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Sermon preached at Galeed Chapel
Brighton, by Mr. J. K. Popham, Sunday
evening 17th August, 1924.

Text: Lamentations 3.v 25.

"The Lord is good to them that wait for Him
to the soul that seeketh Him."

He is good my friends, to make Himself seekable and findable and apprehensible. Consider Him as Jehovah, dwelling in the light to which no man can approach. The God whom no man hath seen nor can see, and consider the distance of sin and the cloud and if I may speak so, the skin, the black and thick unto us, impenetrable skin of guilt; and then consider that this God, that this great God should have made Himself seekable and findable to those whose nature says to Him - "Depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." Consider again that He will be found; will make Himself known; has undertaken everything that is requisite for that great end; that He should be known to a sinner, in a sinner. We shall never be able sufficiently to praise Him for making Himself known by revelation in the word of God, and then in our hearts, where He has made Himself known. He is seekable in Christ, nowhere else. No you cannot seek Him in the law. That is a flaming sword to keep you away from the tree of life. Nowhere but in Christ is God seekable and findable. Let us then as we may be enabled this evening a little, look into the great mystery that is here before us, and the mercy. "The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." and first of all let us speak of the need there is in us for God. It is a great need. Such a need as all creation could not meet, could not supply. Such a need as the word of God sets forth clearly. One thing needful, even the Lord of life and glory who gives eternal life. "Who is made wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption to his people. The need is the removal of guilt. Who can forgive sins but God only? The need of justification. Who but God can justify the ungodly? The need of wisdom. Who can guide a foolish, ignorant creature but the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit. The need of nourishment, for the new creature. Who but Himself is the bread of life, the water of life. The need of a refuge from the storm. A shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible one is as a

storm against the wall, and who can meet that need but the Lord of life and glory incarnate? It is the need of strength against the mighty strength of your trouble. Strength to hold on. Strength to follow on. Strength to justify God. Strength to believe in Him against all the opposition of unbelief and science falsely so-called, and who is sufficient for that but the Lord.

There is a great need in us my friends, if we are to stand well with God. If we are to be His everlasting guests, there is a great need in us. We must be prepared. We must be fit to stand in His presence. We must be qualified to be there. We must have a nature like the place; a holiness like His before and with whom we hope to stand. We must have a title. We need a title, and who is sufficient for such a wide and deep and great and everlasting need, but God? Do you feel your need? Is it pressed on your heart that you are unfit for God? Fit for hell, fit for judgement, fit for condemnation. Do you feel your need? Is it made out to you clearly? Not, have you grown up with some idea, because you have heard the truth preached, but do you feel the need? Is it with you a living need; a pressing need, an urgent, an insistent need, that is not to be put off with any idea of religion, but with Christ and Christ only coming in and taking up His abode, and giving you His rich provision. Need felt is a pressing thing. Need talked about may be an entertainment when people are rich, but need felt, need pressing, need that none can relieve but God, this is another thing. Come my dear hearers, old and young, come with me and let us go into our hearts for a moment and ask if there is there, not in the head a notion, but there, in our hearts, a real felt need, a real need felt. O it is great to have this. It takes you to God. It makes you wish to see and know and embrace the Lord Jesus. It makes you want to make the choice that Mary made, and have the privilege that was granted to her, even to sit at the Lord's feet. It makes you tremble at the thought of missing that; tremble at the thought of standing alone, and having not another with you when you fall. Two are better than one, if one fall, his fellow shall help him up again, but if you begin to think and do really believe at times, that you are alone as to your experience, it will make you tremble. Do we need the Holy Spirit? Do we need the love of God? Do we need the blood of Christ? Let us ask ourselves the important question- how are we affected Godward? Let conscience answer, is it so? Is it so indeed with us that we need Him? If there is this great need

