

Psalm

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Preacher: Gosden, Frank L (1890-1980)

- [0 : 00] I would direct you to the 88th Psalm, verses 10 to 12.
- Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction?
- Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Psalm 88, verses 10 to 12.
- I hope this text won't be out of harmony with the precious hymns that you've been singing. But nothing in the work of the Spirit and the exercises of the soul can be out of harmony.
- [1 : 24] You will be able to distinguish them. But whether the work of the Holy Ghost is in the depths, whether it is working underneath the roofs, or whether the soul is under the sunshine of the presence of the Lord, there is a harmony through it all.
- It may be that when I announce this text, some of you are very disappointed.
- But we can't go around the world of God like going around a garden, and getting a nosegay to bring into the pulpit.
- I sometimes wonder, if I was to ask you all what text you'd like me to preach from, what you would say?
- I should get some, very, an assortment of texts. But here, we have the extreme experience of a living soul.
- [2 : 52] These two psalms have been made a blessing to me. There's a harmony between these two psalms, right enough.
- And all the exercise of living faith in both of them. You're well acquainted with both. And as the Asaph says in the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord.
- My soul ran in the night and ceased not. My soul refused to be comforted. That was the point. Got the same faith, the same grace as Job.
- Miserable comforters are ye all. And this is the secret of the matter. With the work of the Holy Spirit.
- If you're never in a trouble, but that which some creature can comfort you in, you've got a lot to learn yet.
- [4 : 06] Miserable comforters are ye all. Your best friends, your best minister, you'll be brought down to it, my friends.
- Nothing but God. And there'll be times even underneath your groanings, you will cry, Now, O Christ, at all I want.
- But asaph, ee, their oldest mind, eyes waking. I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- Where do you find it today? This is the truth in the inward path. And in the hidden path to know wisdom.
- We may be correct, orthodox and proud of it. But where do you hear this today? Thou holdest mine eyes waking. I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

- [5 : 13] And yet this faith never dies. I have said before, and I feel that it is true.
That when faith is in the very depths, you see it exercising activity perhaps more than when it is in the sunshine.
In these two psalms especially, you can see the very healing of the verses almost moving under the exercising conflicts of living faith in a living soul.
What beauty in grief appears. It was said concerning the Lord Jesus. And so in measure can it be said of a mourning soul.
And there was another thing. I call to remembrance my song within the night.
- [6 : 23] I commune with my own heart. And my spirit made diligent search. You see the exercise here in searching the path.
Let us try our ways and turn again unto the Lord. And when he began to search his path, then there was some very serious cogitation.
When he saw and felt his condition there, he began to suspect, not other people, but himself. Will the Lord cast off forever?
Will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean God forever? Doth his promise fail forever more?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shed up his tender mercy? And he considered it. And he considered it.
- [7 : 28] And he came to this conclusion. I said, this is my infirmity. The Lord gave him to see light in his light.
Gave him to see God's mercy in God's light. His mercy clean God forever. Why, his mercy endureth forever.
It's my infirmity. So I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.
Now how much of that would he have done if it wasn't that he was brought into the shade of death and into darkness? And so, with the text, will they show wonders to the dead?
From an actual point of view, the answer would be no. If there were some wonderful things come to Brighton, they wouldn't take them up to the cemetery and show them to the dead.
- [8 : 46] But when we come to the things of the spirit and the soul exercise and the work of sanctification, it's of a different nature.
Will thou show wonders to the dead? And he showed in the preceding verses the trial of his faith.
Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me and made me an abomination to them. I am shut up and I cannot come forth.
There are some of these religious people who are all joy and all confidence. They know nothing of this language whatever.
And I dare say there are many that are saying I don't want to know it. What a miserable, morbid affair it is.
- [10 : 00] But here is the life of God exercised in a sinner's heart by the Holy Ghost. And he is moving on toward true eternal happiness.
And looking through these dark seasons, this valley of beta, then he can say, looking at the world, O'st not ye sons of earth.
O'st not ye sons of earth. Above your life's mirth, our saddest air sweet prize.

