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Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham
on Sunday morning, 26th. December 1926

Text: John 14 v. 6

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the
truth, and the life: no man cometh
unto the Father, but by Me."

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The Lord Jesus had just done His last physical kind and con-
descending act to and upon His disciples. He had washed their
feet; giving us a lesson as to how we should behave to the saints
of God. He had also said that which took Judas, His betrayer,
away from Him and the disciples. Judas having received the sop
went out and it was night, and then the Saviour began to pour out
His heart to His disciples and the close of the thirteenth chapter
and the beginning of this chapter exhibit the Lord Jesus in His
wondrous grace. He had foretold the denial of Him by His too
strong and impetuous disciple Peter. Peter was too strong; he had
too much love, too much confidence in himself, and while he admitted
that his brother disciples would deny the Saviour, he would not, he
would go to prison with the Lord, he would die with Him, and immed-
iately the Lord says to His disciples, - Peter with them, who was,
in a few short hours to deny with oaths and cursing, all knowledge
of his Master, - Peter among them, He said to them, "Let not your
heart be troubled." This shows that the Lord Jesus came to save
the lost; and that the sins which are so bitter to men after they
are born again and convinced, had no influence on Him to deter Him
from coming to suffer, bleed and die for them. This, seen by faith,
must be an encouragement to every sin-bitten, mourning sinner. Every
one who perceives in himself that dreadful thing sin, that unfathom-
able mystery of iniquity in his heart, feels at times as if the
strong ~~current~~ of wrong thoughts, of infidelity, of the lust of the
flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, must carry
him away. The Lord Jesus, looking on him does not in a sense, see
all this, but He sees a poor disciple, and says, "Let not your heart
be troubled." You have One before you, the Father, I also, am be-
fore you. Believe in Me; believe I am able to save to the uttermost;
believe in the virtue of My precious blood to cleanse you from all
sin. Believe in My mediation for you, that when you are dumb, with

guilt upon your consciences, believe that I open My mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction, and this word is intended for poor sinners. Do not forget it my fellow sinners; intended for a Peter who says I know nothing about the Man; intended for you who feel in your hearts that if temptation came, and grace did not come with it, you would do as Peter did. The grace of Jesus Christ can never be sufficiently extolled. I wished early this morning, that I might at least be enabled to lift Him up, to make Him known in the congregation, that He is a Saviour, that He came to save the lost. The lost, - and that means a great deal to all who are convinced of sin. The lost, - without goodness, without grace, but dead in trespasses and sins, - that were in His heart, that were deep sculptured on His breast, as Hart speaks, and He came from heaven, left His Father's throne, took our frail nature, without sin, into union with Himself, and suffered, groaned, bled, died voluntarily to save them. We have got denial of Him in our nature. We have got Balaam's way in our nature. We have got every evil thing in our nature. O, but if Jesus Christ looked on us in eternal love; looked on us when He took the seed of Abraham; when He went to the end of the law in obedience, and in dying; what a mercy of mercies. O we shall need eternity to thank Him. Now may this gospel do you good, mourning sinners, 'tis intended for such. He came to save the lost.

Then, He said to these, "I go to prepare a place for you." "In My Father's house are many mansions." My friends, He knew them, for He had been there from all eternity. He knew them. We do not, except they are revealed to us and made over to our faith, but He knew them. Ever with His Father, He knew the purposes of the Trinity, He being a Person in the Trinity, and now He declares, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." I have told you Peter, of your wickedness, I have told you what you will shortly do in respect of Myself, but now also, I tell you the other side; My love, My goodness, My knowledge of eternity and mansions in heaven. I tell you of this also, "In My Father's house are many mansions." I have never kept anything from you, that would be profitable to you. Now I tell you this, and moreover, I go and prepare a place for you. I go into heaven with My blood that will prepare the place, I go into heaven with My intercession that will bring you to the place, - the mansions prepared for you, - and if I do this, then, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Well may

we listen to the word, "Lift up your heads," for your salvation is nearer than when you believed. O mourning saints, what a destiny awaits you. O you who see what sin is, and feel its bitterness and taste it as the wormwood, the only wormwood, then I say to you, look up, lift up your heads, for now your salvation is nearer than when you believed.

