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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
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PHILIPPIANS 4 v 19

"But my God shall supply all your need according
to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"

This is good news my friends, good news from a far country, good news, not for the rich, but for the poor. Happy is the people whose God is the Lord. It is written in the gospel according to John that the law came by Moses. O what a word that was. God had a pulpit. He made Sinai His pulpit. He fenced it about with the strictest forbidding of the approach of so much as a beast; that mount which burnt with fire and blackness. And when He preached the law the people heard Him, and they saw the lightning flashes and heard the crashes of thunder and fled away, as who would not, and they said to Moses, speak thou with us and we will hear. Let not God speak lest we die. The law could not be good news to people unable to fulfil it, not even the ceremonial law. Not that it was unjust for God to give it to people unable to fulfil it, for they had lost their God-given power to obey. So have we. We are without excuse, we shall always be without excuse. If we die the subjects of the law and not the subjects of Christ we shall have no excuse. We shall never be able properly to say that God was unjust in commanding us to do what He knew we had no power to do. But the same word, in the same gospel, in the same verse, this is written: "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". What a contrast. Grace, the favour of God; truth in every particular of the Scripture, law, threatening, everything, the truth of salvation; came by Jesus Christ. This is good news from a far country a very far country from men fallen. Very far from some of you, is it not? You might say, if it were put to you whether you would wish to go to heaven, if you have any conception of heaven being a place where there is no darkness, pain nor death, you might say well of course we would be glad to escape all trouble and all evil, but that wont do. A far country is a country that the saints want to reach. That never will be true of a saint: "The poverty of the poor is his destruction". Not because he is not poor, but because, having

a good, rich, full God, his poverty cannot destroy him. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in or by Christ Jesus".

This word is written to the Christians at Philippi, to whom Paul in the providence of God was directed to preach. Now he was in Rome, a prisoner and a poor man. The Philippians had previously sent to him a provision. For a time they lacked opportunity to manifest their affectionate and tender regard for him, but again God had opened the door for them to show their affection and they sent to him by Epaphroditus. He received their gift, was glad to have it. It was acceptable to him but more acceptable to God. "I have all" he said by what they had sent to him "and abound: I am full" - I am filled full the word is - "having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God". I feel no backwardness in saying that when the Lord's people receive the spiritual things of His servants, the people feel it a privilege to give to them of their temporal things, their carnal things. "If ye receive" says the Apostle to the Corinthians, "our spiritual things, it is little that we receive of your carnal things". Now, as if he should say, I cannot pay you back, but my God will. I can make you no recompense, "But my God will supply all your need". If any poor Christian at Philippi emptied his purse to send the little that was in it to the Apostle Paul, he should not suffer. There would be no lack to him because he had a good God, a full God who would supply all his need. There is a peculiar union in the church of the living God and between the church and the ministers God gives to it, and the singular beauty in it is this, the warm willingness, the affectionate willingness of the people of God to communicate of their carnal things to all from whom and by whom they receive spiritual things. This is the outward, so to speak, connection of the text. I say again, it is good news from a far country, and if enabled I shall speak of it in two ways, because there are but two ways of need that we can have here, spiritual and temporal and both shall be supplied by God. And the measure - a word here at once - the measure. Not simply how much you need, but how much He is able to give. Not even your faith; that may be large, but His riches will go beyond. Not your expectations; you will never reach God's riches by your expectations. No! God is great, His riches are great;

First, spiritual riches. I suppose it is true to say that one of the fullest chapters in the whole of the Bible is the chapter which I read just now, the 1st Ephesians. The Epistle to the Ephesians is a singularly beautiful and profound Epistle and the opening of it, the first chapter, as we call it, is remarkable, a great compendium, much in a few words; infinity expressed by words which are naturally understandable and which, opened by the Spirit, are received by faith. All spiritual blessings in heavenly things given to the church of God and this, according to the predestinating love and liberality of God. The grace of adoption: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself.....". The forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance" and all "to the praise of the glory of His grace" And then follows the prayer that the Apostle offered to God for those gracious Ephesians: that "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling....." the hope, not for this life only, but for the world to come, and that explains and expands the word in Colossians: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell". Never a breath of life, never a gleam of light, never a touch of love, never an attraction of the cross, will any child of God receive but through the Person of the Lord Jesus. I might say, what pains the Holy Ghost has taken from the first utterance in Genesis promising the seed of the woman, to the end of the Bible, to lift up that one Person in whom is our hope. Promise, type, shadow, prophecy; O how God has, if I might say so, so exhausted human language to set forth what He has given to His church in the gift of His Son. The need of another Head and Representative; this is a great need. If any of us in this congregation stand before God without a new Head and Representative what a terrible condition we shall be in through eternity. Listen sinner, O listen to this. I speak it affectionately to you. If you stand at the judgment seat without a new Head, different from the first head, Adam, no place in heaven for you; no escape from the wrath to come for you; no cessation of pain for you; no dying of the worm that will gnaw your conscience through eternity; no ending of the fire that will consume throughout eternity. What a solemn position, what an awful position will they stand in who have to stand without a new Head. God give you mercy to think of it, meditate upon it; save you from taking offence at what I have said and save you

