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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, by  
Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning  
10th March 1935

*Text Luke 18 verse 41*

*"Saying, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And he said, Lord,  
that I may receive my sight."*

Two parties are in this text, God, and man. God Almighty, and a feeble blind man. A willing able God, and a desiring man, and though there is, as to their beings, an infinite distance between them, yet as to the love of God, there is a nearness, and as to the man, there is a need. In God, there is love, there is power, there is gracious intention, and in the man, utter helplessness, but a felt need. And the Lord, draws out the man's heart, in this matter. He knows the man's need, but he would have him express it. What is it that you want? My sight, he said. Do you believe I can give it you? Yes. Christ commends his faith. "Thy faith hath saved thee." (verse 42).

Let us see, if we have any real understanding of this text. I do not mean the circumstances of it, they are passed, but there is a teaching, a real teaching, as I apprehend in this, so gracious word. First the Questioner, the one who asks the blind man, what he would like to have "What wilt thou", who is this blessed One, Almighty God. My brethren, you who have grace, and the teaching of the Spirit, you know who this is, in some measure. You have seen Him, to be the very Son of God, the very Son of Man, making one blessed person. How beautiful He has been, in the eyes of your faith, has He not. You never can say, can you, what you have seen in Him. The suitability is inexpressible, as to the fulness of it, a suitability to the cases of poor sinners, needy wretched sinners. What brought Him to this lower world? What made the Eternal Son of God willing to receive, and take, into union with His Divine Person, our nature? To be made like unto His brethren, in all things, except their sinfulness; (Hebrews 2 verse 17) nothing but love. In the fulness of it, love that is embracing, of every particular of salvation. God said, "I the Lord,.....will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42 verse 6). "I am come," says Christ, concerning His sheep, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10 verse 10). I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 10 verse 12). This is the Man, this is the God, the God Man speaking in the text.

People, in his day did not want Him, "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:"(Isaiah 53 verse 3). And if it were put to each individual person, in this congregation, as to whether they, want to know Him, receive Him, be united to Him, be forgiven all their sins, by this person, Jesus Christ. What would the honest answer be? God knows, Some of us know. As far as we know ourselves, we can say, we want Him. In heaven, we want to know, none but Him. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" (Psalm 73 verse 25). And if added to the question, there should be this, and what would you wish, Him to do for you?

Here you would begin with your needs, and faith would spread them out, before Him. You would begin with your fallen nature, born in sin, and you would continue to say, I have sinned. Then you would follow up, thousands of things, wrong things which you have done, in thought, word and deed. You say "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face before Thee my God."(Ezra 9 verse 6). Then you would come to your wishes, Lord I wish to be rid of this sin, I pray Thee, "Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."(Psalm 25 verse 11). You would ask Him to clothe you with that divine robe of righteousness, which He, in His obedience and death, wrought out for poor sinful people. If in affliction, you would say, do sanctify this to me. I am more concerned about having it sanctified, than having it removed. You would say, I know I must die, I may soon die, fit me to die, make me a guest of God in eternity.

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" There are desires in men, there are desires in good men, men of whom it is said "The desire of the righteous is only good:"(Proverbs 11 verse 23) therefore it pleases God. Of course it pleases God, because these desires are His creation, in the heart. Well it is good to want something, that only God can give; good to want something done, that He only is able to do. Here helplessness comes in, utter helplessness, poor wretched creatures, rendered weak, as the scripture has it. When in weakness they are brought to God, to lay before Him, at His own request, the thing, or things, they would have Him do for them, and he responds to the gracious invitation. The Lord invites him, to say what he would like to have done, and he responds. Here I may remark, there is in true Christian experience, inter-communications between God and men. Some word from Him, some touch He gives, some gracious invitation He sends out. He sends out His word, and it lights upon people, Yes, God does not speak to the air. He speaks to people. He says something to people, and to particular people, as to this man "What wilt thou have me to do?" to-day.