Although my cup seems filled with gold, there's something sweet, something secret, sweetness, or you know it.

Have you felt it? Now this death here is not that first death. Death in trespasses and in sins.

[11 : 19] Because the psalmist here and the 77th text, they were just called by grace. Now, there was a wonder shown to the dead in their case when they were born again.

And the wonder was this. And you hath ye quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins. Oh, that wonderful chapter.

Second, the Ephesians. And the two first words about God.

And I think it's about the seventh verse. The first two words about God.

But then it comes down to you. We do need to take heed to those personal pronouns in the Gospel.

[12 : 30] Because it would be of no use to you if the one next to you is saved by grace. When we come to the end, we must die alone.

Not a father or a mother, nor the holiest of men, not a sister nor a brother, can afford us refuge then.

What a mercy then that they be taught to profit. And one way by which the Holy Spirit teaches the prophet is the text.

Brings us in a, into a state of death. I say, not that beginning of a work of grace, but subsequently.

Yes. I had two and a half hours of it last night. That's why I took the text. And not that these people ever die.

[13 : 44] Not that their faith collide. But they can and experience. Everything is brought into a state of death in us.

It is in such a condition that there is a conflate. We see that there are signs.

And the first signs that one would wish to see are signs of life. And it is a very, a very solemn, penetrating experience when everything seems to be brought into a state of death.

You learn the truth then. You learn this truth. No man can keep alive his own soul.

We get into that place of complacency sometimes as though we can keep alive our soul. that the Lord will teach us very severely that we cannot.

[14 : 57] Because, you know, bring a death upon everything. It is a peculiar experience. But this is true. The Lord can bring a death upon living things.

But living things never die. And we shall prove that. This is discipline. Death. Death.

But we'll, they'll show wonders to the dead. We get a type of that in Lazarus, as you know.

And the sisters, Martha and Mary both came to the Lord Jesus. And said, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

And, uh, the Lord said, Sest I not unto thee that if thou believed, thou should see the glory of God.

[16 : 04] And he said unto them, Roll away the stone. Oh, says Martha, he's been dead four days already.

And by this time he's stinking. That's been out to me. You might say, well, that's a peculiar expression to be a help it is.

Why his case looked utterly hopeless. Now, we're rolling that stone away four days already. But this time he's stinking.

Does it mean anything to you, poor sinner? Those of you who feel that you've got beyond the reach of mercy. Now, we shall know what sin is if the Lord deals with us.

And not only at first, but as long as we live. Uh, will thou show wonders to, uh, the dead?

[17 : 06] I believe I noticed in that seventy-seventh chapter there was a reference to that. I will remember the works of the Lord.

Surely I will remember thy wonders of old. The mercy if we've got the memory of faith.

The memory of faith is different from a natural memory. You may have a natural memory and remember things.

But the memory of faith is by the Spirit. And the difference is this. That what you remember naturally remains where it is.

But what you remember by faith brings back the things that you remember. And then grace is once in exercise, uh, exercise again as a resurrection.

[18 : 09] Will thou show wonders to other dead? Oh, this voice. This piteous voice. The voice of faith. The violent voice of life. The voice of the Spirit. It's gotta be dead first.

Experimentally. You might make God know what it is. There's nothing else to say about yourself. You look at your beginning and you'll fear that was dead. You look at the Gospel and you wonder whether his mercy's been gone forever or whether it you ever knew anything of his mercy.

And you read the Word of God but nothing moves. Instead of being a living Word, it's a silent Word. You try and pray.

And your prayers seem dead. And yet, there's more life in that exercise than there is in a superficial religion.

The whole thing is life. The whole cry made as being dead is life. Will thou show wonders to the dead?

