

John (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Knight, Ebenezer (1908 - 1990)

[0 : 00] I will direct your attention once again to the first chapter in the Gospel by John, the 37th and two following verses.

The Gospel according to John, chapter 1, verses 37 to 39. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master, where dwellest thou?

He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

I suppose there are many today who will read the narratives recorded in the Gospel in the same way as we used to read them, maybe when we were in the Sabbath school.

[1 : 17] But it is a great mercy, if the Lord be pleased, to give us eyes to see the hidden depths count beneath what may appear on the surface to be a sinful narrative.

And there is much depth in the three verses which I have read as a text. This morning, we made a few remarks concerning these two disciples.

Mark you, there were many disciples in that day. Many disciples heard John the Baptist preach. But Holy Scripture sees fit to mention two in particular.

And so you will find it in other narratives in the Scripture. There were many who followed the Lord Jesus. But again and again, you will come across this expression, Now, a certain man.

There's no mistake about who it was, a certain man or a certain woman. And I like to think and meditate upon that phrase, because believing as we do in the all-wise decrees of God, believing as we do that all things are in the hands of God, all our times are in His hand and all events at His command, believing as we do that nothing can happen by chance or fortune.

[2 : 43] You may remember the good Huntington referred to luck, chance and fortune as being the trinity of fools. But we believe as one of our poets expresses it, the fictitious power of chance and fortune I defy.

My life's minutest circumstance is subject to God's eye. And therefore, dear friends, as we read in the narratives of the Gospel, these various characters are particularly mentioned.

Well, are they not particularly mentioned by God? And let us not forget also, that particularly perhaps it is exemplified in the walk upon earth of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all He did was in accordance with the mind and the will of His Father.

He said, I do always those things that please Him. Before I leave this point, may I just offer a word of warning here?

Beware of tampering with any portion of God's Word. I believe that will prove to be the downfall of many people today.

[4 : 01] There are many in the professing world today who will tamper with God's Word. They will bring in and bring to bear upon God's Word their own judgment.

And there are certain passages, I do not mean merely the miraculous, for there are many religious people today who reject outright everything in Scripture which is miraculous.

But no, I mean what we might call the little things which are left on record in the Word of God. There may be some passages which we think to be superfluous, but believing as we do in the verbal inspiration of the Scripture, my dear friends, God forbid, we should ever charge the Holy Ghost with being superfluous with a word.

Never. I mentioned this morning how that, to the carnal mind, the phrase in the 39th verse may appear so superfluous.

It was about the 10th hour. Man today would say, Well, what's that to do with it? Why, my dear friends, I believe it was this. As I mentioned this morning, when the Lord Jesus extended this gracious invitation to these two disciples, it was a time, and it was an hour they never forgot.

[5 : 26] I hope some of you, if not in your diaries, in your minds, you have recorded some spots and places, some times, when unmistakably, the Lord made known His mercy to you.

I hope some of you have raised up, as we have mentioned on a previous occasion, some Ebenezer stone, even as Samuel did when he took a stone and set it between Mishba and Shen, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.

Now then, as we mentioned this morning, these two disciples, it was no ordinary hearing with them, but faith was mixed with it, and I hope faith might be mixed with your hearing.

For the Word of God declared, and there's no good mincing matters. Let us face the Word of God as we have it in our Bible. The Word of God plainly declared that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Why do we find here that two disciples, hearing of Jesus, immediately set their heart upon following Him?

[6 : 47] On hearing His name, there had been implanted in their heart a principle, a desire which no man could fill, an aching void which the world could never fill, as in the case of the woman who touched the hem of His garment.

Friends, no power on earth can ever prevent a seeking soul from getting to the feet of Jesus. There is, as I mentioned this morning, in that person's heart, that principle of faith, which will live and labor under load, and which though damp, and it often will be damp, but it can never die.

A wonderful when we read in the Gospels of those various characters in whose heart that divine principle had been implanted.

There's no falling away. There's no giving up. We find there are some who go out from us because they were not of us. Judas fell away.

He was never a Jew of Christ, he left him last. He may have been, and indeed was, chosen to the apostleship. But I like to think of what we read in Peter's vision.

[8 : 11] How that Peter saw this great sheet let down from heaven, knitted the four corners, and in that sheet were all manner of both clean and unclean beasts.

And there in that vision, we see the whole of the election of God. All those who were chosen in Christ. All those who were given to Christ by the Father.

