

**Prayer Meeting Address**  
**given at**  
**Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham**  
**by Mr. G. D. Buss**  
**on Wednesday evening, 15th February, 2017**

**Text:** *“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” 1 Peter 1, verse 8*

The Apostle Peter was an exceedingly favoured character. He had many precious privileges as an apostle. He was one of the three closest in fellowship with our Lord while He was here below. He witnessed the transfiguration. He heard the voice from heaven saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” He also witnessed the agony of Gethsemane; the sweat, the blood and the tears that poured from the holy body of the Saviour in His holy agony before He entered upon the crucifying path that lay before Him. Yes, we know there was a time when Peter followed afar off, and yes, we know that he came into Satan’s sieve. But, even there he had a wonderful privilege: “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”

Then Peter had the privilege of the upper room. To the sweet surprise of that little band in the upper room, who had barred the door for fear of the Jews, our Lord, having risen from the dead, came and “stood in the midst of them.” “Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.” He showed them His hands and His side: the proof that He was “this same Jesus”; the proof that He *is* “this same Jesus.” And, not only was it a blessed proof that He was the same Person: Emmanuel, risen again, but the very sight of those wounds was the proof of their pardon. For they were the wounds that our Lord was about to take into glory. They are, even now, spread before the Father on behalf of the Church of Christ. As the Father looks on those wounds, He says: “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”

And, we know what took place at the sea of Tiberias. Three times our Lord asked Peter that question: “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?” And that answer that came right from the bottom of Peter’s heart: “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love Thee.” Then, at last, with the other favoured disciples,

Peter gathered with them at Bethany. While our Lord stretched forth His wounded hands over that little band and blessed them, He was parted from them. He parted from them while He was blessing, giving us to understand that He is *continually* blessing His Church, and never ceasing so to do. And Peter, with that little band, saw the two angels standing by. “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” They “returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” They waited, at our Saviour’s command, for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And it was Peter who was the first and foremost preacher on that occasion. What did he preach? He preached Christ crucified, Christ risen and Christ the one and only Saviour of the lost.

But here, Peter speaks; the Holy Ghost speaking through him, to the Church of Christ to the end of time who did not have the same, I say this carefully, *natural* privilege that Peter had. Peter saw our Lord with his *natural* eyes in His holy humanity here below. Peter, no doubt like John, handled and felt that sacred body and sacred Person with blessed proofs of His humanity. Peter was a living witness of the transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane and Bethany. But now our Lord has gone within the veil. He has “ascended on high;” He has “led captivity captive.” He sits on the right hand of His Father, not idly, but “He ever liveth to make intercession for” all “that come unto God by Him.” And you might be tempted to think: ‘If only I had the same natural privileges that Peter had, I could more easily believe.’ That is what Thomas thought. “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Our Lord heard Thomas say that, as He hears every word that is in our tongue. “For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether.” The Lord knew Thomas’s words. Although Thomas had been absent at that time, (and that is a lesson for us: not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together”) our Lord knew what Thomas had said. And thus, when they gathered on the first day of the week; this time Thomas with them, no doubt Thomas gathered in humble expectation. ‘Perhaps I will see Him.’ And, to his unspeakable joy, that is just what happened. The dear Saviour turned to His erring disciple; His unbelieving, doubting one whom He loved just as much as the others, and said: “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand.” ‘It is Me, Thomas! It is this “same Jesus,” Thomas!’ And Thomas says: “My Lord and my God.” The Lord has a word; a loving rebuke for Thomas. It is a word of encouragement

to us tonight. "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me," that is, with the natural eye "thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." That is what our text tells us this evening. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." My dear friends, if God has given you the same faith that He gave to Peter, to Thomas and to that faithful little band, one day you will see Him in glory. You will come where good Samuel Rutherford came:

"The King there in His beauty,  
Without a veil is seen:  
It were a well spent journey,  
Though seven deaths lay between."

*A.R. Cousins*

You will look on those once pierced hands, feet and side, and you will cast your crown before Him. With believing, seeing eyes, you will see Him. But, for the moment, "we see through a glass, darkly." For the moment, it is "by faith." "For by grace are ye saved through faith." Faith is the eyesight of the soul. Sometimes it is in vital, living exercise, and sometimes it is not. Peter knew both sides of it.

