am a poor, lost wretch, and I do want to be saved by Thy grace. That is a meek man. A meek man is a man whose wisdom has been spoiled, whose understanding has been broken. "I will" says the Lord "make the wise man foolish. I will bring down the haughty looks of man in the day when the Lord alone shall be exalted." A meek man is a man who has some apprehension of the greatness of God, and such a man is a sinner; he feels it. And this person, meekened by divine grace, brought down from his stoutness and his independence and his self-direction, brought down to feel himself the least, if a saint at all, the least of saints and the chief of sinners, this man, the Lord says, will He guide in judgment. It is a great thing to be made meek by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to be saved from rebelling against God, to be submissive to His teaching whatever means He may use to teach us. The meek will He guide in judgment. Guide you how to make a judgment of things; show you how to discern between light and darkness, spirit and flesh. It is a great thing. I am not a little exercised in these days, recently have been much exercised in this matter, because it is possible for a person to have a quantity of theoretical knowledge and light which is not living, spiritual light. How much there may be that is merely natural in a person, we do not know, but it is very solemn, very. A person may be nurtured up in our line of doctrine, true doctrine, and learn it, and grow up in it, and may be well thought of, and think well of himself, and then at last find that awful scripture become true of him - "From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." Now if you are exercised in this matter, it will be a great thing to be made meek in it; not to say, O, but I have a little grace; O, but I am rich; O, but I know more than so and so and I have had more than so and so. That is not meekness. Meekness is grace, grace to submit thyself to the Lord and He will guide you in judgment; He will give you truth that cannot deceive. And how will He do it? How does He do it? Why He shines upon His work of grace; He gives you in your own soul to feel again the life and the light and warmth of what He has done; attests that work which He accomplished in you here and there; goes with you as it were. You do not go in your memory only, but it is as if

the Lord goes with you, and gives you again to feel somewhat of the substance of what He did.

Shine upon Thy work of grace

sings one

If it be indeed begun

And if you are exercised and really want to be right, and are tried in this matter, it will be good for you and for me if we put the matter before God, if we are allowed and enabled to ask Him to guide us in making a judgment. In the Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ says to one church "because thou thinkest that thou art rich, sayest that thou art rich and increased with goods and hast need of nothing and knowest not that thou art poor and miserable and blind and naked." Well, it was very kind of Him to teach that church like that, and if there should be any person in such a case, a contented professor, O it would be kind of God to teach that person his misery, his emptiness, his nakedness, and his need, for the Lord wont teach you that and then leave you to despair. He will make you feel it; He will give you willingness to receive what He teaches you, and to confess your pride of judgment in the matter, and then He will give you counsel. What is this counsel? It is this, "I counsel thee to buy of Me, Me the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer of the lost, the unchangeable Friend, the Almighty Lord Jesus, "I counsel thee to buy of Me, in whom is fulness of grace, who am the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Me, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see." He will guide you in judgment, and O, when we judge, when we are guided in judgment, sometimes we come to this judgment, we are very short, we come very short. First in experience. It is an evil thing when we make a better judgment of our case than our case really is, when we think we have what we have not. And then, when you make a judgment according to the guidance of the Lord, He will teach and comfort and encourage you by this, that all the experience and all the growth in grace, all

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increase of knowledge, all the fruitfulness that you can desire to make you happy and to glorify God, all this He has to communicate; only He will make us feel our need of it. He will guide us in judgment.

And it is a mercy too, when He guides people in judgment, that they may really know, and humbly acknowledge, His graces. There is us temptation and fear often, which will sometimes smother what the Lord has done, and smother thankfulness to Him for what He has done. Sometimes the Lord may help you in some particular thing, in which you have been very exercised. He may send you help from the sanctuary and strengthen you out of Zion. It will be a little help perhaps, but O a little help is great from God. And then the devil will say, "Well, but that is not all you wanted, and you will never get all you wanted", and he will quench thankfulness. And your fear of presumption will keep you back perhaps from thanking the Lord for the help and mercy He has given you. Now the Lord will guide a meek person in judgment in this matter. A poor sinner, who wants a token for good, when he gets a token for good shall have sometimes guidance in this. You discern to make a judgment that this is temptation that prevents you from thanking the Lord for this blessing. O, says the devil, "You are such a great sinner, therefore you ought not to think that this came from God." But the Lord will guide you in judgment, and He will show you what is His work and what is the work of the devil; what is the work of the flesh; not absolutely, no, we know but very little of it, but the Lord will guide His people and enable them sometimes to make a judgment of things.

