

Sermon Preached at Galeed, Brighton by  
Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning  
27<sup>th</sup> December 1936

*Text John 3 verse 16*

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that  
whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,  
but have everlasting life*

Those of you who were present at the service last Friday morning, will remember, that I had that wonderful scripture for a text "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3 verse 16. And we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the immediate and proper object of faith for salvation. And though the arminians have besmirched that beautiful scripture, they have not robbed it of its glory. It took us to Revelation "And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb Revelation 22 verse 1.

God has been pleased to give to the grace of faith, great prominence in the soul. There is one grace that will last longer than faith, that is love. But faith is always joined to love in exercise, and it has this particular prominence that it goes directly from the soul to the Lamb of God. He is the object of that faith, which God gives, and the Lord has put great honour on this grace of faith in the soul. If you have faith you please God. Think of that, every act of faith, of which you are rendered capable by the Holy Ghost pleases God. A lost soul, casting itself on the Son of God, pleases God. A man with all manner of sin in him, every kind of wickedness, that arises from that wicked heart, that is desperately wicked, deceitful, and full of all abominations, the man I say, troubled with that, casting a believing look on the Son of God, pleases God. Well some of you would lie against your right, if you said you had not that faith. You may not have comfort, but if you have faith, you please God. He will see to it that you have comfort, in His own time. Now I want by the merciful help of God, to bring before you, continuing the subject of what the Apostle Peter here speaks of. "Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." (1 Peter 1 verses 1 & 2). Here the Holy Ghost by Peter calls faith precious, and all the Lord's people blest with this faith stand on the same level. They have faith, not in the measure, but of the same kind, there is no difference in the kind of grace.

This grace of faith, in whomsoever it is, as a grain of mustard seed, is a living precious gift of God to the soul. It won't take you to live on yourself, it will tell you truth, about yourself. It will tell you that you deserve hell, it will justify God in your conscience, when it tells you that, but it will never leave you to live on yourself.

Out of self to Jesus lead ! (Gadsby's 515 verse 6)

And that is what the Holy Ghost does from time to time.

This text tells us first of the source, the divine source of faith, through the righteousness of God our Saviour Jesus Christ. God could have given no sinner from mankind, this gift of faith had not Jesus Christ brought in an everlasting righteousness. You will come to that, who have faith. From time to time to ascribe that great gift to you, the faith of the righteousness of Christ. He made an end of sin. He is the way to God for a sinner, and He is God's way to a sinner. He is the way God opened, that He might come to a sinner and bless him, and give him faith. That makes faith precious, in the first place, that it comes through the righteousness of God our Saviour Jesus Christ. Is not it wonderful to be a believer, is not it wonderful to have faith in the blessed person, and efficacious death of the Son of God. Faith then is precious in its source.

And next it is precious in its birth in the soul. It is called the faith of God's elect, because nobody has it but an elected, redeemed sinner. Many men have a faith, a notional faith, a temporary faith, a joyous faith, a quickly fruitful faith ending in ruin, but the faith of God's elect, is the creation of God in the soul. It is called the faith of God's operation, because He by His divine power works it, creates it in the soul. It is called precious faith, as here because of its object. It does not play with the world. It does not live in dust. Dust is the serpent's meat. Christ is the meat of faith, so it is precious faith in that particular. And it is precious in the trial of it.

Dream not of faith so clear  
As shuts all doubting out;  
Remember how the devil dared  
To tempt e'en Christ to doubt.      (Gadsby's 312 verse 2)

But the trial of faith is very precious in the sight of God, and to them who endure. The trial of faith comes from various sources, first from yourself. If you have the faith of God's operation, you have also, beside it, and around it, the devil. You have unbelief, you have the world, and these will try your faith.

I am very glad it is not necessary for me to give full expression, to the terrible things, that are in their uses, against faith, against the object of faith. O it is terrible when arising, as from a living spring, from your own wicked, desperately wicked, deceitful heart. Things, thoughts, blasphemies against the faith of God's operation, and against the object of faith, that is the trial of it. Probably some of you understand the mocking Ishmael, mocking at your solemnities. Now this trial of faith comes from self, comes from Satan, and sometimes it arises in circumstances. It is not every minute of a believers life, that he can say to a mountain depart, and see the mountain falling into the sea. It is not every minute of the believers life, that he can say, I believe in God. I have thought and said to you, more than once, the man who walks through the streets of Brighton, and says from the heart "I believe in God" is a miracle. He will never say it, if the devil of unbelief in him, can hinder him. O but it is a precious faith, that is called precious by God.

