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The Good Samaritan

Sermon preached by Mr J W Walder at Galeed Chapel Brighton on 11th November 1987

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.” Luke 10:33

The disposition and the kind dealings of the Samaritan in this parable are indicative of the disposition and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to needy, sensibly needy, sinners. He is that blessed person who has shown such compassion and kindness to those who are in a forlorn condition like this poor man who had fallen among thieves, was robbed and stripped and left half dead.

There are two particular aspects regarding this man who fell among thieves which are compatible with the feelings and the experience of every one of those persons whom Christ has come to redeem and save.

Firstly, we may consider this as the case and condition of the vessels of mercy of God's choice. They, in common with the rest of mankind, are fallen in Adam and by that fall are in such a condition as this man was found.

Secondly, it may be a comfort to any who in subsequent experience, after having known something of the saving power and compassion of this good Samaritan, the Lord Jesus Christ, have again fallen among thieves and backslidden, and are in an equally forlorn and distressed condition as this man in the parable. Over and over again such may be favoured and privileged to know something in feeling of the compassion and kindness of Jesus Christ, who did not disregard the man or pass him by, or leave him in such a state and condition as this, but came where he was and dealt with him so kindly and freely in all that he needed. Whatsoever was done for him was for the complete restoration of his soul to that blessedness which is expressed.

First then, it is needful for us to attempt to notice a little the features and circumstances of this man's condition. He had fallen among thieves and they had robbed him and wounded him and stripped him and left him half dead. This is very descriptive of that which the fall has brought us into. By that fall and the entrance of sin we have all the wretched, evil effects and fruits of it. The desperate, deceitful and horrible works of Satan, who by his subtle power and dreadful temptations has robbed man of his first innocency—righteousness and uprightness, which he possessed as God formed him after his own image and placed him in the garden of Eden. My friends, it is our sensible realisation of the solemn fact and truth of the fall, and our own fallen state and condition, which will reveal to us the necessity and the blessedness of the provision of this blessed Saviour, and all that he has done and all that he still does for poor, wretched, ruined and undone sinners.

This man fell among thieves. We have fallen among thieves. We are utterly robbed and spoiled and we have no strength, understanding, goodness, merit or righteousness in which to appear before God. We are left spiritually naked, robbed and spoiled, utterly undone and ruined. We have nothing left, we are totally corrupt and undone through the fall, and this forlorn condition is spoken of as being half dead. Although the sentence of death has not been put into execution, we are under the sentence of it in the fall—death temporal, spiritual and eternal. The sentence is passed and there only remains the execution of it, except we are saved from this awful state and condition. Man fell among thieves, was stripped of his raiment and all that he possessed in Adam in that first estate. All he was when created was utterly lost in the fall. He was robbed of all help, hope, goodness, strength, peace, righteousness, and well-being; robbed of all favour or any worthiness of favour in the sight of a holy God, totally bankrupt, undone, and left half dead.

Now everyone that God has chosen, every one appointed unto salvation, every one brought under the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, in measure, perhaps small in comparison to some, yet real, as being produced by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will acknowledge by feeling, their fallen condition. I say, in some measure the fall will be known and realised and the solemn fact taught.

*That we're unholy needs no proof;
We sorely feel the fall;
But Christ has holiness enough
To sanctify us all.*

(Gadsby's 181)

A forlorn condition indeed! As to ourselves we are in a hopeless state:

*No help in self I find,
And yet have sought it well;
The native treasure of my mind
Is sin, and death, and hell.*

(Gadsby's 739)

To quickened souls there is such a variety and such numerous proofs of their fallen state and condition. Well, he lay stripped, naked, robbed, half dead and in a forlorn condition.

We have two points to look at here before we consider this good Samaritan who on his journey came where he was. There were two others who passed by, first the priest and then the Levite. These are indicative of the law moral and the law ceremonial. Now it is common for everyone who is quickened into divine life, called by grace and shown their fallen and wretched condition, in the initial experience of the heart and in some measure, to look in this direction. It is common with so many of God's people in their early days to look to Sinai, to think they must try and do a little something, to look to the moral and ceremonial law for some help and deliverance. But, my friends, we have to prove, and do prove under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that these things can give us no assistance or help whatsoever. The priest and Levite looked at him and passed by on the other side. They could do nothing for him, they had no compassion, kindness or help, not an atom, so they could only pass by on the other side.

