

Letter 24

by James Bourne

The sermon highlights the importance of seeking God's presence amidst life's trials and understanding the depth of our need for salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 27:8, Psalm 34:5, Proverbs 8:17, Isaiah 41:10, 2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 Peter 5:10

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Seeking God"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to M. B. in Sezincot, 1827, reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the importance of ending well by seeking God's presence. He acknowledges the struggles with sin and the longing for God's sweet presence, emphasizing the need for self-examination and making one's calling and election sure. Bourne encourages not to be deceived by the enemy but to cling to the hope found in Christ, urging others to seek the Lord and experience His power in breaking every yoke. He expresses a desire for spiritual growth among believers, highlighting the importance of seeking God diligently to avoid missing out on His blessings.

Transcript

[To M. B.] Sezincot, 1827.

Dear Cousin,

I was very sorry on one account to hear so poor an account of yourself; yet when I see what the world is after, and the exceeding shortness and uncertainty of all things, I seem more desirous of ending my days in peace - yes, much more desirous of ending well, than of planning for life. I will endeavour to give you some reasons. Since I have been here I have had some sweet, very sweet, and precious moments; my whole heart laid out for God; no room for earthly objects, no wish for any change; persuaded that the Lord would be with me at last. But my foolish heart soon changes; sin soon takes occasion; and I am carried whither I would not, as our Saviour says of Peter. Then I fret and pine after what I have lost, and bitterly complain of what I have got in exchange - dryness, barrenness, and distance; very little power to pray, and yet no heart to anything else; exceedingly mortified at the loss of the Lord's sweet presence, and (I am sorry to add, yet must tell all) feeling angry because I am so served, and thinking it hard that when I would do good, evil is suffered to be present with me.

I believe you are brought into the straits you speak of for the very purpose that you may make your calling and election sure, and may have a clearer insight into the depths of your heart. I think I find this daily more

and more. We should never know what a great salvation it is, unless we were brought into these sad places. Do excuse my expressions; but were I to weep drops of blood, I could not paint out to you the grief and bitter sorrow I often feel on account of my sinful nature. Alas! what am I, and what have I done? All that I could do, and be, against the best of friends. What is He, and what has he done for me? All that he could do, and be, on behalf of the worst of enemies. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." They need not tell us that therefore we may live ungodly or in sin; we love his sweet presence too much for that.

Can I harm any one by wishing him this blessed Friend, this ready Saviour? O, Mr. T., let not the enemy befool you out of the presence of this kind friend; do not submit to be continually blinked by the enemy. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" How I wish Mrs. B. could obtain admission, and for once "see the King in his beauty!" Then she would feel his power in breaking every yoke. Poor Mr. R.! I believe the Lord is with him, and will make it manifest that his deeds are wrought in God. The first trial did not seem sanctified to his wife, perhaps this will have a closer effect. As Mr. Burrell says, God now looks for fruit.

I much wish I could see spiritual life increase amongst our elder brethren in the church; I am persuaded it would greatly encourage the younger ones. Many get their heads well furnished, but very little dew upon the branches. The shadows of the evening are greatly lengthened with many of us, and the harvest may be past and the summer ended, before we have found a place of shelter. It shall certainly go ill with the wicked, but well with the righteous - they shall never be confounded that seek the Lord.

Yours &c. J. B.

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