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Sermon preached by Mr S Delves at Scaynes Hill Chapel
on Monday evening May 26,1969

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:22-23

Two things run throughout the whole of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and they are sin and all its awful magnitude; and salvation and all its glorious magnitude. You take the Scripture in Genesis; you take the entrance of sin into the world and into human nature - at once it has intimated that the condition is not hopeless, but there would be One who would be a Saviour. So it is throughout the whole Scriptures in type, shadow, and sacrifice, and in prophecy. People were continually sinning, otherwise there would be no sacrifice, no salvation, no expiation foretold. It was said years before Jesus Christ appeared in the world, "I will send a great One, a Saviour." And that expression, a great One, clearly indicated that salvation itself is a great matter. Salvation is a great matter, because sin is such an awful reality. "A Saviour and a great One." It would not be necessary if sin were a minor matter. And in time the Saviour, the great One, appeared in this world and appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and He accomplished that great work which culminated in Calvary's sufferings and death, and was gloriously confirmed by His resurrection from the dead on the third day and His ascension into heaven. And then the Holy Spirit came with great power upon the disciples to anoint them, and empower them, to preach the gospel unto all nations, and the gospel they preached was the gospel that there is salvation from sin. And when you come to the end of the Bible you find this, it ends not so much in sin as salvation. The beautiful words in the book of Revelation it is salvation in its final and glorious consummation, "Behold" said Jesus, the great Saviour, "Behold I come quickly." And the church responds with one voice "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." The Bible begins with the entrance of sin and ends with a glorious salvation.

These two themes run through every true and faithful gospel ministry. There are many matters come into our mind, but these are the basic principles, sin and salvation. And we must need preach both, because to preach sin, to speak about sin, to be continually pressing the dreadful reality and awful consequences of sin, would, be despair. It would be to preach despair. But to preach salvation and ignore sin would be to preach salvation with no meaning, no application, no substance. We preach to sinners, but we preach a Saviour too, and a great One. And further, these two basic principles, they meet in the experience of every one that is taught of God. In that experience there is the effect of the Holy Spirit's teaching, operating and speaking of the gospel truths. These two things always meet, sin in consciousness of it, and salvation in the blessedness of it. And I hope I have you with me in this, these two basic principles have indeed met in your own hearts and experiences. If they have, you may feel quite rightly that you are established on a good solid foundation. Now they certainly meet in this text. I said this afternoon, these are the principles of truth and teaching in this text; first the hateful condition of sin and secondly, being freed from its there is the serving of God, the inward service which is the effect of being made free from sin, for no one is freed from sin to live without serving God. And thirdly, there is the blessed end of the spiritual serving of God; it is everlasting life.

This afternoon, we set forth what is the condition of sin in human nature and in every individual and what the condition of sin really is, what constitutes it, and also what guilt and condemnation there is in it, and what clouds of divine wrath hang over it. The Holy Spirit convinces the condition of sin in some degree, more so in some than in others, and causes them to feel that it is indeed a true description of their fallen state. And I spoke about the sin in the heart, it keeps the heart in unbelief in rejection of the truth; that there is no love to God in this condition, and how it shows itself in the way that men live, the words they speak, the spirit they show and the acts men do.

Well brethren, this condition, sad and distressing as it is, is not hopeless, we can be freed from it. Many have been freed from it and I hope some of us have been made free from it. It is an amazing thing to be made free from sin, because we could never free ourselves from it, we are too much entangled in it, our actions are too much controlled by it; Satan has too much power over us in our fallen state for us ever to free ourselves from sin. The law cannot help us in this matter - on the contrary it seems to bind the condition more on us, for by the law is not freedom from sin, but the knowledge of sin. "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

I hope your heart may be open to listen this evening. Everyone who is in this condition may hear what the gospel has to say to those who are in distress by sin and there is hope and relief and cure. Some may not be interested in what is said this evening but even to them it a matter of life or death though in general men may not be interested in it. But to those who are in this distressed condition it is a life death matter to them whether they can be freed from sin. They know sin will sink them into endless ruin if they are not saved from it.

Well now 'Being made free from sin.' How are we made free from sin? We are made free from sin by a powerful work of grace upon their heart. That is putting it in a very general way. There is no way of being freed from sin apart from God's grace and power in our souls. But we must be more explicit than that, and trace out how you may know better whether you are the subject of it or not? There are two essential parts. The first part is this; the quickening of our soul from its sinful condition, quickening souls dead in sin into a new and spiritual life. This verse expresses it, "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins." And the apostle goes on to describe what their condition was and the kind of life that they lived when they were in it. But then he says that they are quickened and are alive to God. A great power stronger than that death that held them hath brought them forth into a newness of life. It must be so, mustn't it? But the soul under the quickening, powerful operation of the Spirit on the heart begins to be free from the death in sin which they had before been held fast in. Take the remarkable physical case in the case of Lazarus. He had been dead four days; corruption had already begun its repulsive work on his lifeless body. Could anything be more hopeless than the death of Lazarus in the tomb; lifeless, corrupt he could never free himself from that condition. But then the Lord Jesus having first praised the Father said "Lazarus come forth!" And life returned to his body. That renewed life overcame the corruption that had commenced and he came forth a living man. But how was he delivered from that death? By resurrection! And how are souls delivered from death in sin but by a spiritual resurrection! Is not that exactly what the Scriptures says "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things that are above."

