

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham
on Sunday evening, 24th May, 1936.

Text: Isaiah 55 v.1.

"Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Bankrupts, fraudulent bankrupts, beggars, discontented are welcome to this market; are invited to come and trade here. If this market suits any of you, gladly you may be hearing about it; for it is a singular market; the Owner of it, the possessor of all it's wares, is Jehovah. He set it up in His decree in Eternity; He furnished it in His purpose in Eternity; He knew the kind of people with whom He would deal, and made provision accordingly; He knew He would have very proud people to deal with and so He takes means to empty them of their supposed possessions. He knew they would, gladly, if they could, make Him a debtor, so He took means, and takes means always to bring them in such poor wretched bankrupts, so ashamed of their bankruptcy, acknowledging that it was self-procured; that they gladly listen to the invitation He most mercifully sends out to them. If any of you have wares of your own, you are not welcome to this market. If any of you think you have got a penny wherewith to buy something, you will have to go to another market, for this market will not have your penny, but if you can say honestly before God, we have no money, no goodness, nothing but death, corruption, evil of every sort and kind; we have hearts like stone, affections like ice, consciences hard, minds blind, wills perverse, nature utterly corrupt, but we would fain be altered, changed and blessed; then as a poor unworthy minister, I venture to say to you, welcome to this market, and to bring to your notice, first of all the Person who has set up this market, the Owner of it, the owner of all the wares, everything mentioned and everything implied. How worthy of notice this is, Who could meet the myriads, unnumbered multitudes now in heaven, multitudes on the way to heaven, needing the provision here mentioned, in heaven they are partaking of God's glory; on earth, the church militant, the poor and the needy, come to this wondrous Person who possesses what here is mentioned.

Bring no money, price, or aught,
No good deeds, nor pleasing frames,
Mercy never can be bought;
Grace is free; and all's the Lamb's.

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He is the owner of all. He owes nothing to any poor creature. We owe Him everything we have, but we refuse Him through our pride and abominable wickedness, but in regard of the elected redeemed church, He says, "Now this people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth my praise.(Isaiah 43.v 21.) the praise of My grace, My free grace, My matchless omnipotent grace, My endless love, My omnipotent pity, my exhaustless store. Who is He but Jesus. We would lift Him up; you who need Him and know Him, would have Him lifted up; lifted up according to His Word- "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12 v.32.) He draws sinners. Jesus draws sinners. He came to call sinners, not the righteous; to call sinners to repentance. Why, angels rejoice over repenting sinners, how much more that blessed One who bought repentance for sinners; who made them repenting sinners; who keeps them all their days repenting sinners. Christ is the sum and substance of the gospel. Christ is the righteousness of every believer who believes in his own filthy rags and who believes in the spotless robe wrought by Christ.

Ho everyone that thirsteth. We understand naturally what thirst is. Take it here- Everyone that thirsteth for knowledge, that diligently seeks wisdom. Knowledge of whom? Knowledge of what? Do you thirst for knowledge that cannot be obtained in the world; that no science can give you; that no natural understanding can procure you? Do you thirst for that glorious One who says here, "Come and buy." Knowledge. It is not good that the soul be without knowledge. The simple without knowledge passeth on and is punished. When you have wisdom you stop to consider what you are and where you are and wither your steps are tending; and when you perceive that in you by nature nothing is right, nothing can be right, that you must needs be saved from yourself, then you thirst for the knowledge of Him. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God. and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."(John 17 v.3.) What a wonder that any earth-bound creature should be so dealt with and taught by the Holy Ghost as to say- I pant, I thirst for the living God. As a thirsty land, I thirst for the living God. A grand point this, in religion, to thirst for God, for the knowledge of Him. No sinner will enter heaven to become acquainted there for the first time with God. All who enter

heaven, enter heaven because they were brought and taught to know God in this life. Ho everyone that thirsteth for knowledge; knowledge of God means a great deal. One might say with truth, that all saving religion has in it as an essential- knowledge. We are ignorant creatures. Pharaoh, in the pride of his countenance and heart, when God was named to him, said, "I know not the Lord; who is the Lord." (Exodus 5 v 2.), and you would say the same if you spoke honestly, you who do not know God, Who is He. When men are taught by the Holy Ghost, then they say, -We have seen God and He is terrible, because He is holy, He is terrible, because He is just; He is terrible to us because we have offended Him. What shall we do. Then comes this great thing-thirst. Can I know Him so as to be saved by Him? Then says Jesus- "O thirsty one, come to Me." In the last day that great day of the feast, of which we were reading just now- Jesus stood and cried, "Let him that is athirst come unto Me and drink." Do you thirst for the knowledge of Christ? God is there, Christ is God, Christ in our nature is God. "Come to Me." He says. The knowledge of Christ is given by the Holy Ghost. Oh thirsty soul you cannot thirst in vain for this. One with natural intelligence, may thirst for natural knowledge; he may wish to know this or that science, and study and work, yet may miss it. No one thirsting for this Christ can miss Him. No. When God sets a sinner on thirsting for Christ, Christ will not let that sinner die disappointed. Whoever sought God and missed Him, when seeking by the Holy Ghost.

