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Sermon preached by Mr J H Gosden
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 14 July 1926

ROMANS 13 v 14

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not
provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof

The Scriptures speak with no uncertain voice respecting the impossibility of serving God and Mammon. They speak of a discernment which shall be given to some who shall return and discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. And in the chapter we read you will have observed how the Holy Ghost there speaks of a double-minded man, a man whose mind is fixed on two things at once. Professing to pray, to wait on God, to serve God, yet having his heart and mind and thoughts absorbed in something else. This instability, this double-mindedness, the Lord, the Spirit, there reproves and in the prophecy of Jeremiah you find that the Holy Ghost, speaking to Israel as a people, says, "Ye shall go and ye shall seek Me and ye shall find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your hearts." Now if these Scriptures be true, and they are, and if they show the teaching of the Spirit in this point, as they do, may the Lord give us grace to attend to what is contained in the text: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof", for it is no easy matter to get to heaven; it is no light matter to be in a profession of religion; it is a solemn thing to be born into this world, and every pretence, all hypocrisy, all that which the Lord inveighs against in His Word - "This people draweth nigh to Me with their mouth but have removed their heart far from Me" - all that will be discovered.

Solemn hour, not far
Dissolves each golden dream
Death will distinguish what we are
From what we only seem

The exhortation in the text is spoken to those who have an ear, who shall have given to them an ear, to hear what the Spirit saith unto

the churches. No Scripture is of any private interpretation or any private application. It is the Spirit who interprets it and it is the same Spirit who sovereignly makes application of it. And the first remark I would make about it, is this. It is not an exhortation to dead sinners to put on a show of religion. The Holy Ghost never exhorts men to that. The devil may deceive some people into that course, and woe be to them; not the leading of the Spirit this. It is an exhortation to men who, having an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, are made to believe what God says. It is sufficient for God to speak, and when He speaks that is true. He condescends to us men, to our frailties, to the low understandings that we have of things, and He speaks and reiterates His truth through the Scriptures here and there, that the people who have ears to hear may hear and understand, and the great and blessed motive that the Holy Ghost introduces as an encouragement and a strength to those who are disposed to this exhortation is contained in the 11 verse which shows distinctly this, that the Holy Ghost speaks exhortations, gives directions, to men in whose souls He has put divine life. He does not exhort dead sinners to do something in order that they may merit or create divine life. The 11 verse reads thus: "And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep", which shows the condition of the church, a condition which obtains in this day very solemnly. "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". So that it is proper for us to infer that it is to believers that the Holy Ghost here speaks this solemn, divine, yet gracious word of exhortation. And another thing to be inferred from it is this, that believers in the Lord Jesus, men born again of the Holy Ghost, though safe in the covenant as you were just now singing - a blessed truth - are, in respect to stability, and comfortable experience, and fruitful, profitable profession, not safe as they walk in a lazy, indifferent, unexercised orthodoxy. Does the Holy Ghost mock believers when He says to them "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep?" Would he say it to lively people? Would He say it to those who were vigilant, who lived with their hearts fixed, their lamps burning, and their loins girded? "It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". It is not the flogging of the law, to which is attached the curse for disobedience. O, see the kind and wonderful and blessed

and comforting truth which the Holy Ghost introduces as an encouragement against all discouragement. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". Nearer heaven, nearer consummation of it, nearer our home and our end and our God and our holiness, our righteousness, our eternal rest. What a motive is this, poor, sinful believer, sleepy person, ashamed it may be and stirred up even by such remarks as these. I say what an infallible source of strength and encouragement against all the discouragement of the shame that you feel for having so neglected so great salvation. "For the night is far spent, the day is at hand". We are living in the last days evidently, as far as light is given one to observe the Scriptures, and the time, the night, is far spent. The night when all the darkness will be over; the night in which the glorious gospel shines only darkly; the night when the god of this world reigns for the most part over men. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand". Let us therefore not go to sleep, not say, well we need not trouble; not say, we will let things be as they are and make the best of them. That is not the result, the proper spiritual consequence of these truths, but rather this: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly" - "decently" as the word is - "as in the day"; as we would walk if we had reached the daylight of heaven. "Let us walk honestly as in the day", as in the light of the gospel and of the presence of God in Christ. "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying". Let self-righteous, self-satisfied professors turn away from such exhortations. Let those here, who feel in their souls, shame that such exhortations are needful to them because of what their hearts are, thank the Lord for this Word, and may grace be given to take signal notice, particular notice, of what He says, for you know, as we read just now, what the Lord says of those who hear and do not; who hide behind and mis-use and distort the Word of God. Who say that a man is justified by faith without works and therefore I can live in sin, I can be careless. The Spirit of Christ in a person, when He moves, and quickens, and stirs up a person, makes him feel an awe in his soul sometimes. He may be brought - notwithstanding all the faith he has been enabled to exercise on Christ, and all the experiences he has had of the faithfulness and goodness of God to him - solemnly to look into matters to see how they stand with him. And lying in this motive, lying in this exhortation, is this great motive

which from time to time every child of God feels, namely, the constraint of Christ's love. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof".