For it would be impossible for any to set their affections on things above if they were not first risen first with Christ. It is a wonderful thing that the heart so dead to anything spiritual feeling of desire or affection, should begin to live to God. As soon as the heart begins to live, as soon as the quickening voice of Jesus has awakened it from the sleep of death it begins to be freed from that sinful death and it begins to live to God. If there is spiritual life in your soul you have been freed from your old state of death, have you not? A new life has come, it may have come to some of you years ago, some more recently but when the quickening comes from God you begin to be delivered from your dead condition and brought into this newness of life which is in Jesus Christ. When a soul is quickened it means much the same as when it is born again; and the new life is brought forth in the soul by the Holy Spirit and this new life is the life also of Jesus Christ spiritually considered.

Now you begin to have spiritual thoughts and spiritual feelings begin to exercise your heart and mind; the old condition begins to pass away and all things become new to you. You have new feelings, new desires new exercises of mind and a new consciousness in your heart. But even so, you might have much bondage, very much of the old conditions still seem to hang around and hinder, and in some senses bind, though you have begun to live. There again the instance of Lazarus seems applicable – “Lazarus come forth!” but how? Bound hand and foot in grave clothes? They belong to his dead state not to resurrection life; he was still bound with grave clothes. So it is my friends when a soul is born again, quickened into spiritual life. He is dead to sin, but he is still much bound to things belonging to his old state, he has not come into the liberty of the gospel in the fulness and freedom of it; it wants a further work, not only to give him life which he has, but to give him liberty which he longs for. The dead know nothing about being bound with grave clothes.

But here I must bring another line of truth into the matter. When one is made free from sin, he is made free from sin by the gospel, by the gospel coming with power and with the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. If the law cannot free us from sin, the gospel can. If by the law is the knowledge of sin, by the gospel is the knowledge of salvation, and not only the knowledge of salvation as to the doctrine of it, though that is very blessed, but knowledge of salvation as to the effects of it in our hearts. By the gospel comes the knowledge of salvation in such wise as we know the freedom from sin that the gospel brings us into. Now there are certain things in the gospel, certain blessed truths in the gospel, that have this effect upon the soul, to free it from sin. That is when gospel is made effective.

There is redeeming love and redeeming blood in the gospel. “In whom we have redemption through His blood even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” O how much is couched and comprised in those words ‘redemption through His blood, forgiveness of sin, through the riches of His grace.’ What is redemption? It is to buy back His people from captivity in sin, paying the price that divine justice required for their honourable discharge. That is redemption, and redemption is by the blood of Christ. “For as much as ye know ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation but with the precious blood of Christ.” The two wonderful features of redemption are love and blood. “In His love and in His pity He redeemed them.” There is love in redemption and they are redeemed by His precious blood. Now my friends the Holy Spirit makes that redemption effective in the soul to this very end and purpose, to free a sinner from sin because the Lord Jesus Christ has already redeemed it by His precious blood. The law cannot claim the soul, neither can sin claim it and control it when redeeming love and atoning blood reaches the

heart. This word is very expressive, "Ye are not your own ye are bought with a price." Now that precious price of the Saviour's blood has a wonderful effect on the soul. And so does His love, it makes one feel and say when they feel the effects 'Lord, I don't want to be my own, I don't want to serve sin, I don't feel I can, I don't feel I can serve sin after that precious love and blood has come into my heart.'

Now is not that being made free from sin? as well as redeeming blood and love in the gospel there is forgiving love to forgive the whole mass of sin. There is mercy that releases the soul from its guilt and filth; pardoning love cancels all the debt at once. In the gospel is the abounding of God's grace and in the very nature of it is wonderful and how sweet it sounds. I feel it now the same as when I first began to feel the grace of God in my heart. I believe that everyone that knows the effects of the love and grace of God cannot help loving the grace of God.

Now consider this word - 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' You know that the word 'abound' means to overflow. The significance of it is this that it overflows any bound that you put upon it. That is how sin abounds. Whatever man may do to try and stop their sin it will run over. But when the grace of God comes to put a bound on it, grace over-bounds sin. There is a world of meaning in the word 'much more.' *Much more.* Where sin abounds unto death, the grace of God much more abounds over that death. Sin cannot put a bound to it; our sinful state and condition cannot put a bound to it; it will overflow it all. Grace comes not only to abound but to reign "Where sin abounded unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life." Here are two principles that want to reign; neither will be content to be in subjection. Sin will reign if it possibly can – it will never be content not to reign. Grace also wants to reign and will never take a second place to sin; it will always reign over it. Where sin has reigned unto death there grace reigns over sin and it is grace reigning over sin that frees us from sin. It is grace reigning over the abounding of sin that frees us from it. That is the gospel. Redeeming love and blood, pardoning mercy, abounding reigning grace is the gospel. It is no wonder that those who know it and feel it and love it find that it is such a good gospel to them.

