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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 16 January 1927

TEXT: MATTHEW 15 verse 25

"Then came she and worshipped Him saying Lord help me"

What a scene this narrative presents to our view, a sinner and a Saviour brought face to face, a petitioning sinner, and a seemingly reluctant Saviour, brought face to face. A sick case brought to the physician, and the physician seemed indisposed to take the case in hand. A bold sinner, a dog, with no such right to come, as a Jew had, and yet she came. How could she do otherwise? There were two things - first, she had heard of Christ and faith came by that hearing. "Faith cometh by hearing". She had heard of His goodness, His skill, and His kindness, and faith came by that hearing. Second - she had a case, a daughter, the daughter under the power of the devil, grievously tormented by him, and faith in her heart said - that man of whom you have heard, who goes about doing good and healing all manner of diseases, that man may take your case up and heal your daughter. Go to Him. And she went to Him, she put her case before Him, but He answered her not a word, and His disciples, apparently careful for His peace and comfort, did not like her crying after Him, so they asked Him to forbid her and send her away. Sinners are not to be put off that way and Christ would not have her put off. O sinner, if you have got a case and you get a hearing of the Lord and faith receives that hearing, it will say to you - go to Him. But what if He should pay no heed to you? Faith will say - persevere. What if He should discourage you? Faith will say - truth Lord, I am just what is spoken, I am a Gentile dog, a poor creature, a vile sinner. But because, even though this is the case, because dogs do have the privilege of being under the table and gathering up the crumbs that fall from the master's table, even so, let a crumb of mercy fall for me. Well dear friends, here we are, a congregation of poor sinners. Is there a Saviour about us, is He passing our way, is He in the scriptures? Yes. Does the Spirit reveal that

revelation to us? Some can say, yes. Have we a case? Yes, a bad case. It may be the devil breathes, suggests, urges, blasphemes. It may be he torments you with infidelity. It may be that some are so distressed with pollution in their minds and that some are so plagued with their own death, that the good they would they cannot do and the evil they would not, they do, that they say, each one - "O wretched man that I am" who can forgive these blasphemies, who can cleanse these pollutions, who can cast these devils out? And faith says - Go to the Good Physician, to the Lord Jesus. Says the sinner, I have gone again and again and He does not seem to look on me, and there are difficulties that I cannot overcome. What am I to do? Well the Lord help us to follow this woman. She came and worshipped Him and prayed "Lord help me". She came and worshipped Him. He did not forbid it, no, He did not forbid it. He does not forbid you, does He? When you try to pray, you do not get repelled do you? When your heart's motions of love go out to Him, He does not repel them does He? When you see divinity in Him, when you see pure humanity in Him, when you see infinite goodness in Him that draws you to worship Him, and does He put you off? Notice this, she worshipped Him. She was a poor, inferior creature, before the infinitely superior One, and she realised her nothingness and sinfulness, yet she fell down, she fell flat before Him. What else, what better, could she do. This was a real act of worship, an act of faith. She got before Him who could do her good, who had a heart of tenderness and bowels of compassion. She worshipped Him, who alone could do her good and save her in this case. Well, worship is a great thing, it is said - Worship God. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". When you see eternal deity in the man Christ Jesus you make no distinction between the two natures He possesses, but you worship Him who is Almighty God. Worship is an acknowledgement of the infinite superiority of God, an acknowledgement of His greatness and of His goodness, of His justice and of His mercy. Notice this in your hearts, worship. A man who worships is right. He may feel wrong, but he is right, and God will own him in His time. And it is clear here that her case, so distressing to her, was not a bar to worship, and your sins and my sins and our fears and our doubts and the many

