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Sermon preached by Mr. J W Walder at Galeed Chapel Brighton Wednesday 10th January 1990

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Colossians 2:6

There are three things on my mind to attempt to notice in regard to the text; first, the Person who is spoken of; secondly, what we are to understand by receiving Christ Jesus the Lord; and this, in some measure, in desire or appropriation being our happy experience, what it will be to walk in Him.

Well, the first and the most important of all matters is the Person spoken of, because unless we be well assured, convinced and convicted of the important matter of who it is, it will matter little who we may consider that we have received. It must be none other and none less than Christ Jesus the Lord.

Well, who is he? that question might easily be answered in the minds of many - we know who it is! My answer to that is just this; I wish that God would, in his infinite goodness, kindness and mercy grant many to know a little more of the glory and sweet presence of His Person, who is so incomprehensible and infinite in his greatness and glory as to be far beyond our conception, that we might be given, really, feelingly and deeply to understand who He really is. This glorious Person, who, being the Son of God, God the Son, is, therefore, boundless, infinite and glorious in His personality, and is also that blessed Son of Man. Christ the Son of God taking our nature into indissoluble union to Himself, became manifestly and in the sweet proof of it, the Friend of sinners, the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer of the lost. When the contemplation of his glorious Person, in all his suitability and sufficiency, is made to such by the Holy Spirit, the one thing needful, the altogether lovely One, the chiefest among ten thousand, then he answers to all those blessed descriptions of him as expressed by the Church of God in the Canticles. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us? (Song of Solomon 5:9) There is none to be compared to this blessed Person in his beauty and glory as the sinner's Friend. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Solomon 2:3) There is none to be compared with him. There is such a beauty, loveliness and glory to that heart which is brought, in some measure to believe in him, to know him and to receive him, that it is impossible that they should express the greatness of his beauty and his needfulness.

Having made those very few brief preliminary observations concerning the Person, which is the one and all-important point in our text; Who it is that is received, none other and none less than Christ Jesus the Lord. Considering who he is and what the purpose and end of his mission in coming down into this world, the wonder and sufficiency of that glorious work which he undertook to accomplish for poor, sinful men; is it not an amazing wonder that for the most part, with regard to the greater majority of mankind, He is rejected and not received? Notwithstanding the glory and wonder of his Person, grace, greatness and the efficacy of His incarnation and all that He has accomplished therein, He is nevertheless rejected by most, but there are some who receive him, and this is the great and important

The prophet Isaiah describes in the fifty-third chapter what Christ appears to be in the eyes of all until they are brought to feel their need and want of him; for he is "as a root out of a dry ground:" to

a natural person he is without form or comeliness, "He is despised and rejected of men.. He was despised and we esteemed him not." How very true of every one who is in a state of unregeneracy, elect among the rest, just as we have demonstrated in the case of those two characters so often quoted, the two thieves; they both railed on him, they both cast the same in his teeth, there was no difference, not a scrap. They were both exactly the same (Matthew 27:44) until a work of grace was wrought in the heart of one of them, and then, what a difference it made in regard to his conception of the Person next to him on the cross, and his personal need of him as his Saviour; truly that one thief received Christ Jesus the Lord, received Him wholeheartedly, believed in Him firmly, trusted in Him for eternity with the greatest confidence of faith. (Luke 23:40-42) But all men, by nature, see no beauty or comeliness in Him, they do not receive Him, they reject Him, and this is universally so. O, how few are constrained to love Christ Jesus in sincerity and in truth? "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John 1:11-12) We read in another place: "For neither did his brethren believe in Him." (John 7:5)

So then let us try and look a little at what we are to understand by this receiving of Christ Jesus: 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,' and my intention in attempting to make a few remarks on this is to try to seek and find out if we are among those blessed characters who have 'received Christ Jesus the Lord.'

Now in regard to this there is no halfway ground, there is no neutral ground, there is nothing between rejecting and receiving; for whenever the work and grace of the Holy Spirit is received there is brought about that vital, glorious and great change in the heart of poor sinners that they are no longer left to think of this glorious Person with enmity, hatred or rejection, but their hearts are immediately so wrought upon and their feelings and desires so moved that there is a preparation made in the heart to receive Christ Jesus: first in the earnest longings of the soul in loving desire after him.

