

38
47

1355a
La 187

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel
Brighton on Wednesday evening 9.7.1919

Psalm 107 v. 30

"Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He
bringeth them to their desired haven".

This Psalm sets forth the dealings of God with His people, both in providence and in grace, and the spiritual man who has wisdom to observe these dealings of God will understand His lovingkindness. Chiefly, this lovingkindness is known at the end of a dispensation. Impatience in us makes us want to see the end at once, and we are very apt to think we judge rightly when we judge of God's purpose by a part of a dispensation, but it is unwise judgement. It is written in scripture, "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Not the beginning of the Lord, not the middle, but the end, that is, the end of a certain dealing. You send your son to school and do not expect that the end of the first year all that you have in mind concerning his education will be seen in him. He may think it is time to leave school. The drudgery of learning, may be to him very disagreeable, but you insist that he should continue, and God sends His children to school, and He is more wisely determined than an earthly parent can be, that His children shall continue at school till they have learned the lessons He has designed and determined that they shall learn. We get tossed about; we are fools, we transgress; we get bound in affliction and iron because we have contemned the counsel of the Most High. He brings down our hearts with labour; we labour in the fire; we labour for nought. We go in foolish things and foolish ways, form foolish judgements, and say foolish things, both of ourselves, and the Lord. About ourselves, we say foolish things - that we are dead, that we are forsaken, that God is angry, that He means to destroy us. And about Him we say foolish things - that He is not kind, not wise, that He deals harshly. Proud nature says What have I done to deserve all this? We get weary; we come down to the dust, and the ground worn out, and think the end must soon come, of all good things to us. I wonder if there are two people in this chapel, fools. I know there is one. Is there another? Fools, because of their transgressions and iniquity, and these go down to the sea in ships and get tossed about, and the storm threatens to destroy and swallow them up, and they cry unto the Lord. There are two things in such crying to the Lord. First is necessity; they must cry. It comes to this with them, they must cry or die. And the other is

the Holy Ghost helps them, helps them with groanings that cannot be uttered, and though they speak sometimes out of haste, rashly, unbelievably, yet when the Spirit prompts them, they speak well and God does two things - He commands and raises a stormy wind. They think He has nothing to do with them, but He commands it, He raises it. Perhaps you think the devil does it. Perhaps you think the Lord has nothing to do with it, at all. Perhaps you think the best thing would be for you, if you could do it, would be to get some land and leave the whole thing, but when God teaches you a little more, you will see who did it. "He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind" which takes hold of the waters and lifts them up into waves, foaming waves, angry waves, and on their crest you rise, and into their depths you sink, and nobody thinks of you perhaps, and you think God has forgotten you, and forgotten to be gracious to you. "They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths" and the waves and billows of God go over them. "Their soul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro" - like a frail, small bark at the mercy of the angry waves, like a drunken man; "they stagger and are at their wit's end." Not a bad place, but a painful one, and when they can do nothing, do not know what to do. They have cast out of the ship everything, the wheat at the last. They must let the ship drive, they are at their wit's end. How to tack, what direction to move the ship in, they know not, and now they have come to the very last. How many people have come to their last and then have found that it was their very best they had come to? "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble" What else could they do? It was the thing God had designed, the very thing He had in view in sending the trouble, raising the storm. They had been too easy, had got careless. Ease does not do for most of us. A little ease and we forget God much. It does not do for some of us. The Lord knows it, so He sends a storm, a trouble. It affects us, affects the soul, every feeling. It affects the body sometimes, depriving you of sleep, and fills you with anxious care. It affects you greatly, and God has designed this. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble" They remember Him in their trouble. Remember His omnipotence, His wisdom. You understand this some of you. Hezekiah turned him to the wall and poured him out a prayer when the hand of God was upon him and he had been told to set his house in order, for he would die and not live. What better thing can the poor people, tossed about thus, do, than cry unto the Lord? He is for them; He is for their use: He has designed to be for their use and good, so He sends His Holy Spirit into their hearts and teaches them how to cry to Him. "Lord, save us, we perish" "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" This cry does wonders, more than all the toiling and rowing, all the scheming, all the throwing out of everything that seemed cumbersome in the vessel. This crying moves omnipotence when you can pray, when you do lay hold of omnipotence. "Let him" the afflicted one, lay hold of My strength and

