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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 9 March 1924

Text: Isaiah 61 v 1 2 and 3

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Jesus Christ, the very immediate and only begotten Son of God here speaks of Himself in the character of the anointed of God. He tells us that His Father has anointed Him. He tells us that the anointing is the Spirit; that the Spirit of the Lord God is upon Him; that He, the Man Christ Jesus, who has come with eternal love, with His church engraved on His heart, deeper infinitely than were the names of the twelve tribes engraved in the stones on the breastplate of the high priest, with their conditions, their captivity, their debased state, their brokenness and everything connected with them, as lost and ruined persons, came with the full intent of redeeming every one of them, and doing that which His Father commanded Him to do, and for which His Father anointed Him. Jesus, this blessed Person, lifted so high on the cross, so high by the Holy Spirit, lifted up that all bitten, broken hearted, mourning sinners, that even captives, in dark dungeons, whose sight is injured by their long captivity in those dismal places, might both hear Him, and see Him, and find the power in Him that God gave Him to exercise for them and in them. Jesus Christ - foolishness to the Greek, a stumbling-block to the Jews, crucified for sinners and so dealt

with by God as if He were an enemy. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, but now in this blessed word, looked upon and speaking of Himself, as anointed by God, He is doing His will to the end of time, as long as there is a redeemed sinner on earth to quicken and guide and teach. Doing all these blessed things spoken of in the text, with the result, that they shall be called trees of righteousness, flourishing in the courts of the Lord's house, to show that the Lord is faithful, and that there is no unrighteousness in Him. We shall never be able sufficiently to praise the Lord, if we are the characters spoken to in the text. Some tell us we ought not to preach to characters. Well, I would be content to follow Him who did preach to characters while here.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek." Is everybody meek? "He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted" Is every heart in this congregation broken? "To proclaim liberty to the captives"; Are all of us captives as to our sense of the matter? "And the opening of the prison to them that are bound". Are we all sensibly bound? "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." How many of us come under these words? How many of us can look up to God in heaven, who reigns, and whose eye seeth every precious thing, and appeal to Him that, as far as we know, we come under these descriptions of the poor people to whom the Lord Jesus Christ is sent, anointed to preach. What a person is the Holy Ghost. What a work was He sent to do. May I, for a moment, direct your attention to this great One, the Holy Ghost. He had to do a great work in creation but His greatest work, is His work with respect to, and in, the Lord Jesus. In respect to His birth, He had all to do. With respect to His entrance on the ministry, He had all to do. With respect to temptation that Jesus endured, the Spirit had a great part. He led Christ into the wilderness, He was with Him there. With respect to Christ's first preaching, the Spirit had to do, for the very first sermon that the Lord Jesus preached, He preached

from this text, as we read this morning in the fourth chapter of Luke. He opened His ministry by preaching on this word. O what a person is the Spirit, one in the Godhead with the Father and the Son, one in nature and power and glory, and one in love and scheme and working, having His own distinct part, not apart from, not different to, the work of the Father and the Son, but forming, with their works, a great whole, even the salvation of the church, and the glory of God therein. And this Holy Spirit was given without measure, in the fulness of His power and glory, to the Lord Jesus, and to every one redeemed by the Lord Jesus on the cross, is this Spirit given by Christ, in a measure, and therefore, and thereby, each one born of God partakes of Christ's Spirit and life, and is united to Christ. O what a distinction is at once made in a person, when he receives the Holy Ghost. How happy we are in our state, whatever we may be in our present experience, if we have received the Holy Ghost, and may we never forget, when we try to measure ourselves, or weigh our cases, or look at them as with respect to God and Eternity, may we never forget that in so doing, we must have regard to this - have we received the Holy Ghost? A very vital, penetrating, all embracing question, for if we have received Him, happy is it with us, well is it with us, but if not, no form of religion will make up that great lack. No acquired knowledge will make it up. Either we are born again, or we are dead in trespasses and sins. As many of you as come under that last word - dead in trespasses and sins, one can say of you, your state at the present moment is unutterably sad. You are alienated from the life of God by wicked works, you are in a slavery you do not understand, do not feel. You are under the power of a blindness which, though you may be full of religion, will ever prevent you from seeing God, and you are covered with rags which make you, under the law considered, abominable in the sight of God. God make you think of it, the Holy Ghost come and open your eyes and quicken your souls. Then you will say, if you think of what I have now uttered, he did not tell us half the truth concerning our bad condition, our dreadful state. But to all who are born again there is this great word, concerning the Holy Ghost, that He was on and in Jesus Christ, anointing Him for the great end, a wonderful end, even to come to us in our evil conditions, in our

sad experiences, and do for us what He only can do, what He was anointed to do.

