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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel  
Brighton on Sunday evening 25 January 1925

ROMANS 5 verses 1 and 2

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

I hope it was given to us this morning to see two amazing things, a sinless Person made sin and sinful men made the righteousness of God. If we get that sight, we get a sight of the highest reach, the widest, the longest stretch and the deepest penetration of the wisdom and power and goodness of God. He can rise no higher in His liberality than in giving His Son. He can go no further in His wisdom and love than imputing to Him the sins of the election of grace and He can deal no more kindly, lovingly, wisely, powerfully, and tenderly with these poor chosen redeemed sinners than in giving them new life, new robes, new holiness, holiness such as they had not in their first creation and if we are partakers of these wonders of God we shall need Eternity to thank and praise Him.

The text this evening is an amplification of the doctrine of this morning, not something different, the same truth amplified, a little opened. God open it, amplify it to us.

The Apostle in the preceeding chapters which we were just now reading gives a solemn view of man in his fallen state. A view that most men turn away their eyes from, that most men would prefer not to hear about. May not we be offended with the Apostle's inspired description of ourselves. It is not good to be ignorant of what we are. It is merciful to be taught what sin is and to be convinced that sin is in us. He gives us a view too of what God does with some men. He gives them righteousness without works because He is determined to have the praise and also because it is impossible for a sinner to make himself righteous and here he brings in, because it is experimental, he brings in that wonderful grace, well called a cardinal grace - faith. In the scripture faith is sometimes spoken of as doctrine - the doctrine of faith. Sometimes as the grace of faith. Here it is the grace of faith that lays hold of the doctrine of justification, rather of Christ's righteousness, and by this faith, whatever a person is in himself, his uncircumcision or his circumcision,

his high position or his low position, whether he be Barbarian, Scythian, or whatever else, or whatever he may be, he just is a sinner and he feels it when taught and then he sees no way of escape from the just sentence of God, hence his self-despair. Amongst the best cases you can ever meet you will find the cases of self-despair. Self-despair and gospel hope are nearer neighbours than people in self-despair think. 'Tis grand to justify God and to despair of yourself. The day may seem distant, may seem long in coming, and people may fear it never will come, when God will say to them - I have no charge to bring against you. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins. Faith acts in the way it is directed by the Spirit upon the truths which are presented to it by the Spirit. Hence, when a man has the law of God presented to his faith, his faith acts on that law, condemns himself and justifies God, and when Christ is presented to his faith, then faith acts on Christ and brings in His righteousness and justification is the result. Justification in the conscience. Hence, this beautiful word being justified by faith, faith that lays hold of that which is presented to its view, and brought within its reach by the Holy Spirit. I think sometimes of what a godly friend of mine in Holland would sometimes say in letters to me - how that the Lord would come near to her and as it were make Himself her prisoner. Her faith got hold of Him and if you have that faith of God's operation in your souls and the Spirit brings the Lord Jesus to you and near enough for you to lay hold of, you will just have that experience though, of course, in mentioning it you might not use the same term. You will just feel as Jacob did - I will not let Thee go - and the Lord willingly let Jacob keep Him. The Church had the same experience when she said - I held Him and would not let Him go. O the sin, the unbelief that makes us slack and willing almost to let Him go. We complain of His visits being short, We do not perhaps sufficiently realise why they are short. We may put too much to sovereignty that God will never allow. We may put a good deal to sovereignty which belongs to self, but faith does lay hold and you will find it so as these two things meet in you - the grace of faith and the manifestation of the object of faith. There is a manifestation. We speak of a revelation of Christ. What is a revelation of Christ? It is the presenting of Christ to the eye of faith by the Holy Ghost in His own divine light so that Christ is really seen. He is a true object. He is viewed as God. As man He is seen on the cross, in the grave, rising from the grave, showing Himself alive by many infallible

