

A poor and afflicted people (Quality Average)

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[0 : 00] The words that I would venture to try and make a few remarks from this evening, you will find in the third chapter of Zephaniah, the twelfth verse.

The twelfth verse of the third chapter of Zephaniah. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

This chapter we have read, one of those solemn chapters in God's truth, where God himself speaks through Zephaniah.

And what he has said must and, since he is an unchangeable God, and all that he hath declared must and will and shall come to pass.

And although you and I may have, which we have, a nature, that may, in reading God's judgments, seem to rise off, yet God in his love and compassion toward us and have not dealt with us, after the imaginations of our hearts, or according unto those things which we may find or rise, which are against those things which he has said shall come to pass.

[2 : 23] And again, in reading of God's judgments, what he definitely will bring upon the world and upon the wicked, and upon the wicked, there will be, if we are rightly taught, a measure of trembling at his majesty and his power, and of the thought and of the thought of those things which he says shall be accomplished in the day when he shall gather his people unto himself.

You've just been seeing a beautiful hymn, but there's one verse, I hope I should be understood here, the last verse of that hymn, we must be in a wonderful place if we are brought to see and to feel that last verse.

To be able to often say, Come Lord Jesus, quickly come. I know well enough that our flesh cleaves to this world, cleaves to our loved ones, but I believe the poet there had in mind that there are times when we are sweetly brought into a place where we can say in another world, I could from all things parted thee, but never, never, Lord, from thee.

Therefore, there are times when we can use that language, I believe, but not always. so then, it is a mercy if we know in our hearts how the difference between those things which God hath determined upon the wicked and those which he has determined upon the righteous.

what a line of demarcation there is drawn through God's sacred word wherever we may read it, if we have eyes to see, hearts to receive, and to understand of the separation already made in the mind of God betwixt the righteous and the wicked.

[5 : 32] And each one of us here tonight, from the youngest to the oldest, are either on one side of that line of demarcation or the other, and the day will come when the tree will fall, as God's word declares, where the tree falleth, there shall it lie.

Which way shall we fall, I wonder? It will be a wonderful blessing that when the tree falls, we fall toward heaven and toward the Lord and Savior, our Redeemer.

Well, may we be led a little into the path of those who will know something of that truth, that, being trees of his own right hand planting, they must and will fall toward heaven and toward God, the Father, Son, and Holy God, and be received by them in and through the merits of Jesus.

And there, too, I believe, when a child of God is taken from this time state, there is joy in the mind of the Son, in that another of his dear children have been gathered unto himself.

Well, he says, here I will leave in the midst of thee, that is, in the midst of Zion. so there is a people that God in his purposes has left in the midst of Zion.

[7 : 44] It's a remnant. As we read in the thirteenth verse, the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, for they shall feed it lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

As so that it is evident that it is a remnant according unto the election of grace, one of his remnant would I be, says the poet.

Oh, what a mercy it is if you and I have any humble hope that we are among this remnant. We shall many fears as to the truth of it.

We shall brought into many times of anxiety and trouble. Indeed, we shall be among these whom he has said he will leave in the midst of Zion an afflicted and poor people.

And you will find that for the most part through life's journey it will be an afflicted afflicting path and there will be much poverty fault.

[9 : 10] But it won't always be so. But it is a pathway that is known by the remnant. They will never say I am rich and in need of nothing.

They will never say they do not understand what this affliction means. I believe then that God causes these things to come that they may be taught what they are by nature and also taught what he is in his great and mighty power to deliver.

Well there will be then times that these people will suffer affliction. Afflictions make us see what else would escape our sight how very vile and dim are we but God how pure and bright.

And so it is that afflictions are brought upon us for our profit and for our good. And I believe there is no greater affliction to a child of God than to feel the wrinkling sores of sin in their mortal members.

Sin that seems to eat doth a canker into their very being. sin how do you feel about sin sinner?

[10 : 56] Is it to thee that that brings about all your afflictions? We needn't go far to see what a sinner done.

A person said to me in the past week while asking me as regards my own slight affliction it is indeed slight how I felt and so on and she to add affliction she said to me these things didn't ought to be did they?