Let us look at this blessed Lord Jesus. He is related to His people in His office. His office is singular for them, suited to them. O sinner, broken-hearted, the office of Christ is peculiarly suited to you, anointed for you. God gave Him commandment to come and stand in the room, and suffer in the stead of His people, and commanded Him to lay down His life which He did. "The work which Thou gavest Me to do" said Christ, to His Father, "I have finished", and He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven. In the days of Isaiah when these beautiful words were written, the faith of God's children looked forward to the promised Messiah. Their faith centred in Him, went through the sacrifices and types, divers washings and carnal ordinances, went through all of them, and looked on Him who was typified, clearly set out as far as a type can set out anything, as being the sacrifice, as the One through whom the washing of regeneration should come. Their faith centred in Him, and where does the faith of a sinner today centre? The same object is set before that faith that is in your hearts, O children of God, and you can say, again and again, and do protest to the Lord that you have no hope save in Him who was crucified, who died, who rose again, and is in heaven. Now this Lord Jesus walks in the church. O may He walk in the midst of us. What a poor, dead congregation we must be if Christ never walks in our midst. What is the form without His presence? What is preaching but an empty sound, a tinkling sound, no life in it, if Jesus Christ walk not in our midst. John saw Him walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I wish He may walk in our midst today. Nor does He walk in the churches, in any poor church, without a great end. As a physician walks through the wards of the hospital and has cases committed to his care and looks at them, examines them, so does the Lord Jesus walk in the churches. He has plenty of skill and wisdom and kindness and He goes to the various invalids so to speak and looks on their cases and takes them in hand.

He has a meek person, broken down under a sense of ignorance and made teachable, his proud heart and spirit brought low and

his one desire is, if he may be taught of the Spirit, taught of God. Earthly wisdom can do him no good. He is a poor, meek person of low eyes, as he looks on himself as alienated from the life of God through ignorance. And this blessed One has come from heaven, with heaven in His heart, the heaven of eternal love, the heaven of redemption, of justification, of sanctification, the heaven of union with Christ, the blessed heaven of being one with Christ here and hereafter, and of being like Him. Jesus comes with all this heaven in His heart, and on His lips there is poured grace, that He may come and pour it out to this meek one in heavenly instruction, and tell him things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither have entered the heart of man". But now the Spirit comes, Jesus Christ anointed by Him, comes and opens somewhat of these mysteries and mercies, and brings them, and pours them in, and tells the meek, that it is well with him, that he has a good God to teach him, a guide so to take him by the hand, as not to leave him to err, and fall into the bottomless pit, and O what good news this is. What good news to a meek person who says often in his heart "That which I see not teach Thou me". "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law". I think I have got that meek person here this morning, I believe I have. And now you have got one to come and teach you, to bring you good tidings, the tidings of redemption, tidings of the Father's love, tidings of the Son's precious death, tidings of the Spirit's grace, good tidings of the gospel, tidings which will warm a cold heart, which will make a fool wise unto salvation, which will open the way of truth and the way of life which is above to the wise, and Christ was anointed for this great work. He has wisdom - "I wisdom dwell with prudence," and He brings this wisdom to his poor ignorant people. They know the difference between acquired knowledge and divinely imparted knowledge. They learn that true wisdom is not a matter of acquisition, but of revelation. They know it, and at times, meekly lie at the footstool of grace, confessing sincerely their ignorance and entreating earnestly that their unacquaintedness with Christ may be removed, that they may see Him with the eye of faith, that they may confess Him as truly as the man whose eyes the Lord Jesus had opened, and to whom the Lord Jesus made Himself known, who, seeing Him in that testimony, in

