

God's Beloved

Ruth 4: 18; 1 Chronicles 12: 38-40; Song of Songs 5: 9-16; Luke 9: 28-36

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I want to speak to you of God's Beloved. It came home to my heart with very deep power when in our reading we were reminded so blessedly that the measure of our acceptance with the blessed God is in the Beloved. I had in mind to say a simple word as to the way in which God reaches His Beloved; I want also to say a word as to how the saints reach the Beloved. I desire to speak, if I may be so helped, of what the saints discover in intimacy with the Beloved, of the exquisiteness of His beauty; and I want to speak of the blessedness of hearing the Beloved's voice.

Beloved brethren, Christ is everything to God. The purpose of God; His mighty plan; His counsel; the deep feelings of His heart of love; the glorious overflowing of His grace; the wonderful provision of His richness in mercy, all depended for movement and display upon Christ. As we grow a little older we are beginning to see that what matters is not doctrine merely; but the blessedness of the Person, and we are seeing too that that Person Who has been made precious to us has been eternally precious to the heart of God. One of the most delightful verses in the whole of Scripture is in John 17: 24, where we read of that blessed Man lifting up His eyes and saying to the Father in holy intimacy, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." And, beloved, that love has never ceased to set itself upon the darling of His heart. In that past eternity He was loved; here in Manhood He is the Beloved of God; and in the day to come the One in Whom, and the One in Whom alone, God can and will head up all things for Himself.

We have spoken together of many features which come to light in all their perfection in Christ. Think of God taking up Adam and giving him so wonderful a place in headship, only to see it all broken down in failure. Then He takes up Abraham, called out under the mighty influence of the voice of the God of glory, and gives to him wonderful promises, only to see death coming in and claiming him before the promises could mature. He connected government with Noah, and the government failed by the defilement of the person himself. But in Christ the blessedness of Headship in all its wonderful features is fully secured; "all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen unto the glory of God by us;" government is secured in His blessed hands; the world to come will be the outstanding evidence to the universe that government is secure in the hands of Christ. How blessed is Christ to God!

I refer to the generations of Pharez because they came to light at one of the darkest moments in the history of men in this world, as depicted in that sorrowful 38th chapter of Genesis. The awfulness of the flesh, and that in the intimate circle of those who are in relationship with God, is in evidence as dominating man's affections and turning them into lusts, bringing in the government of God because of the awfulness of the sin of man. And then there comes to light a "breaking through" and a "rising up" in the very midst of these things. Pharez means a "breaking through," and Zerah indicates a "rising up." This generation is brought in to show that God had another order of manhood in view, a generation which should consummate in the Beloved, in David, (Ruth 4: 18-22). His name, as you know, means Beloved, and God, in spite of all man's breakdown, in spite of all man's failure, in spite of all man's sin, reaches this wonderful point; He brings in David, a man after His own heart. I know that personally David failed, but I am not occupied with that at the moment. I would refer to that incident when men mighty in valour, with prepossessing external features, came before God's prophet only to be rejected;

until one came of whom God could say, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." "This is he." God reached His Beloved. Of course He ever reached Him in His heart, He was ever there. But He reached Him here (I am applying the type) in Manhood. He had a **Man** now before Him freighted, not only with the custody, but with the carrying out of every thought of God — God's beloved Son. Beloved brethren, God would attach our hearts to Christ tonight. The ministry we are having in all its richness, unfolding to us as it does what was in the heart of God from all eternity and what will be for the satisfying of the heart of God in the day of God, throughout a vast eternity, all rests upon the fact that God has found a blessed Man after His own heart. He has found His Beloved, and He is manifested here in order that you and I might be brought to Him in the appreciation of our hearts. There were many who came to David. They came to him in Ziklag; they came to him in the wilderness; they came to him first of all in the cave of Adullam; each of these incidents indicating in type a movement in our affections towards Christ. Wonderful men came to David. Read 1 Chronicles 12, carefully. You will find there were mighty men of valour, men with weapons of war; men with every weapon of war; men who could stand in a crisis; men who came to David ready to fight his battles. And then it says these are they which "came to David in Hebron." They came to David in Hebron. We read "Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt," (Numbers 13: 22). It is indicative to me that God had this wonderful circle in mind, for Hebron means fellowship, and God had it in mind before the cities of this world were founded. He had in view this wonderful circle of which Christ, the true David, should be the centre. And beloved brethren the point is this, not only had God determined that Christ the Beloved should be the centre, but He determined also that He would draw hearts to Him in that centre. I challenge your heart, beloved brother, beloved sister, I challenge it feelingly, as to whether you have found the true David in Hebron. We may have found Him as our Saviour; blessed be God we shall never cease to thank Him for that. We may have found Him in relation to the exercises of the testimony, and we may have found ourselves furnished with the necessary weapons of war to stand in the conflict; but beloved brethren, to find Him as the glorious centre of all God's thoughts in Hebron, what a blessed point! They were men of one heart, and it involves that the very centre of the moral being of every brother and sister in this room must be affectionately subjugated before the greatness of Christ if we are to find Him as the centre of the counsel of God. Allow one single principle of selfwill, allow one single feature to come into our hearts and affections which is not of God and contrary to His thoughts of Christ, and we shall break rank. We shall not be of one heart and we shall not be able to find Christ in Hebron as the centre of the counsel of God. God's Beloved as the very centre of every eternal thought of God. Oh! beloved brethren, may God by His Spirit press it right home upon our hearts. That is the point that God would draw your affections and my affections to tonight, to the Christ of God, His Beloved, as the very centre and circumference of all that there is for the glory and praise and eternal satisfaction of the heart of God. Much more could be said as to what a wonderful place Hebron is. Abraham found it, he found the stability of it in the oaks of Mamre; he found the fruit of it in the grapes of Eshcol; he found the scintillating preciousness of it in the waterfalls of Aner. It is the place from which you can view most blessedly the victory of Christ. When Samson took away the gates of Gaza and the bars thereof, he took them and put them on "the top of an hill that is before Hebron," (Judges 16: 3). And standing in Hebron that night one would have had a wonderful view of the complete victory of Samson — typically of Christ — over all the power of death. But O beloved, what exceeds all that, is to reach Hebron as the spot where the Beloved of God is enshrined as the centre of every thought that will glorify God eternally. To reach Him thus involves being of one heart and keeping rank. It involves that our steps are subjugated to His Lordship; it involves that our affections are under the influence of His Headship; it involves that the eyes of our hearts have been enlightened to take account of Who He is in relation to the counsel of God, and as such we are attracted to Him, the true David in Hebron. And as reaching the Beloved we reach the One Who fills the heart of God with absolute delight. See Him on that mountain

