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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 15 April 1928

ISAIAH 49 V 23

And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their
queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with
their faces toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy
feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for
they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.

The Holy Ghost in this chapter gives out from the Father great promises to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promises happily extend to Gentiles. May they be made over to you, to me. They are infallible, must be fulfilled somewhere, in some people. The whole earth, so to speak, is embraced in this chapter. The isles are to wait for God and hear Him, distant lands are to be brought into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Of His government and peace there shall be no end. To Him is given an everlasting dominion and the kingdom that shall never cease. To be His subjects, O what a mercy it is. Christ complains that He laboured in vain, spent His strength for nought, for He came unto His own, His own people, and they received Him not. They said He had a devil and was mad. They derided Him, hated Him without a cause, and though He went about doing good, God being with Him, they imputed evil motives, and when He cast out devils, they said He did it by the prince of the devils. And when His time had come to depart from this world they crucified Him. They said "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him." But His Father said to Him "In an acceptable time have I heard Thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped Thee: and I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." This great Person, Jesus Christ, is, in His divine Person, the self existent God, with His Father and with the

Holy Ghost. The eternal Son of God, of the substance of the Father begotten. No inferiority is in His divine Person; hold that fast, dear friends. He spoke to Moses and when Moses asked His Name, what he should say the Name who sent him was, He said: "I AM THAT I AM". And when His enemies, in the days of His sojourn here, spoke to Him and asked Him about His origin, He said "I am", (John 8 v 58) and if I said I know not My Father I should be a liar like unto you (John 8 v 55) Respecting the eternal deity and Sonship of the Lord Jesus, may you never be in doubt. But there is a subordination of this Person as incarnate to the Father, and as the Man Christ Jesus He received promises from His Father; promises of help in time of need, and we should be very thankful for this for He is our own forerunner, not only as entering into heaven, but as in the way to heaven. His path was one of tribulation. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In His human nature He was dependent and His Father promised to help Him and He had faith in His Father and in the promises of His Father and said: I know that I shall not be confounded. He is near Me that justifieth Me against all those who traduce Me.

This great word I have read I shall not particularly take up, excepting the last clause. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." And in speaking of this I shall first of all speak of the Person who says this, speak of Him who speaks. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." That is a glorious character that the Apostle Paul gives of God, and Christ in God is here: "God that cannot lie", and all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen unto the glory of God by us" in whom they are fulfilled.

Now in speaking a little of Him I would direct your attention first of all to His fulness, the fulness of Christ. It is two-fold. The fulness of the Godhead bodily. Ah if you see Him as He is God, you will see all that is proper to deity in Him. Whatever perfection deity has, Christ has - eternity, immensity, incapable of extension, immutable; "I am the Lord, I change not". Omnipotent; of which truth He gave abundant proof in the days of His flesh on earth. Omniscient - He knows what is in you; what is in me; what is in all men. "Can any hide in secret places from Me?" Omnipresent - He surrounds us. This eternal fulness is in our own nature. May we honour Christ the Son even as we honour the Father. It is the Father's will that it should

be so. The second fulness that He possesses is the fulness of human nature. Not unimportant to see this, for our nature as we have it is sinful, utterly ruined and the ruin is expressed in the prophecy of Jeremiah: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Now if you feel a concern about God and how you are to stand before Him through eternity - you must, as looking at and into, as you may be led, your own fallen nature - what can you do but despair? A hopeless condition is ours through the fall. Hopeless in the law from which we cannot absolve ourselves, which will not give us up of itself without satisfaction. Hopeless with respect to our understanding - it is darkened; with respect to our affections for they are alienated; with respect to the condition we are in; dead in trespasses and sins, defiled constantly. Can you do other than utterly despair as you look at your fallen nature, at the law under which you are, which binds you? Well then, if the Holy Ghost opens your eyes to see your own nature, without sin, united to God, to see the Incarnate Word possessing all that human perfection that you must have if you are to go to heaven, this, this fulness will be attractive, hopeful. It will hold out to your gaze a perfection that God is pleased with and which, as you receive, will be imputed to you. Here, by faith, you come for supplies of grace. By faith you stand on this Person. By faith you will sing with Rutherford, as he is made to sing

"I stand upon His merit"

