

39
367
1397-153
Lca P812

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

153

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Friday evening 29 March 1929

1 Corinthians 15 v 3

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which
I also received, how that Christ
died for our sins according to
the Scriptures"

What a blessed, happy congregation this would be if the Spirit of grace and of supplications were poured out upon us that we might look on Christ whom we have pierced and mourn for Him. We mourn for self, we mourn over trouble, and sometimes, some of us at least, mourn over sin. The best mourning possible is this "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him". O believer, your sins pierced the Saviour and the knowledge of that would pierce you with a happy sorrow, a gracious mourning. The promise is - "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem", the spiritual Jerusalem, made up of Jew and Gentile, "the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" Not look with an intellect - an intellectual view may leave you as cold as ice and as hard as a stone - but by faith. This Scripture that I have read brings before us several important, eternally important, things. It brings before us the awful thing, sin - killing, condemning, cursing, hell procuring sin. O I wish God would make us feel this more and more. We have it. It is in the warp and woof of our being. We have it. It rises as from a powerful, never failing spring in our hearts and reveals itself in thought, breaks out in temper, makes us say wrong things, fills us with horrible thoughts, separates between God and our souls. O this monster, this devil, this sin of our nature. I know it for myself. I know where the chief sinner today lives. O but it is a terrible thing to be a sinner. The thought, for a minute this morning, made my heart move, the thought that one day I shall not have sin to trouble me. What a wonder it will be to be in heaven where there is no sin, therefore no pain. I wish every one of you had sin in your feelings, in your consciences, wounding you, separating you

from yourself and from the world and making the world a sickening, weakening, painful thing in every shape and form. That is in the text "our sins". God never lets His people forget their sins. The gospel in its freeness would not be welcome to them for long if they forgot their sins. Little feeling of sin means little feeling about the Saviour. The worse you are the better. Men do not live in sin who have grace, but grace makes them feel sin. They do feel it. The publican's prayer suits them. The thief's prayer suits them. The wounds of sin are very evil wounds, putrefying, not bound up, neither mollified with ointment. O it is a shameful thing. That is in the text. The second thing is the Saviour. He died for our sin. The third thing is, in the Scripture. There was no New Testament. The Scriptures here are the Old Testament beginning with the promise in Eden, the seed of the woman. What a wonder; manifested in the promise to Abram whose name was changed to Abraham, seen in the type, the ram caught by its horns in the thicket, seen in the Paschal Lamb, seen in the annual atonement made for Israel, in the morning and the evening lamb, in all the sacrifices for sin. Death, death, death - Israel lived by death. You live by death if you live unto God. The death of the lamb, the death of the bullock without blemish. O this death! And all these types preached the death of Christ. The prophecies of the Old Testament - just take that which I read this morning, for Isaiah is called the evangelical prophet; he so beautifully speaks of the Lord Jesus. "According to the Scriptures". This, if we rightly view and receive, will make Holy Scripture a beautiful book to us. The Old Testament full of the gospel in type and in promise and in prophecy, full of it, and were our eyes opened to see them, the beauties of these types, we should read the Lord Jesus everywhere in the Old Testament, and it all is just this, death, the death of one to be the life of a number that no man can number. "According to the Scriptures", that is as the Scripture promised, as the Scripture prophecies, as the types preached, Jesus Christ died. God open these things to us. We ought to grieve when the matter is opened to us, we do grieve, over our ignorance of the Scriptures especially our ignorance of Him who fills the Scriptures. Ministers should take great notice of this. Paul's word to Timothy is "Study to show thyself a workman approved of God that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth". My brethren take heed of this, look at the Scripture. Hart gives you good advice. He says, join

prayer with each inspection. And if you pray that prayer rightly, many a day you may hang about a Scripture, a type, or a promise, or a sermon, or a law in the Old Testament, seeing therein the Lord Jesus. We do not half value God's Word. Another thing in the text is this that the Apostle preached what had been revealed to him. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received" There probably would not be very much preaching in the land if only that which God taught men were preached. O the pain it may sometimes be to a minister as he comes across that word in Job "I have uttered that I understood not". And the minister may say to himself, how many things I have uttered that I have not understood. Especially when he gets old and reviews his ministry, he may say that. "I delivered unto you first of all". "First of all" because it is first, that is, that Christ died. It is first. The first Word of God, so to speak, after the fall was the first promise of the gospel, the seed of the woman and it is first in importance. No life but by this death, no access to God but by this death, no ground on which to stand and pray, but by this death. No entrance into the holiest but through this death. It is first of all and sinner, when you are convinced, the first thing is, is there a way of escape from the wrath to come? Can such a person be justified? And when it is made known to such a sinner that God can forgive sin, when it is revealed in him that God can forgive sin, this becomes an argument with him, a reasoning, a pleading, a ground. A confession goes well and pleading pleases God. Arguing on the death of Christ pleases God better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. You may take a sacrifice to do according to the law, and offering it is the same thing as cutting off a dog's neck. So says God. But the vilest sinner who is led to plead first of all the death of Christ is welcome to the throne of grace. No infidelity, no lust, no pride, no legality, can stand before the efficacy of the death of Christ. O what a mercy it is that Christ first of all is preached as dying. "I delivered unto you". To these Corinthians the Apostle says "I brethren when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimonies of God". But he declares the Lord Jesus first of all. Is it first with you? O says the sinner, I do look into myself, and I cannot find any ground on which to stand, cannot find any feeling that I can speak of as being good before the Lord. Well, one day, if God is teaching, you will thank Him for that. You will thank Him that He did not let you have good feelings to

