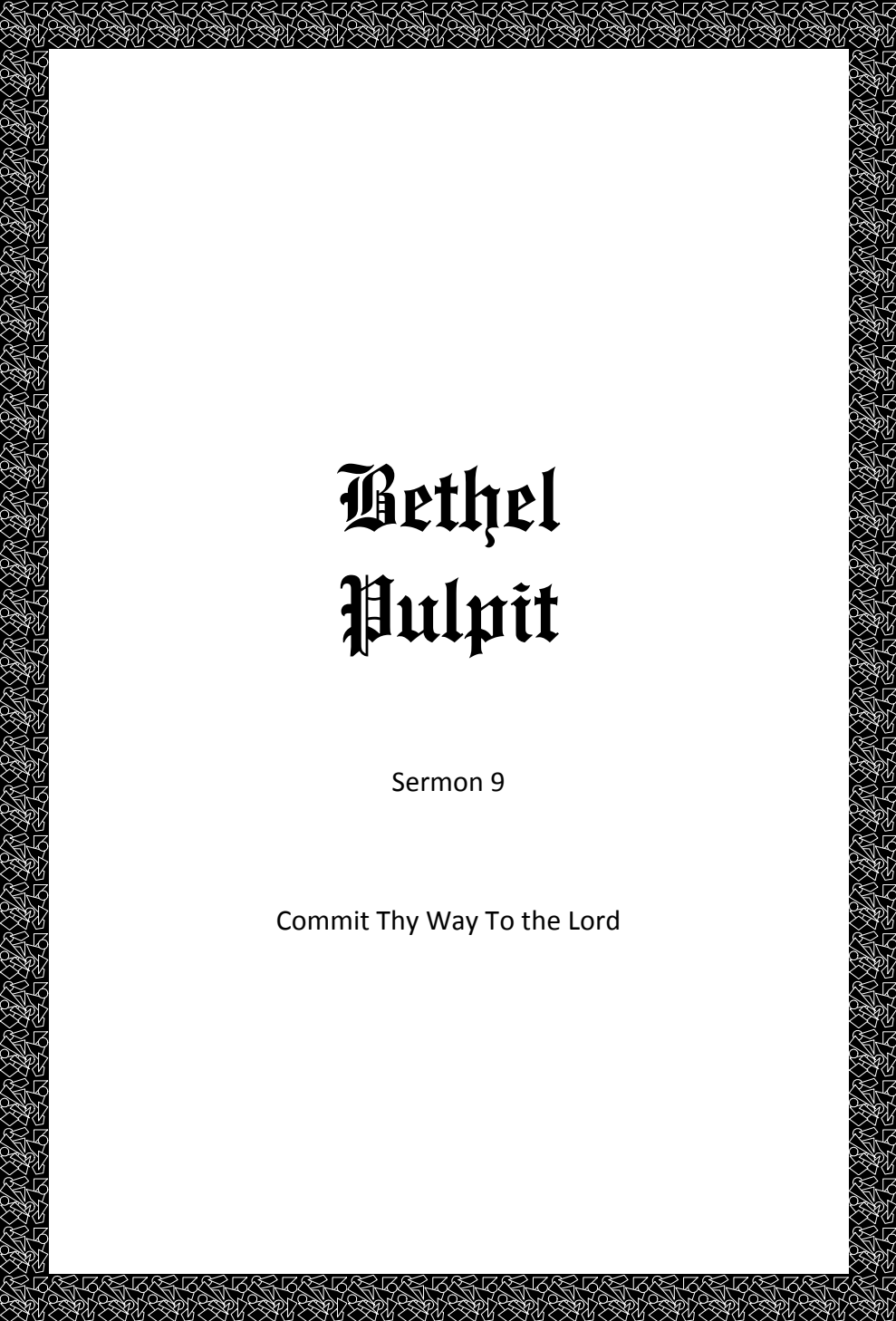




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 9

Commit Thy Way To the Lord

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 19th July, 1981**

Text: *"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37. 5).*

The beauty of this word is its simplicity – so simple that the youngest child can understand it. And what a wonderful mercy, you children, that none of you is too young to commit your way to the Lord. And yet it is a word that is so suitable for an aged saint, a saint coming down to Jordan. It is a word that is suitable for every case, for every condition and for every time.

The second beautiful thing about it is this: its openness. Perhaps you feel that is a strange expression. I mean this. It says, "*thy way*." Now each of you can fill that in yourself. It is like one of those forms used sometimes, there is a blank and you have to fill that part up.