I stand upon His Person, I stand upon what He is. O the merit of this Person, who can express it? When you speak of infinitude you see the unseeable. You cannot measure it, you cannot weigh it. You can only believe it and, believing it, receiving it, rejoice in it. But there is an immensity, an immense fulness, an infinitude of merit, worthiness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, there is a completeness of fulness in His work, His two-fold work; an absolute obedience and vicarious death leaving nothing to be required of those who are justified without works. All the duties of the church, all her liabilities, everything that a holy God requires, the Lord Jesus presented to His Father in His work saying: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And when on the cross, helpless there as it

appeared to the unbelieving, mocking Jews, "He offered Himself without spot to God". Remember always that the death of Christ was an act, an act of His own. "I lay down My life." When we die we shall die involuntarily. When He died it was His own act. When the high priest took into the holiest of all the blood that was shed on the day of atonement, he was then doing an act for others. So, when Jesus offered Himself without spot, He did a vicarious thing. Here is the hope, here is the life, here is the strength of the people of God. Here is their argument when they pray; here is their reason which they offer by faith to God for forgiveness. My brethren, this Person in His work, is full.

He is full, as in heaven; a full Christ in heaven. "Whither", says Paul "the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus", which delivered us from the wrath to come. And there He is; O what a Person, a representative, representing sinners who come to Him, to His Father; representing His Father to them. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also". Fulness of power, fulness of love, fulness of grace, fulness of compassion, fulness of knowledge of all that is needed and fulness of an acquired ability to sympathise with suffering saints. He is able to succour them that are tempted in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted. This is the God of our text. Look ye saints, look on Him, gaze on His eternity as you may have faith. Gaze on His sacred humanity united to His eternal Person. See the love that made Him fly from heaven to the cross; the love that made Him disregard the shame, even despising it. See His greatness in His humiliation. See His love when He suffered Himself to be arrested, to have His Name and honour taken away in the day of His humiliation. And when you look on Him, you look on Him whose word I have read to you for a text. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me". Always regard the foundation of things and when, as you hope, you offer prayer, look to Him and on Him in whose Name, and for whose sake, you draw nigh unto God. If the foundation is not good, it wont bear you, but here is a foundation that will bear, sustain, and bring you honourably through.

In the next place I am to look at these people who are waiting and the subject is worthy of attention. Waiting says several things. First that it is an attitude of spirit that is quite different from

indifference. It is an expectation; it has an eye to Him to whom the people come. It expresses a need felt. It is not a matter about which you can say, well it is of no concern whether I receive or do not receive. You say this:

Give me Christ or else I die

Grant me to know Him, to be in felt union with Him, As the branch is in the vine, to receive its fructifying sap, so may I be in the Lord Jesus. Grant me what I desire, a knowledge of Him, communications from Him. Very interesting people these are, but not interesting to the world. To whom then are they interesting? To God. O think of it; if you are not indifferent to Him, this is true, eternally true, He is not indifferent to you. If you cannot do without Him, this is true, He cannot do without you. If you must have Him, as your heart feels and speaks, He must have you as He purchased you with His own blood. And if you are interesting to God, what matters it if the world does not know you or, if it knows you, it should despise you. You may properly say

Careless, myself a dying man,
Of dying men's esteem,
Happy O God if Thou approve
Though all beside condemn

Did you ever get near to Him, this great Being? Did you ever feel near to Him? Did you ever get a smile from Him? Did He ever say a word to you? Let us look at this waiting and what is waited for. What do you wait for if you wait? There is a definiteness in waiting. What does the watchman wait for? The morning. He has a definite thought and an expectation with respect to the morning. The night may be cold and the hours long and dreary to him. He sticks to his watch because it is his duty, but he is waiting, he is watching for the morning. Now, says the Psalmist, of this man, I wait for God more than he waits for the morning. Can you say as much as that? When you think of a watchman, could you say it does not matter how earnestly he watches for the morning, I watch still more earnestly for the Lord, and I wait for Him. This means that you believe He can come to you. Do you believe that? Why, said the Psalmist: "When wilt Thou come unto me"? Manifestations of God to sinners the Scriptures show to be what the

Lord not only can make, but has promised to make. A waiting man sometimes has a promise in view

