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Sermon preached by Mr.J.Raven at Shaw's Corner, Redhill on Sunday evening, 13.6.48

Text: "Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" - 2 Peter 1.11

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The Apostle Peter in this epistle is very practical. He has much to say on the 'practic part' of religion, but he is not legal. There is no trace at all of legality. Although such portions of the Word are not much regarded by some professors, it is well for us if we can humbly fall before the Word of God, however searching it may be, however we may feel that we are weighed in the balances and found wanting, as we began by singing,

"Against no Scripture ever strive,  
But tremble at the Word"

You notice that the Apostle first of all insists upon the foundation of all true godliness. As I observed in the reading, vital godliness is not something that springs up naturally in our fallen hearts. It is not a product of human nature, it comes from God. It is wrought by His power, in every part of it it is the work of His grace. And the Apostle says, "giving all diligence". "Ah", says the sluggish professor, "I do not like to hear so much about diligence"; he does not like to be disturbed upon his bed; but, says the Apostle, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

Now, how much are you and I exercised about these things? Is there ever any anxious, prayerful concern about it, as to our conformity to such a word of exhortation as we have here? Do we have to come with our weakness, with our defects, with what we may feel of our total lack, to the throne of grace and beseech Him according to His word to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, to fulfil in us the precious promises, the "exceeding great and precious promises" that Peter refers to in the fourth verse of this chapter?

"I on thy promises depend,  
At least I to depend desire,  
That Thou wilt love me to the end,  
Be with me in temptation's fire.  
Wilt for me work and in me too,  
And guide me right and bring me through".

Now Peter goes on, "for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ". Some people have a barren knowledge, a mere head knowledge, a mere assent to the truth, but the true people of God do not rest in a barren knowledge. They know that

"A barren tree that bears no fruit  
Brings no great glory to its root".

They are concerned about fruit, they mourn their lack of it, and in the desires and prayers of their hearts they are stretching out at the mercy seat for more fruitfulness in the things and ways of God. They tremble at the thought of being left to barrenness like the fig tree that a man had planted in his vineyard which had for three years been barren. He had sought fruit thereon and had found none; the true people of God tremble at the thought of being like that. "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins". You notice this, "He is blind and cannot see afar off". Eternal things rest with no weight upon his heart. There is no due consideration of the solemnity of eternal things. "He cannot see afar off", he does not view things, he does not view his own state, in the light of eternity, and "hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." There is no sense of his indebtedness to Jesus and His blood. A child of God may get into such a state that his mind is more or less deadened to eternal realities; eternal realities may be very unreal to him, and he may have very little sense, if any, for the time being, of his dependence upon Christ and the atonement, and as these things are not with weight upon his heart, so he walks indifferently and sluggishly. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence". I say the sluggish

professor has no stomach for this word "diligence", it sticks in his throat, he does not know what to do with it, it makes him feel very uncomfortable. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall".

The Apostle is here indicating an exercise that is a wonderful preservative to those in whom it is maintained, an exercise unto godliness. If David had been exercised after this fashion instead of walking upon his housetop casting idle glances on to other men's gardens he would not have fallen as he did; but you see there was the lack of godly exercise in David at that time, so he fell an easy prey to the devil and his own lustful heart. So Peter says, "If ye do these things", that is to say, if this godly exercise is maintained within you, you will walk safely, "ye shall never fall". Oh, a conscience made tender in the fear of God is a wonderful mercy, for the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death". "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". Now, we are not to understand that an entrance into the kingdom of Christ is a reward bestowed upon people for their diligence in these things, but rather, as these things abound in them, as there is this diligence in the exercise of this godliness, so they are made manifest as belonging to Christ's kingdom. How am I to be made manifest as a member of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ otherwise than by the fruits of godly fear and of faith and of love? I am not a member of Christ's kingdom because of these things, as if by them I merit such a favour, but if I am a member of His kingdom these things will appear in me and will be evidence of the fact. "The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". "The kingdom of GOD is within you". "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

"Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". What I want specially to come to is, first of all, the person of "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." He is the Father's Son, the anointed One, the Son of God whom He sent into the world, the Son of His love. Who can tell how dear to the Father is His co-eternal, co-equal Son? One speaks of the blessed

Trinity thus,

"That sea of life and love unknown  
Without a bottom or a shore".

Well, the Son of God came forth from the Father. "Though He was rich," says the Apostle, "yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich". He came down from Heaven, took upon Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, made in all points like unto His brethren, "and being found in fashion as a man He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". So the Apostle traced the descent of the Lord Jesus, for before He ascended into Heaven He descended, and how low He stooped to raise poor sinners to a throne of glory! The Apostle in writing to the Philippians again traces the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then he says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father". I hope I shall never quite forget what that word was to me one day in reading it with two dear friends. It quite overcame me. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." Oh what beauty, what glory one saw in the Lord Jesus Christ! I believe I knew what it was that morning to worship at Immanuel's feet, and to see and feel something of the wonders that meet in Him.