of transfiguration; take account of Him there; no more glorious sight in the whole of Scripture since the mountain upon which the ram was held by his horns in the thicket. Glorious sight that! You say it was a wonderful moment for Abraham and a testimony to his faith and his obedience. Yes, but there is something in that chapter which is higher than that, for it necessitated Abraham "lifting up his eyes" to see the ram held by his horns in the thicket. What was it? A wonderful type of Christ, held by His own strength of devotion to the will of God in that thicket, in order that there might be carried into effect every thought that lay precious near the heart of God, God providing Himself a Lamb for a **burnt** offering; the unswerving devotion of Christ to the will of God. I do not wonder that God later opened the heavens and said "This is My Beloved." It says of the disciples that "when they had lifted up **their** eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." And the Beloved of God is great enough to fill your vision and mine to the exclusion of all else. How blessed that the One Who ever fills the heart and vision of God with infinite delight is the One that God sets before you and me as our Beloved; "My Beloved" is the language of affection in the Song of Songs, "My Beloved." She speaks of her Beloved and the question is asked, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" And I want to say to you tonight, dear brethren, that she could not have given the answer she gave — (I know she is marked by failure, as we all are) — but she never could have given the answer she did give if she had not known what it was to be near Him in the embrace of love. How intimately she can describe Him, the blessedness of this glorious Person! Beloved brethren, the blessedness, the exquisite preciousness of Christ, was always there, it was always known by God, it was always appreciated by God. But the wonder, the marvel is that He draws you and me into the embrace of love so that we might have an intimate appreciation of the excellence and preciousness of Christ. As she looks at Him, she is able to describe the features of her Beloved from head to foot, and we see, as by the Spirit, something of the permanence and abiding blessedness that marks His Holy Person, and we see how uniquely He is set above all else that has ever been seen in this world. You will remember that in Nebuchadnezzar's image the head was of fine gold, but there was deterioration all the way down until the feet were seen as iron and clay. But in the description of the Beloved His head was "as the most fine gold," and as we follow the Scripture we read "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold." Perfect in Deity — yes, but perfect too in holy Manhood! Oh! the blessedness of His Person, which is set before your appreciation and mine, in order that our hearts might be drawn out to Him in response of affection and in testimony. It is not only that she is herself appreciating His beauty as held in His own blessed embrace, but clearly, concisely, without any note of uncertainty, she is able to give to others who question her a detailed description of His glorious Person. Beloved brethren, think of the dignity of it; God has set you and me in this world tonight and has capacitated us in the Spirit (if we allow the Spirit so to control us) in order that we may be able to give testimony to the appreciation we have of God's Beloved. I know of nothing more blessed.

Then, finally, the word is "Hear Him." May I appeal to the young and old here tonight, whose voice are you listening to? "Hear Him." There are strident, blatant voices in this world but, beloved brethren, there is one precious voice sounding out, it is the voice of the Beloved. Read through the gospels and take account of the speaking of Jesus. The preciousness, the wonderful preciousness, the tenderness, the joy, the compassion found in the speaking of Jesus! "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." What a blessed voice. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." Words of power, too. "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead, where corruption had already started, answers that mighty voice and comes out from the tomb. The power, the authority, the glory of the voice of Jesus. The voice that will penetrate soon into the very recesses of the graves themselves, the voice of the Son of God. The uniqueness of the voice of Christ as it sounds in your heart and mine, telling us above all else of the

glories of the Father's Name; the unfoldings of the Father's heart; the wonders of the Father's word; the precious atmosphere of the Father's house. All these things come to us as we are prepared to hear the voice of the Beloved. And beloved brethren, there is no one to tell with accuracy and with clearness and with power, anything that obtains in the father's abode save Him Who eternally abode in the bosom of the Father's love; God's Beloved. Every day there is the possibility of the voice of that blessed Person Who has charmed the ear of God with His utterances here, Whose voice has such authority that untold myriads of angels obey Him and worship him, sounding in **our** hearts. In accents of pure affection He would delight to tell us the secrets of the Father's love, saying to us — "My Father and your Father . . . My God and your God." May we know what it is on the one hand to have an understanding and an increased appreciation of the beauty of God's Beloved, and on the other hand may we be content to sit and listen to the communications of Divine love, eternal love, that He will make to our hearts, ravishing our affections and leading us out to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Source of every blessing.