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La P 812

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
28.1.1936

Psalm 105 verse 4

"Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore"

A very merciful direction; if the Holy Ghost gives us grace to heed it, it will be well for us. It will conduce to a growth in grace. It may lead us to an establishment in the things of God.

"Seek the Lord and His strength" The reference seems to be to the Ark of the Covenant, to the Sanctuary of God, the Holy of Holies, to that Ark, that Sanctuary, Israel was directed to go by the High Priest, take sacrifices and through the ordained medium, hear what the Lord had to say to them. The anti-type is Christ. He is constituted the representative of God; He is set up as the One, the only one, by and through whom God will communicate good, grace, life and salvation to His church and people. He is the anti type of that wonderful Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant contains every blessing needed, all mercy needed and salvation, protection, provision and perseverance, everything that that nation elected and separated from the world needed, God put typically in the Ark, in the Holy of Holies, and that says to the Church of God - whatever you need, either of provision or mercy, or guidance, or protection, you must look to Me for, the same as I have declared My presence to be on the Mercy Seat the Ark covered. The blessed anti type tells us this and if the Holy Ghost is pleased to guide our hearts, to direct the little faith we may have into a good exercise on the Lord Jesus we shall walk in this text - "Seek the Lord and His strength" What for? First of all for a foundation. Jacob, in blessing his sons, in blessing Joseph said "From thence is the shepherd and the stone of Israel". The strength of God is in the foundation. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, this is Jesus Christ. Nothing, no creature can bear the weight of an immortal soul, only Christ. Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, the stone of Israel, a precious corner stone, a tried stone and he that believeth shall not be ashamed, not be confounded. You will never be steady unless settled on this foundation. You will never know you are safe except as God build you on this

foundation. If then some of us are unsteady and shaken and doubtful and wonder where and how we shall stand through eternity, the text may tell us what to do. Seek the Lord. He who laid the foundation takes a living soul and lays it on that foundation. He who constituted Christ to bear up the church, brings the church to that blessed One. What a wonderful direction then is this to a poor seeking, doubting, fearing creature to have set before him that stone; Rock of Ages. In the prophet Isaiah we read this - "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". Rock of Ages is the marginal reading there; Rock of Ages. On this Rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The rock is Christ. The blessed foundation is that Person, so beloved friends that is the first thing that I bring before you. Seek this foundation. All else is mire and mud and like the quicksands soon swallows up all who are found therein. Winds may blow, rain may fall, waves beat against a poor trembling weak sinner, but built on this rock, though moved in his feelings, he never shall be moved in his state. We should be very thankful that our state is not altered by our continual changing experiences.

Seek the Lord and His strength for all supplies. The type had this in it. God in His fulness was there in the anti-type itself, in the Son of God. The rock that followed Israel was Christ. The bread that fed Israel typified Christ, so He calls Himself the bread of life. I am that bread. Now one of the greatest mercies to the people of God is that they hunger for this bread, cannot do without it. Every living soul here, every living soul in the world can say this from time to time - "I hunger for the bread of life" and the blessing of God is this - "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

Seek the Lord. You may not have very many, very clear, powerful revelations in your experience, but you, if kept lively, have more or less, a real, a living sense of need, of hunger for God and you will sometimes be saying "Jesus my soul's athirst for Thee, absent from Thee I cannot rest." Then the heavenly guidance in the word and the same guidance in the heart is this - Seek that nourishment from Him who in His Person and His work and His word and His intercession makes Himself known to be the bread of life. I

am that bread, that living bread. No tongue can fully express the sweet satisfaction that is felt when the holy, glorious gospel of the blessed God comes to nourish a soul, when some manifestation of the Son of God is made, when some scripture comes like a piece of bread given to you to eat and you take it, you eat it, you ponder on it, digestion begins in the mouth. Spiritual nourishment begins in having this bread and O you know, who know this truth, you know the truth of Jeremiah's word - "Thy words were found and I did eat them". They may bring trouble, they will bring trouble to you later. A roll that was sweet in the mouth was bitter later, and what may be a great blessing to you for a day or more or less, may become a very great trial to you for when you walk out a promise, you walk in different circumstances.

You walk according to that scripture "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the mighty waters, and Thy footsteps are not known" This comes to people, living souls who get that direction "This is the way walk ye in it" What way did the Master go? A way of tribulation. The same you will go if you get the word of God. It is sure to be so. The scripture given to the sinner, put into his heart by the Holy Ghost is sure to have two things in it - sweetness, O wonderful sweetness, then trouble. Until the word of the Lord came to Joseph in his deliverance, the word of the Lord in His promise in dreams tried him. Seek the Lord's word. Seek bread from Christ; He has an abundance, a blessed abundance.

Seek the Lord next for support. If we are His people we have burdens which to nature are insupportable. Conviction of sin, convictions that the way to heaven is through tribulation, experience of tribulation in some form, burdens laid on you which you cannot and in your right moments would not remove. How are you to carry them? How are you to bear the cross that God has given to you, given you grace to take up and follow Him? The faintness, the fainting that sometimes is experienced is not to be expressed in words but strength is given. An insupportable trouble the Apostle Paul had in the thorn in the flesh. How could he bear it? Thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me and the Lord gave him that marvellous answer "My grace is sufficient for thee." That supported him. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmity, that the power of Christ might rest upon me". My brethren, no child of God gets through this world without a burden, no child of

God faints and dies under the burden because the strength of Christ is given, the strength of Christ is made known. "My grace is sufficient for thee". The burden of sin - "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." The burden of affliction in this poor sin forfeited life "I have made you christians, I will bear even to old age and to hoary hairs will I carry you. When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." These scriptures do graciously intimate this, that while afflictions and burdens attend us in every place we have to go into, the arm of Jehovah is sufficient, it sustains. The grace of Christ is sufficient; it comforts, it supports. Seek the Lord and His strength and all things will come well to those who have this mighty arm to support them.

