

Psalm Luton Centenary (Quality: Good, Incomplete)

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Preacher: Gosden, John H (1863-1964)

[0 : 00] I direct your attention to the hundred and second song the 16th and two following verses when the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer this shall be written for the generation to come and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord what a mysterious work is the work of God's grace the formation of his church and the material out of which he forms the church this context shows us plainly if we have eyes to see that God when he builds up Zion and appears in his glory

God takes our poor sinful worms and makes them for his praise there is no other material I would say it with reverence and caution feeling one's own ignorance but there is no other material from which God can out of the human race get glory to himself and glorify them but sinners that shall be saved by divine grace Zion is built up of living stones stones that are hewed from the quarry they are dug from the pit equally are they in the pit with all the human race but separated by the power of God unto himself according to his eternal purpose the purpose of God is very wonderful in the church in the unfolding of that purpose in the establishment of visible churches here and there in the earth and the appointment of the ministry of poor men ordained and anointed for the solemn work and those who have hearts to observe will find much to wonder at and admire in the Lord's wisdom and goodness in this as here in this place a hundred years he has maintained people one generation has passed away and another succeeded but grace is not hereditary very solemn is that truth it is beautiful and proper when children follow their parents in attending upon the chapel services but that is insufficient for the building up of Zion and so from time to time during these hundred years here the Lord has appeared in his glory in the quickening of individual souls the work of God is an individual work in single souls it is said in Isaiah

I will beat off from the channel of the river to the sea of Egypt and ye shall be gathered one by one and they shall come that are ready to perish and worship the Lord in Mount Zion when the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer now this is the condition into which God by his invincible grace brings each one of those whom he will build in his church destitution very solemn it is to be destitute not of this world's goods but destitute in soul oh said the Lord

Jesus when upon earth concerning those who sought much of this world's goods speaking a parable of the man who knew not where to lay up his goods for he hadn't room for them I'll pull down my bonds and build greater and there will I will I store my goods and will say to my soul soul there is much good laid up for many years eat drink and be merry and that is our state by nature by nature we have no desire for God not one of us train a child up as well as you can in in religion in chapel going in bible reading unless and until that glorious solemn mysterious invincible act of God is passed upon a sinner whereby he is born again he is still dead and takes not one half step

Godward the work of salvation from first to last is the work of God nothing a creature can do can contribute to it though the Lord does condescend to use means through which to accomplish that great work of his as through his written word and the preached word he will regard the prayer of the destitute destitute people pray and only destitute people really ever pray until we are brought into this condition to realize what we are as destitute sinners guilty obnoxious to God without a refuge without any righteousness any strength any merit any wisdom until we are reduced to that point

[7 : 56] I believe there is no real prayer to God that one thing that is never prayed for one blessing that is given unasked and undesired and that is the blessing of life the quickening grace of the spirit and yet strange as it is when that great gift is bestowed a poor sinner who receives that gift knows not the nature of it nor whence it came nor whither it goes will be feeling his death feeling his poverty and longing for mercy the dead know not anything but the living know they must die and a quickened soul may know very little when he is born again he doesn't know it but trouble is brought into his conscience he begins to tremble because he realizes there is a

God against whom he has sinned and to whom he must give an account oh what a solemn matter that is whatever means the Lord uses when he brings a sinner down into a state of desperate need need of mercy and with Bunyan's pilgrim he flees with his fingers in his ears crying life life eternal life there's a glory in that a solemn glory it is the conquest of divine grace it is the beginning of eternal life when the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory oh what a glorious thing it is yet how solemn and to the subject of it how terrible when he has to say feeling less refuge failed me no man cared for my soul have you been there sinner a derilth a destitute homeless helpless guilty hell deserving sinner doesn't look much like a glorious work but it is oh how many people who profess

Christianity are only half lost they have a scratch in their conscience and they hope to heal it quite well with a little religious reformation but when the Lord stabs a man to the heart and kills him to his own self makes him feel that he is a guilty sinner and that he is lost that's a solemn business were you ever lost lost oh to walk about lost with eternity in view an immortal soul the judgment day and guilt and mighty sins and a great tempter oh what a case it is to be in have you been there sinner if so the Lord won't leave you there no it is written and every spirit convicted and quickened soul shall prove it in the

