

Our need of God's grace in worship (Quality: Poor)

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[0 : 00] In the Lord's help, we will speak from the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 5 and the first two verses. Book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 5 and the first two verses.

Keep thy book when thou goest to the house of God, be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools.

For they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God.

For God is in heaven, and thou on earth. Therefore, let thy words be filled. These last words, in the second verse, came somewhat sweetly to me during the week.

God is in heaven, now upon earth. Therefore, let thy words be filled. And at once, the comfort and hope was in this, its relation to what we've been speaking over the past few weeks.

[1 : 42] As you know from Psalm 46 and verse 10, Be still, know thy God.

I will be exalted. We have already spoken little of knowing God in worship.

And how he is known. And how he is known. As you sang in your hymn, in the person of Jesus Christ. The place of God's anointed.

He is known, revealed there as the only way of true worship. So that there is still a connection, even on Wednesday, again, through mercy.

The unpremeditated link of which we spoke concerning Moses and the Lord's presence. Thy presence go not with me.

[2 : 51] And how God said that he would be merciful to whom he would be merciful. And how God's glory was solemnly manifested in this.

And how Moses questioned the Lord, asking him, In such words as if I have found grace.

And this tried if, from the lips of a recognized saint. If I have. And the Lord dealing with Moses as he questions this great matter of leadership.

Divine presence. Gracious help. The Lord promising him that his presence. Shall go with him in this particular way.

That he will make. All his goodness. To go before him in the way. So that really we are on the same. Subject in this.

[4 : 14] All these two verses. Keep thy foot. For thou goest into the house of God.

It is quite evident that Solomon who wrote this. Who? Ecclesiastes. Knew what the house of God was in a way that no other king had known.

It was absolutely fresh and new. Everything shone with its gold and ornamentation.

Not only so. But we read of him as we read of no other. He spread forth his hands.

Worshiped. He kneeled. He prayed. He was a lively type of Christ. He was king.

[5 : 18] And priest. He read of no others doing this. Except Solomon. He didn't take it upon himself.

Nor was God offended with him. Glory of the Lord filled the temple. And his prayer was no spitting.

His spirit was no spitting. Will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth?

Can it be a fact? He seems to say to himself. Can it really be that what I'm doing now is the true worship of the great Jehovah?

Can it be that this will be so? And although no voice came from heaven to him, he proceeds on these lines that it was so.

[6 : 30] And indeed it has proven itself to be so. And the great seal that he seals every separate petition with.

Then here now in heaven thy dwelling place is a part of it. The beautiful part is this.

And when thou hearest forgive. That shows his heart, doesn't it? There's no presumption. But he made this petition in every clause, so to speak.

That he quite clearly knew what a true worship was. And the church of God has looked back to this day of Solomon's glory in the ancient temple with all its marvelous beauty, which eventually was crushed into the earth and today's God.

And yet for that particular epoch, it was the center and sum of all earthly worship.

[7 : 59] He therefore stands as a lively type of Christ, in many respects, but not in this that is God.

His beauty, all the glory of the ancient temple is ransacked. Not so, the glory of Christ.

That is unreachable. A Roman soldier can touch that. There it is in all its glory and beauty.

So that prayer remains the same. When thou hearest forgive.

Many of these petitions have been fulfilled. But the point I want to make is this, that Solomon did know what true worship was, as in that day.

[9 : 11] Under the law, under all the beauty of ceremony, and the impressive nature of the singing, and the covering of the glory of God, so that they could not stand to minister.

It was too bright. Well then there came a change. And this Ecclesiastes is a sequel, we believe, in the life of Solomon, after he had been left to himself.

The subject of these earlier verses is very clear. It's vanity. The emptiness. Strange change, surely, from all the magnificence of the kingdom, and the worship of the kingdom, to be plunged into a place where human nature plunged in.

The straining hand of God was taken from him, and outlandish women, and outlandish women caused him to sin.

There was no worship there. He knew what death and darkness was. He never hastened to the temple there. He found other gods, idols.

[10 : 50] All the terrible nature of sin.