in us, is there a provision made? Can we produce any proof from the scripture that there is a provision made for the need we feel, a provision in every way adequate, sufficient; a provision which though so costly, so rich, is to be sold to beggars who have no money? - "Come buy wine and milk without money and without price." O yes, the Bible from Genesis, from the first utterance of God respecting Christ to the end of the book, is full of that rich provision, that is to say, it is one wondrous testimony to the Person and the work and the worth of Christ. It is summed up by the Apostle Paul in that word- "Christ is All and in All." All for a new creature. All bread, all water, all righteousness, all pardon, all holiness, all strength, and heaven itself to his people. There is a provision. There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there, and blessed be the name of the Lord He says- "Seek and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." What is this goodness? It is Himself expressed in the gospel. Nothing less. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "For He hath made Him", that is His Dear Son incarnate, "to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This is God's goodness. Very probably some of you, if tomorrow morning you discovered that you possessed by gift, ten thousand pounds or less, would have quite as much as your heart could wish, and you would not kneel down and pray for a better portion. Does not conscience say that in some of you? You could not look up to God and appeal to Him that He knows this would not be enough. No, you have got the world just as we all had, you to whom I am addressing this remark, you have got the world in your heart, and if a good portion of it came to your hands you would have all you want. Ah, but some can say-

"There's nothing here can satisfy,
not house, nor gold nor land." Only God.

This goodness is satiating wherever it comes in a goodly measure, and it is expressed in the text in a particular way- "He is good unto them that wait for Him."

First He is good in teaching them how to wait. Ah, we do not know where to go to, to lie down with our need and wait without the teaching of the Spirit. "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors; for whoso findeth Me, findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

When people wait really and if I may use the word intelligently and there is a spiritual intelligence, when they so wait, they know what they are waiting for. Do we know what we want? Can we bare our breasts to the eye of omniscience and appeal to the Lord God of heaven and say He knows that what we are waiting for is the forgiveness of our sins, the salvation of our souls, union with Christ, communion with Him and receiving from time to time out of His fulness and grace for grace. Is that what we are waiting for? How good of God to teach us how to wait, nay, an initial goodness or act of goodness on His part is to make us feel our need.

"All the fitness He requireth
is to feel our need of Him.
this He gives us,
Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

and as He is good to make us feel our need, good to enable us to wait on Him, so He is good in directing us how to wait on Him. How to wait on God you say, who does not know that? The man who thinks he knows it and never really waits, he is the man who does not know how. One says- But what do you mean? I mean this - Are you taught to go to a good God in Christ, taught to go with your sins to confess them, your ignorance to ask Him to teach you your badness, to ask Him to take it away and give you His goodness; your irreligion and ask Him to take that away, and give you His religion, His faith, His hope, His love? Are you taught to go as a lost person asking Him to save you; a wandering sheep asking Him to bring you to the fold; a ruined creature asking Him to put your ruin under His hand? Are you enabled to go, taught to go? What is it to wait? It is to be importunate at times. The pressing beggar gets the provision, "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry night and day unto Him, though He bear long with them." If the man who has a friend come to him at mid-night cannot be put off by his friend to whom he goes to borrow three loaves, but who can get and fetch his friend out of bed by his importunity, shall not a poor sinner who goes in the spirit of importunity, that is of a pressing urging faith, shall not he get what he goes for? Yes, but the word wait is a trying word, a trying word. It has embraced ten, twenty, thirty, forty and more years in some people, they have waited and waited, got weary of waiting, tired of waiting sometimes, fearing their waiting would never meet a

gracious reward and answer; tempted not to wait, tempted to go here and there, tempted variously and all but constantly by their enemy. WAiting, O that is no easy thing. I speak the experience of some of you, do I not? It is no easy thing to wait. When you, as it were lift up your hunger bitten soul to the Lord and ask Him to pity and help you and you get no response; when you show to Him your need, your guilt, your weakness, your wickedness, your pollution and you get no answer, no blessing to your satisfaction; when you ask Him to reveal in you His Son Jesus Christ and the empty place is never filled by that revelation, that is not easy is it, to go again and won't be put off, to tell the Lord you can take no denial; to say you will wait and wait and wait till you die, and you will die waiting. This is no easy thing; yet it is what the Lord gives to his people, he gives them power to wait. And the devil ever ready to discourage and put people off, is not able for this. Some of you would like to take the blessing home this evening and I wish the Lord would give it to you to take home, but are you earnest enough. When I say earnest enough, I do not mean earnest enough as a condition, as that which the Lord will have before He gives you the blessing, as if He were taking your penny for His favour, but I mean that as a means He frequently does use this- He gives earnestness, energy, perseverance, persistence, like the man who was importunate and got three loaves. O sinner, is it so with you? Is it so at times that you say I cannot go on without a blessing. I expect if it is so you will say that at such times you at least get some intimation of His goodness, some touch of His mercy, a crumb, a sweet crumb, but He is so good, He won't mock a sinner, he will never mock you

