

Letter 181.

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of finding courage in spiritual conflict by remembering God's promises and His presence with us, and by submitting to Him and acknowledging our sin.

Scripture: Joshua 1:9, Psalm 32:5, Lamentations 3:22, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Prayer And Mercy"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to Mrs. T. Hertford, shares about spiritual conflicts and the overwhelming threats of the enemy, leading to deep confession and prayers. Reflecting on the promises of God, Bourne finds comfort in the midst of afflictions, acknowledging his sins and pleading for mercy and deliverance. He encourages sticking to the lessons learned in trials, emphasizing God's faithfulness to hear and answer prayers, even in times of doubt and questioning.

Transcript

[To Mrs, T.] Hertford, 28 March. 1840.

My dear Cousin,

Your welcome letter came in a time I needed it, and I felt much encouraged by it. Your first chapter of Joshua has been a sweet portion to me, and though it fills my spirit with awe, yet it arms me with divine courage to meet what it may please God to bring me into. I am not here without much spiritual conflict; at times overwhelmed with the deep and subtle threatenings of the enemy, setting before me the utter destruction of myself and family, and adding that there is a necessity for it, because of my pride and presumption, and many such things. I dare not say these are temptations, and so pass them lightly by, but they bring me to much confession and many prayers; and here I found the word of the Lord to Joshua helped me - "Be strong and of a good courage." This being often repeated in the chapter showed me I should need all the help the Lord would bestow; that my enemies are mighty and many, but that the Lord would not leave me in their hands.

I often plead the comfort and encouragement I met with last, winter in my affliction, and am encouraged to believe that the Lord remembers the promises he caused me to hope in, and that the needy shall not always be forgotten. The overwhelming prospects the enemy sets before me sometimes appear too terrible to bear up under, but these things teach me something of the nature of a broken heart. I dare not contend, but cry; not quarrel with the Lord, but say, If it please thee, O Lord, deliver my soul. No demand,

O no! but the most abject submission. Such is the sight and weight of my sins, that I can have nothing to say, but, Wilt thou have mercy, O Lord, and leave me not in my old age. My heart is softened with his unfailing compassion, and I have hope that matters shall not go to the dreadful extent of my fears. I know his judgments are a great deep, and that my sins call for heavy strokes; but the very falling under the feeling sense of them sometimes is attended with this sort of reasoning - The word says, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity;" and I reply, Lord, I desire to hide nothing, but to fall flat before thee. My judgment being in a measure enlightened, I say to myself, Surely this is the way the Lord removes his heavy hand, and will not enter into strict judgment, but will be better to me than all my fears. Thus hoping and fearing, spiritual life is kept in exercise, the soul kept low, pride put down, and all vain conceit removed, and we become profitable to the afflicted children of God.

O my dear friends, stick close to the lessons you have been learning in the furnace. I am sure the enemy will thrust sore at you, and you will need all that the Lord has so tenderly shown you. Never forget this - "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." You will be much harassed, and soon begin to question whether the Lord will ever hear you again; nevertheless, in all your straits, whatever they may be, he will be as good as his word, and never leave you nor forsake you.

Your affectionate Cousin, J. B.

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