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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Wednesday evening 10 November, 1926

MATTHEW XIV v.16

But Jesus said unto them, they need not depart, give ye them to eat

The multitude followed the Lord Jesus. He taught them. It was ever His wont when here to show goodness to sinners who followed Him, and to teach them. The evening came and the disciples appeared concerned respecting the multitude's nourishment, and they approached their Master and asked Him to send them away, these thousands of men, beside women and children, that they might disperse and go to towns and villages and buy themselves food. A very natural thing, but the Lord Jesus had something in view. He would teach, not only the multitude, but His disciples, a needful lesson and it may be that He will teach us a lesson. We need to learn again and again. Even this evening He may teach us a lesson out of this subject. He said to His disciples, these people need not depart. But we have no provision, only five loaves and two fishes and what are they among so many. But the Master knew what He would do and He knew what He could do. The Creator of heaven and earth was at no loss. He who foreknew all things was at no loss as to how to manage, how to feed these hungry people, and so, knowing Himself, His power, and His own merciful intention, He said they need not depart, there is plenty for them. He would multiply those five loaves and two fishes and of them feed five thousand men, beside women and children. Now may we, by the mercy of God, speak about this and show how that sinners today, thronging the throne of grace all over the world it may be, that sinners here, a few poor sinners thronging the throne of grace, needing much, needing many things, and having no supply, and no source of supply in themselves, need not depart from that sacred place where they are.

First of all a guilty sinner need not depart from the High Priest who has a sacrifice. Let us notice this first of all then. Are we guilty? That is to say, are we convinced of our sin and guilt and have we ventured to the throne of God's heavenly grace with that sense of guilt that may be very depressing to us and does the enemy, does a guilty conscience, do many fears, say it is no use. He takes no notice of you. Leave the throne of grace, leave religion, leave the place, leave all your profession. Now to such, one would say, rather the Lord in the Word says, they need not depart. There is sufficient here for them. There is an atonement my friends. His blood can cleanse the

blackest soul and wash away each stain. His sacrifice was accepted of God, being sufficient. His blood bought the church. It is able to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, to bring the distant near, to cleanse the polluted, to make them accepted of God. O guilty sinner, you need not depart. There is no remedy away from this remedy, apart from this remedy. No forgiveness, no cleansing, but here. So when the Eternal God received the sacrifice of His Son, when the High Priest offered Himself, without spot to God through the Eternal Spirit, and when Jesus entered heaven with His own blood (the forerunner for us entered that holy place) there was, and there is, and will ever be, a sufficiency of justification, of sanctification, for all who, sensible of their condition, come to His divine majesty. What a mercy to have set before us in the scriptures as we have, this sufficient work of our great High Priest. What a blessing that the Holy Ghost has set out in this infallible Book the one only remedy for a guilty person, the only justification of the guilty and the only sanctification of the polluted. So, if we this evening are sensible of guilt, fresh contracted, or guilt that has never been removed, in both cases it must be said, and I will say it, we need not depart from this High Priest. They said to Him of old "To whom shall we go" and we may ask the question, to whom shall we go. If we seek, through ignorance and temptation, another remedy, we shall not find it, but if, through grace and faith in our souls, we come to this one remedy, this only High Priest, this one sacrifice for sins for ever, then it may be said, if the tempter comes and affirms that we shall get no relief, if unbelief arises and says there is not sufficient, it is not possible for God to save such a sinner as you, may the dear Priest Himself whisper it into our souls - They need not depart. Wait here. Hang about Him here. Go again and again to this one Person, the High Priest of our profession. It is clear in the scriptures, it is clear in the conscience that is under the teaching of the Spirit, that there can be no heaven for a guilty person. It is equally clear that without holiness no man shall see the Lord and if you have got these two points in your own understandings and consciences, you will never be able to rest until you are justified and sanctified. Justification is the legal ground of sanctification. Justification comes through the imputation of righteousness to a guilty person and then sanctification follows that wondrous doctrine, that wondrous experience. You never find justification and sanctification far apart in the scriptures and you will never find them separated in your experience. Now where these two things are and do notice them, indeed if you feel them you cannot but notice them, guilt and pollution, they

