

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Romans 8 v.12-13.

If the Spirit of God graciously opens up the truth of this and causes our hearts to enter into the purposes of God and the grace by which the apostle could say to the family of God, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors", how the truth you have just sung would be revived in our hearts, and cause, at least I feel it, a desire that the Spirit of God would grant us that grace to live to the glory of Christ. I felt it with respect to it and I felt it in the prayer meeting this morning, how great the mercy when the Lord is so pleased to come, to revive the truth, to come by His Holy Spirit and open up afresh, if I may use that word rightly, the blessings, the truths that are in Christ Jesus. That work of which you have just sung, so that there might arise prayer to a conquering Lord, and the mercy of God to sinners be felt, then, I feel, we should enter into this.

The apostle writing to the Church of God, could speak of them, with himself, as brethren; and I feel that opens up what he opens up himself - or rather the Spirit, in the 7th chapter, to those that know the Lord, to such as have no hope in themselves. To those that by the Holy Spirit are made manifest in this truth. The apostle tells us himself that he was once alive without the law, ~~but~~ he had no love to the Lord Jesus Christ, nor to His people, but when the Holy Spirit came with divine power and broke those chains and bondage, brought down all that was of his flesh, and brought him, by the mercy of God, into a living union to the Lord Jesus Christ by a living faith in Him, then my friends, what a change that made! and what desires, and what love, and how that brought him into this grace. But now in this chapter, he opens up, or the Spirit by him, the blessedness of the Lord Jesus and His work, and how that had manifested the deliverance from the law; the apostle says, "Therefore brethren, we are debtors". I felt that to be a good word. I felt a desire to enter into that, that the Lord might humble my own spirit; this is a humbling word, this is a gracious word, there is no legality here, there is no duty faith, it is not as though the apostle would say, you ought - those that profess the name of the Lord - to live this way and that and not to walk in this sin or that sin, but he shows by the tender mercies of God, how that effectually orks. What a mercy when there is a sensible feeling of a little of that grace of which this 'therefore', opened up by the Spirit of God and sealed in our hearts, O how great a mercy, to reveal the power of Christ and what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, what deliverances as well, you have sung of it,

"To Jesus our victorious Lord,
The praises of our lives belong".

O if we are met together so that by the Spirit there might be that praise arising out of the heart, if there might be that humble testimony by living faith, which only God can give and that alone can look into the greatness of the Trinity.

I felt in this 'therefore', ^{brethren} the wisdom of God is displayed, and that humbles, when that is brought - as you that fear God, if you have this sacred blessing of unity, if the Lord grant us to feel the mercies of the brethren; the brethren are a people that need Jesus Christ, they are a people that are brought into a knowledge of God, they are a people that are under the divine power of the Holy Spirit. I felt that particularly. O the need of the Holy Spirit, my friends, to work in our hearts effectively, and what I felt in closing in prayer is so very real, and the Holy Spirit makes that life and power in such as the Lord speaks of as brethren and having a unity of oneness. There is no schism in the body of Christ; schisms only belong to us in our flesh, there is

no schism my friends, in the body of Christ, there is a one-ness, under the Holy Spirit's teaching and leading in all the matters that pertain to God and to the honour of His glory and thrice holy name and the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and there is a bringing down and subduing of all that is of the flesh; O there is a one-ness, what wisdom is displayed as the Holy Spirit makes manifest what the apostle further in the chapter opens up, to such as this 'Therefore, brethren' is a gracious word, such as are effectually called by the Holy Spirit. That is a great favour, it manifests this grace of God to His people that make manifest this love to the Lord Jesus. That effectual call is so great for it is to the subduing of all our power, to the bringing down of all that is within us, what we may rest upon.

