

1397-17
La Ps 22

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 17 February 1924

Psalm 22 verses 4 and 5

"Our fathers trusted in Thee. They trusted and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee and were delivered. They trusted in Thee and were not confounded"

The whole text tells us whose these words are. You cannot read the first verse and not know who uttered these words. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me and from the words of my roaring? O My God, I cry in the day time, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season and am not silent. But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel". These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was in sorrow, such as no mere man ever had or could bear. He was under the burden of imputed sin; He was on the cross suffering the curse of the most high God; suffering the desertion of His Father in whose bosom He had been eternally. He was a Surety, a suffering, smarting, Surety. His poor people were with Him. Their curse, due to them, He was enduring. And now, under that solemn and grievous desertion, He uttered these important words "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What a solemn blush should cover our faces. What shame should fill our hearts as we reflect upon the little grief we have for sin. Here is the holy, harmless, Son of God, bearing all incarnate God could bear; despising the shame, enduring the cross; for so piercing were His sorrows, so exquisite His pain, under the desertion of His Father, that He cried out in this doleful piercing, "My God" He clung to that. He never gave up His relationship. He said to His enemies "If I should say I knew Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you". Now in His darkest hour, He cries "My God, My God". May we take up the language of Hart, may we use it for ourselves

Blush, christian blush; let shame abound;
If sin affects thee not with woe
Whatever spirit be in thee found
The Spirit of Christ thou dost not know

In the verse following the text the Lord makes a contrast between the fathers of whom He speaks in the text and Himself. "But I am a worm and no man. I am a reproach to all the seed of Adam and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" And did He suffer this for us? Have we a hope in our soul that that blessed Person, Jesus Christ, Incarnate Deity, suffered all this for us? But let us reflect that although it was very bitter evidently to Him that men should so despise Him and disesteem Him, the greatest of all His grief was that His Father forsook Him. In the text He refers to God's dealings with the fathers who had gone before Him and He said "They trusted in the Lord and they were not confounded." They hung upon God. One of the greatest examples we have of trust in God is Himself, Jesus Christ. He trusted in the Lord; He pleaded His Father's promise to Him and His Father held Him by His right-hand and though, as to manifestations and comforts for the time, Christ was utterly destitute of them, He was sustained, held up, and His faith was so strong that He said "He is near that justifieth Me, I know that I shall not be condemned" The law condemned and cursed Him, but in doing that He exhausted it for His people and His Father who forsook Him and smote Him, was pleased with Him in all that and He was delivered. He was delivered ere He expired, and He expressed His deliverance thus - "It is finished" That was the deliverance that the Lord Jesus felt in His soul when no longer forsaken, no more under the hiding of His Father's face, no more pierced, nor piercings He had from and under the law, all penal wrath, all curse, all suffering, all chastisement, finished. "It is finished". Salvation finished, wrath ended, and the mighty conqueror bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

He was delivered further when He was raised from the dead and declared by His resurrection and the Spirit of holiness to be the Son of God with power. And this Christ is before us. May the Holy Spirit cause us to see Him as one who trusted in the Lord and was not put to confusion. "Whoever trusted in the Lord and was put to confusion." The bearing of this upon the experience of the saints is very direct and they all know, as it is brought to them by the Eternal Spirit, they must follow their Head and their Lord. He was opposed by Satan and by men, and burdened by sin. That is precisely the experience of every child of God while in this world and as their Head and Lord and Saviour was delivered and His faith honoured, His trust honoured, so faith and the trust of all His people shall be honoured by the Lord. "Our fathers trusted in Thee" and it may be edifying to us this evening if I am enabled to bring forward out of Holy Scripture these characters which set forth this truth. They trusted in Thee and Thou didst deliver them. "Our fathers trusted in Thee, they trusted in Thee and were not confounded."