plead before Himself, that you had to go as a sinner, and if you live 50 years under the teaching of the Spirit it will be just that you must come at the end of that period as a sinner.

Sinners can say, and only they
How precious is the Saviour

Now the main thing of the text is this "How that Christ died". Well, my brethren, no man is worthy to speak of this, yet sinful men are called to preach it, that Christ died. I would bring before you, first of all, several reasons for Christ's dying. We must have good things to stand on, good ground. Why did Christ die for our sins? First of all because He was raised up and made Christ for this very purpose. Foreordained before the world began was the Lamb. The love of God sent Him to die. The commandment of God upon Him was that He should die, that He should lay down His life a ransom for many. The love of God must be celebrated in this, its sovereignty. It is in His nature to do good but it was not in His nature to forgive sin without a sufficient reason, the reason being the satisfaction given to His Being. To all the perfections of Deity there must be given a satisfaction in order that sin may be forgiven any sinner. To have this properly elaborated and set before men needs heavenly wisdom and anointing and commission. O to be commissioned to contend for the nature, the Being of God in the greatness and in the glory of it. As many of us as will get to heaven will have this to glad our being, to fill it with bliss, that God was honoured in our salvation. His love sent His Son, His power sent His Son, His wisdom sent His Son. Love and power and wisdom divine were all concerned in the constitution of the Person of the Lord Jesus. O that we were led to see this. O sinner, the sight would do you good. It would hearten you, strengthen you, encourage you. It would sweetly give you to pray and not to give way to the feeling of sin and unworthiness. The feeling will never be blunted by the Lord, but the reason that reason forms in you to keep you away, that God forbids. O it is wonderful to see how God is honoured in His own remedy. His remedy for sin is salvation of sinners provided by Himself in His wisdom and in His goodness, in His power and in His love. This is before us. O may we be a church of Christians. A church of Christians would be a church that has the very Spirit of Christ in it, one Spirit with Christ, so it is written

"He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" and doubtless that One Spirit brings again and again in different measures of light and life this that I am trying to express to you, how that God provided His own remedy and it is on this ground we must stand. Ah it is a delight to a sinner to see this when the Holy Spirit shows it to Him. It is such a sobering thing, it is such a maul on the head of a legal heart and spirit. It cries down human nature and cries up the sovereign grace of God. On it may we ponder. Into it may we look. Yea, dig, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the more it is looked into, the deeper you dig into it, the more wonder it will be to you and the more you will desire to see. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet". And when you meditate rightly on God you won't leave out His character. As you meditate on the salvation He has provided, you will see the greatness of His love and the greatness of His wisdom, and the greatness of His power in constituting the Person of Christ, and by that word I mean that the love and wisdom and power of God ordained and brought into being the Person of the Lord Jesus which is, that the holy eternal Son of God took up into union with Himself human nature. And here I would interject a remark. Human nature including all men, all men, not every man but the whole of human nature embraced in the Lord Jesus. And it is observable here that in the line of Christ, among His ancestors, was Ruth the Moabitess. He took human nature, not a human person but human nature.

And the next reason that I would bring to your notice, for the death of the Lord Jesus is this, His own willingness and love. Beautiful is that Scripture in the Corinthians - "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich". Why sinner, think of it. The grace of the Lord Jesus exhibited, flowing down to men in this, that though He was rich in eternity, rich in His Father's bosom, rich in the enjoyment of the adoration of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, rich in all the perfections of eternal deity and eternal Sonship and eternal communion with His Father and His Spirit, yet, for your sakes, He became poor. He did not give up anything belonging to His divine Person, but He hid it all away, so to speak, in that human nature that He took up. He hid it all and men saw Him poor, and they despised Him because He was poor. They were looking for a deliverer and because He was not that deliverer

they were looking for they rejected Him. "He was despised and rejected of men" O, but the riches of His grace, the riches of His love in that He suffered all this. And that is in His precious dying, His willingness. I lay down My life. I lay it down of Myself. The willingness of Christ, the voluntary nature of His death goes into the virtue and merit of it. An unwilling sacrifice would not have been acceptable.

