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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 5 May 1929

Hebrews 11 v 6

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Having glanced this morning at the first part of the text, namely that we cannot please God without faith; that it is a terrible thing to be under the displeasure of God, as every unbeliever is; that faith in the heart gives a reality to the Being of God; to the sinner, in the sinner, God, through faith, becomes real, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not naturally seen; no, not seeable, this evening I would speak, as enabled, about the last part of the text. A believer in the Being of God is led by God to seek Him and the points to which I would draw your attention are these:-

First, the Object, the Object of seeking

Second, the manner of seeking, and

Third, the result of seeking - "that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him".

The Object is God. The Object is God under particular considerations - God in Christ. Out of Christ He must ever be "a consuming fire". In Christ He reconciles "the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". God in Christ is that wondrous attraction, attracting Object, that faith delights to look on. Every believer gets such sickening sights of himself, of his sin, his transgressions, his iniquities, his ignorance, his weakness, his liability to fall, his tendency to backslide; such sickening sights of himself in these particulars he gets as to make him utterly despair

in and of himself. He gets such sights of the world, empty of God, full of ill, the world the enemy of God. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God". Such sights he gets of this world that he is ever ready to flee from it. He gets such sights by faith of the hell deserving condition of his nature, and of his practice, as that he sees in himself there is nought but death. He gets such sights of the law as killing him to it for it is inexorable in its demands. It will bate not a single jot or tittle. It demands perfection and, finding not that, it utters its curses, and the believer gets such sights of that as make him feel that if he dies under that law, he is lost for ever. He gets such sights of affliction being the fruit of sin, that he does not wonder at times that he is afflicted. The wonder is that a holy, just God has permitted him to live so long. He gets such sights of the unprofitableness of his life, that he again and again is afraid that God will say to the gardener, cut this tree down, why cumbereth it the ground? He gets such sights of the church in her imperfections and himself the most imperfect member, that he wonders at the forbearance of God and, seeing in the Revelation, those letters to the seven churches, finding serious and solemn faults with five of them, he wonders whether these faults will all of them be charged on himself. He gets such sights of death and of the hereafter, such sights of the truth that, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be", as to make him cry mightily to be saved. I am speaking what some of you know. Now if there be nothing else to look at than this that I have named, O what a dismal, miserable, hopeless existence must the believer endure. To see nothing but sin, O it is dreadful. But God does set before faith another Object, even Himself incarnate, and this is an attracting sight. They said in Solomon's Song, "Draw me, we will run after Thee". That was a different sight from the sight that Israel got when they saw the law in its thunders and lightnings and smoke and voice on Mount Sinai. They fled from Him, as who would not, in like circumstances. But, seeing Him able to save, willing to save, loving to save, in every way suitable to sinners, she says, this poor church, "Draw me, we", the members of it, "will run after Thee". There is an Object for faith. You may dread, you do well to dread, being your own object, but if you get a sight, a pleasing sight, a heart drawing sight, a heart encouraging sight, of God in Christ, then you have the great Object which the Holy Spirit has taken infinite pains to discover and set up from the third chapter of

Genesis to the twenty second Revelation. All God's goodness and wisdom He displays in the revelation of Himself in Christ throughout the whole of Holy Scripture. There is a sight of God in the Babe of Bethlehem. It was no infant, mere infant, the wise men looked upon; no mere child to whom the shepherds were guided. The wise men of the east when they found the young child poured out their offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh, and worshipped Him. Doubtless they got a sight of the Eternal God in the child else they would have been idolators and God would have had nothing more to say to them than "Depart from Me." But He spake to them after that and directed them as to the way they should return to their home. They got a sight of God. Have we had that? Go worship at this child's footstool. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" inhabiting that child. Union with Him took place then that shall never be dissolved. Happy the soul that has ever got a sight of God in Christ in the incarnation, the birth of Mary's first born. And faith in the teaching of the Spirit gets a sight of the mighty God in the wilderness of temptation when the devil met the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus endured his awful presence and heard his terrible temptations and in each one overcame the devil which ensures the victory over the devil of every child of God. Ah if faith sees that it is a great sight to it, the mighty God conquering the god of this world, and that says He will conquer in the believer.

Christ who conquered for us once
Will in us conquer too

These believers get a sight of Christ going about "doing good, God being with Him," healing all manner of sickness and disease, feeding thousands of hungry people of a few loaves and fishes, raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, causing the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk. And this, as they see it, says in their hearts, you have no disease this Lord Jesus cannot cure, you have no want He cannot supply. A fulness is in Him, a fulness of grace, wisdom, power, compassion and goodness. And sometimes they are indulged with a sight of Christ in Gethsemane's garden. They see the Man Christ Jesus, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. They hear the voice of absolute submission to the will of God. He said, I came to do Thy will, and in the garden of