that light, said - "Thou art the Son of God", and worshipped Him. Do not try to get wise except in God's own appointed way. Do not think by diligent reading, which, may you not neglect, you will get to understand things. You will understand them properly and savingly as this anointed teacher, this Prince of all preachers, who never made a mistake or uttered an error, is pleased to open them to you. He never said a wrong word, He never will. His enemies said of Him - "Never man spake like this man". Never was there a teacher like Him, never will there arise another like Him. He stands alone as the heavenly teacher. O if He would kindly bring good tidings to us, this day and tell us, that though we must needs die, we have an eternal life in our souls, that, though soon these, our poor bodies, will say to corruption - thou art my sister - we shall, as to our souls, be with Him and, as to our bodies eventually, be with Him and like Him. This is the wisdom that the Lord Jesus is anointed to impart to meek people.

They said - "Are we blind also." The Jews, who were His bitterest foes, they said to Him - "Are we blind also". It would have been a mercy for them if they had felt blind, as they really were, and if they had said to Him, as the Psalmist said before them - "Open Thou mine eyes" Lord be our teacher. We shall see if the Lord opens our eyes. Every ray of divine light entering into a sinner, discovers to him his own imperfections and corruptions, and discovers to him, the completeness there is in Jesus Christ of salvation, of justification and of sanctification.

Yes, and He may also graciously bring glad tidings to people who are in trouble. Trouble? Well, it is everywhere. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble". But there is a trouble peculiar to the church of God and every individual member of the church of God. There is an affliction in affliction. He does not despise nor abhor the affliction of the afflicted. There is an affliction in an affliction and the Lord Jesus comes to an afflicted one who is meek in his heart and wonders, and thinks sometimes, every trouble is against him, and an evidence of God's displeasure, He comes and says "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he

whom the Father chasteneth not". As if He should say - "This trouble is for you, this trouble is a token of My love, a sign of your sonship. This affliction, as you are enabled to endure it, shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel in you. This affliction is sent for a great end, even that you may be a partaker of the holiness of God. "Therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." And O poor sinner, think of the distinguishing love of God as put upon you, that He should have anointed the holy and blessed Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit given Him, the Spirit, without measure, in order that that Saviour might come into your heart and teach you that very truth, that the thing you are suffering is a sign of the love of God to you. O what a mercy it is to be under the preaching of Jesus Christ.

The Lord hath anointed Him to preach good tidings unto the meek. What a blessed Saviour we have, and what a mercy that some of us can say He has come to us when our hearts have been bruised and when we have been made meek in our spirits, and when the pride of our hearts has been broken down in a good measure, and we have humbly gone to Him and asked Him to take us in hand, and teach us, and manage us and He has brought to us good tidings; said, this is not against you; this conviction of your ignorance works well for you; this conviction that you have of your weakness works well for you, for thereby you are brought to need Me and seek Me. May we be observant of the Lord's dealings with us. Do they bring us to the footstool of mercy? Do they make us cry to God to be our teacher and, having little or no good news of any kind in this world, to glad our hearts, ask Him to bring good news to us from heaven? Do you, who are afflicted, look round and say - I see nothing but affliction awaiting me, affliction here, trouble there and the blighting of prospects and the uprooting of dear things, there is nothing here but anguish, and dimness of darkness? O then, if such trouble brings you to the Saviour's feet, if it sets your affections on things above, if it makes you look after and unto Him who is wise, to bring heavenly things to you, what a good effect that has. Then He will say to you - "Your treasure is in heaven. Your best is to come. You are now where tribulation must be your lot. Now you

are suffering, but you shall be glorified later. Now you feel empty, I have a fulness for you. Now you are too weak to carry your own burdens, I will be your burden-bearer, as I was your sin-bearer. Here you have no kingdom, now I appoint unto you a kingdom, and you shall sit with Me on My throne then, as I am also sat with My Father in His throne because I overcame. Here He brings good tidings of good things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man even to conceive them. Ah He lifts the eyes up to heaven. When our eyes are turned into ourselves what sad sights we see. A wicked heart, a stubborn will, vile affections, impure minds and burdened consciences. When He says - "Look unto Me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth" and, by saying it, draws our eyes and fixes them on Himself, it is then that we see a Blessed One in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid. Then we see that we need not despair, that we need not give up hope, that we need not turn away. Then it is made out to us in substance what Christ said of the multitudes, hungry - "They need not go away, they need not go away." O you need not go anywhere else poor sinner, nor will the Lord let you. They need not go from Me, I have enough for them. There is not more than a handful of provision in the hands of the disciples, but I have enough. Thousands are nothing to Me. And you may say, I am a poor ignorant creature, but this blessed, wise one has enough of the Spirit of God upon Him to anoint Him to bring all to you that you stand in need of.