Ah that's the world isn't it? sin. Oh my friends when we see that there is the effects of sin sin we see it from the beginning and through and that all our afflictions even the body are the effects of sin in that when Adam transgressed against God the seeds of sin entered and we became mortal and you know the time will come when this mortal will have to put off this mortal flesh and then if we are among these afflicted put on immortality well they are afflicted with sin sins that they cannot quell around that dear hearts is blasphemously obscene or some say well

I don't like that language don't you well you'll find it you'll have it in your heart springing up I think I mentioned that here some months ago how before I was coming to chapel on one occasion before I was expecting to preach how in a few moments there was all manner of blasphemous thoughts entered into my poor mind and I had to come and preach the gospel well aren't they strange powers so you see I know what I'm speaking about there none of us want to get into that ground which the warning is in God's word let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall so then there are those things that afflict us afflict us so and bring us into a place where we feel unfitted for the work in one's case the work of the ministry and also heroes may feel unfitted even to enter into his earthly courts

I'm not speaking about the depth of it but there is in the measure with some these things may know but all will know they are rightly taught what it is to be afflicted within dwelling sin in dwelling sin because people are not a stranger to indwelling sin so little heard of in the day we live but it's there but sure mercy and mind if it's been revealed and we are not left among those that have become drowsy or suddenly down upon their leaves and satisfied that it's all well oh my friends it's better to be stood up it's better to have our nest pulled to pieces like dear Job's was than to settle down on a sandy foundation so that

[15:16] God in his love and mercy comes and he stirs up he does indeed that he does not leave his people to sleep the sleep of death what a mercy these things are to know a little of them so that then that becomes an affliction but they're not left there in that affliction they are brought to see there is a way whereby they are lifted out of this affliction their minds are dead and their prayers are led unto him who alone can deliver from sin and from all its pollution oh that depth of

God's love and mercy in that he made provision for these afflicted people he made affliction made provision for this affliction in the covenant in that Christ was ordained of the Father that he should come to be made a propitiation of our sins that they should be washed away in the fountain of his blood a fountain cries the man of God a fountain with a purple flood a purple flood so there will be a crying out in the souls of those that are afflicted with sin for the fountain that is open for sin uncleanness his cross when the flood of that dear sacred fountain flowed forth for the benefit of the afflicted and those that have no helper for the benefit of those who were ready to perish as

God's word declares they shall come who are ready to perish I hope I'm speaking to somebody here tonight ready to perish it's not a nice place to be in but it's a good place because you're ready for the fountain it's a mercy to be in that place aware are they that we are prepared for it and know it and are calling out unto him who alone can apply it even the Holy Spirit that he might cause this fountain to flow forth into our poor halves and cleanse us from all sin and all unrighteousness so then there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness the dear poet says and I do trying to avoid too many hymns but the dear poet says there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from

Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunge beneath this flood not everybody sinners plunge beneath this flood lose all their guilty stains the dying thief rejoice to see that fountain in his day and there my eye as bile as he wash all my sins away sacred fountain I wish I could get to the fountain more often I need it how do you get on are you afflicted so afflicted that you need it are you pressing hard toward it asking and longing for an application of it well I may say this in passing how that I believe that one sacred drop let alone the ocean of it one sacred drop that precious fountain sprinkled upon thy guilty conscience will land you safely in heaven above it will cause you see so efficacious is sufficient one drop of that is life you see the blood is the life and so then one precious drop of that sacred fountain cleanses from all sin sin so great that it needed a great fountain and a mighty fountain to cover them but you see that fountain being so deep so broad and so immense it swallowed up not only your individual sins but the sins of the whole church as it is complete in

Christ and each one of them here on earth from Adam's day till now were among these afflicted for they were left in Zion they were separated from every other people separated from all and everything everyone else on the earth I know we're living in a day when many do not like to hear too much about separation but you know my friends there must be this separation separated from all and everything else both in the world profane and in the world professing indeed while we find today there's so much of that drifting away as it were here and there from the truth and men loving to have it so yet there is still a remnant there is still those whom

[22 : 21] God hath left in the midst of Zion who are afflicted and are desiring and asking after the old paths asking after those things which alone are written in God's word and do not want anything else but that that shall search them through and through lest there might be one particle of sin that might be the reason of their non acceptance of the father so then there is that experience I believe with these afflicted people they are afflicted sometimes lest they might only have a religion that is like king of whippers almost a christian well my friends as

