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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday evening 6 January 1924

Text; Romans VIII v 30

"Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also
called and whom He called, them He also
justified, and whom He justified, them
He also glorified"

We noticed this morning a little concerning the chapter in general and the 29th verse in particular. A wonderful subject this; a subject which cannot be other than offensive to human nature; to all who are walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air but a subject which, seen by faith, by the Lord's people, begets in them fervent desires to know that they are on the right side of that line that makes a distinction between one and another; between the world and the church. The verse I have read now deals with three great subjects, subjects that all the election of grace shall come to know experimentally. The first is the calling. "Moreover whom He did predestinate" - whose state He fixed eternally - "them He also called"; the secret of God coming to light by a work of grace; His purpose beginning to take effect in experience; His great love beginning to be made known in His dealings with individual souls. Called. A subject that troubles the people who are happy subjects of the work, the called. Time and manner and measure are often, in the minds of the called, as reasons against their being called. The time is indistinct, perhaps not at all remembered; the manner scarcely perceptible. How they became hungry; how eternal things were laid on their hearts, they can scarcely tell. And so the enemy presses these objections, which indeed are not objections for, if I may speak so, the time and the manner of a divine call are but incidents in the case; they are not of the essence of it. But the Lord, for a time, permits a person, a child of His, to be troubled by that. And it is an objection that no man can remove except as an instrument used by the Lord. It is quite clear in

scripture, as I read scripture on the subject, that the call of God is a secret work, made manifest variously; a work which, in some cases, was commenced as in a storm. It was so with the Apostle Paul. Great affliction came to him suddenly; a great voice was heard by him; a sight of the glory that struck him to the ground was seen by his companions, yet they heard not the voice that spoke with him. But in most cases which the scripture records of true quickening and conversion, I think I am right in saying that the manner, the time, are not very distinct and yet the work is distinct. I would make a distinction here; the work is distinct. Now we read respecting the day of Pentecost, when about 3000 souls were born again and converted to God, that there was a work. It is called "pricked"; they were pricked in their hearts. There was no great work done. The word "pricked" as we have it really is this, they were stabbed, thoroughly pierced by the Holy Ghost. And it is the case with all who are born again; there is something that comes and like a stab or a piercing sends a thrill through the soul. Whence it came, what it means, the soul may not in the least apprehend at the time, but eternal realities are set on the heart with power. And it goes through the soul sometimes with singular power and effect, and finds expression in such cries as "I am lost, O I am undone; I am neither fit to live, nor ready to die; I have sinned against God; I am a transgressor of His holy law." Sometimes it passes into the soul and goes through it with a great force and thrill that makes a sinner look and say "Why there is a Saviour; will he save me?" Sometimes the atonement is seen and the sinner says "O that I knew Christ died for me!" Sometimes the sight of christians, true people of God, will make one say, "I wish I were one of those people; I wish I were on the side of Christ as they are, that I knew Christ as they know Him. Then I could live as they live, speak as they speak." But here they turn away with a sigh sometimes and say but I am not as they are. The work of grace is a penetrating work, but not always distinct to the subject of it; not always visible, so to speak, to those in whom it is being carried on. But it is a great, a distinct work. It brought these three thousand people from idolatry, to worship the true and living God; from indifference, from death, from walking according to the course of this world, to worship God. You find

the way of the conversion of the Corinthian christian people spoken of thus, as Paul says, "Ye see your calling brethren", the nature of it, the character of it. "Not many noble, not many mighty, not many wise". And he speaks to them thus "Ye were Gentiles carried away with dumb idols". That was the case they were in; they were Gentiles carried away by, as one says, violent impressions from the devil, to worship idols. But now they were called, as Paul says to them, "to be saints; called to be saints." And that calling involved this; they were brought to know the Lord Jesus and call Him Lord and he says "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." We find that there was a woman, a seller of purple, to whom Paul preached, and the Lord opened her heart that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. Opening the heart is a divine operation, a great work; opening the heart to look at and receive the things against which a strong prejudice had been felt; opening the heart to worship a hitherto unknown God; opening the heart to listen to the gospel; a great gospel, a full gospel, a glorious gospel, an all-covering gospel. And the heart was opened to listen to it, to take it in, not again to reject and turn from and despise it. We find that these christian Romans were called, called to be saints. "To all in Rome" says Paul, "called to be saints" that is to say called to be separate, to be separated from their former ways, their former thoughts, their former prejudice, their former blindness, and their former death; called from that. Called to look on, to believe in, God; called to feel the weight of the realities of God's word, to feel the importance of being right with God. And though these called ones, perhaps many of them, might say, as some of you may be saying inwardly, well but we have had no distinct word; we have heard no voice; we felt nothing special; we have grown into a feeling of being lost, and it is a very real and a solemn and a sad feeling, but we cannot put our hand on a time when, or a word by which, these things came to us. But now, is not this sometimes with you, that you really believe there is a God in heaven? Sometimes you may be saying O He is against me. He is holy; I am unholy. How can I expect to be with Him? He is glorious: I am polluted, how can I be fit to live with Him? He is wise and just and I am foolish and unjust entirely; how can I

