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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at
Galeed Chapel, Brighton on Sunday evening
14 May 1922

TEXT: JOHN 12 verses 20 and 21

"And there were certain Greeks among them come up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."

I have read the two verses, but the word I would speak of, by the help of God, is just the last clause in the 21st verse - Sir we would see Jesus.

He is not in the world, in the sense of being found there. He is not in the pleasures of this life. He is not in the kingdoms of this world. He is not to be found where honours, and riches, and human glory are, and men who wish ardently to see Him are to go forth out of the camp bearing His reproach. Christ makes manifest the thoughts of many hearts. The same gospel will bring forth vastly different thoughts and affections. The heart of one will be heaving up against it, and saying of Christ - away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, and one sitting next to Him will say - O that I knew Him, that Almighty God, for myself. O that I could look on Him by faith, could appropriate Him to my soul, could say of Him - "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." Christ is set for the falling and rising of many. It is solemn to think and believe that in this small chapel and congregation there are two distinct sorts of people, that to some, the gospel spoken feebly is tiresome, and to others attractive. And very solemn to consider that each heart and every thought and feeling is exposed to the eye of God. "What think ye of Christ is the test, to try both our state and our scheme" If there be in us a right feeling of desire to see the Lord Jesus as He is set forth in the gospel, we have great reason, though we may not now think it, to bless God.

This morning I made some remarks upon this vast subject as

to where, as to what, with respect to Christ. Where He is seen, why we seek Him, and what, if we see Him, we shall find in Him, and I dwelt chiefly upon Him as seen on the cross. That is the theme of themes. That was Paul's conviction and resolution. Conviction that only Christ could do Him good and resolution to know none but Christ. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ".

This evening, if enabled, I will, for a short time, pursue the thought of where to find Him, where He is to be seen. And first of all He is to be seen on the throne of grace, rather, more strictly, He is the throne of grace. The man on the throne, whose appearance is as the bow in the cloud in the day of rain. The glorious high throne which from the beginning has been the place of our sanctuary, to which the Apostle mercifully invites all the saints of the Most High saying "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Here, if you have a longing for Christ, you will see Him. In the light of the Holy Spirit, you will see Him ready to save, able to save, ready to give grace, to bless, to deliver, to lead, to teach. Ah, He is a suitable Saviour and the throne of grace is a suitable place for us. Suitable for everything and every necessity and every trouble, and every sorrow and all the sin that plagues us. O sirs, can you say, now we want that Blessed One and would rather see Him than see the world to belong to us. Rather see Him than all the beauty, boasted beauty and goodness of the whole world. Want to see Him and only Him. To see Him on the throne of His heavenly grace, grace reigning, love reigning, righteousness there, and forgiveness there. Everything that can be needed. Now it is the conflict of some people that they wish for this, can say - we would see Jesus and yet live often without a sight of Him, grope for the wall like the blind, grope as if they had no eyes, and this is a sore thing to them. And the lack of this sight of Christ means to them bondage and fear and gloom and doubt and misgiving. How will they get through their difficulties, how will they get through the last hour of their mortality, and how will they stand in eternity? These are mighty questions in their spirits and there is no answer possible with any satisfaction in it but by

seeing Him, the Blessed One, on the throne of grace. "Let us come boldly". Now this is not for good people. The way to heaven from a felt hell is Jesus Christ. The way to holiness from felt pollution is Jesus Christ. The way to peace from trouble is Jesus Christ. The way from to life from felt death is Jesus Christ. We may well sing - "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good", and I would be glad if the Lord would help me the few days of my life that remain to me, and to speak in His name, to speak without faltering, lift up my voice, as it were, in the gospel, and say Ho ye despairing sinners come and wait upon the Lord. The throne of grace is open. "Thy mercy seat" one writes, and we sometimes sing, "is open still, here let my soul retreat, with humble hope attend Thy will, and wait beneath Thy feet. And in all afflictions, whatever sort they may be, the throne of grace is suitable. Do you want to come honourably through all? Do you want to live a life of faith on the Son of God? Do you want to cast your care on Him? Do you need supplies such as He only can give? Do you need grace to be dealt out continually? Water every moment to be given? God to care for you? Do you need Him to appear for you in some providential matters? These things, rightly exercising, will make errands to the throne of grace, and though a misgiving and unbelieving heart may tell you it is no good, yet God will help you. "David's Lord and Gideon's Friend will help His servants to the end." Jesus is seen on the throne of grace. There He lives, there He waits to answer prayer. There He will open the treasures of His grace, the riches of His mercy, the greatness of His love. There He gives out His righteousness. There he pronounces the blessing, even life for evermore. There He smiles; He is like the bow in the cloud in the day of rain, the bow that says, no matter how heavy the rain is, God will no more drown the earth. Jesus, no matter how heavy your trial, how great your sins, how sad your fears, how heavy your heart, Jesus lives and a sight of Him will make you say - "Who can tell but that His mercy may reach me, even me." Jesus, the mighty conqueror of death is the conqueror of sin in His people. These lusts, that pride, that hardness, that death, that carelessness that you feel sometimes oppressed with, these, all of them, shall be subject to Him who is expecting till all His enemies be made