"I will come again." He pays visits to His people, but this is a coming which shall bring the blessed consummation of all things, even the church shall be with Him in her completeness. "That where I am, there ye may be also." Is that any attraction to you? Did heaven ever seem desirable to you?

"--- that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles."

Did you ever get one wish in your heart to be there, where Jesus is?

"Where Jesus, Son of man and God,
Triumphant from His wars,
Walks in rich garments, dipped in blood,
And shows His glorious scars."

It will be great to be there, to have no more death, no more deathly feelings; no more deadness in prayer; no wandering from the Lord; no proneness to wander; to be for ever with Him; to go in and go no more out. "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." They knew that He had come from His Father. Peter had made that confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", and the disciples had received the word of Christ, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee," - and now I am going whither ye know. But now comes forth the partial blindness of the disciples, which may be an encouragement to us who also are very blind, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest," said Thomas, "and how can we know the way?" and His departure from them, filled them with sorrow, - 'Lord we shall be left without a guide, and we do not know whither Thou art going, and how, therefore, can we go after Thee and find Thee?' Do you feel sometimes as if you may be left in the wilderness with no guide; left with no knowledge of God; left, so as not to know where He is going, where He is gone, and if you do not know where He is, how can you go to Him? Then, you need a teacher. Who does not need a teacher, who realises his ignorance? Every one taught of God, feels his ignorance, and though these disciples had been so long with Him, and had had such lessons instilled into their minds, their minds were like a leaky vessel, and they soon let them go. We do the same. We let things slip; we need the

exhortation of Paul to the Hebrews, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." On one occasion the Lord Jesus, after doing miracles before His disciples, and teaching them, said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." Saying, as it were, 'Now you see Me, you hear Me, I am your teacher, but the day is coming when I shall be delivered in My weakness, and in weakness shall be crucified, and then you will need all your faith. All the teachings that I have blessed you with, you will then need.' Take heed my friends.... And the Lord said to him, "I am the way." I am not only going before you, and ye know where I am going to, but I am the way to Myself. I am the way to My Father; I am the way to heaven. I am the way of all truth, - truth of the law, it being fulfilled by Me; the truth of the gospel, it being in Me, I am its substance; truth of redemption, for I have this redemption; truth of justification and all gospel truth. I am all that truth. I am the life, the life of your souls, the life of the truth and the life altogether, so as to quicken you in every way in which you will need to be quickened. This is a glorious gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ here preaches. "Jesus saith unto him," to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

There are ways spoken of in the Scripture; different ways. There is a broad way, and into that, leading to it, is a wide gate. The broad way leads to death. That broad way is the way of sin, the way of sinning; the way of ignorance, of presumption. It leads to death; many are in it. Yes, the great majority of men are in it, walking in it; foolishly walking, blindly walking, and O where grace prevents not, what an end they come to. The foolish passeth on and is punished. It is a broad way, intimating that there are no great difficulties in it, no stumblingblocks, and though many are in it, there is plenty of room for them. Wide is the gate that leads to it. Born in sin, shapen in iniquity, there is no difficulty in getting into this way of sin and of sinning. Does not this meet some? You have got no difficulties; things look straight for you. You may have troubles, and will have, but as to the way to eternity, there are no difficulties for you in that. There is a way of religion which is a way of presumption; when men say, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these", but God is not there. There is a way cast up, this, is the way.

"Cast up, cast up the highway;" - "take up the stumblingblock out of the way." This is the way. It is high. Solomon says, "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." It is above reason, above human goodness, human justice; it is above all the things that human nature can imagine as being pleasing to God. It is high above all these things. It is a narrow way, difficulties are in it, many, and the entrance into it is by a strait, or close, gate. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Very solemnly true. This way is Christ. "I am the way", and there is in this ~~way~~ to be an end - a way leads somewhere, and this Way leads somewhere. There is an end to this Way, and the end is the Father. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." This is the end. If we are born again, we have an end in view. We have something we want to attain to; something we desire to experience; something that our souls long for; not the world, but heaven. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost.