Lord's own time the son of man came to save that which was lost he will hear the prayer he will regard the prayer of the destitute you the great God will be prayed unto that's a great thing perhaps some of you have felt so lost so helpless so guilty so destitute of merit so unworthy that you've been unable to pray bound under law and guilt you've been afraid to pray almost afraid to open your Bible God is very great a sin hating God and a consuming fire out of Christ oh I believe many a child of God has felt that so as to be afraid to fear with amazement and to be unable to pray because there's no hope in himself

I've often said and I believe the truth of it I know it is so in my own case that self despair and gospel hope are near neighbors it is when a man is brought to the lowest point when there's nothing left in him upon which he can lean in which he can trust or hope when he has nothing at all left but is entirely destitute and refugeless that the Lord grant to that sinner a little hope in his mercy a little manifestation that there is a way from that deserved and feared hell in his conscience into the presence of God and if there isn't a glory in that I know not where you can find glory the glory of God's grace in providing a way for a poor sinful worm who deserves banishment to approach the great

[14 : 32] I am and that is through the person a mediation the death the intercession of the son of his love incarnate there could be no prayer but for the mediation of Christ an abstract God is unapproachable by a sinner Luther said save me from an abstract God a God out of Christ and I believe often times under conviction in darkness and guilt a poor sinner sees nothing in God but his justice and holy anger against him he cannot see how mercy can ever be extended to him and what can he do you may walk about and wring your hands literally under this extremity and feel you have no refuge and say what shall

I do and where shall I go but then the blessed God has made it manifest that he will be approached unto and will be treated with by poor worthless sinners and for that purpose has appointed a way approach even through him who said I am the way and the truth and the life no man cometh to the Father but by me why perhaps you have been perplexed about the being of God about the great and mysterious doctrine of the Trinity and then you may meet with a word like that in Peter blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ or you may meet with that word indeed the

Lord may whisper it in your heart let not your heart be troubled ye believe in God believe also in me my dear friends Christ is made real by the spirit revelation to convicted and lost sinners and they alone can appreciate the value of incarnate deity and his mediation he will regard the prayer of the destitute when you've nothing to pay nothing to say no excuses to bring and cannot lean upon your duties done when you feel you haven't a rag to cover your naked soul and have no merit and have no penny no promise to bring then

God will regard the prayer of that destitute sinner he will regard the person of a destitute sinner if you bring a penny if you bring something with which you hope you may appease the wrath of God or procure his favor there will be no regard paid to that prayer but if you have nothing at all but need need of mercy need of salvation and that is given to you to see in Jesus Christ all that your soul can need to deliver you from the wrath to come to deliver you from your guilt and from your sinfulness and from your enemies and to save you from hell and land you in heaven you'll pray you'll pray for mercy through blood you'll beseech the Lord to bless you though you deserve the curse but the basis of your prayer will be for Christ's sake unless there is some manifestation of the mercy of

God the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ I cannot see how a convicted sinner can pray oh but pray we must cry we must there must be an object you do not beat the air when you really pray the spirit inspires prayer and he leads the soul to Jesus Christ and his cross you may see in Jesus Christ poor sinner all that will meet your case a full savior for an empty sinner righteousness to justify the unrighteous one blood to cleanse the pollution of the guilty pain everything that can make you for the glory of God but the point will be have I an interest well the

[20 : 12] Lord will regard that cry he will not disregard it nor the crier I believe there isn't a single prayer offered up in the name of the Lord Jesus from a desperate soul for mercy that the Lord will disregard no he has a tender regard for all whom he brings down to that point to confess their sins and plead the blood that did for sin atoned and not despise their prayer this is something more you may feel so ashamed of your poor broken cries you may often wonder whether they may not provoke the Lord more than your sins some people seem to prize themselves on what is called a gift in prayer as if prayer was a performer to tickle the ear prayer is the falling of a tear it is the heaving of a sigh the upward glance of the eye of faith in desperate need toward the throne of grace and the fullness of grace that is in

Jesus Christ and you may despise your own prayer you may feel how unworthy your prayers are and how unworthy you are to pray to that great and holy God but your despising of yourself and of your prayer makes no difference to the Lord indeed I believe when a sinner is well humbled and feels his own despicability the Lord sees in that sinner some fruits of his grace grace doesn't lift people up with self consequence but it lays them low in self abhorrence and they cannot lean upon their prayers but they're bound to pray and lean upon the merit and name and blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ he will regard the prayer of the destitute now another point about this destitution is a destitution of wisdom a destitution that is contained in that dreadful ignorance that we all have as fallen sinners but that some as taught of God feel plenty of people are wise in their own conceit religiously and from some of their prayers you may almost think that they can inform