It is precious in its exercise, lest the destroying Angel should touch Israel Moses kept the passover, and the blood of sprinkling, and that is one particular exercise of a God given faith, it looks to Christ's blood. If the Holy Ghost sets before you, your secret sins in the light of His countenance, not natural conviction, but spiritual manifestation of sin, in the light of God's countenance, and yet with all that, faith goes to the blood of sprinkling, and the destroying Angel, will never come near that person. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," (Exodus 12 verse 13). You may not always see it, but God does, and it is His sight of it, not your own. His sight of it will preserve you, and your sight of it will be your comfort, your strength. So faith is a precious faith, in its exercise, and it is precious in the fruit of it, in your soul. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (Romans 5 verse 1).

You look at it, here is a man condemned, and two great truths in his conscience condemn him, first the law, I am lost says the man. Second, his own conscience, it ratifies the sentence of the law. Now faith when Christ is revealed to it, by the Holy Ghost, lays hold of him, and then says the Apostle "we have peace with God". Did you ever get as far as that ? Oh some may say, never. Well, how far have you got ? Faith in you will say this, I am kept out of despair, by the feeling in my soul, that Christ can save me. That will please God. It may not comfort you, but it will please God. If faith puts Christ before the law, puts Christ before your conscience, and puts Christ before the condemnation that you feel, and says in you, I am justly condemned by the law, and I am condemned in my conscience, but Christ can save me, if He will. There you stick, if He will, well, call upon Him. Faith's exercise largely exists in praying, up to this point "Oh save me, (Psalm 6 verse 4.) "O deliver me" "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." (Psalm 35 verse 3). Cleanse me from guilt, and from pollution by that precious blood, and Spirit.

Thus faith in its exercises, is a precious grace, and God owns it. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labour of love." (Hebrews 6 verse 10). You may not believe what I say today, but you will one day, if you have got this blessed faith. It will always take you, every step of it Godward. Look at that, faith will take, in every step of it, Godward. Well if your face is Godward, if our faith says, He can save me, what shall hinder me, says like precious faith, in the exercise of it. It is a pure faith, it has no doubt in it. It has plenty of doubt, round about it, but faith itself has no doubt in it. A grain of mustard seed will take you to heaven. You cannot say how little you need to go to heaven, but you need faith, and that faith, though but as a grain of mustard seed, in your soul, will always be going Godward. The devil says, no, this way leads to despair, conscience says it is no ground of hope, faith says - The blood of Christ thy soul can cure.

*walking*  
 O I am so inconsistent, so is everyone, but that is no justification. Our inconsistencies bring guilt, and trouble and fear, and they make our religion very questionable to us. It may be, O you say, perhaps, can a Christian be what I am? Can a Christian have the dreadful things in him, I have? Can a Christian walk as I was walk? Can a Christian be as prayer less as I am, and neglect prayer? Can a Christian brow-beat his conscience as I brow-beat my conscience? I might go through many things, you know them for yourselves, who are troubled about the matter. But then, this is the thing, that God will enable you to look at, that Christ can cure, heal, justify, and sanctify you. You say, I do not doubt that, but whether He will, is a matter I am not clear upon. What does the scripture tell us to do in trouble? "And call upon Me in the day of trouble:" The promise is "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." (Psalm 50 verse 15). Can you do that? Does your trouble move you towards the throne of grace? Does it say call on God? Run to the city of refuge, enter it if you can. O what a wonder of wonders, is that great thing in the soul, living faith. This faith is precious, in the importunity of it.

If we have faith, we shall never let God go. O but He seems as if He would go, but faith will follow, The Psalmist said, and he was a believer, "My soul followeth hard after (God) thee:" (Psalm 63 verse 8). Can you look at your soul sometimes, and say, that is just what I am doing, I feel I cannot live without Him, I must have Him or I perish. My soul followeth hard after God, but He seems to go away. Faith says, I will go after Him. He goes into darkness, He makes darkness His pavilion round about Him. The dust he walks upon, as it were in a cloud, a dust. "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known." Psalm 77 verse 19). And yet faith says, I follow. Christ makes Himself, the proper object of faith for salvation, and that is a principal in the soul, the believing soul explains the greatness of faith, following, yea following in waiting.