He will try you but He won't mock you. He will try your patience, He will try your faith, He will try whether you can continue and with one hand, while He seems to put you away with the other, He will draw you after Him, but He will never mock you.

"If ye being evil", O the sacred teaching of such a word, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." What father will give a child a stone who asks for a piece of bread. The Lord is good. He says, "Seek ye My face." Does He not mean to reveal His face then? He says ask. Does He not mean to give? Will he turn a beggar away? No. If you can say- "Lord, here is a poor beggar. I have no money.

I have no goodness. I have nothing to say about myself but that I am a sinner and I am lost, do for Christ's sake come and bless me. I say again He will not mock you. You will never say that the minister who said that to you, was a false prophet, never. You will say one day, he did not tell us half of the goodness of God, but you will never say I speak falsely when I say "God won't mock you. The Lord is good to give the waiting ones what they wait for. Yes, a full Christ is for empty sinners. A good God is for bad people. If you take some of your own pretty religion, He won't have it, but if you go with your ruin and your rags and your wickedness and your ignorance and your guilt within, and asking Him to give you what you need, to take away your sins and give you Christ's righteousness, to purge away your pollution and give you Christ's holiness, then I say, He is good to give you what you wait for, and how happy is the man who gets that. How happy is the sinner to whom the Lord Jesus, having power to do it says- "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The forgiveness of sins. It is a joyful sound to malefactors doomed to die. It is a great act of God my friends, it is a great act of God. He passes it on a sinner. He speaks the word to a sinner. He drops in forgiveness into the heart of a sinner, tells a sinner that He has nothing against him, and I do think I can say that, that after the incarnation, after the death of incarnate God, that is one of the greatest acts in this world, to forgive a sinner all his sins. Are you waiting for that? Is there any substitute for it for a child of God? You may make a substitute. You may make one. I remember, it is now forty years ago, soon after I came here, one who was a hearer and who went to heaven I believe, saying to me, will you tell me the lowest possible evidence on which I can depend, and it was a snare, and that gracious woman wanted that kind of thing on which she might lean. It was not good. You say, are not evidences good? Yes, very, I wish I were always filled with them, and you also, but if you make them a prop, if you make them a reason that you are going to heaven; if you make them that kind of thing, then you will not get them as you want them. If God loves you He will keep them away from you, or if you think you have got them, you will soon lose sight of them. There is only one prop for us, one foundation, one acceptance, one holiness, one purity, one salvation, the very Person and work of the Lord Jesus made known in the heart. He is good to give it. Too good

to deny a coming sinner, a waiting sinner. He is good to the sinner, He says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Go, and what Nehemiah said to Israel shall be said in the heart of each waiting person. "Go home, eat the fat and drink the sweet, be no more sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Do not sorrow at all. This joy is the joy of salvation made known; the joy of Christ revealed in the heart; the joy of a sense of acceptance in the Beloved. This is the joy. and the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, and you little know, you cannot imagine, you who are waiting, what a welcome there is for you. What a full Christ there is to be revealed in you. What an infinite goodness there is to be poured out into your hearts. What a Lord there is in heaven to pull you there in His own time. He is good. This goodness is nothing else than Jesus Christ made known, poured out into the heart of a sinner, nothing else. You say, "I am not fit for it." You are a poor judge when you say that. What fits a vessel to receive? Emptiness. Just think of it, that is the fitness of a vessel to receive-emptiness. and are you not empty of good? And cannot you go and appeal to the Lord at times and tell Him it is so indeed, that you are empty of good; nothing to commend you to Him. Nothing to give Him delight or pleasure. Nothing to attract His attention in the way of goodness, and O, when you see it, what a comfort it will be to you, that He does not ask this kind of thing. "All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him." The emptiness of your soul. The poverty and the weakness and the ignorance and the ruin confessed and felt and mourned and that by His grace. This is the fitness. "The Lord is good to them that wait for Him." Simeon waited and when that desire came to him, O what a tree of life it was. He took the Child into his arms and said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Ah, when Christ is embraced, hell departs, death is swallowed, evil is removed, goodness fills the soul, peace sways the conscience and love affects the whole heart. Therefore may we be enabled to wait on Him for His great salvation. We have to wait on Him in trouble, "Lord in trouble have they visited Thee. They poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them." This waiting is not easy. What is your first thought when you get into trouble naturally? How can I get out of it? What is the working of faith in the heart by the Holy Spirit? Lord, sanctify it to me. Give me grace, grace to bear it, to say- "Thy will be

