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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham at Galeed Chapel,
Brighton, on Sunday morning 21/4/29.

Text: Psalm 130. v 7 and 8.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord
there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption
and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

If you have never cried unto the Lord out of the depths,
you will never rise to the height of the remainder of the Psalm;
and especially just at this word, this text. There is a
preparation in christian experience. The man who goes the
lowest in conviction of sin, rises the highest in God's time,
in an understanding, an experience of mercy. The steps in
this psalm are remarkable and beautiful. "Out of the depths
have I cried unto Thee O Lord"; and that the depths are used
to express conviction of sin, what follows, proves - "Lord
hear my voice." "Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of
my supplications." "If Thou Lord shouldst mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?" A very searching operation is this.
If God should deal with a sinner according to the sinner's
iniquities, how should he stand? Everyone who has had conviction
of sin will enter according to the measure of his conviction
into this word. The heart laid bare to the sinner's own gaze,
bare even only a little below the surface, brings this to light-
the inability, absolute inability of the sinner to stand before
God; but there is one thing instantly following, that keeps
the sinner thus praying, thus convinced, from despair - "But
there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."
The truth that forgiveness is with God, that He can forgive
sins, that a sinner is capable of being a pardoned sinner,
a justified sinner, is in the very sight of it by faith, a
sufficient reason in his conscience, to keep him from despair. Ah,
it is a mercy to be convinced of sin. It is a subject that
is very much ignored to-day. Religion without sin in the
knowledge and pain of it is fashionable, but not saving.
Only as you know yourselves as sinners, can you come to know
the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, and rejoice in Him. Here I would
say to any who are under conviction, do not run away from
conviction. Rather as helped, go to the throne of grace with
your conviction, with the painful knowledge you have of being
ruined by sin, and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. Slight
thoughts of sin, always end in slight thoughts of a Saviour.

To see yourselves as sinners is very painful and bitter, but surely that sight is lost in a sight of the Saviour, and this good man, even crying out of the depths, waits for the Lord. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait and in his word do I hope.," and the intensesness of this waiting he expresses by similitude. A reference to the man who is watching for the morning on the walls of the city. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning." How many of us could say this? How many could go in secret before God and say this to Him? Probably some who have sown seeds in their gardens watch more eagerly and constantly for the germination of those seeds than they watch for the coming of God to them, and the revelation of Christ in them.

Then the text comes:- "Let Israel hope in the Lord." Seeing sin is what it is. Seeing that the conviction of sin is what it is, as expressed in this psalm and throughout the whole of the scripture, it must needs be a remarkable thing that the convinced person should be able to exhort others, as here, to hope in the Lord. No slight reason will answer the case. No imagination, no speculation, but a great, an eternal truth alone can answer the case. Why should Israel hope in the Lord? Why should any sinner who is drenched in a sense of sin, who knows also what original sin is, hope in the Lord? What is it that is sufficient to take the eyes of a sinner from himself, and diverting his despairing thoughts from a gaping hell, into which he believes he deserves to be cast, and setting them on God? God is the enemy of sin, and of myriads of sinners. He cannot look upon sin but with infinite abhorrence, He must punish sin. This is a truth that is well set in the conscience that is instructed by the Spirit. Why then should the psalmist inspired even though as I have said, drenched in sin, say - "Let Israel hope in the Lord? " A grand reason, a sufficient reason, a reason as a rock, the Rock of ages, firm immoveable, - for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. More mercy in Him than sin in the sinner. Greater redemption in Him than ruin in the sinner, than captivity; therefore without any alteration in the sinner, without any excuses in the sinner, and without any amendments by the sinner, of his own bad case, without any cutting off of any sin, let

him hope in the Lord. May the Holy Spirit enable us to believe this. May the Holy Spirit convey this truth with real power, His own unction, so as that it may be a living truth in the conscience, not a notion floating in the brain. With the Lord there is mercy. This appears in the scripture to be the source and fountain of redemption, and of all goodness shown to sinners. Bowels of compassion in God. Mercy in the sweetness of it, in the power of it, in the greatness of it, in the sufficiency of it. in the beauty of it, in the everlasting nature of it, is with the Lord.

