

Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 246

The Glories of God's Eternal Son

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 28th August, 2005**

Text: *"Blessed is the man that heareth Me" (Proverbs 8. 34).*

This is one of the most magnificent chapters in the whole Word of God. It is so if you think only of the beautiful poetic language, but then more when you think of the glorious truth. There is a mysterious Person speaking here, a glorious Person, this Person introduced as Wisdom. But as the chapter unfolds, it becomes exceedingly clear that this is not just some kind of attribute of wisdom, that this is a Person who is speaking. And as the chapter further unfolds, this Person who calls Himself Wisdom is almighty. And then as the chapter further unfolds, this Person is divine, He is God. So there is not a shadow of doubt that this is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ speaking here, speaking as the eternal Son of God, He who from everlasting was one with the Father and one with the Holy Spirit. We think of the Son of God here, glorious, almighty, speaking under the name of Wisdom. Didn't some of the old preachers used to say, "If you want to know the eternal Sonship, read Proverbs chapter 8, John chapter 8, Romans chapter 8"? Well, it was not bad advice, was it!

But this glorious Person here. Really, the second half of Proverbs chapter 8 is very similar to the opening words of the gospel according to John. It is the same glorious Person, the same divine Person. "In the beginning was the Word." Proverbs chapter 8, the Wisdom; John chapter 1, the Word, the One through whom God speaks, through whom He reveals Himself. "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 any thing made that was made." The same glorious Person, Christ viewed in all His eternity as the Son of God.

Just a word or two why the Lord Jesus Christ should take to Himself this name of Wisdom. Well, He is the all-wise God. We think of His wonderful wisdom in the work of creation. We think of His wonderful wisdom in salvation's plan. Nothing but eternal wisdom could have devised the plan of salvation. We sing, "Eternal Wisdom drew the plan; in all things ordered well." And then the wisdom of the Lord Jesus in ordering and guiding and directing all the affairs of His people. And then

kindly, graciously He gives wisdom. This is such an attractive point and it is a point especially for you girls and boys and you young people who are perhaps puzzled or perplexed. Perhaps you have a decision to make. It may be concerning school, work, what you have to do in the future, a friendship. But so often we do not know what to do, but the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Wisdom knows.

That is a lovely word in John 6, the feeding of the five thousand: “He Himself knew what He would do.” That is Christ, the eternal Wisdom of God. Five thousand to be fed and no provision for them. Philip did not know what to do; Andrew did not know what to do. “He Himself knew what He would do.” He always did; He always will. “He Himself knew what He would do.” He knows what you ought to do, what you should do. So if there are any of you here who are bothered or worried or perplexed or concerned, do not forget this glorious Person of Proverbs 8 – the Son of God, now risen, exalted, glorified in heaven, the all-wise God – is able to direct your way and lead you and guide you. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

The wonderful thing about Scripture and God’s gracious dealings with His people, you have these great and high and glorious truths but they are not just to be preached in a doctrinal way, or nothing but an intellectual way, but they come right down to our life’s minutest circumstances, our problems and perplexities. “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

But especially Christ as eternal Wisdom giving wisdom. He is “able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” That is the greatest wisdom and the truest wisdom and the best wisdom, for the Lord Jesus in love and mercy to make you and me – poor, lost, ruined sinners – “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” And if He makes us wise unto salvation, then like the wise man we will build our house on the rock – on the Rock of Ages – not on the sand. And if the Lord makes us wise unto salvation, then we will have oil in our lamps and our lamps trimmed and burning when the solemn, midnight cry is heard: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.”

So I read just these few words as a text. I felt it so clear to speak to you about this glorious Person, this divine, almighty Person, Wisdom, the

eternal Son of God, but which verse to read, I hardly knew. There is so much here. So I just read those few words as a kind of application of it: “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.”

But just consider these glorious truths about this glorious Person. “I was set up from everlasting.” Not set up as the Son of God – He *was* the Son of God – but set up in the covenant of grace as His people’s salvation. “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth” – the Son of God eternally begotten of the Father. “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.” You look at some of these majestic mountains and some of these hills. You can hardly imagine a time when they were not there, when they were not created. The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says, “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.”

I wonder how many of you are familiar with William Cowper’s lovely hymn on the subject. It begins,

“Ere God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before He filled the fountains
That feed the running rills;
In Me, from everlasting,
The wonderful I AM,
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is My name.”

Now let me just pause here for a moment. These are not just doctrines, not just truths of the Word of God. They *are*, but I tell you this, beloved friends, if by faith you have a view of who God is, who the Son of God is, your life will never, never be the same again. And I tell you something else. I do not say much about my own experience, but if in the depths of trouble you view this glorious God in the Person of His Son and you see that He is almighty, and you have the sweet realisation, “This God is my God,” then your troubles will vanish.

I remember once in the depths of sorrow and trouble, with an impossible thing and no way out, Saturday evening about eight o’clock and having to preach on the morrow, looking up at our Lancashire hills and the

sun going down on them and myself sinking in the depths, and that word with such power:

“Before those hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame –
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.”