Now you take some of the fathers. Take Abel. The position that the Holy Ghost has given to him in the scripture in the 11th of the Hebrews is such as to warrant us to regard him as one of the fathers. He was under the teaching of the Spirit. He was led to make a sacrifice; He approached God with blood. He had the burden of sin on him, he must have had or he would never have offered a sacrifice to God; he had the burden of sin; his faith looked forward to the promised Messiah. Of Him Abel must have heard from his father Adam. Of that great promise, of that great Person who was to come, the Lord Jesus, he must have heard from his father and received the truth of it into his heart. How that the Lord made coats of skin for Adam and for Eve, and this would intimate that there had been a sacrifice, blood shed, and an offering made. And so Abel goes to God, as who does not under the same teaching; he goes to God

with blood. He took of the flock; a different offering from Cains. Cain's offering was rejected; Abels was accepted, and we are told by the Spirit in the Hebrews that Abel offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous and he, being dead, yet speaketh. He trusted in Christ. His faith looked forward to a promised, and coming Messiah. The faith of a child of God to-day looks backward and meets exactly that object which Abel's faith met looking forward. Abel long since in heaven, looked to the Man, the God-man, Christ Jesus. Sinners to-day, looking back by faith, see the same Man, the same Person, offering Himself to God without spot. Abel was not confounded. He had this testimony from God that He was righteous. It came into his conscience, filled him with peace, fitted him to die, prepared him for the violent death which soon he experienced at the hand of his mortified brother Cain, but he was delivered. Sinner, if your faith meets that object, fixes, gazes on that object, on which the faith of Abel looked and fixed, you will find what he found, the witness in your conscience that you are righteous and you will be delivered. Delivered from sin, guilt, fear, bondage, wrath and hell. And this is very important; he had the witness in himself. And the Apostle speaks a second time in the Hebrews of him when saying to the saints that they were not come to the mount that burned with fire and blackness and darkness and tempest, but to Zion and to the new Jerusalem and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to an innumerable company of angels and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. No righteous, that is no self-righteous person, could ever look on the blood of Christ by faith with gratitude for it; never could receive anything of comfort and peace from it, but a guilty person who is brought to trust in that sacrifice, will find precisely the same thing in his conscience that Abel found in his, namely, the witness of God, that he is righteous. And what is the first thing, what is the grand object of a person who is born again but to seek to be righteous. You

say "I want mercy" Mercy will come through and in righteousness, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Can you cast yourselves here? Does the ocean of infinite merit, the merit of the Saviour appear to you? Do your black sins, your innumerable sins, stand before you? Are they as a black cloud which you cannot remove, which no wind of human effort can move away; they must be blotted out by the Lord Himself. Does this appear to you? Now the only relief, real solid, blessed, everlasting relief that you can have is in the atonement. "Our fathers trusted" It is good, to meet the fathers, for us poor children, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Good for us to meet Abel at the cross. There he lived; there he depended; there he died. There he had the witness of God, was reconciled to God and was the first human being that entered heaven. Abel, killed by his envious, angry brother, his happy soul went to heaven upon the merit of that sacrifice which the Father had predetermined and he was not confounded. Now I believe this is a very beautiful scripture for us that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. God accepted him, and he being dead yet speaketh, speaketh it may be through the Holy Spirit's power and grace to some in this congregation - "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin". O what a testimony. May the Lord give it to us in His great mercy. This respects our salvation. This therefore is of vital importance - The sacrifice of the blessed Son of God.

Now there is a father Abraham. He trusted in the Lord. His faith was very strong and he gave glory to God, not regarding natural weakness and impossibilities. He gave glory to God against all the death that appeared and in the death, the impossibility of the fulfilment of the promise God had made to him, he hung upon that. Nothing in Abraham's case, as to nature, gave him encouragement. Reflect upon it; it may be that is your case. Nothing in nature gives you encouragement. Sin in your heart, trouble