"Mercy is welcome news indeed,
to those that guilty stand."

This is the fountain, the source of redemption. Mercy devised it. Mercy determined upon it. Mercy said- redemption should flow as a mighty river of water of life. With Him it is therefore eternal. There are no new thoughts in God. It is eternal, infinite. Sin begins with us. Sin is limited by acts, though infinite in its demerit as against God, but mercy in God is in Himself as, so to speak, part of His nature, though He has no parts strictly. What a God we have! We see when He proclaimed forgiveness by Moses to Israel, who had grossly sinned, this was the first word in the matter -"The Lord God, merciful and gracious." Mercy is the first. It is written in Luke that the tender mercy of the Lord has appeared. Mercy is the beginning and the ending, the everything in this great matter of salvation Therefore guilty sinner, may you be enabled to cast your eyes on this great thing. God is love; and from this comes the the mighty stream of mercy in salvation. So when the Lord looks down upon the earth and sees sinners and hears their cries out of the depths, then He proclaims mercy and says as it were - "Look to Me." Look on My purposes. Mercy is the source of them. "Look on the abounding, the much more abounding mercy; God abounds in it. Abounding means overflowing, plenty of goodness, such plenty of goodness that it overflows so to speak its banks and rushes down in streams of goodness to sinners..."With the Lord." This is the reason for the exhortation - "Let Israel hope in the Lord." One says - But God is just. True. One says He must punish iniquity. True. His justice comes into salvation. You say - He is faithful to His threatenings. Yes, and also He is faithful to forgiving confessing sinners. God is One. His nature is one. In the manifestations of it He is terrible to

sinners. In the manifestations He is kind to sinners, and justifies the ungodly that believeth in Jesus, and I would direct your attention this morning especially to this- "With the Lord there is mercy." The temptation to fix your gaze on yourself is very great and very subtle, often, very great because it seems only right and proper that you should be condemning yourself, and so far it is right, but when it excludes the thought of mercy; when it shuts the sinner up; when it works in him a feeling of despair, then it is otherwise than proper. Mercy is welcome news. O, God, open your ears to hear that! It is very probable there may be some here whose ear is in the mouth of the lion. They cannot listen. Also some here may have lost a leg by the devouring lion. God's promise is to take out of the mouth of the lion, a leg, and the piece of an ear; and when He does so, the sinner can listen to mercy's voice, and walk by faith to the throne of God's heavenly grace. O but mercy is so wonderful. It so glorifies God. That he has mercy on the most wicked people. He does not reckon, when he is going to have mercy, on what the sinner has done, but on what He purposes to do with the sinner. He does not stand and strictly mark and count upon the transgressions of the person, but looks upon Himself and his ability in mercy and says: "I will save that sinner." He does not look at the turpitude of the sins and the peculiar character and the aggravation of the sins. He says - "I will have mercy." With Him is mercy. Bigger than sin. Infinite it is. Infinite. Christ was sent to proclaim this. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath annointed Me to preach good tidings to 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." So there is ground for you, for me, sensible sinners, on which to place our feet and cry unto the Lord. Yes, even if you are saying - "But I sink in deep mire where there is no standing." This shall be put under your feet. The mercy of God. Great is it. O turn not away from it. It suits the miserable. It meets the wicked, the idolator, the filthy person. It meets a sinner who says that he only deserves and expects often to be plunged into everlasting ruin and damnation. With the Lord there is mercy.

Now this mercy is manifested in scripture in particular ways.

First of all it is manifested in the gift of God's only begotten Son. He sent Him to deliver his people from their enemies, from their sins. He spared not His Own Son. In the fulness of time He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. His incarnate Son is the very fulness and embodiment and highest possible expression of God's mercy. His mercy will never rise higher, never sink deeper, never be wider, never be more wonderful, never be as wonderful anywhere else as it is in the gift of the Lord Jesus.

