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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Wednesday evening 4 March 1936

PSALM 146 verses 5 and 6

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his
help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: which made
heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which
keepeth truth for ever."

This is a notable Psalm. How warm must the heart of the Psalmist have been when he penned this Psalm, full of praise. "Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul." When you get near God, when some mercy touches and melts you, when some answers to prayer are given, when you see Jesus by faith, what can you do but praise Him. Your highest praise comes short of your desire. Still, with that holy warmth in your heart, you want to lift Him up, and others to lift Him up with you; to praise Him. "Praise ye the LORD". May we this evening, even this people, have a touch, a felt influence, from the warmth of truth, the life of truth, the comfort of God's goodness, so as to excite our hearts to praise Him. "Praise the LORD, O my soul". And so affected was he with this great wonder in his heart of God's great goodness, he said: "While I live will I praise the LORD. I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being." How long is this being to last? While we are here only? No, throughout eternity to come. So he said while my being lasts I will praise God. That will be the happy lot of every child of God. Last night by the last post, from two sources I heard of the death of good Mr. Patterson, Pastor of the church at West Norwood, and from a word, I think he must have died a most happy, triumphant death. O, it is well with him. Perhaps some of you may almost at once envy him. Let us pray for the widow and for the family and the widowed church. Now his being, cleansed from all that sin procured mortality brought to him, is full of praise. He praises God now, and while his being lasts he will continue to praise Him.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth;

in that very day his thoughts perish." So do not depend on a prince, lean not on an arm of flesh, for it can do no good to you really. And so the contrast is here. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever." What can you need that this God cannot supply? What can you need for life and for godliness, that He is not able to supply? Happiness is a sensation of the mind when comfortable things are possessed. Natural happiness is a pleasant sensation in the mind when positions are comfortable, when condition is pleasant. Spiritually this happiness, this sweet sensation, is known from time to time, when God is gracious to the soul, when Christ appears, when the Holy Ghost in some gracious operation moves in your hearts. This is happiness; not absence from God but His presence; the communications of His love, of His mercy, of His power, of His word. Such communications make the people who receive them happy. Their hearts have those sweet sensations which are all but inexpressible. They have a God to go to, a God who comes to them. "A light that shines upon the road that leads them to the Lamb". The motions of life from God, the operation of the Spirit of God in them, the sweet comforts of the gospel. These coming in different measures from time to time, make the people who receive them happy. You may have said sometimes, when under divine favour, I am happy in the Lord. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help". The God of Jacob is Jehovah. The God of Jacob loved him while he hated Esau. He protected him, He guided him, He spoke to him, He made over a great promise to him, that in all places whithersoever he went, He, his God, who had now spoken to him, He would be with him. "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". That was the God that Jacob had. During his twenty years of servitude under Laban God was with him. When the Lord told him to return to his country and to his father's house, He said, I will be with thee. During all those dreary years, God covered him with his protection, helped him with His mercy, enriched him by His power. This was the God of Jacob. When Jacob went astray God reprov'd him. When Jacob's seed, the nation of Israel, sinned, the God of Jacob dealt with them for that. If we have this God for our God we shall be happy, we shall be chastened, we shall be corrected, we shall be comforted, and have final victory over all afflictions and sins and enemies and go to be where this God

is.

The God of Jacob is the Mediator, Jesus Christ, intimated to him by the vision which God gave to him of a ladder whose top was in heaven and whose bottom reached the earth. The Mediator. Jacob could not go to heaven but by that ladder; that is, by the Mediator. Never could he have had any good from God but through the Mediator. Never could he have approached God and got near to Him but by the Mediator. Happy is he that hath the Mediator for his help.

The God of Jacob is the Holy Ghost, that divine Person who is given to every child of God to be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, to guide into all truth, to reprove, to correct, to chasten, to comfort, to shed abroad the love of God in the heart; to restore fainting souls, to raise up all who are bowed down, to comfort all that mourn, to deliver them out of many deaths, to reveal in them the Lord Jesus. This Three One God is the God of Jacob, and happy is that person who has Him for his help.

Help is needed constantly, and the saints are directed by the Lord in the Scripture. It is written: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" Here again, the God of Jacob appears as our great High Priest and seeing we have such an High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, therefore, let us come boldly unto the throne of grace. You will never come near to God but by the blessed, glorious, High Priest, who is able to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.