about you, weak faith, strong unbelief, prayerlessness and all kinds of evil in your heart, everything to discourage, everything to say what you have hoped for cannot be. You have hoped that God would make you a child of his. You have seen in scripture that the people of God are called saints, sanctified persons, you have seen that they are called believers, you have seen that they get answers to prayer, that God is with them, that He walks with them, that He comforts them, that He pours out His mercies upon them and look at yourself, a destitute, poor grovelling, unbelieving, often prayerless and hard hearted sinner. What can you expect? What can you hope for? Now Abraham trusted without any natural support for his faith. Do not try to support your faith by natural things. God, sooner or later takes away every support of that kind from the faith of His people that it may depend alone upon a promising God and if you have got the naked promise of God, unfulfilled it may be, in your heart, you are better off than you would be if you had all the gold in the world and no God. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. Rich in faith, that faith that says to a mountain "depart", that says "God is sufficient" That faith that looks through all natural impossibilities, emptiness, weakness, vanity, and all that can come against it, and says "God is true" Abraham believed God. That is a great word to be said of a sinner - He believed God. Do you believe God? There are a great many people who profess to believe God but now come to yourself. Why do you believe in Him? What do you believe of Him? What are you expecting from Him? Have you any support in yourself for your faith? Have you any support for your faith in the world, or are you brought, Abraham-like, to trust God's naked, unfulfilled promise? He trusted in the Lord; he was not confounded. God honoured his faith and He will honour your faith. If you say "I have no signs of grace, I have no marks of being a child of God. If you protest to the Lord that you are the blackest and most wicked of all persons, then with all that painful experience which no man would really contradict were

you to make it to him, I say with all that, can you, are you at times enabled to, go before God and protest to Him that you do believe the Lord Jesus is sufficient and the promise must be fulfilled and that you can take no denial. One of the hardest rubs you will ever get will be here. How glad we should be if we were supported by repentance; if we were propped up by a thousand good feelings. O how glad I should be to be so, but when, destitute of all that kind of support, we are enabled to cast our needy, naked, lost souls on Him, who has promised not to cast out any who come to Him, that is trust, and we shall not be confounded. Whoever went to the Lord in that way and was sent empty away. The promise stands good if you can stand by it. If you can plead it, if you can hold on, if you can take no denial, there will be evidence of your interest in it, though Satan may roar against you, and tell you that you have no interest in it, though unbelief may say "There is nothing at all about you or in you like a christian, yet I say again, if you can hold on here, God, the giver of that faith, will honour it, and one day He will say to you "Be it unto you even as you will".

May I bring in here a mother in Israel. I mean the Syrophenecian woman, and speak of her case by the way. What had she to prop her up? What in her circumstances? What in the Lord's dealings with her at the moment had she to hold her up? Nothing to her sense at all, nothing, only a rebuff "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" Do you feel like that? Do you feel as if when you try to go you are put back from the throne of grace, as if a frown is perceived by you on God's face? O then to trust Him and argue with Him, fill your mouth with arguments, such as His goodness, and His faithfulness and His atonement and His free promise will furnish you with. This trust will be followed by "not confounded". They were not confounded. A good God will never never send empty away one who hangs about Him and can take no denial from Him.

Take our father, if I may use that word with respect to us, and I believe it is true of some, take our father David. Look at the instance we have of the grace and power of God with him in his early days. There is an account of this faith, this trust, in those blessed words which I read this evening. That wonderful chapter exhibits human power in its utter helplessness and divine faith in its prevalence. There is the giant; there is the stripling; and these are to meet. The giant unbelief in you, the giant enmity, the giant death. There is the stripling of faith in the new born soul and the giant mocks, and blasphemes and says there is no God; there is no such thing as religion as you talk about, there is no such thing as holiness that you want and speak about wanting, there is no such thing as truth anywhere as you speak and this giant comes and threatens to slay you utterly. Do I speak to anyone here? Can anyone say "well often that is my case, I know all about the giant unbelief and his mocking and his blaspheming." Well now do you know about the stripling? Have you seen his ruddy countenance? Have you followed him? Have you gone with him in his faith? God delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, and now I meet this giant. I will go, I will meet him in the name of the Lord, and take the stone and the sling and cast, as God helps me. What a favour it is to see this work of faith with power in the case of David. It will keep you from turning your back on all evil and enemies. It will keep you with your face to God and if your face is to God it will be to your enemies also and there will be times when you will venture wholly, venture entirely and cast yourself on the Lord and believe it is little with Him to work, little with Him to enable a stripling, without sword or armour or prowess, to overcome. And what is this overcoming? We have it in the Epistle of John where he says "Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith".