fit a person for hell and that person who feels and knows that and therefore these must be removed, that sinner feeling them need not depart from the Priest. No, never need a sinner depart from the throne of grace to which he is invited, to which he comes in the power of the Holy Ghost. He need not depart. These two things are to be settled there. Righteousness imputed, blood applied, will settle these two points in a sinner's conscience and not only once, but whenever fresh guilt is on the conscience and fresh pollution on the mind, there still is this - they need not depart, for there is no other salvation, no other remedy to be had.

The hungry need not depart from Him who has and is the bread of life. This is another point in experience. Every living soul is made to hunger for God, as a thirsty land. Said the Psalmist, My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God. That is a settled principle in the soul, as it is in the scripture. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, after God. They need not depart from God for any other support or sustenance. My friends, where is bread to be had? Who is the bread of life? Who possesses it to give to hungry souls? What a wonderful thing that in heaven is that bread which, if a man eat, he shall never die. That wonderful, that everlasting, satisfaction of a needy soul, that Lord Jesus who said - I am the bread of life. He gave it to His disciples. He gave them the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as a divine, a beautiful symbol of that bread which He gives to His people. "I give Myself" He said. "I am the bread of life, and whoso eateth this shall never die" The world will never satisfy our hunger. Self will never satisfy our hunger. Good deeds, if we do them, will never satisfy our hunger. Only one and that is God Himself, and so you need not go anywhere else. "Come unto Me" He said. Open thy mouth wide, I have provision for you. So, no hungry person, hungry that is for God, in this chapel now, need depart from that place, that throne to which they go for bread from time to time. Christ is that bread. God constituted that bread. He Himself said He is that bread. His flesh is meat indeed and whoso eateth that has everlasting life. Therefore O may we have power given to us to abide fast by this place and feel we need not and would not depart from Him.

The satisfaction that Christ revealed gives to the soul can never be expressed by any minister to anyone, it is so sweet. It is in the word found sometimes - Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Any part of the gospel given to you is the bread of life, for it is the glorious gospel of Christ. Any gracious promise spoken to you has somewhat of Christ

in it. Any revelation of His Person is as bread to your faith, to your soul. Any sweet intimation of God's goodness and good purpose to you is as bread to your soul and so He, having this infinite supply, you need not depart from Him and go to buy food anywhere else. No victuals as the word here is, can ever be purchased by us to satisfy the hunger of our souls. One says "I seek and hope to find a portion for my soul" and that portion is the bread of life - Jesus Christ. O to be saved from a gadding spirit. O to be delivered from looking for bread anywhere else but to Him who is the bread of life. Emphatically, He is the bread of life. A weak soul need not depart to find strength. If you go to Christ you go to the Strength of Israel. That arm that holds the world up, the arm of omnipotence. Omnipotent grace is the only arm that can support you in the wilderness. You will never come up out of it well except as you lean on the arm of your Beloved. Never, never be sustained well, but as that arm sustains you, bears you up. Never carry your burdens properly, but as the grace of Christ is the strength of your soul. His word comes and strengthens faith. It is like His own omnipotent arm when He promises to be with you and to hold up a soul, I will hold thee by thy right-hand, What a support that is. "I will hold thee by My right-hand" Hold the soul in life, keep the feet from falling, spread divine protection over the sinner, over the church, and graciously bring the weak one honourably through all his conflicts and troubles. They need not depart from Christ in this particular. Are you weak? Too weak to stand, too weak to pray, to hope, to love, to fear God, too weak to hold that which you already have, too weak to maintain the battle, to maintain your ground? Does sin weaken you as it rises before you? Does the recollection of sin weaken you? Do you see your short-comings and failings so as to be ready to give up? But you need not depart from Christ. When you believe, then you die and live in Christ. You will die to live. Die to your own strength, to live in His strength, and this is a blessed thing. Thus, a sinner who is weak in himself is brought to be truly united to Christ, to lean on His Almighty arm. Do not go anywhere else. Do not go to yourselves, nothing but sinful weakness there, and lean not on an arm of flesh, nothing but sinful weakness and instability there. Do not go to naked knowledge and say - I understand things - that will let you down into sore trouble and guilt. But, as you can, in your felt weakness, go to this and abide by this Strength of Israel and you will never fail, never. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged. We fail, and we are discouraged, therefore we need not depart from Him. We need not go, as ignorant people, from Him to find wisdom anywhere else. "I wisdom dwell with prudence" Wisdom cries in the street and the top of the high places. O ye simple attend unto My instruction. O ye sons

