

Sermon preached at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham
by Mr. G. D. Buss
on Lord's Day morning, 6th July, 2014

Text: *"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."*
1 Peter 5, verse 7.

Those of you who hear the sermons preached from this pulpit will remember that, only three weeks ago, this was our subject. You may wonder why we bring it before you again. Well, we trust this is the word that the Lord has laid upon our spirit for this morning. And, sometimes, we need reminding. That children's hymn is a very apt one, isn't it?

"Tell me the story often,
For I forget so soon."

A. K. Hankey

Perhaps one of you felt the sweetness of this verse a few weeks ago, and now all that sweetness has gone. Fresh cares have come upon you, fresh clouds have gathered and the devil is saying: 'Where is your God?' Well, here is the answer. God is still the same. It is still true, as it was then: "He careth for you."

And, dear friends, we need reminding of these things because we are such slow learners. When we *think* we have learnt where to cast our care, for a moment we feel a peace, a quietness and a confidence in so doing. We think we will not doubt again or be troubled again, and can leave matters in His dear hands. But, we soon find that our inner unbelief starts to work again. Our carnal mind and our natural man begins to reason, and we return to our sad place. So, friends, we need reminding. Or perhaps it is with you as it was with Gideon of old. He had the fleece wet and then, as a further token, wanted it dry. Maybe the fleece was wet for you two or three weeks ago. Now you feel the need of the fleece to be dry: a second token. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

When the Holy Ghost took Peter and began to guide his pen to write this epistle, dear Peter was not writing indifferently. He was not writing as it is at school sometimes; when a teacher might dictate something to be copied, and the children have no interest in what is being said or written. It was not like that with dear Peter. “Out of the abundance of the heart” the man was speaking. He knew about what he was speaking, because he had been in this path and was still in it; needing to cast all his care upon his dear Saviour. As I pondered this, I thought of four incidents in the life of Peter where he proved our text so blessedly and so significantly.

For example, we have that first occasion when Peter comes to the fore. Our Lord had borrowed Peter’s boat for a pulpit. That boat had been out on the Sea of Galilee that night. Peter, with his fellow fishermen, had been letting down their nets hour after hour. They had brought nothing up but weeds. There must have been fish in Galilee’s lake, but they did not come into Peter’s net. “They caught nothing.” Do you know what that is? You pray, and there is no answer. You look for a door, and there is no door. You wait for a deliverance, but it does not come. You catch “nothing.” And nothing seems to touch your faith and help your soul, nothing seems to come just where you are in your path. You begin to wonder: ‘What is the point of letting down the net?’ Well, Peter had been like that. All night they had toiled, but they had “caught nothing.” Friends, God is a Sovereign. Sometimes a time of adversity is just as necessary as a time of prosperity. Sometimes an empty net is just as important for us as a net full of fishes. Why is that? To remind us of who it is who fills the net. You are not to take it for granted. If your net is empty this morning, may it be a solemn, sober reminder that *you* cannot fill it. And, if ever it was filled, it was God who filled it.

So, here was Peter. The boat was used for the precious purpose of a pulpit. When our Lord had finished His sermon, He says to Peter: “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets” (not net) “for a draught.” ‘Oh!’ says Peter, “we have toiled all night and have taken nothing.” As if he said: ‘We are weary, Lord! It was a fruitless exercise. We cannot make a living out of this!’ But then; faith, blessed faith

came to his aid. “Nevertheless.” Although we toiled all night and took nothing, although we are weary of letting down our net; “at Thy word,” and on that ground alone, “I will let down the net.” Peter did not say ‘nets’ in the plural, he let down *one* net. I think, perhaps, that his faith did not rise high enough to realise that more than one net might be needed. “Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” Friends, when he *did* let down the net; what an abundance of fishes flowed into it! Galilee’s fishes flowed into that net from all quarters; so much so that the boat began to sink. Help was needed from the other disciples to get the fish to the land, lest the boat should sink. And Peter, in humble amazement, stands before his God. “Depart from me;” he says, “for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” ‘I am not worthy of such blessings, Lord. I am not worthy of such answers to prayer. I am not worthy of the fulfilment of such promises.’ But, the Lord says: “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” From then on the Lord began to put fishes of another sort into Peter’s spiritual net. But first, Peter learned that lesson in providence. That is why Peter says to God’s dear people here: “Casting all your care upon Him,” your empty net this morning; cast it upon Him, and you will prove He cares for you.