His footstool. Would you see Him? Would you view His brightest glory? Would you look into His heart as led and permitted? Would you see what mercy He has, what power He has to apply mercy? What authority He has to send His good Spirit? Would you see Him? Then I say you will see Him there on the throne of grace, high and lifted up.

We will look, by the Lord's help, at a few of the circumstances in which He may be found. First of all He may be found and is found and seen by guilty people. Let us take an example of this from the scripture. We have Jacob, guilty Jacob, guilty of deceit, cruel deceit toward his father. Guilty of supplanting his brother, he is obliged to leave home to escape the vengeful spirit of his brother Esau and when he is in the wilderness at night he takes stones and makes a pillow of them, and lies down to sleep, and then God comes to him. He dreams a dream, and there appears a ladder set up on the earth whose top reaches to heaven and God stood upon the top of it, and spoke to him, spoke mercy to him, and it is not a little remarkable that the Lord did not speak of what Jacob had just done to him but overcomes and overtops everything, and tells him that He is his God, that He will guide him in all places wheresoever he is going, that He will be with him and not forsake him till He has performed all that He has spoken to him of. Guilt is no bar, dear friends, and when you feel it and mourn it, either at the beginning of a work in your soul or later, through some wickedness done in your heart, there comes this great gospel - I am the Lord thy God. I have redeemed thee. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto Me for I have redeemed thee. This revelation of God makes a godly man. He wont live in sin who has a revelation of God to him. He wont live in deceit and hypocrisy who has a revelation of Christ. Christ saves His people. His Name is Jesus for He saves His people from their sins. Take the case of backsliding, and He is found there on the throne of grace, and, as an example of this, go to Hosea where the Lord says "O Israel thou hast fallen by thine iniquity". Whatever might come, you have deserved, but what says the Lord, having thus charged on His people their sin, what does the Lord say Not what we should say,

not what we should expect a man injured to say to the one who had injured him, but what a God can say. Only a God can say it, only the God of grace - O Israel, thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord and say unto Him, against whom you have sinned, say unto Him "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously. So will we render the calves of our lips." And when Israel has thus, under the power of God, gone to the throne of grace with that confession and that petition, what then does the Lord say - I have heard him, I have observed him, I have seen his ways. I have smitten him; he is no better; he is still vile. I have observed him, he is barren. From Me is thy fruit found. He is found on the throne of grace. I will heal him, I will love him freely. Is he my dear son, is he a pleasant child, for since I spoke against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. Come boldly to the throne of grace, ye wretched sinners come.

Take the case of affliction, temptation and trial and look at the scripture for an example. Here you have Nebuchadnezzar setting up an image and calling upon all his peoples to fall down and worship it, and you have three godly men who refused to worship that golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up. They are brought before the king. They are not afraid to answer the king in that matter. The God whom they serve is able to deliver them out of the hands of this king, but if He will not, let the king know that they will not bow down to the image which he has set up. Here is a case. Ah, they had got the ear of their God. They had the grace of their God in their hearts and so, when it was commanded that they should be cast into the fiery furnace, God came to them, and they saw Him. He was found of them in their trouble, and, as you know, I have frequently said I believe that that was the best walk, the sweetest air, they ever took and breathed, when the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, walked with them in the burning, fiery, furnace. Have you found Him in a fire? In trouble, has He come to you, and said "Fear not"? Has He taken away the fierceness of the trouble, while leaving you in the trouble for the moment? Have you felt that He was walking with you? Would you see Jesus in your troubles? He

can sanctify them and bring you honourably through them. He is to be found here. We would see Jesus on the throne of His heavenly grace, in the glory of His Person, in the exercise of His power over sin and death and hell.

