

SERMON PREACHED BY MR. L.S.B. HYDE AT SHAW'S CORNER,  
REDHILL, on FRIDAY EVENING, 20th MAY, 1966

TEXT: Psalm 119 - 165 v - "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them".

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It is often remarked that what the Psalmist wrote, he wrote out of the experience of his own heart. Comparatively few people know this peace about which he is speaking this evening. "Great peace have they which love thy law". Men are continually striving after peace, and they are continually finding the elusive quality of it, but the Psalmist speaks here of having it. He had it; the people of God are blessed with it from time to time.

"Great peace have they which love thy law". This is the only real place where great peace will be discovered, but as we are directed into this word this evening, O that the great peace of God might come upon us. When the Holy Ghost fell upon the company assembled in the house of Cornelius great peace fell upon them, and some of us here are witnesses to this great peace which has fallen upon us from time to time. If we should be enabled to examine the time and the occasion we may recall that it was when we were in the condition spoken of here: "They which love thy law". One point here is very striking: the Scripture does not say 'which keep thy law', it goes one step further - 'which love thy law'. We shall not have to be concerned about keeping God's law if we love it, because it will be one of those things that will naturally fall out. You cannot love the law of God without keeping it. Nothing can you love without paying particular attention to its commands, or if it is a person, their commands and exhortations to you.

How do the people of God love the law of God? There are several aspects concerning this word 'law', and the first one we will look at for a few moments is the law as it was given by Moses. What did the law of Moses do to you and for you? I believe that you will love that law if it was your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ, if by the application of that law upon your hearts you were brought down as a sinner, you heard those words expressed in Ezekiel's prophecy: "The soul that sinneth it shall die". And although at the time you did not love that law at all, because it cut right across your pathway, it destroyed all your pleasures, you could find rest in nothing - yet, how ~~is~~ it now? Can you see the lovingkindness of God in bringing that law into your heart, causing you to realise that you were a great sinner before God?

So, there is a love to the law of God as given by Moses. It was the love of God that sent it. Had it not have been for that law, you would not have known that you were a sinner.

Then we may go on to remember what the Apostle says: "The law of commandments contained in ordinances". "Great peace have they which love thy law" in this matter. And how do they come to love that law? Perhaps some of you can bear this testimony of the length of time that you have stumbled at the law concerning the commandments of the ordinances, and there has been a rebellion rising in your spirit. Many suggestions have been put from your own heart, and from Satan. You may have looked at other people, and you have said, Well, they have not been baptized - why should I? Do we follow that person that has not been baptized? Or, do we follow the Lord Jesus Christ? The words: "Follow Me", refer to the following of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, seek to follow Him, because "in keeping of His commandments there is great reward".

This is where the great peace will come in. And now we may consider, as some of you may perhaps wonder, where this peace can come in as one passes through the waters of 'believers' baptism. I know, and some of you know, that it does come in. We may say, for the consolation of some, that no blessing is promised as we go through the waters, but it will be a blessing in your soul if you have great peace concerning it. And how will you have great peace concerning this law of ordinances which as rightly led you go through because you love it? It is because we see in the ordinance something more than just being submerged beneath the water. I heard a godly man not very long ago who gave this counsel? He said: When you see Christ in the water, follow Him. Have you looked for Christ in the water? Have you looked beyond the outward ordinances to the deep significance, and seen the Lord Jesus Christ being overwhelmed with the sins of the whole election of grace? Has there been upon your spirit a deep sense of the love of Christ that He should have gone down into the grave? Love begets love. And it is when you see Christ in the water in all His love, going down there suffering for sinners, and you hope for you, that you will want to follow Him. And so, before we pass on, we may put this question to some of you: Have you seen Christ in the water? Have you seen a blessedness and sweetness in the ordinances which are set before you this evening? If we have, then we may follow the counsel of the man that I have spoken of, which is in accordance with the Scriptures: "Follow Me".

What depths did the Lord Jesus descend into in order that He might save your soul! And I believe our dear friend, (and my dear daughter) this evening is following the Lord because she has seen Him, her Lord, in the water, because she sees in this baptismal pool the Lord Jesus Christ in all His sufferings, and all her hope is there. By this revelation we become aware of something in our heart which attaches us to it, to the ordinance, and it is more than the mere baptism. It is because we see Christ in the ordinance, and we love Christ because He was baptised Himself as an example to us, and also in all that it pre-figured in His death and His burial. But they would not be sufficient to give us joy and love if that is where it finished. As there is a going down with Christ - "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" - so there

is a rising again up out of these waters, and the setting forth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Great peace have they which love thy law". We love the Lord Jesus Christ because He laid down His life for His sheep, but how much more do we love Him because He rose from the dead! "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain".

