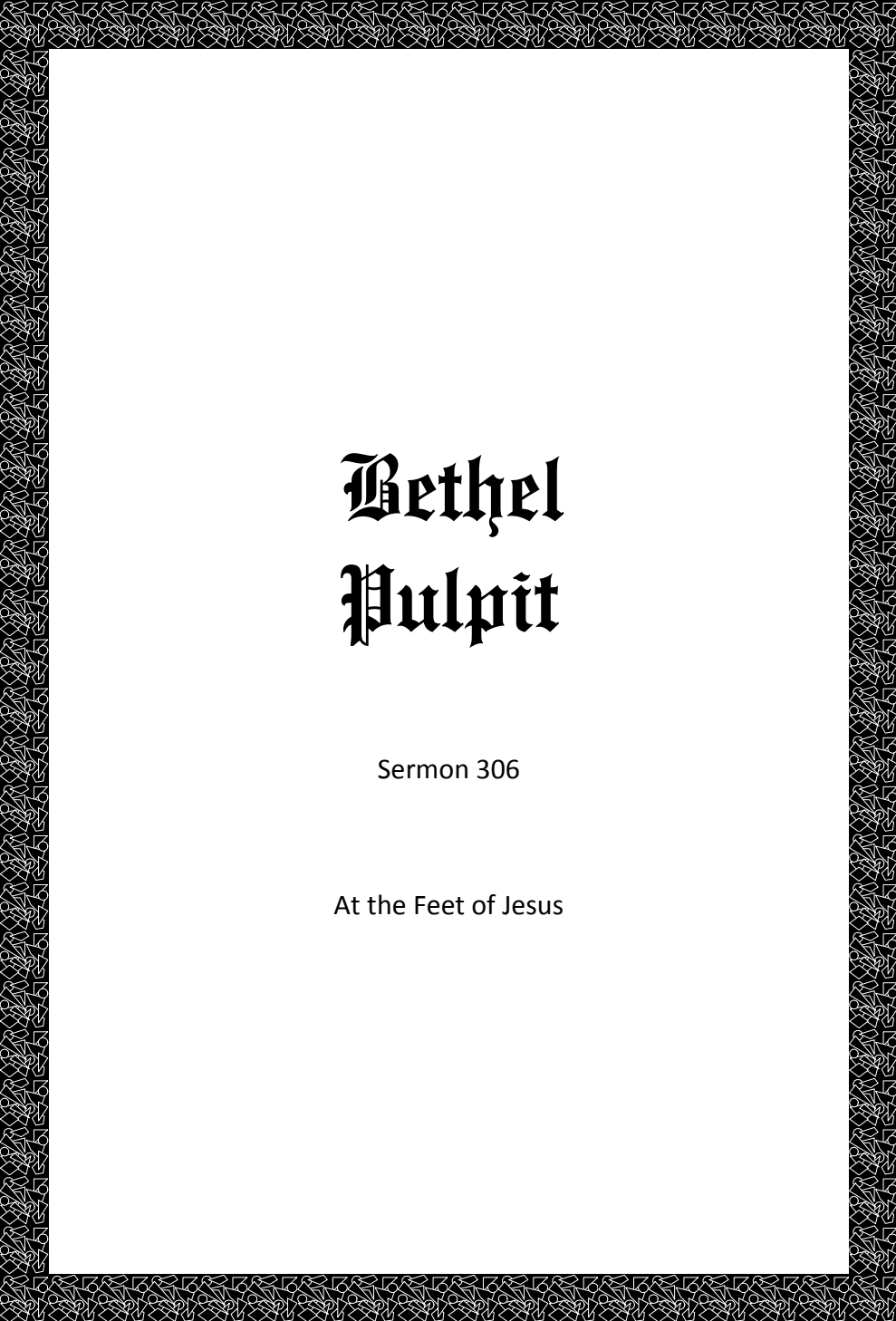




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 306

At the Feet of Jesus

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 10th October, 2010**

Text: "*At Jesus' feet*" (Matthew 15. 30).

