

(Audio Book) Letter from Blackness Dungeon 1606

by John Welsh

This sermon is a heartfelt expression of faith, hope, and longing for the eternal presence of God, filled with anticipation of the joys of heaven and the assurance of God's love and grace. It speaks of the desire to be reunited with God in the afterlife, the comfort found in the promises of Christ, and the willingness to endure suffering for the sake of the gospel. The speaker reflects on the challenges faced in the world but finds solace in the hope of a glorious future in the presence of the Lord.

Scripture: John 14:2, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 15:54, Revelation 7:14, Philippians 1:21, Romans 8:38, Revelation 22:20, Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 40:31, Ezekiel 33:7

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "Assurance of God's Love"

Description

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Transcript

The Consolations of the Holy Ghost be Multiplied Upon You in Christ Jesus Often and many times, Christian and elect lady, I have desired the opportunity to be comforted with that consolation wherewith it hath pleased God of his free grace and mercy to fill and furnish you. Your remembrance is very sweet and comfortable to my very soul. Since the first time I knew you in Christ Jesus, I have ever been mindful of you unto the Lord.

And now, not being able to refrain any longer, I could not omit this occasion, not knowing how long it may please the Lord to continue my being in this tabernacle or give me further occasion of writing to any. Although I have not great matter at this time, yet in remembrance of your labor of love, hope, and patience, I must needs salute your ladyship, knowing assuredly you are the chosen of God, set apart before ever the world was to that glorious and eternal inheritance. Being thus comforted in your faith and hope, I am fully assured, though we never have the occasion of meeting here, yet we shall reign together in the world to come.

My desire to remain here is not great, knowing that so long as I am in this house of clay, I am absent from God. And if it were dissolved, I look for a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In this I groan, desiring to be clothed upon with my house which is in heaven.

If so be that being clothed, I shall not be found naked. For I that am within this tabernacle do often groan and sigh within myself, being oftentimes burdened, not that I would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. I long to eat of that tree which is planted in the midst of the paradise of God, and to drink of the pure river, clear as crystal, that runs through the street of the new Jerusalem.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand the last day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and not another for me. My eyes shall behold him, though my reins be consumed within me.

I long to be refreshed with the souls of them that are under the altar, who were slain for the word of God and the testimony they held. And to have these long white robes given me, that I may walk in white raiment with those glorious saints who have washed their garments, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why should I think it a strange thing to be removed from this place to that wherein my hope, my joy, my crown, my elder brother, my head, my father, my comforter, and all the glorious saints are? And where the song of Moses and the Lamb is sung joyfully, where we shall not be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon and to hang up our harps on the willow trees, but shall take them up and sing the new Hallelujah, blessing, honor, glory, and power to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.

What is there under the old vault of the heavens and in this old worn earth which is under the bondage of corruption, groaning and travailing in pain, and shooting out the head, looking, waiting, and longing for the redemption of the sons of God? What is there, I say, that should make me desire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth, wherein I shall rest forevermore. I look to get entry into the new Jerusalem at one of those twelve gates whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. I know that Christ Jesus hath prepared them for me.

Why may I not then, with boldness in his blood, step into that glory where my head and Lord have gone before me? Jesus Christ is the door and the porter. Who then shall hold me out? Will he let them perish for whom he died? Will he let them poor sheep be plucked out of his hand for whom he hath laid down his life? Who shall condemn the man whom God hath justified? Who shall lay anything to the charge of the man for whom Christ hath died, or rather risen again? I know I have grievously transgressed, but where sin abounded, grace will superabound. I know my sins are red as scarlet and crimson, yet the red blood of Christ my Lord can make them as white as snow or wool.

Whom have I in heaven but him, or whom desire I in the earth besides him? O thou the fairest among the children of men, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and saints, my soul panteth to be with thee. I will put my spirit into thy hands, and thou wilt not put me out of thy presence. I will come unto thee, for thou castest none away that comes unto thee.

O thou the delight of mankind, thou camest to seek and to save that which was lost. Thou seeking me hast found me, and now being found by thee, I hope, O Lord, thou wilt not let me perish. I desire to be with thee, and do long for the fruition of thy blessed presence, and joy of thy countenance.

Thou, the only good shepherd, art full of grace and truth, therefore I trust thou wilt not thrust me out of the door of grace. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth by thee. Who shall separate me from thy love? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things I am more than conqueror through thy majesty who hath loved me.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature is able to separate me from the love of the majesty which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. I refuse not to die with thee, that I may live with thee. I refuse not to suffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee.

