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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

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

TEXT: JOHN 12 verses 20-21

"And there were certain Greeks among them who came 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."

The sight of Christ is the best sight that is possible to a creature, for it is the sight of God as made bearable to a creature. It is the sight of His infinite wisdom and goodness. Christ is the express image of His Father's Person and glory. In Him it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. It is a moving sight. It moves those to whom faith is given to melting of heart, to sweet repentance, to comfortable hope, to joy in the Holy Ghost, Some here have known what that moving means as they have seen Christ. None like Him. There never has been and never will be one like Him, to such. The chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, Christ has been and shall be through Eternity. It is a moving sight to others when they see Him coming in the clouds with the glory of His Father and with His holy angels to gather all things to Himself, that is to say His church. Then the eyes that never looked on Him here, that is the people who never had faith, shall see Him, and the piercing, but unavailing cry of those people to the rocks and to the hills and to the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that cometh and from the wrath of the Lamb will be heard. God will hear them, but not heed them. If any of you now hearing me, an unworthy creature, should get that terrifying view of Christ, you will know that I barely expressed the effect, The greatness of it, the horror to you of it, the fearfulness, the condemnation, and the eternal destiny of your hitherto heedless souls, you will then enter into. The Lord save you from such an end. Why do men want to see Christ? Various motives influence men to wish to see Him. Herod desired to see Him. He had heard so much about Him, had heard of His miracles and wonders, and he

desired to see Him. And the day came when He did see Him, and because Christ did not gratify his carnal curiosity, he, with his soldiers, began to mock Him and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe. It was an ungodly desire that he had to see Christ. The disciples of John the Baptist when they had heard John proclaim Christ "Behold the Lamb of God", followed Christ, and turning round to them He said - "Whom seek ye?" and they said to the Saviour "Master, where dwellest Thou?" They wanted to know Him. Why do you, if it be so with you now that you want to see Christ, why do you want to see Him? What is there in Him to make Him desirable, for He is a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness and when men generally and naturally shall see Him, there is no beauty that He should be desired. He has a cross and men must have it. There is reproach attaching to Him and men who follow Him will have that reproach attaching to them. Why do you want to see Christ? O some come a little short, and believing in a way the scriptures, that Christ is a Saviour, they would fain see Him to make up their little deficiencies. And when they see Him, as they will one day, it wont be pleasure, it will be just to hear Him say - "I never knew you". You professed Me, but I never spoke to you. You hung about Me in a way, but I never paid you any visits. I never knew you. May you not be of that number. May I not be of that number. One wanted to see Him and he said this "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in His temple." Can you join yourself to that? That is to say, is there in your heart, just that feeling - one thing? My heart wants many things. My nature cries after many things, but there is one thing above all. One thing to the exclusion of all that. I desire to behold the beauty of the Lord. Where is the beauty of the Lord? Where is it seeable? Where is it bearable? In the Lord Jesus Christ. These Greeks, probably proselytes who had come to worship at the feast, hearing of Christ and, one would hope, touched by the grace of the Spirit, moved in their hearts to want Him by the received report they had heard of Him, said to Philip, one of His disciples - Sir, will you introduce us to Him? We want to see Him. May we see Him? What would you say to one you believe to be an ambassador of Christ, a disciple of Christ, who knew Christ in His own soul.

What, if you expressed your thoughts and wishes concerning Christ, would you say? Would you take up this language as your own and say - "Sir, we would see Jesus?" We want to let other things go, want to let self go, and all interests go. We have a desire to unite with one who said of himself and all his acquirements and all his religion and of all his own righteousness "I count them but dung and dross that I may win Christ and be found in Him." Can you go with that? It is not a little to deny self, to esteem your own beauty, the beauty that men admire, esteem everything that you have got, everything you have attained to, everything that you could wish, everything of that sort and kind that men boast of, to esteem all but loss and dung and dross that you may attain to that one thing - the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified. When men do see Christ by faith, what do they see? Let us enquire, as enabled into this matter. What do men who have faith, to whom the Spirit opens Christ, see in Him? Well sirs, first of all they see Him to be God, very God and very Man. They see Him to be a wonderful Person, the Godhead and humanity united in one Person. They see this. There is no Arian, no Socinian in the church of God. They may hang about the church but they are not in it, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have we seen that in Him, Deity's indwelling rays, Deity's loveliness and majesty and glory, Deity's wisdom and omnipotence? Have we seen them in the lovely Man Christ Jesus, in the babe of Bethlehem, and would you see Him? Would you be ever looking on Him as Almighty God, once sighing human breath, but now that wondrous Person at the right-hand of the Father? Stephen got that view before he left the world and left behind him this testimony - "I see the heavens opened and Jesus, the Son of Man, standing at the right-hand of the Father". My brethren, no sight can ever glad the heart of a sinner more than this, when feeling some hope in His mercy, that Jesus Christ is true Almighty God. Here we must fix if taught of the Spirit. Here we shall fix - that Christ is God. Would you see this sight? What will you see in Christ if blessed with faith and the revealing light of the Holy Ghost? You will see in Him the Mediator between God and man. There is one God, a terror to the guilty, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. Sinners value Him. Dumb sinners need Him to open