expect to walk with Him? I am not agreed with Him. Sometimes there may be given to you what you would call perhaps only a glimpse, a very transient glimpse, just a flash passing before your mind of the Lord Jesus, and you cannot say what you felt instantly to Him; what desire you had to be found in Him; to be one with Him; to have His precious blood applied to your conscience. The work of grace is indeed a great work, a mysterious work, but this is always certain, that though the manner of it be very indistinct, though the time of its coming to you may not be known by you, this will always come forth sooner or later; you will be separated, separated from the world. If you had ungracious companions you will have to leave them; if you walked in prejudice against Christ, this will be killed from time to time; and if you walked in utter indifference, as indeed you did, to your own soul's salvation and to God's honour, that indifference has gone; and now from time to time, the desire of your soul is this, O to be right with God; to be fit to live, ready to die; to be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith. Sometimes the work is commenced by God, by means of some affliction. Manasseh was caught in the thicket, in the thorns and he was taken and then he cried unto God. The Lord has often used affliction to bring His people to their senses, to quicken them and to cause them to cry mightily to Him for mercy.

Called. Called from something; from self; from the world; from death. Called to something; called to know there is a God; to know there is a law and to know that we are under the law. Called to know that we are justly condemned by that law because we have broken it; called to know there is a throne of grace, and humbly to seek access to it through Jesus Christ; and called to have some experience of that great word that I read just now - "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" and "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" That is a wonderful summary of true experience. Experience of distance, then experience of nearness; experience of condemnation, then experience of acceptance and justification, of which we are to speak soon.

Now my friends, this great work of God is a sovereign work and the subject of it is one who is predestinated to be called - "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called." They were eternally in His heart; in time He is to call them to His footstool. Eternally loved, now they are called to feel after that love if haply they may find it. Called away from their indifference; careless about themselves, about God, about their character and about His character; now they are called to meditate at times upon Him and what He is and who they are and what they themselves are and very solemn work this is. Do not, therefore, if you can help it, fix your minds too intently on the manner, on the time. Both may lie more or less obscure to most of you. But see if you can find in the light of God's teaching, some marks; a turning; a halting; a becoming hungry; a becoming ashamed; a recollection of God in heaven and you on earth; in a field, starving, without anyone to give you bread; you, a ragged prodigal, you a poor sinner with your face and your heart and your steps all toward hell and now called to reflect, think, meditate and feel. That is being called. The law condemns you; you are called to feel it. The gospel is to deliver you, and you are made to seek after it. You are called to feel what a wretch you are and what a great God you have offended; what a hell you deserve and what a gospel there is of salvation. "Whom He called". O what a mercy it is to be called by grace!. What a blessing we, some of us, have received from heaven. Just think of it. What a great act was passed upon us when God called us; when, as in the days of His flesh on earth, Jesus went where Simon Peter was and his brother, passed by them and said, "Follow Me"; saw the sons of Zebedee and said to them "Follow Me". And so in some manner and in a good measure of mercy and power He has said to some, "Follow Me". That has opened the ear, opened the eye, opened the grave, quickened the soul, brought it up out of the grave of spiritual death. That great work is the fruit of eternal love, the effect of eternal predestination. It is the distinguishing act of a great God on a poor sinner, separating him and making him, as the Apostle Paul writes to the Hebrews, a holy brother, a partaker of the heavenly calling. He feels anything but holy, everything but holy. But

that is his character in the scripture and one day he shall know it to his great joy.

The next step is justification. I do not mean that a person born again instantly and at once takes a step from that moment into Christ for justification but it is the next step in the text. Many a weary step is taken by the subjects of divine calling toward this matter, this sweet, rich experience of justification. Hundreds of sighs and tears and prayers characterise this person in his movement toward God. O what heart aches he has! O what heart aches he feels in secret before God! How sometimes he sobs out his trouble and cries "God be merciful to me a sinner". How he wishes that he could join the dying thief in his prayer "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom". What a view he has of his ruin! Many and many a day he is found seeking God, but one thing is before him, according to the text - justification. He is to come into that; that is to be his experience and a blessed experience it is. Let us look at it a little by the help of God. The justice of God is concerned in this; the grace of God is the origin of this; the incarnation of the Son of God, His sorrows, sufferings, woes, bleeding and dying are all in this. We find Isaiah saying "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all". May we be well grounded here. Justification is not an arbitrary act of God; it is an act with many things in it. Justice divine is in it; eternal love is in it; the sweet grace of Christ is in it. We have the whole in this Epistle where the Apostle says "Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification". God is first in it. The sinner who is to be justified, was justified when Christ died, but he is not justified in his experience. Justification of the whole church took place when Christ was delivered for our offences. He removed the sin of His people that day when He said "It is finished". The law of God was abundantly satisfied; the opening was made. A channel, if I may use the expression, a channel was cut, through which mercy should flow in its freeness and greatness and power into the hearts of sinners. The death of Christ, dear friends, is the cause of justification. But then, all that Christ did culminated. His obedience unto death, you

