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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden  
at Blunsdon Hill  
Wednesday evening 6 October 1954

Psalm 62 v 8

Trust in Him at all times ye people, pour out your  
heart before Him. God is a refuge for us. Selah."

If you followed in any experimental way the chapter read (Job 9) you will realise what a wonderful thing it is to have a Daysman between God and the soul. Poor Job! All those destructions and fears and sorrows and losses that he had were emphasized because, at that time, he had no sense of a Mediator; but at one time he was able to say "I know that my Redeemer liveth". He had changes and the Lord's people have changes. They do not stay in one condition long. They get reliefs and they get again into trouble. But it is a mercy that the Lord does not forbid, but rather encourages His people, vile though they feel themselves to be, and unworthy, to wait upon Him, to confide in Him, and to trust in Him.

It is a greater thing than perhaps any of us conceive to be allowed to trust in a holy, almighty, sin-hating God. We come to that point in our experience when there is none other to trust to, there is none we can confide in. Creatures fail us; our own wisdom is used up; our own way often seems dark, and there may be great clouds upon us ready to burst; and what is worst of all is our own sinnership that we carry about with us. I believe this is the greatest trouble that the Lord's people have, that they have a nature contrary to God. It baulks them continually, and they understand in that sense what Job must have felt when he said "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shall Thou plunge me again in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me". And yet, notwithstanding all that, Job could say - not, "Excuse my sin", but "Do not condemn me, show me wherefore Thou contendest with me."

Now that is a point of trust on which, first of all, I would try a little to speak. It is not a blind trust in omnipotence, it is not the trust of a person who justifies himself, but the trust of a sinner who

is compelled, and sometimes enabled, to expose himself to the light of God's scrutiny and ask Him to examine him. If we are rightly taught we shall be brought to this point, that the Lord does not exact upon us what our iniquities have deserved. Job escaped, he said, by the skin of his teeth, but he did escape, and to have escaped uttermost judgment, and to be on praying ground and not to be forbidden, and not only not to be forbidden, but to be encouraged and invited to come and trust in the Lord, is not a little mercy.

In a previous verse the Psalmist says to his soul "My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him." He charged his soul to this posture, and some of you may be brought to that. Yet what a disposition there is to look somewhere else, to seek for some creature help! "Wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him." "He only is my Rock and my salvation. He is my defence; I shall not be moved." Faith seemed to rise in David's heart as he thus consulted within himself and charged his soul. Then he said "In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God". There is nowhere else. Do you get a glimpse in the midst of your troubles of what there is in God? the sufficiency of grace and of salvation and of safety in God, - all that you need? But not less than you need. This will make you value the privilege of trusting Him. Once or twice lately I have felt it to be a real privilege to go to the Lord and confide in Him, not with self-justification, not with self-pity in trouble, but just like Job did: "Do not condemn me; show me wherefore Thou contendest with me." It is a mercy when the Lord does that - opens up to us what may be offensive to Him, and with this purpose, that we may be enabled to confess and seek a clearing in our own hearts, seek to be delivered and restored from those things that provoke Him to send trouble to us. This is one way, as I feel it, in which trouble can be made profitable. If we nurse self-pity, or if we fall under the power of unbelief and become utterly dejected and dispirited, our faith, though if it be a living faith it will not die right away, yet it will be greatly depressed. But when there is a venturing trust, a taking of the whole case without reserve to the Lord and placing it before Him, and asking Him to pronounce upon it, there will be relief.

"Trust in Him at all times". It means "all times;" times of

extremity, times when your faith is greatly tried, times when the enemy roars and suggests the Lord has forsaken you, times when you are in the dark in your mind, times when circumstances bewilder you; all the times that go over your head; times of affliction, personal or relative affliction, times of trial in the church of God. "Trust in Him at all times."

This trusting in the Lord will be exercised in a way of prayer; prayer that will be directed up to the Lord according to our cases, and according to His word. The soul that trusts the promise is not a person who looks at the promise and admires it, but the person who pleads it before the Lord when desperately needing the fulfilment of it. If the Lord has made a promise over to us, we may depend on it, we shall come into times in our experience when that promise will be imperatively necessary to be fulfilled. Promises are given for that purpose. You take a time of the power of indwelling sin; O what a painful, serious thing it is when sin rises up within, evil thoughts with temptations, and you fear that you will sink and fall and bring a disgrace upon the Lord's cause; make shipwreck of faith. Well, if in such a time as that the Lord reminds you of what He has declared in the gospel "Sin shall not have dominion over you," what will be the consequence? We shall not say that we shall stand, but we shall trust in the Lord in pleading that promise that He will fulfil it and let His grace abound in us in its invincible power, that we may not fall. "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe".