Let us look then, at this way. "I am the way." The casting up of this way is very remarkable, very solemn. Remarkable because of the Person who casts it up; remarkable because of the nature of the way; very solemn because of the labour and the sorrow, and the tears and the groans and the sweat and the voluntary death of the Lord Jesus. Nothing short of His Person and work can be this way; Nothing short of Him. "I", the Son of God in ~~human nature~~; "I", the Surety for the people for whom I have come; "I", their Redeemer, their Intercessor. "I am the way." He cast it up by perfect obedience; He cast it up by His blessed vicarious death. What a way this is, think of it.... Do you know it? It is to be known - the Lord Jesus Christ, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, we have the way "cast up." Any other way leads to death. This, leads to life, and this observation grows out of what I have said, namely, that every soul that wishes to go to the Father must find Jesus Christ to be the way to the Father, and as He is the Mediator, and as He cast the way up by obeying the law and becoming the end of it for righteousness to every one that believeth, and as He died and by dying put away sin, He must be known, He must be known. My brethren, the Scripture reveals this, and yet, people do not know it by reading the Scripture. The Spirit knows this and is sent to reveal it, and this brings me to what I am often saying to you: revelation, revelation, revelation! You will see it in the light of the Spirit, if that light shines into your heart; if you get what God speaks by Paul to the Corinthians, "God, who commanded

the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Well then, this way is the way of faith.

"We walk by faith, not by sight." No walking in this way if you have not faith. "He that believeth shall not make haste." He is in the way and he will not make haste to get out of it. He will not make haste to get out of trouble anyhow; he will not make haste to get rid of his sins anyhow. Believing in the Saviour, in the blood of Jesus Christ, he waits on God by prayer and supplication. What a mercy it is to have a grain of faith in your soul. If you have, you will say, 'Lord increase our faith.' A grain of faith will bring you to the Lord. Its exercise will be toward and on Himself. It will tell you that there is plenty of grace in Christ, and when you sing the words sometimes, you will believe them:

"Plenteous grace with Thee is found;
Grace to pardon all my sin."

Yes, it is a way of faith. Faith goes to Him for all the supplies that you need. It will go to Him for pardon and for grace, for strength and for holiness, for preservation in the way of life. It will go to Christ for everything; it will desire to live near Him. It will desire to live at His cross, shelter in His wounded side and find perfect healing. This is the way of faith: to believe impossibilities, to believe that God who is just, is also a Saviour; to believe that there is nothing impossible with Him; that whatever troubles, sins, temptations, fears, devils, difficulties there may be in the way, all can be met and all overcome and removed by the Lord of life and glory, and this, in your heart, will be like an invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," - Ho, poor sinner who cannot do without the Lord Jesus, come to Me! "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Trade without money, without price.

"Faith in the bleeding Lamb,
O what a gift is this!"

In your heart it will sometimes laugh at all enemies. The daughter of Zion shall laugh at her enemies, because she sees that there is more in Him whom faith looks to, than in all the world of opposition that can be offered. Do you not know this? Some do know it. There is in Christ enough; - plenteous grace, plenteous redemption, innumerable pardons and deliverances, in Him. This then, is the way. The

Lord Jesus is the way of a sinner coming to the Father. The way of faith, the way of real believing and hanging about the cross waiting for the redemption of Israel; that redemption which is promised.

Then, it is a way of waiting on God. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." Waiting on God is one of the hardest things which the people of God ever meet with. An impatient mind, a tempting devil, an unbelieving heart, and providence sometimes will make the difficulty of waiting very great, but the promise is: "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." That will stand when all enemies are dead. That will stand and God will make the face of a waiting one, shine with answers that will make your closet a desirable place. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." O the mercy of waiting on God is very great. Wait on Him. Wait though faint and feeble. Wait on Him. Weakest souls can best wield the weapon of all prayer. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

"Look to Jesus, kind and strong."

