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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 14 April 1935

MARK 11 v 22

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have
faith in God

A remarkable word, a word which, if we have grace to attend to it, and if we have the faith here spoken of, we shall be highly favoured in this life and in the life to come. The marginal reading is "have the faith of God" which one understands to be, have the faith which God gives, the faith which is the gift of God, the operation of God, peculiar to the people of God, for all men have not faith. There are many definitions, given by various writers, of faith, but there are two meanings in the Scripture which I think are prominent and to which I would call your attention this morning as enabled. The first meaning is the doctrine of faith; not the grace of faith in the heart, but the doctrine of faith revealed in Holy Scripture. Timothy and Titus are both exhorted to this. Timothy was spoken to thus; to continue in sound doctrine. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee". He was exhorted by the Apostle to preach and to maintain sound doctrine. "Hold fast" he said to him "the form of sound words which ye have heard from me". To Titus he spoke about preaching sound doctrine which could not be gainsaid. Sound doctrine is the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Son of God incarnate, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost; that is to say, the doctrine of the everlasting gospel. You cannot give too much attention to this. As a people I exhort you to be very careful about this. Be diligent in attending to doctrine. Timothy was exhorted to give attention to reading and to doctrine. Why such stress on doctrine? First because it is the revelation of God and without revelation no man can know either God or himself. It is the revelation of the Trinity; one divine eternal essence subsisting in three persons. You will let me say this once more; though I have said it probably scores of times in your hearing, still I would exhort you to attend to this, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the

essential Names of the Trinity; the Name of the Father, and the Name of the Son, and the Name of the Holy Ghost. The Father begetting eternally His Son, called therefore His only begotten Son; the Son of Love, that is the Son of Himself; the Name of the Holy Ghost. These are essential; if you destroy the Names you destroy the Trinity.

The doctrine of divine revelation in the covenant of grace; a covenant which is ordered in all things and sure; a new covenant. The first we broke; the second is not in our keeping. The first contained a curse to all breakers of it; the second conveys a blessing that is immutable, even as immutable as He is who made it. The covenant of grace is made between Persons; there must be more than one person involved in a covenant. "I have made a Covenant with My chosen" says God; that chosen is Christ. My King, Says God of Him, whom I have set on My holy hill. To Him the Father said "I have given Thee for a covenant of the people, a light unto the Gentiles." This blessed One said to His enemies: "Except ye believe that I am He ye shall die in your sins". And ere He departed the Saviour of sinners said "I will send you another Comforter". Let not your heart be overcharged with sorrow at My departure; it will be to your advantage that I leave you, for if I leave you as to My bodily presence I will be present with you and will give you My Spirit. I will see you again. The new covenant is full of promises and also of precepts. It is everlasting and ordered in all things, meeting the necessities, the weaknesses, the failures of the people interested therein. O my brethren, we should - we ought often to - bless God for the gospel, for the doctrine of the gospel; the doctrine of divine grace; the living, blessed, Almighty Saviour. The fulness of grace is in Him. Have faith in this God. That is the first meaning in the New Testament of this word "faith". The gospel is preached for the obedience of faith in all nations; obedience to the faith, to the doctrine of Christ as opposed to all the doctrines of devils. Be careful about this; examine yourselves; see whether ye be in the faith or not. Not whether you have the grace of faith in you - that will be a matter of examination - but whether you have the doctrine of faith, the blessed, holy, everlasting gospel of the grace of God.

The second meaning is the grace of faith in the heart. "Have faith in God". Saving faith will bring you who have it to deal with

God more or less continually. It will deliver you from living on notions; it will keep you from self-satisfaction; it will bring you to look to God for all that you need day by day and for eternity.

Let us look at this faith first in respect of the context, the occasion of this word. "Have faith in God". Jesus and His disciples came to Jerusalem; on their way to Jerusalem there was a fig tree and Jesus was hungry. "He came" to the fig tree "if haply He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." Matthew says of this, it withered presently; immediately. The disciples heard that curse and on the morrow, when they were coming again from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and them that sold doves, and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple, and so on. "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto Him Master, behold the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith". Evidently the first thing in this faith, here spoken of, is belief in omnipotence; a grand point. Omnipotence is manifested throughout the whole Bible; in creation, in providence, in grace. The creature is weak; that every saint knows and feels and acknowledges. Weakness in all respects, particularly in respect of goodness. Christ sets before these disciples another object than self - the Omnipotent One. "Have faith in God".

Have faith, first of all, in omnipotent love. Everything in God is omnipotent; all His perfections are omnipotent; His love is. What did it do? It gave forth the only begotten Son. "God spared not His Own Son"; He had but One Son. You think of that and what it means. Having One only Son. He has myriads of sons by adoption, but only One Son by generation, eternal generation, and love sent Him forth to be the Saviour of all given to Him to save.

On such love

one sings; may we sing

my soul still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?

