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La P 812

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham,  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton

Wednesday 7/12/27.

Text: John 8. v 36.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall  
be free indeed."

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What a word is the word free. Who does not claim, who can bear to be under constraint or restraint? Is it not natural to us, to say our lips are our own, who is Lord over us. Pharoah won't die as long as there is a sinner in this world. He lives in this chapel, whenever we meet together; but if God has broken him as to his authority, it is a mercy. Free? Of course we are free, so men boast. There is no such thing as absolute freedom, out of God. All freedom in creatures is relative. It is necessary to a creature that his freedom should have the limit of a statute. A statute is a limit. God set a limit to us, and a beautiful, and an approved, and loved limit that was when, and while we were pure. On that awful day, when Adam broke the beneficent law under which he was made, and lived, all that pleasure, in the will of God, died and obedience, that was pleasant before, became irksome, and we are nothing: better, in our unregenerate state, than slaves, and there are two kinds of bondage. It would be too harsh to say, that bondage was in Adam before the fall, because he was under the law which he loved and obeyed, and there was no bondage there. Bondage is a servitude, an unpleasant servitude that came with the fall; and the two-fold bondage that now, we are under by nature is first sin. We are the servants of sin, either profane or religious, we are the servants of sin. Not without significance is it said by the Apostle Paul, that sin is a law, the law of sin, to show it's authority; to show that it claims obedience and alas our hearts, and our lives, proclaim us to be the servants of the law of sin. Every man and woman in the world, until God comes and lays hold of his own, in regeneration, is a slave of sin, in some form. This is bondage. It won't let you go. You will never be able to free yourselves from it. It is an iron yoke. It is a tyrant. It is defilement, it is transgression, it is idolatry and it is every lust that you can imagine. Such is sin. Sin is the transgression of

the law. Sin makes obedience impossible to us as we are the servants of it. It makes every effort to be good, as some men say, and seem to practice, difficult, burdensome, a yoke. An irreligious nature may be quite unable to appreciate that religiosity, that is in some people by which they must be religious, but it must be burdensome to them. This yoke is on all men. And the second kind of bondage is the righteous law of God, that which it claimed, when Adam and all men in him were pure; it still claims, it claims every man for God. It tells every man to love God with all his heart, and mind, and strength, and soul and his neighbour as himself. What a yoke, what a claim laid on an ungodly man. The ungodly man won't own it, until he is made to do, either by grace, or in punishment in perdition. This yoke of the law; this penetrating word of the law; heart, and strength, and soul, all for God, and these two things, this double kind of bondage must hold every man, to whom the Holy Ghost does not come into, whom He does not breathe the breath of eternal life. O sinner, if there be a dead sinner here, God make you think of it, you are in bondage to sin; you are under a broken law and as sin is a captivity and will not let you go, and as the law is a righteous thing, holy in every claim, and spiritual in all it's penetration, and just in all it's utterances against a man who has broken it, this double bondage is a terrible thing even to contemplate. How just the law is, but no man will believe it until he is taught of God. And I believe there is one proof of the justice of the law, that will never appear to a ungracious, an untaught man, that every child of God has in a measure, in him, namely, the Holy Ghost, who purges his conscience from darkness and ignorance, and lays righteousness to the line and judgement to the plummet in the conscience, that person says though I am a sinner, and though I have enmity against God in my nature, and though I neither can do, nor after the flesh, want to do, I do know, and I acknowledge, as before Him, that His law is most just, most righteous, and if He will not have mercy on me, I have no complaint, because I have no claim on Him. Here we are, a congregation of sinners, blessed be God, some of us know that we are sinners; we know God's law is righteous; we know His claims are just, we are condemned. Now Jesus Christ the very Son of God, in order to redeem His church, given to Him in Eternity to redeem, came from the bosom of His Father, and was made flesh. If anything could prove, more than another, the value of the

immortal soul, yea, of the person of an elect one, it is the incarnation to save that person, of the Son of God, and O there is no proof like this, of the love of God. Well may we endeavour to say from the heart - thanks be unto God for His unpeakable gift. We love liberty naturally, and Christ gives liberty of a spiritual nature to his people. He had been preaching to the Jews as was His wont; they had contradicted Him as was their terrible wont; but His preaching convinced some that He was the Messiah. Many believed on Him as we read - "As He spake these words, many believed on Him." It would seem that some conviction of His being the Messiah was borne in on their minds. Then the Lord Jesus spoke to them. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him - If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, and this offended them. They answered Him, "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man, how sayest Thou, ye shall be made free." Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. That is as the scriptures analogy of faith would cause us to believe, and hold. Whosoever liveth in sin, practices it, is the servant of sin. If you, people of God, feel, and who does not, what child of God does not fall in his spirit day by day, there is no man that doeth good and sinneth not, the mercy is this, not to live in sin. I believe if some of us were to speak the truth, as in the sight of God respecting ourselves, we should say this, and God would not contradict it - we are not the servants of sin. We are full of sin. We are disposed to sin, and we do sin in spirit, in word, in many things, but we are not living in it. Conviction comes, the Spirit touches us, light shines in again and we repent, we confess, we leave the sin, we forsake it in aim and affection and design, and the Lord knows that one would not go far, one would not leave the pulpit to find the chief sinner in this chapel, but it would not be true if one were to say one lives in sin, mercifully it is not so. So with you who fear the Lord. Sin catches you. O the silly minds that we have got, the weak minds that we have got, the wills that are in us, so weak that we are caught away, O in a moment o'er ever we are aware of it, but mercifully we do not love it. You say I am carried into captivity. Remember one thing - a captive is not so with his will. The captive