Well, He is exalted, set at the right hand of the Father, the High Priest of the church, and the King of Zion. The Father "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church." He has made "that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ". So said the Apostle to the Jews when he charged them with His death. Well, this is the person, that exalted Man; He is the Son of God and Man in one glorious Person. This is the person of whom the Apostle speaks when he says, "Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". Oh, think who and what He is! It is so

important that we have right views of Christ.

"What think ye of Christ is the test  
To try both your state and your scheme,  
You cannot be right in the rest  
Unless you think rightly of Him."

"Some take Him a creature to be,  
A man, or an angel at most,  
Sure these have not feelings like me,  
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.  
So guilty, so helpless am I,  
I durst not confide in His blood,  
Nor on His protection rely,  
Unless I were sure He is God."

Oh, it is GOD the Son of whom the Apostle Peter here speaks and says, "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". View Him then as the Saviour, how suitable in every particular, in every aspect in which He is to be viewed, how suitable! "Beside Me there is no Saviour". "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The salvation of the church of God could not be accomplished by angels, nor yet by legions of angels. All the angels in heaven would not suffice to accomplish salvation for one poor sinner, let alone the multitude of the church of Christ. But the Son of God is able, and in order to the accomplishing of salvation He took the nature of His people into union with Himself. As the Son of God He has all power for the work, as the Son of Man He is eminently suitable, able to stand in the sinner's stead, able to take the Church's place and bear her guilt, and fulfil all her responsibility. He is able to do it, and He came into the world for this express purpose, to save His people from their sins, to save them from sin's guilt, from its dominion, from its pollution and from its dread consequences. A curse belongs to those who break one precept of the law, He took the curse. The sentence of death is pronounced upon the sinner. "The soul that sinneth it shall die", He died the death. The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, but He took that awful flood of wrath that otherwise must have fallen upon the Church and immersed her in everlasting woe; He took it and He was able to drain

it to the last drop. Oh, Christ is God. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom", says the Apostle Paul, "I am chief". He came to save His people from their sins; He did not come merely to save them from the consequences of their sins, that would not have been enough, that would have been no deliverance. There are many people who would be content to be saved from the consequences of their sins, who do not want to be saved from their sins; but He came to save His people from their sins, from the guilt of their sins, from the dominion of their sins and from the dreadful consequences of their sins. He came to save them with an uttermost salvation, to save them from their sins. Oh, does this ever meet with your soul's approbation? Have you ever rejoiced in the thought that He came to accomplish such a salvation, a salvation so suitable; that the Father sent His Son into the world to die for the ungodly?

"Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Well, who values the Saviour? The majority of men do not. They see not the necessity of such a Saviour; they do not realise their lost condition; they fondly dream that all is well. They may admit that they are not all they ought to be, but they think they are not so bad after all, and if they think of God at all they think of Him as a very benevolent Father who will be merciful to them and shut His eyes to all their defects and take them to heaven at last. So they think it will be enough to have a clergyman come to their bedside, and read the Lord's prayer or the 23rd. Psalm, and all will be well. But that will not do for people who know themselves lost and wretched. That will not do for people whose souls are awakened to some sense of their state as sinners and their solemn position as under the holy Law of God, and exposed to divine wrath. When a sinner feels what the Psalmist expresses, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me", in the light of what He knows GOD to be, he sees himself to be a lost wretch, a God-provoking sinner, a base rebel against a good God. Mr. Hart expresses it well where he says

"Sins against a holy God,  
Sins against his righteous laws;  
Sins against his love, his blood;  
Sins against his name and cause;  
Sins immense as is the sea -  
Hide me, O Gethsemane".

Do you really want a Saviour? A Saviour revealed in your heart, a salvation that is as real as your ruin, as real as your wretchedness, a salvation that is as real as your want, a Physician as real as your malady? How suitable and how sufficient Jesus is! One says very beautifully,

"All sufficient is our Jesus  
Though our sins are black as hell"

He is a Saviour. I think it was one of the old fathers who said, "What is Jesus but a Saviour"?

"Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". Now, salvation to those who are taught of God is a great thing. Oh, salvation is a tremendous matter. To be redeemed is not merely to be redeemed from hell and from the curse of the law, but it is to be redeemed unto God, and salvation is not merely a being saved from but a being saved to. "Our Lord and Saviour". Well, if He makes Himself known to you as your Saviour, as saving you from your sins with an everlasting salvation, saving you from death and from hell, and from all the power of the enemy, you will see a wondrous beauty in Him. "My Beloved is white and ruddy", we read in the Song of Solomon. Dr. Watts says,

"White is his soul, from blemish free;  
Red with the blood he shed for me."

