

# Letter 34

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining communion with God, acknowledging sin, and praying for guidance and comfort in times of affliction.*

**Scripture:** Mark 16:7, Luke 21:34, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Spiritual Guidance", "Personal Repentance"

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## Description

James Bourne shares about his desire to maintain communion with God, reflecting on the comfort he finds in knowing that the Lord goes before him in every situation, guiding and sustaining him. He acknowledges his sinful nature and the need for God's compassion and guidance, especially in times of distress and temptation. Bourne emphasizes the importance of not being overburdened and the necessity of prayer and watchfulness to stand before the Son of man. He highlights the significance of acknowledging our sins as the barrier that keeps us from opening the door for God's power to work in our lives.

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## Transcript

[To Mr. Nunn.] Tunbridge Wells, 16 August 1829.

Dear Friend,

Although I hear but little of you, my mind is much occupied about you all. I shall not therefore wait for any letter, but send you some little account how I go on. I am through mercy much better in health, and free from pain; my eye is a little worse, but I have many secret reasons for believing that this is not forgotten by the Lord.

I think I never felt a greater desire to maintain communion with God, night and day watching the various influences that pass upon my soul, and my feelings under the absence of my best Friend, and the way in which a returning spirit is given to me. In reading the last chapter of Mark, I found these words - "Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you." As soon as I had named the word Peter, I cannot tell you the sensation of peace and friend-ship I found. It sounded in my heart, as if it said, - Tell James Bourne I go before you to guide you and comfort you; in every affliction, temptation, and grief, I go before you and will be with you, and sustain you. Nothing shall be too hard for the Lord; nothing shall be too hard for you.

I should not know how to manage with my employers here, unless the Lord went before me. These little matters of business were the subject of earnest prayer before I entered the family; and I watched the

Lord's hand, and before the day was over, they expressed great surprize at the sudden improvement they had made. These things much encourage me to bring greater matters to the Lord; and all contribute to endear him to me.

In the early part of my profession, especially, I saw and understood but little of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the manner in which God knows and notices everything. I am sure it must be (at least I hope it is) in God's light that I discern my guilty fallen condition, far beyond my power of describing, and often wonder how I can ever be brought back to Christ's fold; and I really think there are none amongst us so unfaithful as myself. But, "his compassions fail not;" and this made Jesus send the message to Peter, especially by name, that he would go before him, though he had so basely denied the Lord, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow, and think, Though Christ says he will go before the disciples, he does not mean me. The sense of this kindness broke my heart, and I would wish it might ever remain so broken.

How it would comfort my heart to hear that friend T. could attain to some consolation in his distressing case! I seldom go upon my knees but there seems a goodly company of you presented to my mind, for whom I desire most earnestly that the Lord would appear.

Our time here is short. I wish you would notice Luke xxi. 34-36. I have often waked in the night with much darkness and dread upon my spirits, and felt as if I could not "stand before the Son of man;" and that the last trial would prove it so. At such a time fears and reasoning seem quite to dismay me, but something here invites my attention by way of solemn caution, NOT TO BE OVERCHARGED; for that day shall come unawares, "as a snare shall it come upon all," good and bad; but it is in vain to set a snare in the sight of any bird; and it is only by watching and giving ourselves to prayer that we shall be able to stand before the Son of man.

The Lord says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" [Rev. iii. 20]. The question is, How is the door to be opened? Flesh cannot open it; and we see that the power of God is not alike displayed to all his people, so as at once to open it. Now just at this point I have lately been considering the absolute necessity of acknowledging that my sin shuts the door and bars it; my folly keeps it so, and my enmity clenches it with the old idle excuse that God is a Sovereign. It was only yesterday that I had light upon this subject, in the following text, with sweet acquiescence in my spirit; - "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE" [1 Cor. X. 13].

Yours &c. J. B.

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