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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday Evening 13 January 1929

TEXT: LUKE 9, verses 23, 24 and 25

"And He said unto them all, if any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away?"

A very solemn and heavy word yet it has in the very heart and soul of it a good look on sinners. If any man, any descendant of fallen Adam, any man, any poor, corrupted foolish sinner, sensible of being ruined, any man in the whole world and this is so wonderful that the Lord Jesus just says this word. People talk about universal redemption which is a great lie and libel on Jesus Christ, but when He will manifest His mercy to men, then He says any poor creature, sick, blind, lame, guilty, wicked blasphemer and any sort of sinner even to the thief, even to the blasphemous Saul of Tarsus, if any man. Well does not this look kindly, and has not it a kindly look for some of us. Just think of it, He has not put your name in nor my name in so many letters, but He knows the objections some of us raise in our hearts, that we are too bad for Him, too wicked, too vile, too ignorant. There is no room at all in us to entertain a thought of His kindness to us, but He says now if any man. Is there a poor creature here in this little congregation that answers to this, a wretched creature. Any man. Well I think it does express the kindness of God. Not any good man. I came not to seek the righteous. Not any strong, not any wise man; not any rich man. I came to save the lost, and I believe that if there is a poor creature here, ready, from a sense of vileness, to cut himself off, God will make this word more or less distinctly appear to him, to embrace him. O if the word of

God embraces you. Not a pharisee, who cuts himself off, by praising himself; not a saducee who says there is no resurrection, but any poor wretch, without professing this or that, with pharisaism in his heart, saduceism in his heart, and yet convinced of his sin and cutting himself off. If any man. I think this wonderfully kind. So it appears to me as if the Lord Jesus would say now these people I have come to save, just judging themselves unfit, and unworthy, so I say this, if any man. The Arminians are not half so kind as we are for they put it upon their own will and their own choice and they must be fitting themselves, but here the Lord Jesus says nothing of the sort. He was surrounded by a multitude. He had just fed them miraculously. He speaks to His disciples and He speaks to them because His gospel is for sinners, really for sinners. O you who would fortify yourselves with some goodness, He wont have you; who would be wise if you could, He wont have it. He will just have this, lost. I came to save the lost.

Sinners can say and only they
How precious is the Saviour

Now take that word, then look at it, see if it suits you. If any man, any lost man of Adam's race. Then He says there is a will in this. If any man will come after Me. Here are two remarks that I would make. First that the man is needing something. He is a lost man and he is needing to be saved; a poor man and he is needing riches; a wicked man and he is needing to be made righteous. He is a needy man and he finds there is nothing in the whole world to meet his poverty, nothing in himself, nothing in any creature; he is just a poor man, without resources either in himself or in the whole world. Do you know that man, a poor man? Poverty; it is a very pinching, embarrassing thing, and poverty such as God's people feel is to them very embarrassing, very pinching. They are likely to die in their poverty. The poverty of the poor says Solomon is his destruction and you think your poverty will be your

destruction. What is this poverty? No righteousness, no goodness, no wisdom, no strength, no holiness, no pure affections, that is poverty. Indeed that is poverty, and the millionaire who has no grace is this poor person, but he does not know it. And the second remark is this that he has some thought, if not a distinct knowledge, some thought that Jesus Christ has the riches he needs, that if Jesus Christ will but look on him, and open His divine and liberal hand to him, all the poverty that he has will be removed. There is some thought, idea, feeling perception that Jesus Christ has all the riches he needs. Do you know that poor man? Do you know what that perception is? And these two things working in the person, bring this about, a will, a will to follow Christ. "If any man will come after Me" That is a great thing. Most men say to Him, "Depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" When Christ had healed one poor wretched creature, casting out devils from him, and the devils entered into the swine and the whole herd of the swine ran and drowned in the sea, when the owners of those creatures came, and the city, what did they say to Christ? "Depart from us, get away from us." Now it is another spirit that this poor man has. O he says, if Christ would but look on me, if He would but open His merciful and liberal hand, if he would but give out some of his divine bounty to me. I need, I desire nothing else. There is a willingness in him to run after Christ. Do you know this will? Some of you do. Where would you not go to find Him? What would you not leave to find Him? So this is a gracious word. Let this poor man, this any man, no matter where or what he is, being poor and having this will, let him come after Me. He does not put bars in the way. He is kinder to the man than the man is to himself, for the man says though he has got this will I do not think he will receive me if I go to him. I am afraid if I do go in my present condition that He will forbid any near approach to Him. I am not fit for Him. I am unholy, unwise, unthankful, unbelieving, hard hearted. I am ambitious in the world; I want to get on, and to do this and to be that,