Enough to make us tremble, and I hope it does make us tremble. And they realized the subtle, deadening, carnalizing nature of sin.

And in this particular case, we're not looking at those outside, but inside. We're looking at King Solomon.

A man that wrote the canticles. And we see where he was left to go. Be warned, therefore.

And you younger ones, take it to heart. You will never be able to trifle with God.

[11 : 54] Solomon knew the other side, therefore. And here, he is giving us some really mature counsel. Counsel that has come out of the fire.

Keep thy foot, and thou goest to the house of God. What does it mean? Keep thy foot.

If we ask the children, they might say, well, it means, what's the step in the front of the chapel? And don't trip over it.

A little mind might very well think that's what it means. What do you older ones think? Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God.

But first, what is the house of God? What was it to Solomon? It was the place of worship.

[13 : 10] Though he had departed from it and lost much of its sweetness and its glory. Yet, he knew what the house of God was.

It was back in the past. We don't know how many years ago, but it doesn't matter. We had recollections of those days.

Job did, didn't he? And the candle of the Lord shone about it. We look back to those days and he said, oh, that it were with me as in the days past.

And the candle of the Lord shone about me. Oh, happy days. Since then, Solomon must, as we read in these earlier chapters of Ecclesiastes, enjoyed a good many carnal things.

He tells us what he did, doesn't he? He says, I made me houses and lands and so on.

[14 : 36] I gave my heart to seek and search out wisdom concerning things that are done under heaven. Spent his time in carnal things.

Well, only God is able to hold his people fast when they get there, which they do.

And the mercy is that they come out right the other side, as he did. There's hope in Israel.

Yes, for this being of God. The house of God was a place of reality to him now, a guilty, guilty man.

And when thou hearest forgive, do you think he didn't use it more deeply for himself now than he did then?

[15 : 36] I'm persuaded he did. As you get older, you who have learnt for many years perhaps what the house of God is, do you not tread there more carefully?

Do you not listen to the sacred command take with you words? Is there not a realization of the depth of the word of forgiveness?

Or on the other hand, the height of the word here thou in heaven thy dwelling place. When thou hearest forgive the house of God.

You will remember, spoke of this only Sunday or two ago at what it was for Jacob when we were speaking of knowing God in true worth.

and how Jacob knew him at Bethlehem. And the whole of the word of God has to do with worship and the presence of God, the presence that Moses sought to go with him on his difficult way through the wilderness.

[17 : 08] Oh that this great subject has ever been the concern of the Lord's people and the wonder and mercy of it is that the Lord Jesus had so much to say about it.

When he came down first hand from heaven it was this subject that he taught the poor woman at the well.

You wouldn't think she was very much of a fit subject to be taught worship at your not.

God is teaching you very unsuitable wicked heart you've got hardly seeming good ground to sow any seed on but so was hers.

Worship it is an unending subject in this life for the Lord's people. There is a house of God.

[18 : 26] What is it? Where is it? Is it what your father taught you that that place there with Bethesda written over it or Ebenezer or Bethel written over it was the house of God is it?

Is it that place that had a peal of church bells ringing out for the services? Was it that humble little place that you didn't want to go to?

Or is it something now clearly outlined in your heart as the hymn writer expresses it?

Thou within no walls confined inhabitest the humble mind house of God it bears thinking about doesn't it how God introduced you to his house beautiful isn't it?

That'll humble you in the house to feel how God introduced you to the house of God and brought it into your life as a place to be revered a place where his honour dwelt and this is infallible teaching and also in the church of God universal it is the good spirit's work is he that makes the house of God and the glory of it is utmost freedom so that it is not something with a name on it as necessary as that may be naturally speaking the place where his honour dwell and his name his honour glorified his truth his truth as

[20 : 51] Jeremiah said in the fifth chapter are not thine eyes upon the truth it is irrespective of numbers our Lord made this quite clear there isn't a minimum any more than there's a maximum it's where two or three are gathered together in my name the Lord settled this question long ago so that there is the house of God God and to say to this house of God then by Solomon himself who saw the greatest house of God as I've already said and all its magnificence and was left to leave that house of

