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Sermon preached by Mr. L.S.B. Hyde, Redhill, at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, on 10th
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"It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go, until had brought Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." Song of Solomon 3:4

In the chapter that we read (I Peter 2), and in the hymn that we have sung (174), we have this great, wonderful truth set before us: "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." (I Pet. 2.7) It is a clear mark of being a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, if and when Jesus Christ is precious. If Jesus Christ is not precious, then how can we really believe on Him? It is because Christ is precious that people believe. 'Precious' is a very important word of very deep meaning. If there is only one of an article in the whole world, then how very precious that article is. If there is only one Person that is able to save to the uttermost in the whole world, then how wonderful and precious that Person must be. If there is only one Person that has power in heaven and in earth in regard to the Church of God, then how precious that Person must be! And if we feel that there is only One that could look down upon us in our great need, and do something for us and save us from our sins, then how precious that person must be. That Person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have no need to be told that, I know but you may well ponder this great matter as to how precious Christ is to your soul. In the hymn we have just sung we have the lines:

*To them He is more precious far
Than life and all its comforts are. (Gadsbys 174)*

and that is sometimes very true. If it is a question when we are faced with death, and we have got to leave all the comforts then, how little or consequence and value they have, for to find Christ precious in the hour of death will be an unspeakable blessing.

Now my mind has been somewhat tossed in turning to this word this evening, but I trust that God is in the matter, and that some may find the benefit of God's favour. In the chapter itself we find that real religion is a day and night exercise: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets." (v 1/2) So she goes on: "It was but a little that I passed from them" (that is the watchmen) "but I found Him whom my soul loveth." We should notice that 'my soul' is mentioned here. Every experience and relationship that the people of God have with Christ is in their souls, it is not anything to do with physical attraction? Indeed we read in the Scriptures that the visage of Christ was so marred, more than any man's. But to the soul there is an attraction in Christ, the result of the Spirit of God working in our souls that we may seek after Him, How wonderful if God should bring us to feel that we are wanting Him and seeking after Him. Let us make the point clear that that is not of our flesh. There are those who profess to seek after Christ, they have decided to seek after Christ. You need to examine the matter to see whether your beginning is right. God always begins, the sinner never begins. By the grace of God the sinner may continue, but the sinner never begins. The

Word of God speaks of those that are 'sought out' (Is. 62.12), and cannot we say? some of us must surely say: 'I was sought out'; I could not claim any honour or any faith of any description, any applause by being able to say, well, now I began to seek God. If we began to seek God then there is something wrong, but if God sought us out, and gave us His Spirit that we felt we must seek after God seek after Jesus Christ, even though perhaps we wove met with a great deal of opposition, then surely to God must be the praise. We must seek after Jesus Christy Will He receive us? Whether He will or not we must press through.

Now it is very clear that the Bride of Christ in the Song of Solomon knew something about the beauty and the glory of the Person after whom she was pursuing: "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth." So there was recognition. The leading and teaching of the Spirit will make Christ a reality, and we shall find in our seeking that we shall know Him "But I found Him whom my soul loveth." We shall know Him because when we see Him His smile will be a smile of love, the very visage of His face that is presented to our faith will be such that will move us in love and affection towards Him.

We can take an instance from the case of both Martha and Mary when their brother Lazarus died. They needed the Lord Jesus Christ then in that predicament when they had lost their dear brother, "But I found Him whom my soul loveth." Martha, said, "If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." It is noticeable that Mary said exactly the same words. But there was a purpose in the delay of the Lord Jesus Christ coming at that time. We noticed that there was a delay here. He did not suddenly appear "she sought Him but she found Him not." But He was coming; He was coming to Lazarus. He was going to perform that which would glorify God. How often do we think in God's appearing that His purpose is to glorify Himself. If we get impatient and say God is not delivering me out of this trouble, now He has come too late, looking at the case of Lazarus now he has died. If you had been here four days earlier then all would have been well, but now he has died. But both of these women could surely say "I have found Him whom my soul loveth." They were now about to behold some greater and deeper experience of the love of Christ, and see what He was able to do.