I do not know what your way is this morning. You know what your way is, with all your joys and sorrows, your pleasures, your fears, your perplexities, your sorrows. You know what it is and the Lord knows what it is. And this sweet, simple, beautiful word says, "Commit *thy way*" – thy way – "unto the Lord." That which is so close to you, that which lies with such weight on you, that which is part of you – "thy way" – commit it to the Lord.

Really, though this is a very simple word, there is a profound doctrine here, and the profound doctrine is this: that God's people should never seek to order their own way, but that they should always seek that their ways might be graciously ordered and directed by God. We should desire that feelingly this might be our lot.

"His skill infallible,
His providential grace,
His power and truth, that never fail,
Shall order all my ways."

In a sense there is a very gentle, loving rebuke here. The rebuke is this, that so often we try to order our own ways; we try to direct our own

paths, and there is a loving, very solemn warning against that. You are to “commit thy way unto the Lord.”

“Leave God to order all thy ways,
And trust in Him whate’er betide.”

Now I affectionately ask you, is this the way that you live your life, young or old, children or aged ones, whoever you are, is this the way you live your life, daily, hourly, committing your way unto the Lord and wanting Him to bring it to pass, to order everything for you? “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

So you see the nature of this loving rebuke. These things that are concerning you, are you committing them to the Lord? Those things tomorrow, are you committing them to the Lord? Or are you trying to manage your own way, to order your own affairs? Now there is a vital principle here.

So this comes to us not just as a sweet encouragement and a gracious commandment and a word of direction but it comes as a loving rebuke, and if you need it may you receive it. “Commit thy way unto the Lord.” May you have grace to say, “Lord, that is my sin. I have been trying to manage it myself. I have not been committing it to Thee. I have not been leaving it in Thy hand. I acknowledge my sin. Henceforth do enable me to trust Thee more.”

Some of your best hearing times will be when the Word of God pricks your conscience, when it is sharper than any two-edged sword, when it shows you where you are wrong in your life. It is a solemn thing if you come to chapel week after week, all through the year and cannot look back to one occasion where the Word of God has found you out and said, “That is wrong; put that right.” If the times you think the Lord has spoken to you have all been blessing, confirming you, there is something amiss. We are so often acting wrongly, thinking wrongly, doing wrong, blundering, making mistakes, taking false steps, and we need the Word of God to come and put us right.

Let me put it very simply, like this. If you are in Luton and you hear the town hall clock striking, you glance at your watch to see if it is right, don’t you, and if it is a minute or two out, you put it forward or back, don’t you? One godly old minister once said that when he lived in the city

his watch was always right. The reason was that he was continually hearing a clock chime or passing a clock and checking it. But when he lived in the country he found that continually his watch was losing.

It is like that with us. You come into the house of God, God's Word giving a sure and certain sound for you to check your life, every detail of it, the things you are doing, the things you are planning to do, the way you are behaving, for the Word of God to touch your heart here and there and to touch your life here and there.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord.” “Thy way.” All your ways. And if you cannot commit your way to the Lord then there is something sorely wrong, something amiss. You are going to go somewhere. Can you commit that way to the Lord? You are making some plan. Can you commit that way to the Lord? If you cannot, there is something solemnly amiss.

That tale about Romaine has been repeated over and over again, but it still has a weight in it. Romaine, of course, was one of the most blessed ministers the Church of England has ever produced, and he was once in company with a group of people and they suggested a game of cards and pressed him to play. He did not say anything until the cards had been dealt. Then he said, “Let us ask God's blessing upon the game.” They looked at him with horror, and said, “You cannot ask God's blessing on a game of cards!” He said, “If I cannot ask God's blessing upon it, then I cannot play.” “Commit thy way unto the Lord.” If you cannot ask God's blessing upon it, then it is wrong. If your life is being lived easily and you are just doing what you want and there are no checks from God's Word, then there is something solemnly amiss. God's Word will be like a fire and search your heart and prick your conscience and at times it will turn you upside down. The things you do – can you commit your way to the Lord?

Did you commit your way to the Lord this morning? Did you pray for blessing on the preacher and on the preaching and did you commit your own hearing to the Lord? Now did you? Can you expect to profit if you did not?

Now I must just qualify that, because the sovereignty of God is a great mystery. When I received my greatest blessing in the house of God, I

had gone in a bad spirit. Divine sovereignty is a mystery, but as a general rule you cannot expect God's blessing if you are not labouring in prayer for it beforehand. "Commit thy way unto the Lord."

Beloved friends, there is nothing too small to commit to the Lord and there is nothing too great to commit to the Lord.

