

Acts (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Cottingham, Peter (1947 - 2014)

[0 : 00] Amen. The words I do feel the Lord's gracious help to bring before you.

It is found in the chapter that we read, the 11th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the first close in verse 21. The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 11, the first close in verse 21, and the hand of the Lord was with them.

I felt, indeed, a great sweetness in this word, and how I do trust that there are many here that can truly say that the hand of the Lord has been with them, even to bring you into the house of God this morning, that the Lord has directed your steps and brought you here.

Oh, may it prove to be so. And I would have you to notice with the words here that the hand of the Lord was with them.

And it is in this that I felt that I must bring before you, first of all, those words of warning, as we have them in the word of God, as we do see them around about us, that the hand of the Lord is indeed upon the wicked in judgment.

[2 : 17] a solemn truth, and yet it is a matter that we must ponder well on.

We read of the enemies of the people of God, how that the Lord's hand went out against them, how the Lord appeared for his people to deliver them.

And I thought of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, how they were delivered, and they were delivered by the hand of the Lord.

And how it is with souls, they are delivered from their enemies, the enemies that crowd in upon them.

And it is truly the hand of the Lord that is upon them and with them. It is upon them for good and not for evil.

[3 : 31] But how stands the case with us? A solemn thing indeed, if the Lord's hand is drenched out against us in anger, do we not feel to deserve it?

Truly, we each do. We deserve that the wrath of God may fall upon us. Why?

We have sinned, we have rebelled, we have done evil in his sight. And yet what do we find? The mercy lengthened out time and time again.

Amen. And in our thoughts regarding the children of Israel, to hasten on a little when they were in the wilderness, how they rebelled, how they murmured, and yet the hand of the Lord was with them.

Oh, the mercy, the loving kindness of God toward his people and the mercy toward them that are bound up in the covenant of grace.

[4 : 49] That it will not be in anger, but it will be in love, that his hand is upon them and is with them.

Now the children of Israel, by reason of the burden that was upon them, the bondage that they were in in the land of Egypt, cried unto the Lord and the Lord heard their cry.

We have this instance then where the Lord truly hears the cries of his afflicted people. And have you cried unto the Lord?

And have you felt this, that he turns a deaf ear to your cries? Amen. Now this is a source of trial to those souls who feel their great need of the comforting hand of the Lord to be with them, to support them, to bring them out, to lead them in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

And yet what do they feel? They feel to be as Jeremiah when he said, the Lord has shut out my every cry. Yet the Lord heard the cry of his people and he remembered them in their affliction and he raised up his servant Moses to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt.

[6 : 31] And they were led forth by the right way as every sinner is. The way of righteousness, the way of peace, the way of forgiveness. But what do we see?

Those many, many times when Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let his people go, the Lord's people go, the children of Israel.

And he comes into my thoughts, oh, how Satan clings and holds fast to the Lord's people.

Do you feel this? Oh, do you feel this in your soul? You would walk in his ways, you would walk in his paths, you would desert the paths of sin and of evil and yet you cannot.

And as the children of Israel, they had no might and they had no strength to deliver themselves from Egypt. Consider this, they were a great number and yet they had no strength to deliver themselves.

[7 : 51] As we have no strength, we cannot deliver ourselves from the clenches of the enemy of souls.

But there is in the Old Testament dispensation as there was one that was raised up, through the power of God to deliver them and to lead them forth.

So, in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have one that is raised up. And I think also of the children of Israel when they did murmur and what did the Lord do?

He sent into their midst those fiery serpents to bite them, those that were bitten died. And each soul that is bitten by sin, the sentence of death is upon them.

The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die. There is no escape from it. There is no escape from the Lord. What did the Lord say to Moses?

[9 : 12] Make a brazen serpent and raise it up upon a pole that all those that look upon it shall live.

And what is it in the word of God that speaks in this way, even as Moses raised up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must Christ be raised up that all that look upon him may have eternal life.

And how do you feel in your soul? You cannot lift up your eyes, I believe we mentioned it in prayer, to lay aside every weight, to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

You say, I cannot. I have no strength. I cannot release myself from this burden, from this captivity.