Oh, there will be a beauty in that once-suffering, bleeding, dying Christ, who now is risen and exalted, and in all the everlasting validity of His finished work, of His atoning sacrifice, is at the right hand of the Father and ever lives to make intercession for transgressors. I say, there will be something wondrously attractive in that person, so that you will want, ardently want, not only to be saved by Him in the bare sense of the term, but you will want to be altogether His. You will want Him to come by His Spirit and take possession of your heart, you will want what the Apostle Paul desired in his supplications for the Ephesian church; "That Christ may dwell

in your hearts by faith". You will want Him to be set on the throne. There are many people who will talk of Christ as Saviour, who are taught by their teachers and pastors that all they have to do is to say, "I accept Christ as my Saviour; I believe He died for sinners, and I am a sinner, and therefore He died for me", and such a mere mental assent, such a formal expression as that is called 'believing'. Poor things are deluded into the notion that they are saved, whereas what is called faith is nothing more than a self-deceiving act of presumption. That is all it is. Well, when a person is supposed to be saved in that fashion there is no power in it. The Apostle could speak of the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us, but where a person is merely content with notions of salvation there is no shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart. Therefore there is the absence of His constraining power, so they have to invent another doctrine. They tell these poor people that since such often fall away from what they profess, their faith proves not to be of an enduring quality, and they are told they may fall from grace, they may be saved today and go to hell tomorrow. So they are whipped by many exhortations, they are kept as busy as possible in all sorts of religious activities, they are told to be very zealous in these things. You know, the teaching of the Keswick Convention is this, that as you submit to Christ as your Saviour and are saved by Him, so you need to go a step further and submit yourself to the guidance of His Spirit, and so enter into the fuller spiritual life. Well, I cannot consent to have things mis-interpreted and divided up after that fashion. I believe where Christ comes as a Saviour He so overcomes that soul by His redeeming love that He makes room for Himself in the heart as the Lord of that heart. You want not only to be saved by Him but you want to be ruled by Him. The Apostle Paul counted himself happy to be the bond-servant of Jesus Christ. Oh, he delighted to entertain as his Lord that Jesus whom he once despised. So if the power of His salvation is once felt in our hearts we shall say with one,

"Reign o'er me as King, accomplish thy will,  
And powerfully bring me forth from all ill."

It is a complete salvation. It is not merely a partial salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to His people and accomplished for them. He will be their King. Instead of sin and evil and the devil being their king, He sets up His throne in the heart and they bow before Him, they own His sweet sceptre. Oh, how thankful, how glad they are, to be under the dominion of King Jesus! They want to be more under His dominion and they long for that happy day to arrive when they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads and His servants shall serve Him, love Him with an unsinning heart and serve Him with a perfect, holy service. They are looking forward to that day. Meanwhile, their cross and their burden often is that sin defiles everything they do. But then, there is the precious blood, there is that cleansing fountain, and a true believer has to go continually to Jesus, and to the "blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel". It is in this way, and in this way only, that peace of conscience and peace with God is maintained in the heart as a sweet and precious experience.

"Our Lord and Saviour". O do you desire to confess Him? Are you ever glad thus to acknowledge Him? Would you know more of Him as such, "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" I have spoken to you about that piece in Bunyan's Holy War where the people of Mansoul saw Immanuel enter Mansoul as Conqueror. Mansoul was defeated and wondered what was going to happen, knowing that Mansoul deserved nothing but the heaviest judgment, and for all Mansoul knew Immanuel was going to pronounce the sentence that was just. When the men of Mansoul saw their Conqueror entering the city, they were so taken with the beauty of His person, with the grace and majesty of His every movement, with every line of His countenance, they were so taken with Him that they began to say one to another, "O that Immanuel were our King!" "O that Immanuel reigned in Mansoul!" Have you ever felt like that? As you have looked upon the Christ of God have you ever wished that He had the throne in

your heart? that He ruled in your affections? that His sweet sceptre, the reign of His grace, had its full power and authority in your heart? "Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". He is Lord and He requires obedience from His servants, but He Himself is the fountain of their life, and He, by His Spirit, works in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power, and the Lord Jesus Christ gives what He requires, He inspires what He commands, repentance, faith, love, godly fear, humility,

"Every virtue, every grace,  
All that bears the name of good"

Jesus gives it, and we receive out of His fulness, says the evangelist, grace for grace.

"Jesus gives us pure affections,  
Wills to do what He requires,  
Bids us follow His directions  
And what He commands inspires."

O to know Him as our kingly King! "Our Lord and Saviour". I wish we had such a heart for Jesus Christ as good Samuel Rutherford had. He spoke of Him, you remember, as his "Kingly King", and often he would conclude his letters "Yours in His sweet Lord Jesus". I say, I wish we had such a heart for Jesus Christ as Samuel Rutherford; and yet he complained that his heart was too cold, altogether too contracted; he could not love Christ as he wanted to love Him; he could not hold as much of Jesus Christ as he wanted to hold; but his heart burned with fervent desires towards Him. O that it might be thus, that we might be brought to a willingness to acknowledge Him as our "Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ". "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father". Here I must leave it. May the Lord add His blessing. Amen.