Thou callest burdened souls to Thee
And such O Lord am I

If waiting is definite it means this, that the person who waits knows something about what he waits for. Vital religion is not a nebulous, shapeless thing. There is in it that which is definite. I wait for the God of salvation. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God." Now there are several things in the Scriptures respecting the Lord Jesus which, by faith, become the object of desire and of waiting, as, first of all, the salvation of the soul. "In God is my salvation". "Hope thou in God" said a waiting man to his soul when his soul was cast down within him. "Hope thou in God". "Truly my soul waiteth for God". "Salvation is of the Lord" and it is in the Lord. He is salvation. I have given Thee for a covenant of the people. Thou art My salvation unto the ends of the earth. Salvation is from something; salvation is to something. Salvation is from condemnation and that salvation means justification. Philosophy and science falsely so called, will tell us that justification, that which we want, is not possible; that if a man has done an evil thing it attaches to him and it cannot be taken from him. Among men that is true, but what is impossible with men is possible with God. Justification has relation to a sinner; it is related to a person who is arraigned and charged and who pleads guilty to the charge brought against him, and stands before God in that guilt, and knows that there is no hope of escape from that charge and from that guilt in himself. But when he sees by faith the Lord Jesus as having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, then the sinner looks for that to be imputed to him and imparted. Justification was not written for Abraham's sake alone but also for all others who shall believe on Him who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. And as justification is an act among men wherever it takes place, so justification is the act of God on a person who is charged. If you are convinced of sin, you wont be able to walk in that word in Solomon's Proverb of a wicked person who wipes his mouth and says, it is nought, it is nought. You will sympathise with Joshua standing in filthy garments before the Lord and wont be

able to take off your own filthy garments. You may shed your garments but not your sins. These will be filthy garments that you cannot remove. But then the Lord can and a waiting man believes that and he wants it; he seeks it; he asks for it; he looks for it, and gets energy sometimes, great energy put into his faith, and he begins to argue and plead and urge. He deals with God; he deals with a good God. He deals with God in his own nature, and through Him he deals with the Father and this inward dealing is by the energy of the Spirit. He maketh intercession in a sinner with groanings which cannot be uttered. Is justification before you? Is it what you need, what you desire? Do you wish to stand before a holy God as justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses? Ah there is a place in heaven for people who are fit for it, and for people who have a title to it. They are fit for it and they have a title to it to whom is imputed righteousness without works. Having shown the impossibility of justification by what a man can do, the Apostle Paul says, "We conclude that a man is justified without the deeds of the law". He is not to bring his penny; he is not to bring a good feeling; he may not bring anything in the form of one single bit of righteousness wrought out by himself. He must come, he does come, he is enabled to come, as a person who is, in himself, lost. O dreadful word to a quickened conscience "lost", and being lost he is saved. I am glad that justification is without the deeds of the law. Now if you wait for this it won't be easy. Many difficulties are in the way of waiting people; many enemies stand in the way and threaten a waiting person. Unbelief, the chief of all, says you will never get it and if you have long waited, if you have offered perhaps thousands of prayers for this great blessing and as yet you have it not, then O what havoc will the enemy, unbelief, make with you, all to destroy you sometimes. Now wait on Him; wait as well as you can and let not the enemy drive you from your knees, so to put it. You may often pray without kneeling, and more often pray without words than with words, but O do not be driven away by a voice that says you will never get it. There are but two voices you should ever listen to in this great matter. One is the voice of the Holy Scripture. Does the Scripture ever tell a sensible sinner, one who knows, who feels his need, that he may not go to God and wait on Him? No! emphatically No! No bar will you ever find in God's Word in the way of a waiting sinner. And the other voice is the voice of the

Spirit in the heart, and I am bold to say that a waiting sinner never gets a word from God in his heart telling him it is no use waiting. Any other voice that comes to discourage you, to weaken you, God give you power not to listen to it, reject the suggestion; it dishonours Him; it hurts you. "Wait on Him, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait I say, the Psalmist speaks, wait I say on the Lord". When people have got this they are apt, just in the first enjoyment of it, to think that all is done. Now they will sail well and easily, comfortably to heaven. They reckon not on what awaits them and it is a mercy it is so. It is good of God to hide, as it were, from us at the beginning that we are not to go to heaven without difficulties, but they do come. Sing while you can, when you can; sing as long as you can. The days of mourning will come and when they come they come from various sources. The chief of all is indwelling sin. I think it is observable that the Apostle Paul never calls himself a wretched man with respect to his troubles from men, to his persecutions, and the labours he had to engage in for the good of the churches. As far as I remember in his case the only times he calls himself a wretched man is when he felt the power of sin, the defeating power of sin, the law of sin in his members. Do not complain of your outside things. If you have grace to complain of sin go on complaining, but mind to whom you make your complaint. Do not make complaint to men. When you fast, wash your face. But when you go to God in secret lay it all before Him. Now this is the chief thing, indwelling sin. And what do you want? Grace to help you to bear the burden; grace to help you to "Fight the good fight of faith"; to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; never to patch up an inglorious peace with your enemy; never to say a confederacy with your enemy, but to go on opposing, resisting, as well as you can and going to this great, blessed God, for grace, grace to help in time of need. And what is needed for all this is the whole armour of God which is described in the Ephesians, but you have to wait for it perhaps. God does not give it all out at once to you. A little grace today and a little tomorrow, but that complete armour you may say you do not wear, you have not got it, and therefore you are so often shamefully defeated. Wait on God. The Holy Spirit is given to bring to the people of God that great armour, that sufficient armour, that will enable them to resist and to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Those of you who are younger in the ways of God may

