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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 1 November 1936

Psalm 132 verses 13 and 14

"For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath
desired it for His habitation. This is My rest
for ever: here will I dwell; for I
have desired it".

Strange it must sound to nature that God, whose habitation is eternity, should chose men to be a habitation for Himself and that He should call them, formed into a church, invisible indeed, His rest and say that He desired it. If He comes to you in your own souls and causes you to know that He desired to dwell in you it will fill you with amazement, happiness, contrition, comfort, peace and joy unspeakable. There is a reality in religion, there is a reality in God's favour to men, a reality in His coming to men individually, in His coming to them collectively, calling them a habitation for Himself. In Christ the whole body is united and builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. What a wonder that God should have come to you and to me, those of us to whom indeed He has come. I have chosen Zion; Zion would not have chosen Him. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you", said Christ to His disciples. He is Alpha in this as in all other things, the first. If our hearts are after God, His heart is after us first of all. I have chosen you before the foundation of the world. Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be united and formed into one body, a church, and O that He should have desired it. Heaven and earth and all things therein belong to God but He passes by them as of no account or worth and looks on and chooses and loves and quickens and justifies and sanctifies the vilest of men and says these are My treasure, these form My habitation, in these I will dwell. These shall show forth My praise. If you believe in this, if you are born again, the one thing you will wish to have is the testimony of God that you belong to Zion, that really He has chosen you. "Desired it". "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? " Then, looking upon the chosen Zion, He says,

this is the place I have desired to dwell in. These hearts are My dwellingplace, these sinners are My delight. Can ought be named by the side of this for wonder, a wonder of love, of wisdom, of grace, of mercy, of power. How can these vile creatures be God's delight? He makes them saints, He makes them holy. He cleanses them from all their sins. That is the wonder, that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Two things every child of God comes to know for Himself. Sin, that bitter thing, that foul thing, that one thing that God hates - sin. I know it, you know it who are born again. Seen in God's light, it is seen to be the one thing in creation that is opposed to His eternal holiness and it is felt to be that thing that deserves hell. I am thankful I know sin. I know what it is. I have seen my sin in God's light, and I know the pollution and the turpitude and the guilt and the power of it and the forgiveness of it. That is the point you want to come to if you are convinced of sin. You desire to come to that one point that God has put your sin away. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"This is My rest for ever". God rested from His works of creation on the seventh day and hallowed it, and whenever it is observed and kept, the Lord's Day is the day of rest. Woe to England for its awful profanation of the Lord's Day. We should keep it, it should be a sacred day to us. He rested from all His works. He saw them to be good and pronounced them to be very good and rested. Christ entered, at His incarnation, on the work of redemption, the work which His Father gave Him to do. What a work! A chosen church in her pollution and death and He was to redeem her and cleanse her and present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This was not done by one word "Let it be". That sufficed to bring creation into being, but that did not suffice to remove sin. Think of it, it did not suffice to remove sin. To remove sin cost the Son of God all that we read of. He took on Him the form of a servant, though He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. God's form is not the Papist's form. It is the Trinity, essence without beginning, without division, three persons in one eternal, incomprehensible essence, subsisting in three persons. The second person is the Son and He was sent to do the work of redemption, to humble Himself even unto death, to despise the shame, to endure the

cross, and pour out His soul unto death. That was what He had to do. Shame and spitting and persecution and evil from men. But that was little, though it broke His heart, that was little compared with the curse of the law, the desertion of His Father, and the shameful, ignominious death of the cross. O believer, whenever you get a sight of this it humbles you, does not it, that He should die such a death that you might live, that He should sigh human breath and weep and groan and suffer and bleed and receive into His very Person the curse of the law that you might live and be happy. Now when He had done all this, He rested. One offering, then He rested, and His rest is in His church. "This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell for I have desired it". "My rest for ever". He will never go to another rest. Think of it. If He has taken up His holy abode in you He will never leave that place of rest for another and this, when felt, will make a soul very tender and jealous lest it should depart from Him.

Where Christ dwells, there is some knowledge of that dwelling. You know if He is with you. You know His absence if you have had His presence. Where He dwells there is life. "I am the life". Where He dwells there is the light. "I am come a light into the world". Where He dwells there is holiness. Thy people shall be all holy. Where He dwells there is some knowledge, "And we know that the Son of God is come". "I know whom I have believed". It is not an idea floating in your brain, it is a solemn, humbling, sanctifying knowledge that you have, when Christ is with you.

