

Letter 58

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and seeking God's mercy during trials for spiritual growth.

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:12, Psalm 123:1, Proverbs 27:22, Luke 18:13, James 4:10

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Trials And Faith"

Description

James Bourne preaches about facing difficulties and trials as opportunities for spiritual growth and deeper intimacy with God. He encourages the listener to humbly come before God like the Publican, acknowledging their sinfulness and desperate need for God's mercy. Bourne emphasizes the importance of seeking spiritual growth and clarity through trials, trusting that God's love and intentions are always good, even in the midst of challenges.

Transcript

[To the Rev. B. G.] London, June 19, 1834.

Dear Sir,

I have often thought of you in your present difficulties, and only hope the Lord is on your side by the deep exercises you labour under, and the deep sense you have in them of God's visiting your sin, and by his stirring up adversaries to bring you to the feet of Christ as a lost sinner. When these outward trials and inward conflicts bring you to that place, I shall have further hope that the Lord has some marvellous blessing in store for you, if you, like the Publican, dare not so much as to lift up your eyes unto heaven, but smite upon your breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Will you plead that you did not deserve such treatment? Did the Publican plead his good intentions? Did he plead his faithfulness to such treacherous and unfaithful friends, and that he deserved and looked for better treatment than what he found? No! You do not hear one plea in his own behalf, but "GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER."

May the Lord, in all the dark dispensations you are now passing under, teach you to stand in awe of his word, and bring you to the very place in which the Publican was. May he make you not to fear man, but to remember, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

I dare say you are often ready to dispute your title to the name of Israel; then I say, "Give the Lord no rest," begging that this trial may have this very effect in it, that your calling and election may be sure to you. Let

me put this prayer on your lips, and may the good Spirit bring it forth from your heart:

"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud" [Psalm cxxiii].

Let me entreat you to watch this one thing that whatever the outward event may be, whether prosperous or adverse, you gain a SPIRITUAL increase, and come not out of the trial like a fool brayed in a mortar [Prov. xxvii. 22]. If you belong to God, you will certainly see that every cross providence has spiritual instruction in it, and if sanctified, will produce a clearer intercourse between the Lord Jesus Christ and your soul. I have always found my heaviest troubles in the end produce the sweetest enjoyments of God's love, and the brightest and clearest views of his gracious intentions of doing me good and not evil all the days of my life. I hope the Lord has something to clear in this crisis, and that your spiritual attention to his "still small voice" within, may not be lost by the thunders and threatenings without, which I am sure will be the case if you are not much in prayer.

May the Lord protect you and Mrs. G., and make you willing to be nothing hard lesson! Here let me quote for you both a part of our late friend's prayer - "O Lord, keep me very low, O keep me very low indeed! O Lord Jesus, do thou do it, and save me as thou didst her who sat at thy feet, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and thou saidst her sins, which were many, were forgiven, and she loved much." Get here, and all outward difficulties are easily righted. The Lord exalts them of low degree, and to the poor in spirit salvation is sent.

From your unworthy but willing servant in the Lord, J. B.

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