

Letter 23

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God's goodness and the dangers of spiritual complacency, inviting listeners to cultivate a deep and personal relationship with God.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 55:6, James 4:8

Topics: "Spiritual Intimacy", "Gods Mercy"

Description

James Bourne shares about a profound encounter with God that filled him with joy, gratitude, and a deep sense of God's mercy and love. He reflects on the importance of acknowledging our sinfulness and unworthiness, yet experiencing the peace and atonement offered by Christ. Bourne emphasizes the need for spiritual intimacy with God, urging believers to seek God's presence and not blame Him for their struggles. He encourages a humble and faithful approach to God, recognizing His grace and the need for a close relationship with Him.

Transcript

[To Mr. Nunn.] Sezincot, Oct. 1827.

Dear Friend,

I am never happy at the thought of leaving town without some token for good. While with my family on Sunday, after chapel, the Lord was pleased to draw near with all the assurances of mercy and friendship that could be conceived. The more I debased myself, the more he assured me of his favour. I could now commit my family to God; and many in the church also crowded upon my mind. O that they did but know the goodness and tenderness of our God! They would never reproach him with keeping them at a distance, but would readily acknowledge that sin alone separates between God and them.

Tell Mr. T. that such a visit as this would make the lips of him that is asleep to speak - and what will he speak? He will speak all that is good of God's name; he will exonerate God in all things, and put all darkness, confusion, distance, dryness, barrenness, and unbelief, to his own account. In these visits he will also wonder at the unbounded freeness of God's everlasting love in Christ Jesus, overtopping all our misery and sin.

To return to my subject, I cannot express to you my joyful surprise and gratitude to God, nor with what willingness I took my journey the next morning. In the coach I read Romaine's Walk of Faith, and again

found many sweet and precious sips - many times in spirit lying prostrate in the dust, deeply sensible of my unprofitable life, and yet seeing my High Priest ready to atone, feeling the peaceful application of his Spirit upon my heart; and this wrought an unspeakable wonder at his picking up me - yes, unworthy me! My prayers also were towards our little flock, that he would remember them, though separated, and hated of all, and many amongst them asleep in the midst of light! - some making all kinds of excuses for their continual sorrow and want of power to make clear work, and laying the fault upon God! O how I can, with all my heart, declare that he is pitiful and of tender mercy, and is very nigh to every one of us if haply we feel after him! Let us consider the difference of the two parties that give us an account of the promised land. One brought an evil report; the other, precious fruit. O that men were wise!

In former days, I well remember that these visits were a seasoning for some approaching trial; and as I always fear the enemy at hand, I did, on my journey, most earnestly beseech the Lord to be beforehand with me - that he would so manage for me as not to let me play the fool; that he would keep me spiritually-minded, and that when my feet were ready to slip, he would be pleased to remember me. I wished to be in a low place, for then I knew I should not have far to fall. It is high and large expectations, lofty conceits, and towering prospects, that bring a man down in sorrow.

Tell Mr. C. that he need not go back to a certain stile near Witney for another visit from the Lord; I hope he has found even Hampstead none other than the house of God, none other than the gate of heaven. Our God does not grudge his visits; I have the sweetest sensation on my heart while I write, declaring the inexpressible freeness of his grace. Only remember how Josiah acted when Huldah the Prophetess declared her message; may we all go and do likewise, and our end shall be peace.

Tell Mrs. N. that if she could get a little of the new wine of the kingdom which I have had this day, or, in plain language, if she could get some comfortable and friendly intercourse between God and her soul, it would clear up her doubtful path, and make her to know that her salvation is of God. I have told another friend she is spending the best period of her life without this spiritual friendship. The word says, "Occupy till I come;" the slothful professor says, I knew thou wert a hard master, and therefore "hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine." Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, until thou hast "found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," even in thine heart. Pray admit him; you will never meet with a better friend. Farewell.

Yours &c. J. B.

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