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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
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Psalm 62 v 6

He only is my Rock and my salvation: He is
my defence, I shall not be moved

This beautiful Psalm, expressive of hope and confidence in God, suits the saints of the Most High in their various afflictions, their path in providence, and their felt danger from enemies. As I noticed this morning, in speaking about the previous verse, "My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him", we see that there is a shutting up of the people of God to Himself, that the repetition four times of the word "only" makes it a very exclusive word. It has reference, so to speak, as I ventured to say then, to other possible helpers, to other possible defences, but from all of them faith turned the Psalmist and he said to his soul, solemnly, secretly - "My soul wait thou only upon God". Turn away from all other possible means of deliverance, turn away from all creatures and go to God alone. Nor is this a singular experience that the Psalmist had. Down to this day it is what God, the Holy Ghost, works in His people in different measures. Every saint is united; all the saints are in the body and they form the body, and by joints they each minister something to the other. "The whole body fitly joined and compacted together by that which every joint supplieth maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love". That is how the church stands in God's sight, and how she is in herself in her own life. But when you come to your own particular experience, to God's dealings with you, and your standing before Him, then it is as if He were alone to you and you alone to Him. A kind of gracious, personal experience, without reference in your feelings, in your petitions, in your hopes, to any creature. Very exclusive, very gracious, very necessary for your establishment and for the glory of God. Look for something for yourselves. Bunyan says we may be lost in generalities. That is true. You may be lost in a congregation and in generalities. You like to go with others and where they go you would go, but mind this, there must be something between you alone and God, something between

your soul and the Most High, dealings of the Spirit with you, and dealings of your faith with God. You must bear your own burden. "Every man shall bear his own burden". Therefore, says Paul, "Let every man prove his own work and then shall he have rejoicing in himself". He shall have confidence, that is to say, confidence that God has given him something. And it may be painful to some people who are born, so to speak, in the chapel, brought up to hear the truth and never heard anything else, mingled all their days with God's people. Even though they are brought really to be convinced of sin, there is a sort of trial about their religion. Did I just receive it because I was born in it? I do not know that trial myself. God had to pull me out of the world, and He did it mercifully and effectually. O but this is a great point, to have some dealings of God with you. The Lord bless you with distinct dealings. Nothing else will save you.

Now in this word that I have read there is a profession, a confident profession. "He only is my Rock and my salvation. He is my defence, I shall not be moved". In the second verse he says "I shall not be greatly moved". You may stumble, you may fall here and there, but you wont be greatly moved from the Rock. The Rock will hold you. "In God". This is the point - "In God is my salvation and my glory".

Now in the text there are three things which I would bring to your notice. That God is the Rock, points to the choice, that is the election of God of Jesus Christ, His Son, to be the Rock. "Behold", as in the chapter that I read this morning it reads "Behold my Servant, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth", that is His dearly beloved Son incarnate; that is the Rock. He is the Rock; there is no other. In the Rock there are these things to be noticed. The stability of it. I think it is Philpot who says the Rock is beneath the waters as well as above the waters. Did you ever see this Rock? Did you ever see the Deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, constituting one Person, sufficient for you, for every need, every sin, every devil, every fear, every adverse providence, every affliction that may come, so as to say - Now He is, at least I would have Him to be, my Rock. Stability, immoveability. "I am the Lord I change not". Think of it. Here is a changeling, here is a sinner who has constant vicissitudes, here is a poor creature who has no

stability in himself, who can only say - "Hot and cold in half an hour"; now fixed, now wandering, now hoping, now running away from the object of his hope. What a creature! And then God comes to him, and deals with him, and shows mercy to him, overwhelms him with that amazing word. After bringing to his conscience his sins, He says "I, even I, am He that blot out thy transgressions for Mine own sake". "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed". This is in Him. In God, in this Rock of Ages, in Jesus Christ, there is this stability.

Secondly, in Him is suitability. Oh how suitable is a Saviour such as Christ is. By Peter we have that noble confession - "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God", and Christ's blessed response - "On this Rock will I build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". We are very apt, I think, very apt to confuse our shaken feelings and our tottering feet and faltering steps with this, that there must be a shaking of the foundation, which is not true. Oh how suitable to a sinner who often does get shaken to pieces in his feelings, in his conscience, shaken by many fears, is this unshakeable, this suitable, this blessed Rock of Ages.