I realise that these three words are almost exactly the same in various places in the New Testament. I read them from this verse rather than any of the others because the others are perhaps speaking of some special occasion, some special case. But this word speaks of a *multitude* being found at Jesus' feet, and I think it is perhaps the longest catalogue of ailments, disabilities and complaints we have anywhere in the gospels: lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others. It did not matter what the case, what the condition was, but we are told that He healed them. Now beloved friends, this is the place where every sinner saved by grace is brought: to Jesus' feet, to find our only hope there, to find all our salvation there. There is no other place.

"At Jesus' feet." But I felt it particularly laid on me concerning our pilgrimage and our conflict, our warfare and our Christian life: this point seems to come to me week after week these days, perhaps especially when in prayer. We have so many favours here, but we do not want to be left just to coming and going and nothing really happening, no reality. Beloved friends, real religion is solemn; life is solemn; death is solemn; eternity is solemn. We want to be right; we want real things; we do not just want a profession; we do not just want to talk and preach and hear and sing. It is this point with me: to be brought to the Saviour's feet. And let us be clear, I realise, you realise that literally we cannot come to the Saviour's feet. It is like the little children's hymn, "I think when I read that sweet story of old." Well, we cannot literally come to Him; we cannot literally come to His feet; but that little hymn goes on, "But still to His footstool in prayer I may go." It is to be brought there by faith. It is to be led there by the Holy Spirit. It is nearness. It is reality. It is the communion. It is the closer walk with God. It is that wonderful word, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Now do these things really matter to us? O we do want to be found at Jesus' feet. The Word of God tells us that all God's people will be brought there, every one of them. We think of that wonderful chapter, the last words of Moses, the man of God, and right at the beginning, looking forward to gospel days, Moses said, "Yea, He loved the people" – that is

Israel's God and Saviour. "Yea, He loved the people." Well, He did, and He still does, though they are all sinners. "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand" – in union with Jesus. "They sat down at Thy feet." Now that is it. Every one of them, all those who are loved with an everlasting love, all those who are safely secured in the hands of Jesus. "They all sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words." So it would be a wonderful thing if this evening as a congregation we were brought to Jesus' feet. One hymn of John Newton's says this:

"Go humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there."

Now that is good divinity and that is good experience. "None can perish there."

This evening I read to you that long chapter, Mark chapter 5, and in that chapter we had three people and you could hardly have three more different people in the whole of the Bible. But did you notice – each one of them was found at Jesus' feet? The mad Gadarene was found at Jesus' feet, "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." And Jairus was found at Jesus' feet in prayer; and the woman with the issue of blood who pressed through the crowd was found at Jesus' feet. But if you think of the difference, that wild, mad, wicked Gadarene, and then this poor, feeble woman with her complaint, and then a man who was eminent, a ruler among the people. They were all found at Jesus' feet. You know what it was. They needed something to be done for them. They could not do it for themselves. Only the Lord Jesus could do it for them, and He did. That is why they were found at Jesus' feet.

How did they come there? Well, with the mad Gadarene, you see divine, almighty power with a great sinner and what seemed to be a hopeless case; divine power bringing him to sit at Jesus' feet (and he had hardly been sitting anywhere before in his life!) He was now sitting at Jesus' feet. And what brought poor Jairus? Well, it was dreadful sorrow. Cowper says,

"Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low and keep me there."

That is what brought Jairus. He had a dying daughter, and so often the Lord uses our problems and difficulties and sorrows to bring us to His feet.

And then the poor woman with the issue of blood. They all three of them were found at Jesus' feet.

I know what some of you would say if you were permitted to speak aloud. You would say, But how do I get there? I long to get there, if only I could get there. Surely it is the most blessed place on earth. Well, that was the point with the poor woman with the issue of blood: How can I get there? She did not have any money to pay. She did not know then it was free. She had spent all. Her condition was so bad; it was getting worse. Ceremonially she was unclean. She could not go near people, and she was so weak. She had this debilitating affliction. How could she possibly get there? That is how you feel tonight, and that is how I feel. If only we could get to Jesus' feet. How can we get there?