God but ignorance is very painful ignorance of God oh how dreadful if it is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent then it must be eternal death to be ignorant of him is your panting desire in your sense of great ignorance and mind this no theological study no religious education can bring a saving knowledge of God all true saving knowledge of God is a matter not of acquisition but of revelation if you mourn your ignorance of God and pray him to reveal yourself reveal himself to you and go with that destitution and pray lead me in thy truth and teach me it's far better than to be left to think we know because we have some smattering of logical acquaintance with the

Bible oh said the apostle Paul that I might know him is that what you feel do you feel if not utterly destitute of a knowledge of him to be very very ignorant and want to know him more I tell you a point you know it some of you if the Lord has in any measure made himself known to you in the fullness of his grace in the plenitude of his redemption in the sacred mystery of his substitutionary death and in his mediatorial power and intercession on high you'll want to know him more intimately than you do and the Lord will regard that prayer oh he will enrich a destitute person how by blessing him with a visit by speaking to his heart and conveying to his soul the blessings of salvation for instance you won't be destitute if the

Lord speaks in your heart and declares there that he has put away your sin by the sacrifice of himself if he takes away your guilt and gives you peace in your conscience you'll be richer in your experience than if you possess all the world without that blessing it will be richness toward God God if we have the whole world and are not rich toward God how dreadfully poor we are and what an awful eternity awaits us but if the Lord blesses us with a knowledge of our interest in him in his grace and in his salvation then we shall have a proof that he has not disregarded our poor broken prayers nor despised them nor us and is not that wonderful have not some of you felt at times a few times in your life when you have had proofs that the

[27 : 04] Lord has not disregarded your prayer but tenderly regarded it and mercifully answered it by visiting your souls with his salvation has it not surprised you has it not humbled you and has it not made you glad thou hast put more gladness said one into my heart than when their corn and wine increased he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer if he makes himself over to you and declares that he is your redeemer and your portion and your savior and that his power and wisdom are on your side why then you'll no longer be destitute while

Christ is rich one said I can't be poor what can I want this side that's the pearl of great price that is the one thing needful and it is made so in the experience of everyone who is appointed to salvation through Jesus Christ and who shall in the Lord's own time be gathered to Zion and praise his holy name worship and praise are inseparable from the knowledge of salvation only sinners born again called to repentance and blessed with some acquaintance with the Lord Jesus can really worship God and that constitutes the church

I know Goodwin said a real word when he declared that Jesus Christ is most worshipped in secret it is a secret work perhaps some of you have to say your heaviest and most terrible times have been in secret and your sweetest and most blessed times have been in secret you cannot tell your worst nor your best to the creature but that experience the twofold experience of being lost experimentally and saved experimentally by the Lord Jesus coming and entering the heart giving a hope of glory will capacitate a person to be a member of Zion outwardly when the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory in the glory of the conquest of grace in the glory of that work of grace that shall be seen in the fruits of it in a poor sinner a repenting sinner a praying sinner and a praising sinner this shall be written for the generation to come whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope now there may be some here or there may be one the Lord only knows was in that condition spoken of by the psalmist refuge failed me no man would know my soul no man cared for my soul you may be just there and you may feel so helpless so shut up so full of fear and guilt you know not what to do and then the Lord may help you to look up to him the Holy

Spirit helping your infirmities will manifest to you a blessed throne of grace occupied by the man Christ Jesus oh what strength that will put into your heart that will enable you to pray in the midst of all your destitution and ruin your hands your heart will be stretched up towards him you'll see in him all that you want the energy the Holy Spirit puts into a destitute man sometimes is very wonderful and then the blessing comes down oh if it were so today here if one soul in this gathering today receive Christ into his poor destitute heart in the riches of his mercy grace pardon righteousness and could say as did David I said thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living you'd have something then more than a mere refuge great as that is for a person in danger sensibly in danger of the rock to come to find a refuge in the cliff of the rock and to perceive that the Lord