In fiery trials, when you fear you will be consumed by them, swallowed up in them, has not the Lord declared that He will be with His people in the fire and bring them through? O what a promise that is in Zechariah "I will bring the third part through the fire". When we get into fiery trials our faith seems to quail, and we fear we shall be burned up, especially when we find rebellion working, especially when impatience seems to hurry us here and there, and when Satan attacks us with his suggestions. But that is a wonderful promise; and when you find a little influence on your heart raising up your faith in the Promiser, so as that you can pray that the Lord will fulfil that promise, you may be surprised at a sense of the Lord's presence with you. He comes sometimes almost imperceptibly when you are at the throne of grace, and gives you to feel He cares for you.

"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him." The warm, strengthening encouragement of promises, known to the Lord's people, will enable them to plead those promises and trust in Him and watch for answers to prayer in the fulfilment of them.

Prayer is not an end in itself. O, it is a dreadful thing to be left to make an end of prayer, as if prayer is all. Answers to prayer are what we want; and when the Lord gives you power to prevail with Him, to answer your prayers in that way and to fulfil what He has promised, and you feel His presence, why, then your circumstances will not overcome you; you will feel strength to trust in His faithfulness, in His power, in His immutability, in His grace.

"Trust in Him at all times; ye people pour out your heart before Him." Unreservedly. You need have no reserve, though He be so great, when you get His ear. O, that is a great point! Said the Psalmist in one Psalm "Incline Thine ear unto me." Sometimes the Lord's ear seems to be turned away. Jeremiah found it so: "I cry and shout and He shutteth out my prayer." Yet Jeremiah trusted, waited upon Him, and considered that it was of the Lord's mercies he was not consumed. And presently the Lord heard his prayer and drew near to him and said "Fear not". O, that was worth waiting for! Those two words, whispered in that still small voice that the child of God recognises in his heart, will do more to strengthen a poor sinner in his trouble and to enable him to rely upon the Lord to bring him through, and to make it profitable to him, than all temporal prosperity.

"Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him." Your desires; your fears; your confessions; your enquiries. Pour it out! Tell Him the worst! He knows it all, and yet His will and method is that His people shall so confide in Him as just to pour out their hearts in reverential simplicity; and when you can draw near to Him, as I have said, and get a sense of His inclined ear, O what a relief it is to pour out your sorrows and anxieties, to confess your sins, to make known your desires and your requests, and just to present your case before Him! You know the relief of that, some of you. What could we do if we never got access to God at the throne of grace, never got His inclined ear, never had any indication, any

token of His favour? "Show me a token for good," said David in the 86 Psalm.

"Pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us". God, a refuge? He against whom we have sinned and who owes us nothing but judgment and wrath, a refuge? Yes! He is a refuge, in Jesus Christ, even for sinners.

#### A refuge for sinners the gospel makes known

The very God against whom we have sinned is, in Jesus Christ, a refuge for us; for in Him is salvation, in Him is justification, in Him is sanctification, in Him is exhaustless grace. He is ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon Him. In all these particulars a troubled sinner will perceive that God is a refuge. He has everything to secure us from the danger of the wrath to come. If we can only prevail with Him to apply to us the atonement, and to accept us in His beloved Son, and to justify us freely by His grace through Christ's redemption, then how can wrath take place upon us? That is the first thing to cover our heads, a refuge from the wrath to come. God has provided it in the Person of His dear Son.

He is a refuge for His people in respect to all His attributes, because those attributes are all harmonised in the Person and finished work of Christ. I know what it is to dread His omniscience, to dread His immutability, and to dread His faithfulness to His threatenings; but if you see those attributes in Christ, and see how that "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" in the suffering death, the precious sacrifice, the finished work of the dear Redeemer, then you will see that those attributes are on the side of a confessing sinner, and that it is not contrary to God's glory to bless, to receive, to forgive, and to save sinners. There is no salvation, and no safety, out of Christ. "God is a refuge for us".