Come again to Galilee’s lake. How many lessons were learned on that lake! On this occasion, the dear disciples were in the boat (we know not if it was the same boat). But, nonetheless, at the Lord’s command, they had left one shore and were going to the other. The Lord was not with them *physically*. Note what I said: *physically*. Spiritually He was, His eye is everywhere. There is no place where God is not. Even when you cannot discern His presence in the way you would like to, that does not mean He is absent. No. We know where the Son of God was; He was up a mountain, praying to His heavenly, Father. And we know His eye was upon them, because we read: “He saw them...about the fourth watch of the night.” Again, they were toiling. Peter was always a toiling man, wasn’t he? Are you one of those who is always toiling? Sin, the devil, the world, the flesh, burdens, cares, fears and doubts. What a toiler they make you! The disciples were “toiling in rowing.” They were making no progress; the wind was against them. Remember, they were men of “like passions as

we are.” I suspect that not only their strength, but probably their patience was short, as well. We get into a low place when our old nature rises up and begins to comment on the path we are in. The one thing that made them so disconsolate was that “Jesus was not come to them.” He had not come. It seemed as if He had no care over their toiling and rowing, no concern that they were making no progress, no concern that they were in the dark and no concern that they seemed to be in this hopeless condition. But, we read: “in the fourth watch of the night,” when things were at their worst, at their darkest, and they were feeling their weariest, “Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.” At first they thought it was another trouble. But, He silences their fears. “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” And now, dear Peter comes to the fore. “Lord, if it be Thou,” if it be my Jesus, if it be my Saviour, if it be that One on whom my hope is fixed,’ “if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” “Bid me come.” Doesn’t one of our hymns take that up?

“Dearest Jesus, bid me come;
Let me find Thyself my home;
Thou the Refuge of my soul,
Where I may my troubles roll.”

J. Adams

“Bid me come.”

I remember what our late friend, Mrs. Florrie Wilderspin, said when our friend Mrs. Winnie Hart had been taken home. After one of the services, she said to me: ‘When will He bid me come?’ Some of God’s aged saints feel like that. ‘When will He bid me come?’ He will.

“The time is now fixèd, and soon it will come,
When Christ will His messenger send,
To fetch him from Meshech and carry him home;
And then all his sorrows will end.”

W. Gadsby

That day *will* come, the due time *will* come, poor, trembling soul. The

journey will be done, the victory gained, the race won, the crown of righteousness received and Christ seen face to face. All your toils and weariness will be behind you for ever. That day will come: God's due time.

But, here is Peter. His time has not come to depart, has it? He has many more days, weeks, months and years to walk in a profession of the name of our Lord Jesus. But, he climbs over the side of the boat at our Lord's command. "Come." Just one word was enough. Power was in it, and authority was in it. He ventures over the side of the boat. The watery waves support him. Amazingly, this poor, sinful, weak man walks towards our Lord Jesus. Where did the power come from? Where did the support come from? It came from the One to whom he was walking and to whom he was looking: the One who had bid him "come."

"Thy grace sufficed saints of old;
It made them strong and made them bold,
And it suffices still."

J. Berridge

But, Peter had to learn where that faith and that strength came from, didn't he? He took his eyes off the source. You have done that, haven't you? You have forgotten the source of your faith. Instead you have been examining all the negative things in your path; the winds, the waves, the darkness, the distance, the vulnerability, the carnal reason and, perhaps, even scientific reasons as to why you should never be where you are with such a depth of water beneath you. No wonder Peter began to sink! But, here is the care of the Saviour for Peter. "Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." This is one of the shortest prayers in the whole of Scripture. Do not be ashamed of short prayers. Those three words brought forth the omnipotent arm of the Son of God. "Immediately," this arm that is never too late; "Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him." The hand of sovereign grace had caught Peter before. The hand of sovereign grace was, eventually, to be nailed to a tree. Blood was going to pour from wounds of that hand to

cover Peter's guilt, and our guilt too, I trust. But, dear friends, this blessed hand that caught Peter: "He careth for you." He cares about an empty net, and He cares for a sinking Peter. "Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him." He not only caught his hand *physically* (the Lord knows what you need in that respect), but He caught his hand *spiritually*. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" That, dear friends, rescued Peter's faith. His faith was like a bruised reed about to be broken, and a smoking flax about to be quenched. And so it would have been, but for our text. "He careth for you." Peter knew what he was talking about. "He careth for you," not just in that great providential need that you have, not just in your sinking times, but also, as Peter could say, in Satan's sieve. What a place to come to! We often speak about it, but, if ever you have been there, you will know why Peter must have dwelt much upon it in retrospect. But, he proved the Lord's care even there.