I've said many times and I repeat we must be made complete in christ almost will not be sufficient that is doing close you know almost it's only an air's breath as it were oh how solemn if you and I come to the gate of heaven and we find we are only almost a christian but to be made complete in christ not having on our own righteousness which is of the law but having that righteousness cast upon us which which God through his dear son give to us and that will cover our naked souls yea cover us from top to toe pure and holy and undefiled as we stand in christ when we know this and feel this i'm sure we should be able to enter into that last verse again which we sang tonight to desire to depart and be with him lest we again become polluted our professional garments become bedorked in the mud and mire of this wicked world i will leave in the midst of zion in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people so that they're not only afflicted but they're poor may have many riches many of god's gifts here below which we should prize all his providential blessings we should thank him for all he's given us but these are not our god they are poor they're poor in faith and love oh do you feel your poverty there's times when we feel so poor we cannot trust him for the day to come we cannot trust him for the future well you know a man would ever and ever have been meddling says in the word fools they will be meddling we'd like to pry into the future but god in his wisdom and love and hidden it from us for our comfort were we to see the future it would sink us into despair god having widely hidden the future for us he has also made a way for our escape he has indeed for whatever the future holds for us he's still our god he's still the one we can look unto and if we feel this poverty well it's a mercy to feel it well there is a poverty now when we are afflicted by sin there is a poverty that is accompanied with this affliction which is known in that they have nothing to breathe whereby they may purchase our grace or his mercy nothing in mine hand

I bring simply to thy cross I cling naked come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace black eye to the fountain fly wash me savior all I die as so then there will be a poverty fault and there will be nothing we can bring no good deeds no good tempers and no pleasing frames nothing that we can offer unto God for acceptance what blessed poverty this is to be brought into poverty it is perfect poverty alone it is indeed that will bring us to that place where we shall be enabled to trust in the name of the Lord I love to preach to poverty stricken souls that have got nothing those that know something of that truth and have heard it in their hearts by the exhortation of

Isaiah the prophet through the anointing of the spirit for the comfort of his people oh every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters come buy wine and milk without money and without price isn't that free not free will but free grace the freedom that God hath given to his people so then is perfectly evident that there is nothing for you and I to do in the way of merit that we can bring unto God for the pardon of our sin or for the deliverance from our affliction or to deliver us from our poverty well they being afflicted and poor people they are also rich these are the poor that are made rich by the richness of the grace of

God the riches of his love his mercy and his grace and also the riches of being in possession of those three cardinal graces faith hope and love well I know we cannot always come to that height but nevertheless they are still made rich in the position of those things though there are times when we cannot perceive or see our signs cannot behold them but it does not alter the word of God that these things belong unto the afflicted and the poor people who we have left in the midst of Zion it is their free gift of the

[30 : 51] Father through the Son and by the revealing of the Holy Ghost have been shown under them that they are the recipients of these things not as I would emphasize once more because of their goodness of their merit or anything that they have but to the contrary because it is of God's love and mercy and condescension toward them and that placed upon them in eternity and through life's journey and one day will be known to the full in heaven above so then there is this bestowed upon the remnant of Israel the spiritual

Israel that have been called out of nature's darkness that have been delivered from as I mentioned this morning in taking that text how when they were delivered out of Egypt an Egyptian bondage so that he in his love and mercy brought them forth by a mighty and outstretched arm this is the remnant of Israel they were only a remnant in that day you know the literal Israel there was only a remnant on the earth really that God had force of peace toward them only that they transgressed and their carcasses fell in the wilderness because of their unbelief does that try you but let's get that quite square for a moment that unbelief of the children of Israel was the unbelief of that of the reprobate you know there is no evidence that

God all those who were brought out of Egypt went into the land of Canaan there was only two there was only two who entered into the land of Egypt who entered into Canaan who came out of Egypt the others you see how they provoked the Lord and did not walk according to his commands or how close that comes doesn't it when we think how provocative we are sometimes surely we have to acknowledge his long suffering and his compassion toward us these things in God's word brings us to book don't they it do indeed makes us examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith or not but to return how then he says I'll leave in the midst of the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people and they shall trust in the name of the Lord

God ah this is a this is a trust here that only God can give but he does give it in the time of affliction he does indeed how he gives it perhaps when in bodily affliction a quiet trust a humble trust a passive trust I know no trust so sweet as when we can lay passive in his hand and know no will but his when perhaps in affliction a body we have proved him to be bored to us and all our fears when we have suffered pain and anguish of body and yet he has given us a quiet restful trust in him and enabled us to walk through those things which he had purpose toward us even in those things but he gives us to trust him where we cannot trace him trust him when with the veil between when darkness surrounds our tent when we feel far off from him and yet