We do not know a great deal about Jesus Christ, and all that we know is that which He is pleased to reveal to us, "But I found Him whom my soul loveth." Now, what would that mean to you this evening? What does Jesus Christ mean to you? Is He really precious to you, or is He not? Would it matter if you did not find Him this evening? Is there that produced by the Spirit in your soul makes you anxious to find Him now, and maybe you came on the last occasion when the House of God was opened here, and you did not find Him, and you did want to find Him, and God has delayed. Why has he delayed? He delayed four days on the occasion when Lazarus was to be raised from the dead -and that He_ magnify His glory, and show to the sisters that there is a power in resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself had not been raised from the dead at that time, but He had the power of the resurrection He was able to raise up Lazarus by His own power.

"I found Him whom my soul loveth." Why do you love Jesus Christ? Do you think you can honestly say:

*Compared with Christ in all besides
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee. (Gadsbys 940)*

We should look at these things very carefully, because this is what real religion is all about. There is plenty of religion of a sort, but religion in its fulness is to "know Christ", and the Apostle therefore says "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." (Phil. 3.10) What joy was in the heart of the Bride of Christ in this verse "But I found Him whom my soul loveth."

Now it was not a casual meeting, and neither was it a meeting at a distance, because in the next clause we read "I held Him." Now we see here two things - wonderful condescension on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ that He should be willing to be held. And yet if we look at the matter in regard to her matrimonial relationships, well, is there not something very instructive? "I held Him." What would you think of a person that you loved, and who professed to love you, who never held you. Now much more so, our profession of Christ is such, and our desire after Christ is such that with a spiritual spontaneity there is a stretching forth of the arms of faith and grasping Him in our arms the antidote of death. "I held Him."

We read elsewhere that "He is held in the galleries"(S of S. 7.5), and that the graces of the Spirit are poured out upon the people who are thus favoured and inspired, and I may use that word in a right way, not an inspiration as we refer to the Word of God being inspired, but nevertheless an inspiration as we may take it from that Scripture: "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2.13) So then let everything that the children of God do, they do as the Apostle says: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2.20)

"I found Him whom my soul loveth, I held Him." Now this seems to set before us that this was a private meeting, and it certainly will be a private meeting. You know when your soul is tied up in the love of Christ it will always be private, because the eyes of men will not be able to pry into this sacred scene. How much can be conveyed in a 'hold'? I held Him and would not let Him go."

Now this takes us back to that occasion when Jacob was wonderfully blessed when he was in great trouble, and you will perhaps remember that the Angel wrestled with him - the Angel of the Covenant wrestled with him." And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except Thou bless me." (Gen. 32. 25/26) Jacob in the midst of all his troubles had found Him whom his soul loveth, and found Him who was the only hope of deliverance at this time. He found Him, and not only had found Him, but he had held Him, and not only had he held Him but he would not let Him go. He said, let me go. Jacob said I will not let thee go except Thou bless me. Now, would you be favoured this evening, any one of you, to feel that

you have found Him, and that you are holding Him, and that you will not let Him go until the Lord has granted you a blessing.

What would you consider to be a blessing? Jacob did not indicate any blessing at all. It is not delineated as to what Jacob meant when he asked for a blessing, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." But God commanded the blessing, and how good it is when our Beloved speaks to us things that we can hardly imagine. He said "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said; Tell me, I pray Thee, thy name. And He said wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And He blessed him there." (Gen. 32.28/9) Surely Jacob was left in no doubt as to who this Person was - the Angel of the Covenant - Jesus Christ in human form appearing to him on that occasion, and commanding the blessing, changing his name. No one else could change your name from sinner to saint but the Almighty God.

"I held Him and would not let Him go." It is good when our religion makes us tenacious. To lots of people religion is just one thing, but there are many other things but to some people the knowledge of Christ and the love of Christ is the only thing:

*I could from all things parted be,
But never, never, Lord from Thee. (Gadsbys 1105)*

Whilst we are fully aware that there are many temptations, that there are many demands upon our time, perhaps sometimes you have felt very distressed because there have been so many demands upon your time when you desire to find your Beloved and that Christ was your All in All. We should remember that if we are disciples of Jesus Christ then we must forsake all, father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife and one's own self also. That is the hardest thing to forsake. But God Himself will make us willing and give us grace to forsake ourselves, so like Job we shall say "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job.42.6)