Again. Peter had to learn, as you and I have to learn so often; that he could not maintain his own faith. He meant it well when he said: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." Let us not put any doubts upon his sincerity or the reality of his confession, in that respect. I believe he really felt such a love to the Saviour that he could not possibly deny or desert Him, although all the world might. But he did not know from where that strength had to come. He thought that the present love which fired him was enough to carry him through. It was not long before he had to prove the opposite was true. He takes a sword into Gethsemane's garden to defend the Saviour. The Lord said: "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Then Peter follows afar off, and we find him at the back of the judgment hall, surveying the scene as our Saviour is arraigned by those soldiers. What a terrible scene it was! He was buffeted, smitten and spat upon. And there was Peter at the back, watching it all. Someone notices him. "Surely thou art one of them." They discern his speech: it is Galilean. "Thy speech bewrayeth thee." 'It betrays where you are from, Peter!' He begins to curse and to swear. "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" said another. "I know not this Man of whom ye speak." He

denies again. The old nature rises up. Now Peter is in Satan's sieve. The Lord turns and looks on him. "And he went out, and wept bitterly." Bitter tears! What Peter endured from Satan that night, none of us will know. The accuser of the brethren must have got hold of him and tripped him up. But, he had one ray of hope that the devil could not touch or take from him. What was it? "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." "He careth for you." If one of you is in Satan's sieve this morning, as good John Warburton says: 'devil-dragged,' "He careth for you."

"Nor can he bark, nor can he bite,
Unless the Lord permit."

J. Berridge

And, what is more, Satan will not snatch any one of His dear people from the hand of the dear Shepherd. No. "He careth for you." Even in Satan's sieve; even when, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, with Apollyon standing over you with a sword to dispatch you, "He careth for you." Apollyon wasn't permitted to do so then, nor will he ever be allowed to do so.

"He careth for you." Two further examples come to mind in Peter's experience. Firstly, when our Lord rose again, the tidings reach Peter and John, and they hasten to the sepulchre. We read that John outran Peter. That does not necessarily mean that John was a better athlete than Peter. I will tell you why he outran Peter. Peter was like Jacob, halting upon his thigh. There was a question in Peter's mind: 'If I meet this risen Jesus, would He want any more to do with me? Would He even look on me? Would He receive me? Whatever would He say to a man who had denied Him with oaths and curses; a man whose profession had collapsed in ruins around him? Would He have any smile or any word of comfort? Surely He would say: "I never knew you: depart from Me." ' No wonder Peter halted upon his thigh! But, there was a personal meeting between the dear Saviour and Peter that memorable day. We are not told what took place; the conversation is hidden from us. But, one thing Peter learned at the end of it was: "He

careth for you.” ‘Despite my backslidings, despite my wanderings, despite my false profession when I looked to myself; still, “He careth for you.” ’

“Rebellious thou hast been,
And art rebellious still;
But since in love I took thee in,
My promise I’ll fulfil.”

H. Fowler.

“He careth for you.” Let us go with Peter to one more place. Herod, the arch enemy of the Church of God in its infant days, wanted to please the Jews. He took James, and killed him with the sword. Because that was gratifying to the Jews, for political reasons, he takes Peter, also. James’ work was done; to glory he went, without a shadow of a doubt. Peter’s work was *not* done.

“Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.”

J. Ryland

Herod’s sword could not reach Peter until it was God’s time that his journey should end.

How was it with Peter? He was shut up in prison with sixteen soldiers guarding him day and night, in sessions of four. An inner door and an outer door: locked, barred and bolted. Herod’s decree was against him. The Church had no access to him and his friends were not able to speak to him. Does the Lord still care? Well, there are two things which are very remarkable here. One is, the Church. They had no access to Peter’s prison. But, they had access to Peter’s God. You may be in that path this morning. There are matters that need dealing with in your path. You have no control over them, you cannot manage them. They are beyond your wisdom and skill. But, friends, you have got a God to go to! There is a throne of grace, there is a God of mercy. There is One who welcomes coming sinners. There is One who says: “The cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto Me, and I will hear it.”

