

Sermons and Addresses

BY

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Yet I Will Rejoice in the Lord.

A Sermon preached at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, on Sunday Evening, June 13th, 1897.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* In the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls:

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.—*Habakkuk* iii. 17, 18, 19.

IN the first verse under notice we have brought before us not merely the loss of one thing, or of another thing, or of anything, but the loss on the part of the Jew of everything, for they were in an agricultural country generally speaking; and the prophet Habakkuk says regarding himself, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, *yet* I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Now, this is the great and deeply important question, What is it that brought this man of God to the decision that though he should lose everything, though he should be reduced to a state of the greatest poverty and difficulty and affliction, yet he would rejoice in Jehovah? What was it that brought him to this? Because the Living God has given Himself to every one of His children as their portion! He has given Himself to every one of His children, so that whatever they may lose, in regard to the things connected with this life, God remains to them; in other words, their ALL remains to them. They are not, and they never really and truly can be, losers of anything that is worth anything, for God remains.

He gives Himself to every one of His children, to the weakest, the feeblest, the least instructed among them, as their portion; therefore, having Him, they have everything they could wish. God remains to them; He gives Himself to His children, once for all; they have, once for all, blessing to make them happy; they have, once for all, kindness, mercy, and grace, bestowed on them, sufficient for their whole earthly pilgrimage, and for the whole of eternity. O beloved in Christ, and O beloved ones who are not yet believers in Christ, let us all really and truly seek to enter into what it is to have God, and what it means that God gives Himself to us. Two verses of the 73rd Psalm and many similar portions might be brought to bear, but I think these two verses will do, "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth." The Psalmist supposes himself to be brought to the end of his earth-

ly pilgrimage, brought to the point of death. “My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” God had been his portion in life, and now he was going out of time into eternity, God remains his portion. Not only for a few years, or for a few hundred years, but for ever God remains true to His people. If this were entered into what happy persons we should be! O, if only held on to by faith and realised, what peace and joy in the Holy Ghost we should have—not merely now and then, not merely frequently, but habitually! O, how exceedingly precious! God gives Himself, and with all He is and has to the weakest, the feeblest of His children. O, how precious! How exceedingly precious!

And the prophet Habakkuk entered into it, and it was just this that made him so happy. Though he should lose everything that this world could give, yet would he rejoice in Jehovah. “Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord”—it means Jehovah—“I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Now, let us just for a little while ponder somewhat more minutely what we have here, what we receive from God as poor sinners, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ; and what other poor sinners might have if they were only willing to know what God is prepared to give to those who come to Him through Jesus Christ. First of all, He opens our eyes and shows to us the lost and ruined condition in which we are by nature; makes manifest our complete spiritual darkness and ignorance. He further shows to us that we cannot save ourselves, that salvation entirely depends on Himself, through the gift of His Only Begotten Son, Whose perfect obedience unto death He accepts in our room and stead. Now, all this is in the first place to be seen, to be apprehended, to be laid hold on by faith, in order that our eyes, being opened, we may have the beginning of peace and joy. Further, so far even as this present life is concerned, we at once, through faith in the Lord Jesus, obtain full forgiveness for all our numberless transgressions. We are accepted in the beloved, in Jesus Christ, and treated as righteous ones, as just ones, though in ourselves unjust ones and unrighteous ones. So accepted in the beloved, and treated as justified ones, accepted in the beloved and treated as forgiven ones, not one single transgression shall be mentioned against us any more. All, all is forgiven! Entering into it oh, what peace it gives to the soul, entering into it more and more it brings joy in God; the heart is filled with gratitude to Him for what He has done for us in Jesus Christ.

But what I have mentioned is not all. We thus being born again, regenerated, obtain spiritual life; while before we were dead in trespasses and sins. Now, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we obtain spiritual life; that life is everlasting. The beginning of this everlasting life is made when we are brought to believe in Jesus, and this spiritual life is continued, this spiritual life lasts, when the natural life is come to an end, when we pass out of time into Eternity. This is another blessing. Then we are now, through this faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of God not merely in name, but in reality. We have obtained spiritual life. We are born again by the power of God's Holy Spirit. We are really and truly the children of God, and as such we are really and truly heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ; and thus we have everything that we could possibly wish. We are infinitely rich as the children of God, as the heirs of God, as the joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus, for we partake of all the things which the Father gives to Him, as a recompense for His mediatorial work on earth. Thus we not only become infinitely rich, but we are infinitely honoured, for we share the honour which the Father bestows upon His only begotten Son as the reward for His great work. Oh, what an abounding reason, therefore, we have to rejoice in the Lord, in Jehovah!

Being in this state, whatever may be our difficulties, our trials, our necessities, we can obtain help from God, because we are the children whom He loves with an eternal, unchangeable love—the children who are so dear to His heart that they are precious in His sight, and loved by Him even as He loves His only begotten Son, for they belong to Christ, they are members of that mystical body of which He is the Head. What, therefore, can they possibly want that they cannot receive? Their God and Father in Christ Jesus is willing to impart to every one of them, even the feeblest and weakest among them, every blessing that really would be a blessing to them, everything that really would be for their good and profit, and, therefore, to the glory of God. In the midst of trials and temptations, sore temptations, great attacks of Satan, we may come to Him, in our utter weakness and helplessness, and nothingness, and ask Him to fight our battles for us, to help us, to stand at our side, to rebuke the wicked one and to drive him from us. All this our Heavenly Father delights to do, because He loves us so dearly and tenderly. He loves us with an eternal unchangeable love. He loves us as He loves His only begotten Son, Oh, how precious is all this!