He rests here, in His love. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty". He rests in His love which means He is unchangeable. Immutability becomes a rock for every soul that is born again and united to Jesus Christ. "I am the Lord, I change not". I rest in My love. He never repents of loving a sinner. Sinners may think He will change when they change, but He never repents of loving a sinner. The sinner will try Him. O how have some of us tried His patience and His love and at the end of all His description of His people's wicked departures from Him, He says, I will establish My covenant with them. "I will blot out all thy transgressions as a thick cloud and as a cloud thy sins". And when this is done and I am pacified toward you you shall never open your mouth again for shame for all that you have done. He never repents of loving a sinner. If any sinner living

today in this world could have changed the Lord Jesus Christ from His love to hatred I know who that sinner is. O but to think of it, when He lets you know that He is not tired of you. Though you have wearied Him with your sins, He says you shall never be ashamed. "Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth". And yet, strange to say, the kinder He is to us, the more ashamed we are of ourselves. I have said, again and again, but Lord I am ashamed, yet "they looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed." How is this to be accounted for? Their sins are forgiven and the Lord comes to them and lives in them. His life is in them, His grace is in them, His mercy is in them, His blood cleanses them, His righteousness justifies them, and they stand complete in Him.

He rests in His own work. His work for ever is complete. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified". He rests in His work in them. It is a beautiful work. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works", works you were afore ordained to do.

I get tired, and physically I am scarcely able to be here, but this rest of the Lord Jesus is a rest in His own purpose. He purposes to do you good. Will He change? No. He has a design. How wonderful that He designs that certain sinners shall bear His own image. "Predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son". An eternal thought and purpose to be accomplished in time. How shall it be accomplished? By the descent into the sinner's soul of the Holy Ghost who breathes into that soul eternal life from Jesus Christ. The moment a sinner is born again, that moment the wonderful image of Jesus Christ is born and formed. O what a purpose Christ has. He did not come, a peradventure; He came to a work. And the Spirit comes, not peradventure, but to accomplish a work. Christ was sent to do a work and did it. The Spirit is sent to accomplish a work and He does accomplish it.

He rests in His Word. "For ever O Lord Thy Word is settled in heaven", and settled in your heart when it is spoken, and so sweet are the words of the gospel as spoken that they become the joy and rejoicing of the heart. "Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart". And He rests in that. I have named more than once to you this point, the

faithfulness of the faithful witness. What Christ has said to you He never takes back. He is a faithful God, and faithfulness, as of course you realise, means an engagement. If you make no engagement for tomorrow morning, no one can accuse you of a lack of faithfulness, but if you engage to do something or be somewhere tomorrow morning and fail wilfully then you are unfaithful. Christ has made a promise: "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee". He said to Jacob: I will be with thee in all places whither thou goest. I will not leave thee nor forsake thee until I have performed all that I have said unto thee. That was a pledge. That bound God to him. That protected him against all the deceit of Laban. Jesus Christ pledges Himself to a sinner when He speaks a word of life to him or a promise. "I will never leave thee". How could He be a faithful witness if He left that sinner? O but I have provoked Him. Yes; shame, I know what you mean in that confession; I have provoked Him. But He does not leave us. And how does He show His faithfulness? By chastisement, by forgiveness, by returning. I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. This is My rest.

It is a delight to Him. The Lord delights in His people, takes pleasure in them. They fear His great and holy Name. I have desired it. All His works of creation and holy, wise providence, are, as it were, passed by and He comes to a sinner and says, this heart is Mine, this soul is Mine. I bought this sinner with My blood. I rest in him. Look, dearly beloved friends, for the presence of Christ in your souls. Some tokens of it you may get. Look for His presence. How shall I know if He is with me? How do you know the sun shines? How do you know you are satisfied with a meal? When Christ is with you, you know it; I know it.

Now I must leave it. We have the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper to administer, attend to, and I have not strength enough to continue in this subject but perhaps what I have said may whet your appetite for Christ's presence and make you long to know that you are interested in this great word. "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell for I have desired it." And think, O think of this, that if you have had this great word, this wonderful presence, though you may lack the sweetness of it often, the thing itself abides. He will

never leave, He will never forsake you. I may say this, as your old Pastor and friend, that God has been very kind to me. Today, physically, I have been enabled to be here. I have hardly known how to stand on my feet and how to get into this pulpit. One thing is, my voice has never given way yet. If that gave way I do not think I could go on. But now, how good God has been to me. He has let me feel His mercy and I want to speak of it to you. I know I shall not be stronger; I know I am not going to lose this physical weakness because He told me His grace was sufficient for me. I suppose Paul never lost the thorn in the flesh; he carried it with him to the grave, and I have to carry this weakness to my grave, but while I can come I will, though perhaps you may occasionally have only one sermon in the day. But if God is with you - O He only knows how I labour for this for you - if God is with you in your souls and in the church you will be happy, you will stand well with Him, and you will be with Him one day. What a fearful thing it is not to know God. What a fearful thing it is to lie dead in trespasses and sins. What a wonderful mercy it is to be born again. Now may the Lord be with us at His holy table.

AMEN.