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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel
Brighton on Sunday Morning 19 March 1933

TEXT: JOHN 9 Verse 38

"And he said Lord I believe and he worshipped Him"

This interesting chapter sets forth the Lord Jesus in a typical way, that is His going about doing good and in this instance doing good to a blind man by opening his eyes is just typical of the spiritual mission on which His Father sent Him to open the eyes of the blind, to preach good tidings to the meek. Every child of God here to whom the Holy Spirit has given faith owes to Him everlasting praises for so great a mercy. With the Bible in our hands as the Jews with the Old Testament in their hands, we are blind as they were blind and we are proud as they were. "Are we blind also" And people without grace think they know; that they see they have no doubt; that they can form a judgment of what God ought to be, and what He ought to do, and what He ought not to do, they have no doubt at all, but because they see as they say, therefore their sin remains in rejecting Christ and trampling under foot His word, but when the Spirit of Christ comes and gives to any sinner the seeing eye, the believing heart, then that sinner sees Christ, when He is manifested to him, and when Christ said to this man - Dost thou believe on the Son of God" He answered honestly - "Who is He Lord that I might believe on Him". This shows that there must be preceding believing some knowledge of the Person to be believed in. And Jesus said unto him - "Thou hast both seen Him" just as you may see Him now in reading the scriptures, and yet not see Him. "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with Thee," and as a gracious and necessary consequence he said "Lord I believe" And again as a necessary consequence, he worshipped Him. There are two great points in experimental religion before us. Lord I believe, which is to say I believe in Thee. Thou hast opened mine eyes. Thou hast

taught me, Thou hast found me out, when men had excommunicated him, cast him away from worshipping Him under the Mosaic law. What does the Holy Spirit cause believers to believe concerning Christ? This is a question, what do we believe concerning Christ? If we have real faith, the faith of the operation of God, we first of all believe in the Deity, the Eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus. We believe that He is the Son of God."Dost thou believe on the Son of God" This turns the eyes to Him; allures the affections to Him; draws the powers of the soul after Him; causes the sinner to say "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God" Are we settled on that point? Have we faith in the Lord God incarnate, in the Son of God from eternity incarnate? Here is an object. Vital religion has two parts. First it is objective. This is the object. Second it is subjective. That is an inward work and they both meet at this moment that is to say when they see Jesus Christ and say to Him reverently, humbly "Lord I believe Thee to be what holy scripture declares Thee to be" That is a point. Now that is a saving faith. It kills idolatry. It deeply humbles a soul. It puts out of court human judgment concerning God and it settles the soul on this foundation. I believe Thee to be Almighty God. There were evidences sufficient before the eyes of the pharisees and scribes of the Deity of the Lord Jesus by His omnipotent actions, miraculous healing the sick, quickening the dead, commanding the storm to be a calm, feeding thousands from a few loaves and fishes and yet though they said they saw, they never saw. But if this is our case by the teaching of the Spirit, then we have a saving faith, a faith that will embrace the Saviour, that will never be content without Him. Let us, God helping us by the Holy Spirit's grace, look at this point very stedfastly and carefully, are we settled on this point? How much religion there may be without this, God alone knows, but very much corruption, unbelief, hardness of heart, ever so many streams of vile imaginations and abominable things may the corruptions of our nature send into our souls. This

faith in the Person of the Lord Jesus will prove, more than all other things, to be a life to overcome our death, a steadiness to preserve us from stumbling into error, keep us with our eyes on God, and bring us to look to Him to be supplied with all that we need for soul and body, for time and eternity. A grand point this, deserving of our closest and most prayerful attention that we may be settled here for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even the stone, the tried stone, the precious corner-stone - Jesus Christ. This faith will make Him precious. "Unto you that believe He is precious" Sometimes this belief in action in the soul constrains it to say to Him

Yes Thou art precious to my soul
My transport and my trust
Jewels to Thee are gaudy toys
And gold is sordid dust

And this preciousness of Christ realised by the gracious teaching of the Spirit moves the soul after Him with ardent desires. If you do not feel His presence you will seek it. If you feel His presence you will embrace Him and draw by faith from Him the supplies that you need.