It will be no consolation if we hold merely to the negative side "I abhor myself." To see ourselves as sinners will never save us, but to see Christ as a great Redeemer, oh, that is a very different matter. To hear Christ speaking unto us whilst He is held, and speaking words which are only heard by the sheep of Christ. Well-known is that word in Jeremiah, but nevertheless how rich it is in the grace of God, and the tender love of God: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have drawn thee." (Jer. 31.3)

"I held Him and would not let Him go". This could not be in one's natural strength. We do not see here a natural scene; we see here a spiritual scene; we see here a soul scene; we see here a scene which is secret between the soul and God. Have you ever felt by the grace of God the tenacity which is mentioned in this verse "I held Him and would not let Him go." Let us make this point clear, that nature would let Him go. There is nothing in your nature or mine that would ever wish to retain Christ. "The natural mind is enmity against God." (Romans 8.17) What we have here is the working of the Spirit in the soul of the Bride of Christ, the working of the Spirit in your soul, "Unto you therefore which believe, He is

precious." (I Pet. 2.7) because God has made Himself precious. God has made Jesus Christ the Chief Corner Stone, elect, precious.

"I held Him and would not let Him go". So here was a never to be forgotten experience. On these occasions (not everyday occasions) may not some of you have heard these sweet words of gospel truth, "there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." (Psalm 130.4) "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy sins, and will remember them no more for ever." (Is 44.25) Now it may be that there has been a lot of coming and going on this matter. Your desires may have extended over days and weeks and months and years, but now the matter has become one of urgency, and no one else but God has caused us to say 'Lord grant me this blessing now!'

*Lord, I cannot let thee go,
Till a blessing Thou bestow. (Gadsbys 376)
For Thy grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much. (Gadsbys 379)*

It may be that some of you would have hung back from time to time because you have said Well this is too great a blessing; I cannot really expect that God will bless me in this way. Now the scene changes. Now there is an experience entered into that perhaps you have never entered into before. It is so different; there is a feeling of love, the irresistible love of Christ producing in you an irresistible love to Himself.

So "I held Him and would not let Him go, until." O, there are several places in the Word of God where this word 'until' comes in; in the connection here 'until I had brought Him into my mother's house.' As I look at this word it seems to bring before us the rich desire of those that are blessed by the Holy Spirit, and Christ is rich in their souls that they, desire to bring Christ in their soul into their mother's house; and the Church is the mother of us all, and to set before the Church of God the riches and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now some of you have been favoured o bear your testimony when you heart has been warmed. Others have almost got there and then are perhaps ready to draw back.

I remember when the Lord brought me into this place myself. After one Lord's Day sermon I sat down and I wrote a letter to my Pastor, and then things came along and fears arose, and I tore the letter and did not send it. But the week following on the Lord's Day evening, when my Pastor preached from these words: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Tim. 1.15) I had to write another letter and send it - that was the fulness and *glory* of gospel truth revealed to me, the love of Christ to my soul, and my soul was touched, and God had spoken to me, and I felt that I must, since I was holding Him and would not let Him go until I had brought the matter before those that I loved in the truth, and honoured Him before the Church of the living God. "I held Him and would not let Him go until I had brought Him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

In the Church of God, where there is a right liveliness in the Church of God, there will be a travail for the souls of others. Now perhaps you never thought that anybody was travelling

for your soul. Perhaps you never thought that anybody was praying for you. But in the true Church of God there is a weight resting upon the spirits of those that fear God, and-for those that are not manifest by an open profession. You know there is a very deep exercise sometimes that those people might be brought forth in this way "into the chamber of her that conceived me." Now it is wonderful what the Lord does in this respect. Very mysterious, very strange is this secret work of God.

I have been amazed in my own case, and maybe some of you have been amazed, that you have been laid in the heart of some perhaps for a long time who have been watching for your soul, who have been praying for this time when you should go forth and find Him whom your soul loveth. You may say, I never said a word, but you see, dear friends, if you have got gracious, exercised people in the Church of God they have got very keen eyes and they will watch and they will see the reactions, and they will see whether there is a going forth unto Christ. Maybe, if you are standing by when godly conversation is being spoken, that you will be lingering around. I remember in my early days it was ever so good to hear what the godly had to say. Now you see the godly do not miss these things. Perhaps you might have thought you had succeeded in some way or other in presenting a picture where you were not really listening. But you know God knows when you are really listening, and sometimes the people of God know when you are really listening.