and He wont have anything to do with me, and the Lord Jesus is kinder. He says Come unto Me ye burdened ones, labouring ones, come unto Me. I have what you need, and will give it you. Come unto Me and I will give you rest. But now here is a great question, can this Lord Jesus be found? Where is He? Where is He? He was in the world and when here, he went into the wilderness. The man must go there. He was tempted of the devil and the man, this any man, has to go into temptation and he may, pilgrim like, fall into a desponding condition and even despair of life. The Saviour was confronted by the devil and this any man will find the devil his adversary, resisting and opposing and tempting and threatening to destroy him. Jesus went into the ignominy, the shame of the reproach of men. "I am a reproach of men" He said "I am a worm and no man" and the man in the text, whoever he is, has to go in his measure into that state. Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane and there He gave up His will, and the any man of the text has to do the same in his measure, grace enabling him to be willing to be lost, to lose his life , his goodness, his own will, and wisdom, and strength and provision and just simply be a lost, an entirely lost person. How many of us here have a will for this. Jesus, great, Jesus magnified, Jesus a King, with all the insignia of a King, may attract, but Jesus despised, tempted of the devil, sweating blood, resigning Himself to the will of His heavenly Father, for a man to go in those footsteps, into those conditions, in a measure, that is another thing. The Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men, and when there he seems weak, and unable to offer anything in the way of resistance or delivering Himself and Jesus went to Calvary and was crucified and slain by wicked hands and the man who will follow Him must go to Calvary and there, as a lost soul, find salvation; as a guilty creature, be purged from his guilt; as a polluted person, be cleansed from his pollution. Well it is a wonderful thing to have a will to go to the Lord Jesus in these things and to follow Him, and yet this is the way to heaven. Let him come after Me. Where is He? He is in

heaven, and men talk about Him being there as if they knew Him. I think it is very observable as related in the Revelation, that when John got a view of that wondrous place and saw God on the throne with a book of mysteries in His hand sealed, and the enquiry was "Who is worthy to open the book" and no man was found worthy, and John wept much till it was told him thus "Behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed" and what is observable there is this I think that John appears not to have seen the Lamb until his particular attention was drawn to Him, for one said weep not, behold, see. Then John got a sight of Him. He said "I saw in the midst of the throne" He had seen the throne before, but this was like the two sorrowing disciples walking to Emmaus, Jesus walked with them but their eyes were holden that they should not behold Him. So John did not behold Him until He was pointed out to Him, then he said I saw. He is in heaven and you cannot see Him unless he be manifested to you. I am no more in the world said the Lord Jesus and the world seeth Me not but ye see Me and writing of His humbling and death, Paul said, we see Jesus.

If he will come after Me. Is not it wonderful to be a follower of the Lord Jesus? Now what has this man before him? What has he here set before him? The hardest thing in my judgment that ever a man is put to. Let him deny himself. Not let him empty his purse, not let him divest himself of all his possessions. That might not be very difficult in some cases. No, let him deny himself. He has a self; we all have a self, and express it in saying we have a will, in saying we have an understanding, in saying we have affections, in saying we have a choice, a liberty. We have all got a self, myself, and says the Lord Jesus, now if any of this people, this multitude, any man of Adam's race, will come after Me, let him know this there is no room for himself. I say again, in my judgment, it is the hardest thing that a man is ever brought face to face with, to deny himself. This good self, wise self, pure self, strong self, and self directing self. This man must just abandon

himself. Is the man here, is the sinner here, who has ever been brought to it, to deny himself. It means he must go naked, guilty, ignorant, foolish, self-willed, vile and say before the Lord "An Amorite was my father, a Hittite was my mother" I am just a lost person, and all the things to which I have pretended, now I abandon. Against myself I protest, and Christ is to me as He was to Mary, the one thing needful. Deny self. And Christ here says daily take up his cross and the cross must be largely made up of this, self-denial daily. Daily. Every day some of this self is cropping up. Every day some of this self is asserting itself. Every day myself comes up. I am not pleased with this; I do not like that providence; I wish the Lord would not do the other thing. Every day something comes; every day something comes so as that we have to say Lord again we have to come guilty, again we have to say we are undone. Ah he is a wise man who can come to this. He has heavenly wisdom, he has the Holy Spirit in him else it could not be. Let him come after Me. Let him come. You must give all the riches of yours up. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom. A rich man there is a man who has got plenty in himself, plenty for himself. Now says the Lord a camel could as easily and more easily go through the eye of a needle than that man could enter into the Kingdom. Hyperbole, one says. Yes, expressing a spiritual truth, expressing what every experienced christian knows sooner or later, more or less daily. O my brethren, this is heavy work but the end is good.

And follow Me. It seems as if He would go away from you, would elude you, as if though you press after Him He would not permit you to come near Him. It is a seeming thing only, but it has an appearance of truth to the follower. Some of you may say I seek and do not find, I cry and there is no hearing. He shuts out my prayer. You may say I am ready to faint and to give up. What shall I do. What will become of me. You may find in yourself a

faintness and the enemy ever ready to take advantage of you at some point will say better think no more about it, cry no more for it, but then he suggests an impossibility, for God is at the business. Follow Me - in prayer. Lord save or I perish; by faith - I believe, help Thou my unbelief. In love, perceiving the want and the worth of Him and some of His excellencies. Faith goes along with love, and love walks by the side of faith.