attend to the instruction of a Father. Beg for wisdom as for hid treasure. But you say I am as foolish today as I ever was, and you need not depart on that account. Where will you go? Where is the place that wisdom is found? The depth says it is not in me. Every place in creation says it is not in me. But Christ says "I am wisdom, I am wisdom." If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him. This wisdom will show you the way wherein you should walk. The Psalmist knew this so he said - Unto Thee lift I up my soul, show me the way wherein I should walk. My dear friends, you will see the way into the scriptures, into the promises, into the covenant, and into all good things experimentally by having this wisdom. It is not a bad thing to feel your ignorance, very mortifying, but it is a wholesome thing, a good thing, to feel ignorant as before God. Wait on Wisdom. Wait on Wisdom. Wisdom says, blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of My doors, for whoso findeth Me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. And this wisdom tells a sinner how to leave off wickedness, lay hold of righteousness, and tells him that when that is the case with him not one of his sins shall be mentioned to him. This wisdom tells a sinner how to walk in trouble - Wait on the Lord. The church of old had this instruction and so she said - Our soul waiteth for the Lord. When? Yea in the way of Thy judgments have we waited for Thee O Lord, and the desire of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee. This is the teaching you will get in your hearts from heaven, and it will tell you there is no need for you to move from this place. Indeed, going from this is going into darkness, thick and black, and into confusion. You know neither what you are, nor where you are. Therefore, wait at wisdom's doors, at the gates where Christ comes in, and you will find wisdom pleasant to your soul, and sweeter to your taste than honey or the honeycomb. They need not depart. And an unlovely sinner need not depart to find loveliness and beauty for his soul away from the Lord. "Thy comeliness was perfect through My beauty which I put upon Thee" Sinner, God will have beauty in you if you are going to heaven. The beauty of holiness you must have and wear it and shine in it before Him. The beauty of righteousness, the beauty of love and the beauty of humility. The beauty of gentleness and the beauty of uprightness. You must have this kind of beauty. Now where sin is, it is not in you. Where are you to find it? Why in the Lord, in the Lord.

Thy comeliness. Whatever Israel had of comeliness she had from the beauty of the Lord which He put upon her. The beauty of holiness, the beauty of holy worship, the beauty of believing, the beauty of loving, the beauty of gospel obedience, this beauty He puts on and puts