I will wait for the Lord, who hideth Himself from the house of Israel. Faith is precious in this, that it does not live on appearances, but it is affected by them. If God appears to be against your circumstances, or in the temptations permitted to assail you, or in the uprising or powerful working, of corruption on you. If these things come to nature, the purity and the life and strength of faith will be seen, in this, you cannot let the Lord alone. "My soul followeth hard after Thee." But He does not speak to me, do you speak to Him about that ? "Be not silent to me: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." (Psalm 28 verse 1). God's silence to you, if you have faith, will be a trial of your faith, and your faith will come out of that trial a conquerer I will wait for the Lord, who hideth Himself, and is silent to me.

Faith does not live on circumstances. It lives on, and it lives in God. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4 verse 3). When ? When God told Him to look at the starry sky, one night, and said, if you can count the stars, you can count the seed that I will give you, and yet the promised son had not come. Abraham believed God. It does not live in circumstances, said the Apostle, to his fellow voyagers, the ship must be broken, but not a soul in it shall be lost. God has given me all the souls here, but the ship must be broken. You will be broken to pieces in some way, but you will be saved, if you have this blessed faith. Obedient , like precious faith with us. That faith that moved Peter to say "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." (Matthew 14 verse 28). Strong faith, but soon weak, or weakened when perceiving the boisterous water, raised up into heaps, by the wind, he cried, saying, "Lord save me." (or I perish). (verse 30).

This faith will live as long as you, every believer has a living faith, and it will live as he needs it. How long will that be ? As long as he lives. The language of faith on a dying bed, may be this, I look alone to the blood of Christ for an entrance into glory. You may have lived a consistent life and profession for a long time, but the one gate at which you will be waiting, will be the person and blood of Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Peter here says to those of the dispersion, God has given you faith, even as He gave to us the Apostles, and the faith He has given you, is a precious faith. Precious in the fruit of it, you say I have no fruit. Hannah had, and she took the fruit of it to Samuel, asked of God. Saying to Eli "For this child I prayed." (1 Samuel 1 verse 27). And sometimes you go before God and thank Him, for an answer to prayer. I prayed for this Lord, now I praise Thee for giving it to me. Yes the fruit of faith, in your soul will be that, O the fruit of faith you have in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm "Bless the Lord ,O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:"(verses 1 & 2).

Simon Peter a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord," (2 Peter 1 verses 1 & 2). They had got faith, He said , now may it grow. Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. One thing your faith will be after, that is the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. Faith loathes fancy and loves knowledge. Faith is fed by knowledge, increased by knowledge, strengthened by knowledge, encouraged by knowledge, the knowledge of God, God in Christ. "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord".

Mind this, you will have plenty of trouble, if you have faith, but this faith will last. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), " (1 Corinthians 13 verse 13) and this faith is a blessed gift. We cannot thank God enough if He has given this great gift to us, and we shall see again, and again, the blessedness of it, in as much, as it takes us out of self, this wicked self, this wretched self, It waits on God.

Just one word in conclusion. It is a precious faith in that it will take no denial "I will not let Thee go," (Genesis 32 verse 26) importunity brings answers to faith. If you have faith you will fly to the throne of grace, though the breath of hell will be beating against you, trying to drive you from the throne of grace. You will go after it,

I can no denial take,  
When I plead for Jesus' sake. (Gadsbys 376 verse 7)

Now my friends, I leave this subject. How many have faith, God knows, and you will want to know, who have it, and you will want an increase in it. This is the last Sabbath in the old year, we have had many mercies, and some troubles. We have still many mercies, and some troubles. Tribulation is the pathway to heaven, that is Christ's word. "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" (John 16 verse 33 but faith in your souls, will enable you to overcome, and what does the Lord say of the overcomer. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. (Revelation 3 verse 21)"

O but how am I to overcome ? By faith, "and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5 verse 4)

Amen.