And though, there was but little work, apparently done by the Holy Spirit, there is something done, and God sends words to His people "What wilt thou." O sinner in Galeed, what wilt thou have God to do for you? And when he speaks, it is to a case, then there is some answer to be given, there is communication made by the sinner to God. An answer to His question, a sweet, response of faith, to the invitation of Christ, given out to him. What do you, want Him to do? What do you want from Him? Is there anything I can do for you? and faith says, yes Lord. This brings the case before God. If you have a case, and God is pleased, in some gracious way to touch that case by His word, you will be sure to respond, and lay it before Him.

This poor man, as it were, said, see my unseeing eyes Lord, see them. When you put a case before God, He sees it, as much, as truly, as He saw the blind man, with eyes having no sight, so He sees your case, however dark it may be to you. Now look at the response, "Lord that I might receive my sight." What do you say? Lord I want forgiveness, I want a revelation of Thyself, I want to have, in my heart a realisation of Thyself. Make Thyself real to me, give me spiritual vision, give me a sight of Thyself. Is that so? Do you not go to Him, with that one thing, one request, "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." (Psalm 25 verse 11). The deceitfulness of my heart, the desperate wickedness of my heart, my sins which I cannot number, these burden me, pardon all of them. And faith in you, may sometimes get a view, of the "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zechariah 13 verse 1). And then you plead that, you plead it, bring it before Him, put Him in remembrance, of what He did, when He said "It is finished." (John 19 verse 30). And entreat Him to grant to you, a<sup>n</sup> interest, in that finished salvation, press that on His attention. Press your need of forgiveness, He won't despise that, He never did despise the prayer, and the pleading, of any poor creature, who came to Him, by the grace of the Holy Ghost. "That I may receive" the forgiveness of my sins. It is one of the greatest mercies, that God ever gives out, to a sinner. When you are favoured to receive this, you will know I am speaking the truth, when the Lord tells you, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ". (1 Peter 1 verse 18,19).

Urge thy claim, through all unfitness; (Gadsby's 484 verse 5)

The day will come, when you will say to your friends, rejoice with me, for I have now got, what I long have sought, the forgiveness of sins. Then you will say with the Psalmist, that the Lord gives you perfect rest.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord" (Psalm 4 verse 8) alone has done this great thing. "Rest in the Lord." (Psalm 37 verse 7). Rest in Him is a sweet thing. One may say this morning, if the Lord asked me what I wanted, I should say, Lord I want a broken heart, I am sorry, my heart is like a stone. Wilt Thou break it, wilt Thou dissolve it, does that meet you? If you want really, to have a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, a sacrifice which He will not despise "What wilt Thou" O give me a broken heart.

Only people who know, what a hard heart is, as in God's sight, can enter into this, the sweetness of a broken heart. It is unspeakably sweet to feel, you have no hardness toward God, no hardness in respect of providence, very bitter, some providences, may be to you, you have no bitter feeling, but just have a heart tender and softened by divine grace. Well, if He says, what is it you want, tell Him "a broken heart and a contrite heart, (which) O God, Thou wilt not despise".(Psalm 51 verse 17).

If He says, what will you have Me to do for you, this might be the answer, Lord I want that sweet repentance, renewed in me, that I have felt. Gospel repentance is far removed from remorse of conscience. Remorse of conscience may make you very miserable, gospel repentance, will have happiness about it, and in it. O the sweetness of repentance, then you have tears in your spirit, if none trickle down your cheeks, tears which God will put in His bottle.

Repentance is a gift bestowed  
To save a soul from death; (Gadsby's 241 verse 1)

Repentance has respect to God, remorse has respect to yourself. Remorse says, I am in prison and I would like to get out. Remorse says, I am sorry I have done that, because I am found out in it. Repentance has respect to God, I have sinned against Him, I have contemned His word, I have not followed His counsel, I have had infidel thoughts, and have nourished them, rather than hated them, I have been rebellious. O repentance is very sweet, every sinner to whom the Spirit, gives, this great grace, can never be tired of it. As long as a sinner lives under the unction of the Spirit, he likes to have repentance in his soul. Christ is able to give it "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt".