Well, let us try and look a little at what will be needful in our experience to bring about this great change and necessary preparation, for what can we say of our hearts by nature? They are locked, firmly locked by all the working of unbelief, bigotry, enmity and every other evil thing. Our hearts are locked, and moreover they are as full of rubbish, wickedness and sin as can be in the hearts and thoughts and affections of a natural person, no room at all for Christ. Room must be made; the heart must be opened. This is the blessed work of the Holy Spirit to so work upon a poor sinner in bestowing upon him divine life, quickening him and emptying him of self and all those vain things which fill his affections. This will make him feel empty and void of good and cause him to observe, see and feel his wretchedness, ruin and sinnership, so that there are desires Christward as he is manifest in the Word of God and revealed by the Holy Spirit as the only Friend, Helper, Saviour and hope for a poor sinner, so that in the desire after him and the need of him he becomes exceedingly attractive. Now these are the first things which begin to work, by the Holy Spirit in the heart; it is to '*change the heart, renew the will*' (Gadsby's 76) and deliver from that indifference and spirit of infidelity which prevails in the heart as in Saul of Tarsus, in the days of his unregeneracy. This will cause such a change as to make the soul go forth after Christ.

Now I just drop this remark in passing along, surely that soul that longs for Christ cannot in any pretext be said to reject him. That soul that longs after Him does not reject Him for there is a longing after Him:

*Ye lambs in Christ's fold, ye weaklings in faith,  
Who long to lay hold on life by His death;  
Who fain would believe Him, and in your best room  
Would gladly receive Him, but fear to presume. (Gadsby's 804)*

What can we say to such a soul? They have received Christ, they have indeed; they have embraced him in the want of him, embraced Him in the desire after him. None can ever possibly say that such a soul rejects him because they are longing to entertain him. They receive him, they are longing for him to come. There is that hymn in our book which doubtless expresses the feelings of many a seeking soul:

*Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the raging billows roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
O receive my soul at last !*

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
All in all in Thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick, and lead the blind. (Gadsby's 303)*

Now that soul has received Christ in the desire after him. 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want' - that soul can never be said to reject him, no! they have received him as the person in our text. Such a poor sinner as this finds their heart ready to receive him, ready to embrace him, although not as yet realised. 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.' "Not as though I had already attained." It may be there is nothing higher, nothing further than that, but the apostle says further on "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:12&16), continue in this way, 'So walk ye in Him.' Continue in this same way, earnestly looking, waiting, longing, begging, suing, hoping for this precious Person to manifest and reveal himself to such a degree and measure as to satisfy the soul.

Well, let us try and go a little further: 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.' Ah, the day will come with this seeking soul, and I trust with some it has already come, when such will receive Him in a greater measure and experience than this, as I have, no doubt, reminded you of Rutherford's words more than once, so blessedly true; 'they that desire Christ shall have Him.' Now, my friends, has the Holy Spirit been pleased to put that desire in our hearts so that we can honestly say that we desire him? We would embrace him could we but find him and apprehend him as the church in the Canticles, going about the streets of the city until she found him whom her soul loveth (Song of Solomon 3:2) Ah, she received him indeed!

There will come that day when this precious Friend of sinners will so manifest himself according to his own sovereign will and grace to a poor sinner's heart that they will be favoured and privileged to

say: "I found Him whom my soul loveth.....and would not let Him go." (verse 4) He is feelingly received into the heart and that in the exercise of that precious love which the Spirit works, love to Christ, a love that embraces him and may perhaps tremblingly, and yet very sweetly say: My Saviour, my God, my Jesus! Sweet moment when he is thus received and love can lay claim to him as 'mine.'

He is also received in the sweet and precious exercise of that God-given faith which sincerely, honestly believes and trusts in him, so that in the arms of faith and love Christ is embraced, laid hold of sensibly and feelingly received and owned as the Friend and Saviour, not only of sinners, but of this sinner.

Now he is also received in the sweet and blessed exercise of that holy fear and union which only the Holy Spirit can produce in a poor sinner's heart. There are two or three things I want to notice further in regard to that receiving of him, for we may rest assured of this, that wherever he is thus received into the heart there has been some good preparation by the work of the Holy Spirit. A heart that receives Christ will ever be a broken heart, a heart that is conscious of sin and is penitent; that is always a right and good preparation. Christ is received into the heart of a sinner who feels himself to be lost, wounded and guilty; that is their frame. He is received by faith and love into the heart that is sweetly broken, humbled, melted and sensible of its lost and ruined condition. O how entirely and how sweetly Christ is received by such.

