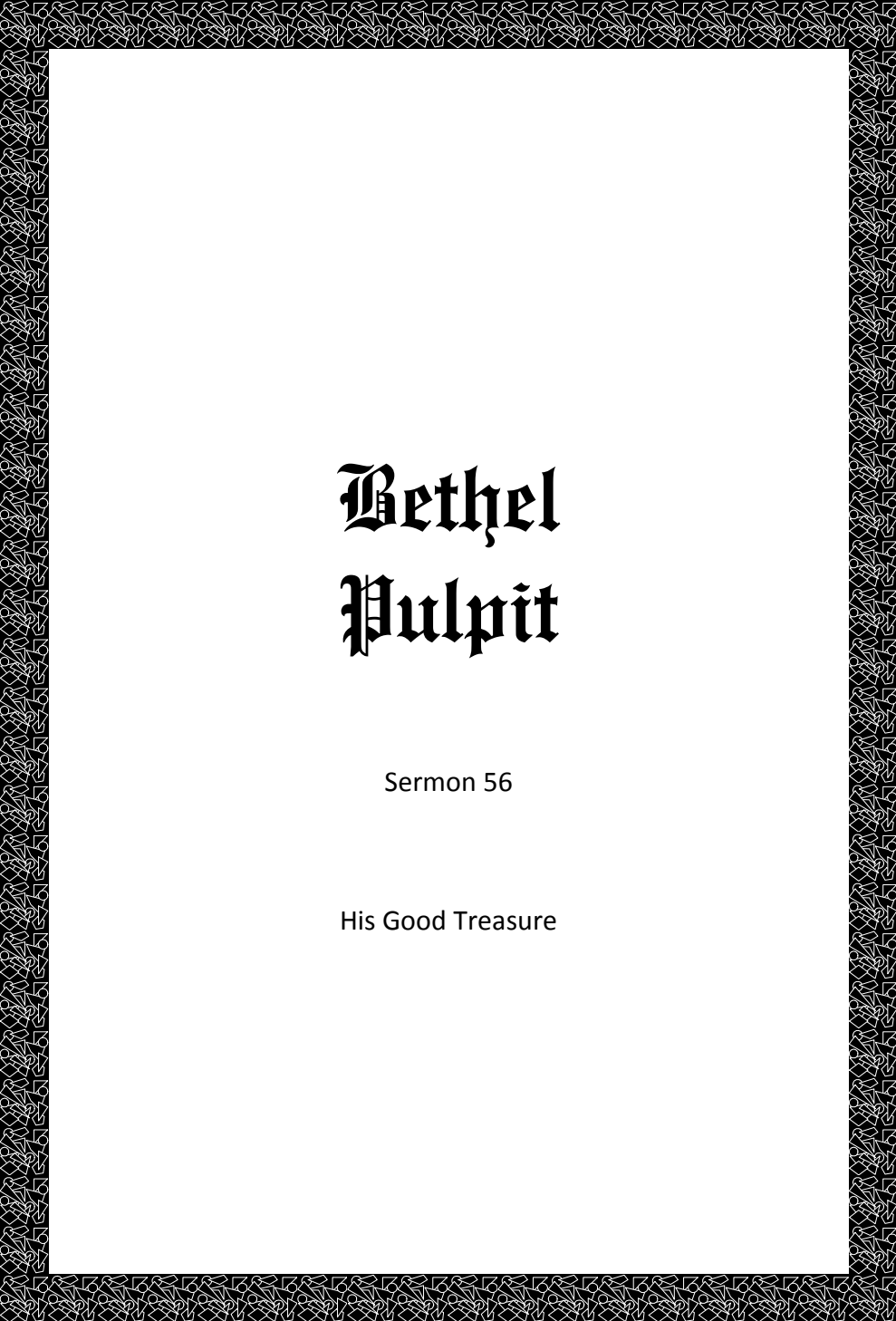




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 56

His Good Treasure

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Thursday, 11th July, 1974**

Text: *“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure” (Deuteronomy 28. 12).*

God here is speaking to Israel of the time when they shall enter the promised land. There were still giants to be fought, walled cities to be assailed, much conflict; but the Lord speaks of Canaan as if it were already theirs. It *was* already theirs by promise, and so surely one day it would be theirs by possession. And the Lord speaks very solemnly to them of when they shall enter the land.

There are just two points concerning Israel entering the promised land I want to touch on here. The first thing. The Lord speaks of a treasure when they come into the land. What is it? Gold, silver, precious stones, gems, mineral possessions? No. The rain from heaven. Literally here this good treasure is the rain from heaven. “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.”

