

1353 n
LaP 812

1353 n

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 28 July 1929

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" Psalm 56 verse 3

Every exercised person realises occasionally that he needs chastisement and is afraid and if that word is out of his sight "I will correct thee in measure" then he fears greatly. If you have in view God's measure in chastisement, then you will have hope. Of all the dreadful things, this is one of the most dreadful, to be punished without measure. To be chastised in measure is to have hope in God, for when His measure is completed, then there will be the lifting up of the light of His countenance. The Psalmist here was greatly afraid. David was pursued by Saul; Saul relentlessly sought his life and many a deliverance did the Psalmist get, many remarkable appearances of God was he favoured with, but there were moments when it seemed as if his faith gave way and he said at least once - "There is but a step between me and death"; I will get away from the country. And he fled to Achish; he feigned to be mad. God appeared for him and there was this always beneath, it came up again and again to him - God was on his side. It came to him; mercy did not fail; it came to him that he had had the anointing oil and that he had been anointed king, and though many trials and many difficulties and many enemies stood between him and the promised throne, now and again his faith rose and he trusted in God. These things are written for our learning; they are written to encourage us when we sink; they are written to tell us that there is a faithful God who, however he permits us to be tried, and however much He may Himself chasten us, will not give us over to death. These things appear to us from time to time and say - Now hope in God, and especially when it pleases the Eternal Spirit to reveal the gospel as being for sinners.

The gospel, whatever it might be to some, would be no good news to us if it were not for sinners, but "Sinners are high in His esteem". It is difficult to believe it, "Sinners are high in His esteem", and, blessed be His Name; there are moments when sinners highly value Him. "Be merciful unto me O God for men would swallow me up". Saul would swallow me up; he, fighting daily oppresseth me. My enemies would daily swallow me, for there be many that fight against me O Thou Most High. A whole nation led by their king fighting against a poor man, and what shall he do. He fled here, he fled there, he took refuge in Keilah; he went hither and thither, and was one of those named in the 11 Hebrews - they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins and in caves of the earth. David dwelt sometimes in a cave and Saul came there, but God delivered him from Saul. O the mercy of having a place in God's heart, of having an interest in God, of God having an interest in us. But his trials affected him; they are meant to affect people; providence is intended to affect people. And a mercy it is to be rightly affected. That is a solemn word concerning Jacob - A fire burneth about him yet he knoweth it not. If any of you get into trouble in providence and have no exercise, it is a fire perhaps but a terrible thing for you not to know it as being kindled by God. You will of course feel the trouble, but it is a terrible thing not to know who sent it and for what it is sent. But exercised people differ from that state of mind, they do feel it. Bless God for a

sensitive conscience. Thanks be to His Name if we feel when we are touched by His hand. One said "My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee and I am afraid of Thy judgments." The child of God enters into it at times. Here we have two things; A man afraid, at times afraid and then that man's trust, the object of his faith, the ground of his hope. "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee".

There are many things that make us afraid. Some of the Lord's people are afraid that their religion is not of the right kind, that their convictions are not by the Spirit, that their concern is not a spiritual concern, and they are afraid. If any of you can say that that is your case, that that is your fear, it may not be the worst thing for you. Afraid lest you started in a wrong way; afraid that the Holy Ghost did not begin with you, that you picked up religion; that you have got, perhaps, a religious disposition, and that there is no grace at all. Sometimes people fear because of that which is constantly within them and sometimes prevails and is more or less continually working - the body of sin and death, unbelief, hardness of heart, ingratitude, slackness in the ways of God, aversion to prayer, leaving the throne of grace to wait on self or something base instead of trusting sovereign grace. These things, as felt, cause fear.