Well, there were two things. There was something that drove her, and there was something that drew her. She did not find it easy. She wanted to get to Jesus' feet. She hoped if she touched the hem of His garment she might be made whole. But as she attempted to get there, she could not get near Him for the crowd. Some of you know something about that, don't you? You cannot get near Him for the crowd. Berridge is very quaint in his hymns, but Berridge had a very blessed religion:

“If unto Jesus thou art bound,
A crowd about Him will be found,
Of unbelieving fears.”

And he goes on about this crowd. You know it even practically: if sometimes you go aside in secret and you think you will call on the Lord, then your phone will go, or someone comes to the door, or Satan suggests something you should have done and you have forgotten and it cannot wait. You know these things. We do not want to talk about generalities. Don't longing souls have this problem, this difficulty in getting to the Saviour's feet? If only I could come there.

But there was something which drove her, and that was her case. It was desperate. She knew it was her only remedy, and if she did not reach Jesus, she must die. So there was something impelling her, something forcing her on. There will be times in your religion when there is that urgency there. We wish it was like it now. But we go back to our early days: “Mine's an urgent, pressing case.”

“If thou press on, the crowds will fly,” says Berridge,

“Or if thou faint, to Jesus cry,
And He will send supplies.”

But there was something else, the opposite. There was something that drove her, impelled her, but there was something that drew her. She did not know it, but it was the power of God’s grace, and the power of God’s grace will pull you through, through every difficulty, every obstacle, your sin, your unbelief, your hardness of heart, the temptations of Satan, the alluring of the world.

“If thou press on, the crowds will fly,
Or if thou faint, to Jesus cry,
And He will send supplies.”

O but that is a good prayer when you want to get there: “Draw me, we will run after Thee,” which means once the Lord begins to draw, then quickly you will be found there at His feet. “Draw me, we will run after Thee.” But she got there, and she got what she wanted. “Daughter ... go in peace.” The Lord called her His daughter, claimed her as His daughter. “Thy faith hath made thee whole.”

“At Jesus’ feet.” There are so many things on my spirit. “At Jesus’ feet” – *the place of blessing*. It is at Jesus’ feet where the Holy Spirit brings you as a sinner, where He lays you low, where you are humbled, where you are willing to take the lowest place. It is one thing for people to speak about the lowest place. A few years ago a minister was preaching and in the vestry the old deacon said, “O I do want to be found in the lowest place,” and the minister replied, “Well, I think it is still empty!” It is one thing to speak of taking the lowest place; it is another thing to be brought there.

“At Jesus’ feet” is the place of blessing. It is the place where the Holy Spirit leads the people of God. With the mad Gadarene, at Jesus’ feet was the place where Jesus triumphed, where Jesus gained the victory. There was a conflict, but grace was mightier than sin and grace mightier than Satan, and there this wild, ungodly man was brought as a little child to the feet of Jesus. It seemed an impossibility, but he was there.

It is *the place where a sinner is brought in a full surrender*, because by nature we are rebels, rebels by wicked works. We are enemies. And there is the word: “Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee,” and where they fall, they

fall down at Jesus' feet. You say, Does this great and glorious King Jesus have enemies? You are an enemy by nature; I am an enemy by nature. "We will not have this Man to reign over us." But the enmity has to be slain, the lusts of the flesh have to be subdued, and that unconcern has to be dealt with, and then the once-proud enemy, the once-proud rebel is brought in helplessness and humble submission to Jesus' feet, and Jesus smiles upon him and pardons him and loves him and receives him.

"My dear, almighty Lord,
My Conqueror and my King,
Thy sceptre and Thy sword,
Thy reigning grace I sing;
Thine is the power; behold, I sit,
In willing bonds, beneath Thy feet."

There are some of you here this evening who have been brought to sit in willing bonds at Jesus' feet. O this is the place of blessing.