First of all then it is an inward, spiritual, gracious determination to walk after, follow hard after, wait only upon, glory only in, wait only for, seek only to hear and to follow, the Lord Jesus. It is an inward determination of heart. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ", inwardly. Put Him on in the fight to which you are called. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life". Now you will find that this exhortation, the latter part of it, is exceedingly needful, and the motive I have named you will prove also to be needful in this matter. "Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." 'Tis no easy thing to inwardly profess, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, for the flesh seeks that provision should be made for it and we are disposed, according to the flesh, to make much provision for it. Lazy, comfort-loving, proud flesh; flesh that will not be put off, that clamours for indulgence; flesh that does not like to be disturbed, does not like to be mortified and crucified; flesh that says, why should your religion so disturb you? Why should not you walk in peace and quietly and happily as other Christians do? Make not provision for the flesh when it clamours thus, as you, poor, convinced sinner, are struggling to fulfil, struggling to walk in this exhortation: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ", for it is a struggle, it is a struggle to get at Him. It is the great struggle of faith to get at Jesus Christ, for the life of a quickened sinner is Christ and that life in that quickened sinner goes out after Him; he is, as born again, from time to time compelled to seek Him, even as in another case and way Abraham was compelled to go out; he went out being called by God; by faith he went out not knowing whither he went. And this is a seeking after the Lord Jesus; seeking if you may but find Him. You must find Him to put Him on. Many people put Him on by profession and show no evidence of having sought Him for themselves, show no evidence of having had contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ". If you are in deadly earnest in respect of your souls there will be times when that will be true of you, as was true of the Psalmist when he said: "My soul followeth hard after Thee O God". Why my friends, if you miss Christ you will miss heaven and if you are born again and have that

fear of missing Christ, you will say, if I miss Christ I am lost and I shall miss my best desires; they will not be fulfilled. It is not a light thing nor an indifferent thing to one, in whose soul is living faith, whether or not he finds Him for whom he seeks. Through the Scriptures here and there you find described the exercises of seeking souls. How fearful they are; and why? Because they are really seeking. If you are seeking only a name then you are not fearful respecting finding; it is a matter of indifference with you whether you find the Lord Jesus or not. But if the Holy Ghost has made Him in reality your life, then it will be your life and your life alone to find Him. There are promises to such as are occupied in this matter, great, precious, gracious, suitable promises to them. You may say, some of you who are really labouring in this business, you may say, I fear I shall never find Him, and what will happen meantime? I fear the delays will prove me wrong; I fear my patience wont hold out, my desires will fail, my flesh will have the mastery and I shall turn back to perdition; prove I never really sought. Well, I know what these fears are. Some of you have got them perhaps now in your souls and for your encouragement, not for your satisfaction, but for your encouragement I would quote what God has said: "Your hearts shall live that seek God". You will live while you are seeking Him. Though you have not reached the source of your consolation nor the foundation of your life you will live. Live in desire, live in conviction, live in pain, live in wandering, live in nakedness, live in perils of the devil. You will live while you seek Him until you find Him, if God has set you searching. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ". If you are driven out of house and home spiritually, if you see what Bunyan saw, that the city was given up to destruction, then, then you will find that this exhortation will not be unpalatable to you. It will rather so fit in what you are compelled to do as to confirm you in your course and strengthen you as leaving the City of Destruction. Turning your back on the world, you cry in your soul, life, life, eternal life. There are many by-paths, many sly feelings, many false experiences which the devil will dangle before your eyes, and by which your flesh may be deceived. Oh, friends, it will be a miracle to get to heaven. It will be a miracle to get past the snares and pitfalls of Satan and to get beyond, and out of, the clamouring of our flesh to stop short of Christ; to find peace without the atonement; to find rest of soul without the testimony of God, the

Holy Ghost; to be living in religion and growing bold in religion without any contact with God in Christ. Such a state can never be exaggerated for awfulness. We need to be cautious and yet our caution wont save us, but the Holy Spirit will make you cautious if you are the people of God. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"

Now every part of our nature, unregenerate, every part of our nature, depraved, - even though there may be a new nature in us - is against this matter. Why do you make so much of the Lord Jesus or why cannot you be satisfied with a description of Him, the doctrine of Him? Why cannot you be satisfied to take it for granted? Why, because you are a living soul; because you must have testimony; because you have a capacity for the Lord Jesus; because He is your life and you need life; you feel death. Because He is your refuge and, being exposed, you flee to Him to hide you. No more can you be satisfied in this matter than could the dove rest until Noah put out his hand and drew her into the Ark, if you are a child of God. You will never be satisfied without this. You will get many encouragements, you will get some negative things, and some helps and some tokens you are in the way. Why the very expressions of some of the Old Testament saints will be so your heart's feelings that you will say, surely I am on the right track; surely I am going the right way. If this man felt this, I can say I feel it honestly. If this man cried out to God and said "O that I knew where I might find Him", if he was in that place and did find Him, I am in that place and I will seek until I find Him. But you wont rest, you wont be satisfied until you find Him, and the Scripture - such a gracious word as this - will be an encouragement to you: "They that seek shall find". The devil may say, you are not seeking right because you have not found. Still the Word of God will be true to you, and you will say sometimes I believe what God says. I believe I shall find one day that prize I am seeking, that home I am longing for, that pardon which I cannot be satisfied without. I believe I shall find for myself a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. It is a mercy when men are kept seeking, when that word does not become their way - turning back to perdition, for many start out, many come into a profession of religion, and stand well for a length of time, more or less, and as we painfully know and see, turn back in time of trouble. I do not say that to discourage the seeking soul; I say it in order that we may be cautious, in order that we may not rest short. There is

