

Sermon preached by Mr. J.K. Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on the Lord's day 2/10/32, preceding the Jubilee Services. (Evening)

Deuteronomy viii.3.

"And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

I spoke this morning from the second verse and noticed as a preliminary remark that the life, the history of the Jews was not merely history but doctrine; that it was not merely a statement or statements concerning a people but typical. The type is a clean cut thing, that is, a kind of representation of something that is to come, and the life of these people was exactly in many respects painfully typical of the living church of God. Delivered from Pharaoh and brought safely through the Red Sea as by dry land, they sang to the Lord. When they had no water in a few days they murmured, and when they lacked bread they wished themselves back in Egypt where they sat by the flesh-pots, and ate onion, and garlic to the full. I need not say to the saints here, how much like them that is. But I also remarked that there is in God's mind, an intention, in His dealings with the people in the wilderness, and a solemn thing it was - "To humble thee." O what breaking up the proud, hard heart of man requires! "And to prove thee" to be a hypocrite, the heart being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; to know what was in the heart; just full of sin: whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no! and alas it is always no!

In this verse we have a continuation of God's dealings with this people, "He humbled thee." Dear friends, we shall never be humble unless we are humbled, and the only One who can humble us really is God. Mortifying trials ^{may} come to us only to discover, and as it were strengthen our pride. Only the rod laid on by God, with a merciful intention, can really humble us. "He humbled thee." Can you say, that God has so dealt with you, as to produce this gracious effect - He humbled thee? That you are glad, to be in the dust, with a little hope, in His mercy? Glad to take the lowest place; that you could honestly sing, "They never think they're laid too low, if Jesus on them pity show." It is good, to be humbled, because humility is sweet. The garment of humility is beautiful. You have never, walked better, than when you are humbled; you

you have never behaved better, in your spirit, than when you are humbled; you will never take more kindly to God's way, and His word of reproof, and discipline, than when you are humbled. A humble spirit, is in the sight of God, of great price. It has been in my eyes, a most beautiful garment. A proud man, may think it is a grovelling spirit, but God esteems it very highly. Seek humility, O people of God, seek humility. You won't carry the word humble, on your coat sleeve, but you will breathe the spirit of it, when it is in your heart. You won't tell people you are humble, but God knows you are, and His saints will discover it.

"And humbled thee." There is a place, where humble people, are happy: supremely happy: the throne of God's grace. There they beg, pray, entreat, get power over the angel, and prevail. There they get sights of Jesus Christ, who in the day of His humiliation, opened not His mouth; there they get a sight, perhaps only occasionally, but they get a sight of the seven spirits of God before the throne, like seven lamps of fire, in His perfect graces, and operation, and long to have Him; and there, they receive mercy, and love, and compassion, and tenderness, lovingkindness; and there they get sweet confidence that God is with them, and will never leave them, nor forsake them. There, they receive communications, and between God, and their souls there is communion; pleasant sweet communion; a familiarity, between them, never to be expressed adequately, absolutely. Infinitely different from unhallowed freedom, luscious names. "He humbled thee." Circumstances are then acceptable, though they be troublesome. There faith, kisses the rod. The will of God, is there in the eye of faith, in the feelings, of the heart perfect, acceptable. There God is All in all to the soul. "He humbled thee."

Well, do thank Him if He has taken pains to hum-ble you. Do bless His holy Name, if He has taken ²¹⁰³ to bring down that lordly spirit, that you have naturally. Thank Him for all the trouble, He has been at, to bring you to this case, to this state: "And He humbled thee." Why, you will bless the rod that brought it to pass, and you will thank God for doing it. Everything is right, when you are humbled before God. Being humbled, nothing is wrong, in Him, nothing is wrong in His dealings with you; nothing wrong in providence, however painful, some things may be to you. O if we were humble people.....

what good it would be for us; how good it would be to us! If every member of this church were humble, what a church it would be! If every godly person, in this congregation were humble, what, O what a spirit there would be! Some of you must say you are proud, and don't begin to say you are humble, and nothing, and nobody, until God has humbled you. O it is good to be humbled!

"And suffered thee to hunger." The flesh-pots of Egypt, the onions and the garlic, the carnal satisfaction, God took it from them, or took them from it. Are you where you cannot get them? Has God taken pains to pull you out of the world? You may be naturally religious, but that is not what I mean, Has He enabled you to leave it; to say "Let worldly minds the world pursue it hath no charms for me, once I admired its trifles too, but grace has set me free?" It is one thing not to be able to get what you naturally want, it is another thing to seek it not.