And as you are brought to that, there will be the sign, and there will be the crying unto the Lord that he might appear before you.

[10 : 26] there came there came then the time, the time of mercy, the time of release, the time when the Lord said, let my people go, and they were let go.

now how is it with souls? You have looked, you have longed for the time when you may have this liberty, and you have felt it.

felt then that all may be well, that the path might be smooth. what happens?

What happens indeed? You feel this, that your enemies are hard behind you, and brought into a place where there is no escape.

As the children of Israel, when they came to the sea, the enemies are hard behind them, the mountains on every side, in the sea before, and no way.

[11 : 52] What were the children of Israel exhorted to do? To remember all the way which the Lord their God hath led them these many years through the wilderness, and whether you are old or young or in the midst of life, can you not see those times, those spots, those places where the Lord has directed your steps and enlarged your feet and brought you into a place where you can truly say, yes, the Lord has appeared for my deliverance.

And you've looked on in wonder as to what the Lord has done. His mercy to you, you've looked on in wonder, why? Because you're undeserving of it.

You've looked on in wonder when you see the holiness of God. You've looked on in wonder when you see your sin and you've looked on in wonder that the Son of God should show such great love and mercy to your soul that he bore the curse of the law upon himself.

Yes, he fulfilled the law when he cried, answer, it is finished. There there was the setting free, there there is the way made for his people as the way was made through the sea.

Oh, may you be brawned, brawned to the point where you have to cry. Cry unto the Lord and know that you have no strength of your own.

[13 : 38] Then, when the Lord does deliver, and I'm not saying if the Lord delivers you, now I'm saying when the Lord delivers you, for there will be deliverance. For that soul will feel that underneath there is the rock.

How was it with the children of Israel going through the sea? Firm grind. There was the rock that they walked on, that they rested on, and this is our only hope.

Our only hope. There was the path that was made. It goes against the flesh. Would we not seek any other way out of our distress, their trouble, our need?

But the Lord has said, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. And the Lord has promised there that he will be gracious, he will be merciful unto them.

Yes, the bread of adversity, the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner anymore, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.

[15 : 03] And one thing you will prove, it's the Lord that has directed your steps and brought you into that path. You will prove also the depravity of your own sinful heart, that you cannot walk in that way, except the Lord bring you and lead you and guide you.

And this also, oh, I believe the Lord's people are brought to know more and more, only as their fall, their sin is revealed to them, that they can see, oh, the holiness of their Lord, and the mercy and the grace, that he has not cut them off, that he has not destroyed them.

Well, we consider then in this illustration of the children of Israel, the hand of the Lord brought them forth out of Egypt and led them in the wilderness.

What do we also see, and I must bring this faithfully before you, that there are the many that fell in the wilderness, many that fell in the wilderness.

Let him that stand there take heed, lest he fall. is this a matter of exercise to you?

[16 : 46] Is this a trial to you? Regarding your standing before God, or are you comfortable?

Are you quite happy? Are you perfectly content content with your path? Are you quite content with coming to the house of God, reading the word of God, putting on an outward sign?

What did the Lord Jesus Christ, oh, what did he say to those? There was one that came to him and said, good master, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?

And the Lord showed forth to him the commands of God, and he said, all these things have I kept from my youth, but what did the Lord say to him?

Yet one thing thou lackest. And I believe that this is with every child of God, they feel this lack, they feel this need.

[18 : 01] They cannot be satisfied, they cannot be content with a mere outward form. It is something that must be known and felt within. It is something that must be sealed home upon their soul.

Take the case of Saul of Tarsus. Where was he found to all outward appearances as a man of God?

and yet he had nothing. He had the true knowledge of the word of God in his head, but he knew nothing of Christ.

As his Saviour, he knew of Christ as one that he cried out away with him, crucify him.

And how this is, oh how this is, and let us examine ourselves deeply in this. Do we say, in our soul, away with him?

[19 : 16] We will not have this man to rule, to reign over us. we have our works, we have our righteousness, we have our religion. This is nothing in the sight of God.

All our righteousness is as filthy rags. But oh, through the Lord Jesus Christ there is full acceptance, full remission, full redemption through him.

