

Bethel

Pulpit

Seeking the Saviour and Finding Him

Sermon Number 477

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 8th May, 2016**

Text: *"Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" (Job 23. 3).*

The vital point in real religion is to find the Saviour. So let me affectionately ask you that vital question at the beginning: have you ever found the Saviour? Because there is a promise to those who seek Him that they shall find, and it was the Lord Jesus Himself who said it: "Seek, and ye shall find." "He that seeketh findeth." I want to speak very tenderly here, but beloved friends, do not take it for granted that you are seekers. Do not take it for granted that you have sought the Lord, or you are seeking the Lord.

This point was brought home to me very forcibly many years ago, and I have often thought about it. What does this word mean, to *seek*? Well, you can be looking for something, hoping you will find it, but what is it really to seek? Years ago on a crowded beach in Wales we lost one of our little children. She was only about two or three years old. When we made enquiries, no-one knew anything about it. She just seemed to have disappeared. Then someone said they had seen her and she was going out towards the sea. It was quite a long time before we found her, and we knew then what seeking was, and the earnestness of it, and the anxiety of it.

Now then, they that seek shall find. May the Lord make each of us seeking souls. And beloved friends, it is not just at the beginning. One great mark of the beginning of a work of grace will be that you are seeking the Saviour. You want to find Him. Perhaps you think of a word like this, and there are so many in Scripture: "Whoso findeth Me findeth life" – that is eternal life; that is heaven at last. "Whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." That is to know those riches of God's grace as they are treasured up in the Lord Jesus. How many of you have come to chapel this morning hoping that you will find the Saviour? And then a little bit closer: with how many of you who have come to chapel is it

the most important thing that you find the Saviour? And what about when you read the Word of God? I hope all of you, even you young ones, regularly read the Word of God. Well, why do we read it? A little girl once wrote this in her Bible:

“Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,
Be Thou for ever near;
Teach me to love Thy sacred Word,
And view my Saviour there.”

And she did find the Saviour there. O that many of you young ones might be seeking the Saviour and finding Him there.

But why do we seek the Saviour? Well, there are many answers to that question, and you know one answer to it is the opposite. Why do we seek the Saviour? Because He first of all has sought us, and because He has found us, because we would never seek the Saviour unless He first of all had sought us. But why do we seek the Saviour? O because we realise we have a soul to be saved, we have a life to live, and we have a death to die. We have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Because we need Him; we must have Him; we cannot do without Him.

Beloved friends, don't you realise the urgency of these things I try to bring before you week by week? There is an awful, solemn simplicity in them. O but this great point, for the Holy Spirit to show you your need of a Saviour and for you painfully to feel it, and then to be seeking Him, and it is the one things that matters. O you must have Him; you cannot do without Him. And as you seek Him – the Saviour, the Son of God who came from heaven to earth, who went about doing good, who went to the cross, who died that sinners might live, who shed His precious blood that sinners might be cleansed – you have to seek Him, and you cannot be satisfied until you find Him. But it will not just be at the beginning. It will be all through your life in greater or less measure.

Now Job here was seeking the Saviour because he was in trouble. Perhaps some of you are in trouble in various ways. Now may you see the Lord Jesus in it. But also with Job, he was walking in darkness. The Lord had hidden His face. Perhaps some of you are there. You cannot find Him because He has hidden His face. You say, Why does a loving God and

Saviour hide His face? Well, sometimes to try us, and sometimes in a way of correction and chastening, and sometimes that we might seek Him more earnestly.

But Job was also seeking his Lord and God in this way. He was being misunderstood, and people were saying wrong things about him. Now perhaps some of you know that experience. You are being misunderstood, and people are saying wrong things about you. Job felt if he could only find his Saviour and lay everything before Him, his God and Saviour would not misunderstand him and He would vindicate his cause. He was really walking this out: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