see, then culminated, and the persons of the sinners, of all the children of the Most High, were delivered from the curse of the law. Now this has become an experience; this has become the real, the sweet possession of every child of God. Sooner or later, you who are called, if you have not as yet received this, are to receive it. Let us look at it as it is an experience. I do not want to leave anything out here, nor any person who is seeking God. As it is an experience, it is the act of God; the voice of the Almighty; the application of the blood of Jesus Christ and the imputation of His divine righteousness. In some measure, some of these great matters are experienced. One may get a sense of being delivered by the blood of Christ brought home to him and sprinkled on his guilty heart and he says "He is happy; he is delivered; he is justified; God is pleased with him. Justice is in his heart; mercy is in his heart; love is in his heart and peace is in his conscience. He is justified, as the Apostle speaks in this Epistle, freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. O what a happy person is he; the blood of Jesus Christ has brought him liberty. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." Now that is one way of being justified or rather I would say, this is one of the things apprehended in justification, the blood of the everlasting covenant. It is the plea of a sinner; it may be years before he gets the application of it. It may, from time to time, by the Holy Spirit be set before him so as to become a strong plea when he is before the Lord and yet he goes away again and again unpardoned in his feelings. Another gets such a sense of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus being imputed to him that he says "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength". He goes free; He is acquitted; He says - What a change there is! Justice is now for me. He feels it; he feels that God, in justifying him has honoured the righteousness of Christ, and he is accepted in that righteousness, without a good deed; without a gracious thought; without one single act of his own, but with sin and only sin he has come before God and like the publican, he goes down to his house justified. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth; it is Christ that died, yea rather

that is risen again." Dear friends, this is an experience beyond all price; it brings you into sensible union with God; it brings you into a sweet feeling that God is your friend for ever, that He will take care of you; that He will guide you with His counsel and afterward receive you to glory. There is that in it that is beyond our comprehension, but when it is brought home we apprehend it. It was so valuable to the Apostle and so essential that he said that he counted all things but loss for it; for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. "For whom" he says "I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith".

He is justified. You must be a recipient, a passive receiver, not an active worker. To him that worketh is the reward reckoned of debt, but to him that worketh not, it is of grace; of grace from first to last. Grace in God, the Father; grace in God, the Son; grace in God the Holy Ghost. It is wisdom; wisdom deviseth the way. It is justice; justice in the law, the law being magnified. It is love; "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" and therefore I came to thee and said "Live", and I have washed thee and clothed thee and thou becamest Mine. Now some of you may be in your very hearts at this time, far from this experience. You may never have received it and yet you are called. You may not be able entirely to say you are not called; you could not say that you are just as you used to be - dead. You dare not say you never pray; you dare not say that you have no longing in your souls to be right, but you have not got this. So far you are right, but you must know further than this you yet must go. You are right so far; how can he be wrong really who worships God? How can he be entirely wrong who prays by the Holy Spirit? How can he go to hell whose face is toward God, toward the cross of Christ? But he wants to know, as Paul says "That I may know Him"; that is the point. And how then can you know Him? "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It is a great thing to be bad enough for this great act of God in justification; not to think you ought to have

this; not to wonder why you don't get it, but to feel you are just a poor, miserable, distraught, guilty, helpless person; that there is a door of hope opened and through that door of hope you sometimes get access; a door of faith and by that you go to God and cry to Him. Then this is to come; the bar of unbelief will be taken away and the yoke on your jaws will be removed and you will find that you are drawn to Christ by the Father, yea and you will come to know that you are called according to Christ's word to Peter, when Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ. Said the Saviour to him "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Now justification brings a person very near to heaven in his experience; very near to God, the justifier; very near to the Saviour, whose blood brings all this great mercy to him and very near to the Holy Ghost who has taught, quickened and led him and brought him into this state. It is a great thing to know the Trinity, for the Trinity certainly is in justification in the experience of all the people of God.

