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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
on Sunday evening 3 May 1936

HEBREWS 12 v 2

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our  
our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him  
endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set  
down at the right hand of the throne of God"

We have before us an infinite subject, an infinitely glorious  
Person; an infinite sufferer having before Him the end of His  
sufferings; a joy set before Him, by reason of which He endured what  
was given to Him to endure. He despised the shame that was heaped  
upon Him and now He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.  
This is Jesus. "Looking unto Jesus". Every look a child of God casts  
on any other object and thinks perhaps to, at least, derive some help,  
that look is sin. I stated this morning respecting a place - by  
mistake I said that at Manchester last Lord's Day; I ought to have  
said at Leeds last Thursday evening - I said that it was a sin to  
attempt to become master of sin or overcome sin without this looking  
to Jesus. Look to yourself to overcome this sin or that lust and you  
are sure to be defeated. But if, by faith, you look to Christ you will  
find help. He is the author and finisher of our faith, possessing  
everything that the people of God need, which He gives to them,  
sending His Spirit, creating faith in them by His Spirit, and  
becoming the proper object of faith for salvation. And we have this  
evening, for a short time, as God may help me and give me strength, to  
speak a little of these separate things

First, the enduring of the cross

Second, the despising of the shame

Third, the joy that was set before Him, moving Him to endure  
shame and despising and

Last, sitting down on the right hand of the throne of God

First, the cross. The cross stands for the whole of the efficacious, vicarious work and death of Christ, Enduring it was passively receiving the curse of the law, the smiting of Him by the sword of justice which His Father called upon to awake. To endure it was to bear it properly, passively. Like liquid fire the curse was poured into Him. We can have no proper conception of what that was. If we have felt the wrath of God in our consciences, and some of us have done, it will give us no proper conception of the curse that was poured into Jesus Christ, and He passively received it, He endured it. He had no rebellion, no rejection of what was poured into Him; no objection to it. He had undertaken to bear what was due of punishment and curse to His people. It is very solemn and we are this evening to remember Him in this endurance of the cross. There are two things on the cross ever to be noticed and borne in mind by us. By the Holy Spirit may we be enabled to observe them. First is endurance. As I have said, He passively received the curse of the law. Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. We do not very passively receive trouble until grace comes and enables us, but He passively received and endured the curse of God, the curse of the law, and the smiting of the sword.

The second thing on the cross for us to observe is His High Priestly work, for He did a work on the cross. If He did not, woe to us, but He did actively, as our High Priest, offer Himself unto God, and if the Holy Spirit should make these two things of Christ on the cross out to us, it would beget reverence and awe and sorrow and joy. If the Holy Spirit makes out to us these two things of infinite importance and merit it will do us good. I just name them to you; I have not enough knowledge, grace, nor ability, nor anointing to enter deeply into these two infinite points. Amazing; see the Person, the holy, harmless, undefiled Son of God, Jesus; see Him there, sinless in Himself, burdened with sin and curse for His people. Shall we come to this table indifferent? Shall we approach and take the elements without some regard to this? He did suffer; He did work on the cross. The cross, if it is revealed to suffering saints here, will beget life, liveliness, spirituality, repentance, happy contrition, comfort and peace in our souls. It will tell us that though we are perfectly impure, absolutely lost in ourselves, there is in Him

plenteous redemption. It will fix our affections, at least for a moment. I am sorry that I know painfully what a gadding, unsteady, wandering spirit is, but something does fix the soul. If anything will fix the soul, if anything will move you, move me, to say - "My heart is fixed" - it is a revelation by the Holy Ghost of the cross and a suffering Saviour on it, an offering Priest on it, enduring wrath, making a sacrifice of Himself, and it will tell us this - no money, no price for this

I ask no price for all I give  
But O remember Me

Call to your memory if you can, O child of God, call up the days of your misery, call up the recollection of your deliverance, of your hope given to you by a sight of this Saviour on the cross. What holy affection this calls for from us, what humble reverence it calls for from us as we approach His table and the Supper which He kindly instituted, that we might therein, thereby, remember Him. What shall I say. Here are poor sinners, miserable creatures in self, with sin enough every day to bring death and curse to us; but every morning the Jew was to offer a lamb, every evening he was to offer a lamb, which said, daily sin calls for daily sacrifice, and the one offering of Jesus answered all that, and there is to be a daily confession of sin. Confession accompanied with bitter conviction will always be profitable to us. You will remember that the Paschal Lamb had to be eaten with bitter herbs. Bitter herbs are, even to this day, eaten by Christians when they eat the Paschal Lamb. "Rare virtues" says Joseph Hart in that beautiful hymn