In a moment I viewed the greatness of God. He could do anything; He could do everything. The most impossible thing with Him was easy. Then I could pray. Then I could leave things in His hand. Then I could believe that He would perform the impossible, which He did.

“Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame –
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.”

These are the glories of Christ in His eternity.

“Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.... When He prepared the heavens, I was there,” as an almighty Creator along with His Father, for, “Without Him was not any thing made that was made.” “When He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth.” May you have a glimpse of it by faith this morning, the great and glorious and eternal God, none other than the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, equal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.

But there are one or two points here. One is, He is almighty. “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?” If you get a glimpse of that, it will enable you to pray, if you are in trouble and you see that He is your God. O but the wonderful thing about this great, almighty, glorious Person is that He loves sinners, and that He loved them before the foundation of the world, and that in the fulness of time He was willing to come. In the language of the children’s hymn, and it is good divinity, “Jesus, who lived above the sky, came down to be a Man and die.”

What about this – all these glorious things before the foundation of the world, even before creation? Now listen to this. This is everlasting

Wisdom speaking. This is Christ, the eternal Son of God: “Then I was by Him” – that is the Son with the Father. “Then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight.” We can see that the Son of God was daily His Father’s delight, but we cannot really comprehend the ineffable love with which God the Father loved His eternal Son before the world knew any being. We cannot understand that. But what about this, when the Lord Jesus on earth said to His Father, “Thou ... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me”? Now as a sinner, can you stand before such a word as that, that as from eternity the Father loved the Son with that ineffable love, so with that very same love He loved you if you are one of His people?

“I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” You can understand, in your little measure, the Father loving the Son and the Son loving the Father, and the Father rejoicing in the Son and the Son rejoicing in the Father. In your little way you can understand it; but you cannot understand this: “Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men.” The Father and the Son, and the Son and the Father. And then this amazing revelation, the Son of God looking down into time, and the creation of the world, and the whole world ruined through sin, and yet the Son of God rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth – that is the places where sinners would live. Why did He rejoice? Because He had a people there, loved with an everlasting love, whom He was going to save with an everlasting salvation. Can you believe it, that from everlasting His delights were with the sons of men?

There is a hymn that has attracted me over the years. It is an opening hymn, though it is hardly ever sung, and the hymnwriter says, speaking of himself:

“Dear in primeval glory, when
Neither were angels made nor men,
Nor aught exist but God.
E’en then Thy heart was fixed on me;
And now, through grace, I fix on Thee,
By faith in Jesus’ blood.”

Now, may the Holy Spirit lead us into these mysteries. There is salvation in them, heaven in them. O but I would that you might this morning have those believing views of the glories of the eternal Son of God, then to see His willingness to come into the habitable parts of the

earth. Why? Because His delights were with the sons of men; because He loved sinners; because He had a people chosen by the Father, given into His hands, loved with an everlasting love, and before the world had any being, as the Son in the bosom of the Father rejoiced in His Father's love, He looked forward and He could see a hill called Calvary in a place where a city would be built, a city that would be called Jerusalem. He could see that hill and He could see on that hill a cross, and even as He was rejoicing and delighting in His Father, He knew that one day He would be nailed to that cross by these creatures whom He had made. He knew He would be nailed to that cross. "How willing was Jesus to die, that we fellow-sinners might live!" From everlasting, "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," to suffer, bleed and die. So Cowper concludes his beautiful hymn on this great and glorious Person:

"And could'st Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,
And nailed Thee to the tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, 'Sinner, I am thine!'"

The glories of Christ as the eternal Son of God, and if it is possible to say it, the greater glories of His love, this matchless condescension.

"But lo! He leaves those heavenly forms;
The Word descends and dwells in clay,
That He may hold converse with worms,
Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.
"Mortals with joy behold His face,
The eternal Father's only Son;
How full of truth! how full of grace!
When through His eyes the Godhead shone."

So that great question, what Ralph Erskine called the greatest question of the gospel catechism, "What think ye of Christ?" What think ye of His Person from all eternity? What think ye of His wisdom? What think ye of His greatness, His divine, almighty power? O what think ye of His matchless love, and what think ye of His condescension, and what

think ye of His dying for sinners? It is this great and glorious Person who created all things who suffers and bleeds and dies at Calvary.

“Now therefore hearken unto Me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep My ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Which implies one thing: that this great and glorious Person of whom we have been trying to preach this morning, He speaks. “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Now did you ever hear Him speak in creation? “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Did you ever hear Him speak in the gospel? “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Did you ever hear Him speak as He did on earth – a poor, blind man to receive his sight; or to the dead: “Lazarus come forth”; or to the deaf that they might hear; or to the poor woman: “Thou art loosed from thine infirmity”?

“Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” But have you ever heard Him speak to you personally? “My sheep hear My voice” – all of them, every one of them – “and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” But they hear His voice and they know His voice. “Blessed is the man that heareth Me,” the man, the woman, the girl, the boy that hears the Lord’s solemn call to repentance. Have you heard that call? The Lord Jesus, this same glorious Person, began His ministry, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Now, “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Have you heard His voice calling you to repentance? “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” That word, “Follow Me.” Blessed is the man that heareth the Lord Jesus saying, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Now, “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” Blessed is the man that heareth the voice of Jesus saying, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Now have you heard that voice? Can you say, “I heard the voice of Jesus say, ‘Come unto Me and rest’”? “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” That is, there is complete satisfaction, complete salvation, there is mercy for the vilest of sinners who at the Saviour’s feet confess their sin.

“Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” But some of the most solemn words in Scripture are spoken concerning those who will *not* hear the Lord Jesus, those who are deaf to the voice of the Lord Jesus, those who do not heed the voice of the Lord Jesus, those who do not listen to the

voice of the Lord Jesus. But, “Blessed is the man that heareth Me,” born again of the Spirit of God. When a tiny child is born, that child can hear. That child can hear its mother’s voice. That child can hear the sounds that are around. Have you ever noticed sometimes there is a bang or a crash and such a tiny baby jumps? Well, there is life there, hearing there. What a terrible thing to attend chapel the whole of your life and hear – how many sermons? – and never hear the Saviour’s voice in it. If it is a solemn thing to be deaf to the voice of this great and glorious Person, it is a wonderful thing if we are blessed with faith to hear His voice.

“Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” O but to hear Him speaking from the cross. “Hark! the voice of love and mercy sounds aloud from Calvary!” This same glorious Person who was there before the mountains were made or the hills brought forth, now a “Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” but still Almighty God, crying with a loud voice, “It is finished.” “Blessed is the man that heareth Me,” who hears that voice:

“‘It is finished!’ – O what pleasure
Do these charming words afford!
Heavenly blessings, without measure,
Flow to us from Christ the Lord.”

“Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” And what about the way He speaks to a poor, lost, ruined, guilty sinner who feels completely defiled with sin, and yet pleading for mercy, pleading for cleansing in the blood of Christ? This great and glorious God and Saviour draws near and He says, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.”

Now, “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” And then there are the promises, and it is the voice of this almighty God and Saviour that speaks all the promises, the voice that spoke in creation when the hills were made and the mountains brought forth. Now has the Lord ever spoken to you as you have been reading His Word? Or perhaps you have been in bed, or about the street, and the Lord has spoken to you. His Word has come into your heart. Or has the Lord ever spoken to you through the preaching of the everlasting gospel? You say, “That was for me.” “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” O but those promises!

“His every word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;

The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”

“Blessed is the man that heareth Me.” This glorious Person, because He is approachable and He is knowable and He is findable, He has revealed Himself in the gospel. He has revealed Himself by the Holy Spirit. Sinners can know Him and approach Him and find Him. It is this very point of vital union. It is something real.

I realise that in the rest of this verse there are some lovely things. Perhaps one day I might be able to speak about them to you: “Watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.” But it is not on my spirit at present to speak from those words, the various gates where the people of God watch and the various posts where the people of God wait. I think some of you may remember quite remarkable sermons on these words. I think of one by Mr. Frank Gosden and another one by Mr. John Green – these various gates, these various doors where God’s people wait and where they watch.

But the point I want to come to is this: “Blessed is the man that heareth Me.... Whoso findeth Me findeth life.” This great, this glorious, this majestic, this almighty God and Saviour, *He may be found*, and down the ages since Adam fell, sinners have been seeking Him and finding Him, and they still are seeking and finding Him. It is the Holy Spirit’s work in their hearts. They need Him. That is why they seek Him. They know He is an almighty Saviour. They want Him. They know He shed His precious blood; they long to be cleansed in it. They realise He has brought in an everlasting righteousness; they long to be covered in it. And so they seek Him as an almighty Saviour, and the reason they seek Him is because He has first sought them, and the wonderful promise is – and this great God and Saviour Himself has spoken the promise – that *all* that seek Him shall find Him. O what a word is that: “Seek ye the Lord *while* He may be found,” which means a time will come when no longer He may be found. “Seek ye the Lord *while* He may be found call ye upon Him *while* He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will *abundantly pardon*.” The wonderful thing is that this great God and Saviour may be sought and He may be found.

And, “Hear the whole conclusion of the matter”: “Whoso findeth Me findeth life.”

“Jesus, Thy Godhead, blood, and name,
O! ’tis eternal life to know.”

“For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord” –
the riches of His grace in salvation, in forgiveness, in heaven.

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Ere God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before He filled the fountains
That feed the running rills;
In Me, from everlasting,
The wonderful I AM,
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is My name.”

When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of ocean’s mighty flood;
He wrought by weight and measure,
And I was with Him then;
Myself the Father’s pleasure,
And Mine, the sons of men.

Thus wisdom’s words discover
Thy glory and Thy grace,
Thou everlasting Lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye surveyed us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom Thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

And could’st Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,
And nailed Thee to the tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!

The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

W. Cowper