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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 10 April 1921

PSALM 72 v 6

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass:
as showers that water the earth"

What a blessing it would be if the free and full gospel of the hymn you have just sung were in your hearts. O if we could but be brought - and we could be if it were His pleasure - by the Holy Ghost to credit Christ and believe that He is able, He is willing, and doubt no more.

Come needy, come naked,
Come loathsome, come bare
You can't come too filthy,
Come just as you are

The hardest thing that a convinced sinner has, that is. But our Lord God and Saviour, the King of this Psalm, is able to command deliverances for us, and it is said of Him that He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." It is a great thing, a good thing to have no helper, because then you are fit for Christ, really fit for Christ.

What when prayer meets no regard
Still repeat it often

It was a good and very trying direction that the prophet gave to his servant after having proved to the nation that the Lord God He was God and Baal was an idol. And, having dispatched 450 false prophets, now the prophet ascends still higher to the summit of Mount Carmel; bows himself in deepest reverence before God, putting his head between his knees and worshipping. He said to his servant go and look toward the sea; see if ye can see anything; go from the summit of Mount Carmel, and see if there appears anything. The servant came back and said that he saw nothing. Now this was the direction to which I would draw

your particular attention. He said - Go seven times. That is a number of perfection in the Scripture and meant, therefore, go until you do see something and he was sure, the prophet was, that something would soon be seen. And so after a time the man came back and said he saw a cloud like a man's hand just on the fringe of the horizon, a little cloud like a man's hand, no bigger. But said the prophet, hasten to Ahab, tell him to get into his chariot and hasten down lest the rain stop him, and soon the heaven was black with clouds. My friends, if you seek and see nothing God give you grace, and give me grace with you when it is so with me, to go seven times. It is discouraging to see nothing, to see no throne of grace, nothing in the Scriptures to encourage us. "Go seven times". The Lord God will come, the Lord God will appear; as it is here written of Him and promised, that "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass". It was said by Moses at the close of the book of Deuteronomy - "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (32 v 3) And why? Because He is great? Yes. Why? Because "His doctrine shall drop as the rain and His speech shall distil as the dew". Therefore what an amazing thing it is to ascribe unto God greatness for His gentleness. He is gentle and sends His word gently dropping like rain and even distilling as dew, softly, quietly, without noise, upon the tender herb. May the Lord look on the tender herb, the little children of His who are assembled here, for we need Him to do this great thing for us, to cause His doctrine to drop upon our souls. And I would say this evening, in addition to what I said this morning on this Scripture, that the doctrine of the Saviour, the doctrine of Jesus Christ, is the doctrine that is to drop as the rain. Take first, His Name. "Thou shall call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." That Name then is full of heavenly doctrine, full of a doctrine that is precisely suited to sinners, black sinners, empty sinners, weak sinners, sinful, sinning sinners; sinners whose height of guilt, whose depth of depravity, whose wide wanderings, can never be found out, felt by himself. A sinner of that sort, Jesus Christ suits. "His Name shall be called Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins". From them; and when this drops on the heart of a sensible sinner, of one who may be old in the ways of truth and who yet feels himself to be full of sin, it is like rain upon the mown grass. It is a very painful thing to learn you have got nothing to stand by except God stands by you. A painful thing to learn that you are not to lean on the graces of the Spirit in you.

They are not to be depreciated; I would not, the Lord preventing me, I would not depreciate them for a world; I only wish I were filled with them; but I do say this, you will never be left for any length of time together - you who have those graces - to lean on them. Whenever you properly come out of the wilderness it will be leaning on the arm of your Beloved. The doctrine of salvation which is the doctrine of Christ's obedience, His obedience to the law, active obedience, the doctrine of His active death. O, I at times love to think of the activity of Christ when He was passive on the cross. Passive to the eye of man; transfixed to that wood, He was passive. As a Priest He was never more active than when on that cross, for it was then particularly that He offered Himself without spot to God. Then it was that He stood before the God of heaven, the God of justice, the God of glory, the God of holiness, the God of the law; stood before the law and the law before Him demanding obedience and satisfaction. And then thus did Jesus actively offer Himself unto this God and became the end of the law, the law receiving perfect, absolute satisfaction at His hands. And when this comes into your hearts you will understand Toplady's triumphant song

Payment God cannot twice demand
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine

And this doctrine is to drop, to fall upon men's hearts. Men shall be blessed in Him, as it is written in this Psalm and this is one of the blessings they have in Him, the blessing of redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. O dear friends, you will never be happy but as and when you know in some measure that Christ loved you and gave Himself for you.