So there may be some of you here this morning seeking Christ for the first time, some seeking Christ because He is hiding His face from you, some seeking Christ because you are in trouble, some seeking Christ because you are being misunderstood and wrong things being said about you.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” And there were a lot of things Job would have loved to have found. He had lost his children. They had been terribly killed and taken away. He had lost his health. He had lost his reputation. He seemed to have lost everything. But he was not so concerned about finding *them*. He wanted to find *Him*. He wanted to find his God and Saviour. That is it sometimes. People are in a difficulty. O but you say, If only I could see the face of the Lord Jesus in it. Job was feeling that: if only he could find his Saviour. He had found Him, but at present he could not. If only he could find his Saviour; if he could come to His feet. He said, “I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me. Will He plead against me?” All these others were, all his three friends. “Will He plead against me with His great power? No.” What will He do? Just what you want: “He would put strength in me.” So the cry, the breathing of a living, grace-taught soul.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” And the interesting thing is, there has not been any mention of anybody. Who is this *Him* that Job is speaking about? Job says, I want to find *Him*; I must find *Him*; it is vital

that I find *Him*. But you say, Job, you have not told us who you are speaking about. You have not said who it is. And with Job there was no need. There was only one *Him* for Job here, and that is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I think some of you here know that experience. There is only one *Him*. There is only one Person. There is only one thing that matters: *Him*.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” We have one of our beautiful hymns and almost every lines begins with that *Him*. I rather think when Samuel Medley wrote it, he took for his text one word. It was one of his habits. He just took that one word, “Him.” Well, if you have just that one word in your heart when you go home tonight you will “enjoy a gospel-day and heaven begun below.”

“Of *Him* what wondrous things are told!
In *Him* what glories I behold!
For *Him* I gladly all things leave;
To *Him*, my soul, for ever cleave.”

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Do you feel an echo of what Job said in your own heart? Do you see that beauty in Christ that you should desire Him? Do you know something of that wonderful attraction, that pulling of free grace? “Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

“Oh that I knew where I might find *Him*!” So it reminds us of Mary Magdalene on the resurrection morning. She was just like Job here. “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” But with dear Mary, the best she hoped for was to find His dead body, and instead she found a living Saviour. But when the Lord appeared, she thought He was the gardener. She said, “Sir, if thou have borne *Him* hence, tell me where thou hast laid *Him*, and I will take *Him* away.” And you say, Mary, you are just like Job. You are not telling the gardener what you are after, or who you are looking for. Mary Magdalene, Job – there was just one thing, and there *is* just one thing in real religion. Sadly we wander from it. David was a great man. He had all the concerns of his kingdom. He said, “*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.” The Apostle Paul: “This *one thing* I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those

things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Didn’t Mary Magdalene find Him! That one word, “Mary.” And she fell at His feet. “Rabboni,” my dearest Master. Have you a religion like that, or do you long for a religion like that? O there was everything in that word. As I have often told you, Krummacher, writing on that garden scene, said that though Mary Magdalene has been in heaven now nearly two thousand years, she has never heard a sweeter sound in heaven than that one word *Mary* on the resurrection morning. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if the Lord this morning came to one or two of you personally and said, “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine”!

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” It was just the same in that little passage I read to you this morning in the Song of Solomon (chapter 3). Now here is a sinner saved by grace and she says, “By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not.” It appears perhaps she was seeking Him in a carnal way. She was saying she was feeling, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Just like Job, just like Mary Magdalene, she says, “*Him*.” He is the only One who really matters.

But then this work becomes deeper. There is more earnestness. O do you know when you become more earnest, when you realise the sentence you must die and you are not ready, or when you realise you are a sinner and need a Saviour, or when you see an attraction in His precious blood? “I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him” – it is still *Him* – “whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. The watchmen” – these are the preachers of the gospel – “the watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him?” O does the preaching ever find you? Does it ever find you out? She could not find the Saviour, but the preachers found her out. That is profitable preaching sometimes when it finds you out and shows you where you are wrong, and it stirs you up.

“I found Him not,” but, “the watchmen that go about the city found me.” O that loving question: “Saw ye Him?” She still does not mention His

name, as if the whole world should know what her concern is, who she is after. “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?” She found Him, but not immediately. “It was but a little that I passed from them.” She could not be satisfied with the preaching. She had to pass by them. “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him.”