Help is needed in many ways. It is needed first in regard to faith. Faith is a fighting grace. "Fight the good fight of faith". Fighting wearies the fighter. Faith gets, as it were, exhausted by conflict, by temptation, by difficulties. You may be ready to faint often through conflict. It is not easy to obey that word: "Fight the good fight of faith". Nor the word that follows: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." We need help in this. How does He strengthen faith? By speaking comfortably to the heart. By telling the sinner that He has gone to prepare a place for him and that, having done that, He

will come again and receive him unto Himself. By giving sweet views of Himself, of His unsearchable riches, His compassions, His pity, His power, His goodness, His promise, His faithfulness. Such views of Christ strengthen faith. By speaking comfortable words. He may say to you when weary: "If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small", and that will stir you up to seek strength from Him. The strength of Israel will not lie, will not faint. He, this Mediator, this God of Jacob, shall not fail nor be discouraged. We fail, we are quickly discouraged. He shall not fail in saving, not fail in holding up, not fail in renewing His mercies, not fail in fulfilling any gracious word He has given, nor be discouraged by your discouragements. Happy are you who get such help to your faith. Faith is a creature and needs nourishment, needs to be upheld. As God holds creation up, so He must hold faith up. If you try to hold up your own faith you will fail. If God holds it up, being the Object of it, you will find it is strengthened and you will get victories, first in the hand and then in sweet experience.

Help is needed in prayer. A little delay on the part of God to answer prayer proves to us our need of divine help. We are ready to faint quickly. If answers do not come almost at once we are ready to give up asking. So the help we need is this, that the Holy Spirit should put us in mind of Christ's word, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man", yet when a widow came to him he would take no notice of her case for a time, but afterward he said: "Though I fear not God, nor regard man: yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me". The Lord applies that, thus: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" (Luke 18 verses 1-7). Thus He would say, praying men, in afflictions, under burdens, and perplexities, pray on; do not faint in prayer. "Pray without ceasing". Pour out your heart before Him; make known your requests to Him; bring your needs to Him; confess your sins to Him, and He, in His Own time, will answer. And thus I may say, we need divine help for every grace wrought in us by the Spirit. It is good to realise that every grace that is in us is a creature, created by the Spirit, and He must help it. Have you patience? If your trouble continues you will find you need help from the God of

patience, or you will be saying: "Let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it" (Isaiah 5 v 19) and you will be discouraged. "Let patience have her perfect work". What is the perfect work of patience in any condition or trouble? I believe it is this, to say in your heart and maintain it: "The will of the Lord be done". Patience will not go further, need go no further - "The will of the Lord be done" - and you will wait on Him; give your will up to Him, make a full surrender of yourself, and your case to Him. That, I judge, to be the perfect work of patience. Are you sufficient for it? No. You need a supply of grace; what Paul speaks of when he says, a good supply of the Spirit, of the Spirit of Christ.

We need help in regard to love, that beautiful grace that will outlive all other graces. Faith and hope abide, but they are to pass away in happy death, but love remains; it is the greatest of the three. But it is a tried grace. John the Baptist had love, love to Christ, and I do not doubt that his heart was very warm toward Christ when he saw Him and cried: "Behold the Lamb of God". "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world". It was a beautiful spirit in him, a gracious spirit. When John was cast into prison; when, during his imprisonment, it would seem that Christ did not visit him or send any word of comfort to him, then John's love began to waver, and his faith and confidence also. So he sent messengers to Christ and when those messengers said - "Art Thou He that should come or look we for another?" - you know what answer Christ gave, and concluded His answer with this - "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me". Blessed is the man who can wait on Him, whose love does not die, though it may wax cold. You may be troubled; Christ may leave you in some prison for a time. He may not speak to you for a time. He may allow the enemy to prevail for a time and you begin to question; did the Lord ever come to me? Did I ever see Him? Did I ever speak well of Him? Was I mistaken? "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me", who can stick close to Me, follow Me, believe in Me. Though I make darkness My pavilion; although I withhold all communications for a time; although I allow the sea to come and rage, though I allow the waves to roar and the winds to blow, and the waves to dash against this believer, blessed is he if he is not offended in Me.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help". Whatever we need He can give. Princes can do little, and they must die, and with their death, all communications, all helps, must die. Here is the everlasting God, Jehovah, maker of heaven and earth, and this was not written without a divine intention, as if the Lord should say, you needy people, look to Me. You have many needs; I have much more goodness and love to supply you. You, in your comforts, die; I, in My love, am eternal. Your strength withers; My strength is everlasting. "Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength". Your needs multiply; they are not as many as My fullness. And so God sets Himself up before faith, and says to that faith, look to Me. Look to Jesus, full of grace and truth; full of love and mercy; full of forgivenesses. Look to Him; take your eyes off yourselves and turn away from yourselves. Take your eyes from men who cannot really help you. God is a very present help in time of need."