If he should say, to one in affliction "What wilt thou" have me to do for you? O sanctify this to me, I am more anxious to have it turned into a blessing, than I am, to get rid of it. Can you say that? Yes, honestly. What is it to have an affliction sanctified to you?

First it is to have your will brought into a sweet submission, to the will of God. It is to believe, that wisdom is in this trouble, in sending it. It is to believe that there is an end, a divinely appointed end to the affliction. What is that? That you might be a partaker of His holiness. You look into the scripture, to see what teaching, there is respecting affliction in the church, and you will find, it is that we might be partakers of His holiness, which has in it, these things, weaning you from the world, weaning you from yourself, weaning you in regard to some particular thing, which has brought this affliction on you. O the sweetness of being enabled to say, "Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (Psalm 131 verses 1 & 2). Weaned from self, lordly self, self willed self, and every kind of self. Lord I am weaned from it.

Happy is the man, who is enabled to go with affliction, to God, and put it thus before Him. Wean me Lord from my lordly, proud, selfish self. One can then enter into Rutherford's expression. or rather exclamation, more than once, made by him. "O that I had not a myself". There is no hindrance in the race, there is no piercing sorrow, that a child of God can have, more dreadful, more to be hated, than this wicked self. Wean me from myself. If He should, come and say to one, who is often reckoning matters up, with regard to himself, and considering that he must needs die, what would you have Me do for you, O saint of Mine. What would that poor saint say, what would you say? You would say, ties that have bound me to the earth, are being loosened, interests that held me fast, are in some respect dying. Pleasures which I formerly felt, and which held me fast, have much declined, even naturally gone. And when you have made these acknowledgements before God, what would you have Me to do for you? You would have Him do these things.

First, seal you, with the sealing of the Spirit unto the day of redemption. You would have Him so seal you, that you can say, "My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth" (Jeremiah 3 verse 4). That is one thing you would like Him to do for you, is it not? I often ask Him to do that for me. Another thing you would have Him do for you, out of His great love and grace, is this, that He would come, and condescend to be your companion, to walk with you, to speak to you, to comfort you, to sustain you, and to give you such sights of the King in His beauty, and of the land, which is very far off, as that, you might say with submission, to His will, as to the time. O but do hasten the day, hasten the day when I shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

Does that express, what you would say to Him? "What wilt Thou that I should do unto thee." Fit me to die, Fit me to be a guest of God, through eternity to come. What was the fitness of the bride, when she was about to enter, upon the marriage state, as we have it in the Revelation? She "hath made herself ready." (Revelation 19 verse 7). How? by good works? No, by having put on, the wedding garment, the "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen, is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19 verse 8). Have you got this desire to be with Christ? Were He to come to you and say, now poor sinner, I see you are tired of life, I know you are weary of sin, I have given you that. I know you would like to be where there is no sin. "What wilt thou have Me to do?" This would be the response, Fit me to die. O but there may be many steps, between that poor sinner and death, many a long day, many a wearisome day, many a night of affliction what then? "What wilt thou have Me to do" in these intervening days, dark days, black and dark nights? Well I would have, Thy protecting care and love, I cannot keep myself, I do not trust myself now as I used to do, but I am prone to evil, do keep me.

Lord I want to feel, Thy love in my soul, prevailing over every other thing, over every other love. I want again and again to have the blessed teaching of the Holy Ghost, leading me more and more deeply into the truth. I know very little of it. Can you say that honestly? Ah yes, and if you live to be eighty years old, you will say it more deeply, and with more meaning, than you would say it at fifty years of age. You will feel your ignorance of divine things. I do not mean that you will be more ignorant, no, but you would feel your ignorance. And this is a truth, that the more you are taught of God, the more you see of God, the more you see in God, the more the Holy Ghost opens to you, the person and riches of Christ, and the love and glory of Christ, the more you will say, O how ignorant I am. how little do I feel to know of Him. Is it not kind of Christ to come then, to a sinner, and take possession of that sinner, whom the Devil, would try to keep away from Him.