God not that all are by any means but to come back to it a different man he says keep thy feet and now go to the house of God keep thy feet watch your step think what you're doing where you are going now what proof there is in Zion that this is exactly what the Lord does the good spirit does to those whom he calls out of darkness this is one of the first lessons like

Ruth say thy people shall be my people that her conscription and compulsion which perhaps you knew in early days or may not have known God there is in its place a willingness a wonderful change of what was so boring to criticize now gone entirely prejudice is removed house of

God comes something to you in your heart I mentioned Jacob again after his long absence from it in Bethel how he was bitten to go back to Bethel and although he'd worked all those years for Laban and he'd got into some tidy corners there soon as the Lord said to him arise and go to Bethel he cleared his house out of his idols didn't he you can keep a lingering respect for Zion you know although you may neglect it he did you can feel what you once felt a renewal of the sanctity of the house of

God these are scriptural examples I know they are confirmed by many gracious experiences but the fact is that the scripture has got to be our God and Jacob not only cleared away the idols but he gave it another name and he called it El Bethel the God of the house of God and so when you have more to do with your own heart and nature and have planted more into the world and have to walk in different tribulations and trials so will it be to you the God of the house of

[26 : 12] God and this is the beauty of it it's more than ever that is why the old saints you know mourn when they can't get to the house of God you can't analyse their inner feelings when they say my greatest trial is that I can't get to these sanctuary you don't understand them unless you be there so it is that we have the benefit of Solomon's experience but we were asking the question what is it to keep your feet what is that which proceeds the attendance of the house of God what preceded your coming this morning I know you got your

Sunday clothes out so did I I know you made a special preparation so far as the flesh is concerned but poor thing if you only reckon to put your Sunday suit on and look a little more respectable than you did yesterday what preceded it was there a keeping of your foot was there petition prayer desire and a spirit of anticipation even of reverence that Sabbath tomorrow is this the preparation and not only week days but Sabbath but week days as well in a word the house of

God therefore becomes a place of reverence come let us bow down says the psalmist let us worship before the Lord our maker now you cannot give yourself this I'm not suggesting you can I would seek to probe your hearts with a view to health and spirituality but you cannot give yourself it but if you're condemned under what I say it may very well stir you up you may come here this morning without a word of prayer in your heart yes and if you have then blush blush you haven't kept your foot this morning have you but supposing you have been a matter of concern prayer to you as you come to the house of God who have you had your eye upon what have you prayed for what has been the desire of your heart has it been the ancient prayer of

Solomon and when thou hearest forgive by God's provision of the house of God and the place where his honour dwelleth be it in a wood a field or a building wherever it may be where these are gathered together in his name is a great privilege look at those in foreign lands who today are denied it look at those too who would gladly gladly listen to the gospel if there were gospel sermons there and is it your lot as we sometimes sing and this old Christian is thine lot is it look at the privilege and yet you mean to say that you didn't keep your foot you mean to say that you just stumbled along to the sanctuary as if it were an ordinary everyday affair it'd be possible that you've got so used to it that you don't think anymore about it and all to see in condition was one of indifference a word whatever we may have externally we have need of the keeping of our foot when we go to the house of God and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of food this is a wonderful thought really when you think that there were no gospel preachers in the time of

Solomon as a mark of divine inspiration over these words which carries it right into the gospel day they did hear oh yes there was a sacred psalm which they did hear and in which they took part there was the gospel in the psalms the breathing of the saints in them but as far as the word here is concerned we have a gospel privilege far in excess in these days in which we live and yet you see how it can be disguised by not keeping your foot by a lack of exercise hunger and thirst and a lack of concern so that the familiar quotation isn't altogether out of place you come and go to the door and the door and it's hinders how blessed therefore is this condition with regard to your worship and your profession whatever you are wherever you go what can you bear the light of such an examination as this or do you not agree with it be more ready to hear hear what and to give the sacrifice of fools look at the negative side of it first unless there is a hearing which we must speak of scripturally then all will be void the sacrifice of fools meaning to say that it's unacceptable to the