Sometimes there is a fear because of persistent inclination to some particular evil, some piece of worldliness. It is not an occasional thought but a persistent disposition in that direction when it would seem that instead of being spiritually minded and having a mind after God, there is just a natural disposition to some particular thing in the world which may not always be perceived as being idolatry but which is really idolatry. O it is sad when a child of God finds the bent and the trend of his spirit to be after some vanity, and though he expostulates with himself, he finds his expostulations vain. Though occasionally it seems as if he resists, his resistance is vain. Though again and again he wishes it were otherwise with him than it is, yet his wishes seem to be only those of the sluggard, and this is very distressing at times to the mind; it occasions fears. Hath God forgotten me; is my way hid from Him; does He take no notice of me; will He not come to my assistance; shall these feeble cries of mine pass unheeded by Him? Many such things and thoughts and feelings create fear

Sometimes fear is occasioned by the mighty devil, the god of this world. He won't let you alone, as often as he is permitted to come to you. Now he will thrust in infidelity. Of all the things that distress a Christian man, a man that is set on God really, this is one of the most distressing - There is no God. Sometimes if he does not come in that violent way, he will suggest with a kind of speciousness that you do not suspect, that though there is a God, that God won't help you. "There is no help for him in God". And a very piercing thing it is, but it does seem reasonable, I mean to one who is sensible of his sins, it does seem reasonable, especially when you have to say and confess that you have forgotten Him; that you have turned away from Him and you begin then to fear He may say- - "Go to the gods you sought unto". Nor will the enemy be slack in this business; he will press it home -"There is no help for you in God" - and you are afraid.

And sometimes fear is occasioned by the Martha spirit that is in us; cumbered about much serving; drunken and surfeited with many cares. Not the deceitfulness of riches alone, O no,

many cares. Christ says, cares of other things. Business; business is slack, many things come suggesting you won't get honourably through. Cares of the family, cares about your health, cares about your friends - such things come. And one more word on this point - we may be afraid of God's judgments on the nation and when they come they will come close to the church, for judgment must begin at the house of God, and perhaps you are afraid. If there should come particular troubles, if there should come, in any form, persecution, then you say to yourself, and perhaps say to the Lord - shall I stand? I am afraid Lord, I am a coward. I have not much faith, if any. "All that a man hath will he give for his life", and you are afraid on that ground and so there are great and solemn reasons in many of us for fear.

And this time is a solemn time, a time, for instance, of self-examination. Self-examination generally in the people of God leads them to consider how false they have been to the Lord; how foolish they have been in their ways; how unbelieving they have been in their spirits; how carnally minded. I could go on with this, for I well understand and have more reason than most people, if not more than any person living, to be afraid when self-examination takes place. You sit down; you lie on your bed perhaps, and you begin to think of the past; how you have behaved; how you have misbehaved yourself toward the Lord; how little you have cared for His Name and His honour; how much you have looked to yourself, thought of yourself, cared for yourself; how, in affliction, you have gone to yourself instead of the throne of grace. This self-examination ordinarily brings to this conclusion - who so unworthy; who has such reason to fear judgment; who has so much reason to get into the dust of self-abasement and cry "Woe is me, woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips." And though this part of self-examination leads to great pain and shame, I am disposed to say this to you, it is a very wholesome thing. It will let out pride; it will let out self-sufficiency; it will stop all promising to behave better; it will bring you to your knees under God's grace. It will bring you to feel your need of that great word which I read in the chapter just now - "I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a thick cloud and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me for I have redeemed thee".

And this time is not only a time of self-examination, but also it is a time of confession. "If we confess our sins". Easy enough to the professor without grace, but difficult to an honest conscience; difficult to a man whose sins are constantly working and threatening destruction. But the Spirit comes, the Holy Spirit comes and there is this great thing carried on by Him confession of sin. "Only acknowledge thine iniquity", says God to Israel. And the sinner says - "Lord, I do it, I am doing it, I cannot but do it." He opens his lips in confession. His lips are closed by his guilt and he cries - "Open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise." His sin closes his lips; grace can open them; he confesses.

And also this time of fear is a time of petition - praying, interceding, making supplications. Prayer seems quite easy when you have nothing to press you, or it may be as a dead thing in your spirit. But when you are pressed, when the devil pursues, when sin hangs heavy on your soul, O then to wait on God, to intercede, plead, urge, argue, and wrestle with God on the ground of the atonement, that that is what a person is brought to when he is afraid on the ground of his sins and unworthiness.