That is the first character - a meek person. He does not lift his head up as if he were something or somebody. He is just a poor, bruised thing, like a bruised reed, like the smoking flax, and his Lord and Master and Saviour comes to him and teaches him heavenly things, and these make him wise unto salvation.

The next character is a broken hearted person. A whole hearted person is one who can say he has no need of a Saviour as to his feelings. A broken hearted person is one who says from his heart that he is undone, completely lost. His heart is broken by the Word of God. "Is not My Word a hammer that

breaketh the rock in pieces". Some truth breaks a rocky heart, then it is broken. The Lord breaks the heart. Well were it for professors on the right hand and on the left, if they came into this experience - a broken heart. Broken by the law's loud thunder. The terrors of God break the heart. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear." If the terrors of God's character should fall upon any of us, hitherto hard and unbroken, we shall come into this word - broken hearted. Who can bear the terrors of divine holiness, of divine glory, of omnipotence naked, of a sword of justice drawn to be fat in the blood of its enemies? The terrors of the Lord, O the terrors of God, naked, so to speak, because not clothed in Christ, these break a sinner. Can thine heart endure, and can thine hand be strong, when I shall deal with thee for these things? Can you be strong when God reproves you, when His character comes against you? But the Lord Jesus has a commission for this person. Your heart may be broken by a sense of what you are, by a sense of what you need, by a sense of the Lord's absence, and your fear that He will have nothing to do with you. It is one of the most heart breaking considerations, that a child of God can have, as sometimes some of you and myself have had, often had perhaps, that God will have nothing to do with us in a way of grace; that He is absent, as to our feelings; distant, as to our apprehension. It is a fearsome thing, we fear it greatly. If we go day after day without any touch; if we go on without any drawing near to Him, without any sense of His drawing near to us; if we go on without the scriptures speaking to us, either a reproof or a promise, is it not, I say, enough to break your heart. It does break it in a sense, to think that that great God, whom you have sought, as you have thought, after whom you have panted, as you have felt, whose presence you have longed for, to whom you have gone with all your troubles, as you thought, that that God, who alone is sufficient for you, will have nothing to do with you. O the thought, how piercing it has been to some of us. What, will my soul sink under God's awful, His deserved, silence? Why sinner, it is heart breaking to think of it. How many a time in the night watches have some of us had this pain, this brokenness, this great, penetrating fear, that God would have nothing to do with us. If He has nothing to do

with us, what will avail us? All the creature help, all the self help, that we may have, just nothing. And now He comes, this anointed Jesus Christ, He comes to heal the broken hearted, to bind it up, take away the fear, wash away the guilt and the pollution and drop in His eternal love, His atoning blood, His sweet mercy. That will do it. Oh how your heart will melt, not broken to pieces because of distance and hardness and guilt, but healed by the Saviour of sinners, bringing His own, freely shed blood to you and speaking peace to your conscience so that nothing, nothing now of anger or controversy shall be between this God and you. And Jesus comes to do it. When He does it all is well. It is astonishing when the sinner is thus healed, how his soul goes up to God in the sweetest gratitude and falls before Him in the profoundest worship and goes out to Him in the sweetest confidence and what Isaiah, in another place says, so it is felt "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength", and also this - "Let him that glorieth glory in Him". "No flesh shall glory in His presence," but this healed sinner glories in His presence. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad." Then the sinner can sing, if he knows the word, if he has a hymn book

Jesus heals the broken hearted
O how sweet that sound to me
Once beneath my sin He smarted
Groaned and bled to set me free

A full Christ, a healing, all skilful physician, now is known by the happy sinner.