"Suffered," permitted "thee to hunger". Brought thee, into the wilderness, no bread; no cultivation possible; no purchase of bread possible, only hunger and starvation stared them in the face. Does that represent the case of any here. You won't believe it though I tell you, unless God is pleased to make you believe it; that your hunger is a blessing. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness", not after the delicacies of this world, nor the pleasures, so-called, of this world, but righteousness. Whose? Christ's. God permits this hunger to weaken you, to sicken you of self, and worldliness. A hungry soul would be glad of any reproof: "To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet". God permits it. He is not careless of the state. He is not careless or indifferent, to the condition of the hungry person. He watches, He looks at this person, and sees there is some strength left, so hunger must go on. When weakness is induced, by famishing; when a sinner, is hunger-bitten and his strength is gone; when he can say "I have no strength to hold out longer; I must submit, and would gladly submit, to God's dispensations, and wait on Him till He shall give me the Bread of life; that is what He intends; that is the end, He will cause you to enter into. Hunger is not an end in itself. I know you will think it is, you who are hungry, and can get no bread; but it is not an end. No affliction is an end; it is but a means, to the designed, divinely intended end. O but you

may think I am pouring nitre upon vinegar, that I am singing a song to a heavy heart, but this is the truth. You have not come to the end of the dispensation; the wilderness was not Canaan; it was not the abode of those people; neither is hunger, God's end. It is giving an appetite, for the Bread of life. O wait on Him! Think of the importunate man, who having a guest come unexpectedly, goes to a friend and asks three loaves, but his friend is in bed, does not wish to be disturbed. But importunity fetches him off his bed, puts the loaves into his hand and opens the door. God give us an importunate spirit. If you can deal with Him, like that, you will get the bread. "He suffered thee to hunger." Not to kill you, but to feed you, and make you fat, and flourishing.

"And fed thee with manna", lively type, of the Bread that comes down from heaven. He fed thee. People say we will read the Bible, and then we shall get what we want. Well, go on reading the Bible, and if you can, follow Hart's advice, "Join prayer with each inspection;" but do not think you can get the bread out of the Bible. It will tell you of it; it will tell you, how you can get it; not by your own hand but by the sweet, gracious operation of the Holy Ghost. Every kind word, in the gospel, that God may speak to you, will be a piece of bread; something of Christ. Doubtless in my own mind every word of the gospel has somewhat of Christ in it. You say a crumb is not much. A crumb of bread is all bread as to constituents. It may not be much to you, but it is bread O what a precious thing it is, to be fed with the Bread of life!

What a wonderful thing for God to condescend to feed a soul. "I am the Bread of life", said the Lord Jesus. If you eat His flesh, you will live for ever, What is it to eat His flesh? It is to receive a crucified Saviour, into a spiritually hungry soul; to receive Him by revelation, by the Holy Ghost opening up what He is, ^{who He is,} what He did, where He is, and what He is doing. O Christ opened, manifested by the Holy Spirit is seen to be the Bread of life! That is to say, He is the life of His people and their reception of Him by faith is like eating Bread; and like bread is when assimilated, the strength of a person, so Jesus Christ, when received, is the life and the strength of the soul.

"And fed thee with manna." You will say it came down, I did not get it, it came". You will be sure to acknowledge that God gives it you, when you get it. O mercy sends it, truth sends it, the Spirit brings it! Christ is the bread and the sinner receives Him, and when He is so received He is loved. You say then: "He is the chiefest among ten thousand." This is my Friend, this is my Beloved; the chiefest among ten thousand." and the altogether lovely." Perhaps some of you, wish you could receive Him. Well, do not run out of the wilderness. and don't think you can make a piece of bread in the wilderness. No, when you are in the wilderness, you are in some bondage, and you know you are helpless, and a sense of helplessness is one of the best feelings you can get in the place where you are. And then when you cry to God, "O Lord save my soul, O grant me to know and receive Jesus Christ", when He answers that prayer, you will say, "This is the Lord, I have waited for Him; this is the Lord."

"Which thou knewest not" till it came; until it was explained to you. The people took the manna to Moses and said "What is it?" This is the bread which God gives you. Ah, and when Christ comes, you almost say, "What is this? I feel a peace which I never felt before. I have satisfaction which I never before realised. I have a living hope sweetly in my heart. It has come; I did not fetch it, it came just as Paul says and Moses before him, you do not wish, you are not able, to rise to heaven to fetch it down, nor descend into the deep to bring it up; the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth; and that word is Christ in you the hope of glory.

"Which thou knewest not." Who can know the things of God, till they are brought to him? "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." But when they come, then they are known. You will perhaps never forget, the first glimpse you had and the first taste you had. sometimes I remember, the first hope I had in my soul, by some intimation of the infinite value, of the blood of Christ. When you get something like that, you pray and pray and pray. O what energy, I felt in my soul, when I saw that the blood of Christ, could cleanse me, from my sins! A solid belief, that you can be saved, is a wonderful strength to prayer. My soul waiteth for the Lord. What for?