But there are many doubts about it, that is to say, about an interest in it; some here may be much troubled about that. They doubt not that God is love; they doubt not that He gave His only begotten Son in love; that Scripture may have shined in their eyes sometimes - "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life". Then comes the question, did He give that Son for me? Did that Son come for me? Were my sins taken by this precious eternal love of God from me and put on Christ by a most just imputation? Sin's rising and working seems to be a just reason to doubt it. Corruption felt seems to be a reason to give up all hope concerning it. Temptations may come and say you have no interest in it, and the pain of this is only known to those who have it. Can this love overcome all objections? Can one, who has no reason to think well of himself, but every reason to hate himself and hate his own ways, be overcome in respect of the doubts and be assured, so assured as to sing thus

For love of me the Son of God
Drained every drop of vital blood

O, it is a great thing to have this made out to you, that is to say, to have the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. O doubting soul, fearing sinner, if you can, listen to this, the love of God sending His only begotten Son. Plead it; pray about it; take your case of your doubts and your corruptions, the reason of your doubts; ~~take all to God by prayer,~~ as enabled, and beg hard of Him to send to you that good Spirit who alone is able to quell all sin, remove all doubt, and give you a pure conscience by the precious blood of Christ. Have faith in His love; omnipotent. Think of it, what it

removed. What did it remove? Sin. A little word with an everlasting meaning, a terrible meaning; the thing which God so hated - sin. No angel could move it; no sinner could move it. Sin brings mortality; sin digs graves; sin makes the world partly a great hospital, and partly a great cemetery; the great necropolis, the city of the dead over the whole world, made by sin; sin in you, in me. Sin appearing to be sinful by the law which has a curse in it for the sinner; this stood in the way of sinners approaching God. How can this be removed, this great mountain; great to you, great in you; this great mountain. "Have faith in God." That will take it away. Have faith in the omnipotent Saviour. The work Christ had given Him to do was a great work, a work that nothing less than omnipotence could undertake and accomplish. Jesus said to His eternal Father, on the eve of His crucifixion, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do". It was a work that He alone was capable of. He bore sin in His Own body on the tree; He was made sin. I believe we shall never fully in this world enter into that terrible word. Full of love and of grace and of wisdom, He was made sin. He was not a sinner; He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, and yet the Bible doctrine is clear and clearly spoken: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin". And being made sin, He must make an end of it. Think of it, make an end of sin. Have you faith in this Redeemer, this mighty Redeemer? "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." (Isaiah 63 v 1). Mighty, Almighty. Think of His Name; the child born, the Son given, whose Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Does your faith reach this? Does your faith reach this? Even though you may be saying, I doubt my interest, I doubt it much, yet does it reach it? O blessed faith, that is the gift of God; it will take you out of yourself - a wonderful blessing that. "Out of self" prays Gadsby and we sing sometimes

Out of self to Jesus lead

Faith will do it; nothing else will. Necessity is on one concerned about this salvation; a great concern that is. Shall I be saved? May

I be saved? Can I be saved? Reason wont help you here; faith alone will help you. But God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. How are we to live through Him? By His death; by His death, no other way. A corn of wheat did fall into the ground and die and therefore it brings forth much fruit. Jesus fell thus, that is to say, He died and His death is fruitful in the salvation of a number that no man can number, and in the salvation of sinners sitting here, some of whom may be saying, O that we did but know that for ourselves. Faith will lead you to Him Who can tell you it is so. Do not begin to assure yourselves but, if unable to assure yourself, go to Him and say

Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood

Then you will find, one of these days, a wonderful thing coming into your heart; strange, sweet peace, stealing as it were into your conscience, and when you say, what is it, the blood of Christ will answer the question. "He made an end of sin". A great word that. The mountain removed, sin ended, righteousness brought in, reconciliation effected.

Have faith in the Holy Ghost. That divine Spirit is a Person in the Trinity; He proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Father gave Him to the Son without measure; the Son gives Him in measures, different measures. Do you believe in the Holy Ghost? Is it part of your creed, if I may use that common word, too glibly uttered by many? Does this Person, the Holy Ghost, stand before your faith sometimes? Can you, do you, go to Him and pray that He would dwell in you, saying

Unworthy dwelling, glorious Guest
Favour astonishing, divine

The Holy Ghost; He is concerned in salvation. He was first of all concerned in the incarnation of the Son of God. It is worthy our attention that the Holy Ghost overshadowed the virgin Mary. A new creation was there, by Him. And when Jesus was born the Spirit was given to Him without measure, and this was manifested at His baptism.