His mouth for them. Sinners who have an unrighteous quarrel with God need a Mediator. Sinners, who by their fallen state and nature are every ready to pick a quarrel with God, these, feeling their guilt, need a Mediator. These, feeling their dumbness, as being a proper dumbness, need one to open His mouth for them. They see beauty in a Mediator, loveliness in the suitability of this Mediator, divinity to deal with divinity, manhood to deal with man. Love to bring Him into that position; wisdom to qualify Him to fulfil it, authority to be with Him in all the acts of His mediatorship. They see the Mediator. He signed the peace; He makes it good in the conscience. There is the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

What do they see in Jesus Christ when they see Him, these desiring ones? Why they see Him on the cross, dying, full of infinite merit, as well as of mercy boundless. Christ crucified is the centre of the soul's life and hope and peace. Christ crucified is the sinner's reconciliation to God, the sinner's pardon, the sinner's peace, the sinner's strength, the sinner's plea and the sinner's hope for eternity. The death of Christ was a glorious death, but only so to faith; as to Deity covered with ignominy, filled with shame, bruised, wounded, chastised and marked with stripes. His Father was pleased to wound and put Him to grief, and there it means His Father was delighted to do it because it meant the salvation of the church. There was guilt, there was justice, there came all Deity to that man on the cross - True Almighty God, and when faith beheld this death, she beheld a peculiar glory, a glorious love, a glorious pity, glorious mercy, glorious truth, glorious righteousness. The cross has a halo round it to faith. The cross has heaven's light on it to faith. The cross has mercy's voice in it to a sinner. The cross has the removal of all sin. It speaks of justification and of sanctification and of redemption and of wisdom and of righteousness. Ah, it is a great thing to see Christ crucified and by precious faith make it everything. To feel - now here is my hope, here is the open door for me to the throne of grace, here is the way of God to my soul if He will come. Here is the way in which my heart, so filthy, can be purified, my conscience, so burdened, can be eased and sanctified. Would you see this

Jesus in this case? Would you see the dear Son of God in this case? A case, worse for grief and shame and ignominy than that of any other creature. He bore all Incarnate God could bear and had strength enough and none to spare. Faith hears heaven's voice in the sorrows of the Lord Jesus. So, when the Holy Spirit, having created the desire in a sinner to see Jesus, reveals to that sinner the Lord Jesus in this case, the sinner says - "Now this is my life, this is my liberty, this is my goodness, this is my righteousness. Nowhere else. None else. We would see Jesus. And the desire to see Him is the desire to see Him crucified. It was Paul's ministry, it was Paul's determination to know nothing else but this - "Christ Jesus and Him crucified". I determined not to know anything among you, not to know any of your wrangling and quarrelling and disputes and things of that sort, not to know anything in my ministry of the world and of its sciences and its applications and all its divisions and things. I am determined they shall never go with me into the pulpit. I am determined to exclude all these subjects when I go to preach and I will know only one Man, and that Man under one consideration, which includes everything really, and that is Christ Jesus and Him crucified. It was his glory, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." My brethren can you follow Paul in any measure? Have your eyes looked into the death of Christ? Have you seen infinite love there? Have you seen God there in His beloved Son reconciling the world unto Himself and making you long to have that reconciliation in your own souls? Have you seen the pity and the compassion and the power and the goodness and the righteousness of Christ crucified, and longed to have that best of all blessings in your own souls? Have you seen Him pouring out His soul unto death whereby He delivered from a deserved hell, all whom He represented and for whom He stood, when He was offering Himself to God, without spot, on the cross? And, so seeing Him, have you said "now there is heaven if I am but interested? There is peace if it may but come to me. There is love if the Spirit may but shed it abroad in my heart. There is liberty if the Holy Ghost will bring it to me. Faith does see in Christ crucified wonders, wonders of goodness, wonders of salvation. Sir, we would see Jesus delivered to death.