Professors also would keep him away from Christ, if they could, so would pride, but to whom, necessity makes Christ needful, Come, as if He should say, come lay this great need before Me. Was Christ able to do this? Is Christ able to do this? An easy professor might say, who doubts that? I put the question seriously to you. Is He able to do this? Faith says yes "If Thou wilt, Thou canst" (Mark 1 verse 40). "Abraham believed God," (Galations 3 verse 6) and his, believing in Him, show there are moments, when men under the teaching of God, do believe in Him. If you believe in God, what difficulty can there be in your mind.

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9 verse 23). What my condition? Yes all things are possible to you if you have faith. Jesus said, "Receive thy sight," that is what you, want Him to say, and what He will say, one day to you. When He comes and asks you, what you want Him to do for you, receive it. When you ask, you receive, and in this sometimes that word is made good "While they are yet speaking I will hear." (Isaiah 65 verse 24). How wonderful that is, while you are speaking to the Lord, asking Him to bless you, the blessing is in you. When you ask for some mercy, the mercy is in you. When you ask Him to confirm you, the confirmation is in your heart, even while you are speaking, He does the thing. Is He able? Yes, able to make you a child of God, a willing servant of God, able to so fill you with Himself, that there will be no room for other things, that you can honestly, believingly with worship say "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." (Psalm 73 verse 25).

Jesus said unto him "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee." God owns faith, it is His gift and He will own it, and gives the reward of it. You get the reward of your faith, faith being your own possession, and standing in all its movements, in the power of God. May the Lord give grace in this great matter. Search your hearts, see if Christ has ever been near you, or if you have a desire for Him, to come near you, and put the question, pointed, personal questions, not generalities, but grace. God Almighty comes, and says What wilt thou, O man, O woman, what wilt thou poor mourner, "What wilt thou, that I should do unto thee?" Faith looking at Him, O I wish I got a sight of Him, every day, looking at Him, seeing Him to be the very Son of God, and the very Son of Man, One Person. Looking unto His fulness, unto His love, unto His grace, unto His blood, unto His righteousness, unto His power, and said, Lord I have got a bad case, a bad heart, a gadding spirit, an unrighteous mind, unbelief, that inveterate foe, that I cannot manage, wilt Thou save me from these my sins. Lord I have no home here, I am a vagrant, a pilgrim, and I am seeking "a city, which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11 verse 10). I want to reach that city, I am in such a state, that I cannot but sin by my nature, and I want to be where I cannot sin. Ah, what will He say? "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." But suppose He should be silent, for a time, yea, suppose He should say a word, which is like a sword, to kill you. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs," (Matthew 15 verse 26) what then? Faith would meet Him, O it is wonderful that He should give faith, of that nature, that will not take a denial. "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (verse 27). Wait on Him my friends, you say, I cannot help it, neither can you really.

But we do get slothful, at least I do, backward to speak to Him, very backward, slothful, hard hearted. Lord dost Thou ask me what Thou shalt do for me? What I want Thee to do for me? I bring my case, I bring my nature, fallen and wicked, I bring my deceitful heart, I bring my untoward will, I bring my stubbornness and my pride, all these things I bring to Thee. You understand me, some of you. O the business that is carried on in secret, sometimes on your bed, in your room as you wake. Business that is carried on between you and heaven. Bless God, we cannot do without Him. I cannot do without Him, and yet there is a nature in me that says, I do not want Him. O I shall be glad when I have done with this nature, it is so vile.

And Jesus said "receive thy sight," and one day He will open the door to a poor pilgrim, and death shall be the porter, and Jesus will say, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord;"(Genesis 24 verse 31).

Amen