[34 : 27] Lord we have the standard in the world I've mentioned the person to whom it was spoken by Jesus they that worship God must worship him in spirit and he true this sacrifice is the one which is acceptable to the Lord but without it what is it is in this negative side therefore that we find our condemnation sacrifice that is empty like you read of in Malachi and the Lord summing up of his people's sacrifices through the Old Testament age to what purpose it says of all this being it's it lacked your heart it was not done in the gospel spirit in the way that

I intended I cannot I cannot he says in Isaiah away with it this is sacrifice of fools but you won't be offended with it if you come this way because you will sometimes feel at the end of the Sabbath or any other day service that yours hasn't been what it should be you will be your own greatest critic you won't want a minister to examine you you'll examine yourself your conscience will go home perhaps and say oh dear there was my mind all over the place you settled a problem in chapel that has been puzzling you whole with a sacrifice of fools and who's the fool and is it an offensive word is it something intended to give offense no really it's an all embracing word much understood in

Zion you never called yourself a fool I mean as regards the things of God you never say oh foolish man that I am as well as Paul's other word oh wretched man that I am so that there is a sacrifice you see that is void empty unacceptable the sacrifice of fools but be more ready to hear now here we come to hunger that beautiful grace of hunger ready to hear more ready to hear anxious to hear I will hear what God the Lord will speak for he will speak peace unto his people what a marked difference this is what wonderful people these are as I told you before and I'll tell you again that my prayer for mouth lock is this that they may come hungry and thirsty and I am not likely now to order them down to my end

I shall come at this that you come to the sanctuary home certainly I leave all the rest I don't ask you to come with your pocket full of money hungry ready to hear now Solomon has given us a remarkable exhortation and it is this which has had such a place in the gospel account through the subsequent ages I sometimes wonder what the apostle Paul thought of this and his eyes were opened to see the beauties of the Old

Testament which was the only one he had of course being more ready to hear look at the Bereans how it must have been pleased to think that they went home after they heard the gospel and searched the scripture to see whether these things were so but your liberty to do this you see preaching isn't dogmatizing your perfect liberty to go and examine these things for yourself your free men and free women your responsible men and responsible women be more ready to hear keep thy foot be more ready to hear now share the two things fit together now what is there to hear what do you want to hear and let us alter that by saying of whom do you want to hear you know you know who hunger thirst desire see young or old you know whatever may be your trials or burdens you can analyze it all in this the

[41 : 05] Lord knows really what you want who you want on the other hand you may have just a facade people may think well yes is someone come to hear of Christ and that's the last person I ever want to hear about come to hear of Christ I've come to hear of conviction of sin unworthiness no they've just come just of superfluity when it comes to the gospel and hearing and we asked the question what is there to hear why everything isn't an endless limitless subject that Christ his glory his fullness as we've been speaking over the past a few weeks his worship his name think think of those words in

Isaiah from which we spoke the spirit of the Lord God is upon me anointing me preach the gospel to the poor proclaim liberty to the chapter the opening of the prison to them that are bound they don't tire on it isn't something that they say well you heard about that we heard about that last Sunday they don't say well and pick up our books and go somewhere else it keeps on the same theme I know I have but what is there to hear you don't keep away from your well or cap because it's the same water as so with the gospel have a friend it's ever new it's ever life giving as I have already said about the 46 psalm there is a river there is there is a river and here it is in the house of

God yes the streams that's enough for you isn't it the streams were all like glad the city of God though it is with this holy exaltation keep thy foot and thou go into the house of God be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools amen we will close this morning service by singing hymn number 698 June 672 home bakal■m Here comes the 698th to 698th.

Pause my soul and ask the question, Are thou ready to sing? Am I made a real Christian? Or did the Redeemer's love add my Hebrew to the church's name?

Am I made a real Christian? Am I made a real Christian?

[45 : 28] Am I made a real Christian? Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

[46 : 58] Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian? Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian?

Am I made a real Christian? Am I made a real Christian?

[48 : 23] Am I made a real Christian?

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[50 : 41] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.