[19 : 25] Shall the dead arise and praise thee? With respect to his people, it will literally be so. He will show wonders literally to his people.

Our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

Do you think that's a wonder? Do you think that's a wonder? A wonder to the dead? Oh, the blessedness of the Gospel. And here I noted, he knew that the Lord could show wonders to the dead.

But it was an appeal, it was an cry, a living soul, and a sense of deathliness.

Will thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? They will. I know, I kill.

[20 : 43] I kill. I can live. I will. And I heal. If we are to know the Lord in these ways, we must be killed. We must be wounded. We must be cast down.

We must be lifted up. And therefore he speaks. Fear not, for I am with thee.

I will help thee. Be not dismayed. For I am thy God. I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee.

With the right hand of my grace. Will thou show oneness to the dead.

Shall the dead arise and praise thee? It doesn't look as if you ever will. Have you ever come to this, my friends?

- [21 : 45] Ah, I fear I shall never pray again. Oh, how many times I felt I shall never preach again. I preached my last sermon many times.
- And when you lie helpless, before the Lord. And yet, you look at it. You look at that cry. That sense of death.
- That helplessness. It isn't bad. It's about the urgency of the cross. As we've said, you can all see each of these verses moving.
- With the vehement desire and with the anger.
- And the condition of the cross. In the grave. So the poor man, he not only fell dead, but he fell buried. And we did another scripture which points to the same thing.
- [22 : 52] Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth. And not only scattered, but they are at the grave's mouth ready to be buried. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth.
- As when one cut it and cleaveth wood upon the earth. But this is the thing, it's the birth. It is faith labouring under load.
- But their eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord. In thee is my trust. Leave not my soul destitute.
- O the struggling life of faith in a poor sinner's path. It's music to the Lord. Music in heaven. Indeed, this is the Holy Spirit's groan.
- He makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And not only that, but there's desire with the groanings.
- [23 : 55] All my desire is before thee. And my groaning is not hid from thee. These desires and these groans.
- These groans, gleaming in the breast of a living soul. Under a sense of death. And the grave. That's where life is.
- This is the living religion. This is the living religion. And there is underneath it, you'll feel it. There is underneath it a peculiar secret hope. This is the living religion.
- Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine and we'll be saved. Knew we would.
- [25 : 00] And so you know, when you've been in the sense of death and everything seems to be buried, you have underneath a confidence in God that adds a touch from him.
- Would bring you up. Very the same thing in Ezekiel. The scriptures do confirm one another. You know it well, the dry bones.
- Then they said, our hope is lost. We have cut off our hearts. Same experience. But the Lord gives the answer.
- So, prophesy, Son of Man. Say unto them, O my people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves.
- Then shall we know that ye are my people when I have opened your graves. Of course, there is some graves we dig by our own next lightings and our sins.
- [26 : 15] We bury the promises often. We bury our comforts. We bring darkness upon our own minds.
- But in all this, there is the work of sanctification. Teaching his people to profit. Burning up all the wood, hay and stubble.
- And conforming them to the image of God's dear Son. And that's what they're predestinated to. And this is one way by which the Holy Ghost works.
- Predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. And that conforming work is going on in the midst of his chastenings.

In his departures. In his silence. In your afflictions. In your losses.

[27 : 22] In your sense of death. Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave it's so impossible? The Lord seems to be light in impossibilities.

It is designed to bring his people into a position where they have no help of themselves. Bring them in self-despair.

And that's the way to good hope through grace. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave?

Or thy faithfulness in destruction? You look at these two things. Faithfulness in destruction. True. True.

[28 : 33] We read in the 90th Psalm. They'll turn it man to destruction. And say it to return. Ye children of men.

And that. As though the psalmist would say here. Can the two go together. Lord. earth.

Pomestali. A Christ. Yours. And as though the psalmist.

Well, it is at the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. And one reason is, I am the Lord, I change not.

Therefore, these sons of Jacob are not consumed. The Lord will never destroy the work of his own hands.