Lord I believe Thee to be a substitute for sinners. This is another point. The substitution of Jesus Christ in the place and stead of His church is a fundamental doctrine, and the experience of it is sweet. When you can say

Tis He instead of me is seen
When I approach to God

you have a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a humble confidence that it is well with you. If we consider for a moment in the light and teaching of the Holy Ghost what a substitute means we may see the much grace of God, the great wisdom of God, the infinite kindness of God in sending His

Son and laying Him for a foundation for the church. Everything necessary for the escape of man from the wrath to come, necessary to fit and prepare sinners for the blessed dwelling of God in heaven, everything necessary for the perfect justification and the holiness of sinners, the substitution of Christ ensures. It embraces them all. A substitute for another person is one who takes the position, the responsibilities, the liabilities of the Person for whom, with open eyes as to all that is necessary, He is to be a substitute. Do you feel a sinner? Do you feel a rebel? Do you feel that that is true of your heart, that it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Do you feel the streams of sin boiling up from that depth of corruption that you have in you covering your heart and mind and carrying away your thoughts into every foolish and wicked thing? Do you feel your nakedness before God, your awful guilt before Him, your constant disposition to sin and turn away from righteous things? Now all this sin, this guilt, this wickedness Jesus Christ saw and knew fully when He consented to be your substitute. He took on Him the form of a servant that is to serve His people. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Now when the Holy Ghost comes and gives you to believe that Jesus Christ was a substitute for you and you can say in this particular to Him "Lord I believe" you have a real experience of God's love and goodness, you have a real ground for hope and rejoicing and praising. Everything that God saw you would need, He sent His Son to be for you, a substitute in your place as a sinner, and thus took away all your liability to wrath, paying all your debts and receiving penal wrath, divine curse, into His soul in your room and stead. "Lord I believe" O the happiness arising from this faith. God has given to this faith a singular position in respect of salvation. This faith in the substitutionary work of Jesus is that that brings justification, being justified by faith. God delivers his people from the wrath to come by faith in Christ Jesus. They are manifested to be the people of God

by faith. Look then at this point. Has your faith received this doctrine by the Holy Spirit? Have you felt that divine Spirit moving in your heart and directing you to this alone source of goodness, this only way of escape from the wrath to come? If so, you have, I say, a real religion and great cause for thankfulness and praise to God.

Lord I believe that Thou art a prophet. This man, in answer to the sceptical question that the pharisees and scribes put to him, what He is, said He - He is a prophet. Jesus is a prophet. Of Him Moses said "A prophet like unto me will the Lord your God raise up unto you. Him shall he hear. Have we heard Him? A prophet was a Seer in old time called. A prophet was one who received instruction from God and authority to go with that instruction to the people. The prophet was to tell them about God, about themselves. Has the Lord Jesus ever told us about God, about His love to sinners, His much mercy in raising us up and giving us again that blessed hope, as the Apostle Peter says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of His much mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Good news from a far country, a country we could never reach, a country of which we are naturally, through sin, absolutely ignorant, where God dwells, where the Trinity held council and when the Trinity holding council decreed that the second person in the Trinity should come and take our nature and be a prophet and tell us of the love of God, of the love of the Son, of the love of the Spirit. O if the Holy Spirit comes and opens this work of a prophet to us, we shall see that the Lord God hath annointed Him is a great truth. What for? To preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn. The Spirit does comfort mourners. Jesus sends Him for that. He preaches Christ, and Christ pours the oil of joy into the soul of

mourners. So He is a prophet of good things, good news, a Father in heaven for vile rebels, adopting them into His own family. A Father to teach His children. "Whom shall He teach knowledge" A Father to take care of them. Ah He will educate us if we are His children and we shall often show that we do not want to learn, but He is determined. O, by the way, did you ever thank God that He has been determined with you; determined you should learn some lessons, and would not let your vile run-away heart prevail, but that is by the way. Now this blessed holy Lord Jesus made known by Himself, and by His Spirit, is received as a prophet, a prophet in the understanding, making that good. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of His calling" Hope that predicts good in days to come. Hope that says to a despondent soul "Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him" "Lord I believe".