"He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted". Why, He came from heaven on purpose to do this; went into the wilderness of temptation for this very purpose; went into Gethsemane's garden; into the judgment hall, onto the cross and suffered there the wrath of God for this very purpose, that He might come as a risen Saviour, as an anointed preacher, to bring glad tidings to the broken hearted; good news from a far country, with the healing touch of His grace and of His love and of His righteousness, whereby the sinner should find himself completely

cured. O the completeness of this is very wonderful to those who experience it. After experiences we are not considering at this moment, but just what the Lord does here. He brings the healing of the wondrous and glorious gospel of the grace of God. Why, you bless God that ever you were broken hearted, when you have got this healing. However much against you, the broken hearted condition you find yourself in under the law; however you may have pitied yourself, as you were born in sin, as you were born under the law which, having broken, you could not fulfil, and which yet, though you had broken it, commanded you to obey it; however much you have thought God was neither kind nor wise in such dealings, now you come to thank Him, to thank Him that ever He gave you a sense of being wrong, that ever He broke your heart by the law, by His own voice, by His own terrors. You bless Him for such an experience as this. Your heart may be broken by trouble, even by trouble of a temporal kind, and the Lord's pity is very great here. He went to a widow who was following her son, her only son and support, and showed His kindness to her. He stopped the bier and commanded the young man, her son, to arise. He may see you with some temporal sorrow, overwhelmed and broken, a broken spirit, broken courage, broken prospects, broken in your feelings, just brought down, and He may come and graciously bind all your broken feelings up, not perhaps by taking all your trouble away, but by showing you this, that He was more than the things which are broken, more than the losses you have sustained, more than all the prospects you cherished if you had realised more than all of them; that He is sufficient; He, and He only is sufficient; that so does He deal with you, as that you can say - "Lord, I do not want a creature, I do not want a blessing Thou hast been pleased to withhold. We have enough if we have Him. If He be pleased to touch us with a sense of His greatness and all-sufficiency for every emergency, every need and every trouble, and every danger, that He has enough for everything, I say we do not want anything else. He has sent Him to do this. And O, if He should say, now whatever you are suffering, whatever you lose, I am more than a compensation, what you suffer is for time, what you lose is but for a moment but I bring you good tidings of an eternal state, of ever riches - durable riches and righteousness are with Me,

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Lord - that would be enough. We suffer no loss if Christ comes to us. May we believe it. It is not easy to believe, except He come. When He comes then we do believe it. He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted. Well, we have got no wound then, and tears are all sweetened. Almost all, if not quite all, the salt is taken out of tears when Jesus binds the broken hearted and there is no sad regret, when He comes and binds up broken hearts. The whole world is an empty thing, and we may have very much grudged this in respect of ourselves and our own portion while we had this unhealed heart, but O the healed heart makes us look upon, not the world in its emptiness, but upon Christ in His fulness and His sufficiency. It is quite enough for us. I would not, I hope the Lord may keep me from speaking lightly of things that we may lose, the things we may suffer, disappointment we may have, and crosses that may come, I would not speak lightly of them because I am too carnal myself to disregard them, but I do say this, knowing just a little of it, that when Christ comes, you have no regrets, you can just live on Him, live in Him, live to Him, live for Him. Eternity is coming, Eternity is near and then farewell time. Thus the healed heart can speak. Yea, and perhaps you say to Him - Lord if it could please Thee shorten these days of my mortal race, bring me quickly home. O think of the Lord coming from heaven to say such things to us as heal us. Think of it. Every song we sing of rich grace, of precious love, of healing, cost the Lord Jesus groans and sighs and tears and pain and death.

I hope it may please God to do these two things for us who need Him to do them, and I would say to you who may feel now greatly to need teaching from heaven, and much to need a healing touch and word from Christ, do not think because you are not presently spoken to and healed that therefore you never will be. He is too wise to err as to the time of doing it. He will do this work in His own time. We would say, a minister would say, with respect to all such characters in his congregation, Lord do not let them go home from this service untouched, unspoken to, and unhealed. But then, who can hasten the Lord's time? I would preach a good gospel and so lift your eyes up. There is one in heaven, a Man, Almighty God, in heaven, full of grace and truth,

anointed, and full of the Holy Ghost, and in time, the time appointed of the Father, He will send down that instruction you need, and grant you that touch that you need whereby you will both know heavenly things and be healed of your present disease. May the Lord grant patience to us to wait upon Him for He says - "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

AMEN.