I am sure there will be this quiet trust I don't know quite how to explain myself on this point we must be felt really to understand it but to feel it deep down in the heart like you've heard me say sometimes about faith how we do not feel it's in exercise but it's there in the heart and you will find that same with trust there will be a trust in him when things are going against us I believe this trust too is joined to hope trusting and hoping upon him and it may be when in this particular place when you are trusting him there will be what I mentioned before today and those broken desires going up unto him that he will be your helper you'll be saying to him in this trust oh lord

[37:01] I am oppressed undertake for me oh lord do come once more and raise me up from the place wherein I have fallen and also in bodily ailments too there will be a crying out unto him that he will come and heal your body but sometimes you know how we have to go in to those things deeper before he puts forth his healing hand even there one day he'll bring us to a place where he will say unto us friend come up higher so that you see it is not always in his mind and will to do those things which we trust him for in the way we think but he will I say come in his own time and way and deliver us from our afflictions finally and from our poverty finally and take us to that place where we shall see him face to face and have no need no more need of faith hope and trust but that precious love that he has shed abroad in our hearts and no no change but save to increase that love that boundless love that love which is so so deep to follow you hear me often speak about this love well it's so important to my mind for we have this love the love of God and then we haven't anything it all embodied in his love that love of his that was made known in eternity in providing a way of our escape from eternal ruin that love that sent the dear saviour to die that love that brought us into an exercise as to our never dying immortal soul ever an interest in it that love that brought us into the knowledge of it the same love that hath been with us through life's journey and been our helper in every trying time and every trying need been our support and hath proved unto us that underneath our everlasting arms arms those everlasting arms that are under his people and that they can never seek below those everlasting arms then his love is such that he hath spoken this word to hear by

Sephaniah that I will leave in the midst of being afflicted and poor people and they shall trust in the name of the Lord and just a few words before I soon sit down a few words here concerning the next verse the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies oh my friends you'll never come before God with a lie oh it's an awful thing to come before him with a lie you'll tell him all the truth just what you feel and though he already knows it but you'll tell him all the truth you will indeed and neither with a deceitful tongue I know there's a principle within that does not want to be deceived nor deceive others and it's a certain thing we cannot deceive

God that's a certain thing we might deceive others but we can't deceive God but you know in a child of God there is an earnest desire that we may not deceive others with a deceitful tongue that there may be there neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth for they shall feed and lie down oh what a merchant it is he said they shall feed what shall they feed upon a cleave provender of his word indeed the sheep of his old right hand planting they shall feed upon the cleave provender of his word and something more they shall feed upon my flesh sounds too deep doesn't it but he says this you know except he eats my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you so then he brings them to that place where they feed upon his flesh how do they feed upon his flesh well when he brings them into those places when they are overcome as it were with his love and they are able to say this is my beloved this is my friend that is the time when very few are these seasons

I'm not saying we're having this always but there is now and a season and may I say this sinner if you had one of those seasons for one few moments see feed feed upon his grace and lie down so there will be a lying down not in a sleepy condition doesn't mean that there be a lying down in that peaceful rest as dear

John you know was favored to lie his head upon Jesus Jesus breast to supper so you my dear friends if you are favored to us there will be a time when you'll be able to come and lie down your head your weary head upon his breast loving breast there is nothing I believe of immense tongue can ever set forth the love of Christ and how the sinner's heart yearns and burns in love under him for his great condescension toward them so that they're not only able to lie down in that way but also to lie down as the 23rd psalm lie down in the green pastures of his heavenly love so that they find to that sweet ranch resting in him resting in

[45 : 21] Jesus resting in God and that too being a prelude to that rest that remain earth there is a rest that remain earth for the people of God it won't be always as we have it here my friends battling with the powers of darkness and being afflicted and knowing what our poverty is there we shall know something of the riches of his grace to the full as they have been taught us on earth there shall receive the accomplishment to the full there too it will be favoured to sing an everlasting song around the throne unto him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own body of the tree while I must give over may the lord be pleased to add his blessing to these few remarks and grant us fresh tokens of his love fresh touches of his love that we may be found when he cometh watching and waiting for his appearing may the lord add his blessing amen