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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed
Chapel, Brighton on Wednesday evening 23 April 1924

Psalm 37 verse 7

"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him"

I have read only the first part of this verse because I want to speak of it in an absolute way. The whole verse is relative. It relates to wicked men who may prosper in evil designs and ways. Against such we are exhorted not to fret ourselves. But I rather feel that I would wish at any rate for the most part, to speak of the verse in an absolute way. Take the exhortation "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." The world lieth in wickedness. It is full of unrest. It always has been. The wicked is said to be like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt. All things are full of labour. Ever since sin disturbed, if I may speak the word, the equilibrium of a perfect human nature, that nature has been more or less at unrest and it will be. Man has become eccentric and has no centre and, having no centre, that is no God, he is always seeking something on which he may rest, in which he may find contentment, and satisfaction, but a just God will not allow it. There is no rest anywhere short of God. Man thinks there is, and is determined, if possible, to find it, but he will always be disappointed. He may see something glittering, but will find it to be a mirage. There is nothing solid, nothing to rest in, short of God. Would not this be a wonderful congregation if every member of it believed that. If each one could say, in his heart and conscience, that he believed there was no rest out of a bleeding Saviour, short of justification, of sanctification, of God Himself, and therefore his whole heart was engaged from time to time, under the leading of the Spirit, in seeking that rest of which Paul speaks in the Hebrews "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." You will never be happy out of God. If you have no union with Him you will never know what happiness is. You may think you do now and again, but you never will. There is no real peace, no solid rest, no true happiness, out of God, God in Christ. There is a rest in God. The people of God find there is no rest out of Him, and they are not always in Him as to their experience. They get trouble, trouble in their persons, trouble in their families, trouble in their businesses, trouble in their sweetest, dearest relationships, and there is no rest. We have no rest. Very significantly the Lord said of Levi, that he was to have no portion with the other tribes, for

said He, "I am thy portion." That is translated into true christian experience continually in the saints of the Most High, because the Lord turns them out so to speak of all resting places, knocks from under them all their desirable props, brings them more or less feelingly to know that this is not their rest, to exhort them to arise and get out of it, for it is polluted. He brings them all to say

None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good

Some of us can set to our seal that this is true. We have been very foolish, and we are still very foolish. We have been seeking rest where God will never allow us to find it but, blessed be His Name, He does sometimes come in His word, by His Spirit, in manifestations of His dear Son and give us rest, and then we know what rest is. And I would like, as enabled, to speak of this rest in the following manner.

Rest in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Person as the only refuge and hiding place set up for us. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary" "Come boldly to the throne of grace" There is the throne set up by God, come boldly to it. "Come unto Me", He says "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". "Come unto Me". When you go to yourself you go to wickedness, to weakness, to ignorance. When you go to some providential thing, you go to what is like water, liquid, flowing, soon past you. And, when you go in your intentions, go to what is weaker, weaker than gossamer. But when, through the Spirit's grace, you flee to Him who says "Come unto Me", and when you go with your weakness, and your sins, and your vanity, and your helplessness and your ignorance, He does not disappoint you. He never will. He will give you what He promises, rest. O, it is rest too, and as the sleep of a labouring man is sweet, as his bed is grateful to his limbs, when they are weary with labour, so and much more so, is the rest that the soul experiences in the Person of Him whom God has set forth to be our propitiation, our mercy-seat, our help, our hope, our all and in all. In Him, who says, I will preach Thy Name among My brethren. I am not ashamed to call them brethren. And when He makes you know that He who is Almighty God and very Man, He, obeyed by angels and adored, that He is your brother, and He takes you as it were and causes you to repose your soul upon His blossom, and you find Him to be in you a real rest, then you have the beginning of heaven. There is rest in the Person of Christ. He is God and yet He is Man. It is very beautiful to faith to see the rays of Eternal Deity made bearable, made

beautiful, made attractive, as seen in, as flowing and beaming from and through the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ. O could we learn to prize His Person

O could we but with clearer eyes
His excellences trace,
Could we His Person learn to prize
We more should prize His grace