Then this will be a point with you. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." If you believe that Jesus Christ is a prophet and knows the counsel of God and was sent as this gospel particularly tells us, sent to work the works of God and to speak the words of God which were given to Him; believe that He can say nothing but what the Father has told Him to say, and do no work but the works which He saw the Father do; then, I say, you will go to Him. And the Spirit will show this - the willingness in this prophet to open divine secrets to sinners, to tell them which way to go; what to flee from; what to run to. To tell them that there is all in God they need. Lord I believe that Thou art a King. King of kings and Lord of lords. Are you in a storm; do the waves roar? He sitteth on the waters. He sitteth King for ever. He bindeth the floods from overflowing. Are you tempted of the devil, the god of this world? Jesus is the King of kings, and all He has to do when He sees it needful for you, when your strength is gone, is to rebuke Satan the adversary. Are your circumstances painful? Are you tried? Can you not

manage? Happy the soul that says "I do not know what to do, but I go to God. Happy the man who cannot manage for himself, but who is obliged, and is not only obliged, but by the grace of the Spirit, led to this King.

Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill

He is a King.

Lord I believe that Thou hast all fullness; all that I need Thou hast. Of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace. We need much; we are very poor people, and everyone to whom the Holy Ghost has made known his native poverty, his sinful strength, will be thankful whenever he gets a sight of the fullness of Christ, fullness of life, fullness of mercy, fullness of pardons, fullness of righteousness, fullness of power, fullness of pity, fullness of compassion, fullness of faithfulness. O what a Christ we have. What a Christ the Holy Ghost has caused us to believe in. We need not be troubled, but we are troubled. An empty cupboard is a troublesome thing; an empty purse, but more painful and troublesome is an empty soul, empty of good, full of ill. Who can supply the need of such a soul? Turn your eyes to the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit open to you what He possesses. All the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All the good will of God. All the gospel, all the grace, all the covenant, all the power, all the love that can possibly be needed and desired and sought, this blessed Lord Jesus has. Happy the man who has a place in himself for this fullness. He must be emptied from vessel to vessel. A christian really taught of the Spirit is never far from doctrine, and never far from experience as He is blessed to have within him the Holy Spirit. The two are so intimate that you cannot separate them in the scriptures and they are so intimate in the soul that you cannot separate them for long. A dead Calvinist separates them, having no life and no experience, but a live child of God sees as a divine

truth or doctrine the fullness of Christ and by his faith, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, draws from that fullness. Lord I believe.

Lord I believe that Thou art the only rest for my soul.
Beautifully Rutherford is made to sing

My nest hung in no forest
Of this death doomed world or shore

The only rest is this blessed, holy, glorious Lord Jesus Christ. If you think you rest in a circumstance that is very pleasing, you will probably provoke God to put thorns into it, or to take it away altogether. "Build" says Rutherford, "build no nest in any tree of this death-doomed forest" But we are very apt to do it. Naturally we want to do it. I have had plenty of experience of that disposition. Oh but says Christ - you shall need Me, and when the Spirit brings the need to our knowledge and feeling, then comes the kind, merciful invitation - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". My blood shall give rest to your conscience; my love shall give rest to your affections, and My knowledge shall give rest to your understanding, and My power shall support you under every burden, yea My wisdom and goodness shall be with you to preserve you in every fiery trial. Great was that Glorious One who, when three professors and confessors of Him were cast into the burning fiery furnace, walked with them. Ah, I have often thought and said to you, I suppose, that the air of that furnace was the pleasantest atmosphere those three men had ever breathed. O the Rose of Sharon was there. The goodness of God was there, and they proved that there was a bed in the fire, a rest in the furnace, as every child of God, more or less finds when in some fiery trial. "I will give you rest. I am that rest. My Person is the rest. There is nothing but mire and mud in the whole world. He is the rest of His people. Sweet rest. Change and decay we have in our persons, in our friends and friendships. God

takes one and another away from us. He is the same, yesterday, to-day and for ever.

