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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

Sermon preached by Mr. J. Raven at Shaw's Corner, Redhill on  
Sunday evening 14.8.49

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,  
and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him  
from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man  
believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession  
is made unto salvation". Romans 10.9-10

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The religion comprised in these two verses is a vital thing.  
It is not what the poet calls "a godliness that feeds on form, or  
lip devotion, barren cheer". It has its roots in the heart, and  
the confession that is spoken of springs out of a believing heart.  
"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus". Now  
Christ said that many would say to Him, "Lord, Lord" who would  
finally be rejected by Him, he would not know them. "I never knew  
you, Depart from Me", so not every one that saith unto Him, "Lord,  
Lord", shall enter into the kingdom. It needs something more  
than lip confession; it needs something more than outward form.  
"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt  
believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead,  
thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto  
righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto  
salvation". May the Lord help us to look into this so solemn, so  
heart-searching subject..

What is it that true believers believe in their hearts? It  
is not the mere historical fact of Christ. Their faith is not a  
notional faith. Mr. Hart says,

"Faith is by knowledge fed,  
And with obedience mixed,  
Notion is empty, cold and dead,  
And fancy's never fixed".

Now what a person believes, who properly believes on the Lord  
Jesus Christ, is to begin with, in the justice of God. A true  
believer in the Lord Jesus Christ believes in the justice of God,  
believes God to be just in all that He testifies in His Word  
about sin, believes God to be just in every sentence of

condemnation pronounced on the transgressor, believes God to be just in the whole of that awful curse that is pronounced under the law upon the sinner. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them"; and if the Lord gives to us the spirit of faith we shall believe that. We shall more or less feel it in our hearts. I am not insisting that all must come to the same depth in this matter, but this must be in some sufficient measure felt in the heart. For what can Christ be to one who has no sense of sin? to one who knows nothing of his ruined state? What can Christ be? Christ is absolutely meaningless to a person who has no sense of sin, and who has no awful sense of the justice of God in the condemnation of sin. There will be this - I shall believe that I am a sinner. I shall believe that God is just and righteous and holy and always must be so, in all that He says and all that He does. Then again, if I have this faith, I believe in my own utter ruin as a sinner. I shall look upon my own case, look into my own heart, and see ruin and death there. One says -

"Thine's alas, a lost condition,  
Works cannot work thee remission  
Nor thy goodness do thee good.  
Death's within thee, all about thee;  
But the remedy's without thee;  
See it in thy Saviour's blood."

I shall believe that I am ruined, that I have no strength, that I am incapable of doing anything spiritual or pleasing to God, unable to do a single thing that can be accepted by a holy and righteous God. These are things that faith believes. I shall believe that the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, from head to foot there are wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. O what a description this is of a sinner's case, as an awakened sinner feels it!

Then again, being convinced of this in some sufficient measure we shall, if we have true faith, if we are taught by the Spirit of God, realise that we have need of a Saviour, that the salvation which saves us, that rectifies our case, must come from outside

ourselves altogether. It must be a mighty salvation, it must be a just salvation, it must be a God-glorifying salvation, for (with all reverence one would speak it) God cannot do anything but that in which He is glorified, He can do nothing but that in which He appears just and holy and righteous and wise. Therefore if He saves me, His glory, the glory of His wisdom, of His justice, of His righteousness, of His truth, of His faithfulness, of His goodness, must shine in it. Well, another thing that faith will believe is, as the Spirit gives some inkling of what Christ is, as the gospel reaches the ears and heart of the sinner, that the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour answers exactly to all the necessities and the wretchedness of its ruined case. It is as the mortice answers to the tenon. O what a needful Saviour He is! and it is wonderful how the Spirit of God does take of the things of Christ and reveal them to a poor sinner. It is at this moment when the sinner is overwhelmed with his sins and need, when he feels so destitute, so undone, so altogether without strength, when it seems as if he must sink never to rise again, that the Spirit of God brings in some inklings of what Christ is, what He has done. O what light there is, what power and life there is in His testimony, as He takes of the things of Christ, as He testifies of Jesus, that He came into the world to save sinners, and the chiefest of them, that "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief". "He shall save His people from their sins". So, in whatever aspect Christ is viewed, as the Spirit reveals Him he answers to the need, the felt need of the sinner. O, am I sick, sick of a dreadful sin-sickness? Am I afflicted with a fevered condition through sin? Christ is the Good Physician, skilful and wise and gracious. He had all power to heal, when on earth, all manner of sickness and disease among the people. He cast out devils; and what He did then by His power in the afflicted bodies and minds of people, He is able to do in poor sinners' souls. "here is a spiritual palsy, there is a condition