And we need also to be guided in judgment in respect of men. It is a great thing, a very solemn thing, to make a judgment of men. We are not to judge men, that is to sit in judgment on them, but we all must make a judgment of men. You must take judgment of the ministry; there are false teachers, we read in the scriptures, as there were false prophets. There are men going about in sheep's clothing who are wolves, and, says a poor meek person, a person who has no reliance in his own natural judgment and fears making mistakes, fears touching one of the Lord's

anointed and fears being deceived himself, that person says - "Lord give me discernment, grant me a discerning spirit. Then the Lord says "Ye shall return and discern between him that serveth God, and him which serveth Him not." He will guide you in judgment if you need it, you who are made meek by the power of divine grace.

And we need to be guided in judgment in many things in providence, to make a right judgment of men and things, and matters with which we have to deal, and the Lord can guide us in them all. "The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way." His way, the way which the Lord will have us to go. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." "I will lead thee in a way which thou shouldest go". He will teach a sinner who is afraid of his own direction, of his own will, of his own way, in the Lord's way. A meek man, who is afraid of going in the wrong way, who is afraid of his deceitful heart, of his delusive flesh, and of a tempting devil, and of an alluring world, will sometimes pray like the Psalmist prayed, "Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Do we pray like that? Are you made meek enough by the teaching of God, in His grace, poor sinner, to really seek that the Lord will search you in your thoughts and heart and spirit to see if you are in an evil way? O we do need this; we need a right spirit; we need the Spirit of truth; we need to know where we are, and we cannot unless the Lord teaches us and gives us this guidance in judgment. And then we shall only know what He teaches.

There is another thing which the Lord teaches people and guides them in, and that is in the way of faith. He will teach the meek in His way of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight. He will teach you to go by faith. What a life faith is; it is a life of dependence; a life, not wherein you can see your way clearly; a life, not wherein you feel that you have enough to manage on, but a life of dependence in many respects, particularly spiritual respects. "I taught Ephraim also to go", and He will teach you to go in this blessed way, this trying

way of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight. We fain would walk by sight, and by sense, but the Lord will teach you if you are His, what it is to walk by faith, in dependence upon Him continually. And He will teach the meek His way also, His way in the Sanctuary. His way is in the Sanctuary, the way of obedience. Now a person is not meek who says that he need not trouble about outward obedience providing he is going to heaven. That is not meekness, it is not gracious. Meekness is submission to a Superior, and O, when God, the Lord Jesus condescends to manifest Himself, as the precious Head and Lord and Saviour of your soul, and of the church of God, and then when He shows that He condescends to have order in His house, and that you are a child of His, He will make you meek and willing to be taught His way. He has a way in the Sanctuary; He has commanded His people that they shall remember Him, that they shall partake of the symbols of His precious death, in the church. He ordained the Lord's Supper to be observed to the end of time, in remembrance of Him, and this he teaches sinners, teaches them the substance of it in their souls, and gives them to know and feel that the Lord Jesus died for them, that He bore their sins in His own body on the tree; at least a good hope that it was so, that their sins were borne away, then fills them with love to Himself, and then kindly, wisely, condescendingly, gives to those people instruction in this, that they are to observe these ordinances, to take of the bread and the wine in remembrance of Him.

The meek will He teach His way. But there is a way to this ordinance which also He teaches and that is the way by believers' baptism. It is Christ's way, my friends, the great God's way; it is not a mere idea of our little sect; it is Christ's way. No other authority, no less authority than that of the Eternal Son of God incarnate lies behind the root of believers' baptism. And He teaches the meek His way in this particular, says to them "Follow Me", says to them "If ye love Me keep My commandments". He Himself teaches the meek by His own example as well as by His word and by His ministers, for He gave commandment to the disciples that they should go and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Ghost, and said "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world". He teaches men this. I wish that He might teach many here this, having made them meek and teachable, so that carnal reason and all the objections of the flesh might be put aside, overcome, dissolved by love. It is an honour to be taught the way of the Lord, and to be allowed to walk in it, to be allowed, you, a poor, wretched sinner, allowed to follow the Lord Jesus, to put Him on, to profess His great Name. He will teach you this; He will give you a judgment first whether you are a fit character. O we need that; it is not every person who wants to be baptised, who is a fit character to be baptised, but the Lord makes people, guides them in judgment when they ask Him to do. Then He shows them the way wherein they should walk when they lift their heart up to Him so. Well, my friends, it is wonderful that God should do these things for sinners, for a man who is confessing his sin and who cannot find any rest in himself through his sin; that God should do that to such a person as should bring him near to Himself by the blood of Christ, and permit him to walk before Him and in His church, in the ordinances of the Lord blameless.

May the Lord put us among His children; may He condescend to make us teachable; may He make us willing to be ignorant, to be taught; willing to be fools that we may be made wise in the knowledge of Christ. I have only just made a few halting remarks upon this scripture, but I trust the Lord may cause us to walk in it, and forgive what has been amiss.

AMEN.