All those for whom he died. All those concerning whom the Lord in eternity had said, this people shall be my people. They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewel.

As if he would say, Satan, you'll never have them. Satan held the thief crucified with Jesus until a few moments before his death.

But there was the power of God made known in him. See, the power of God made known in the Madgarim and in others. And I hope some of you can see the power of God made known in your own lives.

[9 : 22] Some of you, I believe, can sing with one of our poets, Ah, but for free and sovereign grace, I still had lived astrayed from God till hell had proved the destined place of my deserved but dread abode.

But, oh, amazed, I see the hand that stopped me in my mad career. A miracle of grace I stand. The Lord has taught my heart to fear.

My dear friends, grace will single out a man today. It's a mercy of grace that singled us out, each one of us. It will be made manifest in God's good times.

For the word of God very solemnly declared there are many called, but few are chosen. These two disciples heard John the Baptist speak.

The two disciples, they were Andrew and John the Evangelist, the author of this epistle. And they followed Jesus.

[10 : 29] And my dear friends, this is the effect of a right hearing. If you hear, and merely hear as a wayside hearer, you may just hear with your natural understanding.

It goes in one ear and out of the other, as we say. But where faith is mixed with your hearing, there will be fruit. There will be following a desire, and a desire after what?

Not after the world, but a desire after Christ. I've often been impressed with the one thought the Apostle Paul had in mind in his ministry.

My dear friend, he never wavered. He said, I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And that was the beginning, the middle, and the end of his ministry. I hope it might be mine. I don't know what some of you may be looking for this evening, but I do know this, that in the professing world today, there are many who look for something far removed from the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

[11 : 49] If the ministry can only bring in a bit of wit and humor, something to tickle their fancy, then it will go down well. But what is the preaching of the cross to you?

What is the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified to you, my dear friends, as you've heard the word? Have you ever felt it deep down in your heart, a rising up, a welling up of love in your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ?

You can't get at him, you can't stretch forth your hands and lay hold upon him as you would wish, but you know what you want, what you want, you know what your desire is, you know him whom you are seeking, and maybe in your quiet moment before God, you've been able to sing with one of our poets compared with Christ in all beside no comeliness I see.

The one thing needful, dearest Lord, is to be one with thee. Do you ever know what it has been to tread the world beneath your feet, to see the emptiness of it?

Oh, my dear friends, what is all that this earth can afford when you come to die? We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

[13 : 20] One of our poets expresses it like this, Had I a glance of thee, O God, kingdoms and men would vanish soon, vanish as though I saw them not, as a dim candle dies at noon.

Has Jesus ever been made precious to you? Is your prayer that he might be made more precious, more precious than your daily food, more precious than your vital blood?

Oh, my dear friends, if any of you have ever witnessed a glorious deathbed of those who've been gathered home to glory, you know a little of it.

I remember my own dear grandfather on his deathbed shortly before the Lord took him home in anticipation of that joy, that glory which awaited him, he could sing with good rutherford, O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep, sweet well of love, the streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above, there to an ocean fullness his mercy doth expand where glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

Oh, what a mercy it would be if one or more of you this evening or at some future date might get a glimpse of what that poor godly yet mentally unbalanced Scotch lad he saw, yet he may be, you've read about him, he'd had a glimpse of yon lovely man.

[15 : 07] These two disciples had, he whetted their appetite for more, they must be after him and so will you. You will know more and more the emptiness of all that this earth can give.

You will know the emptiness of every honor which man can bestow upon you. one of our poets speaks quite solemnly respecting these matters.

He says, if wealth or honor power or fame can bring you nearer to the land then follow these with all your might.

But if they only make you stray and turn your heart from him away reflect in what you thus delight. How good it is to see by our Alfred E. Portman not only on the Sabbath day our friend, you know it's not only this evening I know you're in the house of God this evening I don't know where you were this time last night that I'm asleep with the Lord but you know real religion is not just one day a week matter no it's a living reality in the soul and my dear young friends may you live to prove this not die may you live to prove it it is religion that can give sweetest pleasures whilst we live and it is religion must supply solid comfort when we die and so these two disciples followed Jesus and Jesus turned and saw them as we mentioned this morning the Lord Jesus knows every true follower if he's put a real desire in your heart he knows it and dear friends what a mercy it is to be able to bring our cases to him he who knows us all together he who knows the end of a thing from the beginning and he also who knows what sore temptations mean for he has felt the same and if we are indeed followers of him we shall come to him we shall know him as our prophet and priest our king we shall look to him to teach us we shall look to him as our advocate before the father if any man sinned we had an advocate with the father

