

# Letter 73

by James Bourne

---

*James Bourne's sermon 'Letter 73' encourages believers to trust in God's mercy and guidance during times of trial and uncertainty.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:14, Proverbs 3:5, Ezekiel 2:3, Matthew 6:11, 2 Corinthians 12:9

**Topics:** "Trust In God", "Submission To Will"

---

## Description

James Bourne preaches about the importance of submission, patience, and trust in God's will, even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties. He encourages the congregation to seek God's guidance through prayer, to humbly accept humbling dispensations, and to trust in God's power and glory. Bourne emphasizes the need for personal experience and reliance on the word of life in preaching, reminding that God's will unfolds gradually and that walking uprightly leads to receiving all good things from Him.

---

## Transcript

[To the Rev. B. G.] London, 17 January 1835.

Dear Friend,

I think it is a great mercy that you should be (as you say you are) ashamed, and afraid, and cast down. It is always so where the Lord is disciplining a man to bear tidings for him. You will find Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, all perfectly understood this. You ought not to say you see not one footstep before you; the first sentence of your letter contradicts this, for the Lord evidently sent you once more into St. Andrew's pulpit. The prayer goes no further than this - "Give us this day our daily bread."

All these little oversights are to show the reality of what you wrote, namely, your weakness and want of submission; not to dishearten, but to discover the utmost of man's wisdom and strength to direct his way. These perplexities are to teach you from experience to set before the people how they are to proceed when surrounded with all sorts of difficulties, and not to despair if they find the want of submission, enmity, dissatisfaction, and a whole host of desperate evils in battle array against God.

Even in such a case, set forth before them what God has taught you in the furnace for that very purpose, even that effectual prayer (which I now copy from one of your letters), "Fulfil the good pleasure of thy will, O God, in me." And when he has brought us to this, he will plead our cause, and make manifest that he is on our side, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. There is in me a wonderful impatience to

know how I am to live upon the Lord next week, both in providence and in grace; and in this anxiety I lose many present mercies, as well as opportunities of communion with him.

The world wisely considers "a bird in hand is worth two in the bush;" but the children of God are never so safe as in the midst of fears and dismay, trusting in the Lord, cleaving to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, with some measure of belief that he is able to save to the uttermost, clean contrary to all human probabilities and impossibilities. The Lord delights in all such as hope in his mercy. They shall never be finally ashamed, nor confounded, world without end. I have found it so, and still retain a secret hope that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

He can do no wrong. He instructs us, and leads us about - a round-about way, as we think; but he keep us "as the apple of his eye." Prove him, and see if he will not leave a blessing behind. Only be sure to attend to one thing - that secret prayer goes up; and if you think that he does not clear your way in providence, yet see that he purges your conscience from every evil work, and owns you for his own adopted son. Gain that point daily, and then will this also be effectually added, He will "freely give us all things."

I could never yet find a clear way that was satisfactory to the flesh, nor a smooth one wherein I prospered in spirit; and perhaps you will one day say you never were kept more tender in all your life, than while under your present oppression. Be an apt scholar, beg for a docile spirit, be tractable under the rod; rich fruits will spring out of humbling dispensations.

I have been greatly cast down lately, and feel myself a most unfit person to write to you. When I read your letter I wept before the Lord, saying, How can it be that I should be able in anywise to counsel a servant of thine? Yet my judgment informs me that the power is of God. He can do what he pleases, and by what means he pleases; so I am encouraged to write, as also I have not ceased to pray for you, that the Lord would stand your friend, clear your way, keep you in a low place, learning every day more and more that you are nothing, an empty pitcher, an earthen vessel, a fool for Christ's sake; then will the power and glory of God rest upon you.

Whatever you preach, be sure that it is that which you have tasted and handled of the word of life; and let your enemies hear it, as well as your friends, for who knows for what purpose the word of life is sent to Hertford? Whatever may be the pleasure of the bishop, rest assured he is in this matter God's messenger to you; do not hastily leave Hertford, even in the event of leaving St. Andrew's. We generally had the Lord unfolds his will by slow degrees; nothing is so darkening as a hurrying spirit. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

After I had written the above, I began to contemplate the wonders that God had wrought by the empty pitchers and the lamps of God within them [Judges vii.]; this broke my heart under the feeling sense of my own condition, and the wonderful display of God's mercy to me in Christ Jesus. I shall be truly happy if you also find the same.

Yours &c. J. B.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-bourne/letter-73/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**