Gethsemane He said "Not as I will but as Thou wilt". Do you want submission to a present trouble? Do you want your will in a present affliction to be brought to lie straight with the will of God? See Him who can grant that, see the Lord Jesus who can give you that submission and bring your will to lie straight in a gracious unison with His almighty eternal Father's will. They get a sight of Him in the judgment hall, they see Him falsely accused, they find that He is dumb, that He made Himself, there, of no reputation, that, though he could with one word have smitten the false witnesses to the ground, and have convinced the audience that they were false witnesses against Him, He opened not His mouth. Are you accused falsely? Have you some stain on your character that you do not naturally, by any conduct of your own, deserve? Bear it and go to Him for strength to bear it, who opened not His mouth when He was falsely accused. And go one step more upward, even to Calvary, and there in the greatest brightness, the most illustrious wonder, you see Christ crucified, enduring the cross, despising the shame, and what an endurance it was. Enduring the cross which was death, which was death in a curse, which was death by His Father's frown, His Father's sword, His Father's chastisement, His Father's desertion. That was the death of Christ, the curse of the law poured like fire into His bones. O, if we got a sight of that now, I think we should almost say, let the service end, let us get home to weep over a dear Saviour and mourn over the sin that pierced Him and broke His guiltless heart. But it is a sight, it is a sight. This is the Object, this is the Object, Christ crucified. He was Paul's glory; He is the glory of all the saints, the glory of the greatest sinner to whom He is manifested by His Spirit. See Him rising from the dead. Mightily did the Apostle preach the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and teach that He was ascended into heaven, there seated at the right hand of God interceding, ever interceding, ever prevailingly interceding for His people.

Now dear friends this is the Object and rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. May we be afraid of a nebulous religion, afraid of being our own object and end. You will get many a sickening sight, as I have said, of yourselves as you are under the teaching of the Spirit, but it won't be to destroy you. Rather it is to save you and bring you to the Saviour of sinners, the Lord Jesus.

Now the seeking. I have used two words this evening respecting Christ, that He is attractive. There is in Him that which is essential in itself, attractive to sinners, and He is attracting; He does draw. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me". If you are not drawn to Christ, He is not lifted up for you, but if He is lifted up to you the necessary result is this, you go after Him. "I will draw all men unto Me". His natural attractiveness has a power to attract you; He is attracting. Seeking Him. And this seeking is seeking Him to be to the sinner what the sinner needs, what he feels to need. Some of you will instantly have got the inkling of the matter. You need forgiveness; He is exalted to give it. You need justification; He is "The Lord our righteousness". You need access to God; "I am the door" He says. The door is set open. He opens and no man shuts. You need a foundation to build your hopes upon; "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid". Now these are the things that every believer seeks, not once only, but continually as he is led into the depths of the fall, and into a sense of his own corruptions. This seeking is wonderful; it is the seeking of faith, it is the begging of faith, it is faith's entreaty, faith's going to the Lord with the petition "Pardon mine iniquity O Lord, for it is great". It is seeking new life to be poured upon your lazy, sleepy soul, from time to time. O the revivings that we need are many. We so naturally, religiously, go to sleep unless we are moved, quickened, revived and spoken to and drawn by the Holy Spirit. There is everything in us which tends to death. Everything in us tends to destruction. There is in every sin the nature of apostacy. How many of us believe that? How many of you people of God have looked at a bad, wicked thought, a rebellious feeling, a stubborn determination to do what you like and have seen in those sins the nature of apostacy, and have felt that you could say, Lord if these sins go to their natural victory, have their own tendency unchecked in me, they must land me in eternal ruin? I would press that on you. I believe it for myself. I solemnly believe that every sin - I would repeat it though it may seem tedious to you - every sin in a child of God and done by a child of God has in it the nature of apostacy, and nothing can stop it, but grace. Nothing can wash it away, but the blood of Christ. Nothing can bring the sinner to stand perfect before God but the righteousness of Christ and union with Him. Believing that, will greatly affect you sometimes, and if you escape the snare you will say

O may I flee from every sin as from death and hell. Sinner, hell is in your nature, the hell of sin. What a mercy it will be if the hell of punishment never comes into your nature. Did Jesus suffer the punishment due to your sins? Now the seeker says, that is what I want to know. Who can tell you? Only One, only the Spirit can bear witness with your conscience that Jesus Christ died for you, that His blood cleanseth you from all sin, and that Holy Spirit dwelling in you will bear that witness one day. Seeketh Him. It is a grand thing to be a seeker. One might express it thus, to be a seeker is to be a hungry person. Hunger is not disease; hunger is natural, healthy, proper. Spiritual hunger is not disease; it is healthy, it is proper. It will continue with all creatures who are born of God. Hunger says, I must have bread or die. We say in the hymn sometimes