"At Jesus' feet." It is *the place of love*, where this sinner is welcome – pardoning love, redeeming love, love that flows from the cross. Like poor, lame Mephibosheth, far off. He belonged to the house of the enemy. How could he get to David's feet? He was lame. I think he was afraid if he did get to David's feet, David might have him put to death because he belonged to the house of Saul. But there was a loving sentence went forth: "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" They said, "There is one." "Send and fetch him." That is just what grace does. For Jesus' sake, send and fetch him. It seems that poor Mephibosheth came in such fear and such trembling. He fell down at David's feet and he proved it to be the place of love. "Fear not, Mephibosheth." There is no need for all those guilty, carnal fears. He is a pardoned sinner. He is "a foe received a favourite, an alien made a child." "Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

"And Jesus smiles at such a guest;
And bids him to a heavenly feast."

"At Jesus' feet." It is to be brought there. Let us be clear, if you have been brought there, your life will never be the same afterwards and people will see the difference. A religion which does not make any

difference in your life is worth nothing, and that religion will not take you to heaven, because that vital ingredient of repentance is missing. Just take the mad Gadarene, (because really I am taking the text from Matthew 15 and using Mark 5 as the Holy Ghost's gracious commentary on this subject, "At Jesus' feet"). Look at the mad Gadarene. Everyone knew him. He was wicked, outwardly wicked, and people were afraid of him. But when the Lord dealt with him, O the difference! The whole of the neighbourhood, whether they liked it or did not like it, could see the difference. Can this possibly be that same man? Can this one who was so wild in his wickedness and sin, and this humble, godly, kind, gracious man, be the same person? That is what the gospel does. So it was with Saul of Tarsus. They saw it, "and they glorified God in me." "At Jesus' feet."

It is *the place where things are changed*. Night is changed to day, sorrow to joy, bondage to liberty, death to life. And that effect is seen by those about. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"At Jesus' feet." Now this is *the place of satisfaction*. Every one of them we read of – so different and different things they wanted – they were satisfied. There is no disappointment at Jesus' feet. The world disappoints and we disappoint ourselves. You might even find that friends disappoint. But the Lord Jesus does not disappoint. The Lord Jesus satisfies. "At Jesus' feet," the place of satisfaction. If we have talked of it as the place of love, it is not just the love of Christ to the sinner; it is the love of that sinner to Christ at Jesus' feet.

"At Jesus' feet" is *the place of obedience*, gospel obedience, because the mad Gadarene, after all that had been done, wanted to stop with Jesus, to remain with Him. You can understand him, can't you? Yet the Lord said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And the place at Jesus' feet was the place of obedience. He did what Jesus told him. I have always felt that: that if a person is to make an open profession, it should be the place where they attend, where they belong, where they have been brought up. It is an easy thing in one sense for a person to leave and make an open profession. When the Lord first blessed me, I was away from home at university, and I was quite tempted miles away from home to make an open profession there. It would be so much easier than going

before a discerning Strict Baptist chapel. In those days, we were not sure they would receive us when we came because we did not feel we knew much. But, “Go home to thy friends.” They will receive you in love. They will be humble. They will weep when you tell them. They will be so pleased with your little tale. They will sing,

“With pleasure we behold
Immanuel’s offspring come,”

if you are found at Jesus’ feet. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

“At Jesus’ feet.” At Jesus’ feet is *the place of gratitude, the place of thanksgiving*. So when the Lord answers your prayer, do not forget to thank Him for it. But if you are led by the Spirit to Jesus’ feet, you will not forget to thank Him for it.

And so we leave the mad Gadarene and the woman who pressed through the crowd and Jairus. We leave Mark chapter 5, and we see ten lepers whom the Lord in love and mercy healed. As they went away, one returned, and we are told that he fell down at Jesus’ feet, and it was in gratitude; it was in thanksgiving. And we are told that he was a Samaritan. “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.” O but they had no place at Jesus’ feet with a hard heart, with an ungrateful spirit. It is at Jesus’ feet where sweet gratitude flows, where sweet gratitude so freely flows. “At Jesus’ feet.” O to be led there by the Spirit of God, to be brought there by faith, as a sinner to the feet of Jesus. This is where our hope is, our salvation, our heaven. This is where we find forgiveness, where we find cleansing. But it is that closer walk with God, that calm and heavenly frame.