misgivings that we have are no bar to worship. Worship is falling flat before God, it is sometimes the concentration of the soul in adoration of God. Sometimes it is the motion of the soul with respect to the perfections of God and sometimes it is the act of faith toward the mercies of God and doubtless this was in this good woman's worship. Though He had not let them out to her, though indeed He had done that which appeared the opposite, instead of letting out His mercies, He seemed to shut them up, as if it were in His mind to send this poor creature away from Him, as if He should say, master though He was, no dog must come near to Me, I am not sent to dogs, I am sent to the House of Israel, yet there would be, in the eye of her faith, the mercy of God, the goodness of God, and therefore her petition was "Lord help me." Physicians, helpers, everything in the world now just dead with regard to this case. Is that so with us? Everything and everybody and every part of religion that men boast of and the whole of the scheme of religion in the world, all dead, and God alone, the living God and this creature with faith in her heart, before, and dealing with, this living God. What a solemn thing worship is when thus viewed, when the world is, as it were, shut out and you in your secret place with the door shut about you and your heart up to Him. God will be worshipped and He approves of worship, He approves of worshippers. Blessed be His name if He has taught us, any of us, to worship. She came unto Him. His heart was all the time drawing her and loving her, He was all the time attracting her to Himself, saying as it were in her heart - Come to Me, and that is how He does deal with His people. He says in their hearts, whatever His outward manner may be to them for the moment - Come to Me - and she came, and we come. Blessed be His name, He causes us to come. We do come. You could not honestly say that you do not come. The thought goes to Him, a reverent thought, and you would not have any irreverence in your heart if you could help it. A believing thought goes to Him "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief". A loving thought goes out to Him, you bring to the God of love a bad case and He does not repel you. You look at His power by faith and say "If Thou wilt, Thou canst". You look into His atonement and say, this is sufficient; to His righteousness and say, this, if given to me, would be my righteousness. Faith has occasionally a wide view

given to it of Christ, who He is and what He can do, what He can give, and these things in the heart, by the Holy Spirit's grace, bring out this worship. O what a mercy it is to be a worshipper of God. This removes for the moment all that flippancy of our wicked nature that we have and feel, some of us. This puts under foot the wickedness, the blasphemies of our nature, so look at that dear friends in the first place - she worshipped Him. How much she saw in Him, how much, if any, apprehension she had of the Father being in Him, and of the Holy Spirit, whether she had any thought of the Holy Spirit at this time, we do not know by the account, but she worshipped Him in whom all the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells. Her faith was sufficiently intelligent and wide to take in the truth of the Deity of Him who is Lord and to whom she said "Lord". We may have but little knowledge of certain points but if we see the Saviour and see Him to be Lord, possessor of all the Godhead, possessor of heaven and earth, then worship is the sweet effect. Do not put this point aside if you can help it. Do not say, I can notice nothing but my disease, I can think of nothing but my badness, my wickedness. If you worship Him, the Lord help you to believe it and to be thankful that you do. If you worship Him the Lord help you to wait on Him whom you worship. Remember that He has said "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me". Nobody waits for God without worshipping Him. It is a grand thing to be a worshipper of the true and living God. The Thessalonians were converted from their idolatry. Our entering in unto you, says the Apostle, was known. The Word of God which we preach came to you, it entered into your hearts, it made you turn from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus. What a thing it is for the devil to come and urge on a sinner that he is to take no notice of anything but his disease and when the eye is fixed on that then says the tempter - now such a person as you may not, ought not to go near, even think of going to this holy, holy, holy God. Look at her petition, a very comprehensive one. It took in her case, her daughter, the devil, her daughter's helplessness, the devil's power over her and the grievous tormenting of her daughter by the tormentor. All these things were embraced and implicit in this petition "Lord help me". We have a case. Some of <sup>us</sup> can honestly say we have a case,

and it is embraced in this word "Lord help me". The case is one which naturally leads to despair. Naturally, if you are convinced of sin, your convictions will, though they be given by the Spirit, have a tendency, through legality and ignorance, to turn you toward the pit of despair and you will cry sometimes "O let not the pit shut her mouth upon me". Conviction will always, when working in the conscience, work two ways. It will work Godward and bring His justice, His greatness, and His glory before you and say against this God you have sinned and are sinning. And conviction will always more or less have another tendency, it will work downward and press you into the dust and below the dust even toward despair, and therefore help is needed at this point. We need the Lord to help us to press on toward the Lord Jesus. There is no help out of Him, no redemption but by Him. Therefore poor

Leprous soul, press through the crowd  
In thy foul condition;  
Struggle hard, and call aloud  
On the great Physician.  
Wait till thy disease he cleanse,  
Begging, trusting, cleaving;  
When, and where, and by what means,  
To his wisdom leaving.