That is how you will overcome. It is that or

perdition. God will bring every little child of His to overcome by that powerful faith which dwells in a trembling heart often; that faith that can never die, though it can be damped; can never be put out, though it can be contradicted. That blessed, living faith, wrought in the heart by the Eternal Spirit and directed by Him to the Lord Jesus in whom is all strength to make us overcomers. "To him that overcometh" He says "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne.

Take David in all his subsequent life and you will find that in his difficulties, his sorrows, his severe chastisements, his rising again and again was by faith. He called on his God and make known his requests and this is the way we have to live, the only way. It is God's ordained way. We must live by faith. Fight by faith. Hope through faith. Hold on by faith. Take no denial by faith. "Our fathers trusted in Thee. They trusted and Thou didst deliver them. They trusted in Thee and they were not confounded."

Let me bring before you one or two kings of Israel. You take Asa, A mighty multitude, a thousand, thousand, and three hundred chariots came against about five hundred thousand. These poor people were like a little flock of kids as it is said, a little flock of kids and the million coming against them and three hundred chariots. What did Asa do? One of the fathers we may call him, for it is written of him that he cried to the Lord and said "It is little with Thee Lord to help, with many or with them that have no might. Help us O Lord our God for in Thy Name we go against this great company" You may have an army of fears. You may have an army of sins in your memory and on your conscience. You may have many difficulties in providence and they all threaten you. They say you will never get through, you cannot stand and there is nobody to prop you up. No prop for your faith in yourself. You are not able

to say "I know this and I know that"; you just have this army before you and what are you to do? Go. If you have faith you will do it. Go, as Asa did. "Lord, it is little with Thee to help" I am a worm, a weak creature, a poor believer, if a believer at all. I am not a christian. I see what a christian is in the Bible and comparing myself with that purport, I find I am not a christian. Lord, I have no love as I would have, I have not forgiveness as I would have. I have not the experience of Thy people as I desire to have, but O, it is nothing with Thee to help such a sinner. Thou art a good God. Thou art ready to forgive, full of pardon and mercy. Do help me. And the Lord delivered Asa. Our father, Asa, trusted in Thee, he trusted in Thee and was not confounded.

Take his son Jehoshaphat. He was in a similar case. A company, a great company came against him and he found himself unable to meet it alone. What does he do? Just what his father Asa did. He said "Lord we have no might against this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up unto Thee. Could they have been in a better place? Was there any place so suitable? Any object so great and so glorious and so suitable, possessing all wisdom and all power and all mercy and all love? And so the eyes of Jehoshaphat looked unto the Lord and he was not put to confusion, he was not confounded. He trusted in the Lord. Both Asa and Jehoshaphat in their latter days departed from the Lord very seriously and they brought chastisement on themselves and trouble to their nation and we find that Asa was reprov'd because after that signal deliverance wrought for him by the Lord, when Baasha came against him he took the gold and the silver of the temple and bought him off. Beware of a subsequent prevalence of unbelief. Let me say that in passing

Take good king Hezekiah; one more example. What a blessed example he is for us; upon whom the ends of the world are come. There comes Sennacherib and a great army

with him against Israel; comes to the wall of Jerusalem and talks the Jews' language and blasphemes the God of heaven. Recounts the victories of his master, tells them, the Jews, that other gods have succumbed to his master and how can they, who could not mount two thousand horses, how could they expect to be victorious. He sends a letter of blasphemy to Hezekiah, and what does Hezekiah do? He does that which faith always does in trouble, in the heart, he goes to God. He spreads the letter before Him. Beautiful simplicity. He spreads the letter before Him. He asks the Lord to look upon it and the Lord did look upon it and told Hezekiah not to answer the enemy a word but that that enemy should go back by the way that he came and not shoot an arrow into the city. O what a blessed trust this was. "Our fathers trusted in Thee, they trusted and were not confounded."

