

Remembrance of Deliverance; and Guidance

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering God's deliverance, trusting in His guidance, and depending on Him for spiritual growth and victory.

Scripture: Exodus 13:3, Exodus 29:46, Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 14:12, Matthew 11:28, Philippians 2:27, Hebrews 13:10

Topics: "Deliverance", "Dependence On God"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of remembering God's deliverance while navigating the wilderness of life. He explains that although the Israelites were freed from Egypt, they faced trials and challenges in the wilderness, symbolizing the Christian journey of faith where deliverance is acknowledged through communion with God. Darby highlights the importance of holiness and dependence on God for guidance, asserting that true worship requires a recognition of our sinfulness and a humble heart. He encourages believers to keep their focus on Christ, who leads them through life's difficulties, ensuring that they remain in communion with Him. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a continual remembrance of God's grace and a commitment to follow His will in every aspect of life.

Transcript

{Christian Friend 1893, pages 141-5.}

Lapse of time comes in here; it is a year since their deliverance, and they are still in the wilderness. When the passover is understood, the present power of deliverance is a very intelligible thing. (Ex. 13:3) They had been in bondage, but they were out of Egypt and in the wilderness, though not yet in Canaan. They had memory of deliverance, with toil and exercise as the fruits, because they were in the wilderness. So we have the joy and peace of deliverance, not yet rest. They were out of Egypt, but in trouble and trial. They felt it when they said, "Were there no graves in Egypt?" Herein is the exercise and often failure with us; but there is no failure on God's part, because He brings us into the wilderness.

The passover is to be kept as an offering to the Lord (v. 7) in remembrance of, and retaining full consciousness of, their being the Lord's delivered people. We have spiritually the principle of the thing in the Lord's supper. There is deliverance in Christ, but trial and exercise as to the actual condition here. Unbelief may say, "We shall die in the wilderness," but faith will always keep the passover; it thus recognizes God's deliverance, and this is blessing. Spiritually it is an offering to the Lord, and so by communion we have present joy - a privilege only to faith; for the deliverance has only brought us into the wilderness where we get trouble. We see in verse 9, etc., grace and holiness brought together to meet

defilement. Defilement now is specially death, because, by the energy of the Spirit of God in us, sin is known in its actual power as death. God brings in the remedy where the need is, the moment it was a question of being kept back from offering to the Lord. When there is the power of the Spirit working in our souls from day to day, there will be the constant detection of sin; for what is not of the Spirit is flesh and sin, and in its power is not merely defilement, but death. They were delivered from Egypt, which was nothing but defilement, and yet they were defiled so that they could not keep the passover. Where there is any consciousness of sin, there cannot be worship. They could not come to God because they were defiled; for "holiness becometh thine house for ever." When the Spirit is grieved there cannot be worship to God, still they were not shut out from Israel, though there must be the humiliation that owns the defilement. We can never return to the power of worship without referring to past failure. There must be humbling and purging from the sin before we can really worship, and the Lord judges of cleanness according to the energy of the life of God.

A stranger (v. 14) might keep the passover, but He must keep it according to the ordinance and the manner thereof. Grace brings us to God, but it always brings us according to what God is, and therefore never departs from the principle of holiness - the eternal ordinance of God's house in the Spirit. If a man is not spiritually holy, his worship is only an abomination to God. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." (Heb. 13:10) That is, fleshly ordinances. The real privilege of God's house is inward holiness. In this place of worship God's presence is found; it gives light, guidance, shelter, everything, so (v. 15) "the cloud covered the tabernacle." God's presence was there. Israel were to know that God brought them out of Egypt that He might dwell among them. (Ex. 29:46) Hence the power of grace; for whatever is inconsistent with holiness is setting aside the purpose of redemption, "that I may dwell among them." The Lord has given us another Comforter to abide with us for ever; and saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" is doubting the power and presence of the Spirit of God. Tempting the Lord is not mere rashness, but doing something to try whether the Lord is with us or not. The presence of the Lord is always with us for blessing, and being with us must necessarily detect sin. The cloud was always there, so that whatever they did should have been in the consciousness that the Lord was with them; the uncertainty from day to day, the want of water, &c., cast them for dependence on the Lord. The difficulties of the way taught them that God was ever nigh to help them. The Lord in His grace will ever keep us in a place of dependence for blessing to our souls. Entire dependence on God always gives entire wilderness blessing.

At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched. (v. 18) So Jesus never went but where the cloud led Him to go; thus when they told Him that Lazarus was sick, He tarried two days, and yet He loved Lazarus. It is important that we should not be doing what is evil only, but that what we are doing should be done because it is the Lord's will. Not a step in my journey, but the Lord has thought about it for me, therefore "we have to run the race set before us." If the cloud does not move we cannot move, our utter incapacity to act is our power against Satan.

Again, if I have no light on any given passage, this makes nothing of me. If we have no word from God, we can do nothing, because it is by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord that man lives. Paul did nothing for Epaphroditus. (Phil. 2:27) God healed him in His own way. God charges Himself with this care of us because we are in the wilderness where there is no way, that God Himself might be our way. He will not give us a way that nature can find out; His way is only found out in communion with the Lord. When we say "There is no way," this will throw us upon God, who will lead us in His own way. In the wilderness there are difficulties, and here is the trial of the spirituality of the saints. The moment we lose

the sense of dependence on God we are left to ourselves. Then "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12) It is a solemn word, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." With us it should be not merely doing God's will, but doing it because it is God's will.

God delivered the children of Israel that He might dwell among them in the wilderness where there was no way; and His guidance proved that He was among them. The pillar of cloud leads by night and by day, for the day and night are both alike to Him, and to us if led by Him. Peter could no more walk on the smooth sea than on the rough without the Lord. We need willingness of mind to be always led by the Lord. We are children, and so sure of it, that we are willing to be servants. Jesus was Son of God, but took the place of a servant. It was to Him as having taken this place that Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," seeking to cast a doubt on His Father's care. The certainty of the Lord's love gives the confidence of obedience; if I count on the Lord's love I am cast on the Lord's will. When Israel settled down by the palm trees, they must get up, because it was not Canaan. The Lord may give us a little rest, but we must not settle here.

By virtue of the first passover we have been brought out of Egypt and are now in the wilderness, and while there keep the passover in the knowledge of God's love in our deliverance.

When the cloud tarried many days (v.19) they were to keep the charge of the Lord, so while we tarry here we have but one thing to occupy us - God; and if our "eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light."

When Christianity is being given up on all sides, it is well to know what Christianity is. It is perfect peace and reconciliation with God; we are perfected for ever before Him. And as regards the path in this world, it is the eye on Christ Himself in glory, and one undivided energy to get after Him. Every step we take we get more of Christ, and are more capable of knowing Him; and thus the effect practically is to form us into His likeness. This bringing in of the life of Christ to my soul enables me to see Him in the glory, so that even now I get more like the resurrection I am aiming after. The resurrection from among the dead identifies itself with winning Christ; raising from the dead speaks to us of God's perfect delight in us in Christ.

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