Now notice further the title that is given to God. He is called in the 18th verse, "The God of my salvation." He is the God of salvation; but the preciousness of the statement lies in this, that we have proved Him to ourselves thus, and are able to say, "The God of my salvation." That is just the language of my heart! Now, how many of us are able to say this? I say, "He is the God of my salvation." I glory in it, I rejoice in it, for, by the grace of God, I am as certain that I shall go to Heaven as if I were there already! Therefore, I say, "He is the God of my salvation." And there are many scores here present who, like myself, can say and sing, "He is the God of my salvation." But if there are any here who are not yet able to say this, give yourselves no rest till you can. First of all, you must come to see that you are sinners needing salvation. If you do not see it, ask God to show it to you, and, as a means to come to the knowledge of it, read carefully three or four

times the first three chapters of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, and the second chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. Read these portions with application to yourselves, and if still you do not see that you are sinners needing a Saviour, read yet again these very portions, and ask God to open your eyes. Then, when you see what is contained therein, ask God to help you to put your trust in Jesus for salvation. for He in our room fulfilled the law of God, and, therefore, sets us free, and He in our room and stead bore the punishment due to us.

When able to apprehend this, we no longer dread God; we are no longer afraid of God, but look on Him as our Father, as our Friend, as our Helper Who has loved us in Christ Jesus. But if yet we have no peace in our souls, let us go on asking God that we may, by the power of His Holy Spirit, apprehend more feelingly and truly the work of Christ, and to enter into it that we may have that full peace and joy, which God delights to give to every one of His children. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet, I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Oh, if any of you know this, how greatly are you blessed! Oh, if everyone here knew this what an encouragement it would be to sinners who have not yet obtained this peace and joy in God!

Now we come to the last verse, “The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.” “The Lord God,” that is Jehovah—for you know that whenever we have the word “Lord” printed in large characters, it invariably means this, “Jehovah”—“is my strength.” Was he weak physically? God would be able to strengthen him, for He was his strength! Was he weak spiritually, amid temptations, great and varied and many, and of a lasting character? Jehovah was his strength; therefore, what could he lack? Was he poor in any way? Did he require anything for the life that now is? Or, for himself, or for his family, or under any circumstances, did he require anything which would be for the glory of God? God was able and willing to communicate it to him! Now that is just what we have to lay hold of, that Jehovah is the strength of His children physically, mentally, spiritually; and this not now and then, but at all times and under all circumstances, however great the power of our spiritual adversaries may be, and however fearfully they may attack us in order to overcome us, “God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places” The feet like a roe, a wild animal running. For what? To act according to the mind of God! That, I judge, is particularly meant here by the words, “He will make lily feet like hinds’ feet” Not to accomplish our own purposes, not to enjoy ourselves, but to act according to the mind of God! The will of

God presented to us, and instantaneously and with the greatest alacrity acted upon therefore, the words, “hinds feet,” means that no delay is made, but immediately the will of God is carried out.

Then one other point “He will make me to walk upon mine high places.” The heart of the prophet Habakkuk was in Heaven, and he looked down on the things here below, and the state in which he was. O to enter into it, though we are poor sinners, that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places! That, therefore, we should treat all human affairs as those who are seated in Heaven in Christ Jesus, and look down from Heaven, so to speak, on the poor, weak, feeble, earthly affairs here below, and judge about them as those who are already in glory, who are already in Heaven.

Now, if one or the other says, “But I am yet in the body; I find a difficulty thus to think, to judge, and to act,” my reply is, “So do I, but the grace of God can bring us to this state.”

“He will make me to walk upon mine high places.” These high places are those in which his heart is fixed, and this is just what we individually should have —*the heart in Heaven*. While in the body, we must attend to the affairs of this life; God would not have us give up our earthly occupations because of the difficulties connected with these things. But we must yet remain in the position to which God has brought us, entering into the spiritual life which has been given to us, remembering that this spiritual life is eternal, that more and more it will be developed, and that at last it will come to the full fruition and we shall be holy, as our Lord Jesus Christ was holy while on earth and as He ever has been since He ascended to Heaven, and that we shall at the same time have a glorified body, as the Lord Jesus Christ had when He was raised from the dead. These are the blessed prospects of the weakest and feeblest child of God!

Oh, what a precious blessing has God bestowed on us in Christ Jesus! Oh, what are we poor miserable sinners come to by faith in Him! Our great business, therefore, must be in child-like simplicity to ponder all the wondrous blessings God has bestowed on us through His Son, and, in child-like simplicity, to believe everything that He has declared regarding us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in joyful anticipation look forward to the day when all this will have its complete accomplishment, when we shall no longer walk by faith, but by sight, having every one of these blessings in actual possession. Now, one word more, Are there any here present who up to this time have been thoughtlessly and carelessly unconcerned about the things of God? If so, I now entreat and beseech you no longer to be thus—for the salvation of your souls, your happiness here, and throughout Eternity, depend upon your receiving Christ. Salvation is also to be had by faith in Jesus Christ, and God is willing to bestow the blessing on every and any one, however great and many their transgressions may be. Only let them

own that they are sinners, deserving nothing but punishment, and only let them put their trust in Jesus, and the blessing is their's for ever.