Now the bearing of these cases is direct as the Spirit is graciously pleased to teach us. It comes to us thus. Are you in trouble? Is it soul trouble? Is it providential trouble? Is it some peculiar exercise of mind that you have respecting God and His ways and His dealings with you in providence? Now we have many examples, some of which I have brought before you and first and most important of all is that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and, says the Apostle "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Now may the Lord help us to look at this. Here is a poor believer in real trouble and grief of heart. He has sins innumerable. He has keen sorrows in providence. He has great perplexities. He has some mortifications, disappointments. He knows not what to make of this and that providence, but most and worst of all he knows not what to make of himself, he is such a poor creature and so crowded with sinful thoughts, and sins that he does not know how to lift up his head. Now the great question which I would propound to you is this, is there revealed in the scripture a ground and a warrant for a

person with such complications within and without to trust in God? I put that question. Is there a ground, a warrant for any sinner in the case, the general case, I have named to go to God and trust in Him and hope that, that God to whom he goes, to whom he makes known his case and his sorrows, is there ground for him to hope that that God will bless him and not put him to confusion? Let us look at this great question. I have put it; I will answer it by the help of God. I will honour the Lord as well as He enables me. I will try to lift Him up to you and before your eyes and I will say this. There is ground, there is a reason, there is a prop for the faith of one in so sore a case and what is it? The very Person and sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The burial, resurrection, ascension into heaven of that same man, God Man. Here you have the ground and the reason, the sole ground and the sole reason for a hope that God will hear you, attend to your cries, and deliver you out of all your troubles. That is the blessed ground. I may fail in setting it before you as it should be, for I know not often in my own feeling how to preach the gospel, but I know it is a good and sufficient ground for every poor sinner, who goes under the guidance of the Spirit, with his sorrows and his griefs, with his sins and his guilt and his fears, to the throne of God's heavenly grace.

Now let me briefly, as I may be able to, extend this in the words of Christ Himself. "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it." O what a word it is. Say you, "But it has not come to me". If your faith is led to plead it, it belongs to you. If you are led to see the greatness and the freeness and the fulness and the sufficiency of it, and your faith can use it as a plea before and with the Lord, I hesitate not to say it belongs to you. The sweet feeling, ere it would be a sweet feeling, but just a dim feeling of hope in your heart, the feeling that you may venture near, that you can venture to use that plea, that, that very feeling, is some evidence that the Holy Ghost has wrought in

you somewhat in and by this very word

"If ye shall ask anything". Salvation for your soul, peace for your conscience, comfort for your heart, a stay for your mind, a manifestation of the Lord Jesus, an assurance of your interest in Him, anything for your soul that will be for the glory of the Redeemer, the glory of the Father and the glory of the Spirit, "I" says Christ "will do it." If ye shall ask liberty from bondage, deliverance from the law, a sense of union with Christ and a realisation of that union, says He "I will do it" I will answer that cry. I will bless you with a sweet answer in your soul. I will do it. Anything in providence that shall be for your good. Any deliverance that shall exalt the grace and power of God. Any guidance that shall show you that that wisdom you need is in Christ, that the power you need is in Christ. Any openings in providence such as may be for your good and the good of those about you. Anything that shall be for your good, I will do it. If ye shall ask the indwelling of the Holy Ghost who alone can teach and guide and help and hold up and bring on safely, the Holy Ghost, who is promised, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, whose work it is to glorify Christ, says He "I will do it".