He sent Him to die for His enemies. Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, and it would be a great commendation of love for a man to give his life for another man, who happened to be a good man, "but God" says the Holy Ghost by Paul, "God commendeth His love toward us in while we were yet sinners." You will put the emphasis there, as you are feeling yourselves to be sinners- "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." Nothing human can reach this. God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners God purchased us with His own blood." Hence the forgiveness of sins. God humbled Himself to behold the things that are in the earth, and He saw enemies to God and goodness, and said He would save them; and in order to save them, and to harmonise with their salvation, His eternal attributes of justice and honour and glory in holiness, He sent His only begotten Son, who should do that great thing - Save sinners and honour the Almighty. With Him is this, therefore it is said there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared. Forgiveness is a word often on the lip, but O to have it in the heart is extraordinary forgiveness. God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness which is complete. Leaving nothing behind that shall be needed to be done. Forgiveness, that takes away absolutely, sin. Forgiveness that leaves no grudge in the mind of God, against the forgiven person, but just opens the way to the most intimate communication. This is the forgiveness that is with God. Very wonderful it is that God should

reconcile an enemy to Himself, and never rake up the acts of the enemy. Never bring up against him his ungodly deeds, his ungodly speeches, but just deal with him as a loved child and speak friendly to him. This is the wonder of God's forgiveness; and those who have it in their hearts know the greatness of it, and the sweetness of it, the power of it. It meets the case absolutely. They say in the service of the church of England - "He pardoneth and absolveth all who truly repent and believe. To absolve is to loose, let go; and if your sins are loosened from you, and removed by forgiveness, there is that absolution that will make you happy. Forgiveness is God's gracious act on the sinner. His powerful voice in the conscience. The blood of Jesus applied to the conscience, purging it from dead works to serve the living God; and if you enquire as to what is true religion, one would say, this is it. I do not mean that there is no true religion until this is obtained, everyone born again has true religion. He has got a life in him that will never die. A principle of holiness that will never be stained, and that, when sin comes there will be grief for it. That is true religion; but when you come to the blessedness, and the enjoyment of such a religion, you have the forgiveness of sin; and when you have that, you have the title, you have the meetness, that is necessary for the inheritance of the saints in light; and this is that which is to be preached in all the world- that God forgives sins, and the Spirit takes care to preach this in the consciences of all who are convinced of sin. There is a sacredness in this. There is a peculiar relationship between conscience and forgiveness. Conscience enlightened never can rest till forgiveness is spoken to it; and when the blood of Jesus is applied, then the conscience is satisfied. There is a contentment that nothing but forgiveness can produce in the mind. It is a joyful sound.

Plentiful redemption. Redemption in the first place is an accomplished work, accomplished by Christ who said to His Father- "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He gave the price. He purchased the church with His Own blood. He did it. "It is finished." was His own mighty word. A word fuller of meaning, of grace and of glory than we can here apprehend. "Finished." - everything that God sent Him to do. Take notice of it. One writes, and we sing sometimes;-

Holy Ghost repeat the word,
Full salvation's in it.

"It is finished." This is redemption,- when Christ purchased the church, redeemed her from all her iniquities, and left no stain of sin either original or done by the church. Hence she is without spot or blame or wrinkle or any such thing. That is the doctrine of redemption. That honours God. That glorifies every attribute of Deity. That satisfies the law. That leaves no blameworthiness in the people for whom the work was done. Dear brethren, hold fast the doctrine of redemption. It is God's delight. He honours His Son in that accomplished work by setting at liberty all for whom He accomplished it. Hence there is plenty of redemption in God. An infinite redemption. No limit to it. It's application will prove that. No limit. Now you come to experience. Here is a sinner in the pit, in deeps. His iniquities are upon him. He cries out of the depths of iniquity as felt in his conscience. Good news is brought to him. Hints by the Spirit he gets that there is this redemption with God, and these hints have a powerful effect upon him. He says - "I cry to God. I cry to Him. He has what I need. I ask Him to grant it me. I cry to Him out of my present condition, and because I believe there is forgiveness with Him, I come to Him for forgiveness. I cannot live without it. I must perish in this pit if I am not forgiven." He goes to God. His concern is great. His desire is intense. He looks for the Lord more than a watchman in the night, frosty night, watches for the morning. That watchman cranes his neck and strains his eye towards the east for the first gleam of the break of day, but, says the psalmist - "I do that toward God much more than the watchman does. "I want God." I wonder how many in this little congregation can say that to God. We quote, it may be, often thoughtlessly, we quote the word of the psalmist in another psalm - "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God, when shall I come and appear before God." Now where that language is in the heart, not on the tongue, in the heart, there is this - "I watch for the Lord. I wait for the Lord. I want Him. I cannot do without Him." Now this person is a praying person, and it may be often this is on the spirit.