May God grant that as we grow older, we may grow more and more out of conceit with self, and more and more in love with the Person of Jesus Christ. Rest in Him. The rest that His Person is, though it begins here, will never end. The sweetness of it we lose often, the thing itself must abide for ever. He must change before the rest can be broken. There is a rest in Him, a real rest. Faith brings the soul to it. Faith says in the soul, there is everything you need in Him. Strength to sustain you, love to console you, goodness to comfort you, fulness to supply you, light to guide you, life to animate you, and bliss to satiate you through eternity. O, when a weary soul comes here, how sweet it is. He can say, I lay me down and sweetly sleep, for I have peace with God. Rest in Him.

Moses had this rest. He could not go on without it. He said "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." No rest for him but in God. A troublesome people, a burdensome people, always with him, hung about him, seeking to pull him down. With himself he had rest, but in the great and gracious God who said "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest" Poor sinner, you can bear everything that is laid on you when you have Him with you and you recline on Him, when His Person is your rest, your bed, your all, your living hope. When you perceive that all you can need, here and through eternity, He possesses, then I say you can bear all else. Paul said it was so with him. The presence of Christ was everything to him for he said "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." You can sing perhaps sometimes

I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains
While His left hand my head sustains

It was a great privilege that John had, when Christ was upon the earth, to lean on His bosom, but greater still for John's faith to lean upon his Saviour and dear Redeemer. He left the earth and went to heaven, and the great privilege of the Lord's people

is, from time to time, under the gracious anointing and teaching of the Holy Ghost, to lean by faith, upon that Person whom God has so celebrated; His word, set forth to be the Saviour, the God, the Brother, the Mediator, the ever present Helper, Jesus Christ, and in this rest there is so much that is very sweet. There is such satisfaction in it, such sweet wonderful, inexpressible satisfaction. Even if you have it but for a few minutes, you understand what that satisfaction is. You do not want to go elsewhere. You have got a centre. You are at home. Your nature, as born again, grows with the holy Christ, your faith looks there, and there alone, and these are your pleasures, your comforts. There is satisfaction. You see the world in feverish haste, running hither and thither, because there is no one place it can call a centre of satisfaction, and God will never let it be so with the world, because the world is against Him. When He brings His own dear elect people, through the faith of the operation of His good Spirit, to this point, then they say

Here would I constantly abide,

And every moment live

and I should say that I express the experience of most of you when I say that having had the Lord with you, your chief trouble is that you are so frequently and for such long, long intervals, away from Him. I wonder if I express your prayer when I say this, when I say what I often have said, give me grace enough to be unhappy when Thou art not with me. Is that what you want? O, rest in Him. He will come again. Erskine has a good word on this,

Say not, He is gone for ever

Though His visits He adjourn

"I will see you again" What makes His absence so grievous is that we procure it by sin. That becomes a very penetrating sorrow, that we procure His absence by sin. We cannot do what we would. Thank and bless God when that can be said in one way. When you can say "I cannot believe as I would, nor love as I would, nor pray as I would, nor recline on His bosom as I would, nor follow Him in all humble, willing obedience as I would. I cannot do it. But why not? Because there is another hellish, devilish principle in me "The flesh lusteth against the spirit", hinders as much as possible whenever allowed, baulks you, comes athwart your path and says you are not to go there, not to do that. It hinders you in prayer

and in every possible way comes against you, and it keeps you from the good that you would, and what is so bad sometimes is that it drives us into what we would not. O, you can sympathise with Paul, cannot you "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." That is a terrible experience, but, alas, very common, common in the church.