is taken into captivity against his will and he is not then in a willing servitude. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin and the servant abideth not in the house for ever. Many a professor is a servant. Many a professor is a servant in the house, but not being a son, the day will come when that will be repeated in the spirit and substance of it - Cast out Ishmael the son of the bond-woman. Every branch that beareth not fruit in Him, He taketh away, and men gather them and they are burned. A word that shakes some of us sometimes, "But the son abideth ever." First the Son of God, the heir of all things, for God has made Him the heir of all things. Blessed be God to be co-heirs with Christ. May we thank Him for such matchless mercy. Christ is the Heir of all things, therefore He has this liberty to give. He gives what is His own, as you read in Ezekial, the Prince, though He may give gifts to His servants, which gifts shall return to Him, yet when He giveth a gift to His sons, it is theirs by inheritance for ever. Christ has liberty to give. If the Son, the Heir of all things, of God's love and grace and mercy, the Servant of God, coming from the bosom of His Father to speak the words He has heard His Father speak and do the works which He had seen His Father do, this Son, never a servant to sin, though He had sin imputed to Him, has liberty. Life gives liberty from death. Light gives freedom from the prevailing darkness, and we have got therefore, by the help of God, to look a little at this liberty. In the first place, at the Person whose it is to give. I shall try by God's help as long as I live and can speak among you, to set this Person first. I would like to stand by the side of the first letter Alpha and by the side of the last letter Omega and having nothing in between but that which is connected with Apha and Omega. Every other letter of the alphabet has a connection with the first and the last and every good thing that the church enjoys, every blessing a sinner feels, he will find to come from the Lord Jesus who says- "I am the first and the last, Jesus Christ. A beautiful, an amazing word. God made Him the Heir of all things, the Creator. God made the worlds by Him, His Son, and He made Him to be the heir of all things, that this great inheritance that the Lord Jesus has, the Lord Jesus possesses, should be dispensed by Him according to His will, that is to say,

according to His love. Liberty, Why, the grave could not hold Christ. His Father loosed the pains of death, and it was not possible that He should be holden of death, and that liberty from death He gives to His people. Everyone born again of the Spirit, at once, in that act of regeneration has that liberty from death bestowed upon him. He does not feel it then, does not enjoy it. That bring him, as to his experience, into bondage, but there is liberty. Free among the dead is a new-born person, and that is by the will of God. Which were born the receivers of Jesus, not of blood, not by natural descent, nor of the will of the flesh, not by human generation, nor of the will of man, not by the freedom of man, as men boast, but of God. That word exalts above all our imaginations, the grace of God, the creating love of God in giving a new heart, called a new creature. No death will hold through eternity, the sinner that is born again. Here may we cast an anchor, here may we hope and praise God, whatever comes in between the instant of regeneration, and the instant of the regenerated person entering into heaven. Nothing can undo this. Which was born. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; remains Spirit; is manifested as Spirit; lives as Spirit; prays as Spirit; trusts as Spirit and walks before God as Spirit, and enters into eternal glory eventually. Born, born to be free. "O," said one to the Apostle Paul - "You a free man? How got you the freedom? " "O, I was born free," said Paul, said the man, "With a great sum obtained I this." Are you born again, born to liberty, and that will be a matter of wonder, when the Lord perhaps says to you, for your backslidings and your turning from Him, "Is Israel a home-born slave, why then is he spoiled." Was he born again to be a slave? A slave to sin. That is the first thing. Think of it. Meditate on it. The beginning of gospel liberty is in regeneration. The Son conveys His life. He is the Only Begotten Son, the immediate Son, having the holy nature of His Father; being God with His Father. A regenerated person is not a son in that sense, and never can be. Grace does not communicate Deity. It communicates the life of Jesus Christ, who could not be holden of death, neither can spiritual death ever again seize and hold one, to whom Christ has conveyed His own life. Prize your birth-right my friends. Bless God for your birth-right. And then, this freed person, being Christ's freed man, has liberty to believe. Well, but some may say, surely people can believe without such