"Then those 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." (Mal. 3.16) Those people that may not be able always to speak sometimes think upon His Name, and if you think upon His Name then that is going to be manifested when you are listening. If you have never thought upon His name, then there will never be any interest in any godly conversation but if you have thought upon His Name then when godly conversation in which Christ is glorified, you will be unable to do anything else but listen. What is this? Well, here is just the indication that you are seeking after Christ.

Another thing, if you are seeking after Christ the things of this life will lose their hold, at least for that time. You will see that there is nothing to compare to Christ. Oh, that I may know Him, that I may know that He is mine - Mine. Religion takes on a very great reality. It is not just when it is time to go to chapel; it is a Sunday; it is the Lord's Day. Oh, no, it is ever so different, and that is why when God works in your soul you will know the difference of going and coming and many chapel goers. You will come with a desire, you will come if so be that you may see Christ, and that you may find Him, and that you may take hold of Him, that He will bless, that your soul may be blessed in such a way that you will say 'I will not let Him go' because my soul is overwhelmed within me, and I must bring this Christ that is in my heart now into the presence of the children of the King that they may know how precious and how glorious He is to me

"Until I brought Him into my mother's house." Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Do we love Jesus Christ? Are we really saved? "I have found Him whom my soul loveth." If you love a person naturally you are going to talk about them, and many of you will know what that experience is. Furthermore, if the person you love is referred to you will be all ears.

Now there is a line in our hymn book that speaks about these young converts and when I say young converts I do not mean in regard to natural age, because when God converts us by His grace, whatever age it is we shall be young converts. How glorious a time that is when we are called by grace and Christ is made precious, because He has saved us from our sins, and raised us to a hope in His mercy, and His love has been shed abroad in our hearts, and the gospel has been very precious to us, and we have looked forward to the next service from the last service. So we may truly be found seeking, with a true seeking, with a longing seeking, with a God-inspired seeking.

"I held Him and would not let Him go until I had brought Him into my mother's house." You know there are one or two instances in the Scriptures where the Lord was detained. We think of Abraham, when the three men came to him and he asked them to wait while he prepared a meal for them, and they were willing to wait. Then we think of the case of Manoah when they prepared an offering, and the Angel of the Lord was willing to wait. So then let us take the spiritual experience 'until I brought Him into my mother's house.' Perhaps Satan may suggest that He will not wait, that He will go. Oh, then may Satan be proved a liar, because he has always been a liar from the beginning and the father of lies.

"Until I brought Him into my mother's house." What for? Because I wanted to speak of His glory as far as I could. Now, you know, we cannot say very much about Jesus Christ. We know Jesus Christ as we know ourselves as sinners, and the greater sinners we feel to be, as distinct from actually being in practice, the more precious Christ will be. In the chapter we read "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious:"

Now this is a very important point - He is precious. It is not He may be precious, It is not, well, it is usual that He is precious. The Word says, "He is precious unto you that believe." Now then, if you are brought into this experience "I held Him and would not let Him go, until I brought Him into my mother's house." then you see He is a reality.. There is a reality when faith lays hold on something. You know if we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews we read about a hope that is of God, and we find this: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Now you see, in laying hold here, it is a laying hold of the hope set before.(Heb. 6. 17/18)

*Our Jesus is the God of hope;
He works it by His power;
It holds the weak believer up,
In the distressing hour. (Gadsbys 244)*

So here we read that those that have fled for refuge, Christ is the Refuge for this purpose, to lay hold or the hope set before them: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6.19)

So then "I held Him and would not let Him go until I brought Him into my mother's house." One of those things which we need to speak about when we come into our mother's house

willingly, oh, so willingly. 'What is your hope? 'You are a sinner, what is your hope? In the book of Job we read, "where is now thy hope?" and it is a good question, and it is worth considering, and weighing up. "Where is now thy hope? Can we say:

*"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus" blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. (Gadsbys 1106)*

If that is true, is this what you want to bring before the Church of God? Is this what you want to tell those who, although you were not aware of it, they travailed for you, they watched for you, they have looked for you, and they have prayed continuously that Christ may be in you the hope of glory." I held Him and would not let Him go until I had brought Him into my mother's house."

