

Sunday School Address - Rain (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Dawson, Peter (1925-2014)

[0 : 0 0] I'm asking a dear friend to speak to you and we pray you may be held Thank you Mr. Hyde My friends and especially scholars I trust you will bear with me I need to be rather simple in my approach to the address this year I had a feeling last year that some of the younger ones were not really able to enter into the things that I said sometime in April I had to have a little operation in my arm and it meant that I couldn't do anything for a fortnight and that's time to think isn't it and as I was thinking I prayed and I prayed that I might have something to talk to you about that was ordinary that would cause you to see it when it came and to think of God and of his word

I've tried to adopt this principle several times when I have spoken to Sunday schools and to young people in other places now for 14 days while I was not able to go out we had one thing that happened I think of 11 of those 14 days when something happens 11 times out of 14 you begin to think it's a message don't you what was that one thing you know that April was the wettest April we've had for very many years and so you will need very little understanding to see that it was rain it rained on 10 or 11 of those 14 days and I had asked that I should have something to think about but it's all very well to think of rain isn't it but you have to think of rain specially now I wonder

I'm only going to ask you two questions any of you tell me when rain is first mentioned in the word of God that's right it's not quite right but it's the answer I wanted before the flood we find rain is mentioned but it's only mentioned negatively that God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth we don't know quite how long that was right at the beginning that is said and whether it was during the time of creation or whether it was until the flood we are not shown we do not need to conjecture but it does give to us one principle shown in both of those mentions and the thought is this that in the first instance we have this said God had not caused it to rain but when the flood came as you pointed out to me that that was the first proper mention of rain the Lord God said

I will cause it to rain forty days and forty nights now this brings a principle when I was a child younger than some of you and at the age of some of you there was a principle in my home and it was one that it was not wise to violate we never had to complain about the weather it was not allowed and the reason was given God sends the weather and God sends what is best now there's something to think about isn't it because when we have a gift from somebody or whatever we have from somebody we might look at the gift but surely we think of the giver do we not we look beyond the gift to the giver and surely we can look upon the gifts of God in so many aspects and shouldn't each one of them remind us of God if our hearts are rightly affected with the thought of God we shall be looking upon his works and when we look upon his works we shall think of his power and when we think of his power we shall think of how he uses that power he uses it for the good of his people now you will say but we can see this in many things but rain but I just want to take rain as my focal point if you like the point the thing that we look at the thing that as we look at it we find from the word of God it reminds us of God now when I started thinking about this

I hadn't had the May friendly companion do you have the friendly companion any of you? can you remember what the editor wrote about in his opening article in May?

[5 : 14] it was about a man but it was what the man did yes? and you wrote it down well about umbrellas about umbrellas that's right yes I had not seen that when I began to work out my address but I thought when I looked at it yes there are several ways of looking at rain and one of them is that sometimes we feel that it makes us wet and perhaps we do not feel very thankful about it at the time and yet some of you are not old enough to remember it but most of the congregation grown-ups are I can remember a year 1976 when we had no rain from March until October and how glad we were when we did get wet from October onwards and the Lord in his goodness and mercy sent almost enough rain in that last part of the year to restore us to almost normal level

I think we had 24 out of the average of 26 inches and in that case you see there was a gladness when we looked at the rain now I need to be fairly brief but I want to look at it first from the viewpoint of from whence it comes we've already made the point have we not that God had not made it rain and then God made it to rain and do we not get the thought of it that it is under the control of God perhaps some of you older ones you've begun to learn science and you might have looked a little at meteorology my favourite subject in my service life and we might follow how the rain comes but if we do not believe that God sends it just think of the efforts of men to get rain when it's short useless or if they are successful so minimally successful that they might as well be useless for the cost and have you ever thought of trying to stop rain when it's coming it can be stopped when it's coming do you remember that one of the later mentions of rain was this that in the plagues of Egypt the Lord God caused it to rain a grievous hail and then

Pharaoh showed as he did so many times repentance Moses prayed then the Lord caused the rain to cease I think we have the point from the word of God as well as from the practical issue that rain is given or withheld by God we can look at it once more just in the negative side for a moment for mostly we look at rain as a blessing as something that God gives to us and the point is made because if we come to Elijah's time we find rain was withheld from the earth we all know the story of course it was three years James tells us three years and six months and there was a dreadful famine in the land and then the time came when the rain came again but we look at the rain then and when it came for Pharaoh and when it came in the flood there's a means of judgment they're coming with the Israelites for a moment before they went into the promised land and what was one of the things the Lord showed to them about the land that it would be watered with the rain from heaven and he promised them that there would be the rain when they put the seed in and the rain before the harvest to make sure that the harvest had grown it was one of the blessings of the land that the rain and the seasons were so worked that they could sow their seed and reap their harvest knowing that under the circumstances that were set forth as they were following the ways of God that God would be faithful in his provision for them and one of the great parts of that provision was that he would send them the rain in due season what a thought it is we had a little thought in some of our hymns about God looking upon his people and you see some of the look has to be because we are sinful creatures in judgment but how much of God's looking upon his people is in benefit toward them in the thought of his goodness his mercy his provision and we see it in the rain now I had another thought come to me dear old minister of years ago only the older people here will remember him

