

Letter 82

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of perseverance in the face of difficulty, and trusting in God's promise to instruct and empower us.

Scripture: Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Lamentations 3:22, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Spiritual Guidance", "Perseverance In Faith"

Description

James Bourne encourages his dear friend to not be disheartened by the difficulties faced in delivering messages between the living and the dead, emphasizing that these trials will reveal hidden sins and false hopes. He reminds his friend to seek the Lord persistently, assuring that those who seek Him shall not do so in vain. Bourne urges his friend to preach only what he is taught by the Spirit, emphasizing the power of God working through weakness and brokenness. He advises his friend to patiently wait on God, acknowledging personal shortcomings and the need for complete reliance on God's strength.

Transcript

[To the Rev. B. G.] London, 14 June 1835.

My dear Friend,

I am by no means disheartened by the difficulties you daily encounter. It is no small thing to bear tidings between the living and the dead; nor do I see how you could find a suitable word to broken-hearted sinners, but by the perplexities you yourself endure. The lessons you are now learning in this furnace, will enable you to discover the many hiding places and false hopes that we should like to take refuge in.

The enemy preaches to you the uselessness of pressing through a host of difficulties, any one of which is or ought to be sufficient to inform you that the Lord has no need of you. If this were to succeed, his end would be gained; but blessed be God, who instructs us with a strong hand, and will not give us over into the hand of the enemy, though he will bruise us, and make us eventually sit at his feet, willing to be instructed, and to go where he bids, and do what he says.

Seek the Lord night and day until he returns; then you can assure your hearers they shall not seek in vain. Paul warned his hearers for the space of three years. Preach what you are taught, and nothing else. Let the Lord the Spirit dictate upon your heart, and give learning to your lips. Many will gladly hear your broken sentences of dismay, the power of God will be felt in them, and sinners will fall, though by such weak

means. It is that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God, not of man. The weaker you are, the more manifest the power of God; only give yourself wholly to prayer, that your profiting may appear. Be not too much cast down, nor look too much at things that are seen; but beg for power to wait upon God, without distraction.

I am glad you feel strength, to remain at your post, for by this will eventually be discovered the purpose of God toward you. It would grieve me to hear of your hasty leaving. I cannot help feeling it much safer under present circumstances that you should be in this low state. I have no doubt it produces many confessions of things said and done, which in your former prayers you have often acknowledged ought not to be done. Perhaps you have not till now truly felt "there is no health in us." The Lord will not teach you merely to say how lost men are, and the way they are to be saved, but will most effectually involve you in all the despondency and dismay of a lost perishing sinner, as the best means of warning others; and when the comfort comes you will also be able to encourage them. See Lam. iii. 22-33.

May the Lord kindly look upon you and your wife, and direct all your steps steadily, that you may both patiently wait, and quietly hope for his salvation. Call to mind the many favours that the Lord shows you in this trial; the labour and toil many show in your behalf, how the Lord turns their hearts, to render you every service in your affliction, and their anxiety to find a place for you to preach in.

Your affectionate friend in the Lord, J. B.

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