You know, when we speak of riches, when we speak of treasures, it is seldom that we mention such a thing as the rain. Usually it is farthest from our thoughts. But even in these natural things the Bible is exact. “His good treasure.” Wherever should we be tonight if it did not rain? Why, the whole country would perish through drought and through famine and through pestilence. “His good treasure.” It is from this rain that the Lord continually sends that we live; it is from this rain that we have our continued harvests. “His good treasure.” May we not easily forget this. There are so many things we take for granted, and when even naturally we speak of treasures, we seldom speak of the rain. But wherever would we be without it?

Look at the Lord’s kind provision continually in the sun and the rain and the harvest. Where should *we* be without it? I know in eastern countries this is especially so – the value of the rain; there would be death without it. So I would just make this point right at the outset, this good

treasure here spoken of, literally, when Israel enters the promised land, is the rain.

I know some of you may be saying, “Surely the sun is also needful as well as the rain. If it was all rain and no sun, it would be equally disastrous.” Well, the point here is obvious. The great danger in the eastern countries was drought. They were not afraid of floods; it was drought that they feared. They knew they would have the sun, but this precious rain – they could not do without that. “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.”

Then take up this point, just for a moment, spiritually. What of these showers of blessing? What of these sacred seasons, when His doctrine, the precious doctrine of Christ, shall fall as the rain and sweetly distil as the dew? What about the Lord Jesus coming down “like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth”? “His good treasure.” There is no treasure to be compared with this as your weary, parched, barren, thirsty soul cries out for the living God; cries out “as a thirsty land.” Then how precious this good treasure when Christ Himself comes down like rain upon the mown grass, and when He meets your case! “The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.”

Now the second thing I want to say about this chapter and Israel entering the promised land is this: this chapter is law, not gospel. It is full of law. And you see the law in all its fierceness, in all its solemnity. I read a terrible IF twice in this chapter. There are all these wonderful blessings, these natural blessings enumerated here; this verse is one of them. But at the outset there is a terrible IF. These wonderful blessings are promised to the people of God “IF thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments.” Have you come up to this IF, beloved friends? Most of the chapter, and it is a very long one of sixty-eight verses, most of this chapter is not taken up with blessing; it is taken up with the curse. “Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in and when thou goest

out.” And these verses are preceded with another terrible IF: “IF thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day.” And then this multitude of curses follow.

Now this is law. Here you see the law in all its solemnity, in all its forcefulness; the law as it concerns Israel entering the promised land. If they obey, if they observe, if they do all His commandments, then they are blessed; and if they disobey, if they do not hear, if they do not do all His commandments, then they are cursed. Now this is the law in all its solemnity, and by nature, as natural men, we are all under the law. This terrible IF. It would be all right if we could come up to its requirements, but we cannot. We all come short, far short of this terrible IF. Then, “Cursed is the man who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” The law can do nothing but curse and condemn those who break it, those who cannot live up to this great IF. Now this is law, and here we have the law in all its awful severity and solemnity. The blessing – IF thou shalt obey; the curse – IF thou shalt not obey. “What shall we say to these things?”

“Thus Sinai roars, and round the earth
Thunder, and fire, and vengeance flings;
But Jesus, Thy dear gasping breath
And Calvary speak gentler things.”

O what an unspeakable mercy if you and I are delivered from the curse of a broken law and brought under the gospel! The gospel does not curse, the gospel blesses.

“Pardon and grace, and boundless love,
Streaming along the Saviour’s blood;
And life, and joy, and crowns above,
Obtained by a dear bleeding God.”

This is gospel, not law. These are the gentler things that Calvary speaks. And what is the secret of it? How can sinners cursed by a broken law be blessed by the gospel? Do you know the way? There is one, and but one. It is this: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the

Gentiles through Jesus Christ.” Now that is how the blessings of this verse in a gospel sense come to you as a guilty, law-cursed sinner. “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” It is Christ made a curse that sinners might be eternally blessed. I can do no better than repeat Dr. Watts:

“Go, ye that rest upon the law,
And toil and seek salvation there,
Look to the flame that Moses saw,
And shrink, and tremble, and despair.

“But I’ll retire beneath the cross;
Saviour, at Thy dear feet I’ll lie!
And the keen sword that justice draws,
Flaming and red, shall pass me by.”

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” There are many treasures the Lord has, and they are all good treasures. What is a bad treasure? Is there such a thing? Many people on earth possess treasures but they are not good treasures. Some have ill-gotten gain. Some have treasures they have gained through covetousness. Some have treasures which only lead them to avarice. There are many bad treasures.