And the third thing is this that He, the holy, harmless, undefiled Lord Jesus was made sin. He could not justly have been punished if He had not been justly made sin. Who made Him to be sin? Who made this holy One to be sin? Men imputed sin to Him. They said He had a devil. They called Him a deceiver and so on, but who really made Him to be sin? His Father did. O think of it, the eternal Son as it were taken hold of by His Father and His Father said to Him, Thou shall go into the world and I will impute to Thee the sin of the men I have given Thee to save. And so He was made sin, an act of love, an act of justice. I have admired occasionally the wisdom of God in making His Son under the law, for if He had not been made under the law that was broken by men then the sin of men could not have been imputed to Him. But He was made under the law, and so His Father took the sin that you, His dear people, and my unworthy self among you, He took the sin that we had done under the law and laid it all on His beloved Son. And now, because the Lord Jesus is made sin, what will, what must, His Father do? What must His Father do? He must punish Him and the punishment is that that the law threatened to man, the very thing. The curse and the damnation of the whole law of God, the Father, of necessity, must inflict on His Son. "It pleased the Lord" - O what is contained in that word we shall never fully understand here. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed". Think of it. God punishing His Son. The devil afflicted Him, men despised Him, but the stroke that entered into His very soul, the sword that pierced Him through and through, God inflicted and pierced Him with.

Now let us look for a minute at this dying. It was a real death that Christ died, a real death. He took a life that He might yield

it, give it up. This was the only remedy for sin. Hart speaks the truth of the gospel when he writes

Sin to pardon without blood
Never in God's nature stood

So Christ must really die and the wonder of the death is partly expressed in the action that was taken with respect to the two thieves who were crucified with Him. As the Sabbath was approaching it was necessary, for the Jews to keep that Sabbath holy, that these crucified persons should not live to see that Sabbath and so to expedite the death they broke the legs of the thieves, and they came to the Saviour to do the same to Him. But then the Scripture would have been broken if they had broken His bones, for the Scripture is this, in the Paschal Lamb "A bone of Him shall not be broken". And in the gospel it is said, when the soldier pierced His side - That the Scripture might be fulfilled, a bone of Him shall not be broken. And again, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced". (John 19 v 36 and 37) What a fulfilling of the Scripture. It would look a mere incident in the circumstances of His crucifixion that He should be dead before they came to break His legs, a mere incident that a Roman soldier, to make sure, as it were. that He was dead, should pierce His side, but hundreds of years before that precious death there were two Scriptures given. One, "A bone of Him shall not be broken". The other "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced". O, but this actual death, it came by the curse of the law, and by that which you can well believe pierced Him more than anything else, the hiding of His Father's face, the desertion of Him by His eternal Father. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And then, when all these things came to Him, and were in Him in their fulness, wrath to perfection, curse to the separating of Him from His Father, - these in their terrible fulness came to the Lord Jesus - then He said, knowing that all things were accomplished, "I thirst" and they gave Him out of a jug, vinegar to drink. Then He said "It is finished" and bowed His head and gave up the ghost. And so this text had a wonderful fulness in it and still has and shall have through eternity. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures".

And now, as the old ministers would say, for the application. I

have tried to deliver sound doctrine to you, now for the application. Every new born sinner finds sin to be his burden, his shame, his chief trouble. Yea, sometimes he can say the pain of it is exquisite, and what shall he do? He comes to know that he is utterly helpless; he comes to feel that he is utterly hopeless in himself. A painful, but a good, experience, fitting for the Lamb of God, fitting the sinner for forgiveness free and full. Now the Jailor's cry, "What must I do to be saved?" will ever be in a man of God. Though he may say, I know how I am to be saved, I want to be saved again and again. In this death of Christ are these things. First of all liberty to enter into the presence of God. Now let us look at that. Sin is a separating thing. "Your sins have separated between you and your God". Sin does separate. Who, taught of the Spirit, does not know that? And if you indulge in any sin, O people of God, if you unite with the world in anything, you will find, sooner or later, it will bring a separation. God will hide His face from you. The spirit of prayer may be, for a time, withheld and you will find your hearts grow hard, until God sends again His good Spirit to you. "Access", a wonderful word "access", ingress, liberty to go in to the presence of God. And who shall lead the sinner? The Holy Spirit. He is sent to guide and to lead into all truth and He opens a door. "I have set before thee an open door" and you may come into this open door and into the very presence of God and there confess your sin and, like a penitent, lay your hand of confession on the sacred head of the Saviour. Among the best graces of the Spirit, if I may use that word, is this, the grace of repentance. Nobody repents until he has, in some measure, the gospel in him. Legal repentance means remorse. Cain's tears may be shed, Esau's tears may be shed, and no heaven come. But, as the gospel enters in some measure, then repentance begins. Entrance into the holiest is this, through the death of the Lord Jesus. And another blessing is this, that power is given to pray. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced". O for a sight, a sight of Christ crucified. You would not want to gad after the world if you got a sight of Christ crucified. Rather you would want to go into your room, shut your door about you, and fervently weep and pray, repent and rejoice in a sight of this great Lord Jesus. But the thing of all others is this that is sought after by all repenting saints, namely the forgiveness of sins. "By