Then another point with regard to freedom from sin – The gospel frees from sin as it is received into the heart; there is the word "They have received the gospel" which means that the gospel came to them and they received it in such a way they were made free by the receiving of it into their hearts. "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of godliness which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." This verse instructs and gives help. "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin" – how did they come to be free from the service of sin? They obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered unto them. That means the gospel. The form means gracious truth and the features of it that we have mentioned. The gospel came not to them in word only but in way of power to their hearts, therefore they received it. They received the form of doctrine delivered to them. They received it in a believing heart and faith mixed with the word believes it. For with the heart man believeth (the gospel) unto salvation. When grace is received in our hearts to believe the gospel then the gospel frees from sin. That is in complete agreement with the scripture that says so plainly "By grace ye are saved" and to be saved is to be free from sin "by grace ye are saved through faith." Through faith they received and obeyed the gospel by believing in it obeying from the heart the form of doctrine delivered unto them. This obeying from the heart is a receiving of it and

embracing of it in love. For what you receive and embrace in love most certainly will have a gracious effect upon your soul.

It is unbelief and its utter want of love that makes people, despite hearing the gospel, still content in the state of sin. But when the Holy Spirit gives the new life they love the gospel, they are free. The apostle says "Ye have obeyed from the heart" – obeyed by believing, obeyed by loving, obeyed by submitting you're your whole mind and spirit to the blessed gospel. Souls are freed from sin by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and by the receiving of the gospel in faith and love. The Holy Spirit makes the gospel a liberating gospel in their hearts.

Suppose anyone here should be saying 'Well, I can look back to the time when these gracious operations of the Holy Spirit were wrought in my soul in a measure and I feel that I was brought out from that sinful condition of hatred. I felt the gospel came to me and that I received it and believed it to love it; but somehow I do not feel I am free from sin.' How are we to deal with this problem? It is difficult to deal with but the Word of God is true. Joseph Hart says ' 'Tis to credit contradictions.' Well, if the Word of God is true the Lord help us to credit it so that notwithstanding what you feel to the contrary in your heart. For if you believe in Jesus Christ, if you are a quickened soul, if you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit, if you have obeyed the gospel and ever had faith in your heart to believe in Jesus and felt His love and blood to be precious to your soul then, however you may be feeling now, you must credit the Word of God -that the gospel frees from sin.

In dealing with this problem there are two things that enter into it – to be freed from sin in this time state is to be freed from the state of sin and its *dominion*. We shall not be freed from it in our carnal nature. The child of God still has a carnal nature; his holiness consists in the spiritual nature which is brought about by the Holy Spirit – it consists in that. As long as we are in this present state we shall feel sin in our fallen nature – it is there. But it is one thing for sin to be in you and it is another thing for you to be in sin. That is the point and how we must solve the problem. If you consider your present state now and the contradictions that are in it and you compare it with your with unregenerate state when you had no spiritual life and no spiritual desire, no hope, nothing at all; or if you could compare it with those that are dead in sin you would see what a difference there is. Although you may be under a very heavy cloud you would say 'Bless God that I am not like that.' You would be like one who said 'By the grace of God I am not what I once was, though I am not what I would be and by the grace of God I hope at last to be all that I would be.' Is that helpful? You would not be what you are but for the grace of God; you know there would be no life, no love, no faith, no hope, no sense of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, no attraction of your heart to Him if you were in a state of sin.

It is one thing for sin to reign and another thing for sin to rage. It is the reign of sin that has been destroyed in you, grace is that which overcomes it but we are not easily delivered from all that which pertains to the death of the soul in sin. The children of Israel were all under Pharaoh's cruel dominion but they were brought out from it; they were delivered by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. The Lord brought his people out of Egypt and its captivity and the Egyptians were glad to let them go when the last stroke came upon them. So the children of Israel were delivered and freed from Egyptian bondage. But Pharaoh changed his mind, he was by no means willing to let them go and said "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon

them.” He was after them and especially when he saw that they were entangled and said ‘They are entangled in the wilderness, now I will have them again; I will make their captivity harder than it was before.’ Pharaoh was enraged but God was reigning and Pharaoh and all his host were overcome and swallowed up in the depths of the sea. It does seem like that sometimes as though Satan is after us again and he seems to have so much to work on in our fallen nature as though he would get us back under his dominion. But he never will. However much Satan may rage the time will come when he will be swallowed up in the depth of the sea. I think sometimes of how they sang of mercy that morning when they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore. They sang the song of Moses and it was a song of victory over their enemies.

I hope that it may be so when at the last when we are brought through our last trial and are not swallowed up by death but all our enemies are. It is written ‘They sang the song of Moses and of the Lamb.’ The song of Moses was deliverance from Pharaoh’s bondage; the song of the Lamb will be deliverance from sin, guilt, curse and all that pertains to it. This is the song of the Lamb ‘Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sin in His own blood.’

Here I must leave it with you. Amen