"He only is my Rock". And when you come to this point, there is an appropriation. "My Rock". I think the other day I named a distinction made by the Puritans which I have often admired. They distinguished between the faith of adherence and the faith of appropriation. It is one faith, in two degrees. The faith of adherence. You could not, with your finger and thumb, pull away a limpet from the rock, and no sin, no devil, can pull a sinner from the Lord Jesus. The sinner gets shaken to pieces and thinks he must give up, but the Lord holds him and remember, that the Rock holds you, not you the Rock. Two houses are built, according to Christ, by two men, one a fool, who built his house on the sand. "And the rain came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell, and great was the fall of it". Mind your foundation as well as your building. Look to the foundation, and if you are led by the Holy Ghost to look to the foundation you will be digging and digging, getting this and that piece of mud and sand and rubbish up, till some times you will think - shall I ever get to the bottom? But O, it is worth it. O, to dig till you reach this. The wise, the second man, built a house and he was

not indifferent to the building, but first he was careful of the foundation. You may build, you may bond your building well, you may use, what seemed to you to be, good materials, but if you have not a rock, a good foundation, the winds of adversity, the floods of tribulation and temptation will come and blow and beat upon that house and it will fall. You cannot prop it up. If these walls bulged, we could buttress them and say, well the foundation is good, we will buttress the walls. But you might buttress and buttress to the end of your days, you would not make the building stand if not on this foundation. Look to this Rock, this blessed, suitable Rock.

"And my salvation". Salvation is a relative term. It has relation to a previous state, a state out of which a person is saved. Do not talk of salvation till you know what ruin means. The gospel is a good word, but it needs a certain case. To be saved before you are lost is indeed a delusion. To be lost in your experience is to be convinced of your sin. It is to see the character of God. It is to be convinced that He is right in His claims and righteous in His judgments and you cannot meet either claim or judgment; that you are sinful at the bottom and sinful in all the growth and sinful in everything. "Born in sin and shapen in iniquity". O the sight! I got it 60 years ago and more, and I get it still, and it is a sight - ruin, ruin, ruin. Sin in the beginning, sin at every step, sin always, sin everywhere. Well, but if you say this is gloomy, which is better, gloom here, or hell through eternity? Sin must bring gloom, must bring punishment, must bring trouble here. O what a mercy to have all the hell you are ever to have here in this life, all the trouble, all the conviction, all the pain, all the anguish, and all the conviction and condemnation here in this life. Thanks be to God for a sense of sin. Salvation, O joyful sound! I can proclaim this. Insisting on the first, I must also insist on the second, and the second is wonderful. Says this gracious Lord Jesus - "Come unto Me". O sinner, how will He take you? With your sins. Get rid of them, as you may imagine, and He wont have you. He will have nothing to do with a good person, but sinners, O sinners! This is a great stumbling block to us at the beginning; it was to me. How could He look on a man, so wicked? How could He bear, how could He kindly deal with one so wicked? My dear friends in conviction, as some of you here I believe are, do not try to make your cases better. Do not try to make your sins weaker. Do

not try to wash anything away. Why not? Because Christ wont have anything to do with your efforts. He wont honour them. They will never succeed, but this will succeed - "God be merciful to me a sinner". Oh it was successful in the publican. "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom". This was successful with the dying thief and he was soon in heaven. This will do, sinner. Salvation from sin. Nothing will save you but the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus; that will do all you need; blessed be God. Salvation accomplished in a sinner means the peace of God in his conscience. When the Lord deals with men, they have got a conscience; they have got a conscience that is the friend of God and their own friend, though a tormentor. Conscience and memory, working together, under the hand and teaching of the Spirit are wonderful, but O the pain and the shame. I do not speak out of theory; I speak out of experience. The shame, the shame of your memory, the shame of your conscience. You blush to lift up your face to God, wondering that He could have allowed you to live so long. And then He comes and says "peace". He says "peace" and it is peace. O it is peace, a "peace that passeth all understanding". It is a powerful peace and it keeps the heart and mind as in a garrison. Now sinner, this is in God - "In God is my salvation" - and out of God it comes to the sinner's heart. It flows from Him to the sinner. It flows like a river, a river of peace, a river of love, a river in which the sinner can swim, sooner or later. A river that cannot be passed over. You may be in it, ankle deep, and get out of it very quickly. It may reach to your knees and then you may walk out of it into some vanity. It may reach to your loins, then you will begin to swim, then you will say "In God is my salvation". "He is my salvation". This will last as long as you need it. How long shall you need it? Through eternity. What a salvation! The two parties in it are glorious - the Saviour and the saved. He is glorious and, says the Psalmist - "He is my glory". O how honoured is God in saving a sinner. How honoured is a sinner in being saved. How honouring to God is a saved person. If you have not got it, and yet can say - "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God" - then I would say, take courage and wait on Him. None ever went away ashamed. Many go away, time after time, and perhaps for years, discouraged, thinking they will never get it, but they will never go away ashamed. "Whoever trusted in the Lord and was put to confusion?" My friends, I do not, I cannot, preach an