Ho everyone that thirsteth." Do you thirst to be accepted of God. yes, one may say, I am afraid I shall miss. Why are you afraid? Why, because I am a sinner; because my soul has rejected and does reject Him; because I have wickedness enumerable, sins terrible, lusts abominable in my nature, I am afraid I shall miss. Why? Why because I have a devil. There is One who, when sojourning here below, cast out devils. A woman went to Him about her daughter, who was grievously tormented of the Devil. Rutherford translates that thus - Who was grievously devilled, as if her own being was impregnated with a devilish nature and Jesus, after trying that woman's faith, said the daughter was made whole and if you go to Him with your devil, whatever that may be, covetousness, idolatry, pride, lust, vanity, if you have faith to obey this invitation - "Ho everyone

that thirsteth" come with that devil, you will not sink into hell with that devil. "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt," will be the word one day.

"Ho everyone that thirsteth to have himself put right. Wrong, altogether wrong are we by nature. Says one born again, O if I were but right with God. And how do you expect to be right with God? Well, a legal heart says- Do the best you can. A legal heart says, despair, you have tried often and long and missed and failed, now give it all up. The best thing you can come to in that case is to give it all up and cry out of your felt despair, to Him-"Lord save or I perish." What is it to be made right with God, that is to say to be righteous and blameless and holy and spotless. What is it? It is to be found in Christ, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. "I cannot attain to that, one says. Of course you cannot. Then must I despair? No. Here is a market. Here is a righteousness, a holiness, a spotless nature, freely given, freely sold, without money and without price. Ho, everyone that thirsteth for this. Are there people here now who can say - "As the heart panteth after the waterbrooks, so pant our souls after Thee O God. He meets that here. He sends out this invitation. A free market. Think of it, a free market. You have no money? So much the better. You have nothing to offer Him of your own to purchase, procure or in any way deserve. So much the better. Well what a wonder. Come buy and eat. One says- There is nothing in the world now to me that can satisfy my soul. I have a hunger that pinches me; a thirst that consumes me; and the world is to me just a wilderness, arid, dry, without water, without sustenance of any kind. So much the better for you. O, we little know the benefit of penury in regard of grace. We little know the value of being without money and without price in our souls experience.

Ho everyone that thirsteth to have the sanctification of the Spirit. What is that? The indwelling and operation of the Holy Ghost. Unworthy dwelling, some of you may be saying that. Unworthy dwelling. We are not fit for that divine Spirit to come near to us, yet if He waited for a habitation that was fit for Him in this world, would He ever find one. Did He

come to any of you because you were fit for Him? Did He ever come to you, any of you because you had a dwelling big enough, holy enough and worthy enough for Him? No, you say from your heart, what every child of God says, O, how often have I said it to Him- Unworthy dwelling. You may add - favour astonishing, Divine. O that He should come; that He could come; that He would come; that He has come, at any time. What is the sanctification of the Spirit? Is it making our fallen nature better? No. The sanctification of the Spirit is causing the sinner to believe in the truth; purifying their hearts by faith. Wonderful when that is being carried on in the soul; O what loathing of sin there is; what abhorring of self there is; what a denial of self there is. That is the sanctification of the Spirit in one regard. In another regard it is this- giving spirituality of mind. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." To whom does that come? Listen. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That is sanctification. The old nature hates it, and the more you have of it, the heavier will your conflict be. The more grace you will have the more sorrow you will have from this nature, this wicked nature.

Ho everyone that thirsteth for the sanctification of the Spirit. What is it when you are in trouble? The sanctification of the spirit then is submission to the will of God. Self-examination. "Come let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord." Confession of all sin, of all backsliding, that is the sanctification of the Spirit. What is it when some trouble comes and is to your feet like stocks, preventing you continuing in some gadding after a bit of the world, and then you say "O what a fool I have been to think I could get good out of that. And the Lord thus gathers your affections and your mind and your will and your understanding to Himself. That is the sanctification of the Spirit. Affliction does you good. God gains His end in afflicting you, which is this, that you might be partaker of His holiness.

Ho everyone that thirsteth to continue in the faith. "You are reconciled to God." says Paul to the Colossians, -"Yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death,.....if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled." Ah says one, "I am a fickle creature, and I am not grounded and settled as

I ought and would be. What do you expect? What is your thought and expectation of being grounded and settled? Well, that I may be more steady, more sober? In what kind of steadiness would you have an increase? Here is a point, Do you expect this old man to help you in that? Do you expect your old nature to improve, and you be less tossed about? If you do, God will teach you by some terrible thing in righteousness, and bring you off from that legal expectation. This is the way - Rooted and grounded in Christ. Taking root downward, striking the roots of your little faith more and more into the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Is that all? one says. O if you are one of the Lord's people, you will find it is a very big all. You will find perhaps this in your heart- I am a slow learner. I am ashamed that I have not made more progress in the divine life and way. Then your cry will be - "Lord grant me more grace. Fulfil in me that scripture -"He giveth more grace." Then you will say- "I grow worse and worse and worse; I grow weaker and weaker; I become poorer and poorer. That painful experience, such a maul to pride is good for you, because the worse you are, the more lost you feel the better, for Christ is the more glorious in your eyes and the more welcome to your heart.