I believe Lord that Thou art the only beauty and perfection that the church shall ever have, either here or hereafter. Beauty? God is the judge of what is beautiful. What is beautiful in God's eye? Perfection, nothing short. If you have not perfection you will never be in heaven, perfection before you leave this world. No, one says, how can I be perfect with this sin? There is a perfection in Christ which is expressed in one epistle "Ye are complete in Him" All the holiness, all the loveliness, all the purity, all the beautiful form that the church shall have through eternity, she is to have from Jesus Christ. Poor sinner, when you see yourself to be without form and void, huge, shapeless, except as to be shaped in sin and born in it, I say when by the Holy Spirit you get a sight of yourself, how sick of yourself you are. How you mourn. O what salt tears trickle down your cheeks sometimes as you feel yourself to be so utterly bad, but then the kind Spirit of Christ comes and says "Turn your eyes to Christ. See in Him the perfection you desire and must have. See in Him everything that is good." Then you say "Lord I believe" and you do not fumble into your own heart to find a bit of goodness then. No you are content to be a sinner, to be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

Lord I believe that Thou art all the victory that I need. You must be victors if you go to heaven. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne.

I asked them whence their victory came

How did you come through these tribulations? Great tribulations. How did you get along? How came you to stand when there were floods? How came you to live when you were in a fiery trial? How came you to live when death spread

itself over your spirit through the corruptions boiling up in your nature? O, they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of His testimony. They overcame by Jesus Christ. Yes, and the Holy Spirit comes and says

Christ who conquered for you once
Will in you conquer too

Then you will rest there. Then you will say "Lord I believe" I am not to get the land in possession by my own arm, or by my sword. I am to get to heaven by this - I am to lose myself in Thee. I am to lose my sins and my sinfulness in Thy atonement. I am to lose my rags in Thy beauteous righteousness, and I in my weakness am to prove that Thou art strong. All victory is by Jesus Christ. This then, as I view it, is a large word. "Lord I believe" It stretches itself over people, poor believers, who feel so much unbelief. It stretches itself over all their needs, and it says live. Yea more, "Because I live ye shall live also" and more "Where I am there shall my servant also be" O what a word that was to me once, and has been since. "Where I am" Where is He? In the land which is very far off. Lord I believe. And he worshipped Him. Necessarily, comfortably, humbly, believingly, he worshipped Him. Worship is the prostration of a sinner before God. The moving of his passions and powers and pouring out of them all as a libation before Jehovah Jesus. Worship is the movement of all the affections of the soul to Him. It is the giving up of yourself, the losing of your life, the hating of your life and you then find it. And he worshipped Him, as His God, as God Man. The socinians accuse us of idolatry because we worship Him who is a man. They do not know that Deity is in that Man. We by the Spirit's grace do know it. Yes, Eternal God Jesus possessing all the fullness of the Godhead bodily is worshipped, being God. It is a beautiful action of the soul this worship, this prostration of self. an inferior, infinitely inferior, bowing his whole soul before the infinitely superior. An empty creature

worshipping a full Saviour. A vile sinner worshipping a holy Jesus. We have worshipped Him have we not? The other night on my bed this word came to me "Dost thou believe n the Son of God?" and I humbly said "Lord I believe" and I worshipped Him, and I am sure you will do the same whenever you get a view of Him. You wont be gadding about after a hundred bits of vanity when you see Jesus. You will leave everything. You will leave everybody and you will leave yourself, and that is the greatest of all things to leave. The devil was true when he said to God "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life" but then this life which you part with, you will leave, you will hate, when Jesus is near you. In the light of the teaching of His good Spirit, infinite self goes, lustful self goes, covetous self goes, proud self goes, and the humble soul, humble because having been humbled, worships Him. May the Lord cause us to do this. I have just skimmed hardly the surface of this. God the Holy Spirit lead us into it.