from ridiculing it. Think of it; you must die; you must stand before God. Listen to the Scripture: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive that which was done in his body, whether it be good or bad". O that the Holy Ghost would show you this as an awful truth, that you might then be fitted to receive the good news of the text from a far country that God has made Jesus Christ the Head of His church and family; that He stands for them, and they stand in Him; that what they need they have in Him; what they need of goodness, of holiness, of peace, of righteousness, they have in Him their Head. The body is united to the Head and from the Head all goodness is received, and God will supply the knowledge of this according to Paul's prayer: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened". O to see Christ as a Head and to see Him increasingly in that relationship, that we stand not alone. My God, says Paul gave the riches of this grace to His Son for you. You have obtained this inheritance in Him. Now may He open it more and more that you may see you do not, that you cannot, stand alone, but that He is your Head before God and will be for ever and ever. It is a wonderful thing for a sinner to come to know in his own conscience and understanding that he is not to stand alone neither in the battle that he has before him, nor the pilgrimage that he has to travel, nor the difficulties of the way, nor the necessities that will press upon him, but that in all these things he has a Head who will supply all that he needs; that he never is alone in God's sight, never without a Head of supply in God's sight, and that, from time to time, his sense of need in this particular shall be supplied out of His riches in Christ Jesus. That is a great point and I press it on your attention.

He shall supply your need of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul speaks in one place of having a good supply of the Spirit. The Spirit there is the Spirit of Christ. A good supply of that Spirit is to receive Him in His merciful coming and indwelling and teaching and operation and enlightenment, bringing Christ and good news of Christ from a far country to a sinner. And that Holy Spirit, as He is supplied, will inform the sinner in whom He dwells from time to time and more and more that sin felt, mourned and confessed, is no bar to salvation, no bar to acceptance; rather a fitting of the soul to receive that that it has obtained in Christ, the forgiveness of sins. Religion given by

the Spirit has to be maintained by the Spirit. Grace communicated again and again has to be, so to speak, replenished. He renews it; He gives grace for grace. This Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. In His free operations, in His merciful teachings, He comes to the vilest and we need not really, though we are often, to be discouraged by increasing knowledge of sin. We do know what it is, as Solomon says: "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow". But this is true, the more we know of our sin, the more we are fitted to receive an increase of knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit is given. Let me draw your attention to the great promise of Christ concerning the Spirit. "He" says the Saviour, speaking of the Spirit "shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you", and this is what Paul means in the Ephesians, and the prayer he offered for them, "That He may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ." Take notice of every fresh beam of heavenly light that comes into your hearts. Take notice of every fresh motion of love that you feel drawing you after God. Take notice of every opening that you find set before you to the throne of God's heavenly grace, saying to you, saying in your heart, now come this way; come to this Man who receiveth sinners and eateth with them. Ask bread and He will give it you; He won't give you a stone. When you get such and such motions, instruction and light, take great notice of them. They come from the Holy Ghost, and He, and He alone, is commissioned by the Father and the Son to instruct sinners in the knowledge of Christ, to conduct His sinner train to Calvary, to abide in them, to teach them and help their infirmities. 'Tis great to be supplied thus, to have a supply of the Spirit of Christ. May we remember that the Spirit was given to Christ without measure and that He comes from Christ, is sent by Christ, and is that unction that the Apostle John speaks of when he says "Ye have an unction from the Holy One". The Holy One is Christ; the unction is the Spirit coming from Him. That unction has authority, it is power, it is life, it is light and so people come to know that part in the Romans what it is to be made free by the Spirit of life in Christ from the law of sin and death and what it is to be spiritually minded which is life and peace. My God, the God of all grace, gave the Spirit to His Son without measure, and the Son sends the Spirit in various measures to His people to teach them, guide them, help them, protect them, cover them and put them into the cleft of the Rock. My brethren, we are straitened in ourselves. Do you