Shall not all things be pleasant to me, which may be the last step by which and upon which I may come unto thee? When shall I be satiate with thy face? When shall I be drunk with thy pleasures? Come, Lord Jesus, and tarry not. The Spirit says, Come. The Bride says, Come.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and tarry not. Why should the multitude of my iniquities or greatness of them affright me? Why should I faint in this my desire to be with thee? The greater sinner I have been, the greater glory will thy grace be to me unto all eternity. O unspeakable joy, endless, infinite, and bottomless compassion! O sea of never-fading pleasures! O love of loves! O the breadth, and height, and depth, and length of that love of thine that passeth all knowledge! The love of Jonathan was great indeed unto David.

It passeth the love of women. But thy love, O Lord, passeth all created love, O uncreated love, beginning without beginning, and ending without end. Thou art my glory, my joy, and my gain, and my crown.

Thou hast set me under thy shadow with great delight, and thy fruit is sweet unto my taste. Thou hast brought me into thy banqueting house, and placed me in thy orchard. Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am sick, and my soul is wounded with thy love.

Behold, thou art fair, my love. Behold, thou art fair. Thou hast dove's eyes.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant. Also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedars, and our rafters are of fur.

How fair and how pleasant art thou, O full of delights! My heart is ravished with thee. O when shall I see thy face? How long wilt thou delay to be with me as a roe, or a young heart, leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills? As a bundle of myrrh be thou to me, and lie all night betwixt my breasts. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth.

Therefore desire I to go out of this desert, and to come to the place where thou sittest at thy repast, and where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon. When shall I be filled with this love? Surely if a man knew how precious it were, he would count all things dross and dung to gain it. Truly I would long for that scaffold, or that axe, or that cord, that might be to me that last step of this my wearisome journey, to go to thee, my Lord.

Thou who knowest the meaning of the Spirit, give answer to the speaking, sighing, and groaning of the Spirit. Thou who hast inflamed my heart to speak to thee in this silent, yet lovely language of ardent and fervent desires, speak again unto my heart, and answer my desires, which thou hast made me speak to thee. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth me the victory through Christ Jesus.

What can be troublesome to me, since my Lord looks upon me with so loving and amiable a countenance? And how greatly do I long for these embracements of my Lord! O that He would kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine! O that my soul were the throne wherein He might dwell eternally! O that my heart were the temple wherein He might be magnified and dwell forever! All glory be unto my God! Angels and saints, praise ye Him! O thou earth, ye hills and mountains, be glad! You shall not be wearied any more with the burden of corruption, whereunto you have been subject through the wickedness of mankind. Lift up your heads, and be glad, for a fire shall make you clean from all your corruption and vanity, wherewith for many years you have been infected. Let the bride rejoice! Let all the saints rejoice! For the day of the marriage with the bridegroom, even the Lamb of God, is at hand, and His fair white robes shall be given her.

She shall be arrayed with the golden vestry and needlework of His manifold graces that shall be put upon her. He who is her life shall quickly appear, and she shall quickly appear with Him in the glory and happiness of a consummated marriage. But I must remember myself.

I know I have been greatly strengthened and sustained by your prayers, Honorable Lady, and dearly beloved in the Lord Jesus. Continue, I pray you, as you have begun in wrestling with the Lord for me, that Christ may be magnified in my mortal body, whether living or dead, that my soul may be lifted up to the third heavens, that I may taste of those joys that are at the right hand of my Heavenly Father, and that with gladness I may let my spirit go thither where my body shall shortly follow. Who am I that He should first have called me and then constituted me a minister of the glad tidings of the gospel of salvation these sixteen years already, and now, last of all, to be a sufferer for His cause and kingdom? Now let it be so, that I have fought my fight and run my race, and now from henceforth is laid up for me that crown of righteousness which the Lord, that righteous God, will give, and not to me only, but to all that love His appearance, and choose to witness this, that Jesus Christ is the King of saints, and that His church is a most free kingdom, yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and conventions and assemblies, but also to judge of all her affairs in all her meetings and conventions amongst her members and subjects.

These two points, first, that Christ is the head of His church, secondly, that she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction except Christ's. These two points, I say, are the special cause of our imprisonment, being now convicted as traitors for the maintaining thereof. We have been ever waiting with joyfulness to give the last testimony of our blood in confirmation thereof, if it should please our God to be so favorable as to honor us with that dignity.

Yea, I do affirm that these two points above written, and all other things which belong to Christ's crown, scepter, and kingdom, are not subject, nor can be to any other authority but to His own altogether, so that I would be most glad to be offered up as a sacrifice for so glorious a truth. But alas, I fear that my sins and the abuse of so glorious things as I have found deprive me of so fair a crown. Yet my Lord doth know if He would call me to it, and strengthen me in it, it would be to me the most glorious day and gladdest hour I ever saw in this life.