"Great peace have they which love thy law". You will love this law of ordinances set before us, and this will enable you to look back to the law which Moses gave. And we may speak also of the law of liberty which is spoken of in the Scriptures - "The perfect law of liberty". Where there is perfection (and there is in the work of God), there will be great peace. I cannot communicate this peace to you, but God can give it, and if He should give you that peace tonight, what a blessing it will be. In the course of her account which our dear friend told before the Church she spoke of one such night when peace flowed like a river. When is peace most prized? After the boisterous tempests have blown, when many temptations have visited us. How glad were the disciples when the Lord Jesus stood up and spoke to the wind and to the waves, and said: "Peace, be still". That was the time of deliverance.

So we may refer to this law of liberty which is the liberty of deliverance. A great blessing it is to have deliverance. The people of God have deliverances continually because they are many times in trouble, they are many times beset with enemies which are too strong for them. Great peace have they which love thy law of liberty, and when you experience it, then you will rejoice in it, and the peace of God will flow into your soul. I can vouch for this, friends, because I speak that I do know, and I testify that I have seen. When God looked down upon you in your distress, when your sins seemed to have such a grip on you, and there seemed none that would hear your cry, and it seemed useless to continue with any religion at all - then for the Lord Jesus Christ to speak just a few words. I shall not forget the time of one of my deliverances, friends, or the place, and it was just in these few words: "'Tis He in trouble bears thee up". And my burden was gone, and great peace was upon me. Mark the word 'great'. It was not an ordinary peace. It was not the kind of peace that men give; it was the kind of peace that men cannot take away. It was the kind of peace that devils cannot take away. And even when that peace in its fulness subsides, the Prince of it remains. How blessed a remembrance there is to some of us this evening, as we may remember the great peace that we have had sometimes - and did not we love the law of God? Did not we love everything that was in the Scriptures? How precious were the Scriptures to us! How precious are they today! What peace have they brought into the hearts of the people of God over the years when you have been in trouble, when your enemies have risen up, and you have heard the word of God, and great peace has descended upon your spirit. Has not this had the effect of bringing you within the compass of these people which love thy law? "O how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day". O that it were more often our experience, that we wanted nothing else but to meditate in the word of God. There is, of course, meditation which occupies the attention of people sometimes, but is it because you

love the law of God? Is it because you love the word of God?

I had an experience not very long ago where I devoted, by the grace of God, my attention to reading the Scriptures alone for a week or two, and then I picked up what I have read a good many times, the writings of another person (good writings, indeed), but O how second rate - and I could say, "O how love I Thy law". "Great peace have they which love Thy law."

work Then, we shall see this law extending into the realms of nature, through the realms of God's providence. As for God, His way is perfect. You look back over the years, and you see the law of God, His judgments, His purposes, which have come into your life. I was speaking to a man only last evening, and he was telling me how in his earlier days he was often sick, and he had to see many young men making advances when through his own sickness he was prevented from the same success that they were favoured with. But, he said, I can say tonight that I would not have anything altered. He was, I believe, experiencing what we have here - He loved the law of God; he loved the working out of the law of God; he loved the way that God had brought His promises to pass; and in consequence, he loved the precepts, and wanted to walk in them. Will there ever be a time when you are more willing to consider the precepts of the law of God than when you see that all things are working together for good, to them who are the called according to His purpose. What do we mean when we say "for your good"? It does not mean for the lifting up of self. It does not mean that we might have a more comfortable means of living, but it does mean when Christ is raised up in our hearts, when, as the hymnwriter says:

"The more thy glory strikes my eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie".

Now, that is working together for good. And there will never be a better spot in your life than when you see the Lord Jesus Christ high and lifted up, and you right down in self-abasement. Now, this is religion, friends, and this is what we want to press after. This is when great peace will be upon you, because you will see the mercy of God all through the days of your life. Can you love God this evening as you may look over just this short portion of today? Can you see, do you feel, the wonderful mercy that God has extended to you today? How He has borne with your infirmities, and your backslidings, and your baseness. "O how love I Thy law", especially when we may read in it: "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely"; "I will take away all iniquity".