There is a fullness that resides in Jesus our head. A fullness, yes, to answer our every need.

And what is your need? What is your need as you have come into the house of God this morning? Is it not in this way? God be merciful to me, a sinner. Oh, that we might be brought down, yes, down to this one point.

what did the Lord say there? Ye must be born again.

[20 : 28] We are born, we can be brought up to come to the house of God and we can have nothing. We can have nothing.

And I bring it before you in this way regarding the parable of the ten virgins. five were wise and five were foolish.

To outward appearances they were the same. And may we ever be preserved from looking round upon others and saying, they're lost, for we are lost, we are undone.

What did the man of God say? Isaiah, woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips, who dwelleth amongst a people of unclean lips.

He felt his need. Oh, he felt it. And we have then these instances, the hand of the Lord, and let us look at it in this way, was upon them, upon the enemies of God to destroy them, upon the people of God to bring them unto him.

[21 : 53] Oh, we see the mercy of that precious doctrine of election that the world and the flesh cannot accept.

let me bring this before you. Those who would say in this way that they cannot, oh, they cannot accept this, the elect of God, in him, in the councils of eternity, their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Oh, how can we accept this? Well, I would draw your thoughts to it in this way. None of us are deserving a place in heaven.

None of us. This is where this doctrine comes in, as the precious doctrine of salvation.

there is nothing that we can do to attain to salvation and to heaven to glory.

[23 : 18] It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he came, he came to suffer for his people, to die for his people, that they might have eternal life, through his death, through his sufferings, that they might be one with him.

Now, consider this, as we were speaking of those virgins, to outward appearances, they were the same. God, I bring this before you in this way, take care that you do not condemn any.

As we have read this morning regarding Simon Peter, as he rehearsed before them what the Lord had shown to him.

Not one soul in the covenant of grace, the covenant of election shall ever be lost. What was shown to him?

Heaven opened, a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air.

[24 : 44] there came a voice to him, Rise Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

Now the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed? That call not thou common, What God hath cleansed.

Now what do we read? that this was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven, and Peter spoke of it, that it was drawn up again, everything.

Here I believe it speaks of those who are in Christ Jesus. They may, they are, they are unclean, but what God hath cleansed, call not thou common.

The vessel that was caught up to heaven, it speaks of those who are in Christ Jesus. They shall be caught up with him when the Lord Jesus Christ again comes in his glory to call forth those, the quick and the dead, to be with him.

[26 : 12] When the last trump shall sound, what a solemn time that will be, will I amongst that number be found.

for there is one thing, one truth that is before us, that those, oh, those that are not to be found in that vessel, the vessel of mercy and of grace, they will be cast into outer darkness, to return to their thoughts of the virgins, five that were wise, that had the oil in their vessels, with the lamps that were ready, prepared by the Lord.

When the cry went up, behold, the bridegroom cometh, they went forth to meet him, they went in, and the door was shut. There came the time when those five foolish desired entrance.

what were they resting upon? Yes, that they had gone out and bought. They were going in their own strength.

Depart from me, for I never knew you. Depart from me. What do we also read?

[27 : 39] The parable also of the wheat and the tares. And the servants of that Lord came and said that there are an enemy hath done this, the tares growing up amongst the weeds.

And what did the Lord say? When they said, shall we pluck up the tares, lest they choke the wheat? No, let them both grow up together and at the time of harvest gather ye the tares and bind them and cast them into the fire.

And gather ye the weeds into my barn. The Lord then will come and gather his people to be with him. But those, those that are not bound up in this covenant of grace, cast into eternal fire.

them. And the hand of the Lord was with them. Before we continue with their thoughts here, I come to the Lord's servants.

And I think especially in the hand of the Lord as it was upon Ezekiel. he was commanded to go forth and to speak to the children of the captivity.

[29 : 07] And he was lifted up of the spirit. But how did he go? He went in the heat and bitterness of his own spirit. How I have had to cry time and time again that the Lord would not leave me to my own spirit.

but what do we read? The hand of the Lord was strong upon him. And I have had to cry this, that if I have gone forth in my own spirit, that the hand of the Lord would be strong upon me.