uncertain salvation. It is in God and it comes from Him. "He only is my salvation" He will have no partner in the work, though He will have a partner in the comfort of it. Now mind this great point, mind this great point. You must be brought to it, and if you are never brought to it, what will be said? If sin swallows you up, then hell will close her mouth upon you, but if you have a hell in your conscience, and the blood of Jesus Christ comes to you, then heaven will take the place of hell there. Heaven will fill your heart, heaven will comfort you on every side. You will get double for your sins, according to divine promise. What a great salvation this is. "In God" is this. "He only is my Rock and my salvation". There you have the two things, God and man; a Saviour and a sinner; ruin and salvation; hopelessness in self and hope in God; guilt on the conscience and guilt removed by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. O my brethren, we must die to know how rich we are in this. But, blessed be God, a little of it comes sometimes and we know, even in the little, what a God we have to do with. I want to give Him a good character; O how worthy He is of it. Why, dear friends, none of us can say that we put Him to too much of a test. "Prove Me now herewith" saith the Lord. Bring the tithes and offerings, bring your confessions, bring your justifications of Me, bring your sincere humbling of yourself under My mighty hand. These are the only things we have got to bring. We have got nothing better in self. Bring these and prove Me now with them. I will forgive you, I will wash away all your sins. "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 that is the reason that the word is so sweet to some people.

Sinners are high in His esteem
And sinners highly value Him

You must die to know how rich you are, those of you who are saved. Yea, and die to prove that full river of pleasures which is at God's right hand.

"He is my defence". This speaks of danger; this speaks of an enemy, danger. Are you in danger, who are saved? Yes. What, of hell? No. But of mistakes, of falls, of falling into sin, of going astray,

of dishonouring your Lord. Here is danger enough. Do you feel it? Do you fear it? Can you say, sometimes, I am not afraid of hell? Sometimes you may have said I am not afraid of dying, but I am more afraid of living. I know what that has been in my own case, and I have heard one say - O it was sweet, I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid of living. I am afraid that if I live I shall sin. If I die I shall go to heaven. It is great to be sure of going to heaven. I remember when I felt that. Without a cloud, without a fear, without a sin on my soul, my conscience, I was sure of heaven and though I have often named it to you, I will just name it again because it recurs to my memory. I said "now it would be as easy for me to die as it is to lay my head on this pillow". O how near you are to God when you are blessed with salvation. Since that auspicious day I have lived nearly 60 years and the shame, the pain, the grief, the anguish I have suffered for my sins. Now I have needed to be defended. We need to be defended. Lord, you may say, guard my heart, guard my conscience, guard my will, guard my understanding; surround me. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so surround me with Thy perfections, Thy preserving grace, Thy dissolving love, Thy clean fear. O preserve me. What a blessed thing it is to be in the hands of God. What a solemn thing it is to get away in your experience, to run away from Him, gadding about to change your way. "He", this great God, "He is my defence" You may say, you wont do this, and you would not allow that, and you could not do the other. I never like to hear God's people speak so. I have been cured of saying it myself. Could not do it; you could not sin this way or that. O said Peter to his Lord - "If these, my brethren deny Thee, I will not. I will go to prison with Thee. I will die with Thee." But he was not defended for the moment and away he slipped and down he fell. "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe". See a sinner go steadily and tremblingly, you see a man who goes safely. See a sinner lift up his head and say "O, I am not for that gloomy thing; I know the truth and I will walk in it", you see a man who is in a slippery place. Who knows what God may allow him to do to break his bones, that is to break his self-confidence? "Hold Thou me up"; that is the best. Go on your knees my friends, travel on your knees, travel in prayer, let your requests be made known unto God. Pray every step of the way and you will be safe. When I was young in the ways of God, and did not know I was in them then, I heard a good old minister, who was very near the end, say "I am afraid to take my hat

and put it on and walk into the street without prayer". Well, I thought that was a strange thing to say, but now, in a little measure, I understand him. You may well be afraid. O but it is so gloomy. Ah, but it is very safe, very safe. What, to call on God, gloomy? No. He opens your mouth, He opens your spirit sometimes and says "Call upon Me". "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it", and He does fill it. Mercy fills the soul, goodness fills it, leads it to repentance. This is a good and blessed God we have. "From Him cometh my salvation" In God is this salvation, this great defence. God watches Jerusalem, watches over her.