a word as that. No, they can believe naturally; there is a notional faith; historical faith; a faith that may be well based on the Bible, but not spiritual. The faith that the Lord gives, which is called the faith of His operation, soars above nature, goes to heaven and there looks on it's proper object; finds scope in that object, in the Person of the Lord Jesus; in His righteousness which justifies; in His blood that cleanses; in His grace that sanctifies; in His love that never departs; in His power that sustains. Faith goes to Christ and sin cannot keep this faith away always. One of the most notable examples of the power of faith we have as I judge in the Hebrews, where the Holy Ghost speaks of the word of God being quick, living, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow. O, you who know that operation, in the awfulness of it, a wicked nature brought into the light of God; exposed to His gaze and to your own gaze in a measure; exposed to His word; divided, dissected, analysed, O it is very solemn; almost too solemn to speak about when people have had an experience of it. Now what I was to say is this, when a person is in that case, what can he do but despair as looking at himself, but when the Spirit says in him, as it says in that chapter - "Seeing then, that we have such a High Priest, not one who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, let us therefore, mind your therefore's, when you read them in the Bible - "Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace." in the beginning and right through, that will be the case. Come poor sinner, faith has liberty, it is liberty. You may feel among the dead, but your faith is free. Sin will try to stop it; devil will try to stop it; conviction will say O you are too bad to come, but faith will say, I must go. Hinder me not. The Son gives this. These poor believers, poor believers they were, they could not bear a word that directed them to the right source of the thing; they could not bear to be told that they must abide in Christ, and then the truth which they were hearing should make them free. But now, when the Lord touches His own faith, for it is in His gift and His operation that faith says - Now Lord, do help me to come. Keep me coming. May I answer to the word in Peter - "To whom coming." Not once in the past, but to whom coming. A continuous act; always coming, coming, coming.

That is liberty, true liberty. Now if I catch some of you, who are always hanging back thus, you have got so much sin and ignorance and rebellion and all manner of evil. and therefore you cannot be right, now the Lord help you to take hold of this- sin does not, is not permitted to hinder a sinner from coming to the throne of grace. And sometimes that sinner is blessed with such a view of Christ as enables, yea constrains him to come boldly. O what a servant this is, and He is to abide in the house with the very Son of God. What a servant he is who also is made a son and then you will see what of course immediately follows, this person is at liberty to pray. Said the Lord to Israel, If leprocy breaks out in any of you, go to the Priest, do not judge yourself, I do not permit you to judge yourself, you must go to the Priest to be judged by Him. The nature of this outbreak, the colour of the hair, that shall declare what it is, I have left to the Priest, blessed be God that it is so. The type is good. O but the anti-type, poor sinner, leprocy is not to be a hindrance. Jesus allowed ten lepers to approach Him. Drew them in the days of His flesh on earth. They came to Him, a single leper came to - "If Thou wilt, Thou cans't make me clean." What does this say in the gospel spirit? It says,

Leprous souls, press through the crowd,  
in thy foul condition;  
Struggle hard, and call aloud,  
On the great Physician.  
Wait till thy disease he cleanse  
Begging, trusting, cleaving;  
When, and where, and by what means,  
To his wisdom leaving.

Free in prayer sometimes. How free you cannot say. Free to confess, to bemoan your condition, and the Law-giver does not say, you have broken my law, and therefore I will shut you up for ever, but rather He says "Open your mouth wide." "Come to Me." Bring your troubles, bring your sins, bring your wants, bring your woes, bring your leprocy, and every foul thing about and in you, bring them all, for there is a High Priest whom I have appointed, and He shall judge your case. You have it in the Psalms - "When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly." (Psalm 75.v 2.)" He will judge your case, uprightly; when it is a leprocy breaking out and spreading all over, then you will find He will pronounce you to be clean. If the Son shall make you free, free from the dominion of sin, not free from the conviction of sin; free from the power of