Poor sinner, look to Him! Though devils shall say there is no good in it; though an unbelieving heart shall say you will never get a blessing; though many hindrances be in the way; still wait on God! It is very difficult, I repeat, because of the impatience of the mind and because of the lack of appearances such as we look for. We cannot always discern the face of the times - though we can discern the face of the sky and predict a certain kind of weather by what the sky shows - but there are certain signs of the times which we cannot discern very well, and never, really, without the Spirit: as when difficulties come, they may be a sign; when temptations come, they may be a sign; when impatience comes, it may be a sign; a sign that nature is against us, that the devil is against us; then, on the other hand, when some sweet gospel words enter the mind, into the heart, we may not discern the intention of God in that. We are very foolish, very ignorant, but the truth is this, that God tries faith and says, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

Christ is the way. Now in waiting, we need to have something to argue with before God. We need a plea. We need something to urge before Him, and so to speak, press on His attention, and what can we have? What can a poor wayward Peter, a doubting Thomas

have to urge on the Lord's notice? What can we have to argue with? Job said if he could get near the Lord, he would fill his mouth with arguments, and he would know what God would say to him. What would you do, - what argument has a sinner to use and urge on God for mercy? Well, faith in you has got the answer:

"Nothing but Thy blood, O Jesus!
Can relieve us from our smart;
Nothing else from guilt release us;
Nothing else can melt the heart."

The blood of Christ affords a plea. For an old saint and for a young saint, for one in bondage and for one who has been many times brought out of bondage, the same plea holds good. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Now Job found something of this. He found that he was a man and therefore could not contend with God. You find that, yet, Job had this: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He could not contend with God as a poor sinner, but he longed for a Daysman betwixt God and himself, who might lay His hand on both of them, and now, when his faith got a sight of that Mediator, he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." So, every child of God coming into this, gets a real view of the Mediator's precious blood, he uses that; fills his mouth with that wherewith to argue before the Lord. You never need fear being repelled and turned away if you can use that plea and argue on that ground. He won't look at your badness, He will look at this. He won't think, if I may speak, He won't think of what you have done or what you have been, or of what you are, when you can use that plea. One of the strongest motions of faith, as I judge, you have in the psalms, where the psalmist, or the church speaking by the psalmist, spreads out before God her desolate condition. She is like a vineyard; hedges are broken down; the vine is trampled under foot of boar and of beast, and her plea for restoration is this, - mark it, dear friends, - "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee: quicken us, and we will call upon Thy name." Go that way. Jesus is this way. His blood is this plea, this argument - fill your mouth with it! God will never turn you away. He will never say do not trouble Me any more. If you go with this, you will be acceptable. This is more than your sin, more than your unworthiness, more than all the guilt that you feel pressed down with. This will bring relief.

It is a waiting way. A way in which men wait on God, and they argue with Him and they overcome Him. A great word that is:

"they overcame.".... Yea, Jacob overcame; he prevailed; he had power with God. He took the blessing, and you will get the same. Here it is that a sinner has power with God and prevails. Think of it, poor sinner. What more can you wish than this, what other argument could you have to use and prevail with, than this? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "I am the way." He is the way to victory, - final victory. Every answer to prayer; every token for good; every blessing of the gospel that comes into your soul, you will find to be a promise, as to substance. Each one will say better still is to come; greater things you shall see than these; greater, - and the greatest to us will be to overcome all and get the victory "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Won't it be wonderful for a man, - a sinful man who has been overcome times without number, been made again and again as a gazingstock and reproach to himself because of his sins and fallings, - for that man, to get the victory and enter heaven! Christ is the way to victory. He on the cross, overcame and said, "It is finished." He did not leave an enemy unvanquished, but He does not see, and we do not see as yet, all things put under Him. Our stubborn will, our proud heart, our blind mind, our carnal and corrupt nature; these are not fully put under Him. They are not under us, but He is expecting, He is expecting till all enemies be made His footstool, - put under Him. This chapel is as full of enemies to God and goodness, as there are people in it, and yet some of us are not enemies. God has made us friends but we have the old enemies in us. They are watching opportunities to overthrow us, to defile us and defeat us, but these our enemies, are the enemies of Christ, and He is expecting that now He is on His Father's throne, that these enemies shall be made His footstool, - all be put under His feet. And when that is the case with you and with me, as we hope to reach heaven, then, that will be true:

"I ask them whence their victory came,
They with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death."

"I am the way," to this. Jesus is the way to holiness. Jesus is the way to peace. Jesus is the way to every good thing; the way to all supplies and all power to stand, and all wisdom to walk. May it be so in our experience, even as it is in the Scripture.

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