Next seek the Lord for guidance. Do you know what way to take always? Can you contradict Jeremiah? "O Lord, I know that the way of man that walketh is not in himself, it is not in man to direct and guide his own steps." What then? "O" says Christ "I will guide thee with Mine eye". Therefore be not as the horse in his rashness, nor as the mule in its stubbornness. Follow that guidance. Pray not to go before God. If you go before God, you go into darkness. If you follow Him you will find guidance. When Israel was to pass over Jordan, the Ark went before them and Joshua said "Keep a space between you and the Ark, for ye have not been this way heretofore." Watch the movements of the Ark. Follow it and you will find, as you are enabled to do this, you are guided. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." Providence is often very dark. God makes the clouds the dust of His feet. He hides the purpose of His grace, gives bitter buds, difficult tasks, painful things, all kinds of fears come because the way is difficult. Seek this guidance. Whoever prays for guidance and is left towander without it? God led Israel in the right way, through the wilderness. He led them in the right way that they might go to a city of habitation. One of our greatest enemies is self-direction. This way seems right I will take it. That may lead into endless trouble. Seek the Lord's will. "Show me the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Providence is not always what we may think it to be. When Saul and those who should have kept him had a deep

sleep, because God caused it to come, and David went down to the camp and saw the sleeping king, his servant who went with him did not understand the matter, now he said - "I wont smite him twice, let me kill him" "No" said godly David. Now you may find sometimes what seems a very promising providence and you snatch it. You find you made a mistake. When you are afraid of self direction then your prayer is "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee". Things go right when God works. The Ark did wonders for Israel. It divided Jordan when the feet of the priests touched the brink of the river, then the waters divided and Israel passed through into the land of promise. They went from the law to the gospel, from the wilderness to a home. So the people of God found the Ark doing that for them. They got liberty by Christ, they got a home in Christ. They received mercy by Christ. Seek guidance. I have got difficulties you say, do not know how to manage them. Jericho's walls kept Israel out of the city. Shall they throw them down by their sword? No. Take the Ark. Let seven priests go before the Ark, blowing their trumpets. Let the priests carry the Ark and compass the city once a day until the seventh day, then on the seventh day the walls fell down. The Ark did it my friends, and Christ will throw down your difficulties, your walls, your oppositions. He will throw all down. Seek the Lord and His blessed Son Jesus Christ, the Captain of the host of the Lord, the Commander and Leader of His people.

Seek the Lord next for light. "I am come a light into the world" Light discovers. "Whatsoever maketh manifest is light." It discovers us to ourselves. O what a sickening sight is self when you get a sight of self in the true light. Natural conviction will drive people out of the world and wicked things into religion. The light of life wont do that just naturally, it will show a sinner that he is dead, that no action of his can help him. It will show a sinner that he is polluted and no washing with water and fullers soap can remove his pollution. It will show him the precious blood of Christ to cleanse him from all sin. That bright sun shining into your hearts dear friends will always effect these two things, show you how ruined, helpless, hopeless in self, and dead you are, and then point out the blessed way of life, the life itself, Jesus Christ. Seek this. What a heavenly direction it is. The Star, the Morning Star yea, the Sun of Righteousness shines into the

heart and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and in the next place seek the Lord, who in his tenderness and mercy, seeing a poor Apostle John fall down as dead at His feet, laid His right hand upon him and said "Fear not, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." Perhaps some of you fear sometimes the devil may be permitted to take hold of you and hurry you into hell and shut you up there. No. I have the keys of hell and of death. Think of it, Christ holds these keys. If He shuts hell against a sinner, never can any key open that dreadful abode of misery and punishment. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." When God shines upon us we see our poor sin-bought mortality. We see and feel the burden of sinful mortality. There is much groaning in the tabernacle because of sin and what it has procured, even death, but when that shining turns the eye of faith another way to Jesus and His blood, the scene is changed, the feelings are altered, hope rises, faith moves toward Christ, applies itself to wisdom. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom is this that you may apply to Christ to save you. Go to Him to cleanse you, to justify you, to clothe you, to teach you, to guide you, to save you. Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore. The face of God in Holy Scripture. In the scripture I have quoted out of Corinthians - "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, or the Person of Jesus Christ." That face will give you peace. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Peace is understood only by the saints. The world knows not what peace is. The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked. God says it. The only people in the world who really have peace and enjoy it are the people of God and they get that peace from the countenance of God shining into their hearts. They may have trouble, one trouble treading on another, they may know what Bunyan says to be true "The christian man is seldom long at ease, when one trouble ends, another doth him seize", yet when this face is shining on him he has no trouble in his trouble. He can carry the cross, submit to the will of God, has patience to wait for the promise given to be fulfilled. Seek His face evermore.

You may have some peace in your circumstances. The ungodly may have that kind of peace, but it is not peace, it soon ends. Some ruffle comes, some difficulty arises, something comes to disturb the mind, and the man knows then that life does not consist in the things which he possesseth. God stamps that truth on all His people, on all that they possess. You will get it. If you belong to God, He will stamp upon what you have, be it little or much, and you will say "I cannot rest here" If you could put a child of God into his safe with all his securities, and tell him to read them and let you know the result, he would say "I have done it and I have no satisfaction in it" What no satisfaction? Why? Riches may take to themselves wings, and fly away, or if God retains them for you He may take away your appetite. That was an evil that Solomon saw but when it pleases the Lord to lift up the light of His countenance upon you, you see a gracious well pleased face, you see love in that face, smiles are on that face, peace flows from that face, then you say "This peace passeth all understanding" Seek His face evermore.