To enlarge just very briefly upon this point in the experience of those who are brought to know and feel their fallen state and ruined condition. O, the thundering, the lightening of Sinai, the curse and the condemnation and the threatening! No mercy, pardon, rest, peace there! Not the least hope of help, righteousness, assistance or strength! The law can demand but can give no strength to obey, it cannot justify, cannot help, cannot relieve or heal up the wounds. It only makes them deeper and causes them to fester all the more. It can give no relief, afford no strength, righteousness or help. It must pass you by on the other side; it cannot give any relief or assistance.

In regard to the ceremonial law, it was given by God indeed, but it was but a type and shadow, just a signification of the good things to come. The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin. Yet, you see, how many of the Jews, a great multitude of them who never really knew what it was to feel themselves sinners or to know how fallen they were, or to feel the ruin, depravity and desperate wickedness of their hearts, looked to the ceremonial law, observed it meticulously, carefully and consistently, thinking there was help, righteousness and justification for them, knowing not that they might do this all their days and perish. There was no help in the ceremonial law, it was but types and shadows. The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin. The various washings and the multitude of observations that were demanded could never afford any help. That is just what the quickened soul is solemnly taught. There is no hope, help, relief, deliverance in the moral or the ceremonial law. All are brought to this point—no help for them but in Christ. It is: Jesus save or I perish. A person in a fallen condition like this man will be feelingly and sensibly weaned and delivered from everything that is of the law. There is no help or healing there.

Well, the priest and the Levite came and looked at him, but they passed by on the other side. They could afford him no help or deliverance in his need. But now there is this blessed Jesus Christ; the Good Samaritan, the Friend of sinners, the Saviour of sinners, and he came where he was. He was on a journey, and he came where he was.

Now this is very significant. I want to try and stay here just for a moment, for we have before us in this wonderful parable the amazing infinite condescension of the Son of God; that greatest of all demonstrations of divine love, goodness, faithfulness, and kindness. The Lord Jesus, in two ways, came where he was. Why, this is the whole gospel, in all the sweetness and blessedness of it, all the power and

unction of it, encompassed in very few words: Jesus in the sinner's place. Yes, he came where he was. What is this journey and coming where he was but the incarnation of the Son of God? This sacred, blessed, glorious, fundamental, holy doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God. He came and stood in his people's place, suffered in their stead, shed his blood for their sins, gave his life for them. In love he obeyed the law, suffered, was tempted, tried, afflicted and distressed, "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3) He came and stood in their room, place and stead, fulfilling the law for them. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Romans 10:4) He came where he was. How this is a reason for a poor sinner to worship, love and adore for such amazing and blessed condescension! If only we might be favoured and privileged to get a glimpse of Jesus in the sinner's place, in his place under the law, in his place suffering what was deserved by way of wrath and punishment. He endured all that was due to his people's sins; he came where he was. This is the reason you see why he is able and willing to save, able and willing to have compassion, able and willing to help and to heal. He came where he was.

'And when he saw him'—this is the second consideration in regard to coming where he was, and that manifestly and in the sweet and blessed experience of it, when he is pleased to visit a poor, forlorn sinner by his grace, love, Spirit and his Word; to come just where this poor, robbed, naked, half dead sinner is and to enter into his case, cause and condition sensibly and feelingly.

Now do we know anything for ourselves of both sides of this subject in the preliminary observations of it, in the first experience of the soul in regard to this blessed Jesus, this Good Samaritan? Do we know for ourselves, in some measure at least, that we are in a fallen, ruined, helpless, bankrupt condition of soul, robbed, experimentally naked, no covering for our nakedness, wounded and half dead, wounded by Satan and sin, knowing our festering sores, the dreadful wounds that putrefy, in the real feeling of it in our souls? If we do, this is a preparation in our experience to know something of the precious person for ourselves, who has come where we are and will come where we are in our experience. When he is pleased to come, and sees us and looks upon us in pity and compassion, in our forlorn condition and has compassion upon us, it is a matter we cannot fathom nor comprehend.