So, here is a word of encouragement. "Whom," that is the Lord Jesus Christ, "Whom having not seen, ye love." How can we love someone whom we have not seen? In this respect I think of Rebecca. In a sense, she was a wonderful type of the Church of Christ. She had not seen Isaac, but she had heard a good report of him. She had received some of his riches through his servant, Eliezer. So, when the question was put to her: should she go and marry this man whom she had never seen before and had only heard of during the last few hours, would she go? "I will go," she said. "Whom having not seen, ye love." That is a type of the Church on earth at the moment; going forth unto this unseen, but no less real Saviour.

So, how is it that we can love someone we have not seen? There are five things here which I will bring before you very briefly. See if you can walk in this.

First of all, we see Christ in His holy Word. What is it that makes the Bible precious to you, friends? What is it, if it is precious to you? It is when you find Christ in it. When, like good Jeremiah, you come to these words:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” Perhaps you are reading a passage of Scripture and suddenly it almost leaps out at you from the page; something that tells you something else about your Beloved. It is a mark of life in you, and it is a mark of the preciousness of God’s holy Word. Friends, do you love Him in His Word? When you take it up to read morning and evening, and in the House of God, is that your desire: “We would see Jesus?” ‘We would find Him on the sacred page; we would find Him as ours.’

Secondly, we love His voice. Friends, there is no voice like the Saviour’s voice. I think of dear Elijah in this respect. That poor man, as we hinted at in prayer, had a very lonely path. But he had more companions in tribulation than he realised. There were seven thousand that would not bow the knee to Baal. But, you will remember that when he was at Horeb, there was the earthquake, there was the wind and there was the fire. They were mighty things, and they were all in God’s hands. Yet there was something lacking. There was no voice of God in power to His servant Elijah. They just left him where he was. But then, oh! What a difference! “A still small voice.” “What doest thou here, Elijah?” *That* brought Elijah forth. He knew that voice. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” Friends, do you love His voice? In the Song of Solomon we read: “His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely.” There is no voice like His. Think of Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb. Bitter tears rolled down her face. “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” And, with one word, that captivity of unbelief was turned. “Mary.” As soon as He spoke, she knew the voice. It penetrated right into her loving heart. ‘No one can speak like that, but my Jesus!’ Some of you here know it. They are most precious moments, in retrospect, when we have heard that voice behind us saying: “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Precious Christ!

Thirdly. Do you love His presence? For the most part, because we are here on this dim, dark spot, earth, we do not feelingly have the comfort of His presence as often as we would like to. That does not mean that He is not present. But, often, to our feelings, we

“...mourn an absent God.”

*J. Kent*

But, the very fact that you *do* mourn an absent God is because you know something of His presence. You would never feel so empty and so downcast

because of His absence if you had never known what it was to have His presence. Do you love His presence? Have there been those sweet times when He has come to you walking on the waves to your little boat, as it were? Have there been those sweet times when He has turned and smiled on you with one of those sweet words of His, and you have felt that He is near?

“Why so cast down, dejected soul?  
A loving Christ is near.”

*J. Berridge*

He is so near, dear friends. He has said: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Do you love His presence? Is it *everything* to you? Daniel had a much better night in the lion’s den than Darius had on his bed. The three Hebrews were much more favoured in that fire that was heated seven times over than that ungodly king who looked on in amazement. Oh, the presence of the Lord is everything! The dying thief; what made his last hours of suffering, I was going to say, ‘sweet’? You understand what I mean. It was the presence of his Saviour.

“In Thy presence I am happy;  
In Thy presence I’m secure;  
In Thy presence all afflictions  
I can easily” (we say that carefully) “endure.”

*W. Williams*

Again. Is His name precious to you? We read in the Song of Solomon: “Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee.” Is His name precious to you?

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.”

*J. Newton*

His name is so precious to His dear people. If it is precious to you, you are inside our text. “Thy name is as ointment poured forth.” Sometimes it has calmed your troubled mind. Sometimes it has been just what you needed. “Emmanuel, ... God with us.” Or: “JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” Or: ‘Jehovah tsidkenu:’ “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” There are many other names we could mention. “The mighty God.” Oh! Is His name precious? Is it precious, especially in prayer? When we close our prayers with the words: “for Jesus’ sake,” it is not just a convenient way of ending our petition. In one sense, it is the most important part of our prayers. But, be

sure, dear friends, every real answer we get comes for that one and only reason: “for Jesus’ sake.”