Delivered by whom? O by Pilate, yes. Delivered by whom? Why, says the Holy Ghost by Paul, of His Father, He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. That was a deliverance. God gave His Beloved Son into the hands of death, into the hands of the law, into wicked hands of men who crucified and slew Him. And would you see this delivered One passive in His holy obedience, active in His one offering, passive in the will of God? "Not as I will but as Thou wilt." Would you see this blessed Lord Jesus Christ? Why, He gathers sinners to Himself. Never has there been an assembly in all the world to be compared with the assembly that is at the cross, and may we be among those who are gathered there. "To Him shall the gathering of the people be". And what a motley gathering it is. One with rags on him, another with ropes round his neck, and another with shame filling his heart and suffusing his face, and another with confessions of innumerable sins on his lips and on his spirit and each one crying "Save me O God". "Say unto my soul - I am thy salvation", and the sinner who feels the pollution of his sin, begging for that pollution to be washed away in the precious blood which the Saviour so freely shed. O to be among those who gather to Him. They go to Him. Who are these that fly as doves to their windows? Who are these people who cannot be kept away from the cross? Who, though unworthy to think of Him, unworthy to look on Him, yet cannot help thinking and much desire to see Him. Who are these? They are the loved of the Father, the redeemed of the Son, and the quickened of the Holy Spirit. They are sinners whose whole soul longs to get to that wondrous spot. The gathering of the people is to be to Shiloh, to Christ and Him crucified. This desire will make you who possess it people of one idea as to eternity, and that one idea will be as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "to be found in Him, not having your own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." If I dwell on this a little at length you will bear with it because you will know, as well as I know, that there is no hope of getting honourably to our graves, of standing on the right-hand of God, apart from this great One crucified. The sinner's hope, the sinner's peace, the sinner's glory, is Christ crucified.

Then may we here, as many of us as are blessed with this desire to see Jesus, go, with that limping of our souls, and that weakness that we feel and that guilt that distresses us and these burdens that press us down, go with this cry "We would see Jesus". We see ourselves and we are sick of ourselves. We see the world and see in it nothing but emptiness, being, as it is, under the curse of God. We see human good and find that it passeth away. Human pleasure, and find little or nothing in it but vanity. But we would see Jesus, who on the cross has durable riches and righteousness. We would see Him, see Him for ourselves under the revealing light of the Eternal Spirit. Come then, repenting sinner come. Come, humble, broken down saint, come. Come, you whose eyes are wet with tears of sorrow, whose eyes have looked in vain for good here and there, to this wondrous sight, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

What do you see in Him as ascended on high? Why, all power, all rule, and all authority. Well then, your wicked heart is not beyond His power, your vain thoughts are not beyond His control, your wandering eyes are not beyond His attraction, your emptiness is not beyond His fulness. Jesus exalted at the right-hand of God, a prince and a Saviour. Jesus in heaven, able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Jesus Christ, loved of His Father, praised of His Father, exalted by His Father, having now, by His Father, all rule and all authority. If devils seem about you, He can send angels to be ministering spirits to you. If vile thoughts rise as from a fountain in you, He can send His good Spirit to be a well of water in you, springing up into everlasting life. If burdens press you to the earth, His everlasting arms are underneath and shall never leave you to sink lower than you are. And if wants are pinching upon, and very distressing to you, look - may faith be given - look to His fulness