proofs, and ascending into heaven, and there faith looks on Him. He is real. A revelation of Christ makes Christ real to the person who receives that revelation. He is no longer a picture to be looked on and admired, not a cold statement, but just a living person, a living Saviour, in your own living soul, received and held by living faith and this brings in justification. Justification in the conscience is nothing less than God's gracious sentence there. Justification as an experience, as a real religion in a person, is this, the act of God passed on a sinner. The voice and sentence of God in the sinner's conscience removing the sin that made him a condemned and a self-condemned person and bringing into his soul's feelings the sense of now there being nothing of a quarrel, of sin, of controversy, between a just God and the soul, and when you get that you know it. You may often look for it, often long for it, often feel you lack it. You may grieve because of the lack. You may think sometimes it will never come. You may all but give up praying for it because you have prayed so often and it has not been given to you, but, as stirred up again, and again, and yet again, by the Holy Spirit, you will go on and on following, pressing, praying, beseeching, looking out for this and when it comes then you will say Now I know. People may think about it and never get it but when they get it they say they know. "Now know I" said one "that the Lord saveth His anointed" This is a great point. Some of us have had it and had it again and again repeated. I wish those of you who are panting for it may receive it. O God will give it to you. The best thing you can get in this world will be justification in your conscience. The sweetest of all mercies you will find it to be. 'Tis heaven brought down to earth. Heaven put into a sinner's soul. Heaven, the heaven of divine peace, the heaven flowing from God's gracious smile upon you. A smile that fills with amazement the sinner who receives it. I cannot make you believe it or understand it or apprehend it. I can only tell you of it and I can tell you of it because I know it for myself. I have had it, and had it more than once. 'Tis wonderful. God and the sinner brought together. No quarrel, no controversy, no frown, no law, no curse, just peace, perfect peace. I create peace and it is peace. Then you may say to Him as I have said - Lord I do not want a creature. You will be sure to feel you are satisfied. Satisfaction is wonderful. Naturally of course you know that anything that gives you natural satisfaction contents your heart or mind and you are not found gadding after something else the next minute. You have got what satisfies you. And

when that is so spiritually then there you are. "My people shall feed and lie down" is the word of God in Ezekiel and when a sinner receives the sentence of justification he is so satisfied he lies down in contentment, divine contentment. Well, press on poor sinners who have not got it but feel to need it, press on. I can only tell you - may the Lord cause you to believe it - that there is a welcome awaiting you of which you now have no conception. He wont frown on you. He never frowns on a praying person. He may reprove but that is not a frown, though it may look like one. It is a blessing. He will tell you of your fault. He is the only truly, fully faithful friend in this particular. He will tell you of your faults. He has told me mine for many years and I have sympathised very much at times with James Bourne who, in one of his letters, says I find much of the Lord's teaching with me consists in finding fault with me. When there are no faults, all that finding fault will cease. Can you lift your face up and say you have none? You would not dare to do that Well, bless the Lord if He finds fault with you. O, He has told me so many times of my faults. He has been a faithful friend to me and a good God. And then, when He has told you all your faults and you feel you can scarcely bear the thought and feeling of them, then He comes and forgives them all and the person is justified, freely justified, and he concludes with Paul - "We conclude therefore that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Gratuitous justification becomes the bread of life to this person. Christ is his righteousness. This is the name wherewith he shall be called the Lord our righteousness. O sinner you will be well when you get this. Some of us have been well many times. We have peace. Peace is good, only if it is good peace. Some people say peace and safety when sudden destruction is hanging over them, imminently and inevitably. That is not good peace. Some people cry peace to themselves and God never says peace to them, and He is not at peace with them, but this peace is powerful, it is sweet, it is pervasive, penetrating, spreading itself over the soul and filling every faculty of it. Entering into the heart and mind and conscience and affections and will and understanding. Things are right when God gives you justification. Therefore you have peace, peace in your conscience, peace when on your knees, peace when about your business, peace with your troubles, peace with providence. The stones of the field are at peace with you. There is nothing wrong. The difficulties of the way are all straight to your faith though not to nature. Peace with God, with God. It is good to have peace with