What an effectual call it is, however long delayed it might be under the Spirit's power, His ways are sovereign in His dealings, but it is to that gracious end, to bring unto the Lord Jesus manifestly, to make His truth known. To make manifest His power and His grace and that the heart is drawn in love to Him so that the apostle writing to the church, he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus", and it is 'now'. O if the Lord by His Spirit open that up, it is in all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done; in the glory of His grace as the Son of God incarnate, how that He has spoiled every power, how that He has conquered. Why, with regard to this as you were just singing, how great that truth,

"He conquered though He fell".

He has overcome all the powers of sin and death and hell, He conquered. and He made manifest a glorious victory and rose triumphant over all those powers. What a glory is in the power of His resurrection.

Well, as the apostle here makes manifest to the Romans that truth, and just how that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all that was needful in the law. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh". When the Spirit of God reveals the truth of that, when you are convinced as a sinner - and some of you may look back just a moment and as the Spirit of God effectually called these matters became important. I felt that, as desired this morning, that we may not be building on a false foundation. What a mercy to have that witness of the Holy Spirit within that this truth has been so wrought, that we have been brought into a need of the Lord Jesus, and that His name has been made real, so that these truths have been opened up so that we can say with the apostle, I know what that is, I know that word in myself, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors". O the wonder of that mercy! "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent His own Son in the Likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit". What a truth that is! what a glorious truth! How great the mercy - why my friends, it is what the apostle further writes, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If the Spirit of God makes manifest our interest in the Lord Jesus, to you that know the condemnation of the law in your conscience, have had to say under the Spirit's teaching "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; if we have come into this and know that we are law condemned, and said, "that is just, why, my friends, the very exercise of this people, the Spirit's movement in prayer, makes manifest this that we are guilty, that we are justly condemned, but O the mercy of this grace, and the power of this truth! What a foundation, when the Spirit lays it in a poor sinners soul and shows the mercy of this grace as well; I would that the Spirit would lead my own soul, and you, that we may prove what this is. It would be a mercy, if ~~I may just break in~~, by the Spirit we all prove of the brethren before a dying hour. I break in on that because it comes to my mind so much of late. We are dying sinners I do need a living religion, I do need, Christ, I do feel to need all that is made over in Him, and O my friends, sometimes when you can

feel a little of that hope in the Gospel laid in the soul, O the mercy when you can feel a little gracious help and there is a building upon that foundation, for we may prove by the fear of God there is much to be burnt up, much hay and stubble, what a mercy if something remains, something that is of God, laid in the soul, The Lord Jesus Christ made manifest in the Gospel. Well my friends, I felt this morning, some of you come to the house of God with a desire that these might be opened up, be revived and sealed. Why you have nothing else to look to, nothing, there is nothing in the flesh, we have got nothing in ourselves to look to, we are sinners and my friends, it is a true feature of God's people as they are manifest, we are sinners, "A sinner is a sacred thing". O we are debtors to God's mercy, we are debtors to His grace, "Debtors to mercy alone" one says, and this is a gracious word, a humbling word, when the Spirit of God applies it.

I felt in that because it opens up how great the mercy of God is, how great His grace, that God should look down upon sinners, how great that mercy is, my friends. God would be just, and I can say this, I believe what I am saying, I would desire to only speak what is approved of God, but my friends, I know what it is to say,

"If my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well".

O you that know the law of God that has brought you as a guilty sinner before God, that has revealed the standard of God's eternal justice and truth, and you have said, the law is good, the law is good. My dear friends, it is a solemn work is the work of God, but O the mercy.

I have only felt this week how that conviction is a great mercy, how great the mercy of conviction because by the Holy Spirit it is not to send a sinner to hell. If you and I really know the power of the Holy Ghost, then my friends, there is hope, there is mercy, it is to reveal the blessedness of God. I hinted at His wisdom displayed in His grace, in His truth, in the Lord Jesus Christ. I like that word, if I may say it, the greatness of the wisdom of God displayed in the glory of His grace in salvation. What a word this is then, why, this will humble, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors". Why the Lord mercifully has done all, we owe all to His sovereign grace, we owe everything to His eternal mercy and His love and what that opens up - what that opens up in His grace, why there are none of us, if we have an interest in the mercy of God, deserve it, nor is it on the grounds of our parentage, it is not because we are better than any other creatures, some of you know it. As the Spirit of God leads on and teaches us from time to time by various ways. I have looked sometimes at some of the characters in the word of God, and out of it, and have had to say, I am no better. Peter knew he was no better than Judas as a man, what saved him from eternal hell was the wisdom and love of God displayed in the Person of His own dear Son. he was a debtor to the mercy of God, to His grace, to His power, to His love.

