

Sermon preached by Mr. J. S. Green
at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London.
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"My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things
which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the
pen of a ready writer.

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured
into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

Psalm 45 : 1,2

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The Psalmist was in a most gracious, sanctified frame of mind when he penned this Psalm. The Holy Spirit had blessed him, and strengthened his faith so that his faith was set upon the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a good thing it is when the Holy Spirit does thus favour the soul of a sinner, when Christ is first in the sinner's affections, and when they are favoured to worship Him. The Psalmist commences in a remarkable way, and he says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." There are two important words here - "my heart". A good thing if the Lord should engage each of our hearts in the worship of His great and holy Name. It is only heart worship, my friends, that meets with God's approval. All mere, external, heady worship, though it may entertain, it does not bring any glory to God. Heart worship is that worship indited by the Holy Ghost.

We cannot be too exercised about this - whether our worship is heart worship. If the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, we shall be very concerned about this; and our prayer will constantly be that the Holy Spirit might dwell in our hearts, creating therein a godly exercise, one

which shall prove profitable to us, and one which shall bring glory to God's great Name. And where God does work in the hearts of sinners, that work will go on and on. Where once He commences a work of grace in the heart of one of His people, that work will never come to an end. That sinner will meet with much opposition. Satan will oppose that one. Their own wretched natures will oppose them day by day. And yet notwithstanding all the opposition, God will see to it that "the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Are you concerned about your religion, your standing?

Do you sometimes feel searched out and tried, my friends? If you are a heart-worshipper of the true and living God, you will certainly be tried about it. But if you haven't any heart experience of the truth, you will meet with no opposition: your religion will be a very easy thing: it will just go along smoothly like the water in a brook. But O, if God is teaching you, if He is blessing you, if He is at work in your heart, then you will find very much opposition.

The Psalmist says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." There was not a lot of fleshly excitement. There was godly sobriety, a weight in the things to which he gives utterance, and he says, "My heart is inditing a good matter." In this wonderful Psalm, the Psalmist speaks of many things that he considers to be good matter; and if we are taught by the same Spirit, we shall feel the same things are good matter in our hearts. A great blessing to be enabled to speak of a few things we hope the Lord has done for us, a few things which we know we could never do for ourselves! As some of you look back and are enabled to recall one or two of those blessed seasons when the Lord favoured you and blessed you, you remember the sweetness and the peace and the love that you felt in your hearts then. And there may have been raised up in your heart a sweet hope that the Lord had been at work there. As you remember His past

dealings with you, your soul will sometimes long for a spiritual revival, that God will come and do the same things for you again. Your heart will be on the stretch before God that he will mercifully come and regard you and do you good and confirm your soul.

"My heart is inditing a good matter." When you can prayerfully and carefully consider the things of the Lord Jesus, and His blessed Person, what He is and what He has to give to poor sinners, this is a good matter. If some of you feel that there is in the Lord Jesus those things your soul truly needs, and if you are praying and imploring Him to give you these things, to make them your very own, then your heart is engaged in the real worship of God's great and holy Name.

Meditation on the things of God is sometimes very profitable to seeking souls. As the blessed Spirit of God opens up the things of God, the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find some response in your soul, and you will say, 'Oh that I could come to Christ! Oh that I could receive from Him those things my poor soul needs!' That woman's heart was inditing a good matter: she was greatly tried, she had spent all that she had, but she said, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." I believe all taught by the Spirit, who know something of this woman's experience, their hearts are inditing a good matter. There is a godly, gracious exercise there.

Then says the Psalmist, "I speak of the things which I have made touching the king." No doubt, the king here is the Lord Jesus Christ; and He is a King over His dear people. A wonderful King! He has blessed authority: He speaks with power to the hearts of his people. And the psalmist had known something of the kingly power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a good thing, a good matter, a blessed thing to be enabled to speak of: something touching the King and His grace, His mercy, his love and His condescension. How attractive is the condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ to poor sinners! What an amazing thing it is, friends,

that He who is King of kings and Lord of lords should condescend to look upon poor sinful worms of the earth, and bless them and commune with them, and do them good, and speak with love and mercy to their hearts and grant them communion and fellowship with Himself!

Now the Psalmist, he did enjoy this communion and this fellowship. If this verse of the hymn had been penned in his day, he would have endorsed the truth of it:

"My heart grows warm with holy fire,
And kindles with a pure desire;
Come, my dear Jesus, from above,
And feed my soul with heavenly love."