Of course, the way we commit our concerns to God is in prayer, through God's mercy, in the name of Jesus. We venture and we commit our way to the Lord. Now just let me explain. You are all familiar with the case of Ruth, the Moabitess. There was one occasion in her life when she had this matter that was too hard for her. It was really the matter of that inheritance of the family of Boaz which had been mortgaged. She was a poor woman and hoped that someone would undertake to redeem that lost inheritance for her. You notice what Ruth did. First of all she realised that she could not do anything herself. She knew that Boaz had all these things, that he could do it. She had a sweet hope that he would. She went in softly by night and she lay down at his feet, and when he spoke to her, she told him everything and committed her way to Boaz, put it in his hands and she left it there.

That is the way we commit our way to the Lord, to go in softly, realising we cannot manage it, knowing that He can do everything, a sweet hope that He will, falling at His feet and if there is a promise on your side, pleading it and then leaving it all in the Lord's hand. "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." O to see this.

"He engaged to manage all,
By the way and to the end."

"Commit thy way unto the Lord," just like Ruth did to Boaz.

The Hebrew here reads, roll thy way upon the Lord. If you have a margin you will see that the translators have given that as the exact translation. "Roll thy way upon the Lord," the thought there being that whatever your way is it is a heavy burden, too heavy for you to manage, too heavy for you to carry and you cannot even lift it off your shoulders and hand it to the Lord. The only thing is, you can roll it on Him, the figure being of a person with a very heavy load on his back and a stronger person comes and bends down and he rolls it off his back on to the other.

Your way often, if not always, is a heavy burden to you, but we *will* try to carry our burdens ourselves. If only we could roll our burden onto the Lord by faith. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.” “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

I just want to say two or three things about this verse and the place where it comes in the psalm. Really, in the place where it comes, this beautiful verse is a kind of antidote, a cure, and it is a cure for fretfulness. That is the point of this psalm. You know what it is to be fretful, to be in a fretful spirit: you are bothering about this or that or something else. You have not got any rest or peace. Everything seems fraught with anxiety. You are fretting yourself about things and people and today and tomorrow and everything and you are in that fretful spirit. It is not good for your soul’s peace. You say you cannot get out of it, you would be rid of it if you could. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.” Now if you are in a fretful spirit this morning, this is a divinely-appointed, divinely-provided remedy. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Another thing this is, is a cure for envy. It seems that poor David in this psalm was troubled on this point, that he was trying to do right and was being disappointed; things were going wrong and he could see so many people who were not acting right and everything was prospering with them and he was envious of them. Perhaps some of you get into that. You try to do right, do not work on the Sabbath. Other people are doing better than you. “Commit thy way unto the Lord.” He knoweth the way that you take and when He has tried you, you shall come forth as gold. “Trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

There is a third thing that this is a remedy for. It seems also that David here had people opposing him, maligning him, speaking against him, wrongly accusing him, misrepresenting him, and it grieved him. But he comes to this: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

There is a connection between the following verse and this. “And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” In present-day language it is this: the justice of thy cause. He is

going to bring it forth as clearly as the midday sun. However you are being maligned, misrepresented, falsely accused, “Commit thy way unto the Lord.”

If there is one person in Scripture who walked out this word, and is a wonderful example of it, it is that godly woman, Mary, the mother of Jesus. If ever a woman on earth had a bitter trial concerning the justice of her cause, it was that dear, godly woman, Mary. She was found with child by the Holy Ghost and even her beloved husband, Joseph, could not understand it. He thought that Mary must be a sinful woman. We are told that he so mistrusted her that he was minded privily to put her away. There were two ways a person could be divorced in ancient Israel. One was in a very public way in which shame was brought on a person and the other was to do it privately, and poor Joseph made plans to do it, but he was going to do it privately, to save Mary all the public scandal and shame. Have you ever thought of what Mary must have gone through when her own husband, godly Joseph, was planning to put her away? What did Mary do? She committed her way to the Lord. She trusted in Him and He brought forth her righteousness as the light and her judgment as the noonday. He sent an angel from heaven to take up her case. “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” He sent an angel from heaven rather than His promise should fail. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

I want now to speak of a few of these ways you can commit to the Lord. First of all, the vital concerns of your soul and your sins and eternity. That is what faith does, it commits everything into the hands of the Lord. You come as a sinner, guilty, ruined, lost, undeserving and commit your way into the hands of sovereign mercy. You plead the Lord’s promise, His precious blood, and commit the whole of your soul’s everlasting concerns into the hands of Christ. “Trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass,” your salvation, your heaven, your all. No sinner ever perished committing his soul for eternity into the hands of Christ. How many have literally spoken as their last words, “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit.” Of course, David prayed that prayer in the thirty-first psalm, and then the dear Lord Jesus Himself for ever sanctified those words. He prayed that prayer when He was dying, and how many

sinner have spoken that as their last word! “Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.”

