

# Receiving and Walking

by James Bourne

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*Walking with Christ requires retaining the sense of our need of him, using the means appointed by God, and diligently seeking him with prayer.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 62:5, Psalm 73:26, Psalm 84:2, Isaiah 40:31, Lamentations 3:26, John 6:35, Galatians 2:16, Galatians 6:9, Colossians 2:6, Titus 3:5

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Faithfulness"

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## Description

James Bourne preaches on the importance of walking with Christ as we first received Him, emphasizing the need to maintain a fervent spirit and constant communion with Jesus. He warns against losing our first love and becoming indifferent towards Christ and His teachings, urging believers to guard against spiritual decay and seek to keep their conscience blameless. Bourne encourages the congregation to hold fast to the truths of God, maintain a strong faith, and diligently use the means appointed by God for spiritual nourishment and growth.

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## Transcript

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." (Colossians 2:6)

To walk in Christ as we received him is to retain the sense of our need of him, as when we felt the Day Spring from on high first visited us, and the terrors of the Lord made us afraid. O how plainly and feelingly did we then feel the need of a Saviour. Then we hastened, we fled from the wrath to come. Hell seemed close to us, and law and justice seemed ready to push us in. How sweet was the news of pardon then! How sweet a promise, when we could believe the Holy Spirit applied it to us personally. There was no halving it then, we felt we needed a whole Saviour, a Prophet to teach, a Priest to atone, and a King to reign. Christ Jesus was gladly received as such with all the heart.

How is it we walk not so with Christ now? Surely because we have lost our first love, and the powerful impression of our wants we once had; hence comes that indifference towards Christ and his appointed means. A spiritual appetite is wanting where the heavenly manna is loathed as light bread.

To walk with Christ is to be sensible of his worth with that same fervor of Spirit as when we first received him. O the love of our espousals, how precious was the dear Lord Jesus to us then! When we first viewed him bearing our sins, conquering our rebellion, opening the eyes of our understanding, healing our consciences. We felt our access to the Father was through him, and all our peace and joy was in him. At

that time (if asked) we used to declare he was altogether lovely. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." (Ps. 84:2) Watch this point, if you grow cool and indifferent in your attendance on the ministry, you may rest assured this springs from a back-sliding heart. If you walk with Christ, it must be manifest by keeping up communion with him, with the same feeling and desire as when you first received him, and often sought him with many tears. And [there was] seldom any attendance on the appointed means but his comforting presence was found. Creature comforts withered and none but Jesus, a loving God could refresh and satisfy your soul.

How is it now that we cannot find our way to a throne of grace, unless driven by affliction? We then could not live without his presence. And when we felt that, we could trust to him to supply all our temporal wants. Watch and be sober, and notice the very first beginning of declension. Let it at once be brought with much confession and prayer and [do] not suffer that which is lame to be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. labour to feed upon the truths you hear, to be established in the experimental knowledge of them. Religion lies not in talking of Christ, but in the walking in him, therefore be very watchful of inward decays, dread the universal, general profession of the day. Seek to keep your conscience blameless, by continually coming to the Fountain open for sin, and not resting without the sealing of the Spirit to you adoption. Seek to keep up much tenderness of the honour of God.

If these things are kept alive, the soul must be often refreshed with the water of life. Hold fast the pure Word, be very jealous of error of all sorts. Seek to maintain the character of a true church according to the Word of God, where it is called "the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15) Christ has left his truths as a trust to his people, and it is our mercy to keep them with faithfulness and prayer. A lukewarm spirit will make them too general, and this is the beginning of the ruin of all churches. First goes the zeal, simplicity and purity, and then goes their being.

Hold fast the truths of God, they are the treasure and glory of his people. Keep close to the Scriptures, and search them diligently with prayer, and seriously consider what is written in Revelation 2:2, "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." Let us seek for clear work; Peter says we believe and are sure thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:69)

Mind that our fellowship brings about what Paul writes about to the Colossians. He speaks of being knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. (Col. 2:19) These sweet and heavenly truths will lead us to order our steps by his Word, and we shall find, while we walk in the tender enjoyment of these things, the discipline and good outward walk will also be observed as the real true fruits of such soul establishing truths. These will feed the household [of faith] and let your life recommend Christ as a Sanctuary for the afflicted; a Treasure that will enrich the poor in spirit; an Advocate to plead their cause however disheartened they may feel in coming to him; an inexhaustible Fountain of mercy and pardon, comfort and glory. "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35)