And then, next, "God is a refuge for us" in His universal power. O, how powerless we are! Sometimes you may look at the universe, look at the nations, all the seething discontent and all the peril that there is, and all the signs there are of the last days coming upon

us, and threatened judgments; and you may feel full of trembling, and wonder what is coming next. Then you may find a sacred influence on your heart, turning you to the Lord, seeking to find shelter in the clift of the rock, seeking to have the privilege of the Lord's people who are invited to enter into those chambers provided by God for His people, to hide themselves until the indignation is overpast. God's power, that almighty power, is for the defence, the deliverance, of all His poor people. And see His care! It is a striking expression in the Scripture that "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zechariah 2 v 8) Now, nothing could be more secured than the apple of the eye in the human anatomy. It is wonderfully guarded by the Creator. And the Lord has said that concerning His people. O, but you may say "I am unworthy of that care; I am unworthy of the Lord's least notice." You may be, and will feel to be if you are rightly taught, but that does not alter the Lord's care. He condescends to say that He will keep His people as the apple of His eye, keep them night and day, lest any hurt them. Do you find, my dear friends, in your timidity and fear and anxiety, a comfort and a refuge in God in that particular? - "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you"? "God is a refuge for us".

He is a refuge for His people when every earthly thing fails. There are pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. There is in God a satisfaction for His people that, when they feel it, they can say they do not need a creature. Desolations sometimes may fill you with darkness and weakness, and you feel almost as if you have no place of rest; nor has the child of God really a place of rest in the wilderness, outside God. But the wayfaring man, the saint of God, the penitent sinner, the Spirit-taught person, though he is delivered and has grace at times to follow the instruction "Arise and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted" (Micah 2 v 10), yet where shall he go in the wilderness? To God! I shall never forget, I think, once feeling that word, "Lord Thou hast been my dwellingplace in all generations". Now if you get just a touch of that, it will make you feel that God is a refuge for you in the midst of desolation and change. There is no change in Him. He is the same. And He knows His people in adversities, and they know Him from time to time, when they bring their adversities to Him and there is some acquaintance. What did Asaph say? In his instruction and in being shown the foolishness

of his envying the ease and prosperity of the wicked, he came to this point. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". (Psalm 73 v 25) Why, my friends, the Lord's presence is like a pavilion; it will envelop you, and you will be satisfied sometimes with the Lord so as to feel, soberly, that He is enough. If you have His presence, if you feel that God is your Friend and Christ is your Redeemer, you have then sufficient. "God is a refuge for us."

"Selah". This means, observe it; look at it; it is an important, a significant statement. "God is a refuge for us". And, of course, the necessary implication is that we are more or less constantly in danger. A refuge is not needed when there are no dangers. O, but what dangers there are in this wilderness, what pitfalls and snares, what temptations, what liability within us and without us! So that we need continually to run into this refuge. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." "God is a refuge for us."

In this refuge, when you get to it, there is satisfaction, there is rest, there is worship, there is comfort of love, there is communion with God, and there is real safety; and there is peace. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people." And, says the Lord, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." Peace, even in storms. O, but this is all by faith! When faith is active on Christ, when prayer, the prayer of faith, is prevalent, and the Lord inclines His ear, then the comfort of this truth will be felt. But the necessity of it is constant; and the Lord has put this forth by inspiration for the encouragement, for the direction, for the support of poor people in their distressing times. "Trust in Him at all times", to keep you, to give you grace, to hold you up, to keep you from evil that it may not grieve you, to give you victories over temptation, and in times of affliction, weakness, weariness. "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us".

And He is a refuge for His people when heart and flesh fail. We shall need a refuge then! O, we shall need a support when all around our soul gives way, when we launch into eternity. We know not how