Now what comes after this? Why, this hope, this trust - "I will trust in Thee", in the Lord. With the Lord there is mercy that He may be feared and with Him is plenteous redemption. Let us consider for a moment or two what the gospel proclaims concerning the Lord. This is one thing it proclaims - that Christ made an end of sin by His one offering and so perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The greatness of this is beyond all our comprehension, but it is apprehended. It is apprehended. Everything in God is beyond the comprehension of the creature, but what God is, is apprehensible, and what He reveals is apprehended by faith and this is one of the great things that is apprehended - the atonement of the Saviour, that He made an end of sin, that He brought in an everlasting righteousness and faith says in the sinner's heart - "Go and plead that; who can tell but you will find, sweetly, and soon, the blood of the everlasting covenant sprinkled on your conscience". And this brings a trust; it may not bring immediate comfort, but it works a trust in the soul. "Here" says the sinner "I will lie; here I will die. This is my last resort; this is my ground; this is why I can pray; this gives me boldness sometimes in prayer - that Jesus died for sinners; perhaps He died for me". And again and again faith comes to this -the infinite value of the atonement of the Lord Jesus. That is one part of the gospel revealed in Holy Scripture, contained in the Lord's last words "it is finished". The infinitely valuable blood.

The blood of Christ, a precious blood
Cleanseth from all sin, doubt it not,
And reconciles the soul to God
From every folly, every fault.

I should soon be in despair but for that. O, the blood of Christ. "Look" says one, and may we follow him -'Look my soul though stung to death.'

And another thing the gospel reveals is this - "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." And what for? The bitten Israelite, with poison swiftly spreading itself through his veins and drying up his life, that bitten Israelite had one thing told him to do - to look to the uplifted serpent. So the holy gospel says this Look, bitten soul, bitten by sin, bitten by the devil, bitten by your own rebellious spirit, look to the uplifted Saviour and this look has in it the very nature of trust. Says the sinner 'Hopeless am I in myself, but I look to Him who is lifted up on the gospel pole.' It is recorded in the blessed evangelists, that Jesus Christ was purposely, graciously, lovingly lifted up, that the bitten souls of spiritual Israel should look to Him and thus be healed and saved.

Another wondrous mercy revealed in the gospel is this; that the Lord Jesus is ever living to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. O sinner, are you bitten? Are you guilty? Are you polluted? Are you lost, really lost? May the Holy Ghost reveal to you this wondrous Man in heaven, the great High Priest of our profession, ever living to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. For all; and He saves to the uttermost by this, His intercession. Able to save to the uttermost. You can go no further. When you feel you can sin no more than you have sinned, or that your guilt cannot be more deep and

dreadful. *To the uttermost*. And another word like this in the gospel is "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". Now take these two beautiful words. What a revelation they make of the heart of God, of the love of God, of the love of the Saviour, of the sufficiency of the Saviour to save poor coming sinners.

Another word in the blessed, the everlasting gospel, is this -"I have laid help upon one that is Mighty." That is God the Father speaking of God the Son. "I have laid help upon one that is Mighty." David proved that God was more than Saul, and you will prove, I hope to prove to the end, that God is more than sin and more than the god of this world; able to save to the uttermost. And in connection with this, let me name what is in the Hebrews - "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel" did what? Why, He sware; because He could swear by no greater than Himself, He hath sworn by Himself, that by two immutable things, the counsel, the promise, the oath of God, by two immutable things, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. And these things are in the gospel. O, I would repeat it to you and I do not think you will object to it, that the gospel is for sinners. Sinners are high in His esteem; He came from heaven for their sake; He took their nature into union with His divine Person to save them; He took their sins to put them away. He took away their filthiness and their rags and what can He not do? Dear friends, the preaching of the gospel and the application of the gospel are but means; the end, the great work was accomplished and now the application is just the effect. O what a God we have!