make peace with Me and he shall make peace with Me," says God by Isaiah. "Let him take hold of My strength and make peace with Me" The Strength of Israel will not lie" The Strength of Israel is Jesus Christ, full of compassion and goodness, and a drunken man, drunk with care, reeling and staggering, thinking that this divinely raised storm is raised to swallow him up; if you can pray you will get through; you will outlive the storm. If men have raised it, you will overcome them. Jacob had power over the angel and prevailed. If the devil has been permitted to raise a storm in your spirit and you can pray, you will overcome the god of this world. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". If depression, if trouble, and care, and care of many things, care of your soul, care about to-morrow care of things which are before you, if this is a storm and you can pray, you will overcome. It comes to this - we must pray, and people do not often rightly measure their prayers when they measure them by how often and how long they are on their knees. It is an inward cry - the trembling of the soul, the motion of the Spirit, the upward glancing of an eye, when none but God is near. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble" and He listens. "Now shall mine eyes be open and my ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place" Ah, they are prayers, that are made on a stormy sea; that go from the belly of hell, as Jonah's; and these, perfumed with the merits of Jesus Christ, winged by the powerful intercession and direction of the Holy Ghost, these come up with acceptance before God. Cry poor sinner. It will end well. "And He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still". Distresses, not one distress too many. One, is the distress of conscience. I do not expect you will get into many things, many afflictions, and escape the accusations of conscience and the rebukes of the Almighty. You wont be often saying "I do not know that I have done anything to bring this on me" Rather you will be saying "How is it that so few stripes and so little troubles come to us?" It is a distress when you remember sin done. Not only a sinful nature, but sin done by you. It distressed Paul "When I would do good, evil is present with me" "The good that I would, I do not; the evil that I would not that I do", and trouble brings these things to memory. We are apt to forget our sins. Do you understand me? We are very apt to forget what we have done, but He forgets the sins which He pardons. He casts them behind His back. Two things in the gospel my friends you will ever find joined - repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and that not at the beginning only but all through. Ah, He may say to you by a storm which He has raised "Is this thy kindness to thy friend" Well, these two things - God's ear as it were down, opened. "Now shall Mine ear be opened" And they bring answers. So He bringeth them out of their distresses.

Another distress is this, often, the distressing feeling that you have not submitted, that your will, that stubborn wayward thing, your will, strong will, has not been broken, nor bent, nor made straight with the will of God; but now it is. You lie straight with God's will, and I do not know a sweeter thing in affliction than to feel that you have not a wish contrary to the revealed will of God in your trouble. You are brought out of distressful, distressing stubbornness; brought into most humble submission to the holy will of God. He brings them out of the distress of temptation, the temptation they have been under respecting God's thoughts, the temptation they have been under that what He has been doing with them has been in anger, not in love, not in mercy, but because He would make a full end of them; and now they are brought out of that distress. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still". "Then are they glad because they be quiet, so He bringeth them unto their desired haven" - as who could help being glad, when the storm, the distress, the anguish passed away. They are glad because the Lord has wrought something in them. Oh it makes a sinner glad when he finds God is having to do with him, when he gets that instruction on his spirit that God had to do with the storm, when he gets the instruction of wisdom on his heart, that God commanded the storm to be quiet. He commandeth all to be still. He says "Peace be still" Said the Psalmist "Thou hast made me glad through the works of Thy hands" and O it is a gladness not to be expressed. If ever you have suffered this feeling that God was not having to do with you; that the affliction came on you and trouble came and sin rose all because God had left you, then He has come, and made you understand that He has to do with you in all that, that He it was who commanded and raised the stormy wind, that will do wonders for you, for of all the distresses that can come to us, this is one of the keenest and sorest - that God has nothing to do with us.