O my friends, if the Lord from time to time teaches us and if you know what it is in the Spirit of it to come to judgement here, and I thought as prayer was offered this morning, there was confession of our backslidings, the awful working of our nature, why my friends we are brought more and more to prove, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing", but the mercy of God, the suitability of His grace and the way of salvation revealed and the Spirit teaches how this righteousness is made manifest, and He shows what the carnal mind is, "For those that are in the flesh cannot please God" but if Christ is in you - O that Christ may be formed in our hearts the hope of glory, "But ye are not in the flesh" he says, "but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness". O what a mercy to have that divine life implanted in the soul. That is life, that is the power of God. Lazarus knew it. How many times have you been brought to enter into that chapter? a wonderful chapter. It opens up the resurrecting power of Christ and if you are brought to see it and prove that is the only power that could raise from death and bring forth, what a mercy, and look

forward in hope, so that the apostle says, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by ~~his~~ Spirit that dwelleth in you". What a truth O my dear friends, for the Lord to manifest that resurrecting power, to prove within that divine life, to have a hope in the mercy of God, to feel a little of the grace of God in salvation, "Christ formed in you the hope of glory", why how great a mercy, and sometimes you feel the power of it in living faith so that there is a trusting in Christ, a resting in Him and an entering into the grace that is made manifest in the Person of the Son of God and His work. You embrace by living faith the truth, "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

What a favour God bestows upon His people, and as we sung this morning, He does not break that reed, the smking flax He does not quench, He knows the hearts desire, O if there is a breathing after the truth of God. In His word is revealed the preciousness, the blessedness of those that are in Christ Jesus. I methion it because I thought of Moses, it is the language of sinners, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour which Thou bearest unto Thy people, O visit me with Thy salvation." How great this is ! Well, as the Spirit makes manifest this truth, brings into divine life, grants that living faith in the Lord Jesus, in His Person, and in His grace, why that humbles, it is the goodness of the Lord that leads to repentance, to that living hope in His mercy. You that have been favoured to feel a little of the blessedness of the power of His atoning blood, O my dear friends, how great the mercy! I say all that is in Christ, the greatness, the power of His atoning blood that cleanses from all sin. Do you wonder the apostle says, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors" and then shows what effect that has - "Not to the flesh to live after the flesh", no. O to have a new life manifest. This is the separating power of the truth, it is.

My friends, there is a separating power, and I have felt , for a long time, we can never really be separated rightly from the world only as we are separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a legal separation, it is not of works, It is not, if I may say, that which the Lord Jesus Himself declares, "Stand thou aside I am holier than thou", no. It is when the Spirit of God makes manifest any felt union, when there is a gracious proving of His power, when faith is in lively exercise, when we can feel a little of the comfort of hope, when you rejoice in what the Lord Jesus has done, when by the Spirit that is made over, May I ask ~~you~~ who are amongst those of whom the apostle speaks of as brethren, can you come into this and say, I would walk in the Spirit, I would live in the Spirit, I would desire that while I am here in this world I might redeem the time and have fellowship with God ? There is a mourning, and what causes you to mourn over sin and backsliding and desire the restoring of the joy of salvation ? O my dear friends, it is the power of God. David mourned over his sin, well, it was of grace. Saul never mourned, he never knew what this was, he never entered into it. David did because he was of the brethren, he was united and separated and though God dealt with sin and does with the sin of His people by a chastening and correcting rod, yet my friends there is a humbling as the Spirit of God manifests the mercy of God, the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

"Therefore brethren, we are debtors". God has done it all. He has redeemed His church, He has saved them. His own arm brought salvation, it is complete in Him. O this is the work of the Spirit revealed. Have you seen your salvation ? has that been made over ? I like what Mr. Hart expresses -

"Every work that thou must do,
Will thy gracious Saviour,
For thee work and in thee too,
Of His special favour."