That is a great point. Mind this, notice this, how the feelings of sinfulness in you work. If they work only downward for a time, pressing you toward dismay, into dismay and toward despair, you may judge that then you are under the power of a legal spirit, a spirit that God has not given you, you may judge that you are under the power of unbelief. If you find that your trouble, the sinfulness you feel, works upward, then you are in a good way. Press the case, urge thy case through all unfitness, God is in the matter. Lord help me to press on. What is there to press on to? A full Christ, a good Physician, a never failing, Physician, a kind, compassionate, skillful Physician. Lord help me to press on to Him. One exhorts in the hymn and he does it well

Yield not then to unbelief  
Courage soul there yet is room  
Though of sinners thou art chief  
Come thou burdened sinner come

This is a great point. Lord help me in the face of my sinfulness and the blasphemies and the pride and the wickedness and the despondency and the gloom of my mind. Help me to keep at Thy footstool. Ah, it is the gates of hell that you will find always to be plotting against this. To keep at the footstool of mercy, to keep pressing your case on the attention of the Lord, to keep putting before Him what you need, as well as what you are, what you desire, as well as the unworthiness you feel, is a very great attainment. Oh but you may find many objections. One will be this, I am so hard, I get as hard as a stone; I am so cold, I am like an iceberg; I am so unbelieving, I have no faith; I am prayerless, I do not pray. Sometimes I seem to chatter, sometimes I seem to wish. Sometimes I think I pray but often, it is different with me, very different and yet go on still with that. It is astonishing to me in my own case what limits unbelief puts to the Lord, what limits it imposes on Him. Because I am sinful, therefore I must not go; because I am cold and hard and because of this and because of that there is no ground for me to hope. Now this is the wickedness of unbelief at this point. It puts up thorns and briars, sins and hardness and coldness and deadness and distance and ignorance. It puts them all up against Christ and says, now these will hinder Him, these will keep Him away from you and keep you from Him, these, these, you must notice. O that the Lord would give our straightened bosoms room to credit what the Lord says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden". I am not speaking about the first work here only. No, rather these things grow with our growth, they get older with ourselves and these objections, which are more or less continual, a wicked, vile spirit of unbelief presses upon us. Mind this, it is said against the Jews, they limited Him, they limited Him. I wish nobody else had ever done it or could do it. Unbelief sets a limit to mercy, to divine love, to compassion and it does it often, is allowed to do it in your hearts and in my heart. But she said - this good woman,

this giant believer, - "Lord help me". I can take no denial Lord, here I am. I have come out of the coast of Syrophenecia, I have come to Thee, I have brought my case to Thee, now do help me. I have no power of myself, but do help me. There is a strength in faith that is not perceived by the person who possesses it often. There was a strength in one who said - against this great company that cometh against us we have no might, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up unto Thee. O sinner, there is power there, and though your sins would keep you from the Lord, still press on in this manner. She said "Lord help me". Help me to press on after Christ; help me against enemies. There are a good many enemies, internal enemies, ignorance, what I have just named, unbelief, and the temptations of the devil. This poor girl, whose mother came to Christ for her, how often was she tormented, grievously tormented of the devil. She said, grievously vexed, tormented. It was like as in the case of the son, whose father brought him to Christ, this tormenting, vexing devil might throw her into the fire or into the water, might ingest the most horrible things, blasphemies, into her mind and some of us are vexed in that way, grievously vexed of the devil. You may, by solemn and sad occasions be suddenly surprised at the uprising and violent working of blasphemous thoughts. You may sometimes be amazed and shocked at what you feel rising in your heart and many things point themselves against Christ, many thoughts point themselves against Him, and they come, you may say they come, unbidden and if they are unwelcomed, O what a mercy. If you cry out against this awful violence that is offered to your virgin soul, what a mercy, what a blessing. Lord help me against these things, help me against my own thoughts. Our thoughts may be the most friendly and they may be the most antagonistic to us. They may carry us suddenly to the ends of the earth, and far off upon the sea. They may carry us far against Christ, against the Father, against the Spirit, against the work of the Spirit, against the Holy Scripture. Who can set a limit to this working of wicked thoughts but God Himself. When your thoughts contend against Christ, who can bound the issues of that running stream? Contention is like the letting out of water, who can bound the issues thereof, and when contending thoughts are in your mind,