done. Grace to humble myself under Thy mighty hand, that I may be exalted by Thee in due time, and this is waiting on God. As it is expressed in the Psalms- "As the eyes of a servant look to the hand of his master and as the eyes of a maid looks to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon Thee until Thou shalt have mercy upon us." This is God's way to bring to wait for Him.

He says "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me peace." "My peace I give unto you." When you get a little of this, you will say- "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble", and now I know that He knows me. "He knoweth them that trust in Him," that is, He approves of them, He is pleased with them. Their trust pleases Him. Their belief pleases Him. Jesus sees the travail of His soul when a person is trusting in Him. He is satisfied with that person. Satisfied with his faith. The Lord is good in trouble.

He is good when a person waits on Him with some particular need; has some need in providence. That is a beautiful and all-covering word where Christ said to his people- "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you." All temporal good. Temporal deliverances and guidance and supplies. These are all known to God. You cannot need a pound and the Lord not know it, and not have a way of sending it to you if you are unable to procure it by your own labour. What can a child of His need, that He shall not receive from a good God. So the Lord help you and help me to wait on Him. "He is good to them that wait for Him." To wait for Him, says this - There is some expectation. Now do not I speak what some of you feel at times, an expectation? There are two or three things that make a man expect the Lord. First, some view of Him. It may be distant, but when it is sufficiently clear to make the soul know who He is. To see somewhat of His fulness, His suitableness, His goodness, His graciousness, His compassion for sinners, His intercession for them, then that soul begins to look out. Would He have taught you as much as that, to let that expectation, that waiting, die in blank disappointment? O, how the enemy belies the holy, beautiful character of a faithful Redeemer, when He says a waiting sinner will die in disappointment. Wait on Him. Do you expect Him by having had a view of Him. A view of Christ is most attractive. He becomes the desire of all nations, of all poor sinners who see Him. He does draw. The bands

of a man, the cords of love cast around a sinking, longing, waiting sinner will always have the effect of drawing him and enabling him to wait. Another thing will enable you to expect, namely this, some gracious word dropped upon your spirit, into your heart, perhaps an invitation - "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Whenever an elect redeemed person gets such a word as that in his heart from the Holy Spirit, that person will not leave off waiting. Heaven is his, though he does not know it, but he will be waiting for it. Sometimes an encouragement received, when a sinner is in prayer will raise him to an expectation. You may get very near to the Lord in prayer, and yet be in bondage and unforgiven as to your experience. You may get very near the Lord in supplication, feel peculiar liberty, an urge, in your heart, a pressing, a pleading, an arguing, a presenting to God of your need and of the Saviour's merit, and yet not get deliverance, but it will give you a warm expectation. Yea, one may say, 'Would the Lord have showed me these things if He had meant to kill me? Would He have given me access to His heavenly throne, if He had intended that I should dwell in everlasting darkness and punishment for my sins? Would He have given me to feel the attractions of the Lord Jesus if the Lord Jesus had no mercy for me?' So by these things men live, get encouragement, wait, hope, expect. Sometimes they go a little further and they feel love to Christ. They can say "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believers ear." I am speaking to those who have not realised as yet what they want, and I say to them, Now God is good. If you could reflect on this, reflect on His goodness in making you sensible of your need and your condition in sin and by sin, and under the law; if you could realise how good He is, in causing you to come to Him, to His Heavenly Throne, to present your evil case, and to present also the merits of the Saviour to Him; if you could realise that when you have a sight of Christ it was the work of the Holy Spirit in you, it would help you, and you will find one day, O what a mercy for you, you will find that He gives you what you go for. You have gone with an empty hand many times. One day you will get that hand filled. You have gone with a guilty conscience, one day that conscience will be purged from dead works to serve the living God, by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And my brethren, it is here written as the word of the living God to the soul that seeketh Him. Seeking has much in it. Seeking