Jesus Christ the righteous we shall look to him to teach us how to pray when we can't oh thou by whom we come to God the life the truth the way the path of prayer thyself has trod lord teach us how to pray we shall know him in some measure as our intercessor how with authority before his father's throne in heaven he intercedes he pleads our case before him father I will that all those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am and the prayers of Christ dear friend will prevail and maybe in our daily wants in our daily perplexities in our daily troubles we shall look for him to appear unto us as our elder brother in our family and as our best friend and may I just before I go further may I refer you to that beautiful verse when most we need his helping hand this friend is always near with heaven and earth at his command he waits to answer prayer

[19 : 05] Jesus Jesus turned and looked upon that woman who came from Tyre and Sidon pleading with him on the behalf of her daughter he turned and looked upon the woman who touched the hem of his garment and he turned and looked upon that blind beggar beggars are often dirty you know and I can seem to imagine Bartimaeus this beggar sitting by the wayside when he began to cry after Jesus the disciples they bid him hold his peace just as if they could prevent a man either then or today from crying after Jesus when the Lord has put the desire in his heart now dear friend you can't you can't keep a hungry child from crying out for food and neither will sin or Satan or unbelief keep us from crying out if the Lord works mightily in our hearts

Jesus turned and saw them following and he says what seek ye not whom seek ye he knew they were seeking him but he knew also that they were seeking something more and although dear friends in our prayers well we can't pray as we would well I can't oh it is a matter with me which causes me frequently much distress before God and more so perhaps as a professing minister of the gospel we may go down upon our knees or bow our head before God and we find we can't pray or perhaps like Jeremiah I cry and shout and all my prayer he shut it out and yet you know we often find that even there the Lord is pleased to look upon us and even though we feel there is no nearness no excess indeed we may come before God and there try to make known our requests and bring the burden away with us and yet you know my dear friend the mercy is this the Lord knows all about it for he won't save you for your prayer there's no merit in your prayers and if the

Lord will bring you and make you to feel that you are an absolute nothing before him then you will find you can neither pray nor pray nor read you can't be spiritually minded you can't come into the house of God and worship him as you would and when the Lord is pleased to bring you to that place I believe it is a necessary preparatory work for in bringing you to turn aside from everything and to come to the feet of Christ and there to well to fall before him and if you must be lost there then you will be lost or rather if you must be lost if you must be lost you must be lost there you can go nowhere else or with one of the poets Lord to thee I can't be one void of refuge and undone and if thou reject my prayer ruin lost

I'll perish there not once refers to the moment but one of the hymn writers refers to such a state and condition where the person concerned is brought to that place where he must go to the feet of Christ even like Esther of old she said well I will go in unto the king she couldn't do anything else she must go and if I perish I'll perish there now I want to go further for a little while they said Master where dwellest thou as we mentioned this morning they were desirous of going into a place of a secret place with Jesus where they might commune with him before the multitude there they could not make an expression of those tender desires in their heart

Master where dwellest thou and oh what a beautiful invitation was the word which Jesus extended to them he said unto them come and see and I want to notice this part of our text a little while this evening Master where dwellest thou maybe it's your desire maybe it has been your desire and maybe the fact of it being your desire now if the Lord is pleased to take you and show you where he dwells we want to consider a few of those places to which he will lead you Master where dwellest thou I believe dear friend with the eye of faith we see in this dear man the eternal son of God in that chapter I read in your hearing there you will have noticed the various references to

[25 : 03] Christ the son of God in the beginning of this chapter we read that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God the same was in the beginning with God all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made master where dwellest thou one of our poets asked this question what thing here Christ is the test to try both your state and your scheme you cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of him and did not Jesus ask his disciples the same question what think ye of Christ and he followed it up whose son is he oh my dear friends all down through the ages there have been those people religious enough in their way who wrest the word of

God to their own destruction they have never been brought into that place where they need a Christ more than man there are many today I believe who regard Jesus as some super man certainly a man distinct from all others but oh my dear friend what is he to you and what is he to me one expresses it thus so guilty so helpless am I I durst not confide in his blood nor on his protection rely unless I were sure he is God for you have been brought there master where dwellest thou come and see my dear friends I believe without going into the depths of the various points of theology in this wonderful doctrine