who is able to bound the issue, set a stop and bring to a point and kill these terrible thoughts? O but there is a Saviour who, in His secret working by His Spirit says - Come to me, bring this hard case to Me. David had multitudes of thoughts and they were against his interests and against the Lord but he said "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul". And I think that if, in the multitude of your evil thoughts, there should ever fall into your heart one hint concerning the greatness, the sufficiency, the love of Jesus Christ, it has a heaven of comfort in it, though you may not for the moment perceive it. Who could have given that hint but the Lord the Spirit? Thoughts! O it is a very solemn thing to be a thinking creature. We shall never lose the power of thinking till we lose our being, but when the thinking is evil, when the thinking is wicked, when it is against Christ, when it is against our own interest, then I say, then is the time for us to say "Lord help me" against this great company of despairing thoughts, of blasphemous thoughts, of indifferent thoughts, of dont care thoughts, or worldly thoughts, Lord help me against this great company. Why, poor thinking sinner, all you need is for the Holy Spirit to help you to think of Christ. He notices people who think on His Name. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His Name". And Nehemiah had a good look at some people, even at people who desired to fear the Name of the Lord and he prayed for them. "Lord" he said "hear prayer for all who desire to fear Thy Name". Gracious thought comes from the God of grace and often it is set as a stream against the other stream sometimes and overcomes the vile stream. What a mercy it is, and this is one of the ways in which it will work, namely, setting you to pray, bringing you to Christ and bringing Christ near you and then there will be in you just the renewal of this scene. Though in this case, literally, in your case, spiritually, just the renewal of it, Christ and yourself brought face to face. There is no hell for a sinner who is brought face to face with Christ, and can pray to Him "Lord help me". Help me against the enemy, the devil. He wont let you alone. Whenever he is permitted to touch you, or hinder you, or tempt you, or drive you

or lull you to sleep in any case and every case of that kind, as long and as often as he is permitted to do it, he will work in you. Perhaps one of the worst of all his temptations is to send us to sleep, to make us indifferent to our precious souls and the glory of God in our salvation. O, that dont care spirit that now and again some of you may feel working in your heart. It is an awful spirit - indifference. Christ's person, work, grace, suffering, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven, holy scripture, with all its solemn threatenings, its needed warnings, these, together with your own interest, these, for the moment, have no influence, no attraction, no power. "They all slumbered and slept." You may think when you are in deep concern - whoever can slumber I cannot imagine, I cannot. But the enemy can administer such a narcotic of temptation that you will be with the wise and foolish virgins, when all slumbered and slept. Who could have thought at one time, looking on David, blessed with grace and with wisdom and with deliverance on deliverance, and testimony on testimony, that that man after God's own heart would go to sleep in sin and month after month sleep soundly in sin, go to worship with the other people, but still asleep. May the Lord help us against this. Toplady evidently had a solemn fear of it when he wrote

For more the treacherous calm I dread  
Than tempests bursting o'er my head

He must have felt something of the danger of an easy state. Fulness of bread, and idleness of hands, that men may be tempted to believe they have, is a very terrible state of mind. Lord help me against this carelessness, this coldness, this indifference to my state. The scripture says, and solemnly it says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." And Peter, inspired, says "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." God, in His blessed work in the soul will show, does show, the vital importance of this, and therefore may we cry against this danger, this deadly enemy, "Lord help me."

Sometimes it is very different. A multitude of thoughts.