These characters are set forth in the Word of God under many illustrations and figures - helpless, blind, lost, lame, maimed. O how welcome are all such characters, exceedingly welcome are they to this precious Saviour.

We will look at this receiving of Him: 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.' He is received unreservedly for all that he is and all that he has accomplished. If we do trust and honestly receive the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall receive him as our Friend, love him and embrace him as such; not just merely that he is the Friend of sinners, but that he is the Friend of our poor souls.

Now has it been his good and sweet pleasure at any time in our experience, particularly at some precious time in the early experience of our souls, to befriend us, to endear himself to us, to so draw near as to allure and to attract and draw our poor hearts unto himself, so that we feel that the Lord whom we sought heard our cry and he was received as that which he is indeed and of a truth, the sinner's Friend?

There is another point here which is very important: 'Christ Jesus the Lord.' If he is received he will be received as the Sovereign, the rightful Sovereign of the heart. O, there will be a desire that He will take possession of the heart and the affections and dwell within as the one and only rightful Sovereign of the soul. O, he will be received, whole-heartedly and unreservedly as he who has the undisputed right over all, the Sovereign of the heart.

He will be received as the great and glorious High Priest of our profession, loved, trusted, owned, worshipped and obeyed as that glorious and precious High Priest in the courts of bliss and in this there will be such a sweet and sacred communication between him and the soul in confession and supplication, and we shall come with all our cries, desires and needs unto him as our great High Priest; he will be received and loved as such.

He will be received into the soul in the efficacy, glory and sufficiency of his atonement as the antidote of death. O yes, Christ in his sacrifice as the great High Priest having shed his precious

blood, it will be received, embraced, trusted. Have we ever had such a sacred moment in our experience when we felt confident that the blood of Christ as our High Priest was sufficient for our sin, and we received it and believed it as a precious truth, a glorious fact and we received him as our High Priest who had offered that one sacrifice? There will be a receiving of Him as our Prophet. That precious Person who is appointed to teach and to instruct, upon whom we may implicitly depend for counsel and guidance in all matters that concern us in grace and providence.

Now a little further, and that indeed which is well worth seeking for and a precious and blessed privilege when it is sweetly bestowed upon a poor soul; and that is to receive Christ as the Husband of the soul: "And thou shalt not be for another" (Hosea 3:3) and by reason of the manifestation of his love and his fidelity the one who receives him is constrained and enabled for the time being, and under the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit to give him all their heart. It is an easy thing when he takes it, when he wins the affections and binds the soul fast. It is easy then to yield all our heart and affections to him and he is received as that blessed Husband of the church his bride, and this is indeed a most sacred part of that experience of receiving Christ Jesus the Lord. There are a few, just a very few who have entered into that sacred privilege. It is set before us in the Word of God. May the Holy Spirit so exercise and so stir up the heart to seek after it that it might be obtained and enjoyed. I can assure you it is something to be had if it be God's good pleasure to bestow it, and it is worth seeking for.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord'; received in love and faith into a broken and contrite heart, embraced as a Friend and a Saviour and Sovereign, and Redeemer, and received for his blessed, vicarious obedience and so received as one's only strength. Ah, it is a great thing to be brought to relinquish all our own, to have our working arm broken, and to be brought into a feeling state of impotence that we may find strength in him and receive him as our strength and righteousness, which is impossible that we should do until we are stripped naked of all our filthy rags and emptied of all our fancied goodness and righteousness, for the heart must be emptied and Christ will empty whom he fills. He will be received into the heart that is emptied first so that he is received as the poor soul's righteousness, perfect righteousness, and he alone.

Well, we have got something further to look at. If this has been the case with us in desire, or in appropriation, if it has been the experience that Christ has made himself the one thing needful, the altogether lovely, the one Person vital for our souls salvation and eternal happiness and we have thus received Him 'So walk ye in Him.'