your neighbours. It is a great blessing to live at peace one with another. We have lived here at peace as far as I am concerned for now over 42 years but then there is something beyond that, something we hope is the reason for that and it is this peace with God. If He be your enemy, a million people might be your friends and be at peace with you, but you would not be happy in your state. You might be flattered in your mind, but not happy in your state, but if God be your friend, if He be at peace with you, it wont matter who may be your enemy, all is well. All will be well. How do people know that God is at peace with them? How may you know it? For surely, so wonderful a thing as this can be, is, known. How do you know it? Well I will tell you in a few words. First of all the Father receives you. Your approaches to Him are not repelled. He receives you as it is in the Corinthians - I will receive you and walk among you. You shall be My sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty. Do you know that? Christ smiles on you, spreads His hands over you and blesses you. Do you get that? The Spirit is with you and speaks comfortably to you, speaks some scriptures on your heart, tells you it is well with you. "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him" He holds communion. There is the fellowship of the Spirit. Providence may be against you but that is no mark. A man might have any quantity of temporal prosperity and God be his enemy. A sinner may have plenty of trouble and have God for his friend and God be at peace with him. O many many poor saints have found the Lord to their great comfort in their affliction. Peace with God. Why it is very penetrating. It will be in your house though you may have enemies there, be in your business though you may have troubles there. Your righteous soul will be vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, but you will have peace with God. When He smiles upon you crooked things are made straight, though they remain crooked. Burdens are removed, though they remain on you. There is a sweetness in the cup that takes the bitterness away. We have peace with God and then the Apostle tells us how - "Through our Lord Jesus Christ" and this makes Him so precious. Peter says "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious". The daysman, the peace-maker, the peace-giver, the peace maintainer, is Jesus Christ. O this poor people who know Him as their peace can enter into that word "And this Man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land". O my friends, Jesus Christ is first and last, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord. Nothing before Alpha, nothing after Omega, and He fills it all.

Through Jesus Christ. Through this Man whom God hath appointed, to whom He has committed all authority and power and rule and dominion. This Man who has all authority over devils, can give peace when these roar. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. You may sometimes know on whose side you are because you will have the Captain with you, the Captain of your salvation, Jesus Christ, will be with you and lift the standard up for you and emblazoned on that standard His love, and His truth and His mercy, you will know, and you will be saying - In the Name of the Lord we will set up our banners. Great, O great, is this.

Then the Apostle continuing this blessedness says - By whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Convinced sinners do one foolish, legal thing, as long as they are permitted, but God stops them after a time. This is it. They try to get a standing of their own. It does not matter if they have been brought up under the truth, legality is stronger than notion, and an inbred spirit of legality will be stronger than any received notion of the gospel, so that a sinner under conviction goes about to establish his own righteousness. He finds it rickety and weak, ready to fall, but he goes about by vows, promises, efforts, duties, and so faith, to establish it until God comes in and says "Thy righteousness and thy works, they shall not profit thee" and they go like rags, and filthy rags, they go away. Says the man - I have no standing. He enters into the word of the prophet - I sink in deep mire where there is no standing", No standing in a wicked nature. No standing in imperfectly done duties. No standing in naked knowledge. No standing anywhere, so he sinks. There are some here who understand it. I was very young when I was brought into this experience, to have no standing, and a bitter thing it was. It is to everyone. And then this scripture tells us something else - "By whom, that is Jesus Christ really "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" Let us look at two or three points here.

First, access, ingress, entrance, going in, into a presence. Going into a presence, the presence. Well, this is wonderful. Think of it. God infinitely distant from the sinner. God infinitely angry with sin, and this sinner has sin in him. How then can he come to God, God becomes real to him. How can he come to Him? O says the Spirit in the scripture, then He says it in the heart, - the Lord Jesus is the daysman, the High Priest, the Priest who is a Mediator. A priest is essentially that between the offended and

the offender, and the Holy Spirit opens this truth to faith and as it were says - Guilty sinner come. An open door is set before you, Jesus Christ your Lord. Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Jesus Christ voluntarily dying, actively offering Himself on the cross, putting away sin, the sin of a land in one day. This is the door. O come, hungry, thirsty, willing, broken-down, dishonourable, fraudulent debtors, come to this Blessed One and they come. They get access. O they get access and this is the life long experience, they get access. It is always by whom, always by this man, this God-man, always that way. You will never get it another way. New troubles come and new access is given. New sins are done and new access is granted. New afflictions befall, then new access again and again given, all by this Man. If you look aside from Him you will see a closed and barred door. If you look this way by the direction and teaching of the Spirit, you will see an open door that shall never be shut day or night, and there is no night where this door is. We need a deal of teaching and a deal of saving and the Spirit patiently teaches again and again that this door is open.