hardly be able to enter into this and if one should say it will become an increasing wonder to be brought honourably through this trial and that conflict with indwelling sin, you may perhaps wonder, but when you get older you will find it to be so. To be brought through any particular dispensation, exercise, and testing with regard to indwelling sin you will find to be very very strenuous indeed but wonderful to say with Paul at any time in regard to any particular conflict you might have, I thank God; with my mind I serve the law of God; I Paul serve the law of God. With the flesh, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, the law of sin. Does not the Lord take offence with this? No. Why not? Because He sees your will is with Him and not with the law of sin. If you could more closely observe that, it might sometimes be a help. Which way is your will? Where was Mary's will? Expressed indeed it was in her choice. Where would you be if you could? Where would you live if you might? Sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Having grace to cleave to Him, follow Him, love Him, obey Him, honour Him in all your life. Wait on Him; wait on Him; He has got it. Plenty of grace is in Him. Armour He has; everything needed to defend you; everything.

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me". They wait for grace to sanctify afflictions to them. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". When the pressure is on, when the chaff is to be separated from the wheat, it is difficult; we need grace. You may have set your heart too much on something here and it displeases Him who is jealous of your affection and so He sends some trouble to fetch you to your knees, to bring you to the throne of His heavenly grace, and there is a spirit in a child of God that is very very apt to think that a cross is a sword, that God does not intend good in and by the affliction. Now he has to wait on God that he may walk in that word "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." They have to wait for grace in all their times.

Now the promise is this, and I must only say a word about it: "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." There are some things we are ashamed, and properly ashamed of, and the more grace we have, the more we shall be ashamed of them. Ashamed of an unprofitable

life, ashamed of the many backslidings, ashamed of the deflectings on the right hand and on the left hand, ashamed of a carnal mind often prevailing, and many many things we have to be ashamed of. I think the chief of all is this, ashamed of your unkindness to the Lord. He does take it unkindly as from our hands; an unkindness done to Him when we neglect Him as did the church when He knocked at her door and said, open to Me, and she said, I cannot, which meant, I won't. Are you ever ashamed of the way you have treated Him? It would not be possible for me to express my own sense of shame in this particular as in many others, but they shall not be ashamed of the God they wait on. No shame here; no blush on the face here. A good God, a great God, a gracious God, a faithful God, a loving God. And they shall not be ashamed of the waiting. It may have been long but it is profitable. They shall not be ashamed of their prayers. Now someone may be contradicting me instantly and say we are ashamed of our prayers. You may be ashamed of your words; you may be ashamed of your half heartedness in prayer many a time; you may be ashamed of the unbelief that accompanied you when you went to the throne of grace and there hindered you, and you may be ashamed of an Ishmael who often mocks, but you won't be ashamed of those groanings which you could never utter. Do not be too particular about expression, about words in prayer. I have often said, as you know, words are but the dress of prayer. The essence, the life, the energy, the acceptableness of prayer is in the heart, the spirit, the mind, the trend of the mind Godward. Seeking His honour, His presence, His love, His grace, His mercy and of that kind of praying you will never be ashamed. Why, He gives an answer to it. You will say my groanings have got blessings and I have got them in my heart. You will thank Him for hearing you. They shall not be ashamed; not ashamed of the cross of Christ by which their blessings came; not ashamed of the death of Christ - they live by that; not ashamed of His righteousness - they are justified in that; not ashamed of His kindness to them which has lifted them up many and many a time; not ashamed of omnipotence clothed in their own nature for that has lifted them out of the dust and taken them off the dunghill and set them with princes, even the princes of God's people. Not ashamed of Himself. My God my glory, says a sinner sometimes, even using the Lord's own Word: "Thy God thy glory", thy Saviour, thy Redeemer, thy righteousness, thy Head, thy life, thy all. Not ashamed. When won't they be ashamed? When they get an answer. When

won't they be ashamed? When they are in heaven, when their dear Redeemer says to them "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world".