[29 : 30] But oh, it does seem like it at times. Let's read the book of Job and see how he speaks in his whole experience.

Will thou pursue the dry stubble? And thou dost put my feet in the stocks and set a fruit upon my heels.

You are pursuing me, Lord, pursuing me like dry stubble. Like a poor dryly driven by the wind. No faithfulness in destruction.

Well, there would be no faithfulness if the Lord was to destroy his people. It's what glory could result in his name for the destruction of his people.

His glory is in their salvation. And yet, so is the mystery of godliness and the work of the Spirit.

[30 : 41] That establishment comes through destruction. Life comes through death. Joy comes through sorrow.

The crown comes through the cross. This is the way. The way of tribulation. But here's a struggling soul.

Are you? Do you know anything about everything awake for an hour with a burden of conflict of sin or sorrow upon your heart?

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?

The psalmist knew that there were wonders. That was one of his names. His name should be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

[31 : 47] Who needs to run into those names and be saved? Why those poor souls that need wonders wrought for them? Can you do without wonders?

Is salvation such a little thing to you that you can manage yourself? Wonders. Need miracles wrought? Oh, it's a miracle.

And when any poor sinner is saved by grace. A mighty miracle for everyone that is brought safely to heaven. But, says he, Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?

That's where the Lord accomplishes many of his wonders in the dark. There are the hidden treasures of darkness.

The treasures are not dark. But they're in the dark often. God moves in a mysterious way. Purposely. I'll make a remark which needs to be qualified.

[33 : 02] Or else it would sound very wrong. But the Lord, with all the records of scripture, never does anything in a straightforward way.

Never does. When he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, he could have taken them by a straight course to the promised land, but he didn't do it.

You take the 107th Psalm, there's not much straight about that, but it's straight in the Lord. I think we said the other day, that the Lord's dealings with his people, in accomplishing all of the decrees and purposes of the covenant, lead them in a crooked way, where the way is not crooked to him, is straight.

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?

It seems as though these wonders were brought to the remembrance of these troubled souls. Yes, that's it.

[34 : 19] There are the God that doeth wonders. Now, I ask you to clear thy strength among the people. Well, then they must have needed it.

They must have been a weak people. And these wonders have brought for them. Wonders of grace. There are to God they know.

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? This is where he does make them known. And one reason why he brings his people in the dark is that the light of intelligence will never discover his purposes.

When you're in the dark, you need a revelation. You want things revealed. And you know, if we were to go on and on and be left alone, and we're well acquainted with all the doctrines of grace, we should never need to be brought into the dark.

We should know all about it. But when the Lord brings a death upon your living things, although they never die, you'll think they are dead. And bring you into such darkness, darkness that you cannot sing away, you cannot read away, you cannot talk away.

[35 : 50] Then you need a revelation. And that this is the way the Lord teaches his people to profit, that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

And he's forgotten to be gracious. You take the scriptures again in the 40th chapter of Isaiah.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, my judgment is passed over, for my God, just here they were, shall thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

But he said to them, Why do you say that? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the Lord, the Creator, the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there's no searching of his understanding, he gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increases strength, as the answer.

[37 : 45] Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness. By the church there, how they thought, that their way passed over from God, he took no notice of them.

He didn't take up their cause, their judgment had passed over from him. So he didn't consider them, as to what path they were in, nor did they take up their cause, and judge their cause.

He'd forgotten all about them. But oh, when he answers, hast thou not known? Why, he said to a John the Baptist in the prison, poor John the Baptist, you may depend upon it in that prison, he knew something about these verses.

There he was, and only just introduced the Lord Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, and now he sends two disciples.

Art thou he, and that shalt come, or do we look for another? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

[39 : 06] But go and tell John again, again these things. And oh, poor sinner, that would put things right with you in the twinkling of an eye.

Even if he was to let a poor minister tell you again those things, I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.