Look at the word. In the midst of my thoughts, a multitude of them. A multitude would express some confusion. The multitude pressed on Christ and, when He said "Who touched Me?" one said to Him "The multitude throng Thee and how sayest Thou who touched Me?" A multitude would express confusion, no order, much seeking to get into this and that place. And now you may be like that. Here are your circumstances, what of these? O the thoughts that we have about today and tomorrow, what we shall eat and what we shall drink. O the thoughts about this situation and that position, the thoughts as to what we are going to do and what we are going to be and what will happen with respect to us, these do indeed become a multitude. A multitude of thoughts about the scripture, about inspiration, about your own soul - am I right? Am I born again? Is my seeking correct? Do I walk in the right way? Do I seek God? Do I fear Him? And these thoughts come tumbling one over the other until you are just a mass of confusion, and in the multitude you know not what to do, which way to turn. You are driven hither and thither, carried away and have no strength to resist. Then what a petition, what a suitable place, for this prayer "Lord help me". I have no power against this great multitude, I have no strength to resist, O do help me. Well dear friends, much could be said and multiplied here, but you will be able to fill in for yourselves. You know what these multitudes are, you know what the dangers and difficulties of the way are for yourselves.

Now let us look for a moment in the next place at the petition. She came to Him, she got, O, she got to Him, who had everything she could need and desire. "Lord" she said. She addressed God, she addressed God. This is a grand point in vital religion, to come to God. Ah, we have to do with Him whether we will or not, but when we come to do with Him, to transact business with Him, to deal with Him by bringing to Him our case, this is very, very merciful, very good. "Lo, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath

declared Him." And it was this God to whom this poor Gentile creature addressed this prayer "Lord help me." How far her faith penetrated we do not know, but it went a long way, it got into the very heart of the Saviour. Yea, she was like Jacob, she had power over the angel and prevailed. What a wonderful thing to have faith to speak to God. Think of it, the mercy, the wonder, the privilege, the power, the teaching, the grace in a sinner's heart, causing him to speak with God. Many saw Him, multitudes thronged about Him, but only a few really saw Him, only a few really saw Him. They were all conjecturing about Him, as Peter told Him, saying He is this and He is that and He is the other person, but this woman saw Him and said "Lord". What a prayer. Have you said it to Him with some blessed intelligence in your faith, saying in your heart, you are asking God to bless you, not a man, though He is a man, but not a mere man. You are praying to God. Pray then, O sinner, pray. When you have faith it will bring you into contact with God, and of all the contacts that can be imagined, none to be compared with this. This good woman, this great believer, she came before God and spoke to Him "Lord" And she not only came to God but she came to the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Why sinner when you come to Christ you come to the Daysman whom Job desired, the Mediator, of whom the Apostle speaks thus "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." And when you see Him you say in your heart

Lo glad I come and Thou blest Lamb  
Shall take me to Thee as I am

Faith will bring you to this, you come to the Mediator in whom is God in all the fulness of Him, in whom is man in all the purity of sacred manhood, the man Christ Jesus, in whom are all the purposes of God in the love of God and the goodness of God, in whom is all the merit of the death of the Saviour the Almighty one. You come to this One, pray to the Mediator, and through Him. "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it". Remember when you come to the Mediator, you come to Him as the Apostle expresses Him. Unto whom, speaking of Him as now having

entered into heaven, unto whom all angels and authorities are subject. All principalities are beneath the power of the Mediator. Devils, elect angels, do His bidding. Devils fly at His word, at His commandment. This is the One to bring your case to, this is the One to bring your case to, sinner. The blessed Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. Ah, no sin will bind a sinner to cast him into hell who gets to this Mediator. No poor wretch, empty though he may be and worthless though he may feel, will ever find himself turned away who comes to this Mediator, this blessed Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. May He graciously help us to speak with Him, to pray to Him, to be thus familiar with Him and bring to Him the whole of the case that is troubling us. I must leave it here. May the Lord help us to follow the case and follow the good woman and get her encomium in God's time.

AMEN.