Well in the next place, may we rest in the atonement. An atonement was made when Christ said "It is finished" and In Exodus there is a beautiful word about this in the type. The Lord said that they should eat of that wherewith the atonement was made, that that was the atonement they were to eat and you must eat the Lord Jesus and drink His blood. That is to be your life and your nourishment. His death is to be the life and is the life of the church. His atonement is to be the nourishment of every living soul. Faith will live on that and so you will eat that wherewith the atonement was made. Not something else, not something different, but just that wherewith the atonement was made. That, that removed your sin, shall be your life. That, that pleased God, shall be your nourishment. That, that took away all iniquity, shall be the door of access to you when you seek the face of God, and ~~that~~, when guilt depresses you, shall take away that guilt, and that, that brings you nigh to God, makes you holy, brings you into a sweet, strange familiarity with Him, all that, you will find in the atonement. Blessed atonement. Blessed reception of it one may say also, having received the atonement or reconciliation. God in Christ, reconciling the sinner to Himself, pulling him in when the devil would keep him out, pulling him in when unbelief says in his heart, there is no room for you, such a vile person. God reconciling a doubter, a poor sinking soul, God looking on him kindly when he looks on himself with the utmost abhorrence. God smiling when his own conscience is frowning. When he is brought into this, then he lies down. If he is in a fire, he can lie down on the atonement and rest. Sin is no hindrance here, for this takes away sin. Love of sin, you object. That is taken away. If ever hell is taken out of your conscience by the blood of Christ, the love of sin will also be broken. You could not live in sin when you are made dead to it. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein" And yet, at that very moment, it may be, some awful sin will rise up suddenly like a mist in your soul and will bring you pain. Rest in the atonement. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man

unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile" The pharisee imputed no iniquity to himself and so he went home condemned. The publican imputed iniquity to himself and the Lord forgave him and sent him home justified. Never follow the pharisee. Hang about the publican. Rank yourself by his side, as you may be convinced of sin, and you will feel it a high privilege to get to the side of the publican and breathe forth his prayer out of your own heart. Nay, the dying thief will be a companion to you in his petition "Lord remember me" and the atonement gives access, the atonement gives boldness, it gives liberty. The atonement breathes peace. It smiles a soul into summer. It gives rest beyond all expression, sweet and blessed. The rest here is this, that God is not angry with you. He is not charging sin on you as He has been doing. He is not demanding satisfaction at your hands, as the law has been doing. The blessedness consists in this, that God, instead of cursing, blesses. Instead of holding aloof from you, draws you close to Him and lets you get near in your soul's feeling. The blessedness is this, that when you look for your sins you cannot find them. They are gone, cast behind His back into the depths of the sea. O what a rest is the atonement of Christ. Everything is right where this is. I can do all things, says the Apostle, all things; bear all things, suffer all things, when the Lord is near.

Rest in the mediation of Christ, the Mediator. Every saint has two advocates, one in heaven and one sent to him, even the Holy Ghost. "I will send you another Comforter" and He comes and teaches a sinner how to conduct himself, how to confess, how to pray, how to put his hand on his mouth, how to get into the dust and keep there until God lifts him up. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful friend to a sinner. He is instead of Christ on the earth and He leads the sinner to Christ. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. But, says Christ, I will send you another Comforter. He shall come and teach you and tell you what to do. An advocate in court is a friend to the person to whom he is an advocate, and He does not say to the sinner, now here you are, do just as well as you can. But He says, do this, take this with you. Take the blood as a token, and present the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ to God when you pray. Confess that you have done all you are charged with, and never enter into excuses. Do not