He is our defence against affliction and in affliction. Affliction will either do you good or harm. It certainly will do one thing, it will bring out the worst in your nature, rebellion,

Rebellious thou hast been
And art rebellious still

You need Him to defend you in trouble. When He comes and stills the storm and gives you to say quietly in your spirit "Thy will be done" you are defended against the affliction. It is doing you good. Do not look so much for an escape from affliction as for having it made a blessing to you. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby". When some of you get old and grey-headed, you may say, we understand him better now than we did when we heard him say such and such things. You will find good, as the Lord defends you in your afflictions, and you will come to this, as the Psalmist did - "It is good for me that I have been afflicted". "Before I was afflicted I went astray". "He is my defence". Yea, and sometimes God will defend you by a providence in respect of another providence. He may set one thing over against another. Watch His working, watch His providence, and you will find this, that the soul that watches God's providence, never lacks a providence to watch. He has always got something, something to look at as being wrought for him by his God.

"He is my defence" against the enemy. "Be sober, be vigilant", but when all your vigilance becomes exhausted, what then? "He is my

defence". This good God, this mighty God, "He is my defence". There is only one defence for us my friends. A deceitful heart, a deceitful, deceiving devil, and troubles about us, there is only one defence that can effectually preserve us, and that defence is God. Go to Him; O, you who feel your need of Him, go to Him, and if the enemy says, it is no use, do not listen to him. Listen to the Lord, who says, "Come unto Me", "Open your mouth wide", "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me".

Then this comes - "I shall not be moved". It is a beautiful feeling, confidence in God. Not when you are out of your trouble, that is easy, but when you are in it. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea". "I shall not be moved". There are two feelings expressed by two godly men in the Bible. One is this - "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee". What a gracious feeling it is, but that may be too high for some of us, and so another man says (that is first and the second one is higher) another man says "I will trust and not be afraid". What a gracious feeling, "I will trust in the Lord and not be afraid". Now there are some things that the enemy seeks to move us from. He seeks to move us from our Lord, our good God. He sometimes says - "There is no God". Sometimes he says "There is no help for you in God". That is very moving to the feelings. But now and again the Lord comes and enables the man to say "What time I am afraid", afraid of myself, and afraid of my present circumstances "I will trust in the Lord". I will go and plead the Saviour's merit, and ask the Lord to mitigate the trouble. If He will not move it, to give me strength to bear it, to say, "the will of the Lord be done in this affliction". And that is a good thing; there is real stability here, true confidence in God. "I shall not be moved" from God.

And then next "I shall not be moved" away from the truth, as the truth is in Jesus. It may be that some may say - "we are not going to be moved away from the truth". I should be disposed to say to anybody who said that, "you are being moved already; your confidence in yourself is a weakness in respect of your holding the truth". When the truth is written with the finger of God on the fleshy tables of the heart, then it is rightly known, rightly held, rightly valued.

What is the truth? The Person of the Lord Jesus. The truth, as it is in Him, the truth of His having a blessed Church to save, of His determination and His ability to save her. The truth of the promises as they are spoken in the Word of God, and then one and another spoken on the heart, something that comes to you. Then the Lord says "Hold fast that which thou already hast that no man take thy crown". You have got something to hold; if you have got a promise, you have got something to hold. What is it? God in the promise. God is in every gospel promise and every gospel promise is in Him. "The promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen to the glory of God by us". "Hold fast". Ah, you may say sometimes, I have had a good time, I will remember it, I will keep it. Bernard Gilpin's was a better feeling when he said, having a blessing, "Lord keep it for me". That is the way to hold it. "Keep it for me, keep this feeling for me, keep this promise for me, fulfil it in me. Hold me up in it and by it.". "I shall not be moved". What a great thing it is to stand fast. If you can prove your election by divine calling, if you can prove your salvation by a manifestation of Jesus Christ to you, if you can prove a promise has been yours by some fulfilment of it, if you can prove that God has been faithful to you by His dealings with you, now this word may come in "I shall not be moved". And yet you will say "I am afraid". Well, by your fear, by your weakness here, you will prove Christ to be strong. This text proves this, may it prove it to me and to you, that that man is safe who has God for His God. "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord". Happy is the man on whom God has laid His hand. Happy is that conscience into which divine truth comes, and happy are those feet that are kept in the way of truth and peace.

Now my dear friends, look at this word, and may you believe that vital religion is emphatically personal, not general; personal. A matter between you and God, a matter between you and the divine Spirit who is given to teach, to guide, to help, to sanctify, and bring all poor sinners, purchased with blood, to Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people is to be. Now may He help you, and help me, and help us together, to go to the throne of grace, each with his or her own case, and the glory shall be His.