He was in a most blessed frame, and was enabled, to speak of the goodness of that great King to him. Now what about you, poor sinner? Could you speak a little this morning of the things touching the King? Have you ever been invited by the King to come to Him to have communion with Him? Has He, so to speak, held out the golden sceptre to thee and said, "What wilt thou?" Have you made your requests known to the King? Are you making your case known to Him? Have you a case that needs His attention this morning? Good it is if you want to come near to the King, if you wish to speak to the King, if your heart goes out towards him, and you feel that He alone can meet your case!

And He does speak very kindly and tenderly to His people, as we shall see in the next verse, where the Psalmist says, "Grace is poured into thy lips." He speaks these loving and gracious words; and the Psalmist did hear His voice. The Lord had been pleased to speak wonderful things to the Psalmist, and he did not forget them: the divine Remembrancer brought them from time to time to his remembrance. And when He did, the Psalmist's cup ran over, his heart was filled with heavenly love, and his affections were then set upon things above.

It is a great thing for the Lord to come and to speak to a sinner and to shed abroad His love in a poor sinner's heart. When there is love in the heart, there is a spiritual flowing together. And the Psalmist knew what this flowing together did: he knew what it was to hear the voice of his God. He had spoken to him and He had told him some wonderful things. Now, if you want the king to speak to you, if there is that in the Word which has been made attractive to you, then, poor sinner, you must come to Him. It may be a fearing faith; but He will never despise one of his dear people who ventures to him. If you come to him and say, as Samuel was instructed to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth", then God will in His own time speak to your heart. And then the day will come when this clause of the text will be your experience, "I speak of the things which I have made touching the king." When God's servants can speak thus, it is a very happy and blessed thing: their souls delight to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may not always refer immediately to what the Lord has done for us, but I trust we try to speak from that gracious experience as the Holy Spirit brings these things to our remembrance. Haven't some of you been favoured to sit in the pew and to hear the Lord's servants preach, to speak of the things which they have handled, tasted and felt; and you have felt, 'The King has been here today'? You have felt that He has blessed you with sweet communion. And it may be you have retired for the night, and you have had to thank Him and bless Him for one more opportunity of meeting with His people to hear those things which have been set forth, and to feel that the Holy Spirit has made you a blessed possessor of these things.

"I speak of the things which I have made touching the King" - the things which I have received from the King. And in the gospels we read of some blessed things that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ - some things I trust which the Holy Spirit has made very attractive to us. We were

reading this morning in Luke 4, in the 22nd verse, "And, all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded

out of His mouth." And amongst those wonderful words were these "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Now we believe that although the Psalmist lived many years before Christ was here on earth, yet he knew Him and he understood much of that great work of redemption which should be accomplished by Christ. And he speaks of Him and His work as if it were already accomplished: "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." He seemed so full-to-overflowing: the truth welled up in his heart, and he loved to give utterance to it. He felt Christ was so very, very precious to him that he longed to make Him known, and to speak of Him as he had been favoured to know Him.

Now, the first thing in the second verse is this: "Thou art fairer than the children of men." How the Psalmist esteemed that blessed Person! How he loved Him! When Christ was here on earth, the word spoken by Isaiah years before was true: "When we shall see him, there is no beauty in Him that we should desire Him." How many there were who, with their bodily eyes, saw the Lord Jesus Christ, but He was nothing to them. They never felt a desire for Him; they never loved to be near Him and to receive from Him that which He had to give to poor sinners. How many there are in the days in which we live - they hear him preached, they hear Him set forth as the one thing needful, but they are never affected by the description given of this blessed Person! They never say, 'Oh that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.'

The Holy Spirit favoured the apostle Paul to see such glory in the Lord Jesus, such a beauty in Him: this enabled him to preach Him wonderfully; and God owned and blessed his ministry. The more Paul was favoured to see of the Person of Christ, the more he knew of His wonderful work, the more he wanted to know. And this is how these things work, friends: when you get a glimpse of the King in his beauty, when you are drawn to Him by the cords of love, then you will want to be found

"Nearer, nearer to Him clinging
Let my helpless soul be found."

I am sure things are working right in that sinner's heart who is in such a case.

Now, have you seen a glory in Him? Has that word been fulfilled in your heart that, by the eye of faith, you have seen the King in His beauty? You would describe him a little as the church described Him in Solomon's Song. She saw him, she loved Him, she worshipped Him, and she gave a blessed description of Him: "Thou art fairer than the children of men." How blessed are those sinners who have had a view thus of the Lord Jesus!

I believe heaven is that happy place where God's people eternally view Him. They are in His immediate presence; they view that same Jesus whom they viewed by faith on earth. They worship that same glorious Person Whom they worshipped here on earth. Have you worshipped Him? Has He been fairer to you than the children of men? When He was here on earth, He was a Man of grief. Oh how many things there were that grieved His holy nature! Why, wherever He went He met sin; and being holy and pure, how terrible sin was to Him! And yet, notwithstanding all this - this Man of sorrows, this Man who came on earth to bear the sins of many, who was weighed down, who was pressed down under the burden of the sins of His people, this Man in whom

thousands could see no beauty and nothing desirable - there were a few taught by the Holy Spirit and they loved Him.