O my friends, for the Lord to look down, to make manifest His glorious truth, manifest His atoning blood, has that never humbled your spirit? has not that sometimes broke down every barrier? It was mentioned in prayer, I would desire it in the same spirit of union, "Why me". O my friends, what a mercy, "such a wretch as I, who must for ever lie in hell, were not salvation free". My friends, really to see it and to feel it is a humbling, gracious humbling.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh". If that is wrought in the soul then there is a seeking to the Spirit. The apostle says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"; and my friends, how real that is, and in the spirit of that what deathliness there is, when we are left to ourselves and our poor carnal natures and workings of it, and you that know the truth of God know what death is, and what it is to be felt within and what it is to mourn over it. To be left to ourselves is very solemn.

I was thinking only in the vestry respecting David when he penned his 51st Psalm and O how he needed reviving of the Spirit in his soul that there might be a manifestation of the truth, and what mercy when the Lord did grant him afresh to feel His power, and that He had put away his iniquity, and how it humbled him before the Lord. I do desire that the Spirit of God might preserve us and keep us. It would be very solemn to be left to bring an open disgrace upon the name of the Lord that we profess. But O my friends, how needful is this word. O the power of indwelling sin, it brings darkness, and brings us into bondage; and how the enemy takes advantage. You cannot cast away the confidence of faith, but O what sin is in our flesh.

The apostle here, by the Spirit of God, particularly reveals the wonders of God's mercy and just how great that salvation is. "Therefore brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." What a mercy to have life. I know my friends, this in its greatness is eternal life, to prove that it is to prove that eternal life abiding in us. My dear friends, there is no greater blessing than to have formed in the heart the hope of glory. Why separate from that is eternal death. May the Spirit of God grant us that desire for it. But here the apostle, writing to the church, opens up this truth in the desire that it might by the Spirit be their concern - and your concern, and mine. What a favour when the Lord is so pleased to grant that desire that we might live by the Spirit, might be made manifest. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". When the Lord is pleased so to come, when you feel a little of His power, when His grace is made known and felt, why my friends, then there is a living to the Lord. I felt it in this particular, a separating to the Lord Jesus Christ and that gracious separating us from all that is contrary to Him, from dead works.

The apostle speaks of it in another place, "From dead works, to serve the living God", when we live in the Spirit, that is by living faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. How effectual that is. No dead works then. What is it to live? why if we live in the flesh we shall die. If we are of the people who are brought to know it, we have no works of our own,

"Righteousness within us rooted,
May appear to take our part",

but that is death, it brings death. It is nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ, His fulness, His working felt within when you live in the Spirit, what a grace that is! To live in Christ, to be in Him, to walk in Him, to have fellowship with Him is then, death to all else.

If we live in the flesh we shall die, and the Spirit shows that, and you have to say, well, I have nothing to look to then, my righteousness is as filthy rags, I have nothing to look to, nothing at

all; He is the ground of hope. O when there is a living in the Spirit, O the mercy, why my friends that is to live, all out of that is death. I fear that, if I may speak personally, I fear death in that. The Lord has left on record a very solemn case. Cain brought a sacrifice before God and he was well pleased with that sacrifice, he was angry with God. I thought only during the week with respect to him. He slew his brother, but why? he was angry with God. God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, it was of the Spirit, it was not without life, and he being dead yet speaketh. O there is a voice, and my friends there is mercy when the Spirit leads us into it. The Lord said to Cain, "If thou doest well, shall not that be accepted of God?". But his offering to the Lord though pleasing in his own eyes, was death. My friends, how we need a sacrifice acceptable to God. If we live in the Spirit, then my friends, if we walk in the Spirit we shall live when we mortify the deeds of the body, that is a mercy. When we have nothing of our own, what a favour to come near to God under the exercise of this faith.

