

That Eternal Feast!

by Anne Dutton

The speaker emphasizes the importance of gratitude, praise, and service to God, and encourages rich brethren to use their abundance to serve God's interest and minister to the needs of the poor saints.

Scripture: Psalm 8:4, Psalm 103:12, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 3:17, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Heartfelt Praise"

Description

Anne Dutton preaches about the overwhelming kindness and grace of God, reflected in the care and support received from distant friends, leading to a deep desire for heartfelt praise and gratitude. She emphasizes the importance of living under the shine of infinite grace, acknowledging our impotence and vileness while rejoicing in the forgiveness and acceptance found in God. Anne Dutton encourages a life dedicated to rendering adequate praise to God, reflecting on the privilege of imperfect praises being accepted through the great Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Dear Madam,

Your most acceptable favor with your most kind present I received, and return my most humble and utmost thanks. My soul prays most heartily for your rich reward in and from the God of grace and glory, in time and to eternity. But who, or what am I, that the God of my mercy should raise up such dear friends to care for me so greatly, at such a vast distance, who never saw my face in the flesh? It is amazing kindness, and a pregnant proof of His covenant-engaged and infinite all-sufficiency. Oh, for a heart, lip, and life, to render Him adequate praise! I bewail my impotence, nothingness and vileness. I rejoice to live under the shine of infinite grace, which forgives all my sins, accepts my desires, and will call that praise, in God-like condescension, which with respect to Him is not worthy the name. I esteem it an exceeding great privilege that my low, imperfect praises, ascend for acceptance before God Most High in the perfect praises of the great Mediator, who is with His Father co-equal in glory and majesty. There the God of all grace to us finds, to His heart's complacence, His full and adequate praise; and there He accepts with infinite delight our every little mite, without debasing His infinite majesty to the brightest display of His infinite glory.

And as you, dear Madam, not only supply me freely, but esteem yourself also favored and honored of God highly in your being made an instrument in His hand of relieving the least of His people in necessity, and of sending them again with high praises to His throne; this is an evidence that you love the Lord supremely

and ardently, which love to God in Christ, thus blazing in your heart and life, with your earnest desires after the total destruction of all sin, and the absolute perfection of all grace, and that in the midst of much worldly business and affluence, are such eminent instances of the Lord's special distinguishing favor towards you as are very seldom cast upon others of His own dear children in affluent circumstances. See that for these you give Him due praise. A soul kept alive in God, and for Him, amid sin's, Satan's, and the world's heart-killing influence--is a miracle of omnipotent grace; and such a soul can say, when grace is in exercise,

"Nothing but glory can suffice

The appetite of grace;

I long for Christ, with restless eyes,

I languish for His face."

Since you long, dear Madam, that the whole of what you are and have may be holiness unto the Lord, this is an evidence that Christ, your great High Priest, presents you before His Father's face continually, with all your services, unto the highest acceptance, in His own all-perfect and flaming purity. And, here likewise, upon your desires after perfect holiness, He engraves holiness unto Jehovah. If you were not to God perfect holiness, in Christ, and your services presented to Him and by Him as such, you would not have felt that inherent holy impress on your heart. And because you are now holiness unto God in Christ, representatively and perfectly--this secures your perfect, personal holiness, in yourself shortly; for, "As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," which should excite us eagerly to press forward after increasing holiness daily until that which is in part--or the imperfection of our present personal holiness--shall be done away by the coming of that which is perfect.

It delights me much, dear Madam, to see that, under the Lord's most kind, enriching providence, He gives you to see your duty, to use your God-given abundance unto His praise and the poor saints' bliss, and that therewith he gives you a hearty compliance. It is doubtless the duty of rich brethren to serve the Lord's interest, and to minister to the necessity of their poor brethren with their riches, and to count that money best employed which is given to Christ and His people; and, therefore, the apostle exhorts thus--"Charge those who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to share." And how wondrous are the motives which he presents before them to excite them to, and enforce upon them, these duties--"laying up in store for themselves a good foundation (of reward) against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life!" Strange, that rich saints when they cast away their treasures upon Christ's needy interest and His poor children, should be herein but laying up in store for themselves, but laying a good foundation upon which, of infinite grace, the promised reward shall be raised, and that so great that while they thus, according to the promise, lay hold on or possess it, they shall inherit eternal life!

None but the infinite and eternal God could or would confer such a great and eternal reward upon His favorite servants, according to their works, their little, their very little and imperfect earthly-services. We may well warble out His praise with "Who is a God like unto You?" This I write not, dear Madam, to excite you to do more for my unworthy self. I am full, having received what you freely sent, which to the Lord and to myself is most acceptable; but my desire herein is to promote your fruitfulness to His praise and other brethren's bliss, and that you yourself at the great rewarding day may find a rich account of your

earthly-services to your ineffable joy and eternal glory.

The information you gave me, dear Madam, of the Lord's blessing my last poor letters, refreshes my heart greatly, and excites my praises to the God of all mercy, for as I seek His glory and His children's joy, when I find these, oh, how great is my soul's solace!

I am, dear Madam, a partaker of your joy in your victory over bosom idols. It is the direct way for the destruction of our sins to bring these, our Lord's foes, unto Him, to be slain before Him. Nothing separates between God and us like sin; nothing provokes the eyes of His glory like heart-idolatry--"Therefore," says He, "have I forsaken my people, because they are replenished from the East." And how pathetically does the Lord argue the case with His idolatrous people Israel, in order to their conviction and return to Him--"Has a nation changed their Gods--which yet are not Gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit." And again, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten Me days without number." And as soon as ever, under His almighty agency, His backsliding Ephraim is brought to repentance for his sin, and to bemoan himself for it thus before Him, "You have chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn me, and I shall be turned, for You are the Lord my God"--His heart yearns towards Him, and thus breaks out upon Him, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still--therefore my heart is troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord."

And of this great grace, dear Madam, you are made a partaker of your increasing bliss, and this your felicity enhances my joy. So great is, and ought to be, our sympathy as members of Christ's body, as to interest ourselves mutually and entirely in each others' griefs and joys. How else can we love one another as our dear Lord has loved and does love us; yes, how else could we love Him in each other? And is your Lord returned, dear Madam? Now see in this, His unchanging grace, His infinite faithfulness; now learn to say, as He, that His forsakings are but for a moment; and now learn to trust in Him for time to come, for lo! His kindness towards you has upon it the date of everlasting, past and to come. And time, with all its changes, nor could, nor can, nor ever shall, make the least variation in His love--whose name is I AM!--in the love of His heart, I mean, which is one infinite, eternal flame! The manifestations of it vary; but His invariable love, according to the infinity of His wisdom, makes its displays, or eclipses its glories, just as is most for His highest praise and for our greatest happiness.

And though, dear Madam, you cannot say that you now have the enjoyment of your Beloved so fully as you could wish, remember that the present state is to be a life of faith; that eternal state to come, will be of sight--of immediate, full, and endless sight! And then we shall have as much of Christ as our souls can wish--or capacities contain, without the least fear of His withdrawing again. Meanwhile, 'transient glances' and 'short foretastes' shall whet our appetites for that eternal feast!

Great grace be with you!

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