But I am in His hand, to do with me whatsoever shall please His majesty. It may suffice me, I have had so long a time in the knowledge of the gospel, and that I have seen the things that I have seen, and heard the things I have heard, and through the grace of God I have been so long a witness of these glorious and good news in my weak ministry, and that my witnessing hath not been altogether without fruit and blessing, so that I hope at that day I shall have Him to be my crown, my glory, my joy and reward. And

therefore boldly I say now with Simeon, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, not in a peaceable dying in my bed, but by rendering up to him my spirit, and sealing and stamping this truth with my blood.

I desire not to have it remedied, but let my Lord's will be done. Now that prophecy is at hand, which these two worthy servants of the Lord, Mr. George Wishart and Mr. John Knox, my father-in-law, spake, which was that Christ should be crucified in this kingdom, but glorious should be His resurrection, as Mr. Knox with his own hand upon the margin of Calvin's harmony upon the passion did write, which is yet extant, but alas for this kingdom. My testimony now does not differ from that of many before this time who said that the kingdom of Scotland should be blood.

The kingdom shall be drawn in blood. A furbished and glittering sword is already drawn out of the scabbard, which shall not return until it be made drunk with the blood of the man in this land. First the heavy intestine sword, and then the sword of the stranger.

O doleful Scotland, well were he that were removed from thee, that his eyes might not see, nor his ears hear, all the evils that are to come upon thee. Neither the strong man by his strength, nor the rich man by his riches, nor the noble man by his blood shall be delivered from the judgments. There is a great sacrifice to be made in Basra.

In thee, O Scotland, of the blood of all sorts in the land, Ephraim shall consume Manasseh, and Manasseh Ephraim, brother against brother, and every man in the judgment of the Lord shall be armed to thrust his sword in the side of his neighbor, and all for the contempt of the glorious gospel. And that blood which was offered to thee, O Scotland, in so plenteous a manner that the like thereof hath not been offered to any nation, therefore thy judgment shall be greater. But the sanctuary must be begun at, and the measure is not fulfilled till the blood of the saints be shed.

Then the cries will be great, and will not stay till they bring the Lord down from heaven his throne, to see if the sins of Scotland be according to the cry thereof. Neither shall there be any subject in the hand, in the land, from the greatest to the meanest, guiltless. The guilt of our blood shall not only lie upon our prince, but also upon our own brethren, bishops, counselors, and commissioners.

It is they, even they, that have stirred up our prince against us. We must therefore lay the blame and burden of our blood upon them especially, howsoever the rest above written be partakers of their sins with them. And as to the rest of our brethren, who either by silence approve, or by crying, peace, peace, strengthen the arm of the wicked that cannot return, and in the meantime make the hearts of the righteous sad.

They shall all in like manner be guilty of high treason against the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, his crown and kingdom. Next unto them all our commissioners, chancellor, president, controller, advocate. And next unto them all that first or last sat in council and did not bear plain testimony for Jesus Christ and his kingdom, for which we do suffer.

And next unto them all those who should have at present, and who should at such times, have come and made open testimony of Christ faithfully, although it had been contrary to plain law, and with the hazard their lives. When the poor Jews were in such danger that nothing was expected but utter destruction, Queen Esther, after three days fasting, concluded thus with herself, I will, said she, go into the king, although it be not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish. Esther 9 16.

With this resolution, such as our born counselors should have said, Christ's kingdom is now at hand, and I am bound also and sworn by a special covenant to maintain the doctrine and discipline thereof, according to my vocation and power all the days of my life, under all the pains contained in the book of God, and danger of body and soul in the day of God's fearful judgment. And therefore, though I should perish in the cause, yet will I speak for it, and to my power defend it, according to my vocation. Finally, all those that counsel, command, consent, and allow are guilty in the sight of God.

But the mourners for these evils, and the faithful of the land, and those who are unfeignedly grieved in heart for all these abominations, those shall be marked as not guilty. Ezekiel 9 17. I know not whether I shall have occasion to write again, and therefore by this letter, as my latter will and testament, I give testimony, warning, and knowledge of these things to all men, according to the Lord's direction to the prophet, son of man, I have made thee a watchman.

Ezekiel 33 7. Therefore I give warning to all men hereby that no man's blood be required at my hand, thus desiring the help of your prayers with my humble commendations and service in Christ, to my Lord, your husband, and all the saints there, the messenger of peace be with you all forevermore. Amen. Yours to my full power, for the time, Christ's prisoner, Mr. John Welsh, Blackness, January 6th, 1606.

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