The door of Thy mercy stands open all day

To the poor and the needy who knock by the way

Access is an experience, a real, gracious, humbling experience. I am not speaking a strange language to all of you am I? Cannot some of you say there was a time when we were far off and there came a moment when we were suddenly near, wafted into that glorious presence we feared we should never know in peace. Carried on the wings of the Spirit's intercession, we came into the presence of the Blessed One and when you are there, then the Lord lets you pray and teaches you to pray and encourages you to pray. Pour out your heart before Him ye people. Tell Him what is the matter. Tell Him about the tyrant sin, and about the burden of guilt and about the blindness of your mind. Tell Him your fears and all that you have. Tell Him all. Open thy mouth wide. Bring large petitions. Take advantage of the blessed moment when God says "Come unto Me" and brings you there. Take advantage of it. Shoot not three arrows, but many. Seek while the gale is blowing. Seek to get good things. Lay up a good store. Beg and pray and pray and beg when you get this access. O children of the living God, open your mouths. Present things have to be prayed for. Past sins have to be prayed about that they may be put away. Weakness prayed about and troubles prayed over, and friends prayed for. What business men have to do, that is to say in heavenly places. What business they have to do. Sometimes

you may hardly know where to begin, you have so many things on your mind, so many wishes in your heart, and so many matters about which you need much mercy and help, but then the Lord encourages you. "Large petitions with thee bring" Why? "Thou art coming to a King" 'Tis beautiful to read of Abraham's faith. He counted that God was able to do what He had said. Able. In simplicity and sincerity you might say to a friend - now I will do so and so for you, and the day when the promise might be much needed in its fulfilment, your ability would be lacking. That will never be so with our God. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above that we ask or think. Access to Him by Jesus Christ, that is by His Person as the Mediator. By His work, infinitely meritorious, by His intercession ever prevalent. By whom we have access. How pleasing is Christ to the Father. "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" And can He be other than pleased with the sinner who comes to Him in the name of the Lord Jesus? Did not the Lord Jesus say this "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it" Why My Name is infinitely pleasing to My Father. My Name is the Name in heaven and in earth. My Name is music; My Name is merit; My Name is life and all good things. Ask in My Name, by Me. Come by Me, Pray by Me. Wait by Me. Look, and things will come right. Access. No bar. No toll levied. Access. Free ingress. Just as when the doors of the chapel were opened this evening there was no bar to your ingress, perfectly free, so sometimes, and much more for illustrations always fall short, much more is there a free access granted to needy people. Why are we poor? Why am I so lean and so barren and so unprofitable and why are you so limping and so untender often? Why all these diseases of Egypt upon us, and why the reproach of famine? Why all these things? Says James - Ye have not because ye ask not, or because ye ask amiss. I expect if you look at your prayers, some of you at least may say we are very much ashamed of them. If you examine how you were when on your knees, perhaps this morning and since then, you may say - O what silly, foolish, wanderers we were. So it may be multiplied. Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye have not because ye ask amiss. And then you may fret sometimes and think the Lord is not kind, yea, and you may say I wont pray any more about it. I have asked and asked and asked, and there is no answer. I will give it up and so you would if the Spirit would let you. He will never, never, leave you, nor will let you quite leave Him, but O it is very solemn and very sad to see how barren we are when there is a fruitful vine. How poor, and lean and limping



we are when there is such a gracious God.