“Tell Him all your sad complaints;
He a present help will be –
Give you strength and victory.”

W. Gadsby

Young or old this Sabbath morning, whatever your case; there is One who understands and knows your case. So, tell it to the Lord; lay it before Him. Tell Him your burden, tell Him your care, tell Him your concern, tell Him your impossibility, tell Him about that iron bar and that brazen gate: tell Him all about it. He has the wisdom, the strength, the skill, the power and the means to deal with it, which you have not got.

What about Peter? Peter lay asleep the night before his proposed execution. If you were due to be executed the next day, would you have been asleep? How could Peter have slept? I believe there were two reasons why Peter could sleep peacefully. One was our text: “He careth for you.” I believe Peter lay in perfect peace that night. He knew that his case was in better hands than Herod’s. He knew that One who cared for him, had prayed for him in Satan’s sieve, had snatched him from the waves of Galilee’s lake, had filled his empty net with fishes and had forgiven him in that wonderful meeting on the resurrection morn. He knew *His* care would not fail. “He shall not fail nor be discouraged,” thinks dear Peter. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.” He was trusting in the Lord, the Rock of Ages, that memorable night.

I believe also that Peter knew he would be delivered, although he could not see how it would be. You ask: ‘Why do you say that?’ Because, dear friends, the Lord had showed him that it was not by Herod’s sword that his days would be ended. He was going to hang on a cross, like the Saviour. The Lord told him that. So he knew, in some way, that this was not the end of his journey. There was more work to be done in Christ’s name. There was more work to be done in preaching the gospel. The Lord had more fishes to bring into his net. But, naturally speaking, he could not see how it could be. The matter

seemed sealed and settled. The very next day these things were to happen. But: “He careth for you.”

“Say not, my soul, from whence
Can God relieve thy care,
Remember that Omnipotence
Hath servants everywhere.

His method is sublime,
His thoughts supremely kind;
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.”

T. Lynch

Peter believed it, and God’s due time came. While the Church prayed, God sent an angel from His throne on a blessed mission. ‘Go down to Peter’s prison. You will not need a natural key, but, undo the doors; the outer and the inner gate. Loose his chains, wake him up and set him free.’ The angel did the Lord’s bidding. It was Herod’s soldiers that were put to death, and Herod himself comes to an untimely end in a few days, eaten with worms. God always has the last word. “He careth for you.” “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” Peter could say it; can you say it this morning? Can you look back over your pathway like dear Peter could? Some of you can look back over many, many years, some not so many. Can you say, like Peter: ‘Yes. I have this ‘Ebenezer’ and this ‘Hill Mizar.’ There is a place to which I could take you where I proved in a very personal, particular and special way that “He careth for you.”

Now, come with me to the upper room, and behold the dear disciples gathered there. Through fear of the Jews, the doors were barred and bolted. While they gathered there in fear, trembling and wonderment at the tidings they had heard, “Jesus himself stood in the midst.” They were affrighted and they were full of fear. But, He says: “Peace be unto you.” “He shewed them His hands and His feet;” the marks of His care. Dear friends, He has taken those marks of His care into glory. They are visible wounds to the Church triumphant above.

John was told of a Lamb that “*had been slain.*” That was a reminder of what the Church of God sees in the dear Redeemer above, now risen from the dead; the marks of what He endured while here below. They will always be visible, *always*. It will be one of the glories of heaven to gaze in wonderment, awe, admiration, love and thanksgiving upon those once wounded hands, feet and side. That visage, that was “so marred more than any man,” is now crowned with glory. The great point I want to make is this: He cares as much on His throne as He did on His cross. He cared on the cross. Think how He cared for His mother! The law said: “Honour thy father and thy mother.” And here He was, His mother standing before Him; broken hearted. The words of Simeon were being fulfilled in her very experience: “A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.” She saw Him hanging there; bleeding and dying. He sees the Apostle John standing near. “Woman, behold thy son!” “Behold thy mother!” He made provision for His own mother, even in that hour of His *own* agony.