Paul, before he died, told us that he had already done this. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

“Firmer than heaven His promise stands,
And He can well secure
What I’ve committed to His hands
’Gainst the decisive hour.”

This is the work of faith. Do you know what it is to go as a sinner, led by the Holy Spirit and fall down at the feet of the dear Lamb of God and to commit your eternal all into His hands?

“My soul into Thy hands I cast;
I trust I shall be saved at last.”

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Then there are your concerns in your family. Have you got any concerns in your family at present, about someone you love; spiritually, or it may be bodily, in sorrow, in affliction? Have you got anything in your family, amongst those you love? The Lord knows all about it. From all eternity He knew all about it and this is the way He has appointed for you to walk, but He kindly, lovingly says, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

You say, “But what will He bring to pass?” His own purposes of love and mercy, answers to your prayers, everything that shall be for your true, lasting, eternal good. He shall bring it to pass, and sin, Satan and the world shall never stop Him.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him.” Seek that humble confidence in Him who “is faithful that promised,” “and He shall bring it to pass.”

With some of you, it may be something bodily, your health. “Commit thy way unto the Lord.” With others it may be the unknown way. What have you got in your unknown way? What is there tomorrow or in the coming days? Is there something that troubles you, perplexes

you, something from which you shrink? “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Is there anyone here this morning with a burden, with a hard cause, anyone here with a sorrow, anyone here with a trouble? “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

There is something rather attractive about this expression, “Commit thy way,” because sometimes in your life you have things and you would pray about them and you hardly know how to pray or what to pray for. You feel there is something you hardly know what to ask for. The Lord says, “Commit thy way unto the Lord.”

Let me give you an illustration. It may be there is a godly woman and her beloved husband has died. She may have been married to him for many years and she is heart-broken. How can she pray? She hardly knows what to pray for. She cannot pray for her husband back. It is this: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.” Like John’s disciples when their master was beheaded. They came and they told Jesus. Go and tell the Lord Jesus your sorrow. Do not hold anything back. Go to Him in secret. Tell Him all; He will never deceive you; He will never misunderstand you; He will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

It may be some of you are seeking the Lord’s gracious leading and divine guidance. You believe that as the pillar of cloud and fire led ancient Israel, so the Lord will lead His people and you want Him to lead you. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him.” Exercise great distrust of yourself. Often when we seek the Lord’s will, there is something in us which merely wants the Lord’s opinion and secretly reserves to itself the right to refuse it. That is the deceitfulness of our carnal hearts. You will only be graciously led if you commit thy way to the Lord. Many people say they ask the Lord to show them and He does not. The Lord knows that you are asking what His will is and when you know what His will is *you* will decide whether to do it or not.

We are like people who write letters for advice. They do not really want advice; they want the person to whom they are writing to tell them what they are doing is right. It is ever so solemn that that is what we are

like with God. That is why He is silent. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

With so many of God’s people the real burden is their spiritual state. If they were asked to define “thy way” they would say, “I feel so dead and hard and barren, so much bondage. I come to chapel and hear but there does not seem to be any blessing. My heart is hard; I seem to be in the dark; I can see very little difference between myself and the world. I am tempted and do not seem to have any power to stand against temptation.

‘Surely they can scarce be worse,
That have never known Thy name.’”

Let me ask you a question. Are you satisfied with it? There is a kind of religion that brings a morbid satisfaction. Are you happy, satisfied, with the state of your soul? If not, if these things are a burden to you, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

May the very simplicity of this beautiful text enter into your heart. I suppose you have heard most of these things, if not all of them, before, but O for faith to do them! And this word can never be worn out. It is eternally new. But you may say, “There is something in my way that has not been mentioned, and no one knows about it, not even my dearest friend.” Well, tell the Lord about it. He knows the way that you walk, and if it is something you could not even whisper to anyone on earth, you can go and whisper it into His ear. “He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry.”

My final word is this: as helped, take this text home with you; do not leave it behind in chapel. You know, years ago most people used to use walking sticks. There were two different kinds. Some were heavy, to help you get along, for use in rough places, to lean your weight upon. And there were other little fancy walking sticks that people used to take out when they were dressed up and they used to swing them round and round.

This word is not one of the latter ones, one of those fancy walking sticks, but it is a staff for you to take home with you, to use, and lean hard upon.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”