

Letter 198.

by James Bourne

James Bourne's sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on the Lord through prayer and humility in times of trouble.

Scripture: Psalm 10:14, Psalm 37:34, Psalm 39:4, Luke 11:8, Philippians 1:6

Topics: "Trusting God", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

James Bourne emphasizes the importance of waiting upon the Lord, sharing personal experiences of carrying burdens and finding solace in God's promises. Through meditating on Psalms and receiving divine guidance, he discovers the power of trusting in the Lord's salvation and strength in times of trouble. Bourne highlights the need for humility, dependence on God, and the value of heavenly blessings, urging others to diligently seek God's presence and guidance in their lives.

Transcript

[To Mrs, Tims.] London, 31 August 1840.

My dear Friend,

I cannot refrain from sending you a few lines upon the blessed subject of waiting upon the Lord. I am seldom without some burden too heavy for me to bear; whether at home or abroad, the cross follows me still; and I am made to acknowledge the need for it. I returned home on Friday evening wonderfully recovered in health; but soon gathered new burdens, which furnished me with fresh errands to the throne of grace. I mourned without expectation, but these words invited me to take them for my morning reading - "The poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless" [Psalm x. 14]. This suited my destitute state, and seemed to come with an endearing aspect. I found much liberty and some sweetness; yet my fears ran high, and some heavy clouds hung over me from all quarters, and I, like a poor man, felt myself friendless.

In this condition I was on Sunday morning; and while meditating on Psalm xxxvi., which seemed given me for my family, I felt many keen fears and much misgiving lest I should see the hand of God go out against me, which I am always ready to take as a mark of his displeasure. Still I kept my eye every now and then upon what the Lord had done, and how tenderly he had led me; but I was so very low I could not hope, though I gave not up a very earnest cry. All at once the Lord turned my eye to verse 34 of the next Psalm, and so spoke it upon my heart, that it brought me out of all my troubles - "WAIT ON THE LORD." I replied,

Lord, I do humbly wait. It continued, "AND KEEP HIS WAY." I replied again, Lord, enable me fully and wholly to give up my ways. Then followed the rest of the Psalm - "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. The Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him."

The power of these words filled my soul with the sweetest consolation and assurance, and at the same time discovered to me a further depth of my nature's evil, and brought me down in the deepest humiliation. For the time being I felt the Lord assured me of many things wherein he would stand my friend, and that I should see that nothing was too hard for him. O how my prayers went up for all of you at Hertford, and many more! My burden was removed; I found I had a Friend indeed; "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Under this sweet power I went down to my family reading, and warned and cautioned them all against being independent of God; I told them what a fearful thing it is to enter into life without regarding his blessing, and also what a great blessing it would be to have the fear of God before their eyes, and how precious a treasure is the blessing of God, which through mercy I then felt I possessed. But I could not half set forth the praises or the value of such a heavenly gift.

It is indeed a mercy to find grace to be diligent, and as Paul says, to "increase more and more;" for we shall certainly find that every gift the Lord bestows will be put into the furnace, to show the metal, whether it be gold or anything else. It is this furnace, following so closely upon my comforts, which often alarms me; and yet I think it is the wisdom of God to confound the pride of man, and to show him that of himself he is worse and less than nothing. For if we have ten thousand deliverances, attended with the brightest evidences, yet let them be withdrawn one moment, and where is all our mighty courage and confidence? We must all come to the same point with David in Psalm xxxix. - "that I may know how frail I am."

On the evening of that day the minister was speaking of the good of waiting; this warmed my heart, and I believed to the comfort of my soul, and found a holy confidence to commit my burdens once more to the Lord. While this lasted, my eye caught one of my children, for whom I am much interested, and my heart melted in much compassion, with many cries to the Lord on his behalf; and to my great surprise the Lord came in with such a sweet encouraging hope for the object prayed for, that I was melted in tears of contrition, and my soul went up in ardent love and gratitude to the Lord beyond what I can express. It made me inquire very minutely whether I presumed, or was in any way deceived; but the more I adhered to what I hoped the Lord meant to show me, the more I was encouraged and comforted. It also brought up other times and seasons wherein I believed the Lord had spoken to me on the same subject, and confirmed the whole.

Thus I found the words of my text just suited me - "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way." The verses that followed it were unfolded, but with such a fearful light that I forbear to write upon the subject. May the Lord comfort you also in thus waiting upon him, and we shall most assuredly find that he will not suffer us to wait in vain.

Tell our young friend W. B. that this waiting upon his Master shall be honoured. Neither his goodness nor his badness shall alter that; because the Lord says it is not for our sakes, but for his own Name's sake. He must be a wretched loathsome beggar, that all, except the Good Samaritan, will pass by. Bid him try, when he hears that Jesus is coming that way, whether he can prevail upon him to have mercy. Importunity denotes a sense of need; and I am sure if his burdens are heavy, he will be glad of a friend to bear them;

and if he knew what I do of the tenderness and skill of that Friend, he would gladly go to him without ceasing, and I am sure would speak good of his Name.

Yours in the Lord, J. B.

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