I believe that living faith in the heart of a babe will look back and see the eternal son of God in the bosom of the father in eternity when all things were made for without him was not made anything that was made the apostle in writing to the Colossians he speaks on this wise he says by him were all things created that is by Christ all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth visible and invisible whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers all things were created by him and for him and he is before all things and by him all things consist but I want to notice particularly

Christ in his humiliation master where dwellest thou let us take how Christ took on nature into union with his divine person and where my dear friends the Lord will be pleased to take us for we must be humbled to worship the babe of Bethlehem I know in two weeks time there will probably be many in this country as in the country of my birth who will take a doll or something or other and worship it they will make much ado about Christmas day for they know not the Christ in that day they know nothing whatsoever of him they may make much ado of it they may be very religious in their way but oh my dear friend how different is the

Lord by faith takes you back to view as one of our poets puts it in that dear babe of Bethlehem I see my God contracted to a span for me I often thought some years ago when holding my own children as babes in my arm my God was like this one day master where dwellest thou come and see see the humiliation of Christ see the great condescension of him who was God how he left those realms above and stooped down to be a man and die take this word for instance it has reference to the Lord Jesus being formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary spoken of prophetically by the psalmist in the 139th psalm my substance was not hid from thee when

[30 : 31] I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth oh dear friends what a mystery a mystery that that God whom we worship even Christ should be thus curiously wrought in the lowest place of the earth conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost and there brought forth oh what astute was that oh what condescension many today pass it on one side well the word of God plainly declares concerning the incarnation of Christ in reference to that which holy scripture calls godliness great is the mystery of godliness God was manifest in the flesh oh what astute was that and then we see him as a child subject unto his parents

I'm not going to be sentimental about it friends but this is the god we worship and I believe I know that if the Lord has implanted living faith in your heart you will see not only the mystery of godliness in this blessed truth but you will see the wisdom the power yes and the love and the mercy of god and not only of god the father who sent forth his son but the love of christ himself that he so willingly complies thus to humble himself to be born of a woman to be born under the law and what for to redeem those who were under the law and oh friends that brings me to this point you know if the lord has a favor to you there will be some shall I say stooping times in your life you know there's no room for pride at the feet of christ i think i have previously quoted this text jesus is a humble way pride and self must be brought down nothing like a beast of prey ever can in this way run master where dwellest thou and see see him in the manger oh my dear friend how different in this simple narrative what a different presentation of the gospel we have when compared particularly with the ritualists of today for ye know the grace of our lord jesus christ in that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that you through his poverty might be rich born in a borrowed manger buried in a borrowed tomb that characterizes the god we worship that characterizes this god man whom we worship whom we love and whom we adore master where dwellest thou come and see and are you ashamed to worship such a god i like the word of simeon he had been looking for the joy of god's salvation he had been looking waiting for the promised christ oh with what joy did he take the child in his arms and what could he say what did he say in effect he said lord now it's enough now you can take me home now let is thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation master where dwellest thou come and see but i must go further quickly because of the time see him then brought up at nazareth his reputed father joseph a carpenter and his mother mother mary see the child jesus being subject unto them and we read the child grew then they came to go on to the time when he was thirty years of age he comes out into his public ministry consider as is recorded in the gospels what jesus endured see him

in his own country see him as the lord of all see him showing forth or bearing witness that he was sent of god by the wonderful miracles which he wrought and yet see those of his own country rejecting him taking him up on a cliff and would have cast him head long did not jesus say the prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own house there must be a fulfilling of all this for he came to do the will of his father yea he says I do always those things that please him see him shortly after he was baptized of John in the river Jordan a holy sacred scene that when he came John asked to be baptized of him but no suffer it to be so now said

Jesus for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness see him after his baptism being led into the desert into the wilderness there to be tempted of the devil forty days and forty nights master where dwellest thou come and see friend don't be surprised if the Lord brings you into the wilderness don't be surprised if the Lord brings you just where your master was just your seat to follow him or are you going to turn back now that is what many did in the day of Jesus you know they followed him so far so far as he suited them so far as they could partake of the loaves and the fishes but then they came to a time when they drew the line well dear friend how far are you coming you seek to walk with Jesus you seek to know more of him you seek never to leave his side then follow him into the wilderness there to be tempted buffeted of