sin to turn you from God, but free to go to Him for the forgiveness of sin, saying with the Psalmist - "Pardon mine iniquity for it is great." And free in one more particular. Free to plead with God. Free to plead with your judge; not to plead innocense, nor to present any extenuating circumstances, not that. O that is bondage, but free to plead one plea. "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, says the Saviour, I will do it." Go then with the chains and the ropes of the sins, and the bondage, and the fears, and all that you have and plead that one Name, that will bring success. This is coming in due order. David tried to bring the ark once, and he made a mistake in not going according to the order that God had laid down; he had the ark put upon a new cart and it never was to be born that way, and so God made a breach; but he said later, let us fetch the ark and do it in good order. When you go to God and look on that Mercy-seat in due order, naming the name of the Lord Jesus, and not prop yourself up in any or by anything, that will do; fall flat; do not prop yourselves up and by it, by any possible thing that will grow in your own heart, or mind, or thoughts, and then you will find God will own it. It is not easy. There is something that will cleave to us as long as we live, to be a stumbling in the way of coming, and yet a man says, I am not at liberty, and do not profess to be, until you really are. What is the liberty you want? This is real liberty. Perhaps you want this - forgiveness of sins. "Having forgiven you all trespasses." That is liberty. There may be a great deal of religion without this, but no liberty. When one has walked the path I have briefly tried to set out, he comes to this place, his mouth is stopped, his judgement of himself is severe, according to God's rule, and he has now no hope in himself, as far as he can judge of himself, he is without hope in himself, he is miserable, he looks at his sins, he can unite with Job in that word "Thou makest me to possess the iniquity of my youth." Yea he can say, God has sowed his iniquities in a bag and given a bag to carry. He has not a single thing now, he is brought to destitution, condemnation and death. Why, he may say I am not fit to go where the Lord's people are, and how can I think of going and trying to draw near to the Holy One of Israel. This is what Christ will have. Come to Me. And this is what He will say. "Thy sins are forgiven." You are redeemed with blood, not with gold and silver from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of

Christ; redeemed with that, that made known, brings peace, which is called the peace of God which passeth all understanding. And now law and sin and devil and all things, that may be about you, to trouble you, now they have gone. They cannot hold you. You have come forth out of the grave by regeneration and now the Lord says - "Take off these grave cloths." Let him go free. Freedom of forgiveness, of justification of acceptance, of adoption into God's family. This is freedom wherewith the Son makes the sinner free, and it is like his own freedom. He is the Son of God, nothing holds Him. Now you, an adopted son walk in the likeness of that liberty. No death can hold you. It may not last long with you in your experience, but it will last for you, and in you really, throughout eternity. Sonship is not to be forfeited, not to be destroyed. Sonship abides. Sense of it may often be wanting, itself abides, and none of the people of God would ever turn round and say to the Lord Jesus we were never in bondage. No the language rather is 'O what a wonder that we who were in bondage, were the slaves of sin, lived in sin, and loved sin and obeyed it, . and were glad to do it, that we should be made free from those very things that held us; from that bondage that was cruel to us; that we should walk with God and before God. Now one word more before I close.

There is I judge, a beautiful analogy to be drawn, between the sorrowful life of the Son of God, while here, and the sorrowful life of his people while here. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Do you expect a better lot. You cannot have as bad, as sad, as sorrowful, as intense, that would be impossible, but you may have some blessed analogy to this in this great matter, you may say sometimes I believe the devil hates me. He plagues me and I believe sin seems to know that I am away from its dominion, for it is always trying to get the better of me. Always aiming to overcome me, yea and more, afflictions come and why do they come? Why, says one. everybody has affliction, but there is an affliction that is not common to every man. If they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also. Marvel not if the world hate you. It hated Me. If God should give us to understand, to experience this - that there is a suffering that has relation to our union with the Son of God. It would put a different face on some things to us, it would put a great difference in our feelings about some things. What have we trouble because the Lord has given us

liberty. Have we some afflictions that arise from that relationship that has been set up between the Son of God and ourselves. You shall be free indeed. Free? Yes, says the enemy to a sinner - Flee as a bird to your mountain. Says faith, to that Person - Flee to your God, and there is liberty in it, go to your God. Go to your throne of grace; go to your Saviour, Redeemer, Sustainer, your friend, your advocate, go to Him. O, the liberty that He has given to us. I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it. I open and no man shuts. I shut and no man opens. If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed. Where is the Son now? We sing sometimes - Blessed be God, we believe it, some of us.

A man there is, a real man,  
with wounds still gaping wide,  
from which rich streams of blood once ran,  
in hands and feet and side.

Tis no wild fancy of our brains,  
no metaphor we speak,  
the same dear Man in heaven now reigns,  
who suffered for our sake.

He is there. What does He say to his adopted ones, his brethren? This "Where I am there shall my servant also be." "Because I live," I am free, no death holds Me, so you shall be free. No death shall hold you because I am with My Father in His Throne; you by my grace shall be overcomers and sit with Me in My throne. So what is before you dear friends, you who know the Lord, say, What is before you? Heaven. Come let us sing the joys of heaven. Let us try to praise our Lord; His glory be our aim, because He has made us free. We are bound many times here. Afflictions bind us; temptations bind us; certain sins bind us but we have got liberty before us and sometimes liberty in our souls, but the liberty that is to come - no night, no sin, no pain. O what a liberty is before us. May the Lord help us to lift up our heads, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed at the first and I wish we might get glimpses of the King in His Beauty and the land that is very far off. As far as I have any understanding in it by experience, I can say this, nothing loosens us like this. Nothing unties the ties of this world like this, nothing has so powerful an effect as this. It is a kind of sweet desolvent. May the Lord give us to know it.