The prevalence of Christ's Name in heaven, who can understand fully. The sweetness of that Name in heaven, above all other names: The beauty of Him who wears it above all other beauty. No elect angel, no perfected spirit of men, can ever approach the Lord Jesus in that particular. O what a name is the name of the Lord Jesus and He says "If you poor disciples of Mine with all your fears, and all the perturbed feelings that you have and all the ungracious thoughts that teem in your minds, if you, My disciples, following Me and wishing to be My disciples, shall ask anything I will do it." How many poor saints have had recovery from sickness, have had deliverance in providence; how many have had sent to them to meet their liabilities. How many have had deliverance that they could hardly expect,

through the asking in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything. If you ask for mercy in the way, for provision by the way, for protection against enemies. If you ask guidance through the sea and the wilderness wherein you find no beaten track. If you ask the Lord to be with you in a dying day; if you ask Him to take you over Jordan safely, and ask Him to bring you to the desired haven, says He "I will do it" "That were a grief" one writes and you sometimes sing it

That were a grief I could not bear
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load

That is a sufficient reason. You will never be confounded. To be confounded is to be thrown into disorder, confused, things badly put together, mixed, without order altogether. To be confounded is then to be abandoned, to be forsaken of God, for there is no order where God is not. There must be confusion where God is not. Job found that in his experience. He said "I am full of confusion" because God seemed to be against him. I am full of confusion and mine affliction, it increaseth. Do you feel afraid of that, afraid of being confounded. Things mixed up, nothing straight, nothing in order. Your religion not straight, your hope not right, your prayers unanswered and God not with you and no Saviour with you, no Redeemer in your heart, no peace in your conscience, no helper to come and deliver you and help you out of your troubles. Are you afraid of being confounded? Many saints are afraid. Who is not afraid sometimes, but now here it is said they trusted. May we say this to each other. Comfort one another said Paul respecting the case and state of the dead who die in the Lord and may we say we will comfort one another. As God helps, that I can try to encourage you to trust in God, to make your case known, go to Him with it, whatever it is,

however difficult, however impossible to you, He is sufficient for it. O the sufficiency of Christ, the sufficiency of His blood, of His righteousness. The sufficiency, the beauty, the efficacy, the glory of His name. Mention it O poor believer, name it in God's ear, name it in God's ear; it has a sound in heaven that will bring an answer to your heart, a deliverance for your soul, and peace into your conscience. Name the name of Jesus Christ. The Father is pleased with Him. His name seems to mean His very Person. Name it, plead it, urge it, represent it to the Lord, His Father, what you need and that you believe all you need to be in the Lord Jesus, and I am sure no sinner hearing me and feeling perhaps some little encouragement from what I am enabled to bring before you, will ever say to me "You are a false prophet". I am sure you are not. No real seeker shall ever be deceived, put away, put off. No. God is good. God is faithful, and whoever trusted in the Lord and was confounded. Take the scriptures, take all the blessed characters that God has put here for our instruction and edification. Take them all and as you may be enabled to look at them they may preach to you. They may preach in your heart and they may say "Why the God you seek we sought and He discovered Himself to us. The forgiveness you long for, we longed for, and we received it and now we are before the throne.

Raise thy downcast eyes and see
Numbers do His throne surround;
These were sinners once, like thee
But have full salvation found.

And when you find it, then you will say "I believe the prophet did his best but he did not half express what is in Christ." I know that I never shall be able to express a tiniest part of what is in Christ, for what He has is infinite. Infinite love, infinite merit, infinite goodness and mercy.

The ends of the world are come upon us, for there are two classes of witnesses in the scriptures. One class is in the Corinthians set before us. The carcasses of unbelievers who fell in the wilderness. These, says Paul, are for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. And the other class you will find beginning with Abel and coming down to the martyr Stephen and to all after him who were the Lords and for whom the Lord stood by. You will find them all saying, "God is good, Christ is sufficient, the Spirit is sufficient, blood is sufficient, righteousness is sufficient. Seek the Lord and you shall live."