Jesus Christ has received into his own person that curse due to his sins that's a great day or a great thing to be delivered from the wrath to come sensibly in the conscience and to have a real hope in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ but there's something more thou art my hope and my portion in the land of the living to have a way to God in and through Jesus Christ is wonderful but to have the Lord Jesus as our portion and to have a relationship to God in and through him how can a joint heir with Christ be poor my friends those of you who are born again by the Holy Spirit are joint heirs with

[34 : 01] Christ Jesus you not only will escape a deserved hell through his precious suffering substitutionary death but you will possess in the Lord's own time all the communicable blessedness of God and this is to be possessed it is to be known here in some measure by the Holy Spirit the Lord will not disregard but he will very tenderly regard the cry of a destitute one for he has made him feel his destitution and helplessness in order to bring him to appreciate the gospel to the poor the gospel is to be preached to be preached for the obedience of faith for the reception that is to say of the word of the truth of the gospel into the soul so that that word is possessed

Israel shall possess her possessions if we are the Lord's elect people we possess in Christ all spiritual blessings eternally but those blessings are to be received and possessed here a little and there a little by the blessed Holy Ghost conveying them in answer to prayer you may meet with many things in the scripture that express blessings that perhaps up till now you have to say I do not possess that but you may plead those promises you may ask and will when faith is an exercise on once crucified and now exalted and enthroned redeemer you will ask all that heaven has good and you'll get a little heaven down here all this is written for the generation to come and this is one of the generations that has come not merely natural generations but the regenerated people the people that which shall be created shall praise the Lord you have met today professedly for prayer and thanksgiving and praise in how many of your hearts is to this cause a praise that the

Lord has heard and in some measure answered your prayer pressed out of a sense of need and destitution and guilt and has made himself known to you as your redeemer oh that men would praise the Lord said the psalmist over and over again for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men that 107th psalm seems to me to be like as it were a bird's eye view of a Christian's life from beginning to end he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation and who were they they were the redeemed people of God and see where he led them and the troubles they came into and what the trouble did as sanctified it brought them to confess the sin that procured the trouble it brought them to cry unto the Lord in their helplessness and distress and he answered them and delivered them then are they glad because they be quiet so he bringeth them to their desired haven the life of a true

Christian must of necessity be very largely a life of prayer and what a privilege it is dear friends you who fear God do you not esteem it often times to be a great privilege to be allowed to pray but how many times you may find yourself almost destitute of prayer then you have to pray for a prayer and pray for the Holy Spirit who alone can indite living prayer in the soul and bring new life from Christ's fullness into your experience there is no condition into which a child of God can come but what the Lord can help and deliver him and there is no reason in God why you should not pray in spite of all your destitution

I know guilt shuts the mouth or you may feel so guilty sometimes in your trouble and so full of rebellion that you hardly have a desire to pray and yet there will be a groaning a breathing after God underneath a restlessness for him all manifesting that hidden life and then presently power comes down the Lord conquers a poor rebellious sinner gives him grace to confess and forsake his sins brings him nigh by the blood of Christ sheds abroad his love in his heart and there is a sweet holy rejoicing there how could we live without some such experiences and they all come from one point from one source and by the hands of the dear redeemer out of his fullness

[40 : 25] John said have all we receive and grace for grace the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord it is comely it is pleasant it is solemn to praise the Lord oh when hearts are attuned when the Lord manifests his presence in the hearts of people and when they are gathered together in Zion it is very sweet then as the song flows to one great object when to worship saints assemble let the song to Jesus flow do you find your heart sometimes bubbling up with praise with gratitude do you sometimes feel unspeakably unworthy of the least of his notice and yet have impressed upon your heart an assurance that you have an interest in his favor that will unite you to the people of

God and very sweet is that bond of union in Jesus Christ various stages of experience but one object of faith some of you may have no more impression than a feeble faith of adherence you may feel you have no hope but in Jesus Christ but are doubtful about your interest well that doubt will be troublesome to you and I hope you'll never disregard it but wait upon the Lord that he will resolve that doubt and grant you a sweet assurance of your interest others have an exercise of appropriating faith that's a wonderful thing if some of you have that blessing and can call the Lord your own in ties of love and blood and feel that he is precious in the worth of him and the possession of him as your

Lord in your heart where you have much reason to praise and bless his holy name and then for temporal things they shall praise him for everything he does common blessings but especially the blessings of grace look at that word momentarily Paul speaks of in the Corinthians poor man he was in such trouble weakened he was as was the psalmist here angry and the ESS he Was like him