There were those three in that house at Bethany - Martha, Mary and Lazarus - I believe they loved Him: they could say of Him, Thou art fairer than the children of men; they could say of Him, Thou art the altogether lovely. They knew Him. And we read of one and the other who were favoured thus to know Him.

The particular thing is this: that every sinner favoured to know the Lord Jesus Christ - whether in Old Testament times, New Testament times, at the present time - every one of them gives the same description of this blessed Person. They may be taught Him in various ways, but they all say the same things of Him. They do! You have never yet heard one sinner who by faith has viewed this blessed Person but who has spoken most highly of Him. Oh how they have longed to tell forth the worth of the Lord Jesus Christ! They have spoken most highly of Him.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men." None amongst the children of men rightly compares with Him who was this Man of sorrows. Alas, we see some in their religious attempts to worship - they dress themselves up in surplices and other things to make themselves attractive, to make themselves seen. They are not concerned about the honour and glory of that blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not, indeed! But there are a few, I believe, even in our day, who find a real delight, who find a real joy in being able to set forth something of the beauty of Immanuel. Toplady, in that well-known hymn, said:

"Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee,"

Now that good man, taught by the Spirit, - he knew something of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had viewed His lovely countenance; he had received from Him some token of His love; He had received from Him something, of His mercy, and he could say, "Thou art fairer than the children of men."

The apostle, in his ministry, did seek to exalt this blessed Person. And he said that in all things He should have the pre-eminence. He had to set up this blessed King, to speak well of Him; not to speak so much of himself. "Thou art fairer than the children of men." One good man, sweetly favoured in these things, said:

"Living tongues are dumb at best,
We must die to speak of Christ."

Now, if such a desire is sometimes found in the hearts of sinners to speak well of Christ, to set forth His glory, His beauty, His suitability, what will it be to see Him as He is; for our eyes to be set upon Him for ever and ever? The text will be blessedly true then: "Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips."

John, speaking of this blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, said of Him that He was full of grace and truth. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." What a wonderful testimony!

"Grace is poured into thy lips." But not for everyone! Not for all people, but for those for whom He prayed in the 17th of John. Grace is poured into His lips for His people. Good John Owen says that God has not called all men to believe. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Oh what a sad thing to be one of those self-righteous ones, self-satisfied! Some of you can say, through grace, you are not one of these characters.

The Lord has mercifully met you, stripped you of your self-righteousness, and laid you low before Him. Now, the gospel is for sinners, sensible sinners, who feel unfit to partake of it. What a great mercy it is to be one of those whom the dear Lord invites. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." What an encouraging word this is for a sensible sinner, a Holy-Ghost-made sinner, a mourning sinner.

Now grace is poured into the lips of Jesus Christ for these sinners. How often when on earth, He was pleased to speak a word to a poor sinner, a word of encouragement, a word that made their very heart to dance with joy when they heard His voice! In seeking a little meditation upon this word last evening, I thought of that word that has come from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ into the hearts of many sinners, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Wonderful words they are! And, if they should fall from His lips into your heart, poor sinner, they would form in your heart such love and such affection towards Him, that you would beg of Him to speak again and again to your soul. Once you hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel, it will make you long to hear it again and again. This will give you a real affection for Christ. Your heart sometimes will long for Him. You will plead that He will not be silent unto you, but that He will come again and again into your heart and speak these words of grace and of love.

There is another word in the 11th of Matthew that has been made a good word to many poor sinners, and that is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What are these words to other people? What is my poor preaching to you? What are these words that fell from the lips of Jesus to you, unless the Lord is at work in your heart? They are nothing to you! They are not attractive to you. You don't want to come to Jesus; you don't feel your need of Jesus. But if you are a poor sinner that is taught by the Holy Ghost what a sinner you are in God's sight, Oh! how attractive a word like this would be to you! How

encouraging to your poor soul! To think, that this blessed King in Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ, invites such poor sinners to come to Him!

And the gospel does welcome sinners! Right the way through God's Word, sensible sinners are welcomed to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." None other can speak this to the heart of a poor sinner but this blessed King. He speaks with divine authority. And if you feel to be a poor, helpless sinner, dejected, cast down, mourning over your sins, remember the text says, "Grace is poured into thy lips" - into the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ - and He will speak pardon and release to your heart. May you be helped to venture on Him and to plead His own word.

Amen.

Bible Reading: Luke 4.