Grace, sovereign, sovereignly; grace, a ground, a ground to stand on, a ground that never moves and wont let the man standing on it be moved away. "On this rock will I build my church" and so of grace that everlasting ground on which to stand Rutherford is made to sing "I stand upon His merit, I know no other stand" Happy he who can say it honestly. Any other ground will let you go. It is but sand, mire, mud. This is solid. Wherein we stand. It is a great thing to be standing. Standing has some firmness in it, has some steadiness in it. Not always carried about by every wind of doctrine and the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Standing, I say, has something solid about it. If you stand on Christ you will never be moved. Moved in your feelings probably you will be times without number, but in fact never moved. How can they move who are fixed to a rock. They stand sometimes to things they have said before the Lord. You may pray heavy prayers and reflecting may say - what have I said - and then faith will come in and you will say - I could not withdraw it if I might. Labour here, labour here. Pray, wait, hope, beg, entreat, argue, wrestle here. Success must follow. Yes, though you may wait long for the answer, it must come. Nothing is so encouraging as a full gospel. Nothing is so blessed as this blessed standing, this firm standing ground. Grace, never sought in the first instance, not wanted, given. Then wanted and sought. Grace, the free favour of God, better than life. We stand in this. And then it comes to a wonderful climax. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God. What a climax. How many of us can rise, or have ever risen to this height? Hope, what a sweet grace it is. See the object of it - glory. See the spirit in which it is viewed at times. We rejoice in it. Rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Here hope is as an anchor of the soul, another figure used to set forth stability. An anchor of the soul. Why? Not as it is on the deck, but as its flukes have laid hold of ground and the ship is steady and kept, though the storm may be great. Hope is an anchor cast into that which is within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus. This is grace. Hope looks to God. Hope is a grace for the future not for the present moment and an experience. What you have got you cannot hope for, but what you believe in, what you have received intimation of, what you have had revealed to you, what the Holy Spirit has spoken of in your hearts, that, as to its fulfilment, that you

may, that you will, that you must, hope for. The glory of God. This is known here in measure. Every saint has the Spirit of God and of glory resting upon him. So says Peter, - The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. O happy people. When you have Christ's righteousness you have glory. When you have His blood, you have glory. When you have His Spirit you have glory. When you have His peace, then you have glory. There is glory in every saint more or less but what is here intended is the future. O what a future. How bright is the prospect that the Lord sets before us in the scripture and how bright has it been as set before some of us at times. My prospect has been very bright sometimes, not a cloud on the sky, for when Christ comes He is as a morning without clouds. Ah there is a Pisgah in the gospel to which saints come. They climb by faith and though the way be difficult, they reach the summit, and then they look north and east and south and west and what a prospect. The goodly land. The land which is very far off they see and the best of it is, there their faith sees the King in His beauty. The King. King of kings. The King who has been invited and has condescendingly accepted the invitation to come into your heart and reign there. The King who has spoken kingly words, and kind words too. The King who has done kingly acts, defended, protected, guided, supplied, and blessed. The King who has made you a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. This king in the beauty of His Person, in the perfection of His work. This King in all His love, and sweetness seen by faith in His beauty. Such a sight is not forgotten easily. If you have seen this wonderful land and this still more wonderful King by faith, you rejoice in the hope that one day you will go to be where He is and see Him as He is and this is the object, the great object, the object that fills heaven and earth and fills your heart, fills your hope, fills your eye, and fills your love and fills your affections. Fills your will, fills your understanding. Christ is sufficient for everything. What a wonderful grace this faith is and what a wonderful thing is hope growing out of it, and what a wonderful thing it is to have an object. An objectless religion is not a good religion. True religion is both objective and subjective. The object is God, God in Christ. The subjective religion is the possession of this good God in some measure of experience. Happy is the man who knows a little of this.

The Apostle continues and brings before us what we should hardly expect in this connection. Not only so, he says, but we glory

in tribulations also. Tribulation. The tribulum, the cart-wheel of the scripture, the Roman tribulum running over the wheat and the old-fashioned English flail put on the wheat with all the strength of the man using it. This gloried in. O says faith sometimes - The Lord only intends to take the chaff away and the belief of that is very sweet. He will gather the wheat into His garner. So this vital faith runs through your troubles, runs into them. Tells you there is a good finish coming, a blessed end to them all. Tells you that you will have no more trouble when you have no more natural life; when your mortality is ended, then trouble will be ended, and there is only one enemy to be dealt with and God will deal with that one enemy, even death. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death, and then all will be swallowed up in this glory. You wont go to heaven to see it for the first time. You will have it here if you are going to heaven. It will come here in measure to you - this blessed glory. Viewing it will bring it to you. We all with open face, unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. May the Lord bring us to this blessed experience.