

Worries About the Journey--a Good Wife

by John Newton

We should trust in the Lord's guidance and protection, and beware of giving way to ungrateful fears.

Scripture: Psalm 23:4, Psalm 56:3, Proverbs 3:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, James 1:17

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Guidance"

Description

John Newton, in a letter dated July 15, 1777, congratulates a friend on a safe journey and reflects on the fears and uncertainties of life's journeys, comparing them to crossing rivers. He emphasizes the tendency to doubt God's faithfulness and goodness, despite His continuous guidance and care. Newton urges trust in God's promises and warns against being deceived by outward appearances, using the analogy of poisonous fish in matrimonial relationships. He acknowledges the need for gratitude to God for His guidance and blessings in life.

Transcript

July 15, 1777

My Dear Sir,

I begin with congratulations first to you and Mrs.--, on your safe journey and good passage over the formidable Humber. Mrs. --has another river to cross (may it be many years before she approaches the bank) over which there is no bridge. Perhaps, at seasons, she may think of it with that reluctance which she felt before she saw the Humber; but, as her fears were then agreeably disappointed, and she found the experiment, when called to make it, neither terrifying nor dangerous, so I trust she will find it in the other case. Did not she think, The Lord knows where I shall be, and He will meet me there with a storm, because I am such a sinner? Then how the billows will foam and rage at me, and what a long passage I shall have, and perhaps I shall sink in the middle, and never set my foot in Hull! It is true, I am not so much afraid of the journey I go by land, though I know that every step of the way, the horses or the chaise may fall, and I be killed; but how do I know but He may preserve me on the road, on purpose to drown me in the river! But, behold, when she came to it, all was calm; or, what was better, a gentle, fair breeze, to waft her pleasantly over before she was aware. Thus we are apt perversely to reason: He guides and guards me through life; He gives me new mercies, and new proofs of His power and care every day; and, therefore, when I come to die, He will forsake me, and let me be the sport of winds and waves. Indeed, the Lord does not deserve such hard thoughts at our hands as we are prone to form of Him. But, notwithstanding we make such returns, He is and will be gracious, and shame us out of our unkind,

ungrateful, unbelieving fears at last. If, after my repeated kind reception at your house, I should always be teasing Mrs.-- with suspicions of her good will, and should tell everybody I saw, that I verily believed the next time I went to see her she would shut the door in my face, and refuse me admittance, would she not be grieved, offended, and affronted? Would she not think, What reason can he assign for this treatment? He knows I did everything in my power to assure him of a welcome, and told him so over and over again. Does he count me a deceiver? Yes, he does: I see his friendship is not worth preserving; so farewell. I will seek friends among such as believe my words and actions. Well, my dear Madam, I am clear I always believed you; I make no doubt but you will treat me kindly next time, as you did the last. But pray, is not the Lord as worthy of being trusted as yourself; and are not His invitations and promises as hearty and as honest as yours? Let us, therefore, beware of giving way to such thoughts of Him, as we could hardly forgive in our dearest friends if they should harbour the like of us.

I have heard nothing of Mr. P-- yet, but that he is in town, very busy about that precious piece of furniture called a wife. May the Lord direct and bless His choice! In Captain Cook's voyage to the South Sea, some fish were caught which looked as well as others, but those who ate of them were poisoned: alas! for the poor man who catches a poisonous wife! There are such to be met with in the matrimonial seas, that look passing well to the eye, but a connexion with them proves baneful to domestic peace, and hurtful to the life of grace. I know two or three people, perhaps a few more, who have great reason to be thankful to Him who sent the fish with the money in its mouth to Peter's hook. He secretly instructed and guided us where to angle; and if we have caught prizes, we owe it not to our own skill, much less to our deserts, but to His goodness.

I am, &c.

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