has a good deal about it. It has enemies, many enemies, but if you seek, there is some knowledge, that is the first thing to notice, there is knowledge in seeking, that is to say you do believe and here, believing is knowing that there is something to be found - a good God in Christ; a mighty Saviour; a fountain of infinite merit; the mighty arm of the Lord; the delivering hand of the Lord. You believe these things, and believing, seek them as knowing and feeling that you need them, and cannot be saved without them. There is a real seeking in this way. Do you seek? Prayer is no perfunctory business. Prayer is the trembling of a sinner, the presenting of a bad case, the going with a hard heart, an empty soul, an impure mind, a guilty conscience, a perverse will.

Prayer is presenting these things, these conditions in which you find yourselves, to God. Prayer is pleading, urging. Prayer is the ascending of your heart to heaven, asking the Lord to give you that which you feel your need of. Prayer is no flattery. Prayer is no empty business. Prayer is not a quantity of meaningless or unfelt words. It is just the expression of the souls feeling of need; asking for those things which the soul feels it's need of. Can you pray? One says- "I have no words." That does not matter, words are not of the essence of prayer. They are it's form at times, but not it's life, not it's essence. The essence of prayer is the lifting up of a soul to God, by the operation of the Spirit. The expression of the souls confession of sin. The expression of a believing heart- "Lord, I am lost, save me." The expression of one who feels his ignorance of the way- "That which I see not teach Thou me." It is the laying out of a case before the Lord. It is an unutterable groan at the throne of God's heavenly grace. A looking to the Mediator and to the Intercessor and to the Great High Priest. These things are of the essence of prayer. Easy when the Spirit moves. Difficult when unbelief operates. Easy when Christ's merits are presented to faith. Difficult when these merits are not present to faith. Difficult when temptation comes. Difficult when your ingratitude, and your sins, and your innumerable wanderings are before you, but O, never put out entirely, never. Ah, if some of the rooms in Brighton and some of the streets of this town could speak with respect to some of you, would they not say this people were engaged in sighing and groaning and panting after God. They told Him again and again that they could not be satisfied without Him. Now what saith the scripture- "The Lord is good to

the soul that seeketh Him." Says the enemy, "He has never given you any goodness yet." What is the devil? Let Christ's description of him answer. "A liar and a murderer from the beginning. What saith faith? God is good. Have you that witness for God in your soul? Can you wait on Him? And when distressed, distraught, troubled, can you go to Him? Do you feel an influence, a power leading you? Now a good God will never mock you. Let me repeat it even though it may seem but empty repetition, I say He will never mock you. No. Press your case.

"Urge thy suit through all unfitness,
sue it out, spurning doubt."

War in weakness,
dare in doubt."

and put the Lord in mind of His promise, that the soul that seeketh shall find. To him that knocketh it shall be opened." Put Him in mind of it, and put Him in mind of His own work, His own merit, His own mercy, His own love, His own word, and the day will come when you will overcome Him with the eye of faith that looks on Him. You will overcome with the importunity of faith, and He will say - "Be it unto you even as you will," and then you will say - "Now I know that the Lord saveth his annointed." You will say as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed my transgressions, and also you will say as a friend, He in infinite condescension came to me, and made known His heart and His love and His pity even to me the worst of sinners, He came and made me know Himself; made me understand by experience, a little of union with Him.

Now may the Lord bless you, help you to believe His word; fix this text upon your spirits and give you such a pleading spirit, as will bring down the blessing, and you carry it off in a sweet experience.

Amen.