every encouragement in the Scriptures for seeking souls. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" Put Him on in your souls as to your confidence and your applications to God for forgiveness. Is sin nothing really to you? Has it no influence in your life? Have you ever apprehended the awfulness of being a sinner? If you have spiritually realised this, then I declare nothing will ever really heal your conscience, or satisfy your soul, but the blood, the sin atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to your soul by God, the Holy Ghost. And as this is in your soul as a desire, as you see by faith from time to time as you read the Scriptures and as they are made vital in you, that the blood which Christ shed is sufficient to cleanse the blackest soul, that will give you energy and strength to seek for its application. I know the flesh clamours against this; I know that a religious flesh will clamour against this, because it makes the person, who is set on it, subject to the sovereign will of God, the Holy Ghost. It is He, according to His will that gives the assurance of faith, the touch which is effectual to bring on the conscience the atonement, and to give satisfaction to the soul respecting redemption and this will mean, in this walk, much earnest prayer to God and you will be encouraged in it. O, the encouraging Scriptures which there are to those who are brought to turn their back on the world, and, brought to forsake their own ways and their thoughts, are enabled to come to God with a real desire to clear themselves. Forgiveness is a reality, a divine reality. It is an act of God. It is, as it is passed upon a sinner, an experience of the sinner's heart. God has forgiven - in respect of His judicial act - He has forgiven every person for whom Christ died. Now that act you want passed on you. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ in this. Seek no other blood or Name to cleanse your guilt or hide your shame but the blood of the Lord Jesus. And as you are pleading with God respecting this and waiting on Him, and by grace and the power of the Spirit refusing the solicitations of the flesh to rest short, one day, - after much trouble it may be and shame, and much reproach from religious friends, and from the devil and from your own flesh, - one day you will find what you will never be able to express; you will find the Holy Spirit bring satisfaction into your soul; there will be contact with Jesus Christ, and I do not see how any person who has eternity before him and realises it, and who has his heart opened to him, and his nature opened to him, by the Spirit, how any person can really lie down - I do not now speak physically of

lying down - can lie down in soul and rest satisfied without contact with the Lord Jesus. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" Now if you have been brought to this point, if you have been enabled to follow on to know the Lord in this point, then there will be incumbent upon you to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in another manner, namely to put Him on in a way of profession. Mark, not to put on a religious profession without this, but having inwardly, through many changes and much sorrow and through many deaths, it may be, and many disappointments, yet having been brought to this and been enabled to put Him on, to receive, to embrace, to claim, to love Him in your soul, and to put your trust in Him and commit all to Him, I say then it is incumbent on you to put Him on in a way of profession. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" But there are difficulties even in this; not such great difficulties as those inward, spiritual difficulties, but there are difficulties. The flesh wishes to have provision made for it, for its lusts, and first of all it means a clean separation. If you have been brought to the point that I have named you will have a clean separation made in your heart. I am sure if ever a person's heart is divorced from sin it is when he has contact with the Lord Jesus, when He makes Himself known to the sinner as His Redeemer, His sin-bearer, His Saviour. But our flesh remains and it clamours, and a person who has been brought to this point may become lukewarm, when the warmth of those feelings recedes. I trust none of you may think it necessary, and pray, if you are in a sweet experience now, pray earnestly that you never may become lukewarm; it is not necessary. Some people seem to think it is a necessity that a child of God, having felt the love of Christ, should become lukewarm. May the Lord give any of you, who feel your hearts glow to the Lord Jesus, who have any sense of blessing He has given you, and pardoning love, the mercy of walking tenderly before Him every day. May He keep you from that sad experience, that shameful experience of turning away in heart and becoming comparatively indifferent; of forgetting Him. But you will find trouble, you will find persecution, you will find the influence of an alluring world, you will find the influence of easy professors, men who say that it is possible to walk as near the world - and they know just how near they can go - to walk as near to the world as is possible and yet get to heaven, and they are so clever they can mark out just how far a man can go without going over the precipice, and they are so easy and have such liberty. Such people

that the love of Christ in your hearts will make you see and feel that the necessity of separation in this day is, if possible, greater than in any other day of the church's history. There is such a mixing, such a generalism, such a hand in glove with the world. The Lord keep us from the hand and, insofar as we, individually, some of us, may have imbibed the spirit of the world, may the Lord in infinite mercy give us prayer and mercy, and create in us a clean heart and renew within us a right spirit and warm us with His constraining love. I hope the Lord may not frown on my bringing this matter to your notice, but that He will honour Himself, glorify Himself, and comfort and bless and prosper your souls.

AMEN.