worse than leprosy, there is a lameness, a maimed condition, a withered condition, and there is death, stark death, and Christ has all power even to command the dead to live. And in all this how suitable He appears in the eyes of a sinner who is convinced of his sinful, sickly case, convinced of his death, the death that is within him, convinced of his total ruin. The Spirit of God shows us then the riches of Jesus Christ, riches so suited to meet our poverty.

Then again, there is the burden of sin upon the conscience, there is the pollution of sin in the heart. Well, Jesus said again and again, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; He said in one case, "Go and sin no more - neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more", His word not only brings forgiveness but it brings a sin-subduing power into the heart. There is a saying, I do not know who by, that the Lord does not bring His people out of gaol to let them die of gaol-fever. He does not forgive a sinner's sins and leave him under the dominion of his sin. When He forgives He brings deliverance from that bondage. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace". How suited He is in this to the necessities of a sinner's case; and as the Spirit of God reveals Him, how the heart, as it were, closes with Him, using that term in the sense in which the old Puritans used it, when they spoke of 'closing in with Christ'. Our hymn-writer represents the matter very nicely where he says,

"Lo, glad I come, and thou blest Lamb,  
Shalt take me to thee as I am;  
Nothing but sin I thee can give,  
Nothing but love shall I receive".

Blessed is it to be enabled to close with Christ in that way, to receive Christ on His own terms, "without money and without price", to be just a poor empty vessel receiving out of His fulness grace for grace. Well, thus a poor soul believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He believes that He is sent by the Father, "He shall send them a Saviour and a great one". He believes that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the work that the Father gave Him to do, that He wrought the righteousness, He accomplished salvation, He obtained

eternal redemption for His people by pouring out His soul unto death and entered into heaven when He rose from the dead in token that the debt was paid. Sweet truths these are to a convinced sinner who is in such a state that nothing less than this great salvation will suffice to rectify the evil condition that he feels himself to be in. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved".

Now the Spirit of God not only testifies of Christ and Him crucified, but He testifies of Christ Jesus risen from the dead. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept". He has entered into Heaven in and by virtue of His own blood; He makes intercession for transgressors as Isaiah so beautifully expresses it. I am glad that it does not say that He makes intercession for His people, or for His church, or for His elect, but it says, "He made intercession for transgressors". O then, are you that transgressor who needs such a Friend in the court of Heaven, who needs such a High Priest who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them? O the faith of God's elect looks beyond the grave, beyond the tomb; it looks up into Heaven, it enters within the vail and lays hold upon Jesus, the friend of sinners there, who, as He died to save here upon earth, now lives to save in Heaven, lives to save. As on earth He was mighty to save, so in heaven He is mighty to save, for if Jesus, crucified through weakness, was mighty to save, then Jesus who liveth by the power of God must be mighty to save, and equal to every condition of need, and the worst condition that any poor sinner can bring to Him. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead". Do your thoughts sometimes run out after Him? The Apostle said, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God". "Set

your affection on things above, not on things on the earth", Do your thoughts and affections, does your mind, run up to Heaven sometimes? Is it a matter of real concern with you as to whether your name is on the High Priest's breastplate, while He "on His bosom bears the worthless names that did prevail with Him to enter there"? As you think of Him and His finished work, think of Him exalted at the right hand of the Father and set with Him on His throne, does your heart go out to Him in fervent desire that you may know Him? The Apostle said, "That I may win Christ and be found in Him", "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings". O do you seek for a closer acquaintance with the living Christ?

"O that my soul could love and praise Him more,  
His beauties trace, His majesty adore;  
Live near His heart, upon His bosom lean:  
Obey His voice, and all His will esteem".

I say, does your heart run after Jesus Christ in such desires as these? "The desire of my soul is to thy Name and to the remembrance of Thee". "If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved". And if your heart in a way of hunger and thirst, and in a way of believing confidence though it be but a trembling sort of confidence, is running after Jesus Christ entered into glory, "thou shalt be saved".