find bondage? Do you feel bondage? Do you feel at a distance from the Lord, hard of heart sometimes and careless about your standing? Now listen to a question put by the Lord: Are these His doings? Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Do not My words do good like a medicine? If then we lack this Spirit for the present, and if, lacking Him, we are the prey of evil, put the question to yourselves. Are these things God's doings? Conscience will say, No!. Then confessing this there will be another supply, a supply of the Spirit of Christ. There shall be a supply to maintain life. What maintains our natural life? Food, nourishment. So the life of God in the soul must be maintained by spiritual nourishment, and very likely it instantly comes to the mind of you who know the Lord that that nourishment is Christ's flesh, Christ's blood. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood shall not see death", and every time the Lord Jesus is pleased to say "Eat O friends and drink; yea drink abundantly O beloved", the provision is Himself. This is My body, this is My blood, this is the provision. It may come in some gospel Word, a Psalm. It may come in the 23 Psalm "The Lord is My shepherd, I shall not want". When you receive Christ in that way your soul will grow in strength and vigour and hope and love and warmth. There is a growth. A blessed growth it is when you realise that you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood. Broken hearts, O these are the hearts to eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood. A broken heart and a broken hearted Saviour suit each other well. My God shall supply this. Dear friends, there is no scant supply here. "Of His fulness have all we received", and more and more of that fulness we daily need.

My God shall supply all the patience that is needed. We should never have heard of the patience of Job if Job had not had his trials. Trials bring out our impatience and God sends into the heart a patience to wait upon Him in a way of affliction. He is called the God of all patience. He has been very patient with us. He has been very patient with me. For many many years He has borne patiently with me, and with some of you. But when He touches me in a way my nature does not approve, then I am not patient with Him. By nature, there is impatience. Trouble brings out the worst, but grace brings out the best and proves what is the best and shows to a man what is good, that he should wait on the Lord and bear the yoke in his youth. Patience?

Berridge expresses a paradox.

When our dear Master would bestow
Much patience on His friends,
He loads their shoulders well with woe,
And thus obtains His ends.

Hope brings patience. Patience says "I will wait for the Lord who hideth Himself from the house of Jacob". Patience says I will bear His indignation because I have sinned against Him and I will wait till He appears for me. Patience says, why should I hurry out of this trouble, why should I run away from this affliction? Patience says to the soul, lie down, get flat, seek the face and the help and the strength and the goodness of God. My God shall supply these. A person may not know for a long time what a impatient person he is until trouble comes and he painfully finds it out. Why, he says I am an impatient person. Then he wants the God of all patience who has borne with him to give him patience to bear while God afflicts him; to take up his cross and say, the will of the Lord be done.

My God shall supply all your need of power that you may be "strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man", that you may be able to walk in the word by Paul to Timothy "Thou therefore my son endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". Hard questions put into your mind by the enemy; hard questions asked by your own heart of God; hard thoughts; endure them, that is resist them, and do not think because they come to you that therefore you are no child of God. "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Here is an enemy; withstand him. "Withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand". And here is a coward, a weak cowardly creature, troubled with fear, burdened with sin, afflicted by unbelief. How is he to stand? "My God", is the answer, "shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by or in Christ Jesus".

My God shall supply the strength you need to hold on to the end. "The righteous shall hold on his way and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger". He shall hold on his way because he is righteous, because the Justifier of his soul, of his person, will

not let him go. He shall hold on his way because he shall live, not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He shall get such sights of Christ, he shall hear such words from Christ, he shall get such views of the glory that awaits him, as shall enable him at times to say, I will pursue the narrow path till Him I view. He shall give all the encouragements you need.

My God shall supply all the comforts that you need. Comfort? Well, some may say, they get but little here and I would say eternity will be long enough for comfort. We can only have discomfort for a moment. If we have eternal comfort that is great. But still there is comfort in this life. "As one whom his mother comforteth; so will I comfort you" saith the Lord, "and ye shall be comforted" (Isaiah 66 v 13) "I will restore comforts to him" whom I have smitten, "and to his mourners". I will restore the comforts of the gospel, the comforts of my love, the fellowship of My Spirit. "I will restore comfort unto Him". The comforts of a divine smile on the soul; the comforts of the sweet inflowing of the peace of God; the comforts of a wonderful sensation of peace in your conscience. It is wonderful how God does comfort His poor people. The comfort of a "Fear not". "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". "My God" says Paul. He was inspired, if I may so express it, to pledge God to these Philippians as if he should say, whatever you need, I pledge God He will supply you. Great is this word therefore as being the word of the Holy Ghost, spoken, written to the saints of the Most High.