In the next place, we would see Jesus as our only provision and bread of life. No man can keep alive his own soul, but there is bread, the bread of God given. He came down from heaven to give His life for the world, and that blessed world for which He gives His life, is born again, and each member thereof hungers and thirsts and gets this precious bread, Jesus Christ, manifested to his soul. He sees Him; he receives Him; He partakes of that bread for his nourishment, and His soul lives, lives by faith. It is by faith, this blessed nourishment, which keeps his soul alive and makes it strong sometimes. Strong to walk and strong to build and strong to labour and strong to fear God and to depart from all iniquity. Would you see that bread? Would you see Him, who alone can keep your souls alive, who alone is able to nourish your faith and keep you from falling and present you faultless before the throne of His glory? " Sir," they said "we would see Jesus". These Gentiles would see Him who could make them living souls and keep them alive, and none else could do it. We would see Jesus as the water of life. God made Israel to suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock, and also the smitten rock supplied water, living water to Israel, all through their journey, tiresome and wearisome, wearing them out in the wilderness. This blessed water of life can only be had here and would you see it. It was shown to John. He said "I saw a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" No refreshment, but in Christ. No refreshment I say, but in Christ, and as He is pleased to communicate it. We would see Jesus then as able to refresh our souls in a thirsty land. "I will" says God "pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." This is the water of life. This keeps a soul straight in the ways of God and no man, having tasted of this water, will straightway desire the world because he says this is better. This is the best.

We would see Jesus as our prophet. Who can teach like Christ. He teaches many things as His children go on through this world. He teaches them more and more deeply their sinfulness. Yes, we must learn more and more how utterly lost we are. 'Tis a painful, mortifying lesson, but we must learn it, and mercifully God is determined that they shall learn this lesson. It is true that you can only appreciate the Lord Jesus in the measure in which you know your sinfulness and your need. O it is a great and wonderful, though painful, blessed thing, to be taught our sinfulness, to be brought off from all trust in self. But He teaches more than this; He says - This is My Name "The Lord your righteousness". He says this - "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness". He says this - "I am the way, the truth and the life". I am the way from that felt sin, from that darling lust, from that master corruption. I am the way to holiness after which the soul is panting. I am the way into the truth which a sinner would fain receive and walk in. I am the way. Learning our badness, we find that Christ must give us His goodness. Learning our emptiness, we find that there is fulness in Him to supply all our needs and this is spoken "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The prophet will teach this. Yes, lesson on lesson, line upon line, line upon line, little by little, we are brought to know that Christ is God. Christ is the prophet to teach His children and lead them into the truth. Sir, we would see Jesus the prophet to tell us the way to heaven, to tell us that there is a blessed heaven to go to and tell us that He will take us there.

We would see Jesus as our Priest. A prophet in the understanding will make you know not only the plan of salvation, but your own salvation. A priest in your conscience will bring you to feel the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Conscience will guard your spirit. Conscience will take care of your interests. Conscience will make you feel it is a solemn thing to live before God. Conscience with guilt on it will be the most troublesome companion you can ever have, and for this you need a priest. The great High Priest of our profession is Jesus Christ, and His one offering that alone can purge the

conscience. Would you see Him? Would you see Him? Would you have peace with God? Would you feel in your conscience that there is no controversy between God and your soul? Would you feel that in your conscience now you know that your standing is more secure than it was in Adam? Only this can be brought to pass and become your experience through the priestly offering of the Lord Jesus. Poor sinner, if you are convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit, I tell you this, you never will have a real peace in your conscience but by the blood of Christ, by His one offering of Himself once in the end of the world to put away your sin.

We would see Jesus as our King. King of kings, and Lord of lords, these are great and awful words. To whom do they belong? Why to Christ, and where is He king? In heaven, having all power and authority committed unto Him there. Where is He king? In the whole world, ruling when men see no God, when they only look on confusion and trouble and war and distress and anguish and dimness and darkness. There is a King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Where is He King? On Zion's holy hill. I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion. There He is King and what does this mean? It means that He is King in the hearts of His people, ruling with His gracious rod, the rod of His strength that comes out of Zion. That strength is His grace, His love, His mercy, His pardon, His sweet justification. That strength is His blessed word of direction, a word of promise, a word of the covenant. He rules as King in His people and they want to see Him in His kingly character, to be able to say He is my King and welcome Him in His authority and His rule to their very hearts. Yes, their trouble is at times that there is no submission to Him. The insubmission of their spirits. The wish, they have after the flesh, to do as they like, make their own crosses which would be nothing but a few straws, to walk in their own ways. O their bad nature gives them a lot of trouble, but faith says - I want to see the King of kings and the King of Glory, let Him come in. Yea, let Him touch this heart of mine, that the two leaved gates of it may fly open when He, this blessed One, should come and take possession. We sing at times

Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will,
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill;
Till, falling before Thee, we laud Thy loved Name
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb.