Rare virtues now these herbs contain;  
The Saviour sucked out all their bane;  
My mouth with these, if conscience cram,  
I'll eat them with the Paschal Lamb. (153)

When you have conviction, O Christian, when you see your sins and feel them, when you are ashamed of them, you have got bitter herbs, but the Paschal Lamb is to be eaten with them. You wont eat them alone, and there is no curse in them. Think of it! every true sense of sin done by you, given to you by the Holy Spirit is a bitter herb but there is

no curse in it. Lay the hand of your faith O believer on the head of the sacrifice. He endured the cross, and the cross is the life and the death and the love and peace and the hope and the strength of all the people of God. Jesus died; we live through Him. He partook of flesh and blood, He gives us His Spirit. He took our sins, He gives us His sinlessness, His holiness. He took our guilt, He gives us His righteousness; that is, if we are His people. What is the cross to us? Have we seen it? Have we had a view of Him there, nailed to the accursed tree? The Son of God bare our sins in His own body on the tree; He poured out His soul unto death. And can we be unmoved? Yes, alas, we can be unmoved when we see this, but if the Spirit comes and brings it to view, we shall not be unmoved. May there be no unmoved, no untouched communicant this evening. It is a solemn thing for us to come to this table and take the broken bread, for that represents the broken body of the Lord Jesus. "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ" He endured the cross.

He despised the shame. They put Him to open shame. They spat in His face, they smote Him with their hands, they mocked Him by putting a royal robe on Him, they punished Him by putting a crown of thorns on His sacred head. They said before this that He had a devil and was mad. They said He was a gluttonous man and a winebibber and the friend of sinners. They reproached Him because He ate with sinners; He received sinners and ate with them. All this He despised. One word from His lips could have consumed them, but He patiently endured the cross; patiently, wonderfully, despised the shame. Underneath all that was the suffering inflicted on Him by His Father and by the curse of the law. What was there before Him to lead Him to all this? "The joy that was set before Him". Something was set before Him. It is written in the Psalms by Jesus Himself, in the spirit of prophecy: "I have set the Lord always before Me; because He is at My right hand I shall not be moved." That was the word of Christ. "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage." That was Christ. What is the heritage? The Church which God gave Him to redeem, and this was the joy; He saw that; He rested from His labour. My own personal judgement is this, that the moment He uttered that important, infinitely blessed, word: "It is finished", the smile of

God fell upon Him. His soul was not left in hell a moment after that. "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell". Could One who had paid a debt be justly detained in prison? Could the suffering Jesus be continued in suffering when He had paid all, endured all, exhausted the curse, and brought in, by that, an everlasting righteousness? He rose from hell; hell, not the abode of fallen angels and lost men; No, He never descended into that hell. Hell of punishment, just punishment, He endured and when that was ended He rose. Dear friends, it is one thing to say this; it will be another, and a better thing for the Spirit to reveal it to us and to say to our hearts, Jesus rose for you. The moment He said "It is finished", this is His rest. I cannot doubt that the rest of Christ took place the moment He said: "It is finished". He had nothing more to do. May the Lord open it to us; the Holy Spirit reveal it to us, and give us grace and faith to labour to enter into that rest; to enter into it here below. Yes, men do not go to heaven to find for the first time that holy rest. Christ rests in His love; Christ rests in His church, and His people rest in it when they rest in Him.

"The joy". Poor tempted, falling, failing, ignorant, weak child of God, the Holy Ghost only can make you believe that Jesus saw you when you were given to Him by His Father in eternity. He saw you ruined in the fall, yet loved you notwithstanding all; died for you, rose for you. O what a joy He had; think of it. You say, I say, what, the Son of God enduring the curse joyfully because He saw me given to Him? God gave me to Him, gave Him a commandment to die for me, and He obeyed that commandment. Oh it will melt you when you get it. It will give you repentance of which you will never repent. It will give you sweetness, happiness, contrition, and comfort and peace you can hardly imagine till you get them. "The joy that was set before Him"; He entered upon it.

So in the last place, "And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" What does this include? It includes this first that you, O people of God here; that the saints in the whole world; that all who are with Him in heaven now; sat down with Him, in Him. What a mystery, what a mystery the resurrection of Christ is; not only of His sacred body, but with Him the whole Church rose.