in His people so that their comeliness is perfect and that is the secret of those high praises that Christ bestows on His people when He says to them "There is no spot in thee" Thou art all fair My love, My spouse, My undefiled. Never will a sinner understand that language. All Christ's beauty is on him. He may see it and say what does it mean. He may even know what it means in the letter, but he will never enjoy it until it is put on him by Christ, who is loveliness itself. How beautiful is Christ to His Father, and how beautiful He is to His people, and therefore He says, when they are anxious about this, when their souls are concerned about it, when they say how shall I come before the Lord, how shall I bow before the Most High in all this guiltiness and deformity of sin, how shall I come before the Most High, "I have put My beauty on you" A miserable sinner need not depart from the source of happiness to find happiness. Madness it is to go from the only source of happiness to find happiness. These things have I spoken unto you, says Christ, that My joy may be in you and that your joy might remain. What? What is joy? To know the Lord is your God, that you have union with Him, that He has an eye to watch over you, a heart to care for you, a hand to defend you, an arm to sustain you, a fulness to supply you. O this is joy that does not grow in nature's barren soil. My friends there is such a thing as heavenly joy on earth. It is not loud, it is not exciting, it is not excitableness, it is solid persuasion in your soul that you have a good God, a Saviour, a Redeemer, a blessed One in heaven who cares for you, who says "Cast all your care on Me for I care for you." Who has promised a kingdom and says "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Joy has many sweet tears. Joy has true humility. Joy has humble worship. Joy has a real reverence, gracious quietness, simplicity, thankfulness, and when you have the most of this, you are the quietest, and you want to be alone. Yes, you want to be alone. The more you have of this, the more it separates you from yourself and from the world, and the more truly and feelingly you die, as you thus live, the joy of the Lord being your strength and you go home as it is directed in the scripture and are no more sad. Why? You eat the fat and drink the sweet, and find the joy of the Lord to be your strength. Therefore you are no more sorry. Why? All this is in one great and gracious and good Redeemer. Have you any joy, or are you longing to be joyful in the Lord? Do you envy the man who said My soul shall be joyful in the Lord; though the fig tree blossom not, though there be no fruit in the vine, though there be no herd in the stall, my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. Nowhere else. A full stall, a fruitful vine, and everything that nature can wish could never give heavenly joy, never give holy joy. This joy in the Lord is heavenly, it is holy, it carries

up the soul above the earth for the time being. They need not depart for this from Him who has it.

A dumb sinner need not depart from Christ because He is the Advocate to whom it is said "Open Thy mouth. . . . Open it in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Plead the cause of the poor and the needy." Perhaps some slips today have made you dumb. Perhaps some evil, horrible thoughts have flooded your mind and filled you with confusion and sadness. Perhaps you departed from the Lord in some respects, some ways and if you have gone aside and tried to pray having this in you, you felt as if you could not speak to the Lord. What can a guilty person say but guilty. What can one who has turned aside say but that he has turned aside? What can he say when grace teaches him but that he is sorry for his sin? But now, who is to open His mouth for this person? The Mediator. There is one Mediator between God and man: This poor creature has no excuse now to make. No, he cannot throw the blame of his falling on anybody. It is his own sin. He sees it. He saw the snare and walked into it. Conscience said to him you are wrong in this, yet he went on frowardly. Perhaps some of you understand what I am saying. You will feel it as on you because of something this very day. Something not remarkable as to circumstances, and indeed not strange as to action for you have done it before, many a time perhaps, but now you feel dumb and something says, well now you have got into a strange place. Where are you going? What are you going to do? O you need not depart from Him to whom you go bending the knee of sorrow and confession. He says in the scripture to the Mediator, the Advocate "Open Thy mouth for the dumb. Plead the cause of the poor and the needy. Plead the cause of the sons of destruction, the sons of death. Plead their cause. Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish in his feelings now, because he has behaved himself so badly to-day, behaved himself so ungraciously in his heart and spirit, walked so proudly in that circumstance, behaved so wickedly in his mind when he thought himself provoked," What a Mediator we have. What an Advocate. If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. May the Holy Ghost reveal in us this great, this ever prevailing advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

But Jesus said unto them "They need not depart" I have enough for them. They need not depart for an assurance of their interest. Some here may lack that assurance. We may be feeling very doubtful about our own cases, they are so bad. Not ordinary cases. Such constant backsliding, such constant turning aside, and away so that whatever