Satan forty days and forty nights but the Lord upholds him there and as the bring us to feel our own weakness and nothingness so he brings us to feel our utter dependence upon him how that in every way bodily and spiritually it is in him we live and move and have our being but let us go a little further master where dwellest thou we must because of the time come to the end of his sojourning here upon earth where dwellest thou see him in accordance with what his divine father had prepared for him see him when he comes with his disciples round the Lord's table oh friends I often think about it I suppose some of you have been in the place before now where there has been on the horizon in your life something you know you got to pass through maybe it's a visit to the hospital an operation or something like that or whatever it might be there it is in front of you and there's no turning away from it see what lay before the

[39 : 11] Lord Jesus here all that cup which he must need drink up he must lay down his life for his people and therefore he gathers his disciples around that table he takes the bread and breaks it what did it set forth it set forth his own body think for a moment think of Jesus in his human nature with his human heart taking that bread and breaking giving it to the disciples knowing that ere long his own body would be broken and bruised for them he took the cup and poured it out he knew his own soul his own blood would be poured out unto death for them small wonder then dear friends as we see him in the garden of Gethsemane and see there

Jesus in his human nature father if thou be willing let this cup pass from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done master where dwellest thou come and see and you know what it is to agonize in prayer before God see the holy harmless undefined lamb of God sweating as it were great drops of blood before his father of his suffering so intense angels have no perfect sense but having undertook he must go through here was his divine mission upon earth he comes to do the will of his father he makes known his love to his people by laying down his life for them greater love he hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends and where are his friends they all forsook him and fled all friend think for a moment not one standing with him see the chosen free come with him into the garden of

Gethsemane he leaves them for a while whilst he goes and prays he comes back and he finds them sleeping for what friends were they the three particular friends having been betrayed by one chosen to the apostleship and now the three particular friends they they sleep and you remember how three times he came back and he found them asleep again one of our hymn writers puts it very beautifully backwards and forwards thrice he ran as if he sought some help from men or wished at least they would condole cause all they could is tortured soul want what there our captain fought the field alone soon as the chief to battle led that moment every soldier fled mysterious conflict dark disguise hid from all creatures peering eyes. Angels astonished, filled the scene, and wonder yet what all could mean. Then when he went into the judgment hall, those three, they forsook him. Peter,

Peter forsake him? Yes, Peter does. He'd been very bold about it. He said, though all men forsake thee, Lord, yet will not I. But he did. They all forsook him and fled, and Peter denied his master. See then the Lord Jesus before Pilate and before Herod. See him there, dear friends, bearing rude mocking of the ungodly men. They spit upon him, Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. Friends, are you coming here? Where are your desires now? You wouldn't have come where your master did here. They mocked him. They reviled him. They spit upon him.

He was king. They made a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They beat with a wreath upon their crown. Those thorns pierced his head. Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see, sinner. And be not surprised if in some measure the Lord take you into a pathway of suffering.

[44 : 02] Are thee not surprised, therefore, if the Lord be pleased to lead you into a way, even as he walked. From there we go, even to Agargetha. And there we see him. How they took him and crucified in there. Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. Come and see. One said, think what Christ thy Savior bore in the gloomy garden, sweating blood at every pore to procure thy pardon. See him stretched upon the wood, grieving, bleeding, grieving, crying, bearing all the wrath of God, groaning, gasping, dying. Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. Oh, my dear friends, and so we might go on.

But we can go a little further. We have considered the humiliation of Christ. Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. Our mercy will be.

If this word is made good at the end of our journey. Where does he dwell? He dwells in heaven. Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

All the mercy to hear those words. One good hymn writer in speaking of that blessed and right, blessed and right royal welcome. He says, come in, thou blessed, sit by me. With my own blood I ransom thee.

Come, taste my perfect favor. Come in, thou blessed spirit, come. Thou now shalt dwell with me at home. Ye blissful mansions. Ye blissful mansions. Make him room, for he must stay forever. Master, where dwellest thou?

[46 : 32] I believe we can each join in prayer with another good poet when he pleads that the Lord Jesus as our intercessor might intercede before the Father for us.

Lord, do thou do not leave my case before thy Father's throne. And in the new Jerusalem appoint my soul a place.

He said unto them, come and see. And they came. And they saw. And they dwelt with him that day. For it was about the tenth hour.

Oh, may the Lord grant unto us such a gracious invitation. If not in the fullness, the open manifestation of it as we would desire.

Yet may the Lord give it to us in our desires, in our heart. And may we feel a little dew upon the branch.

[47 : 35] A little kindling or rekindling of love in our heart. Toward the name of God's only begotten Son. Here I'll leave it.

The Lord has his blessing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.