"Great peace have they which love Thy law". We have got those who can bear testimony to it this evening here in our congregation. There is a lot of religion without this great peace, but there is a religion which has it. And if you have once had it, you will want to get back to that place again. How sweetly did the Lord speak to His disciples when He said: "My peace I give unto you". So then,

this peace is a gift. Have you sometimes been filled with agitation; have you been filled with vexation of spirit; have you been disturbed by the events that have come into your life so suddenly; have enemies risen up to fill you with dismay; have you been troubled on every side?- what will give you great peace? What will make you love the law of God? "Cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus". This is what we are having set forth this evening, bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus. We shall need to have that grace given to us to die to the things of the world, and to live to Christ. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain". This is religion, and nothing else. People like to call theirs religion, but this is a religion that will save you. This is a religion that will land you in heaven, because if you are living here with Christ, then you may be sure that Christ will be standing ready to receive you, and O how you will put out your arms, and how He will put out His to embrace you, and what great peace will envelope you then. This peace will be greatly needed, but God does not leave us until we get to the last day of our lives, generally speaking, before we get this foretaste of the peace of God which passeth all understanding. There are those spots along the road where, as a returning prodigal, we may see the joy and the love of the everlasting Father, and Jesus Christ coming to us and saying: I love thee well, My child. There was peace in the household, you know, when they brought forth the fatted calf, and brought forth the best robe, and put the ring upon his finger.

"Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them". What a blessing is here. Offences will come, but what a blessing to have this in our hearts that will enable us to bear this testimony: "And nothing shall offend them". No stumbling-block at all. We shall see God's ways as just, His counsels wise, love marking out every step. Sometimes the Lord has laid upon His people heavy afflictions. Sometimes He has brought into their lives unexpected trials. It has even been the case, as it was in the days of the Apostles, when there has been suffering from false brethren, and sometimes great and heavy trials have been brought about even amongst the godly themselves. Now, just think upon it. God knows what place you are in tonight. How does it find you? Do you say, this is hard? Do you say, where is the love of God that this should have been allowed to come into my life? Well, you may do. Flesh kicks at the start, but may the time come by and by when you will bless God for present trials, when you will say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good". Eli well knew that he deserved what the Lord brought upon him, but this is not always the case when trials come into our lives. God brings trials into our lives sometimes, and bitter experiences in order that the grace of God may abound, in order that His grace may be tried, in order that we may learn a little more about the love of Christ, and about His sufferings, whatever we may feel to know in this respect, (and we may well confess it to be small). If we are spared a few more years, we shall know that we are still learning.

If we are being led by the Spirit of God, we shall be learning a little more of what it cost the Lord of life and glory to suffer. Do you know anything of His sufferings? If you do not, you cannot speak of them, can you? But the Apostle Paul, and Peter, and John knew a little of the sufferings of Christ, and they also had revealed to them the glory that should follow. That is why Peter spoke about it.

"And nothing shall offend them". O how the ordinance which is before us tonight has offended so many. How is it in your case? Are you offended? What a mercy when God does this great work in your soul, whereby great peace shall be yours, and as that great peace comes into your soul, so you will love that law, and you will love the God of the law, because

"The written and the Incarnate Word,  
In all things are the same".

We cannot love that which is inanimate, because it is unresponsive, and love must have its reward in a return of that love. Sometimes it is tried, sometimes the love that we expect does not come, but nevertheless love will hang on and wait for the time when that love will be returned. This is when great peace comes into our souls, when we love the law of God. Yes, but when we love the God who gave it, when we love the Lord Jesus Christ, when we love His eternal Father, when we love and rejoice in the eternal Spirit, then nothing shall offend.

We may consider just one point of exhortation here. That which offends is often brought about by a stumblingblock, and there is a word to the people of God that they should take great care that they should not put a stumblingblock in another's way. This will occasion a great deal of exercise in the hearts of the people of God. We can so easily put a stumblingblock in another's way, and they are offended. But here is our great cause for rejoicing, when God comes He will remove all the stumblingblocks out of the way, He will even cause you to love the people that have put the stumblingblocks in the way. I am speaking from experience, friends; I am not speaking of what I have read in other people's books. We shall see the perfection of God's work, and we shall find great peace. What shall we say concerning our enemies, or those that we may indeed refer to as our friends, and yet seem to have become our enemies? Where shall we find great peace? I can tell you. When God brings you to that place as He did me on more than one occasion, to be enabled to pray unto God and say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". They do not realise that they are carrying out the will and purpose of God in order that I may have fellowship with His sufferings, in order that I may indeed see the blessedness of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sufferings reached their termination on the cross, but His whole life was a life of suffering. And so, we are here testifying, to follow a despised and crucified Lord.

"Great peace"- O that we might feel it -"have they which love Thy law". O that the love of Christ might move our hearts.

"Let me attest Thy power,  
Let me Thy goodness prove,  
Till my full soul can hold no more  
Of everlasting love".

And then all those things which offend will be moved out of the way. And if there are some of you that have been offended in relation to the ordinance of Believers' Baptism, may this love of Christ come into your soul, and may this great peace descend upon your spirit, and you will see, as we have already said, Christ in the water, and when you see Him, let me say this: Follow Him.

AMEN.

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