And the doctrine of His resurrection is to drop as the rain and to come down as rain upon the mown grass. The resurrection of Christ. We have never made half enough of it. I have not preached it half as I should have done. I saw the other day an account of a bridge being taken down and in some way the keystone was removed too soon and the bridge instantly fell and crushed some who were working on it. If you take away the keystone of the arch of true religion what will it do? What is the keystone? The resurrection of Christ. He was

declared - not made - declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection. The satisfaction of His work was manifested by His resurrection. The satisfaction the Lord had received was declared by His resurrection. The Church's salvation by Him was declared by His resurrection. It was then manifested that He had put away the sin of a land in one day. It was the declaration that God had no further demand upon Him, that He had perfectly pleased His Father by perfectly obeying Him; that He had done that one commandment - "This commandment have I received of My Father" - that was that He should lay down His life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul in the Romans speaks of this. He says - "In that He died He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God". He who died, lives; lives for ever; lives unto God; lives to plead His people's cause in heaven above; lives to undertake for them in their cases; lives to bring them through their troubles, lives to save them from their sins, lives to justify them by His righteousness, lives to cleanse them by His blood, lives to send His Spirit to them, who shall teach them and help them, and bring them honourably through all. And when this drops sweetly - softly drops into a sinner's soul - then it is like rain upon the mown grass.

He shall come down in this gracious way, like rain. We may be very uncertain for a long time about the work of grace in us. We may be very much tossed about as to whether we are born again. We may be very doubtful about the way we are walking in and no friend will be able to assure us, but when Jesus comes, comes as having died, comes as having risen again from the dead, into our hearts, then doubt and fear and guilt and bondage will be removed.

He comes as a King. "Give the King Thy judgements O God". Who is this King? The Lord Jesus of whom it is written in the 2 Psalm by the Father - "I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion". But if Christ is the King, if He is King of kings and Lord of lords, why should this prayer be - O God give Him Thy judgements, Thy truth, Thy Word, Thy Spirit without measure. Because this is the Covenant arrangement, part of the Covenant engagement of the Father to bless His Son, and He gave Him His Spirit without measure. And so we read in Isaiah (11) - The Spirit of the Lord God came upon Him as the Spirit of might, as the

Spirit of the fear of the Lord, as the Spirit of judgement and of counsel to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And the same prophet towards the end of his prophecy speaks as if Christ were speaking - "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". This is our King, and He shall not fail in His Kingly work nor be discouraged till He have sent forth judgement unto victory. Our King - What a wondrous display of Kingly power was that, that we read just now. A burning, fiery furnace, heated seven times more than it was usual to heat it; three men cast into it bound and ere long the king, at whose word the furnace had been so heated and those men cast into it, looked and saw a great sight. He saw a King with three subjects, a King over the fire, a King who had made it the sweetest, most pleasant atmosphere that these men ever breathed and walked in. Jesus was with them. "The form of the fourth was like unto the Son of God." That king, heathen, idolatrous king, was made to confess to Jesus Christ; was one of those of whom it is said, every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess. "The form of the fourth was like unto the Son of God." Jesus came into the trouble, came down to quench the violence of the fire, came down as rain to these men to revive them, keep them, bring them through, to the praise of His grace. That literally, as far as we know, is the only case of the kind. But spiritually, how often has it been done. What fiery trials have been; O what fiery trials have the Lord's people had to go into, and have been brought out of by their King coming down to them. This coming down like rain means the manifestations that Christ will give of His great power and His great goodness in reviving His people. So fiery trials in a sense invite the Saviour and poor people in them fervently cry to Him to come to them into the fire and He does. Just as rain comes to preserve the new man of grace, so Jesus comes to preserve His afflicted people. You may look for Him. You who have trials, fiery trials to try your faith, may look for Him and you wont look in vain. If at the first you see Him not, go seven times and present the case; He will come. He