Give me Christ or else I die

Give me Christ means manifest Him to me, reveal Him in me. May He be a foundation of life in me, the bread of life to me, the nourishment I need. This is seeking; seeking is wonderful, goes on sometimes more anxiously and zealously when you are moving about than at other times when you are on your knees. Seeking is the soul's panting after God, sometimes finding expression in ejaculations - "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" "Lord save or I perish". Seeking is laying a bad case before Christ, casting a lost soul into His arms, casting a lost soul upon the illimitable ocean of His merit and His mercy. A seeker is a subject of sovereign grace, and seeking is seeking for that grace. It is seeking to be made right, to be justified and sanctified in and by Jesus Christ. Seeking is expressing your desires. The desire of the righteous is a good desire; Solomon says it is "only good". The only good thing a man has is righteousness and that righteousness being in him, his desires are righteous desires after the Spirit. What a wonder it is to be a seeker. If you know yourselves to be sinners, you know that you are naturally averse to seeking, that seeking is not a pleasing occupation to the carnal mind. Look at the manner of this - diligently. You are not indifferent whether you find God or not if you are a seeker. You may be sleepy sometimes, you may in your sleep, knowing better in your judgement, say - "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him but I found Him not". Of course

she did not find Him there. She was too lazy for the moment, she had treated Him very basely. And now she said "I will rise". "I will arise". The prodigal said it, "I will arise, I will go to my father". And the church said - "I will go into the streets of the city and into the broadways, and I will ask everyone I meet, watchmen and others, saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? Have you seen Christ lately?" You may say to the minister, "Have you seen Him lately? Have you heard of Him? Have you heard from Him? You may say to a godly neighbour, have you seen Him?" And he may give you an answer which is quite correct in doctrine and experience, but it won't be an answer to you. So then you will have to pass by them all and go on seeking and seeking and seeking till you get hold of Him. She said "I held Him and would not let Him go". There was a diligence, an earnestness, a life, a power in her soul at that time that made her pass by everybody and everything in order that she might find her beloved. This diligence is furthered by special motions of the Spirit. O the solemn movings in your heart that you now and again experience as if you must put down your work, leave the company and turn aside and seek God. "O come to me, discover Thyself to me. Say to my soul, I am thy salvation"

Sometimes it is so, and sometimes the Holy Spirit uses circumstances. Trouble comes and conscience says, you brought this on yourself, and God may say "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself?" and you say, confessing sin, Yes, Lord, I have and much more and much worse I deserve. And God may use that as a means to stir you up diligently. There is a word in this epistle that is very solemn. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God", lest, though he profess much, he should miss the thing. Looking diligently, carefully watching every point and every movement, and every thing, saying, Lord make clean work, clear work in my soul. O let me not be deceived. Let me not be turned aside by anything. Seeking diligently. Sometimes He may use a temptation. The very thing the devil uses to drive you away, God may turn to a reason why you should diligently seek. Lord, do not let me be overcome by this. O keep me fearing Thee, Keep me, so to speak, keep me on my knees. Let me live on my knees. I speak, of course, metaphorically. Well it is a great thing to be a seeker, and a great thing to be a diligent seeker. A minister should ever be a seeker and will be as God is with Him and he

will seek, not only his own soul's profit but the profit of the people to whom he ministers.

And now a word as to the result. "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". "He is a rewarder". They believe it; having faith they believe that "He is a rewarder". Now here is a point, you may often ask Him without believing firmly that He will give you an answer, but faith will go in this direction. I believe He can if he will. "If Thou wilt Thou canst". Now that is a handle. May you use it. O for wisdom and skill to use such a plea. If Thou wilt, if Thou hast it in Thy heart to bless such a sinner as I am, Thou art able to do it. Did you ever get at this point - "If Thou wilt". Faith looks at His ability and says there is enough there; at His fulness, and says there is a supply there; at His righteousness and says there is justification there; at His blood, and says, there is cleansing there, if I but have an interest. Now the sense of want in your soul, the solemn uncertainty of your heart as to your case, the solemn fear that you may miss that prize "such numbers never seek, such numbers seek in vain", will bring you with some diligence to seek it. Lord, say to my soul, "I am thy salvation". I have enemies. Draw out the spear, stop up the way against them and say to my soul "I am thy salvation". What is the reward? What we deserve we know. What is this reward? It is nothing less than, and no other than, Himself. To a seeker one day He says "Behold Me, Behold Me". "I am found of them that sought me not". It was but a little that I passed by my friends and the minister that "I found Him whom my soul loveth". That is the reward. You say, I want repentance, and you will get it there. I want a broken heart; you will have it with Him. I want love to Him; you will feel it then when you have Him. I want to recline on Him; you will do it then.

Every grace and every favour
Comes to us through Jesus' blood

O forget it not. Every grace you covet, every good sign you fain would have, you have this way, when you get the reward. "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". Noah sought Him all the time he was building the ark. Moses sought Him when he turned from the treasures in Egypt to the Lord Jesus, sought Him when he kept the

Passover, and feared not the wrath of the king. Abraham saw Him all the time he was seeking "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God".

Now I think that I have, though very poorly, set before you great reasons for encouragement. One may say, you set the standard up very high, and my prayer is that I may never be allowed to lower it, but rather that God, in His infinite kindness, would put round you the bands of a Man and the cords of love, the bands of Jesus Christ and the cords of eternal love, and draw you to Him. "The rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". May He give us power to seek, and discover Himself to us, and the praise shall be His.

AMEN.