offer one single excuse. Excuses from a culprit do not sound well, and least of all will they sound well with one who is before Almighty God. And so this heavenly teacher, this Comforter and Advocate tells the culprit how to conduct himself before his Judge and then the Judge becomes his God and Saviour, in manifestation. Do you feel dumb? Cannot you speak? Are your sins so before you that all you can do is to say guilty, guilty, guilty? Are your innumerable backslidings so before you that you can only use that word again and again and perhaps say you are astonished that He has allowed you to live so long, being such an unprofitable person? Do you see yourself to be very much like any character, like the barren fig tree. O there is one who will plead and ask that you may be spared this year, that you may be dug about and dunged, that, being so dressed, you shall bear fruit. Well, you need not make excuses, nor need you frame prayers to yourself and for yourself. One shall teach you, as it is most beautifully and graciously promised. "We know not what to pray for as we ought" How could we? Why a pure Adam alone could not have looked into the heart of Deity. God must always be a self-revealing God, and if a pure man could not have looked into the heart of Deity, how can a sinner, blinded by sin, tempted of the devil, and ignorant, look into the heart of God. But God comes and opens His own heart by His own Spirit. He comes and opens His mind and will concerning a sinner, and teaches the most ignorant creature on earth to pray in exact accordance with the mind and purpose of God concerning him. Sometimes I have stood before that word, as it were, with the utmost amazement. Here is a wretched, ignorant creature, covered with guilt, drenched in sin, and the Holy Ghost comes and takes hold of him and carries him on the wings of His own intercession and grace and power and teaches him how to pray for the very things that God has eternally designed to give him. What God has in His heart, the sinner is taught to pray for. O, the privilege of such prayer and the blessed returns that come, the gracious answers that come.

Rest in the Mediator. There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus. Rest in His omnipotence. Is He thy God? He'll bring thee through. Is there anything too hard for Him? Any difficulty, trouble, affliction, tribulation, sin, tempter, Satan in hell, too much for the Lord Jesus? O what cannot Omnipotence accomplish? You may think you lay too your arm as Berridge says. You may think you will rise up and do this and not do that, and form resolutions, for a child of God is still in the flesh,

and very ignorant. Therefore he may foolishly resolve not to do this or to do that, but he will find his strongest resolve is like a bit of tow in the fire, like the morning cloud, the early dew, the smoke out of the chimney, nothing better. His resolutions may look bright, but they cannot become stars fixed in heaven, only like sparks that soon die and fall. O but if the Lord brings us in our weakness and fear to lean on that arm that holds the world up, that arm that is stretched out to fulfil all things that are promised in the exceeding great and precious promises, how can we fail or be overcome? Rest in Him, in His power, and so rest in His promises. They are great promises. They embrace every case, every need, all weakness, all enemies, all fears. They take in everything that can molest our peace, disturb our rest and threaten our destruction, everything. As you may look at the promises you will see your cases in them. Promises are for sinners. Promises are for empty sinners and weak sinners, and foolish sinners. Promises, free and great and unconditional. Promises that come to cases and that speak to cases. O what a mercy it is to have cases that ^{the} promises will fit. Rest in the Lord as He has spoken the promises.

And here let me say a word about His gracious work. Rest in what He has begun to do. Sit still. He wont be in rest till He has accomplished the thing. Having begun a good work in you He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. There is a right way of looking on what God has done in us. There is a right way of regarding His work of grace in the soul. He says "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard and hold fast" He has not wrought a work in you that it may be forgotten and passed by. He has not given you a broken heart for you, altogether and always, to neglect that you have had it and got it. He has not given you at any time peace of conscience for you to utterly forget and pass by as if you had nothing. "Lord Thou hast wrought all our works in us." "Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou Lord hast wrought all our works in us." Have you had access? Regard it. Have you heard His voice? Hold it fast. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which were spoken. Have you heard the voice of Jesus Christ, for God speaks by Him? "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son." You may be told that you think too much on the subject of religion. You will find probably, God is the judge, but you will find probably that the

man that tells you that does not know much, if anything at all, of a subjective religion. A subjective religion will carry you out of yourself to God and yet you wont forget what He has done for you. Can you forget the hours of peace you have had? Can you rightly pass by the many times of access you have been blessed with? Can you pass by, as nothing, the visions you have had by faith, of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus? No. God has not given you them to forget and let go as if they were nothing. You are not to rest on them. You are not to lean on them, as if they were everything to your salvation. But you are to look to them and be thankful for them as coming out of a full Christ and as being evidences of the love of Christ to you.