"Of Thy righteousness alone,
continual mention we will make,
we have nothing of our own,
but soul and all's at stake."

Is that so with you? - Soul and all's at stake. How shall I come before God? Here I am in a deep place. There is mire and I am sinking into it. "No," says God, here is the Rock, put your feet upon it. Here is a plea, use it. Here is an argument, use it. There is a Mediator between you and my Majesty. Use that one wondrous Person in your prayer. Make use of the Mediator. And so the man goes on and he comes to this- "There is plentiful redemption with Thee Lord, then let some of it out to my captive soul. Redeem me from my iniquities."

There is such a thing as this, an immediate contact of a living faith with a living Saviour, and the fruit of that is redemption enjoyed in the conscience. This makes vital religion a wonderful thing. It makes a redeemed sinner a miracle of grace. It brings him into an understanding of the abounding, the much more abounding grace of God. Much more. Think of it sinner. When you are saying - "Well my sins are always busy. The activity of them I can never express. The fearfulness of them I feel in my soul, but then - "Where sin abounded, overflowed; where there was plenty of it, grace, another word for mercy; Grace in it's freeness comes to give freedom. Grace much more abounds. There is a limit to the aboundings of sin, but there is no limit to the aboundings of grace. God can set a bound to your iniquities, though they be like a flood, but there is no bound to be set to the grace that flows freely. Go to Ezekiel and you will see there, in his prophecy he said that he saw waters issueing from beneath the gate that looketh toward the east, and these waters flowed into the wilderness, and to the sea, and whatsoever they touched lived. Grace flowing will heal you and make you live. Forgiveness spoken will make you live. Forgiveness enjoyed, will make you stand before God as you felt you could not stand when looking at your iniquities. "If Thou shouldest mark iniquity." How often you may have said - "Lord I could not stand." But now forgiveness comes, and you stand before the Lord, yea,, you get familiar with Him. You get, in your experience, what David on one occasion found, when David had good news from Nathan, from God, we read this -

"Then went King David in and sat before the Lord." Sat down in the presence of the infinite Majesty and Holiness and Justice and Glory and said - "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" And in some measure that is experienced when people are forgiven. They go in and God extends to them the golden sceptre. They touch it. They get liberty. They are bidden, as it were, to sit down, and they sit before God, and they ascribe to Him all the praise of His goodness.

Plenteous redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. All the perverseness of his nature. All the pollution of his mind. All the turpitude of his wicked conduct. All his iniquities. Very great word this. The iniquity of original sin imputed because men die, who did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned in their head Adam. A profound, awful doctrine in that particular, is the doctrine of imputation, but equally profound, most blessed, is the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and this leads to the redemption of the people of God from all their iniquities.

H If you get this all, there is nothing left, and that means that the redeemed stand before God, and shall be presented to Him eventually, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blame before Him in love.

There is no hand-writing of ordinances to come against this justified redeemed person, for Christ took the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, and contrary to us, out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Think of it. The hand-writing that you read. The hand-writing that was presented to you to read, and presented to you by God Himself, that is the law applied, that hand-writing that was against you, against your happiness, against your peace, contrary to you, standing before God as it were, against you as an enemy, an accuser, that, the Redeemer took out of the way, nailing it to His cross. O what a liberty, what a redemption, and when applied, a sinner is redeemed from all his iniquities, from his backslidings, his captivities. This is a very large field. From backslidings I will heal him. "I will heal their backslidings. I will love them freely. His anger is turned away and now He is only love.

My brethren, this infinite redemption is commended

to us in Holy Scripture and it is brought to us by the
ministration of the Holy Spirit whose ministration is called, as
he brings the gospel, the ministration of life. So may we
be brought to this. O captives, look to this Redeemer.
Prisoners, look to this Redeemer. He shall redeem Israel
from all his iniquities. May His good hand be upon us in His
Holy Gospel. Amen.