"This", said the Father, as Jesus came up out of the water: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased", and the Spirit. in the likeness of a Dove, came upon Him openly. He had ever been in Him since His incarnation, but He came upon Him now openly; now, as it were, for His ministry, and Christ, opening the Book in the synagogue one day, opened to that word in Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me 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; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes....." Mind the ashes; you may fix your eye on the beauty rationally and have no view of the ashes. What ashes? What do you mean, some may say. I mean, ashes are produced by fire. If there is no fire in you, no fire of divine anger manifested, there will be no ashes, and if there are no ashes there will be no beauty to give unto them. "Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness....." Now that is the work of the Holy Ghost on the Person of Jesus first. What is that to me? says one. This, if you are to go to heaven, that that Holy Ghost who was thus given to Christ will be given to you by Christ, and if He is given to you by Christ, He will work in you to will and to do of God's good pleasure, and you will be working out your own salvation with fear and trembling fearing lest you should be wrong, trembling at the holy, great Word of the living God. Have faith in the Holy Ghost. Is your heart like stone? He can make it soft, as soft as wax in the flame. Do you feel dead? He can renew the face of your soul by fresh life poured upon you. Are you feeling your ignorance? He is the Spirit of wisdom and of knowledge and of revelation of Jesus Christ. Are you distant? By Him you can have access to the Father through the Son, the suffering Son, the risen Son, the High Priest in heaven. Are you low? Are you on the dunghill of wretchedness and guilt and sin? "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people". The work of the Spirit of God is as necessary to salvation as the work of Christ was. Blessed Holy Ghost. Praise the Holy Ghost. Have faith in Him.

Well now, my friends, if I have spoken words of soberness and truth to you concerning this matter of faith, may it not be well for you, as for myself, to examine ourselves whether we have this faith, the faith that God gives, that God works; the faith that stands in all its motions in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men. The faith that lays hold of the Lamb and gives union to Him, that goes to the cross and that pleads that precious cross before the throne of God's heavenly grace. Such faith will save our souls; such faith will bring us to the throne of grace; such faith will not look at mountains and stumble at them, but say, "Be removed and cast into the sea", and it shall be done even as you say.

Have faith in God next with respect to your experience. Christian experience is this, simply, if one may so describe it; the work of God in the soul. O but how mixed it is. The work of God in the soul. What is experience? Something you know; something you have experienced, felt; something you have proved. Our government will never allow a new railway to be used for traffic until they have put certain tests to that railway. They tested it and got experience of its sufficiency. You cannot trust experience unless you have got some testimony from God in your own soul. In this, it may be said that faith is a knowledge, as also it is true to say faith is a spirit of credence. Faith is a knowledge. They said of old - We have found Him of Whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth. When you find Him you will know Him. If you hear His voice you will know it. "My sheep hear My voice"; they know My voice; they know not the voice of a stranger, that is to say, they do not receive it as the voice of the Shepherd. They hear a sound but they do not receive it. They hear Christ's voice and they say: "The voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills". O, how well they are then. Have faith in this respecting your experience. He can make it good; He only can make it good. We speak of experimental preaching and of experience in the soul. It means simply, where it is right, that God has done it. God has wrought it. "He that wrought us for the self-same thing is God who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit".

Have faith in respect of your painful experience of sin. It is one of the greatest griefs, it is the keenest sorrow, a child of God can have, the uprising of indwelling sin. Opposition, rebellion, hardness, misjudging of God, mis-belief of God, awful desires, corruptions thick and foul rising in your soul, and you reason on them. Yes, it is the thing we are given to, to reason on our sins. They are a ground for doubt; they are a reason for giving up. That is to say, in ourselves, they are reasons for such and such things. If there is no faith in exercise it seems that a sinner must be swallowed up in despair. But no, faith says,

The blood of Christ, a precious blood
Cleanseth from all sin, doubt it not
And reconciles the soul to God
From every folly, every fault

This is true faith. It leads you out of self unto, and eventually into, Christ. You believe in Him and are not in condemnation. "Whosoever believeth in Me shall not be condemned". You condemn yourself here, but Christ wont condemn you. I might just interject a word here, namely to say His compassions are such that instead of condemning you, as you think He must do, He pities you

He pities all our griefs
When sinking makes us swim

Have faith in this. O what a good experience Christ gives to a sinner. It was His reproach while here that He went and ate with publicans and sinners. It is His glory to do it; He does it still. The publican condemned himself and Christ justified him as he went home. You condemn yourself, your heart condemns you, but God is greater than your heart, and when you say, I am a sinner, He says, if you confess and forsake your sins you shall have mercy. I like that word, that double word, "Whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy". You say, I wish I could forsake my sins. Forsaking sins may be dealt with in more ways than one. You may forsake some outward sin and yet be in bondage to that very sin. But when you can go to God and appeal to Him and say, Lord, though I am taken captive; though I am often overcome, my heart says, I would be holy, I would forsake my

sins, I would not live in one known sin for the whole world if I had power to avoid it; He will reckon that - you cannot reckon it perhaps - He will reckon that to be a real forsaking. "As a man desires so is he". The desires of a man are taken to be that which is the man in this case. O, says the Lord, I see a sinner here; he is confessing his sin, he is speaking to Me of his weakness. He cannot forsake that sin - that besetment overcomes him day by day - and yet he weeps before Me; he forsakes his sin. As his desire is, so is he. You think of it; have faith in this blessed Lord Jesus who can make your experience good. The mountain of your sin, one of these days, your faith will remove and you will say, I am clean and I am just. I stand before God in His righteousness. May the Lord give us faith in this. I must leave it now for the moment. The Lord give us grace to look into this great point - Have we the faith of God, the faith which He gives. If we never have faith we shall never be saved. If we have faith of the operation of God, we shall never be lost. The Lord help us to believe.

AMEN.