Whom He called He justified; whom He dealt with to condemn, He dealt with to acquit; whom He brought into the court to be tried, He sent out of the court justified, without a stain on his character or name. And I tell you this my brethren, that it is a blessing God has laid up in Christ for all seekers. It is laid up for them. And how are they to know it? "The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart." That is how it is known. Brought by the Holy Spirit. He, opening the treasures of Christ, brings out this robe of righteousness and puts it on the sinner, and the sinner receives it by faith and wears it, and professes it. "Surely" he says, "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength" "Who is he that condemneth?" The devil will try to condemn; men will condemn; you will condemn yourself sometimes, yea, often, but this self-condemnation is good. We are chastened of the Lord when we condemn ourselves. "But who is he that condemneth?" None can rightly condemn; "it is God that justifieth" and who shall undo His work? You have got a treasure in your heart, when you are justified, of which you will never really be robbed; a blessing you will not lose. It sets up a sweet communication between God and you; it sets up a wonderful new relationship.

Not now an alien; not now a culprit; not now a criminal; not now one condemned and ready to perish, but a child, a friend, a companion of Jesus Christ with whom God can have fellowship; to whom He can come and pay love visits; to whom He speaks peace, for He does speak peace; He does speak peace. Whom He justified in their consciences; that is the place to have it. It is in God; it must come from Him into a sinner and become the sinner's possession; become his experience. Blessed be God I do not set before you something that you must climb up to attain. You will climb and labour hard to get it; you will pray, that is God's ordination, that is His will, that is His work in the heart. But the thing itself comes down from heaven. When a sinner is in the wilderness, when he is condemned and condemning himself, it comes down from heaven and he receives it. "Drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation." Now may I ask you a question? How many of you are well affected to this justification of a sinner? Well affected I say, kindly affected to it, warmly affected sometimes, so as to say "I wish this righteousness were mine". Not a cold wish but a fervent cry sent up to God. I say this to you "They that seek shall find. To him that knocketh it shall be opened". And I say this also, when you receive it; when you are near to God in this robe approved of by God; accepted by Him in the Beloved; when He lets you know that He is yours; when you get some sweet fellowship with Him, then you will say "the half was not told me". His beauties were never adequately described; the blessedness of this righteousness was never properly set forth. No tongue can tell what this robe is; no tongue can express what the experience of it is. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth. It is Christ that died yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God". Press forward to this; you must get to this before you have that sweet blessed peace of God which passeth all understanding. But remember, it is a free gift.

Bring no money, price or aught
No good deeds or pleasing frames
Mercy never can be bought
Grace is free and all's the Lamb's

God's grace is free; grace in justification is free.

"Whom He justified them He also glorified". That is to come, but it begins here, for every justified person has on him the Spirit of God and of glory. The most wondrous person in the world is one whom God has justified. There is the Spirit of Christ; there is the righteousness of Christ; there is the glory of Christ. "He glorified". Consider the suffering of this present time. Justified persons do suffer; they suffer from Satan; they suffer from sin; they suffer in the world; they groan, being burdened; they groan with the whole of the creation of God, the new creation; they are subjected to trial and difficulty, not willingly, but by Him who has raised them up to a hope; they are subjected to tribulation according to Christ's word, which you may take to be a promise even, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". But what is all this compared with the glory that is to be revealed? Now the people of God, by occasions, glory in the Lord. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory". But the great thing is to come. All is well for the saints, and one day they will enter into rest and into glory. "He glorified". And what shall we say then? What shall we say to these things? Perhaps there are two voices in the chapel. One says - what I say to these things is this, that my heart's desire is to possess them; it is to be found in Christ; it is to be one with Him, to be clothed in His righteousness, cleansed by His blood and indwelt by His Spirit. Another says - I see nothing in them. He may say to me mentally - what you say may be true, but it conveys nothing to me. May the Lord make you sensible of your state, and then the cry of your heart will be - "Remember me with the favour that Thou bearest to Thy people; O visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the goodness of Thy nation and glory with Thine inheritance." It is a mercy to be on the Lord's side in desire and a mercy to be justified.

"Whom He justified, them He also glorified." The saints are secured; they are in the bundle of life; they are in the unbreakable covenant; they are embraced in eternal love; they

are one with Christ; they are indwelt by His Spirit. Who shall destroy this people so blest? Who shall break the three-fold cord that binds them to the Trinity? Who shall deprive them of their title? Who shall keep them out of their inheritance? "I am persuaded" says Paul in his triumphant conclusion of this great matter in this chapter "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." God will glorify His people. O what a state awaits the saints. When faith gets a view of that land which is very far off, and the King in His beauty, it makes the soul long to go; it makes one sing

Weary of earth, myself and sin
Dear Jesus set me free
And to Thy glory take me in
For there I long to be

But one may say, there is a great deal between my soul and that. Yes, but when righteousness is brought to you, you will be very near to the other. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified". God justify us; God justify us, then it will be well with us.

AMEN.