“At Jesus’ feet.” It is *to know His gracious presence*. It is to know that wonderful peace that He made by the blood of His cross. O to know more of the loving, gracious presence of the Lord, to be found there at Jesus’ feet, humble, near to Him, close to Him, in dependence, and to know that peace He gives. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

“At Jesus’ feet.” But at Jesus’ feet is *the place of discipleship*. Apart from the way we have it here in the gospels, we also have it used as an expression of discipleship. What I am thinking of, in the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that the Apostle Paul bore witness to this, that he sat “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22. 3). What did he mean? He was one of Gamaliel’s disciples. He honoured him. He was taught by him. So this is the place of discipleship. “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” It is at Jesus’ feet that takes place. That is where you learn of Him. “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” O to be found at the Saviour’s feet learning of Him, honouring Him, desiring to follow Him! It is a wonderful subject. But I repeat, we are not thinking of sentimental things. We are thinking of blessed realities, divine realities, spiritual realities. Never think of these things as being visionary things, imaginary things. They are real things, vital things, to be found at Jesus’ feet.

But now to come to this especially, and perhaps more than anything else, “at Jesus’ feet,” *the place of true worship and true union and communion with the Lord*. Solemnly, sadly don’t we have to say,

“’Tis of Thee I little know,
And ah! still less enjoy”?

O but we would covet earnestly these best gifts and it would delight our hearts if this evening by faith we were brought to worship at Jesus’ feet. I believe all three of them in Mark chapter 5 worshipped the Lord Jesus at His feet, and I believe that poor Samaritan leper worshipped at Jesus’ feet.

What is worship? There is so much in it: love, praise, thanksgiving, humility, the tender fear of God, faith, hope, repentance – like the holy anointing oil, after the art of an apothecary, made up of so many different spices.

But now we have to leave all those three in Mark chapter 5 and the Samaritan and we have to go to that sacred house in Bethany, and there we really come into the inner sanctuary. Mary of Bethany – there are three different occasions she is mentioned in Scripture and each case she was at Jesus’ feet. One was in deep sorrow when Lazarus died and she went outside the city to meet Jesus and she fell at His feet. And another was when she anointed His head and she sat at Jesus’ feet. And then there was the well-known occasion when Martha served, but Mary sat at Jesus’ feet.

It comes close, that account, because what could anyone do better than serving the Lord, waiting on Him? Well, that is what Martha was doing. I take it the point is, we need to watch anything, even if it is a religious duty, if it draws us away from Jesus' feet. "Martha was cumbered about much serving." And you and I can have these lawful things, right things, that keep us away from the Saviour's feet. Not only that, but Martha (and she was a godly woman) was even finding fault with the Lord Jesus Himself. She said, "Lord, dost Thou not care?" You say, Martha, you had better be careful. You can get into a wrong spirit and a judgmental spirit and a self-righteous spirit. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful." Often we speak about it and Samuel Medley has his lovely hymn on it:

"Jesus, engrave it on my heart,
That Thou the one thing needful art."

Really in the context the one thing needful for a child of God was sitting at Jesus' feet and worshipping Him. "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

"O that I could for ever sit,
With Mary at the Master's feet!
Be this my happy choice."

"At Jesus' feet." Years ago, I heard of a place on the continent, I rather think it was a cathedral, in which there was a magnificent and very large picture of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am not sure whether it is a painting or whether it is a tapestry or exactly what it is. But people go there and they are amazed at the beauty of it, and then there is something that shocks them. There seems to be something wrong with the face in the picture, as if the artist had made a mistake. The face does not seem right. It does not seem beautiful like the rest. It seems distorted. But if the guide is enquired of, he says that there is a secret. It is a great picture and the feet come right down to the floor, and I understand the guide tells the visitors that if you want to see the beauty of His face, there is only one place: you have to lie down on the floor at His feet. And the visitor who has been amazed at the beauty of the picture yet not able to understand the face, when he lies down at the feet, he sees that face in all its glory and beauty. That is only a natural thing (and of course we do not like representations of the Saviour), but there is the truth of it: you can only see

the beauty of the Saviour's face when through grace you are brought to lie at His feet.

May we as a congregation be brought through grace to lie down "at Jesus' feet."