

Letter 84

by James Bourne

The sermon explores the challenges of faith amidst tribulation and the assurance of God's unwavering love and mercy.

Scripture: Psalm 74:9, Luke 9:23, Luke 14:28, Luke 18:13, Galatians 6:9

Topics: "Trials And Tribulation", "Dying To Self"

Description

James Bourne, in a letter to a friend, shares about the path of tribulation he faces, surrounded by difficulties and darkness, feeling entangled and unsure of the way out. He finds comfort in his friend's boldness in following God despite shame, reminding them of the need to focus on the eternal reward. Bourne acknowledges the challenges of being a soldier for Christ, facing trials and uncertainties, but trusting in God's everlasting love to guide and protect. Despite the alluring arguments of the enemy, Bourne emphasizes the importance of dying to the world and earnestly seeking God's mercy as sin becomes more apparent and the reality of perishing looms.

Transcript

[To a Friend) London, 24 June 1835.

My dear Friend,

I must acquaint you that I too have a path of tribulation and am often greatly at a loss to see my signs. [Psa. lxxiv. 9.] All the difficulties and darkness that you and the rest of the friends at Hertford complain of, I am surrounded with, and sometimes so entangled by them as not at all to see my way out.

I am exceedingly comforted to find that the Lord so emboldens you as to make it openly manifest which way your heart beats, and that you are made willing after the inner man to despise the shame that must continually be upon all such as take up such a despicable cause; I trust it is because you have a view to the recompense that Moses set his heart upon. In the present low state of the church of God amongst you, there seems but little to flatter the natural pride of man, but we must remember, the Lord Jesus Christ made himself of no reputation for your sake and mine, and when we first enter the lists as soldiers for him, we are not always aware of the posts of danger in which we shall be placed.

However I may be told to sit down and count the cost, I am such a fool, never can beforehand settle these matters, for all my settlings are like the weather-cock, in all directions in one day. So that when I come into

the actual experience of heavy trials I feel all the weakness and uncertainty that you feel, and see no way of escaping God's judgments; already feeling myself more than half gone in fluctuating irresolute thoughts and fears, lest that good old path of tribulation should not be the right way, for there seems a prospect of much pleasure likely to go, and of nothing but contempt certain to be gained. These arguments are put into such reasonable shapes, with so many plausible appearances of truth, by our arch-enemy, that we in the confusion can hardly tell bitter from sweet. Yet here, with all these burdens upon us, will be found the arm of God's everlasting love underneath, protecting so that we do not finally settle on the wrong side; but by his over-ruling management he causes us to die to the world, to its applause as well as to its contempt. Sin grows so exceeding sinful, and God appears so holy, and our danger of perishing so great, that out of a keen feeling of the reality of these things we cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Here we cannot pay much regard to any that might otherwise drag us back; but being in true earnest, we cry out "What wilt? One says, have me to do?" One says, Behold if I have wronged any, my heart cordially restores fourfold. The cross is kindly taken up; like the disciples we leave our nets, and follow the Lord; but not without sore conflict. "In your patience possess ye your souls." "In due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not." So prays

Your unworthy servant in the Lord, J. B.

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