this Man is preached the forgiveness of sins". "By Him" said Paul "we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses". This is the way for God to come to men as well as for men to go to God and this is the way in which it pleases God to say to sinners that their sins are forgiven, that "I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a cloud and as a thick cloud thy sins"

Then there is this also to be said by the death of the Lord Jesus. Ordinary troubles that come to the saints equally as to the world, ordinary troubles, are turned into a blessing. Why? Not by what the saints do but by what is done in them, for them, by the Holy Ghost, for the door of access to God is open for them to go to Him, in and with and about, their troubles. They go to Him. Lord, said Jacob, I am afraid of Esau; deliver me from him. And God heard him. Prayer put every one of those four hundred swords into their scabbards and Jacob only got a blessing. Through the death of Christ your troubles will be turned into blessings. Through the death of Christ you will find that instead of God dealing with you on the ground of justice and on the ground of your being a sinner, He deals with you as a Father. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten". "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" O what a wonderful thing it is to have your troubles sanctified and to find that God really, in sending trouble, sends blessings, real blessings, and this is through the death of Christ.

And one more blessing for me to name is this. Sin, you know, separated Adam and all his posterity from God and the separation was set forth by the expulsion of Adam from Eden, as if God should say, now there shall be an everlasting example of the separation that sin has produced and brought about between sinful men and Myself by My expelling Adam, a sinner, from this garden. What can bring you near? What can renew, and more than renew, the communion that was lost? Why, the death of Christ. "He made an end of sin". As Daniel prophesied - There shall come the Messiah and He shall make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. And so the communion is more than restored. Communion with the Father in the Person of the Son by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and what we ordinarily speak of as

the benediction and is repeated always at the close of services, becomes an experience. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen."

Now it may be said that in and through this precious death of Christ, the good seed is sown in good ground and the three degrees of fruitfulness come in. Thirty-fold when a sinner, as the sinful Thessalonians, is turned from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. That is the thirty-fold, perhaps, when a poor sinner says, I must hang here, sink or swim, accepted or rejected. My soul receives and I hope loves and cleaves to the Lord Jesus for salvation. That sinner may long lack an assurance, but he does not doubt the sufficiency of Christ to save him, only he lacks a sweet assurance of being saved. He cleaves to Christ, he follows Christ, he leaves the world. There is brought about separation from the world. Then sixty-fold when the sinner gets a sweet, solemn assurance of the forgiveness of his sins and he finds himself sweetly delivered from the law and all bondage of spirit. Yea, he may be able to say "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength", and he follows Christ. And myriads, having that, have followed Him in the ordinances of His house. Then you get the hundred-fold, and I have thought perhaps an hundred-fold is expressed by the Apostle Paul in the Philippians when he says that the sufferings of Christ, the sweet fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, were before him. Yea, I believe he had that union, sealing of the Spirit, fellowship with Christ. Sweet communion with each Person in the adorable Trinity might be said to be the hundred-fold. That is only what I judge to be the meaning of that word, and I have a wish that I might come, before I die, to the hundred-fold. But think of it. Christ acknowledges the thirty-fold. He acknowledges the sinner cleaving to Him and wont despise or cast him out, takes notice of every act of faith. Every motion of love, every feeling of patience and hope in his soul Jesus takes notice of, and approves, sweetly approves. O my brethren, you who have got this measure, hold fast, follow on, and more is to come, much more is to come.

And I would just close with this. All of it is by the death of

Christ. Now I will conclude with one more word. Some of us are going to heaven, and we believe it. What will be the song when you get there? It is being sung now and indeed sometimes some of us lisp it here. But what will be the song never to be wearied of, ever, ever, ever to be repeated in His ears to His praise? "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Now I think, in as many of us as it may be seen by the Lord that we are keeping this day in our spirits by regarding this death of Christ according to the Scriptures, we are pleasing to God. And a man who keeps this day, keeps it and gives God thanks, says the apostle of keeping days, and a a good thing it is so to keep it. Now brethren may the Lord help you and help me thus to keep and observe as before Him this blessed death of the Lord Jesus. No hope, no access, no peace, no comfort, no strength, no godliness, no good walking, no right living, no happy dying, but by this death.