“No; I must maintain my hold;  
'Tis Thy goodness makes me bold;  
I can no denial take,  
When I plead for Jesus’ sake.”

*J. Newton*

Friends, is His name precious to you? How precious it will be on a dying bed to a living child of God! The name of Jesus! There was a lady who attended this house of prayer in my early pastorate. She was suddenly taken very ill and was unconscious. I believed her to be a God-fearing woman. I was called to go and see her. No one could get any response from her, at all. Her relatives and the nursing staff said that she was too far gone for any response. Her name was Miss Simms, but she called herself ‘Simmy.’ So I just said to her: ‘Simmy, is Jesus precious?’ And immediately she said: ‘Yes!’ You see, dear friends, there is something so precious about the name of Jesus. It will do you good in the fires, in deep waters, in darkness and in temptations. But, to do you good on a dying bed; how precious that is!

“And when in death they bow their head,  
He’s precious on a dying bed.”

*S. Medley*

When our loved ones and our friends can do no more for us, how precious that name will be! Those natural bonds will be severed, but not the bond with this precious Jesus. No. It is an eternal bond. It is an everlasting bond. It is a bond that will outlive and outlast death unto all eternity. I ask you, dear friends: is His name precious to you?

And we must not close without asking you this question; the question that all convinced sinners long to know more of: is His blood precious to you? What would we do without it! Where else can you take your guilty soul? Where else can you take your polluted conscience? Where else can you take those sins committed from your earliest days to this present moment, and sins to come, where else can you take them? Is there any earthly physician, any minister or any pastor that could put them away? “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“What stream is that which sweeps away  
My sins just like a flood,  
Nor lets one guilty blemish stay?  
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

*J. Irons*

If ever you have felt, just once, the efficacy of that precious blood; the virtue of His death, for that is what it is, applied to your conscience, and have been given that peace of which we read in John 20, then, dear friend, you have a celestial seal which can never be erased. When the tabernacle was reared, as we read in the Book of Leviticus, Moses sprinkled all the vessels of the ministry. Once they had been sprinkled with blood, he did no more. That does not mean that you will not want more touches and tastes; of course you will. We need this fountain every day. But, it is blessedly true that

“The mark of that celestial seal  
Can never be erased.”

*W. Hammond*

“Whom having not seen, ye love.”

Well, how is it with you, dear friends, this evening hour?

“What think you of Christ?”

*J. Newton*

Has it moved your steps? Those of you who are privileged to gather around the Lord's Table: you cannot see Him literally, but can you see Him in the emblems? The broken bread: the broken body. The poured out wine: the poured out blood of our Lord. These are precious if we sit there in living faith. “Whom having not seen, ye love.”

And, is it evident in your life? We read of the disciples that “they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” “They took knowledge of them.” It was seen; their steps showed it, their conversation showed it and their spirit showed it. “They had been with Jesus.” It is what we might call a ‘reflected glory.’ And, when all is said and done, the glory of the Church is reflected. The light of the moon, that we are thankful for, is reflected. It is the reflection of the sun. It has no light in and of itself. And the Church is described as being as “fair as the moon.” All her glory is a reflected glory; remember that. Thus, when we speak of this joy and this glory, it all comes from the Sun of Righteousness, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Within the veil this evening hour, He sits “a Prince and a Saviour.” One by one He is gathering the precious jewels of His crown. They are gathering around Him.

And the one mark that unites them all is this: they love Him. Why do they love Him? Because He first loved them. Why do they love Him? Because His love has put away their sins. His love has quickened them into divine life. His love has plucked them as brands from the burning. His love has translated them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son of God.

Yet, it is an amazing fact how *loveless* we are in return. His love is such a mighty love, such a stupendous love, such an ocean of love! Yet we have such poor, cold distant hearts. What can we say?

“Lord, it is my chief complaint,  
That my love is cold and faint;”

His is not! Yours is, and mine is.

“Yet I love Thee and adore;  
O for grace to love Thee more!”

May God add His blessing.

*W. Cowper.*

*Amen.*