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” There are many of them. I begin with His most precious Word. There is a good treasure. “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.” “His good treasure.” The exceeding great and precious promises are His good treasure. “A Man more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir,” who is the glory of the Word of God, good treasure! How many of you, through grace, count the Word of God His good treasure?

Now the Lord has given it to you; in a sense He has given it to all men, His good treasure, His precious Word. But you see, there is something else here: “The Lord shall *open* unto thee His good treasure.” He gives His Word to all, but He opens it to His people. Now this is what we want. We want the Lord to open to us the good treasure of His Word. We want it in our reading, in our secret meditation. We want it in the preaching of the gospel; we want it in the sanctuary. We need the Lord to do two things (we have them both in the same chapter, Luke 24): “He

opened to us the Scriptures” . . . “Then opened He their understanding.” We want the Lord Jesus, who has the key of David, who opens and no man can shut, and who shuts and no man can open – we want *Him* to open our understanding, and we want Him to open His good treasure of the Scriptures. And when He opens it, O the blessings that flow from it! And when He opens your heart to receive it, O the blessings that flow into it!

“Breathe from the gentle south, O Lord,
And cheer me from the north;
Blow on the treasures of Thy Word
And call the spices forth.”

There, of course, the hymnwriter refers to that beautiful text: “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden.” I realise that this is an unusual interpretation, referring the garden to the holy Scriptures, but the application of it is very sweet. “A garden of spices,” so is the Word of God. But we do not always smell the sweet savour of it, the sweet savour of the gospel, the sweet savour of Christ. But when the Holy Ghost breathes upon it powerfully as the north wind, or gently as the south wind, then the spices flow. Now I know it is an unusual interpretation of the garden; usually we take that garden for the church of God, and second, the heart. It is an unusual interpretation, the holy Scriptures, but the application is very beautiful. O we do need the Lord to open to us His good treasure! “Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow forth.”

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” It is a sweet promise to those of you who are tried because you have little insight into His Word, those of you who long to enter in, those of you who want more gracious understanding, those of you have to pray, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” And those of you who want to find Jesus in His Word, it is a sweet promise to you: “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.”

Now to proceed. All the blessings of the gospel that are spoken of in Scripture are His good treasure, and we want the Lord to open them to us. I can only just mention them. The precious truth of the covenant of grace, confirmed with an oath, sealed with precious blood, containing all blessings; that covenant in which the Lord Jesus stands in eternal union

with His people, as their Saviour, Surety, covenant Head and everlasting All. The eternal, unchangeable love of God to sinners. The doctrine of the atonement:

“The Saviour died, and by His blood
Brought rebel sinners back to God.”

These are His good treasures. All the glorious truths connected with the Son of God: His incarnation, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His precious offices, His divine attributes, the relationship in which He stands to His people; these are His good treasures. The sacred truth of the eternal safety of the people of God. The truth of the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, where

“With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer.”

And so we might go on. All the precious doctrines, all the sacred truths of the gospel, every one of them, all these are His good treasures.

And there are two things about these good treasures. The first is this. When you have them, you are made truly rich. That is the truly rich man, the one who is made a possessor of these good treasures. Gadsby says,

“In Him there dwells a treasure all divine,
And matchless grace has made that treasure mine.”

This treasure cannot be bought, this treasure cannot be earned; it is freely given, and the man who possesses it is truly rich. You might say, “The man who possessed the pearl of great price, he gave all that he might have it.” Well, beloved friends, you will have to give all that you might possess it. That does not mean that you are going to earn it or merit it. It means you will be made willing to part with all; it means that compared with Christ, in everything else, no comeliness you see. Now these are His good treasures.

And the second thing. You cannot lose them. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.” In ancient times most of the treasures that people possessed were either in garments or in silver and gold. Now however precious their garments were, they were always

afraid of the moth; and those garments did perish and become moth-eaten. And because there were no banks they were always in terror that the thief would take their money, and it was very customary for them to dig holes outside their homes and there bury their treasure. Hence the reference we have in one or two places to hidden treasure. Then there was a constant fear of rust. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” This good treasure is especially described by the apostle like this: “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” “The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” – a good treasure; and then immediately afterwards he says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” You see, the treasure has its value in itself. We are just like earthen vessels: cracked pots, worthless, valueless, easily broken, no beauty, and yet having a capacity to contain a priceless treasure. “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.” Beloved friends, this treasure, if you have it, can never be lost. It will take you to heaven and you will take it to heaven with you.