Now what are you going to say about Jesus Christ? You know there are those that when they have thought about taking a step like this, the question has been posed 'and what are you going to say?' Let us remember this, that you will say what God will put into your mouth to say, and that will glorify God. We may be so anxious about what we shall say. You know, friends, it is not a lot that has to be said, but it is just a sentence or two about the Lord Jesus Christ: You see here the Bride had by faith held the Bridegroom to her "I held Him and would not let Him go until I brought Him into my mother's house." There may, of course, be some reference to the Jewish way of things in the presentation of this espousal. "I brought Him into my mother's house." She was quite willing, and you will be quite willing in the day of God's power. Now I do believe that the Church of the living God is the salt of the earth. I know there are plenty of people that will raise all the differences and divisions and so on, but you know on this occasion you will see the people of God as in Christ. You will see them in perfection, you will see them without fault and therefore you will want to be amongst those that are witnesses. "I held Him and would not let Him go until I had brought Him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress has a chamber that is called 'peace.' If the experience spoken of in this verse "I found Him whom my soul loveth, I held Him and would not let Him go" - then you will know by experience the peace in your soul. "When He giveth peace, who then can make trouble." Peace! Then there are my sins, then there are my weaknesses, but then I cannot trust myself. You are never called upon to trust yourself. The Word of God says: "Trust in the Lord at all times", and that is where your trust is.

You see some have been tempted and fallen under the temptation that if they were to make an open profession of the name of Christ, they might bring a disgrace upon the cause of Christ. Now let me tell you this, friends, whilst you are not making a profession, if you have held Him, and you have loved Him, and you have found Him, then you are bringing a disgrace upon the cause of Christ now. So it is not time that there should be a change of station since your love is so great. You will say, I cannot let this pass, I must honour Him, and we remember : "They that honour Me, I will honour." (1 Sam. 2. 30)Turning to that verse in Peter's Epistle "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious." it says in the margin 'unto you therefore which believe, He is the one to honour.' We should not fail to notice that. In

Malachi's Book we read this: "If I be a father, where is mine honour." (Mal. 1.6) and we may say likewise concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, if I be a Saviour where is mine honour? Oh, how important it is to be filled with the Spirit, which you will be if God favours you with this; "I found Him whom my soul loveth." He presented Himself to me; He came where I was,

You know friends, we shall never be able to say well, I put all my energy into seeking Christ, and at last I found Him. How many of us will work out the whole thing like this - He suddenly appeared. And that is what God does -He suddenly appears. You keep searching, you are ready to faint. "He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint in the ways of God." (Is. 40. 29/31) When Thou shalt enlarge my heart I will run in the way of Thy commandments! "I held Him and would not let Him go."

You see, my friends, the moving force is love. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2Cor. 5.14) and if the love of Christ constrains you to follow Him, and to honour Him, and to speak well of Him? will you say, but I do not know whether I can? Can you speak ill of Him? Oh, you say, I could not speak ill of Him. Well, are you at the cross-roads? You must speak well of Jesus Christ if He has turned you from your former life, if the things which you valued so much at one time now seem to be without any value at all. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." (Job 23.2) We find Job saying "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."(v.10) I shall find Him! I shall find Him: And this experience is described here" But I found Him whom my soul loveth." It is very clear that she did find Him, because of what follows, "I held Him and would not let Him go until I brought Him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me"

Now we leave these words in the hand of God, and may it be His power, that constraining power to set the captives free, and if so:

Hark how the gospel trumpet sounds!

Christ and free grace therein abounds; (Gadsbys 984)

and then "And if free grace, why not for me?" Free grace where God will give you the living experience of His own favour and you will say:

Then will I tell to sinners round,

What a dear Saviour I have found;

I'll point to thy redeeming blood,

And say, 'Behold the way to God.' (Gadsbys 144)

The Lord forgive all that has been amiss, and, Oh that His name may be glorified that we may not only be hearers of the Word, but doers also.

Amen