One word on this point and I pass on to notice briefly the second point. This God will supply your need of society. I thought this afternoon it was a great thing, a great thing, to have suitable society and suitable society to a living soul is that that the Lord Jesus expresses in the gospel of John. "If a man love Me he will keep my commandments and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Erskine must have felt something of this when he penned those words. "I am most in company when alone". Is not it wonderful that the Lord Jesus will come and join himself to a sinner who is sad of heart and of countenance. Jesus went and joined Himself to the two sorrowing disciples who were walking to

Emmaus and some people here, you know it, and I also in a little measure know what it is, for the Lord Jesus to join Himself to us. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He is not ashamed to own a poor brother and He brings riches with Him. Riches of love, riches of forgiveness, riches of divine proclamations of the covenant made with Christ and with the sinners in Him, and He walks with the sinner. The little that some of us have known of this has made so deep an impression on our spirits as we believe will never be erased. The society of the Lord Jesus, of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost. John said "I heard a great voice from heaven saying: "The tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and will be their God and they shall be His people". Wonderful to walk with God. When you walk with Him you are agreed with Him. You can never walk with Him unless you are agreed with Him. "How can two walk together except they be agreed". Dear friends, seek His company. The Father said, I will walk with you; I will dwell in you. The Son comes and He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" and the Spirit comes and says "Here will I rest". This is My place, this is My rest; I have desired it, and so the Holy Trinity comes. Well, I wish some of you might say in your hearts, I would be glad to have that society. Perhaps now the society you long for is the world. Well may the Lord make you understand that Scripture: "If any man will be a friend of this world he is the enemy of God", and do you want God for your enemy? "The friendship of this world is enmity with God". A terrible thing. Now I leave that, this great point, the society, the company of God. He tabernacles with men; blessed be His Name some of us have known what His presence is.

The second kind of need I can only name and need perhaps do no more than name it, namely temporal need. We have temporal need; a creature is dependent; all men are dependent. The king himself is served of the field. Independence belongs to God alone. No man can properly say he is independent. We speak of independence among men, and we of course understand what is meant, and a good thing it is when a man knows what it is and can use it properly, but there is still, and must be, a dependence on God. That is, the creature cannot live without the Creator. If He take to Himself his spirit and breath, we die. But the saints know that they are dependent on God and the greater portion of the saints of the Most High have this on their side

- they are the poor of this world: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" But He has not left them there; He does not say that only. He says "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom" (James 2 v 5), children of the Most High, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Now one beautiful thing in respect of divine providence is this, that that providence is in the hand of the Man Christ Jesus. So He shows His goodness and His fulness to His people in providence. He opens a door for a poor child of His. He puts the need of a very poor person on the heart of one who is well off and in that way sends supplies. If you can watch God's providence, it has been well said, you will never lack a providence to watch. O it is great to believe this - "shall supply all your need". And this, of course, was in the mind of the Apostle when he penned those words because he had received a temporal supply from the Philippians. So he said, now you won't lose by this; you will never lose by this because God who gave you both the means and the heart to supply my needs will supply all your needs; all your temporal needs. I wish the Lord would do for some of you young people here what He did for me many years ago, when I was a young man. He set that on my heart: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things" which the Gentiles seek, "shall be added unto you". If God is first with you you shall suffer no lack. If He makes His grace desirable and sought after, you will suffer no temporal lack. Even though you may be poor, God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Said Elijah to the widow to whom he was sent for sustenance, "Go and make me a little cake first". "Bring me a little water and make me a cake first, for, as the Lord liveth, the barrel of meal shall not waste nor the cruse of oil fail till the Lord send rain upon the earth". And I think it very probable that that little meal was not increased so as to fill the barrel that she might see and say: Ah here is sufficient, but every day it was made enough. And so with the cruse of oil; every day, though she used that cruse, still it ran; supplied her and her house and the prophet. Dependent on Him; dependent on Him. Have you faith? Ah He will never send it empty handed away. Then may I not repeat what I said at the beginning, here is good news. Good news for your table; good news for your soul; good news for time; good news for eternity; good news for your family's supply, and good news for your soul's supply in this wilderness. Good news, and good news not from a failing source, not

from a fallible lip. No! We have a good God, immutable in His nature and immutable in His promise.

Depend on Him, thou canst not fail;
Make all thy wants and wishes known;
Fear not, His merits must prevail;
Ask what thou wilt, it shall be done.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Dear friends, it may be pleasant to you, as it is to me, to believe that the supply is not even according to your faith. The reception may be, but the supply is infinite. The Lord help us to believe it.

AMEN.