Mr. Hickmott he came to Bethesden once and he preached to us about the rainbow and a little after he'd finished he was in my home waiting to be collected and we had a most beautiful rainbow in the to be seen and I asked him to come to the window and look at it and he came and looked and he was a very old man and tears came into his eyes and he said isn't it lovely do you know what it makes me think I said what does it make you think Mr. Hickmott he said my boy it makes me think of what God said when I see the bow I will remember my covenant and he said we look at the bow and God looks at the bow therefore we must have a little sense of nearness to God when we see a rainbow and then I thought I was looking out of my window and I was looking at the rain and as I looked at the rain I thought yes no rainbow but nonetheless who sent the rain and so I looked at the rain and I think I had a little sense of at least being on the receiving end of God's gift and if somebody sends you a gift you do feel a little close to them do you not and I thought there's a blessing in the rain not only the blessing that the earth needs watering but the blessing that God had sent it now it's not even a start now I need to be very brief because there's something rather important to happen before the time comes

I'm sure that you're waiting for it these prizes need to be distributed but let us look quickly Moses speaking for God said my doctrine shall drop as the rain don't we look at the rain sometimes and begin to think of the doctrines doctrine is rather a strong word for some of you but just think of what doctrine is it is what God tells us of his grace toward his people his goodness for his people his provision for them and when we look at the rain we have to say God calls one of his messengers to give us this message that his goodness his mercy his grace toward us should come as the rain and so when we look at the rain do we begin to think of the goodness the mercy the grace of God it is surely something that our hearts can be brought to think upon is it not and then we come a little further and with a lovely text in Isaiah

[13 : 30] I think about it quite often and the Lord said as the rain cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither but watereth the earth bringeth it to bring forth so that there is seed for the sower and bread for the eater so shall my word be now I think you look into the word quite often I hope you do but when you look at the rain does it make you think it's one of God's blessings and remind you shall we say of a most wonderful blessing a word of God so shall my word be so that's two things that already the rain reminds us of if we read the word of God the doctrine the word yes there's a parallel isn't there adjoining between them but let us come a little closer still lovely text in Hosea

Hosea is a prophet and he has a text in his sixth chapter which I trust I shall never forget I'll read it to you then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord his going forth is prepared as the morning he shall come he shall come unto us as the rain as the latter and former rain of the earth latter autumn former spring the rains I told you about that were in the holy land and as the Lord was speaking of or sending the message by his prophet of him coming he likened his coming unto the rain well then what a lot the rain is beginning to show to us of the goodness the mercy the grace of God he gave us his doctrine he gave us his word he gave us himself he shall come now a prophet as you know is looking forward and looking forward there is an anticipation and he was coming he was looking to the coming of the Lord

Jesus now I need to keep this very brief indeed then we look but one more and we come into the Acts of the Apostles and of course then there was a looking back the Apostles spake Peter of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord we think of rain as a time of refreshing don't we especially on a hot day and the ground leads refreshing and then we see a likeness times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord he shall come as the rain yes can we think when we feel the refreshing shower it is an illustration a picture of what it is to our hearts when it pleases God to send to us the knowledge of our

Lord I really need a sermon to expand on that but the time is already gone just one last thought Hosea again shows us something else we spoke last time I was here about consciences if I asked all those who were righteous to put up their hands how many of you would put them up and if I asked the congregation or myself I think the same thing would happen we should have to keep them down wouldn't we we do not know what righteousness is when we look into our hearts but Hosea speaking for the Lord says till he come and rain righteousness upon you as I looked out of the window at the rain and some of these texts I had looked up and some of them came into my thoughts I thought what a lot of blessings are set forth by the rain lastly

Ezekiel says there shall be showers of blessings now when we were at home in my father's time we used to sing a hymn on our young people services some of the old people here might remember because I'm going back now 30 40 years and I'll just read you two verses see if you can remember them Lord I hear of showers of blessings thou art sending full and free showers the thirsty earth refreshing let some drops now fall on me you praise that your prayer is that and then the last verse was this love of God so pure and changeless blood of Christ so rich and free grace of God so strong and boundless magnify them all in me showers of blessings may the

[18 : 59] Lord rain them on all of us thank you