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness". There is a rich, a glorious, a spotless, an incorruptible righteousness imputed to those who believe. It is unto all and upon all them that believe. "To him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness". This righteousness of Jesus, the righteousness which is Jesus Himself, Christ Himself, is the righteousness of His people, which is imputed to them. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness". Faith may be feeble, it often is, but that does not alter the righteousness. It is not a lesser righteousness for the weak believer, for the trembling soul, and a bigger, fuller and more glorious righteousness for the strong believers who attain to the

full assurance of faith. No, it is the one great and glorious righteousness which is unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. I say, faith may be feeble, it may be a trembling faith, there may be a good deal of unbelief to hamper it, but that faith that goes out to Christ lays hold of a rich righteousness, lays hold of nothing less than Jehovah Tsidkenu. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness". The woman with the issue of blood came very tremblingly to Christ, but she got a full healing. There was nothing wanting in her healing - it was not a partial cure, it was a complete cure, and so it is with a sinner who by grace comes to Christ. He gets a full blessing, he gets a complete healing, he gets an everlasting justification.

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". When the fire burns, then you will have to speak. "While I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue". I think Mr. Popham used to quote a saying like this, 'If you put a bushel over it, it would burn its way through the bushel'. Where there is this living faith in the heart, there will be the confession of it. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Where the reality is known and felt in the soul the tongue must bear witness to it, and the fruit of it must appear in the life of the person, it must be made manifest. "By their fruits ye shall know them". "With the mouth confession is made", and there is a very sweet and very blessed way in which confession is made, according to the will of God, and that is when a poor sinner blessed with a humble hope in Christ, a humble hope in the mercy of God through a precious Redeemer, is constrained to say to the people of God, "Come and hear all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul". Very sweet are the lispings of these babes in grace, very sweet. I have heard it said at Church Meetings at which the stammerings of poor people have been heard, 'It is the best of all our services, the best and the sweetest'; when some poor sinner comes in a humble, it may be a trembling way, to speak of what he or she hopes the Lord has done for their soul,

this is well-pleasing in the Lord's sight, and it does mightily encourage His people. "They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me because I have hoped in Thy Word". "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation", and is He not worthy of it? O poor soul, is not the Lord who has done such things for thee, worthy to be confessed? Is He not worthy to be owned as your Lord?

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend  
On whom my hopes of Heaven depend?  
No; when I blush, be this my shame  
That I no more revere His name".

May the Lord enable us to confess Him believably. Some of us who have been before the Church and have given our testimony have found a sweetness in telling out to other what the Lord has done for our souls, and following Him in the waters of baptism. I believe that when things are healthy with the church of Christ, healthy with the souls of His people, it will be as we read in Malachi, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name". If you are led to think upon His name, His name will make sweet music in your heart and will shed a rich fragrance there that you will not be able to hide, for as you meet with others who fear God and love His name you will have to speak of it. And are they not sweet seasons when those who fear the Lord meet together and Jesus is the theme? Like those godly women at Bedford who sat in the sun at the cottage door, speaking of the things of God. Bunyan gives a very gracious description of their discourse which he, a young fellow destitute at the time of grace, listened to, and he thought they seemed to be like people in another world. It was something so altogether different from anything that he had known and he never forgot it. Well, they spoke of the things of God, and after all, what more profitable theme can engage our thoughts or lips than the things of God, the things He has done for our souls, the things we need Him to do, the sin we need Him to pardon, the pollution we

need Him to save us from, the conflict that goes on within in which we need His mighty help and deliverance, the temptations we bear, and then the sweetness of being delivered? "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." To be enabled to speak to the praise of the glory of His grace, to speak of what He has done and to sink into the dust the while, for I believe that the more His people know of His gracious dealings, His intercession on their behalf, the more they will sink down into the dust and they will lift up the name of Jesus Christ and exalt His glory. The feeling of the heart will be to renounce all their own reputation, and let their name lie in the dust that the name of Jesus only may be exalted. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation", Confession is made before God sometimes in secret; confession is made before men and especially before His people. The Lord grant that His Spirit may so mightily work in us as that we shall be among those who thus believe and who thus confess His name. Amen

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