And do you think, poor, trembling child of God, that He who laid down His life for you, shed His blood for you, endured the agonies of Calvary for you, endured the hiding of His Father’s face for you, do you think that His compassions are dried up now? Do you think His river of love is empty? Do you think His lovingkindness is failing? Do you think His glory is so great that He has forgotten the needs of His Church militant here below? No. His compassions are still the same. We are reminded by those wounds, that He has taken into heaven that He will not and cannot forget those who need His care, rely on His care and seek His care. Remember the word that comforted our late dear friend, Margaret Angell (now in glory) the word that was made so precious to her many, many years ago. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.” You think of the darkness that she endured in the last months of her life. Yet, throughout it all, the Lord’s care was the same. There is a very precious hymn that comes to my mind (we rarely sing it):

“Thy purchased people, gracious Lamb,
Thou never canst forget;
The piercing nails have wrote their name
Upon Thy hands and feet.”

A. M. Toplady

Think of it! Can He forget? Can He cease to feel? ‘But,’ you say, ‘I feel so unfeeling and so hard. These troubles have deadened me. They have almost smothered my hope, my faith and my love. My religion seems drowned out by it.’ Well, He has not changed. His care is the same. His love is the same. His mercy is the same. His grace is the same. His compassion is the same. You think what the man who fell among thieves must have been feeling on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho! To be suddenly mauled and robbed by those thieves; to be left bleeding; his life ebbing away! I doubt if he could speak of much feeling in his heart! So what are we to say about the man? The priest and the Levite look on. One passes by on the other side, the other takes a look, then goes on. No heart for him, no concern for him and no feeling for him. But, we read that the good Samaritan: “as he journeyed, came where he was.” He came just where the man was! “When he saw him, he had compassion on him.” His loving heart rose up. ‘I cannot take a single step forward without doing something for this poor man. Leave him to die – I cannot!’

“And can the Lord pass heedless by,
And see a mourning sinner die?”

J. Berridge

No. He cannot. He will not. No. He pours in the oil and the wine. Spiritually, the oil speaks of the blessed Spirit bringing the gospel into the heart. That is what it signifies: the fruit of Gethsemane. The wine: the precious blood of Christ; the healing balm for all sicknesses of the soul. Then the binding up of the wounds: some precious promise applied to your soul to renew your strength. He “set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” He paid the innkeeper. Really, it was the care of the good Samaritan that was still behind the matter, the innkeeper was but the instrument. Whatever

means He uses, dear friends, He cares for His dear people.

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” Now, turn the text around. You say, ‘What do you mean?’ Friends, if He cares for you in the way I am speaking of this morning, you will have a care for Him. He will have a place in your heart, too. There is the fruit of it. I want you to examine yourself this morning. What place has Christ in your heart? Is it the first, the second or the third place? Does He come before your family, before your business, before your pleasures, before your leisure and before your sins? Be honest. If you are walking in Peter’s path, then Christ will be first in everything. Peter says: “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” So precious that He is more precious than anything else that this world can ever give! This will show in your life. You will not debate as to whether Christ should have the first place. It will be something that will be welling up in your heart. You will love Him, you will love His Word, you will love His people, you will love His house and you will love the ordinances of His house. Friends, you will love *everything* about Him. If you love Him, it will show in your conversation, in your walk and your ways. There will be the fruit of that love. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” Our love is but the fruit of Him first loving us. “He careth for you.”

And, dear friends, this love will sanctify your life. Worldly conversation, inappropriate dress and bad habits will fall away. It will be no drudge to “go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” It will be no onerous duty to lay aside those idols that have taken the place that *He* ought to have had in your heart and life over many years. You will be made willing in the day of His power to do what your wretched flesh kicked against for so long. “We will not have this Man to reign over us,” that is what it has been. But, now, conquered by love, conquered by grace, conquered by this precious work: “He careth for you.” It is an irresistible work, when the Lord puts it forth. It is a wonderful word. It is a word that lays hold of a sinner in lovingkindness, as the Lord said to Jeremiah: “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

Well, dear friends, I hope it has not been vain repetition this morning. The same text! It is a well of salvation, isn't it? Out of it God's people have drawn comfort from Father, Son and Holy Ghost over many, many, many generations. The care of the Father in sending the Son, the care of the Son in so willingly coming and the care of the Spirit in bringing to Christ those given to Him by the Father! In all eternity we will have reason to thank God for these few words: "He careth for you."

Amen.