They are glad, because they be quiet from that storm that tossed them about, that battered them all to pieces.

They are glad when sins, passions, and powers like a storm are quiet, and the swift wind from the south quiets their spirits, and the smile of God touches them as it were, with a heavenly warmth and gladness.

"So He bringeth them on to their desired haven" of rest. A few words about this desired haven and the first is this - they get to the atonement; the sweetest haven this side of heaven. His sweet atoning sacrifice; it becomes a haven of rest to a weary soul that has been tossed about in a storm. My dear friends, I know of no rest sweeter than this, it hushes every feeling of the soul. It quiets every feeling of the conscience. It brings the sinner to rest in the Lord. The atonement of Jesus Christ received thus, makes the sinner very glad. 'Tis a haven; 'tis commodious to winter in. It will do for all weathers, and all seasons and all troubles, all afflictions. If you rest,

if you winter here, you are well, and God bringeth them to this haven. Look for this. You think perhaps you are playing a mad mariner's part. You see the shelf, yet feel as if you must strike it, you cannot avoid it, have no power and no wisdom to avoid it, but Jesus holds the helm. Happy he who is thus guided and brought to his desired haven. This is peace with God. This commands all guilt, the cause of all the trouble, to depart. This brings a sinner into the sweetest and the most comfortable feeling that God is at peace with him and he is at peace with God. Nothing is wrong then. All his troubles are right, and if you can observe this as having been done in you at times, you will observe and understand the lovingkindness of the Lord to you, and in this desired haven, there is also this mercy, namely that the soul is brought to rest in the will of God. He makes no mistakes. He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. He has a will, and is determined that His people shall be brought to submit to it, and that their will shall really be brought down to be straight with His will. O when you can say

"Thrice comfortable hope,
that calms my stormy breast,
My Father's hand prepares the cup,
And what He wills is best."

You are at rest. The will of God is concerned in every stroke, every storm, every trouble that His people come into and when they realise that, they do not want to have their own way; to do their own things, to say their own words, nor walk in their own pleasures. It is to them enough that the will of God has ordained all for them. If the Lord has chosen our inheritance for us, is it too much that He should choose the way to it? No, and faith says to Him, "Choose Thou the way" If it be a way of storm, may my soul acquiesce in Thy will. If I am to be depressed, if I am to be tempted, if I am to be counted as a sheep for the slaughter all the day long, still let Thy gracious will be done. And these are very sweet lines :-

"All that He blesses is good,
and unblessed good is ill;
and all is right that seems most wrong,
if it be His sweet will."

and faith believes that. Then the soul is brought into its desired haven. This was rest to Christ. This was a sacred rest to Christ, when the cup was put into His hand to drink, and His sacred humanity shrank from the very sight of it. Then He said "Not as I will but as Thou wilt." "Thy will be done". O it is a haven of rest, to see God over you and about you and within you, and to feel that His will has ordered your way, ordered your things, your family, your matters, your ups and downs, your consolations and your troubles, your weakness, and your strength, your crosses, your losses, that the will of God

has ordained that you should be a poor creature, a dependent creature, an enfeebled sinner hanging on Christ for redemption, and for heaven, that the will of God has ordained that the devil shall approach you or not, as it shall be for your good, and His glory. To perceive the will of God in these things, O it is a rest. O it is not an easy thing to come at, yet you come at it in a moment, from a storm to a haven of rest, when Jesus comes and enters the ship, then immediately you are there. Not my will; forgive my wilfulness and fretfulness. Forgive my wanting to straighten crossed hands; forgive all these things and let me rest in Thy will.

Well brethren, the will of God is never thwarted - "Who hath resisted His will" but it is a sweet thing to acquiesce in it.