soon it may be with us, but our mercy will be to seek daily a knowledge of this God and of this refuge, and to have that blessed clearing of our cases for eternity at the throne of grace daily, to lay up a good foundation in prayer, and to have, if it please Him, a gracious daily experience of communion with Him. "They that are far from Thee shall perish". "It is good for me" said Asaph, "to draw near to God". If we had a daily experience of this, if we were enabled daily to flee unto the Lord and to seek tokens of His care, of our interest in His great salvation, in His precious promises, how good it would be! Then we should not be afraid of evil tidings. We should be then trusting in Him, in His blessed promises. What did He say? He said that He would come again and receive His people to Himself. O what a word that is in the 14 John! Sometimes you may feel to tremble at the thought of death; and there is a Scripture, a wonderful word, in the Hebrews to encourage such people. Of the Lord Jesus Christ it is said that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." A kind word for people who tremble and are often in bondage through fear of death! What can take that fear of death away and enable a person to say with all sobriety, "Let Him come when He thinks best" is to have in the conscience a sense of the atonement, to realise the redeeming love and blood of Christ in the heart; and then that word I have quoted will be a wonderful refuge: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." God is the home, the eternal refuge, of His people. When we launch into eternity it will be a great thing then to know God; but if we live and die without any sense of danger, without any conviction of sin and repentance and confession, without any knowledge of the Redeemer's blood, without any real faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be no refuge for us then. I do believe the Lord's people are brought to that point in this life, that there is no refuge but God. The god of this world and our own worldly, carnal minds, would blind us to the solemn fact that we have to appear before God, would blind us to God's claims and our accountability. "So then every one of us shall give account of Himself to God". But what a mercy it is the Lord makes His people know that they need a refuge, and brings them down, and enables them to welcome affliction and to ask the Lord to search them through and

through and make them right for eternity; and then gives them to see that the blood of Christ is enough, that the finished work of Christ is sufficient for them! There they can rest; and when they come to the end, then they can say, "Thou hast known my soul in adversities." To be owned of the Lord at last, and to be permitted to own Him, to claim Him, will be a wonderful blessing. Nothing short of this will do.

"God is a refuge for us" for we belong to Him if He has redeemed us. "Thou art Mine" He said; "I have redeemed thee". O what a comfort that will be, and is, when the Lord makes it out to a sinner! Then what? He will enable you to look to Him to defend you, to secure you, to give you "safety on earth, and after death, the plenitude of heaven."

"Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us. Selah". Man may fail; creatures are useless. Said David, "Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I said Thou art my refuge and my portion". O, I do like that word! - my refuge and my portion in the land of the living". Not a refuge just to escape from some danger - that is included - but, "my portion", an eternal portion! And what a portion it is! A portion in God, an everlasting inheritance, eternal pleasures at God's right hand for evermore, everlasting righteousness, and sinlessness, purity, worship!

"God is a refuge for us. Selah. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." What is man? We have to leave man, to "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils." Not the nearest and best of creatures can help us when we come to die, and none can save us but the Lord. But in all times of trouble He will be a refuge to His people. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Have not you sometimes turned aside? - You may be overwhelmed in some trouble as, in the 81 Psalm, David was. "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Have not you found it so? - turned aside in the overwhelming troubles of your

mind and found a little refuge in God, a little solid hope, a little sweet belief that the Lord is with you and will bring you well through, bring you right through and out? "I will be with him in trouble". "I will bring the third part through the fire." "They shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." And the people will all get safe home to heaven. They shall come back to Zion. O what a flowing together there will be one day! What a triumphing there will be among the Lord's people, all of them celebrating what the Lord has made Himself to them, and especially what He has done for them in becoming their refuge by His precious sacrifice and redeeming blood! "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood .... to Him be glory and dominion." Not only safety on earth, but eternal safety in heaven!

My friends, do we know God? Does God know us? Have we been brought into those straits where we have been cast upon God and only He could help us? Of some of us I hope it is true that the Lord could not say "I never knew you". Could He say that of you? Has He known you in adversity? seen you fleeing to Him as a refuge? Well, the storm of death is approaching us. I have that before me now not infrequently; and there is only one place of refuge. What a sweet thing it will be, when we come to the end, if the Lord is with us and we feel that, even in the swellings of Jordan, He is a refuge!

He has promised to be with His people. The Lord help us to trust His promises, not by merely remembering them, but pleading them with Him and seeking to have fulfilment of His promises, especially the promise of His presence. O, His presence is salvation, His presence is strength, His presence is comfort! It is light, it is sanctification. What more can we want than the Lord's presence? What can harm us if we are sheltered in His presence as in a pavilion? David said, "Thou shalt hide me in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep me secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Devil, men, world, they can have no effectual entrance there. The people of God are safe. O, may we be shut in there! May we, even when we come down to Jordan, feel that we are shut in that ark. That will do! That will mean we shall be landed safe in heaven, "with God eternally shut in". Sin shut out, danger shut out,

sorrow shut out, pain, temptation, all shut out!

"God is a refuge for us." May it be so in our own cases!

AMEN.