A fulness resides in Jesus our Head  
And ever abides to answer our need

It was a wondrous sight that Stephen got ere he left this world -  
"I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right-hand of

the Father." We may not get the same sight that he, the protomartyr of Jesus, got but, depend upon it, though the manner be different, and though there be no miraculous opening of heaven to our view, as was to his, the same Person, the same blessed position kept by the same Person will be given to our faith. We shall see Him there. John saw Him. He saw a Lamb in the midst of the throne of God; in the midst of the four beasts and the four and twenty elders, he saw the Lamb, as it had been slain. A glorious sight, for this Lamb did, what no man in heaven nor in earth was able to do, even to approach that I AM and take the book out of His hands, and break the seals and look therein. Ah, Medley says in our hymn book to himself concerning Christ "and Him in everything employ" and is not that what the sinner wishes who has the grace given to him of the Holy Ghost, to put his case, bad as it is, his wants, numerous as they are, his weakness, great as it is, and threatening him with ruin often, to put all into the hands of the Lord Jesus. Says the Apostle - "Come boldly to the throne of grace". Here is the King, here is the blessed King with all power in heaven and in earth, with all grace in His heart, and love there, and bowels of compassion and prevailing intercession, and heaven at His command. He shall make angels His ministering spirits. All there. What a sight it is, the sight of Christ, at the right-hand of God. Why, my beloved friends, the sight that Stephen got and that you may have had in some measure, and shall have again, will make you feel each time you get it a wonderful, humble, independence of the whole world. If this God be mine, if His fulness be mine, if His intercession be for me, if His gracious covenant is for me, then what need I to fear? How can want destroy me, how can devils overthrow me? You will feel, I say, a humble independence of the whole world. And God speaks to these. He says to some "Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die or of the son of man whose breath is in his nostrils and forgettest the Lord thy Maker". And have not you forgotten Him sometimes? How often have some of us forgotton this blessed One at the right-hand of the Father in heaven and looked at our own weakness, and then fear has arisen in our minds and we have looked at this and at that and thought, now the time will come when these, our difficulties, will overthrow us. We have forgotten the Lord.

"And forgotten the Lord thy Maker." But He comes and puts Himself into the heart of the sinner, and gives him a remembrance of Him, and says "Behold Me" "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open Thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Sir, we would see Jesus. We would see Him exalted at the right-hand of the Father.

What would you see in Him? Why you would see Him to be the Rock of ages, Rock of ages. This is our rock, the only rock. "On this rock will I build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And there, amidst all the sinking sand of our own weak, dying nature, full of corruption, and there in the midst of all that may be suggested by your barren hearts, all the fears we may feel, as we feel full of sin, there, I say, will be seen that rock, on which built, the sinner shall remain for ever. "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The councils of hell will be against it, but not prevail. Floods will be against it, but not wash it away, nor the building that is built upon it. The more we feel our own weakness the better it is for us. The more deeply we are convinced of our own inability to stand and of the mud and mire of our fallen nature, the better it is for us. If you cannot bear to hear of the fall you will never tolerate the news of salvation. Only as you know the one, can you possibly appreciate the other. Only as you feel lost, will the news of a Saviour be welcome, as that news comes by the Spirit. And, only as you feel the mire of your sinful nature you are in, and are likely, to your own apprehension, to sink in and remain there for ever, only as so taught and led can you value, when you see Him, Christ, the Rock of Ages. He will sustain mid all the floods that come and beat against the church. He will bring His people safely through all because He is the Rock of Ages and, as Philpot so beautifully remarks in one place - the rock is not only above the water but it is beneath it. It sinks deeper than the water and Christ is beneath all the fears and the weakness of His children and He is above their difficulties and their enemies and their lost and ruined state.

Sir we would see Him. We would see this blessed One, sent

from heaven, doing on earth His Father's will. We would see Him taken back to heaven, received there till the restitution of all things. There to rule, there to intercede and there to save. We would see Him who once emptied Himself, now full, full of everything that can possibly be needed and desired by His people. We would see Jesus. How many of us could kneel down in our rooms and honestly say to God, Lord, this is our desire, we want to see Him. We cannot talk about religion, we feel to have no religion. We are ruined utterly. We do want this. O grant this to us. We believe that all that mercy is in Him, all that love is in Him, all that goodness is in Him. O let us see Him by precious faith. We believe we are as full of sin as it is possible for a creature to be. O save us from it by Jesus Christ. If we can so go apart from our friends and kneel before the Lord our Maker and so speak, happy are we and happy shall we be throughout eternity. They said to Philip - Sir, bring us to this Person, bring us to your Master, introduce us to Him, let us have His society, let us hear Him speak. We want His teaching. My dear friends, do you say that. O let us be introduced to Jesus Christ, let us be brought into His company. May He speak to us and teach us and say something to us that will be heaven in our hearts, heaven begun. May the Lord give us honestly then to say this "We would see Him". It is in our hearts to say "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple."

AMEN.