'He had compassion on him.' Now the compassion of Christ is the compassion of God. It is infinite, boundless, and inexhaustible. It is pure, holy, perfect, blessedly free, sweet and suitable. It cannot be compared with human compassion. That indeed may be great at times, but what is it in comparison with divine compassion? This is shown in all its glory in Jesus coming where he was, and is shown in measure in the demonstration and communication of it in the hearts of those who are feelingly in need of it.

*This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
He pity ne'er withdrew.*

(Gadsby's 438)

It is eternal compassion. My friends, if you and I have enjoyed it, and I hope we have, that there are a few occasions we can look back upon with comfort and sweetness, seasons never to be forgotten, when that compassion has been felt in some little measure, yet we must know the sorrows first in our measure. This is a wonderful encouragement to those who increasingly feel the fall, know what they are by nature and know what a condition they are in through the Adam fall and are brought to increasingly know their need of such a Saviour as Jesus. You know that it is no good looking anywhere else. You have proved what the law can do for you, you have proved what notional religion can do and you have proved how empty everything in nature is. You want something greater than all this, even the manifestation and compassion of Christ in communicating the power and influence of his cross, blood, death and obedience to your soul. That alone does you good. To feel that what he did in possessing our nature, becoming incarnate, was in compassion for our souls!

Now you see, in this compassion of his, 'When he saw him, he had compassion on him,' he was moved to do for this poor man, freely, kindly and pitifully, all that was needed to be done.

We will just look a little at what Christ did, being moved with compassion as set forth in this parable. This is a wonderful indication of what Jesus still does for such characters. What did he do? 'He went to

him.' Blessed words! I wonder even now how many of our hearts are desiring that he would do this for us, or do it again. 'He went to him,' and you and I are saying, 'Lord, come to me, do come.' We do not want him to be at a distance, pass us by, disregard us, take no notice of us. O, that he would look upon us, have compassion and come to us, as this Samaritan went to this poor forlorn and sorrowful character! "He went to him, and bound up his wounds."

Jesus still does this. He is appointed for that very purpose. How able and how willing he is to do this. This poor, wounded man was bound up.

*Jesus heals the broken-hearted;
O how sweet that sound to me!
Once beneath my sin he smarted,
Groaned and bled to set me free.*

What a wonderful thing to be able to feel that, and say it feeling that he did so, and so be enabled to say:

*Seek, my soul, no other healing,
But in Jesus' balmy blood;
he, beneath the Spirit's sealing,
Stands thy great High Priest with God.*

(Gadsby's 759)

He bound him up with all the tenderness and compassion of his love, for he came where he was. He died for poor sinners, and this binding up is nothing less than the sensible application of the power and influence of his precious blood to our wounded souls. Fallen sinners who are sensible of this do have wounds, festering sores, feelingly deep wounds. O,—

*Deep are the wounds which sin has made,—
Where shall the sinner find a cure?
In vain, alas! is nature's aid;
The work exceeds all nature's power.*

(Gadsby's 977)

Indeed, in vain are nature's cures, but O, the wounds of Jesus!

'He came where he was ... had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.' Not only did he bind up his wounds, but he cherished them with oil and wine. This is the precious oil of his grace and love, and of his Spirit. How necessary this is and how necessary we feel it to be, causing us to truly long for it at times. The oil must be poured in, there must be a reception of it, an application of it. Grace, love and the sweet Spirit of Christ must be poured in. Oil to heal, and when there is a communication of free grace, sovereign love and the sweet Spirit of Christ and the efficacy of his finished work, that will heal,

*Oil and wine to heal and cherish,
Jesus still to Israel gives;*

(Gadsby's 759)

This blessed wine is a universal remedy for fearing, fainting, ready to perish, half dead, robbed and mourning souls. How sweet when this is received as given in compassion—the oil and the wine.