came to the Apostle Paul in a particular affliction. For this great trouble that he had, he thrice besought the Lord that it might be removed. It was a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, and for this, he said, I sought the Lord thrice. And Christ came to him, not to do what Paul asked Him to do, but to do something better, yes something better. What could have been better to Paul than the deliverance which he had sought? Why this, that he got sufficient grace to enable Paul to glory in his infirmity, and Paul soon felt it to be better for he said - "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon me." That was best and he felt it. You may be in trouble. If Christ comes you will find you have got quite enough grace to bear, grace to rejoice, grace to do the will of God, grace to unfeignedly submit yourself to Him with all your concerns; grace to believe that He will never leave you nor forsake you; to believe that He will bring you honourably through and you will praise Him through eternity.

He comes down to His people in His Word. Yes, the Word of God is like a plentiful rain sometimes to refresh a weary inheritance. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground," and they shall grow as grass among the willows. This is what Christ will do. Thus He will come down to His people. How sweet is it to find the Word of God in your heart. It is good to have it in your judgement and in your memory and to be found reading it, but this is the best, to have it spoken. Thy word was found, said Jeremiah, and I did eat it; and when you find the Word of God coming to you, as you are in some wearying trial, ready to give up perhaps, ready to say - "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgement is passed over from my God"; then, then to hear Him say, I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee. Though my way is in the sea, though My path is in the mighty waters, and though My footsteps are not known to you at the present, yet I am with you. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee". I am with you, I am your God. He comes down and has that blessed effect on your soul in His coming that rain has upon the earth that is chapped and dried; upon the grass that is brown with heat; so Christ comes in His Word. Sweet is God's Word. It is in the heart. "The Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart", effecting the

very purpose of God and doing in you that which you needed so greatly to be done. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass". He comes sometimes in a sweet earnest of the Spirit. The earnest of the Spirit Paul speaks of as being in the heart. "God hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit". An earnest of an inheritance is a piece of the inheritance; a little bit only perhaps, but it is an earnest. Some truth made over to you; some blessed persuasion in your heart that God is yours and you, the vilest of sinners, have found favour in His sight. Some word made so particularly yours in trouble; some assurance of your being loved of God and of having an interest in Christ that, for the moment, you could not question it. The earnest; you have got a look on it, you see it; it is different from all other things. If it is a promise, it is an outstanding word of the Bible to you. If some holy, gracious condescending visit, that is something that stands before you. It has a singular and precious prominence in your experience; an earnest of that that is before you, that awaits you, to which you are to go; the heaven that you are to inherit. And this is coming down and it makes you grow as grass among the willows. It comes, reaching the roots of your faith, to make that faith grow exceedingly and love abound. It comes to your confidence and makes it strong, so that you can, at that time, say - "I will trust and not be afraid". Or if it does not reach so high, you will be enabled to say - "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee". O, it is sweet to get an earnest. It will enable you to say, my treasure is in heaven; my righteousness is in heaven. The treasures of rain are in heaven in Christ. The fullness I need is in heaven; the power I need is in heaven; the light I walk by comes from heaven. The comfort I have flows down from heaven; the righteousness that I look for for eternity Christ is. It leads you up to Him. O but some may say, we have never had that. Well, what have you had? Have you had a spirit of prayer at any time and the grace of supplications? Have you ever been enabled to cast yourself on the eternal God in His free love, His effectual grace? Have you ever had given to you a wondrous sight, a heart-affecting sight of the Lord Jesus, the Friend of sinners? Have you been drawn to Him; enabled by that drawing to come to His heavenly throne, to come with some boldness. O then, even in such cases. Christ has come. In those measures He has come, and there is no heart can conceive the unsearchable riches of goodness out of which those mercies have come. The unsearchable riches of Christ's grace and

love and mercy we must die to enter into fully, and we shall need eternity to look into them and to drink from them that bliss that awaits us.

"As showers that water the earth". Jesus shall come down in that way. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." Do not despise the distilling dew. O whatever moisture of grace is on your hearts is from Christ; despise it not, but seek for the showers. He shall come down as rain, as showers that water the earth. "Ask ye of the Lord rain, in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds; to every one grass in the field." That is, rain should come and give every one grass. May the Lord give us some experience of this, for it is very, very great. I must leave it here; the Lord add His blessing.

AMEN.