And next, they are glad because they are brought into their desired haven, namely the very word and promise of God in the covenant of grace. The covenant ordered in all things and sure is a haven of rest. O it is a resting place. Here is a poor sinner, daily coming into new things. One says "New troubles tread upon reliefs, griefs run an endless round" - coming into surprising afflictions, and into surprising pleasures perhaps, nothing steady long, with any of us in the past, and nothing will stay long with us in the future - subject to changes. O then, God is pleased to bring us into His blessed, unalterable covenant, and into the promises which change not, and cannot be broken; which He will not break, which He will fulfil; how good it is. Upon His oath and His covenant we can rest our souls secure by precious faith. This is a large land, plenty of room in it; milk and honey in it and precious things in it; in the land of promise, in the covenant of grace. It is a large land my friends. Who knows but the saints, and only they, as brought into it, what the liberty of this is - when the promises are open to you and you walk up and down in one of them perhaps, or more, when as it is said "I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord" When that is known, why a little of this liberty will make you understand that there is no liberty in earth to be compared with it. You are free with God. O look for that for a moment - free with God; and He is familiar with you. Of all the astonishing experiences, this is the greatest. I think I know a little of what it is for God to be familiar with me; of what it is for my soul, by faith, to be familiar with Him. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." This is a haven of rest. This is a commodious place, commodious to winter in, and you say "Let not my flight be in the winter" Here let me rest, here let me breathe, freely breathe, here let me believe all is well. Every evil shall turn to good, and you understand sweetly then a little of what Paul says - "The things which have befallen me have turned to the furtherance of the gospel." You can see how that the things that troubled you, God has so ordered them, or wrought by them, or sanctified them,

that they have turned to the fulfilling of His word in you, turned to the furtherance of the gospel in your soul's experience. "He bringeth them unto their desired haven". Well dear friends, this desired haven has one blessed outlet. It may often have an outlet that is not at all pleasant. You may get out of it, into a stormy sea again and again, like as, to use a word of Christ's in another figure - the sheep who enter into the fold, go in and out, and you who have been brought to a desired haven, may be again minished and brought low, through oppression, and get further trouble, and further storms, for a time, but there is one outlet I want to name. To our experience, this haven seems not only to be very sweet, as indeed it is, but seems to be limited, and in our experience it is, but it has an outlet into a limitless ocean, timeless blessings, endless blessings, that is the desired haven that is before some, before the people of God. I have much liked at times what the Apostle Paul says in the Corinthians - "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" "We know" he says "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" and says a tried soul - O but I am afraid I shall never reach it, I am so unfit, so unprepared, so unlike the place, such a foul nature have I, I think, I fear, I shall never reach it, and this is what I have admired, O that I may partake of it, and you also - "Now" says Paul, "He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Well then, the business is God's to take a man to heaven, and not only to take him there, but to make him fit to go there. It is God's business - "He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God" and the tossings and the storms tell us that we can do nothing, that we seem to be the creatures of circumstances. We seem to be at the mercy of the waves and the devil and of sin and of all evil, but all the while there is a great God watching over these things and these poor people who are in this sad case, and, says Paul "There is a house made without hands for you" and you have to go to it. You say 'I do not know how I am to get there' and says the Spirit by Paul - "He that hath wrought us for it" that is, made us fit for that house;"is God and He has "given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" in our hearts. If He has ever spoken one word to you, it came from the fulness of Christ and it is an earnest. It is not something different from the inheritance, it is a little part of it. O how glad will poor people be to get to heaven, who have been tossed about on the main of temptation, and have sunk into the slough again and again, and thought to rise no more, and when the waves have lifted themselves, these poor creatures have been tossed up, and then down, They have gone into the trough,

and they have thought, woe, woe unto us, what shall we do? "Master carest Thou not that we perish?" So He bringeth them unto their desired haven", from atorm, from trouble, from oppression, from hunger, from fetters of iron, through affliction, and all the binding of affliction, through these things. So "He brought them unto their desired haven" and Jesus will be there to receive them, there to delight them with His presence, there to put His own image on them, and there to lead them to living fountains of waters, and they shall thirst no more".

Amen