"Whose hope is in the LORD his God." The Christian's hope will never fail as long as it is needed. It will be needed on a dying bed, up to death, then it will no longer be needed. Hope is a grace of the Spirit which is built on the Rock of Ages, not like the writing in the sand. A hope in the eternal God, in His electing love; hope in the Redeemer, His precious blood, His glorious righteousness, His faithful promise. Hope in the Holy Ghost, who had undertaken to bless you and guide you and teach you and bring you ultimately to a victory that will place you on the throne with Christ, crowned with a crown of glory. This hope has for its Object, God; has for its Object, the Trinity. I hope God will cause us, let me say by the way, to firmly believe in the Trinity by an experience of the Trinity. The Trinity in Covenant, in love, in mercy; each Person is needed by us. Hope has God for its Object; it has the fullness of Christ before it to plead; it has the faithfulness of God before it to hang on, so it cannot fail. You who have hope in your souls have a grace of the Spirit that will never fail; cannot. Very distressed and discouraged and cast down and ready to faint, you may be. This hope will rise; again and again it will rise in the power of Christ's resurrection. It will come and speak to you, as it were, reprovably. "Why art thou cast down O my soul and why art thou disquieted within me. Hope thou in God". Hope in creation has gone; hope in things has gone. Now One remains;

hope in God; the God of love, of wisdom, of goodness, of power, of faithfulness. Hope in that God. You may have found your own soul thus, as it were, reprov'd, remonstrated with, expostulated with: "Why art thou cast down?" One says, well, I have good reason for being cast down. What is the reason? My sins, my afflictions, my weakness, my fretfulness, my want of submission to the holy will of God. I have good reason to be cast down. You have very good reason to confess and confess and confess your sins, and O, an endless reason, as long as your life lasts, but that, though a great and painful reason, is not as much as the blood of Christ. And the greatness of Christ, and the love of Christ, and the faithfulness of Christ is a reason for hope. No despair shall live where this hope is. "Hope thou in God".

"Whose hope is in the LORD his God." Not only on Him, but in Him, fixed in Him, rooted and grounded in Him, the God of hope. Now the God of all patience and comfort fill your heart with joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. For this great grace, hope - a valiant grace it is; valiant enough when it comes to a soul and says: Why are you cast down; why all this ado - you will never give an adequate answer. You will say, I am ashamed, and now my hope, revived, goes to God and fixed in Him, looks to Him, casts on Him all needs, all necessities, and all poverty and affliction. It casts all on Him. "Whose hope is in the LORD his God."

Now as if the Psalmist would set before us God's sufficiency to meet our cases, he says, "Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever." Let us briefly notice those two great things.

Creation, that is God's creature; that is upheld by Him. Christ, the Mediator, and possessor of heaven and earth, upholding all things by the word of His power, brings this before us. Are you needy? "If I were hungry", says He, "I would not tell thee". The cattle upon a thousand hills, the gold and the silver, are mine. Look then to Him. Moses, look to Him. You think that all the beasts of the earth, and the fishes of the sea, and all the fowls of the heaven, would not suffice this nation for a month. "Is anything too hard for Me?" says the Lord. The heaven is Mine, the earth is Mine, men are

Mine; all instruments, all means; all supplies are in My hand. Now believer, if your faith is guided to this greatness, you will be ashamed that ever you had a doubt. You will feel, what was I doing to doubt this great God. Doubt is one of our sins. Unbelief is that wretched thing that dishonours God, and hurts us. Faith rises and says, here is a good God; He made heaven and earth, and therefore He is able, out of heaven and earth, to send help to you, and confirm your hope and comfort your hearts. "The sea, and all that therein is". Then, to crown the rest, the foregoing, he says: "Which keepeth truth for ever", which I understand to mean, He is faithful to His word. Whatever word God may have given to any of us, is firmer than heaven and earth. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away". All must be fulfilled. If you then can go to a word God gave you, if He gave it to you 40 years ago and more, it is as fresh, as beautiful, as full and true today as it was when He dropped it into your heart by the Holy Ghost. He keeps it, holds it up, looks on it as His pledge. The Apostle Paul pledges God to His people. "My God". says he in the Philippians, "shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Think of it. Your soul's needs are many but they are not as many as God's mercies, not as great as His fullness. "Which keepeth truth", the truth of the gospel. Take it generally, the whole gospel, the glorious gospel of God, the blessed gospel of God; that gospel shines in the heart at times as Paul says to the 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." That gospel can never fail; it is the everlasting gospel. The blessings of it abide and will live for ever and ever. Particularly some part of the gospel may have been opened to you. Justification, that is an everlasting thing; surely in the Lord we have everlasting righteousness. Or the atonement may have been opened to your faith, and you have seen in that atonement riches of love and of grace, and of pardons and of forgivenesses, and comforts and strength, supplying you with arguments at the throne of grace. That abides; that will abide for ever and ever in the fruit of it. Or the promise of Christ: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". When you are in the water, there He is. In the flame, there He is. In the furnace of affliction, He is there. Under temptation, He is there. "He is nigh unto all them that fear Him." So He keeps truth, holds it up.

The glory of God is in the truth, is in the gospel of His grace. So brethren, this blessed word is given for comfort, for strength, for encouragement, for establishment. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever."

AMEN.