others may be, we feel we have not sufficient ground for an assurance and you may be on a wrong track there. What would be to you a sufficient ground for assurance of interest? One might say - If I were more consistent, if I had more faith and hope and love and if I did not feel so often as I do. If I could believe more and pray more. If you want to make the graces of the Spirit a ground of assurance, I do not think you will get assurance. What the soul needs for assurance is that that Paul speaks of in the Romans - Likewise the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of the Spirit given in the heart. Now these passages teach what every soul knows who receives the assurance of his interest, that the assurance comes, not on the ground of any consistency, not on the ground of his faith, but on the ground of his relationship to God, to which relationship the Spirit bears His witness on the ground of having obtained an inheritance of which the Spirit brings an earnest in the love of God. This is the ground of assurance and dear, doubting, friends, we need not depart from Him for this, for He has this to bestow. He gives the Spirit. He has the Spirit of promise. He has Him and that Spirit is the unction of the Holy One, coming from the Holy One. He bears His divine witness in the soul of relationship and of inheritance being obtained and He seals a soul with His own infinitely gracious seal of love, life and power. This is the assurance, and if you lack it, God keep you from going into yourself, keep you from counting up your graces, keep you from reckoning how many things you have got and had and keep you from trying by a process of mental induction to prove that you are right because you have such and such things. Bless God for graces, but they are not the foundation. They please Him when they are in exercise, and they are good for us to feel, but they are not the foundation.

Well, one word more, then I close and it is this. We need not depart from Christ for strength to persevere to the end. We need not depart. The Strength of Israel alone can bring us honourably through. It is a solemn thing for us to have made a profession. I feel this. A very solemn thing to have stood among the Lord's people, professing with them that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and very solemn for me to have preached as I have done so many years. What if we should fail. If we are saints we cannot, but then the question will come sometimes, are we saints? And if we are who has made us saints? And, if He has, will He keep us? His promise is - Yes, I will. But then, when

you come to experience of things, it is not a naked promise, it is the power of the promise in you by the Holy Ghost. I think sometimes of those militant protestants. They are very loud in a good thing. It is a good thing to be a protestant. Would that England were as much a protestant nation today as she was years ago, but I think of those militant protestants who are strong, so loud. May the Lord keep them, but I am too weak to make a great noise about things. I need the arm of God, Jesus Christ, the Strength of Israel, to keep me in my profession and you do too. Keep us hanging about the cross, keep us secretly praying, "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe" Keep us from the hour of temptation that shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell therein. Keep us, by enabling us to keep the word of His patience. Keep us with our eye on Himself and not on ourselves. O to be kept. O for the Lord Jesus to send His good Spirit to us. I ask myself questions at times, and one of them is this. Now if you should live to see greater troubles than are now on us, if you should see a time of persecution, if you should live in that day when God will send a famine, not of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of God, when men shall walk from the north to the east seeking the word of God and shall not find it, how then? If you should live to a time when God's saints shall have shame and ignominy put on them and when it will cost them a great deal to stick to their profession, what then? And all a weak creature can say is - Lord if such and such things come, do keep me, do keep me. And I do not want to go into my own strength, into my protestantism, and say this is my shelter. No, there is no shelter but God. There is no strength but God's strength. There is no arm but His, no life but His, no power but His, no protection but His, that can keep us to the end and is it not a mercy, is it not a great blessing to have this then set before us, as teaching us where to go and how to abide. They need not depart. O fear says, run here and run there. Reason says do this and do that. But, says the Lord, - They need not depart from depending on Me. They need not depart from looking to Me. They need not depart from pleading My promises; they need not depart from looking to My faithfulness, from living on My fulness. Take courage soul, O take courage. God give courage to every feelingly weak sinner. He does give conduct to fools and courage to worms. Little faith gets well to the end. Hopeful makes a good finish. Fearful finds himself able to do at the last as he never expected. He can do without his crutches. May the Lord help us to abide fast by the throne of His heavenly grace. He can bring us well through. His promise is "I will help thee" and it will never fail. No matter how many years you have

proved it, it is as good to-day as when you got it and whenever He shines again on His word, on a promise, it says "Now abide here" Do not go anywhere else, abide fast by My paths and My truth, and My church, and My word, and My promises. Abide here, and it will be well with you. May the Lord help us to remember this word - They need not depart and grant that we may be enabled to follow the heavenly direction and abide fast by Himself and His word.