

# Service of Waiting

by Charles E. Cowman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the service of waiting, where one is called to serve God by doing nothing and waiting for His guidance.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:14, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 30:21, Acts 16:7

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Faithful Obedience"

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## Description

Charles E. Cowman reflects on the mysterious ways of the Spirit, using the example from Acts 16:7 where the Spirit prevented Paul and his companions from entering Bithynia. He shares personal experiences of being redirected or interrupted in his service for Christ, realizing the importance of the Spirit's guidance even in times of inaction or disappointment. Cowman acknowledges the value of waiting on the Spirit's timing and direction, understanding that sometimes obedience means staying still and trusting in God's faithfulness.

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## Transcript

"After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithyma: but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:7).

What a strange prohibition! These men were going into Bithynia just to do Christ's work, and the door is shut against them by Christ's own Spirit. I, too, have experienced this in certain moments. I have sometimes found myself interrupted in what seemed to me a career of usefulness. Opposition came and forced me to go back, or sickness came and compelled me to retire into a desert apart.

It was hard at such times to leave my work undone when I believed that work to be the service of the Spirit. But I came to remember that the Spirit has not only a service of work, but a service of waiting. I came to see that in the Kingdom of Christ there are not only times for action, but times in which to forbear acting. I came to learn that the desert place apart is often the most useful spot in the varied life of man--more rich in harvest than the seasons in which the corn and wine abounded. I have been taught to thank the blessed Spirit that many a darling Bithynia had to be left unvisited by me.

And so, Thou Divine Spirit, would I still be led by Thee. Still there come to me disappointed prospects of usefulness. Today the door seems to open into life and work for Thee; tomorrow it closes before me just as I am about to enter.

Teach me to see another door in the very inaction of the hour. Help me to find in the very prohibition thus to serve Thee, a new opening into Thy service. Inspire me with the knowledge that a man may at times be called to do his duty by doing nothing, to work by keeping still, to serve by waiting. When I remember the power of the "still small voice," I shall not murmur that sometimes the Spirit suffers me not to go. --George Matheson

"When I cannot understand my Father's leading,

And it seems to be but hard and cruel fate,

I Still I hear that gentle whisper ever pleading,

God is working, God is faithful, ONLY WAIT."

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