For the forgiveness which is with Him. You have no conception, of what awaits you, O hungry people! You have no conception, of the glory of God's grace, that you will find in His kindness, when He gives you the Bread of life.

And this has an end "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live." Jesus Christ said "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." You cannot live, by what you gather; you cannot live by the intellectual knowledge that you may be again and again naturally, pleased with. That is not bread for your soul. You cannot eat, and be satisfied, with your outward profession, and consistency; that is not bread. You must live, by this blessed Word of God. Jesus met the tempter when He was tempting Him, to make bread out of the stones: "It is written man shall not live by bread only, but by every word, that proceedeth, out of the mouth of God." And what I would say to you now is just this, that this precious Bread of eternal life, is Christ Himself: "I am that Bread of life, I have come from heaven to be that bread to you, my disciples, I have come from heaven to be the life of the dead, the salvation of the lost, the hope, and comfort of the miserable;" and it all comes from this, Himself being the Bread of life.

Just to go on with this beautiful figure, one may say this, that every grace that is in the soul, by the operation of the Spirit, must be nourished, by this Bread. Christ, is in everything, that is good in his people. There is nothing godly in them but what, if it is to continue, in any measure of strength, must be nourished, by Himself. If you have prayer, He is the object of it, and He also will nourish and strengthen it, by the operation of His Spirit. If you have submission, to the will of God, in affliction, that submission, must be maintained by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. If you have energy of faith, in regard to affliction, that must be maintained, by some nourishment, given by the Lord Jesus. If you can take up a cross, for an hour, you will put it down, unless that strength, be maintained by a given nourishment, the Bread of life. And that leads me to say what a blessing it is to know Christ. Think of it! "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." Luther says "Faith is a knowledge." That is true. Faith lives and moves and flourishes on truth,

which is proved, truth known, and received, on adequate evidence. The adequate evidence is, the inspired Scripture; faith perceiving this receives it, and this is the nourishing Bread, that is life to those who so believe, who so know. "He suffered thee to hunger." Why? Dear hungry people, you will live to thank God, that you were hunger-bitten; that you were hungry for real Bread; hungry for Jesus Christ. You will live to praise Him, that you were not able, to receive satisfaction, until He Himself became the satisfaction, that you sought. Why, we shall want eternity, to thank God, for His goodness to us, in calling us by His grace. I am sure there is nobody in this chapel who was as worldly as I was, and am still, naturally and shall be, a poor worldly creature. I did not want God, but I believe He wanted me. When He calls a sinner there is a miracle of grace. O He does miracles, when He calls sinners! He undertakes a great work, when He undertakes to save a sinner. We need much saving, and so He permits us to come, into such and such conditions, as we have here - hunger and then Bread, the precious Bread of life.

I must leave off, not feeling strong, I wish I could preach a little more about this blessed hunger. It is so wonderful. Why, sometimes you can hardly live for this hunger. You move about your house and your business all the while saying "Lord I want something; I want something; I want something from Thyself, something that I cannot get in the whole world. The universe, apart from this, would not suffice my soul. You cannot do without Him. Every room in your house may sometimes, so to speak, witness this: "Lord, I do want something." O I wish all of you were as hungry as that, ~~and~~ ~~that~~, and that that hunger were kept in your souls! "Do not leave me; let me not die of famine." I would hang on this, and urge it on your attention - real hunger. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled." Mark it. You may think it won't be but He says it shall be. "He fed thee." Rutherford says: "The Lord's wise, love feeds His people with hunger, and makes them fat with desertions." Strange way of nourishing that, but it is true, because when you are really hungry, you cannot keep away from God. Impossible. You must go to Him. It is not a question, "I will pray." It is just this: "I want something and God alone can give it to me, therefore I must go to Him.

I want a token for good and Christ must give you that.

May the Lord make us a hungry people. If you are not hungry for God, you may have a man in the pulpit, but you will have no bread broken. The state of hearers affects the ministry. This is according to scripture. The Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians: "I could not write unto you as unto spiritual". The inability was not in himself, but in their condition, and if you have no hunger, my dear friends, if I live a little longer and preach, you will have no bread by the preaching. But if you are made and kept hungry, then it may be that God will condescend to make a little use of me. In any case you will find you must go to God, for it. What shall I say? I will say this - thank God for hunger. You may say to me, "If you had my case you would not say that". I would. I say if you are hungry for God it becomes you to thank Him for hunger, hunger that the world cannot satisfy; only God, ^{only God} only God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost alone can do you good. Here is the Book, read it, but Jesus Christ, in heaven must come down into it and reveal it and apply it by the Holy Ghost. So you will live, not by bread alone, not by your natural nourishment, not by anything mental that could satisfy you naturally; but just, and only by this precious, precious, blessed bread of life, the Lord Jesus. Amen.