'And brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence.' One more thing before we look at the other signification of this parable—this paying of his debts. The poor man being bankrupt and robbed stood in need of one to be kind, a friend and a surety. The good Samaritan took out two pence and he promised that if this poor and yet most blessed man incurred any further debt, he would pay that too, for he said, 'When I come again I will repay thee.' So here is a promise that debts, past, present and to come will be freely cleared by this blessed person. "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." (Luke 7:42) Every debt, not one farthing left. All was freely paid by this blessed person.

Well, these are only a few thoughts of the state and condition of the man in the parable, this poor, needy man, and the kindness and goodness of the good Samaritan in doing everything for him so freely,

willingly and lovingly and with a smiling face in love and compassion. This is just like Jesus, just what he does. This is what he has done and what he still does.

Now there is a second point to attempt to look at regarding this man and his condition. I feel I shall not apply the matter wrongly if we look at it as it concerns a believer in a backsliding condition, and, one who is therefore brought into such a state and condition of soul as to stand in fresh need of a further manifestation of Christ's power, kindness and goodness to restore him. Those who know their own hearts and can look back with grief and sorrow upon the years of their experience, and can perhaps look at their hearts at this present moment, will be ready to confess they are continually and constantly bent on backsliding from God. We do fall among thieves. There are times when we are robbed and stripped and left half dead and wounded in our feelings, by reason of the awful tendency to, and practice of, declension through the workings of the evil of our own hearts and the temptations of the adversary, and also on account of God's wise, loving and gracious purpose sometimes suspending his influence.

God is sovereign in this and has good ends in so doing, but the moment he is pleased to withdraw his power and influence from our hearts truly shows and declares to us that we cannot maintain our own souls in life. We cannot keep grace lively and exercised in our souls ourselves. We are dependent upon God. I believe that one lesson he will have his people learn over and over and over again is to know their fallen condition, so that they shall not forget their base original and shall be brought over and over again to know their sins and backslidings, and to bless God for his restoring grace.

O, what a wonderful mercy for us, some of us at least, that there is restoring grace for the base backslider! I am sure that if it were not so then long ago we would have sinned far beyond the reach of grace and mercy. We would have destroyed ourselves utterly. But there is restoring grace for the worst of backsliders. That gives no ground for backsliding. It does not give licence to live as we like. O no, those who fear God will be kept tender, not to hew out for themselves cisterns, "broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jeremiah 2:13) But I know from my own experience how a backslider will be robbed and spoiled, yet there is a restoration, and that restoration when received will be exceedingly sweet.

Let us try and pursue it a little. The man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Now Jerusalem was the place where the true, gracious, blessed worship of God was continued and enjoyed. Jericho was the hotbed of the Pharisees—false, fleshly, empty, dead religion, nothing but the flesh. A lot of it, maybe, was very exact and correct outwardly, but there was no life, no unction, no savour, no feeling, no power, no effect—all was dead, hard, nothing but form. The man had turned his back on Jerusalem and was going down to Jericho. He had declined and in his going down he fell among thieves. O how grievous and how evil is this declension to a true child of God! So incipient, often undetected, subtle yet so effectual. There is a gradual decline, not all at once, it is one step at a time; first one step and then another. Instead of sweetness, liveliness and power in prayer, just mere formal utterances; instead of a lively reading of God's Word, it becomes a matter of form; instead of seasons of communication and sweetness, there is death, coldness and darkness. It may very well be that no human eye will detect any outward change, no difference outwardly; but what of that which is going on within? There is a declension, and this will ever bring us to fall among thieves. Sin is not hated so much as it was, it is not abhorred so much as it was, or condemned so much as it was. We may condemn it, but we do not abhor it when in this backsliding condition. There may be seasons when sin is rolled as a sweet morsel under the fleshly tongue of our carnal nature. Things of time begin to get uppermost—home, garden, family concerns, deviations of all sorts—they rob us and spoil us. We are robbed of our comfort, zeal, communion and joy. It is a mercy we cannot lose our salvation, our redemption or our Saviour, but we may well lose the joy and the comfort and the peace. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* we read of one poor pilgrim who was robbed by the thieves. Mercifully they could not touch his jewels, but they took all his spending money. They emptied his pockets, although they could not touch his jewels. The poor man had to go on in a forlorn condition.