Both the Mr. Goddens used to use an expression, and it is not in the Bible, but shall I say it is very biblical, very scriptural. They used to say that in love and mercy the Lord Jesus has made Himself *findable* to sinners who feel their unworthiness and their need.

“It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth.” This is the experience of a sinner when she finds Christ: “I held Him, and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.” That is the gospel church. That is a loving testimony. That is an open profession of the Lord’s name. And when she found Him, she could not rest until she had brought Him into her mother’s house, into the chambers of her that conceived her. “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.”

Well, you have Job, and you have Mary Magdalene, and you have this one in the Song of Solomon, and though she did not know it at the time, she was the beloved bride of Christ. And what about you? I am sure some of you, many of you can come in with this this morning in sincerity, in love: “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” But Job could not find him, and that added to his trouble. He had lost everything. He was sorely afflicted with those painful boils, and he had his three friends accusing him of hypocrisy and all kinds of things. If only he could find his Saviour and his God, but he could not. That is a trouble to you. It is at the beginning when you are first seeking, but it is as you go on, when there are times in your life when your language is:

“I must have Christ as All in all,
Or sink in ruin, guilt, and thrall.”

But you cannot find Him.

Job said, “Behold, I go forward, but He is not there.” Do you know what it is to go forward and He is not there? You have something this week,

or you have something tomorrow. You have something in the coming days. You have a mountain before you, a trial before you. It may be a hospital appointment, or it may be the day of your death, and you go forward and you cannot find Him. He is not there. “Behold, I go forward, but He is not there.” You believe the Lord in love and mercy has dealt with you, He has graciously taught you, and you look back over your little life and there seems to be a cloud over your beginnings, and a cloud over your experience, and a cloud over your deliverance. It is not much help when you keep looking back; you cannot find Him.

“On the left hand, where He doth work.” I take the left hand to be providence, and you are looking for your Saviour in a way of providence, but you cannot find Him there. “He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.” The right hand I take to be grace. But Job cannot find Him there. So he has looked forward, and backward, and on the left, and on the right, and he cannot find Him. One of the old divines – I think one of the Puritans – said, “Job, look up! He is in heaven.” It is the only way you can look. There are those times when you may go forward, and back, and on the right, and on the left, and you cannot find Him, but if you are enabled by faith to look up! “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” He is there in heaven; He is on the mercy seat; He is full of compassion and gracious. He is almighty to save and deliver. Though for a little while He hides His face, He still knows and understands and cares.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Now there is a similar case to that of Job. I am thinking of when Moses and all Israel had come out of Egypt and they had come to the Red Sea. It was just a place like that of Job. Which ever way they went, they could find no way, no hope of deliverance. If they went forward, it was the Red Sea to swallow them up. If they went backwards, there was Pharoah and his host pursuing them. If they turned to the right hand or the left, they were hemmed in by hills and mountains. Really they had come to what John Kent speaks of: “When thou canst no deliverance see.” The people were murmuring. Moses was not getting any more comfort from his friends than Job was here. But you know what it was with Moses, just as it was with Job here. There was only one way. Moses, look up! Moses cried to the Lord, and Israel found Him, and they found Him an almighty God and Saviour despite all their murmuring

and all their sin. “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” There is the Red Sea place in the life of all God’s children. You come into it sooner or later, where you are just shut in, hemmed in on every hand. You cannot see any way out, any way of escape, any way of deliverance if you go forward, or back, on the right or left, and the only thing is to look up.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” Now did Job find Him or did he not? Well, he was enabled to look up, and he did find Him, but I wonder if he found Him in a different way from what he expected. What do I mean? The way he found his God and Saviour was this: “But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” So he did not find a complete deliverance, but he found a resting place, and it is a wonderful thing when in your seeking your God and Saviour, you can find a resting place, and this is a good resting place: “*He knoweth.*” If only you can rest there! And you have it in all its fulness as the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ spoke it. “Your heavenly Father knoweth” – not just your God; not just an almighty Creator. “Your heavenly Father knoweth.”

“Your heavenly Father ever lives,
And all His choicest treasure gives
To you, the favourites of His heart,
Nor will He ever with you part.”

“Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” These things you are walking through, they are necessary. You have a need of them. O it means this: that your heavenly Father will supply all these needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” There is a resting place here for Job, and there is a resting place here for you. “But He knoweth the way that I take.” So He knows the way that you are taking. But there is something even better than that. He knows the way that He is taking. Job did not. God’s way is in the sea, His path in the mighty waters; His footsteps are not known. Perhaps you do not really know how the Lord is leading you, teaching you at present. “*He knoweth the way that I take*” – and He knows the way that He takes Himself – “when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Job realised that all this is the trial of his faith, and in New Testament terms, “That the trial of your faith, being much more

precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” It was the trial of his faith. He knew it was in the Lord’s hands. It was not in Satan’s hands, and it was not in the hands of his three friends who were accusing him and finding fault with him.

“When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” – pure gold, well-tried, none of the gold perishing, the work of grace not perishing, the sinner not perishing, only the dross and scum perishing. “I shall come forth as gold.” What a resting place here for Job, and what a resting place for some of you here this morning! If resting on the Lord’s faithfulness, you personally can say, “I shall come forth.” It is nothing in you, unworthy, sinful, guilty. “I shall come forth.” And this trial, I cannot see any way out, but, “I shall come forth.” Why? Because Job’s God is almighty.

If you read through the Book of Job, there are some of the most wonderful passages in all Scripture concerning the almighty power of God in creation. What about all those things that Job was led to say, and the Lord revealed to Him? The mighty ocean. I do not think there is any great power on earth than the power of the ocean. People who have been in an ocean storm say they have never experienced anything like it. He says to the mighty waves, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.” Job was to learn these lessons. He knew his God; he was seeking; he was finding; he knew He was almighty, greater than the mighty waves of the sea, greater than all the mighty waves of his trouble.

“He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Well, did he find a resting place or not? Did he find his Saviour or not? It is a wonderful place to rest, seeking Christ, seeking His great salvation.

“He knoweth.” But Philpot in one place very beautifully takes up *helps* like this. It is like a person going home, a weary journey, a long way, a cold night, and tired. He is so pleased to see a bench by the wayside, and he sits down there, and is so pleased to have those few moments’ rest. But he knows there is something more than that. There is his home; there is a warm welcome there; there is a fire burning; there is a meal awaiting him. So he is so thankful for that little rest by the wayside, but he cannot be

satisfied. He presses on till at last he gladly reaches his home. It is something like that with living faith and seeking Christ. I go back to my early days, those little helps. You were so grateful, but you thought, there is still something more I would like. This is not just your final resting place.

“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” And there was a time when Job in a special way found his God and Saviour. His testimony was perhaps one of the clearest of all the Old Testament saints, and he made that testimony amidst all his sorrow. You know what I am coming to: when Job said, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” “Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” And Job said, I know He is the Redeemer, and I know that He ever liveth, and I know that He is mine.

O that there might be many of you, those of you of whom it is already recorded in heaven as it was of Job, “The root of the matter is found in me,” and that can never be destroyed. You have the root of the matter in you. O but to be brought, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” But at last to know something of that glorious resting place: “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” Now may it be so for His name’s sake, for the honour and glory of His name.

“Oh that I knew where I might find *Him!*”

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Join, all who love the Saviour’s name,
To sing His everlasting fame;
Great God! prepare each heart and voice
In Him for ever to rejoice.

Of Him what wondrous things are told!
In Him what glories I behold!
For Him I gladly all things leave;
To Him, my soul, for ever cleave.

In Him my treasure's all contained;
By Him my feeble soul's sustained;
From Him I all things now receive;
Through Him my soul shall ever live.

With Him I daily love to walk;
Of Him my soul delights to talk;
On Him I cast my every care;
Like Him one day I shall appear.

Bless Him, my soul, from day to day,
Trust Him to bring thee on thy way;
Give Him thy poor, weak, sinful heart;
With Him, O never, never part.

Take Him for strength and righteousness;
Make Him thy refuge in distress;
Love Him above all earthly joy,
And Him in everything employ.

Praise Him in cheerful, grateful songs;
To Him your highest praise belongs;
'Tis He who does your heaven prepare,
And Him you'll sing for ever there.

S. Medley