One in the tomb; one when He rose;  
One when He triumphed o'er His foes;  
One when in heaven He took His seat,  
While seraphs sang all hell's defeat

If that is true, where is the power can pluck you from the right hand of God. Think of it, this is implied also, that now, having finished the work that His Father gave Him to do, having pleased His Father in all of it, His Father gave Him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess. Blessed be God, some poor people here have bowed the knee of humble adoration, of spiritual admiration, and our tongues have confessed to His great and glorious Name. Can you deny that in regard of yourselves, some of you? A living hope wont allow you to deny it. This Jesus; we worship God when we worship Him. Shining through His sacred humanity is His eternal Deity, and we worship Him. A question came to me this afternoon - "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and my heart said, yes I do. Dost thou believe, O poor trembling one, who would fain embrace Him; dost thou believe on the Son of God? The test. "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation". It is God's will. He that believeth on the Son is sure - not in himself perhaps - but sure of getting to heaven. He is secured, though he is not secure often in his experience. That is implied. He is a King here, a Priest; there a Priest, also a King. What does He do now? Intercedes. "Ever living to intercede for all that come unto God by Him". Well, some of us have come to God by Him many times. We have come in prayer, in contrition, with confession. We have come to God by Him, as Paul says to the Ephesians: "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father", and there we have had the highest privilege of pouring out our heart before Him. There, sometimes a smile has been given, a word has been whispered, a touch has been granted, relief has come; relief from burdens, ease from care, and comfort and consolation with confidence. "Set down at the right hand of the throne of God" ever living to make intercession. You do not feel able perhaps at times poor, tried soul to plead earnestly, but that groan, that Spirit born groan, that goes out of your heart wordless, comes before Him and He makes intercession. "I bought him with My blood." Perhaps there is a sinner here in the court, the court of God. He stands with filthy garments and the devil is at his

right hand to claim him, and there comes, if I may so put it, there comes in this great One. He looks at the devil and, as it were, says, this is no case for you; you have no right here, you have no claim on this sinner. O, look at his filthy garments, may be suggested, and some good people would say, O it is only dust, it can be blown away. No, Jesus does not say that. Accusations are made; Jesus does not deny them - they are true - but this is what He says, I bought him with My blood, he is Mine. I paid his debt, I bore his suffering and curse; he is Mine. When that comes into the conscience by the Holy Ghost, liberty is felt; the sinner leaves, so to express it. And continue it to the end of that, he leaves the court cleared, clean. O all owing to intercession. "Able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Do not make excuses poor sinner, they wont stand. Make all the confessions you can, all the pleas you can offer on this ground, the Name, the blood of Jesus, the cross of Jesus; that will do.

Now see the honour, the glory given to Him as at the right hand of God. The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed; the Lamb as it had been slain prevailed to open the book, the book containing your cares, your troubles, your difficulties; everything concerning you in holy providence in the hand of this great One now. Not in the hand of naked Deity, so to speak, in the hand of the God-Man, the triumphant warrior who came with garments dyed in blood and who, in answer to the question - whence did you come? - I that travelled in the greatness of My strength; this Jesus. What is to be the final issue when the great angel shall plant one foot on the land and the other foot on the sea, and proclaim that time shall be no longer? Where will the whole world be, from Adam to the last inhabitant of the earth? Where will all be when the sea is commanded to give up her dead and all the graves shall open and the grand Assize set? And then the question, where shall I be? Where will you be? Do you think of it? Do you pray about it? May I be found at Thy right hand. Is that it? And what will He say to people who mourned and wept and prayed and confessed and humbly believed and clave to Him with their hearts in the midst of all their discouragements and failures and sins? What of you, who went to a poor child of God and gave him a cup of cold water? What of you who paid a visit to a sick saint? What of you who clothed a poor person, a child of God? Well, you say, nothing of course. He

says, you visited Me in prison, you clothed Me when I was naked, you fed Me when I was hungry. O but we did not. You did it unto the least of My little ones; you did it to Me. And then, O then, this will be it; may we be there. "Come ye blessed of My Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Lift up your heads O saints of God, for now your salvation is nearer than when you believed. Look to the end, sin done with, the devil overthrown, cast out, and you perfectly holy, perfectly just, received up into glory, and all this will be, as long as time lasts with the saints, by precious faith felt and anticipated. "Looking unto Jesus" away from all things which would intervene and interfere. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith". Now hungry ones, who perhaps are saying, it is beyond us, why what is it you want? What are you hungering for? What are you praying for? O we want Christ; we are hungering for Christ. We are praying for a manifested interest in Him. We are praying for the witness of the Spirit. And will this compassionate, gracious Saviour turn His back on you when you go to Him? Will He say, I will have nothing to do with you? What did He come for? Why did He come from heaven? He came to save the lost. I like that word "lost" in the gospel sense. It does not mean lost in hell; He came not to save those. But when a man is lost in himself, lost in his feelings, lost as to all power and all goodness and all help in self and all wisdom; no hope, no help, in self, crying, sighing, what shall I do, what shall I do? Whither shall I flee from the wrath to come which I have deserved? Listen, if you can: "Look unto Me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour."

AMEN.