And what do we read? He was silent. He was going to give them in that way that we might say a piece of his own mind.

Oh, how then the Lord's servants need to be kept from their own spirit and others of the Lord's people to be kept from their own spirit that they might not speak any words.

Oh, that will do harm to the Lord's people that will wound them. the Lord has spoken, yes, there is a time to pluck up and a time to destroy, but there is also a time to plant and a time to build.

[30 : 36] There is a need, yes, there is a need to bring down, but there is also a need to bring forth the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord's hand then be upon me and upon the Lord's servants as they go forth wherever and in whatever way it might be, that we may not be left to our own selves, but we must now come to this, that the hand of the Lord was with them.

How is it with you here? Can you say that the hand of the Lord has been with you, leading you, guiding you, guarding you, keeping you?

Perhaps there are those even here at this time that you have had to say, oh, the Lord has preserved me and kept me from my own self.

What is it you fear most of all? Do you fear what goes on within your own soul? Do you fear what goes on within your own heart? And the Lord has kept you.

[31 : 55] Oh, how the Lord has mercifully kept you. You have sinned, you have fallen, you have rebelled, you have turned aside, and yet his hand has been lengthened out time and time again in mercy unto you that he has brought you back.

remember now all the way which the Lord thy God has led thee these many years through the wilderness. He's led thee and brought thee to this point. And oh, you can look back and you can see truly the hand of the Lord has been upon you for good.

You may have rebelled, you may have turned aside from it, but he has not left you to return to the children of Israel. The land of Canaan was promised unto them, and those to whom he had a purpose of grace and mercy toward, he brought them into the promised land, and what was it?

A land flowing with milk and honey. Oh, do you feel in your own soul that it's over with you? how can there be mercy, how can there be forgiveness for you?

You've sinned grievously, but the hand of the Lord, it has been with you, it has brought you to this time.

[33 : 25] Let me say this, you doubt, you fear, but if the hand of the Lord has been with you thus far, would it be to destroy you?

Would it be to leave you? Would it be to desert you? Never. Never. Not one soul that the dear Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for upon the cross.

can ever be lost. And I believe this was very, very clearly shown to Paul, that there was nothing, that there is no separation between those souls that are found in Christ.

Christ. The hand of the Lord was with me. Let me speak to the children, to the young people at this time.

Oh, may you feel, may you know, that the hand of the Lord is with you in your life, that the hand of the Lord has kept you, and will keep you, and will lead you in right paths.

[35 : 06] And may this be your prayer. Oh, may this be your prayer, Lord, ever keep me, and preserve me from turning aside, from going in paths of wickedness.

Oh, my prayer then is for the young people, that you may feel the hand of the Lord upon you, and with you, to lead you in paths of righteousness.

What a favour and blessing it is, if we have praying parents, the hand of the Lord with us, with our parents.

What a favour it is to be brought to the house of God, to be brought to the Sabbath school, to hear the truth, the word of God. You've seen the hand of the Lord with you in this.

Oh, that you might be given this, this yearning, this love, this desire, after the things of God, this is the Lord's work, the work of the Holy Spirit, to give a desire, to give a longing after the things of God.

[36 : 31] And if you dear young people and children can see that the hand of the Lord is with you, he will keep you, he will watch over you, even, oh, even if you are ensnared, if you are enticed from the ways of God.

God, I bring before you the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in the parable that he spoke of the prodigal son.

In an outward way, I was not left to go from the house of God, but the Lord knows what was going on within. Oh, within, I was as the prodigal son.

The hand of the Lord was with him, and in which way to bring him to a time of want and a time of need. He brought him low.

What a precious place this is, as it was spoken of, and, oh, may you feel this, that the Lord has brought you low.

[37 : 55] Why? He must increase, but I must decrease. The man out of whom the Lord Jesus Christ cast the legion of devils, where was he found?

Low, at the feet of Christ, clothed and in his right mind. And you will not desire to be anywhere else.

Oh, that I might be a doorkeeper in the house of God, rather than dwelling in the tents of wickedness. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, the hand of the Lord with you.

Well, as the hand of the Lord is laid upon his people, they prove that the Lord is with them. The hand of the Lord is with them for good, for blessing.