The publican's prayer is very important, he went to his house justified rather than the other, for the Pharisee, his work was dead, it was of the flesh, there was nothing of the Spirit, nothing of Christ. It was what he had done, it was his own efforts and he thought himself to be better than the publican. I have felt many times, and particularly of late, how solemn an ordinance is prayer. It is not just talk my friends, it is not just talking in the ears of fellow creatures, it is a solemn ordinance is prayer, and what a very gracious ordinance when the life of the Spirit is felt and when the deeds of the flesh are mortified and repentance wrought under the power of the Spirit, and when you can feel a rising above, sometimes to feel a little gracious liberty. Why the publican had liberty. The things of God, my friends, are not looked upon by reasons eye, it is not according to our standard of the natural man, it is by the Spirit. His prayer was accepted of God, it was by faith in Christ Jesus. He was of the brethren, he had mortified, by the Spirit, the deeds of the flesh so that his prayer was acceptable to God.

O this is the mercy, we are debtors to God's mercy, and this is the effect of it, "but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". And those deeds are very deep; they are not just outward conformity my dear friends, if there is not a secret religion in your soul and mine, if Christ is not formed in the heart the hope of glory, I feel this in myself, then all the outward actions are abortive, if they are not of the Spirit of God. You that are under divine teaching are not just satisfied with outward conformity, you would not neglect the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but O how we attend to the word when by the Spirit there is an entering into the truth, when you can feel that love and mercy flow into the heart.

"But if ye, through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". When the Spirit makes manifest this gracious experience and there is a living in Christ, why there is a humbling before Him. O when the righteousness of Christ is revealed to faith and when you can feel the mercy, when you can feel it and say,

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress"

Why my friends, how great that mercy. No deeds of the flesh there, nothing of our own, nothing at all. You may have looked at what the Lord Jesus spoke in the parable and have been exercised in it, for only the brethren are exercised and examined by the truth of God. False religion is not, I am convinced of that; and you have asked the Lord to open that up, the Lord speaks of one that came without a wedding garment, "How camest thou in thither not having on a wedding garment?" He was speechless. What is your case? Do you have to say I have no righteousness of my own, not one good thought, not one good thing to bring? "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die".

How the apostle Paul knew it. The Lord had stamped death on his righteousness, all that he had looked to, all that he had trusted in and he was thankful for it and by grace he could say in truth, "I count all things but dung and loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things". He was brought to this my friends and to see it and say "O, wretched man that I am". Then my dear friends, how great a mercy to live upon the merit of the Lord Jesus, to build upon that foundation and to prove life in the soul, to feel sometimes a little of fellowship and communion with Him.

In the Acts the apostles they had all things in common, they met together with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, that was living in the Spirit. Christ, was revealed to them and they were brought into fellowship and union, they were separated to the Lord Jesus, and it could be said in their souls, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors", for the love of Christ hath separated us, "not to the flesh to live after the flesh", and that my friends, was God's mercy and how that was manifested in their life. These apostles were brethren, those that the Lord had separated unto Himself to have communion and fellowship, O to be among them and have that grace manifested, O the wonders of God's mercy, desiring to walk in the precepts of the Gospel that they may become life and power. It is that separating by the Holy Spirit; and I am convinced of that, of what I have hinted at before, that it is only truth and power that can separate us from the world and cause us to beg the Lord to keep us from ourselves, to preserve us from sinful flesh that we may walk in newness of life, and if I may say, to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, what a wonderful favour this is !

"Therefore brethren", says the apostle, "we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh, For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live!" May the life of Christ be made manifest in us.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).