Many things injure and spoil us when we fall among thieves. We are stripped and robbed and wounded. We may have some deep wounds. Peter had some deep wounds; David had some deep wounds; Hezekiah had some deep wounds. They knew what it was to fall among thieves and to be robbed and spoiled. This is indeed a very sorrowful matter; this brings a believer into a very poor

condition, no comfortable feeling, no communication to speak of. O, there is such a thing as backsliding, such a thing as falling among thieves, to receive fresh wounds, broken bones, to be robbed and spoiled!

I wish to speak rightly and affectionately, but may I ask the question—of myself and you—how does it stand with our souls at present? Are they healthy, lively and well? Are we enjoying God's presence? Are we favoured with life and liveliness in our spirit, or have we been robbed and spoiled and wounded and feel in a half dead condition? Not altogether dead to God, but not very much alive to him; not altogether alive to the world, but only half dead to it. This is a backsliding state and condition. What a wonderful mercy that there is restoration for us! What a wonderful thing when we can look back at one or two seasons in our experience when we have been mercifully restored and mercifully blessed and favoured like the poor man in the parable! The Good Samaritan 'came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.'

But let us look at the two who passed by on the other side; yes, even in the case of one who is in a backsliding state and condition. I am sure some of you have had the experience that I have had when in such a state and case as this. There have been those who have answered to the priest and the Levite, those who have directed to the law—moral and ceremonial—and regarded us with amazement, not understanding our case and condition. They thought we should never be where we are and could not understand it. How amazed some have been who believed that we should have done something to get ourselves out of the gloom and distress! My friends, you will know very well that if we get into a state like this poor man, we cannot get ourselves out of it. We can backslide, but we cannot restore ourselves, we cannot bring ourselves back. We can bring ourselves into darkness but we cannot bring ourselves into light. We need Christ to do this for us and to manifest his saving power again and again. Levites and priests can do us no good. There is no help in the law ceremonial or the law moral. There is only one thing that can help, and that is for Jesus to come where we are. What a wonderful mercy when this is the case and he condescends in love and mercy to come where we are and visit us in this state and this condition!

To illustrate the point just a moment from the examples in the Word of God. What a look of injured love, pity, mercy and compassion was that which Jesus gave to backsliding Peter! It had an effect, a blessed effect. Peter went out and wept bitterly. It did him good. What a look that was! Ah, Jesus knew where he was in his feelings and spirit, in his spiritual condition and state, he knew all about it. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." (Luke 22:61) It was not a look of anger, it was a look of injured love and pity and compassion. But the day came when Peter was blessed and mercifully restored. He was bound up, the oil and wine was poured in and his sin forgiven. The compassion of Christ was demonstrated and manifested: "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee." (Mark 16:7) "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." (John 20:17)

The same was the case with dear David. O the feeling of his heart when he was restored, as expressed in Psalm 51! A healed, broken, humbled, restored, backsliding heart, melted with a sense of mercy and favour and of sin forgiven. The message that God sent to David by Nathan was this, that though he had sinned and was guilty—"Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:7)—yet in verse 15, "Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin." 'He came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion.'

The experiences of salvation, pardon, peace, restoration, love and compassion felt and realised after a season of backsliding are, if possible, sweeter and deeper than those first received and enjoyed. To depart from the living God, backslide and turn our back upon our best friend, fall among thieves, be robbed and spoiled, and then be restored and healed is exceedingly sweet. There is in this, great comfort - hope, real hope, strength, real strength -for any poor soul who knows what it is to feel in this forlorn state. May we, by this experience, be brought to a deeper and sweeter knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatness of his salvation, the wonder of his pity and compassion. May we have the real feeling of what it is to be bound up, to know what it is to receive the oil and the wine as it is poured in, to see that all our debts are paid, and to receive that blessed receipt: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions and, as a cloud, thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22) - pardon received and deliverance given from all our wretchedness, woe and evil.

The Lord give us each such an experience again and again and that to his glory. Amen.