Surely those who know anything of the treacherous workings of their own fallen nature and the exceedingly subtle and plausible temptations of our great enemy will realise his intent and purpose continually is to bring us into bondage and darkness, fear and deathliness in our spirit and will do his very utmost to get the wretched workings of our own hearts to turn us aside from the simplicity of the gospel, and to turn our eyes away from this precious and blessed Person. It is a wonderful thing to be brought to the point where Christ is received into the heart and embraced as our only hope of eternal and everlasting life: it is quite another thing to be able to go on in this way in spite of all the difficulties, temptations, oppositions and workings of our wicked hearts. The words of the hymn writer come to my mind again concerning that sacred point when real union to Christ is felt:

*What conjugal truth didst thou vow?  
With Him was there anything mixed?  
Then what wouldst thou mix with Him now? (Gadsby's 220)*

Ah, nothing was mixed with Christ when first he was received and those vows were made; and what of it now? What of our treacherous hearts? what of our peeping here and there and looking this and that way seeking some kind of help from some other quarter, seeking some relief from some other place instead of trusting alone in Christ and sovereign grace?

Now it is no easy thing to walk in him, as every one of God's people will find. The Holy Spirit, by the apostle Paul found it necessary to sharply rebuke the church at Galatia for their swerving and turning aside to vain jangling, they sought to mix something with Christ, to attempt-to add something to what he had done, an awful insult, they did not continue to walk in him: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" (Galatians 3:1) "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:7) Why is it that ye have so departed from Christ? Well, were they the only guilty ones? I am sure they were not. 'So walk ye in Him.' What a precious, blessed thing it would be if we were favoured and blessed by the teaching, grace and help of the Holy Spirit to walk in Him as at the beginning.

O how blessed if we could walk utterly dependent upon Him, leaning wholly upon Christ! How sweet it would be, how safe it would be, to walk in felt, constant, complete dependence upon him as the sinner's Friend for everything. It is hard work for us to do this, it is ever our nature to patch up old garments or put some new wine in old bottles; it is always the nature of our fallen hearts, proud self-righteous hearts to seek something in self, but, O, to be enabled so to walk in him.

Now one point in regard to it is to seek, diligently seek, that we may be favoured with a continuing and sensible experience of union to Christ. It is impossible that a union to him should ever be dissolved or severed; that is impossible, but we may lose the sense of it, the comfort of it, the experience of it; many things may rob us: so that a part of this walking in him is to walk in a continued and sensible union to him, one with him and one in him.

The second thing is that which is the sweet and blessed fruit of that union and that is close and constant communion. Can you look back to a day when you were favoured so to receive Christ into your poor, broken heart, the antidote of death? You loved, trusted and received him. O what happy, sweet, blessed, constant communion you then enjoyed! O the liberty, the enlargement, the freedom, the freeness in going to him as the sinner's Friend, pouring out your heart unto him in very sweet communion; what a mercy to have it maintained and continued. 'So walk ye in Him.'

Now our legal spirit will ever be seeking to try and patch up the old garment, always looking for something in self and some possession in self, but what a wonderful thing to cast it all away, relinquish it all and reject it with disdain and look only to Christ, and that continually, to be our righteousness. 'So walk ye in him;' You see, the great fault of the Galatians was that they started off well, their trust was in Christ alone for strength and righteousness but through erroneous teaching they sought to continue in their own strength and righteousness, they looked to the law instead of to Christ and this brought them nothing but bondage and death. What a wonderful mercy to look to him only in all that concerns us in our walk, conversation and judgment and continue in a profession of the name of Christ in our spiritual pathway and temporal pathway, to receive him, own him and seek him as our only Sovereign every moment, as the hymn says:

*Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will,  
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill;  
Till, falling before Thee, we laud Thy loved name,  
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb. (Gadsby's 129)*

That is to walk in him. O, to continue in this same pathway, receiving him as our Prophet to teach in all of the dark matters, difficulties, problems of soul and circumstance and all that may deeply concern us, in all the many things to go to him as our Prophet and continue in this pathway, continually consulting him that he would give us wisdom, counsel, direction and strength. Seeking also that the Holy Spirit would favour us with a continuation of that blessed frame that is so needful, a heart kept constantly broken, penitent and repentant and to lean only upon the arm and breast of a blessed Saviour and so go along, looking to Him for strength and righteousness, peace, salvation, help, counsel, government and fresh manifestations of the power and efficacy of his cross and the pardon of our sin; 'so walk ye in Him' as ye began, so go on. If there has been a good and right beginning and He was received, 'so walk ye in Him.' The Lord enable us; it is a blessed precept, may it find a place in our hearts as that which God has enjoined to those whom He has chosen. O, it is such a favour to have an interest in this blessed Person, and so may we continue unto the end.

The Lord add His blessing.

Amen.

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