To be saved in a general way, most people who believe in heaven and in hell and in the Bible would say, of course they want to be saved, but to be saved from sin, to be saved from self, to be saved from the world, to be saved from saying their own words and doing their own pleasure, well you will find out very few who want to be saved so. Bless God if we are among the few, if now and again we are enabled to take a poor heart to Him and ask Him to rule in it. To take a wicked heart before Him and pray Him to subdue it; to take a stubborn will to Him and ask Him to supple it and to put it into conformity with His own will. Yea, and also He sitteth King for ever on the waves to still them when they roar and threaten to swallow up His people. The Lord sitteth King for ever. Would you see Him there? See Him in some family trouble, sanctifying it, in some business perplexity, helping you through it? See Him about some want and behold His mighty hand sending a stream of supply? See Him when your heart feels graceless, sending grace into it? See Him when you feel lost, sending the word of salvation? King of kings and Lord of lords. King on Zion's holy hill, King in the heart of a poor sinner. This is what many and many a soul can say - "We would see Jesus", the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the King of kings.

Sir, we would see Jesus as a faithful God. A faithful God is a relative term. Faithfulness is relative. Faithfulness implies something that has been promised, implies faithfulness to an undertaking. Some of you would not dare in your right mind to say He had not undertaken for you. Now if it is so, that God has spoken, that Jesus has appeared, that He has undertaken to be with you and help you and never forsake you, what does this imply? It implies this, that He will, whatever opposition may come, He will fulfil His word. He will make good His undertaking. This is faithfulness. It relates to you, it relates to your trials, to your necessities, to your weakness.

It relates to you, and heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word never, and that is a ground for saying this, which I have said more than once, that the feeblest saint is, as to his standing and the issue of his pilgrimage and trials, firmer than heaven and earth. These shall pass away but not the sinner in whom the word of God is. God shall roll up the heavens as a scroll, and melt the elements with fervent heat, but that sinner in whom is a divine promise, shall out-live all, and He shall say to God "Thou remainest". Though earth be gone as to me, though supplies are gone, though streams are dried, though everything should perish, "Thou remainest" and Thou didst say "I will help thee" Thou didst say it. Happy he, who can sometimes look up to God and say in faith - Lord Thou didst say to me Thou wouldst bless me. Jacob, in his trouble, had recourse to this, this was his last resort. Thou didst say "Return to thy father's house, and I will be with thee" Now there is trouble in the way, Lord, there is trouble in the way. There is a threatened death, do as Thou hast said. We would see this faithful One, who cannot deny Himself, whose word abides. We would see Him by faith.

And, lastly, we would see Him in His everlasting love. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end, and we would see this

If once the love of Christ we feel
Upon our hearts impressed,
The mark of that celestial seal
Can never be erased.

No, He hates to put away. He hates many of our ways, this we know. I know he hates many of my things, my sinful ways, my sinful things, sinful thoughts, worldly-mindedness, carnal wishes. How hateful these must be to Him, and what a sorrow to a saint it is at times to believe and feel that he has in himself so much that Christ must hate. But there is something in every child of God that He loves. He says to each one and to the whole church - "Thou art all fair My love" Thou art all fair in Me and by reason of My life and My cleansing and My justification. Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee. Sin is a spot, but it is

blotted out. Sin is a weakness, but grace is strong. A thorn in the flesh is troublesome, but grace is sufficient. We would see Jesus. I would like to keep Him before you but I cannot. I cannot keep Him before myself, but there is one who can. The Holy Spirit in the performance of His covenant undertaking and all that which Christ promised Him for, He is able to do this. He shall glorify Me, He shall set Me up, He shall keep Me before you and, from time to time, give you to look on Me. To look on Me as your own, as your husband and your friend. The brother, born for adversity. Your elder brother, with whom you are co-heirs with God the Father. He shall do it. May He do it. Dear friends, we are always turning away from God, and we do it quickly and with a sinful easiness when this Person is not in our view. Very easy it is to look to some vanity when He is not in our view, who has durable riches and righteousness. Now look at your hearts for a moment, and ask them to speak and let conscience answer. Now who is it you would seek? Is there one in heaven you would see? What is His Name? People who have friends in heaven as they think, speak about seeing them when they get there themselves. They may never get there. Who would you see? Is there One in heaven you will have your eye and heart fixed on? Has He ever brought you to conformity to that scripture - "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also?" Now let conscience answer. Go home and look at the matter. Forget my feebleness in speaking about this mighty subject. Look at this great matter. Here I am a dying man; I speak to dying people, and the great test will soon come to us. It will soon be known on whose side we are. Then may you be enabled (I am sure all the Lord's people will wish to do it and do it from time to time) to narrowly put the question to yourselves - Is my heart set on seeing the Son of God in my own nature and do I want Him to be the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of my soul's religion? May the Lord give us a good answer and bless us by giving us discoveries of Himself.

AMEN.