What time I am afraid, afraid of myself, afraid of poor wicked men, afraid of the god of this world, afraid of the judgments of God which I richly deserve; what time I am afraid of affliction when it comes, afraid of death that I have yet to meet; "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee". I won't put on Saul's armour; I won't run into myself; I won't run to men; I won't lean on an arm of flesh nor on my own understanding. Some of us have done enough of that; sick of that we are. But what then? - "I will trust in Thee", a revealed Christ; revealed in Holy Scripture, attractive, more attractive than tongue can say; "I will trust in Thee". Now look at the promise which encourages us to trust in the Lord - "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". Did you ever feel thankful that the Lord Jesus did not say - the clean person, the good person, the consistent professor, the man who has no unbelief at all, if he comes to Me I won't cast him out. O if He had said that, who here would venture to go? But He says him, given to Me by My Father, him, coming to Me, shall not be cast out. I won't cast him out. O my friends, what a God we have, and the Scripture tells us of cases. It is to have them brought to you at times by the Spirit and it may be good for me to name one or two. Take Manasseh, King Manasseh. He made Jerusalem's streets to run down with blood. God caught him in the thicket, gave him to pray, and forgave his sins. Think of it. He came to God. Do you go to Him in your sins? Are you caught in some trouble and conviction of sins? Then may you be drawn by His good Spirit to His divine Majesty and you will find, though you have a thousand reasons in your own mind why He, the holy God, should cast you out, He won't find one, He won't find one.

"This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." This Man, God-Man, Jesus Christ, receiveth sinners and eateth with them. You can go no further, say nothing worse of yourself

than this, you are sinners, and this Man receiveth sinners, burdened sinners, helpless sinners, poor sinners, empty sinners, and eateth with them, and eating with them means He provides the meal. "Come and dine" said the risen Saviour on the sea shore. And when the disciples left their boat and went, they found already provision was made, and when a sinner comes to Him he finds the provision is made, the table is spread and the Lord says - "Come and dine, all things are ready". "Come, sit at table with Me, sit at table with your Lord, and eat celestial food" and the food is His flesh and the drink is His blood. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and he shall not see death. This is what the Saviour does. Now sinner can you go to Him? Can you cast a lost soul at His footstool? Can you cast a helpless soul on His mighty power? Can you cast a guilty soul on His precious atonement and His justifying righteousness? That is trust; the nature of trust is in that. It is an act of faith He will never despise, a blessed act of faith. But what a stumbling block is our poor corrupted reason. It stands in the way of a poor coming sinner and it says you must not go like this and a legal heart unites with that and says you must not go like this, but the Lord Jesus will have the last word in the matter. He rebukes the devil, He silences carnal reason, and He takes away a legal mind, and enables the 'sinner with all he has of sin and all he has of transgression, to go to Him.

Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to Thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I Thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive

O what a God we have. "Look" says one, "Look my soul though stung to death". I wish the Lord may encourage us by the gospel to go to Him, to trust in Him, trust Him wholly; let no other trust intrude. The gospel bears the spirit up; the gospel is the revelation of God's mind and will and love. The gospel is a revelation of the Person and death of Christ. The gospel says to sinners - Hope in God; there is grace in Him; there is forgiveness with Him; there is love endless in Him; there is merit infinite in Him; there is the disposition to save that nothing can turn away. Go to Him; go, stung to death; go, full of disease and leprosy; go to Him. What time you are afraid of everything that is out of God; afraid of everything that is not of God, go to Him, and when you go then you will find "love divine, all love excelling". Then you will find a gracious Saviour, willing, loving, gracious, and full of compassion and you will find an infinite surprise - that is He will embrace you and kiss you with the kisses of His mouth. Then you will go on with the Psalmist - In God will I praise His word. In God will I praise the word; the Incarnate Word will I praise; the written Word will I praise; the promises of the written Word I will praise. The promise of a full God I will praise. In God I will praise His Word. In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Now I have preached a gospel without conditions and may God keep you who are troubled about yourselves, who are troubled about sin, keep you from putting conditions in. I have done it many a time for many years. What a fool I have been. But what conditions? You say, I believe Christ is the Saviour. Yes, but have you never said - If I had a better spirit I could go to Him? If I had a broken heart I could go. If I had not committed such and such transgressions against the testimony of my conscience I could go. What is that but putting conditions? If I

were this, He would be that. That is it. That is flesh in a tried child of God, trying him to the uttermost, but what a mercy for such of us that have done this and may be doing it even now, that the Holy Ghost, who is said to glorify Christ, will blow away such things by His teaching and grace, and help us to go with just what we have, with what we are, with what we fear, to Him. May He help us.

Amen.