Suffer none to deny the sovereignty of God, in his eternal election of his people, and their final perseverance. In the experimental knowledge of these truths lies much of our stability. It is worthy [of] our attention, that which is worth having is worth owning, therefore let us always keep in mind the means which God has appointed for the nourishment and building up his people in saving knowledge. Remember carefully to maintain that doctrine that lays us low at the feet of the Saviour, and exalts his free grace. Strive for the faith once delivered to the saints that our souls may be fed, and not merely the head furnished with dry notions. Be sure your example be stronger than your words.

If we be of God's family, we are often distressed with temptations of all sorts, and have need of exhortation, instruction, caution and consolation; let us be an example to one another; let us by much prayer guard against the fear of man and applause. If you feel your need of the presence of the Beloved, let that be seen by earnest cries, for where he is not, there is no sense of pardon. It will not do to say with the church in the Song [of Solomon]: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not." (chap. 3:1) Such sort of seeking is not likely to find. It is as if she would wait till he came; but she found that would not do, therefore she says, "I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth." (chap. 3:2) This is making use of the means, and she found him and held him. She would not let him go.

Thus we see the necessity of diligence in the use of means as appointed of God, to convey the blessings God designs to give. "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." (Ps. 62:5) Those who watch for the morning, do not only desire it, but expect it and know assuredly that it will come. None can set forth their walking with Christ more than they who stand upon the watchtower to see what the Lord will say unto them and what they shall answer when they are reprov'd. (Hab. 2:1) There may be much weakness felt, but the Lord has promised to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, and to say unto them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come. (Isa. 35:3,4) Do not forget that your walking with Christ will be attended with much sensible weakness, but the Lord will counteract this with seasons of hope and expectation. "Your heart shall live that seek God." (Ps. 69:32) Only let us always remember all our times are in God's hands, our times of trouble; times of peace; of darkness; and of light, so that we must learn patiently to wait and quietly hope for his salvation.

This waiting often proves very painful in our walking with Christ. We meet with so much opposition, so many difficulties, perplexities, and much darkness by which we sometimes feel the heart become sick, and the spirit sinks and we are ready to faint. David says, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord," (Ps. 27:13) therefore he adds, "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." (Ps. 27:14) And the Apostle adds, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9) The Apostle tells us to consider this, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. They who walk with Christ, will never finally faint. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." (Isa. 40:31)

Some will say they know many who have fainted. True! It was because they neither walked with Christ, nor waited for him. These are sure to lie down in disappointment. No soul ever miscarried who walked with Christ, and waited for him. Rest assured, they who walk with Christ here, shall have eternal happiness hereafter. Heart and flesh may fail, but David says, "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Ps. 73:26) It is the continued and renewed tokens of this, which keeps the soul alive in all adversity, and in the worst of times it is said to be good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. (Lam. 3:26)

Even when sorely cast down and depressed, Jeremiah says, I will call to mind that there is forgiveness with God for distressed souls and therefore will I quietly wait and hope. But, alas, such is the degeneracy of professors of the gospel in this our day, they scarcely know the fundamental doctrines, the main pillars of our Reformation. The doctrine of God's eternal election; the efficacy of free grace in the regeneration and conversion of sinners; (Titus 3:5) justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; (Gal. 2:16) and the final perseverance of the saints. Our forefathers put no doubt upon these establishing truths.

Let us consider what our Lord says, he that is not walking with me, is contrary to me in all things. Let the whole of our profession and lives contend for the true faith, and remember in this contention, we not only contend for our own salvation, but also for the honour of God. God's Holy Spirit does neither teach nor lead to uncertainties in matters of faith. The more he is pleased to enlighten us, the more we understand the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. There was a time when the children of God could redeem an hour in the week for either godly conversation or public worship, but now we scarcely can give the Lord the full time we profess to give him on the Lord's Day. What can be said of families professing godliness to be prayerless? This denotes a sad weariness and cannot be called walking with Christ.

May the Lord cause us all to lay these dreadful backslidings to heart. And if we have ever known anything aright, call to mind the godly simplicity with which we first received Christ.

To him be all the glory. Amen.

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