Ho everyone that thirsteth to continue in the faith grounded and settled. To continue? Well perhaps in some favoured hour you say- 'My mountain stands strong. I am settled, I know whom I have believed, and I am settled.' Yes, bless God for that, only mind this, very soon you may say to Him, "Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled." Where is your mountain now? What is this to teach you? It is to teach you that the best experience you can have is not your foundation. Hard to learn that. O hard to learn that. What, all that I felt, all that God has said to me, not my foundation? Most true. These blessings are from the foundation, are from the Lord, they are not the Lord, they are His gifts. Himself will be your foundation. Am I not to value what He has given me? Yes, and you will be ashamed sometimes, that you have thanked Him so little, honoured and praised Him so little for His great gifts. But then you will distinguish between His gifts and Himself. Rutherford is made to sing, "The bride eyes not her garments." What does

she eye? Her bridegroom, her husband. You will find that.

Ho everyone that thirsteth to die well. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. What a great word that may be to some of you. Great to me, it is in this my last days. To die in the Lord. It is to sleep in Jesus. Stephen the martyr of Jesus fell on sleep. Paul writing to the Thessalonians says "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, they also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Sweetly sleep dear saint in Jesus." one says.

Ho everyone that thirsteth to be presented with Christ's multitude by Christ Himself, to His Father, saying "Behold I and the children whom God has given Me." Does this attract any of us? O yes, but we are not fit for it. The gospel does not tell you that you are fit for it, in yourself, but it does say this- "And ye are complete in Him." Away with your rags that would unite themselves with Him. This is the acceptance -"Ye are complete in Him." I have just run through these things which appear to me to be in this invitation. "Ho everyone that thirsteth." for these blessings, "Come ye to the waters." The angel showed to John in the hill called Patmos a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, on the banks of that river John was shown the tree of life, bearing fruit every month, for the nourishment of pilgrims, and the leaves of that tree were for the healing of the nations. This is the water, the waters, come ye to the waters. The living water Jesus Christ. If any man come to Me, shall never thirst. The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life. Poor sinner, no sense of sin, no sense of unworthiness can unfit you for this water. "Come ye to the waters." This coming is by faith. By faith we come to Christ; by faith we drink the water which He gives; "The water that I shall give him." Mind that. He gives it. Tis His own blessed work, and he that hath no money. Ah poor bankrupts look at their bankruptcy a great deal. You look at yourself, I look at mine, and we say together before God, our bankruptcy is wickedness, our bankruptcy is guilt, we ought not to have been bankrupt. God gave us a great heritage, when He gave us in Adam our father an upright nature, capable of obeying, and fulfilling His law. We ought not to have become bankrupt. No lost soul will say to God, in the day of judgement-"Thou didst not give me enough

to start with, therefore I became bankrupt. No, if any in this congregation, which God forbid, should be lost, they will never say that to God. He gave us enough to start with and to continue with, a pure nature. Behold God made man upright.

Now, without money means we are guilty; our poverty is self-procured, we are guilty. What then? Come and buy. I have no money. Buy without money Buy wine to exhilarate your depressed spirit, and milk to nourish you without money and without price. O some may be objecting, but I am so hard and dead and cold. You will always be that by nature; but when grace operates, you will find this in your soul - a willingness to be saved by grace. You may sing sometimes and sing rather thoughtlessly these words:- "Willing to be saved by grace." but heaven is in them. Willing? "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.

"Come ye, buy and eat." What is this eating? but receiving Christ. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you. "We", says the Holy Ghost by Paul, to the godly people, "We have an alter whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." These merit-mongers; these men with their pockets full of good works, like money, have no right to this alter, but fraudulent bankrupts, poverty stricken people, confessing their sin, He says to these- "Come and buy. I know your poverty. I know your distress. I know your empty pockets. I know all about your sad and lost condition, come and buy without money. I am full of goodness and will give it to you; Full of life and will impart it to you; of righteousness and will impute it to you; of holiness, you shall have it. May I again ask you, does this market please you? Would you fain trade in this market? Here the Lord, as it were puts Himself before his poor people in the shape of one who has wares to sell, such wares, O such wares. A robe of righteousness, a fountain of holiness, strength omnipotent, love endless and He says to poor people who cannot do without Him- "Come and buy." I ask no price for all I give. Come and buy. Buy wine and milk without money and without price. If there are people here who come to this market with empty pockets and trembling at the Word of God, Jesus says, "Buy wine and milk without money and without price." May faith believe Him and faith take hold of what He says.

Amen.