It's not to destroy him. It's not to bring down that he might destroy those souls. You may feel it. Oh, you might feel that the hand of God has gone out against you, to afflict you.

[39 : 09] I tell you, if the hand of the Lord is with you, affliction, trial, distress, whatever it might be, it will be sanctified and it will be blessed to you.

It will be to his honor and glory to lay the sinner low that he might be glorified. Then we shall bless the Lord for his hand, for his work and for his mercy that he has not left us.

I tell you, this is indeed one of the greatest fears of the Lord's people. They desire, they know, their need of the Lord's hand to be with them, to be upon them, to keep them.

But one thing that they will fear above all things, that his hand has been taken from them, his presence has been removed. There, if you have known a taste of his sweetness, of his love, of his forgiveness and of his mercy, there you will feel to be in a great strait.

There you will feel your true poverty, your emptiness. Your Lord is all and in all. And one thing you do need, one thing you want, one thing you desire above all things, that the hand of the Lord may be with you, with you for good.

[40 : 43] And now before we come to a close, let us consider this, as the hand of the Lord, yes, can we say, oh, we have those evidences that his hand has been with us.

It's to his honour and glory, it is indeed praise to his holy name. What did the Lord say to the children of Israel? It was not for their sakes that he did it, but it was to his honour and glory that he had brought them forth, that there might be a people to serve him.

And so it is with you that he has done this, it is to his honour and glory that there might be a people to serve him, then the hand of the Lord has been with you through your life.

How will it be when we come to the end of our life? Or have you fears in this?

Do you tremble regarding this that you will be left at last? You will make shipwreck at last? Do you have been resting upon a false foundation?

[42 : 14] Oh, let me say this, the hand of the Lord, if it has been with you, if it is with you, it will be with you, even unto the end.

If the Lord has begun a work in your soul, he can never leave it. Undone, unfinished, that work will be complete.

It is complete in Christ Jesus when the Lord Jesus Christ cried out upon the cross. It is finished, that great victory cry over the grave, over death.

When the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law, when he said, I came not to do away with the law, but to fulfill the law, there the sting of death was removed, and life given unto his people, eternal life.

I say this to you, that if you have known the hand of the Lord to be upon you, and the hand of the Lord, you have proved this, you have walked it out, the hand of the Lord being with you, yes, it will be with you, even unto the end, to carry you, to be with him forever.

[43 : 51] And what did the Lord Jesus Christ say to his disciples and to his people? I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also, in my father's house.

And you will find it in the 14th chapter of John, the promise there, the hand of the Lord was with them, and it is with them, and will be with them.

Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. My father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. And what did Jesus Christ say? I am the way, the truth, and the life.

[45 : 08] The Lord then, as his hand is laid upon his people to lead them in those right paths, he will in grace supply their every need.

He will in providence supply their every need. Perhaps there are those here that cannot point to those evidences that they do so desire.

let me say this, let me ask you this question, if you know the evidence is in providence, in your lives, in your walk, your daily walk, where the hand of the Lord has been with you, guiding your steps even to this place here this morning.

may the Lord, oh may the Lord's hand be with us, that we might see clearly, very clearly, that regarding our soul, the hand of the Lord is upon us, the hand of the Lord is with us.

may the Lord bless then his own word, Amen. Amen. Let us close with hymn number 176, to Nidia 177.

[47 : 00] Now, dearest Lord, to praise thy name, let all our powers agree, worthy art thou of endless fame, our springs are all in thee, here in thy love will we rejoice, all sovereign, rich and free, singing we hope with heart and voice, our springs are all in thee, hymn number 176.

hymn number 176. hymn number large Aus phkaa ch■■■■ ■ m h When I come on in my life,

O Lord, how ■■■■ primary Take me over God and Lord, a drink of joy and peace, a drink of glory.

Lord, ye ye shall forever rez, thou140 a drink of gold's ll ■■■■, with the Word of the Lamb.

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[50 : 40] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS prayer and of exercise over those things that we have heard, that they may be the living word of God unto our souls. Do forgive all that has been amiss. We pray, gather with us this evening, that thy presence may be known and found. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with us each. Amen.

Amen.