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” He shall open it unto thee. Let me explain. Here is an old chest, one of the old-fashioned store chests, and it has a most secure lock, and you have not got the key. You know that inside there are most priceless treasures. You know what is in it, precious gems and jewels and gold and silver; but you cannot get at them. “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” You see, with so many of God’s little ones, with so many seeking, longing, waiting souls, who come to the house of God week by week, your religion is just like that old-fashioned chest. You know that there is a precious treasure inside it, you know that the people of God possess this precious treasure; but you cannot get at it. You feel to be right out of it; you feel to be completely outside it. Does this describe some of you here tonight? You say, “That is just where I am.” But do you long for this treasure? Would it satisfy you if you had it? Do you say, “I do not want earthly things, earthly treasures. It is that treasure in

Jesus that I want.” “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” He who holds the key of the house of David, He will open that lock. Then there will be liberty; then there will be access; then you will be able to draw near; then you will be able to partake; then you will be able to possess; then the treasure will be yours. “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure,” not because you deserve it or because you merit it. You are sinful, unworthy, guilty, undeserving. It is all of grace.

“The Lord shall open unto you His good treasure.” Now look again. There is a beautiful house. There are priceless treasures inside, but you are completely outside of it. Even the external gates are locked and the walls are too high to scale. You can just see from afar that beautiful building; you have only heard of what is inside. Then someone comes and takes you by the hand and leads you to the outer gates and he opens them. Then he takes you through the beautiful grounds, right to the ancient door of the beautiful house. Again, he opens that door and he leads you through the length and the breadth of that mansion. Then he says, “This is yours.” Now that is how the Lord opens to poor, unworthy sinners His good treasures. He does it here in the gospel as He takes them by the hand and leads them in to “possess their possessions.” Why, those precious things inside the mansion are your possession, but you are yet outside the gate. But “the Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure,” and you shall possess your possessions, and not only a mansion on earth; there is a mansion in heaven: “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also.”

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” I read in the Word of God of “treasure hidden in the field.” You see, it cannot be found. “O,” you say, “that is just where I am. People say, I believe you are a seeker after the truth. I hope I am, but I cannot find what I seek.” Hidden treasure; treasure hidden in the field until the Lord Himself takes you, shows you the spot, brings you to the treasure, opens it to you, gives it to you. That is what revelation is. It is not having a dream, a mysterious vision, some fanciful things. If you were to ask me a verse that describes what a true revelation of the gospel is, this is it: “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” That is revelation. He leads you into it, and causes you to possess it.

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” We have spoken of the blessings of the gospel, but in a special sense His good treasure is Jesus Himself. “For unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” He freely gave His dear Son for sinners and He freely gives His dear Son to sinners. O if you have Christ in your heart, the hope of glory, you will feel that you have got His good treasure. You will not want anything else.

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.” Now one last thing. The Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry once said this: “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” So I take it this good man is a child of God, a child of God by adoption and grace, and I am told that he has good treasure, and then I read that he has this good treasure in his heart. He has a good treasure in heaven (“In heaven my choicest treasure lies”) and he has a good treasure in Jesus in the gospel, but we are told he has a good treasure in his heart. Who put it there? The Holy Ghost when He formed Christ in your heart the hope of glory. That is the good treasure, and it is found in the heart of His saints. Have you a sweet hope that you possess this good treasure in your heart? that the Lord has prepared your heart to receive it? that He has opened your heart, caused you to feel your need of it, and then deposited it in your heart?

“Unworthy dwelling, glorious Guest,
Favour astonishing, divine!”

To have this good treasure in the heart, which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

But follow me aright. It seems sometimes that this good treasure in your heart is very close, very shut up. I mean this. You feel you have a good hope through grace in your heart but you feel you are shut up, you are in bondage. “A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” That, beloved, is when the Holy Spirit opens unto you His good treasure, when there is a sweet opening of it in the heart. What is it? Why, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is something begins to flow out. It did not before. It was close. It was all shut up. It was bondage. But now it is liberty. Love begins to flow, repentance, holy gratitude, sacred desires, the tender fear of God. There is

a flowing, something coming out of your heart, something springing up, and so you are experimentally proving this word of the Lord Jesus: “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” O may there be more of these sacred seasons! Our hearts by nature are like stone and if anything good is brought out, it is only when the Holy Ghost works and good things are brought out of the good treasure of our hearts and this blessed word is sweetly fulfilled: “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.”