And now I must turn a little aside to providence. Rest in the Lord in respect of His revealed will in providence. We do not always know what His will is respecting us in providence. We may be perplexed for a good while. We may have something before us which seems very desirable to us. We may think that such and such advantages would come to us if such and such things were given to us, if such and such ways were opened. We are exercised perhaps because things are not as we designed and as we thought for our good. It is not easy to believe that the wisdom of God is better than ours. It is quite easy to say we believe it. That is another thing, and different from really believing it. You have your wisdom and out of your wisdom you devise plans, you lay out this and you think that and you devise something else, but when God works, graciously works in you, without, it may be, saying all you have thought and designed was wrong, He will bring you to this to say now Lord give me grace to have my will in unison with Thy will, grace to be satisfied with the issue of this exercise and this design, whatever that issue may be. Unless you know it, you cannot imagine the sweetness and the comfort and the strength and the contentment of soul when brought into this blessed conformity with the revealed will of God. You can rest in Him. You can say why, the thing that I thought would be hurtful, is pleasant, the thing that was disagreeable, is sweet, because it comes from the will of God. That is the point, the will of God. Rutherford, I think it is, says, the will of God is a soft and downy bed in a fire, and I believe it. Whatever your trouble may be, if it please God to make you know and believe that it is His will and He brings you^{will} into conformity with that will of His, you will find it a bed for you to

lie down on in your trouble and there you will repose, there you will find rest, there you will feel that everything is what you want. But you say, No, I wanted something else. What you have wanted in your right mind, what you have prayed for under the Spirit's teaching was this, was it not, that the will of God might be done, and though He has contradicted your will and disallowed it, you say, now I have got what I asked for, I have got what I asked for, His will is done. Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in my heart. Here is the kingdom. Here the man rests. He has got a king. The Lord says I will be thy king. I will be thy king in trouble, and this trouble shall be under My control. The government is on My shoulder, and says the happy sinner, O I am glad it is there. and he puts himself and puts his case, whatever it may be, into the hands of his heavenly Master, Lord and King and he is happy. Rest in Him with respect to the issue of all and there is coming an issue my friends. It is not far from some of us perhaps. It is coming. "There is an end and thine expectation shall not be cut off" O what an issue if you have a hope of heaven. Then you may well endure your present trials, if you hope that that is coming to you that one beautifully expresses, Philpot, I mean. "Beautiful" said he "Beautiful" "It is better to die than to live" A greater one said "Better is the day of one's death than the day of one's birth." O it will be great. Rest in Him for this. Who can bring us to a dying bed with peace in our consciences, love in our hearts, and a prospect of heaven, but the Lord himself? Rest here and so wait patiently for Him. Wait patiently. Be silent. Be still. Yes, "be still and know that I am God" . Be still before the Lord and wait for His coming.

The scripture knows of three comings of Christ. First His incarnation. The church waited for that. Generation after generation came and passed away, and there was a waiting in the church of God for his coming in the flesh according to the promise, and He came. The second coming is when He comes to a sinner, "I will see you again" and pays a love visit, touches the heart, attracts the faith, and draws the soul after Himself, and He comes to the soul. O there is a meeting now and again between a living soul and a living Saviour and they do agree. I do not, I believe I do not, speak irreverently or too familiarly, when I say that they do agree. Shall I say there is a mutual love? Yes there is. The Saviour loves you and you love Him. You love Him. He kisses you and then you obey the word "Kiss the Son" O what freedom there is, what

holy freedom, what wonderful familiarity. I wish we might be brought to it. If one says, I never shall be, you do not speak wisely. He can do it for you. He can do it in a moment. He can say in a moment, arise, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. Rise up! And it is done in a moment. The third coming is when He shall appear the second time unto salvation to all who love His appearing. What a coming that will be. Wait patiently for the Lord to come to your souls. He, after long generations of the promise being uttered, came, came in the flesh. He who comes after the promise has been made over to a person, comes to the soul. He who said "I will see you again" He comes. Now wait patiently till He does come to you, and when He comes, then you will say here is heaven. Here is my heaven, here is my rest, here is my peace, my comfort, my all.

Rest in the Lord. May He be pleased to help us to do it and to grant that we may have the Holy Blessed Spirit's witness to say that we are the children of God.

Amen