Let Him follow Me, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it. There is a mystery here, a spiritual mystery. What is it to have a will to save your life? It is to have a will to be found in Christ not having your own righteousness but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Would you save your life in that way? It is the only way of saving it. If you want an example in the scriptures of self-denial and following after Christ and a will to be saved you have it in the Apostle Paul's case where, setting out his privileges, his attainments, and his religion, he says, these are to me dung and dross and loss that I may win Christ and be found in Him. Oh is not it a trial just to have everything taken away from you, for the Spirit of God to bring this and that before you that you have got, this wisdom, this righteousness, this attainment, this scholarship, this knowledge of the scriptures, this profession of religion, this attainment, this standing among my friends, to give all up and be just nothing but a lost soul, just a lost soul. I lack ability to express it as fully as it should be expressed. It just comes to this that God turns a man to destruction. Thou turnest man to destruction and it is destruction too. The law kills, scripture condemns, conscience condemns, God frowns on the sinner in the law, and the man works and struggles at times to mend the case, to get wisdom, to become good, and the more he does this the more the law opposes him and resists him until at last he is worn out. He brought down their heart with labour. Nor is this altogether confined to the beginning. It goes on.

Self. You think one day this part of it at least is dead and to-morrow it is stronger than ever in an assault upon you. Self. When you get that you will say with more understanding and more bitterness with regard to it than ever before, self in myself I hate, 'tis matter of my moan and yet the man says I want to be right, I seek heaven, I seek the Lord Jesus, I want an interest in Him, and want to know that He loves me, that He gave Himself for Me. This is being willing to be saved. Whosoever will save his life, he must venture on Christ. He must venture on Christ, venture wholly, and let no other trust intrude. Is the will here? Do you know that working in your hearts? Do you feel it? Can you say Lord I would be right, I would be found in Thee, I would give myself up to Thee, I would embrace Thy will and Thy mercy, and Thy love, and be found in Thy atonement and Thy righteousness. Then says Christ you shall lose your life. You really shall lose it. Your life and Mine do not agree for your life is sin. My life is eternal, therefore holy. Your life is corrupt, Mine is pure; your life is ignorance of my understanding. But whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it, and there comes a day when the blessed Lord Jesus is pleased to say to a seeking soul, "I am Thy salvation". To one at a distance He says, "Look unto Me O you at the ends of the earth and be ye saved for I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour" This salvation, it becomes a matter of experience. Jesus is real, in Himself glorious, and he becomes real and glorious in every soul that is saved. You know that who have got it. Those of us who have been favoured with salvation have yet a good deal to learn and a good deal to be saved. A good deal of work awhile in us, while we live, but it comes to this losing and finding, losing and finding; being a wretch and being near to God; hating self, being loved of Him. And O is not it wonderful that God should take trouble with us as as much as He takes trouble with us and does kindly say "Look unto Me all ye ends of the earth for I am God and beside Me there is no Saviour".

Now in the next place, the Lord Jesus just puts the whole world into nothingness. Comparatively He makes nothing of it. What a different judgment is His from our judgment. What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away. There is a judgment coming, my friends. The day is coming when I shall stand before Him, and you will stand before Him. What we have had of this world we shall leave behind us, and if we gain the whole of it we shall leave it behind us and stand just on our own bottom. Every man shall bear his own burden. If it is the burden of grace and the Word of God, then salvation and heaven and if it be the burden of sin and guilt, then cast away. What a solemn thing it is to come face to face with a scripture like this. What a solemn thing it is to be under the teaching of the Eternal Spirit whereby we see things as God sees them, see things as the scripture portrays them, see things as they are and will be through eternity. A man in sin, lost; a man in Christ, saved. A man after Christ losing himself and finding himself in Christ as Paul speaks in Christ. "I knew a man in Christ" he said. One says that is an experience I am afraid I shall never attain to. If you have got the will God has given it to you. If you have got the will to go after Christ and deny self, O that hard business, then you will find the Lord Jesus will say one day "Come in Thou blessed of My Father" I came to prepare this place for you, and now I receive you to Myself. And the good man, who says, I know and I will do as well as I can, and then the Lord is so merciful He wont out me off, but make up all deficiencies; that man loved himself and not Christ, followed the devices of his own heart, and then in the end this word is fulfilled, cast away. Cast away, away from God's presence, away from the glory of His presence, away from heaven. Cast into hell to be punished there for sin for ever and ever.

Now may the Lord look on us. Take dear friends as you can this scripture. Look at it, weigh it, put yourselves beside it, see if you can stand by the side of it, how you

fall out with respect to it. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up His cross daily and follow Me for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall find it, for what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away.

Now I must leave it. You have been patient to listen to me in these broken remarks. I hope the Lord may kindly make some use of them for His own praise and glory.