

God Willeth to Be Seen and to Be Sought: To Be Abided and to Be Trusted

by Julian of Norwich

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God with earnestness, steadfastness, and trust, and how this seeking pleases God greatly and leads to a deeper understanding and connection with Him.

Scripture: Psalm 27:8, Lamentations 3:25, Matthew 7:7, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

Topics: "Seeking God", "Trusting Faith"

Description

Julian of Norwich preaches about seeking and beholding God, emphasizing the importance of seeking Him with faith, hope, and charity, and trusting in His grace and guidance. She describes a vision where seeking God is as pleasing as beholding Him, as it shows a soul's willingness to trust and wait on God's timing for a clearer revelation. Julian highlights the significance of seeking God continually, believing that He is always present even when His presence seems faint, and that the seeking soul pleases God greatly.

Transcript

AND after this I saw with bodily sight in the face of the crucifix that hung before me, on the which I gazed continually, a part of His Passion: despite, spitting and sullyng, and buffetting, and many languoring pains, more than I can tell, and often changing of colour. And one time I saw half the face, beginning at 21 the ear, over-gone with dry blood till it covered to the mid-face. And after that the other half [was] covered on the same wise, the whiles in this [first] part [it vanished] even as it came.

This saw I bodily, troublously and darkly; and I desired more bodily sight, to have seen more clearly. And I was answered in my reason: If God will shew thee more, He shall be thy light: thee needeth none but Him. For I saw Him sought.⁴⁶ For we are now so blind and unwise that we never seek God till He of His goodness shew Himself to us. And when we aught see of Him graciously, then are we stirred by the same grace to seek with great desire to see Him more blissfully. And thus I saw Him, and sought Him; and I had Him, I wanted Him.

And this is, and should be, our common working in this [life], as to my sight. One time mine understanding was led down into the sea-ground, and there I saw hills and dales green, seeming as it were moss-be-grown, with wrack and gravel. Then I understood thus: that if a man or woman were under the broad water, if he might have sight of God so as God is with a man continually, he should be safe in body and soul, and take no harm: and overpassing, he should have more solace and comfort than all this world

can tell.

For He willeth we should believe 47 that we see Him continually though that to us it seemeth but little [of sight]; and in this belief He maketh us evermore to gain grace. For He will be seen and He will be sought: He will be abided and he will be trusted. 22 This Second Shewing was so low and so little and so simple, that my spirits were in great travail in the beholding,--mourning, full of dread, and longing: for I was some time in doubt whether it was a Shewing. And then diverse times our good Lord gave me more sight, whereby I understood truly that it was a Shewing.

It was a figure and likeness of our foul deeds' shame that our fair, bright, blessed Lord bare for our sins: it made me to think of the Holy Vernacle⁴⁷ at Rome, which He hath portrayed with His own blessed face when He was in His hard Passion, with steadfast will going to His death, and often changing of colour. Of the brownness and blackness, the ruefulness and wastedness of this Image many marvel how it might be, since that He portrayed it with His blessed Face who is the fairness of heaven, flower of earth, and the fruit of the Maiden's womb.

Then how might this Image be so darkening in colour⁴⁸ and so far from fair?--I desire to tell like as I have understood by the grace of God:-- We know in our Faith, and believe by the teaching and preaching of Holy Church, that the blessed Trinity made Mankind⁴⁹ to His image and to His likeness. In the same manner-wise we know that when man fell so deep and so wretchedly by sin, there was none other help to restore man but through Him that made man. And He that made man for love, by the same love He would restore man to the same bliss, and overpassing; and like as we were like-made to the Trinity in our first making, our Maker would that we should be like Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, in heaven without end, by the virtue of our again-making. 23 Then atwix these two, He would for love and worship of man make Himself as like to man in this deadly life, in our foulness and our wretchedness, as man might be without guilt.

This is that which is meant where it is said afore: it was the image and likeness of our foul black deeds' shame wherein our fair, bright, blessed Lord God was hid. But full certainly I dare say, and we ought to trow it, that so fair a man was never none but He, till what time His fair colour was changed with travail and sorrow and Passion and dying. Of this it is spoken in the Eighth Revelation, where it treateth more of the same likeness. And where it speaketh of the Vernacle of Rome, it meaneth by [reason of] diverse changing of colour and countenance, sometime more comfortably and life-like, sometime more ruefully and death-like, as it may be seen in the Eighth Revelation.

And this [dim] vision was a learning, to mine understanding, that the continual seeking of the soul pleaseth God full greatly: for it may do no more than seek, suffer and trust. And this is wrought in the soul that hath it, by the Holy Ghost; and the clearness of finding, it is of His special grace, when it is His will. The seeking, with faith, hope, and charity, pleaseth our Lord, and the finding pleaseth the soul and fulfilleth it with joy. And thus was I learned, to mine understanding, that seeking is as good as beholding, for the time that He will suffer the soul to be in travail.

It is God's will that we seek Him, to the beholding of Him, for by that⁵⁰ He shall shew us Himself of His special grace when He will. And how a soul shall have Him in its beholding, He shall 24 teach Himself: and that is most worship to Him and profit to thyself, and [the soul thus] most receiveth of meekness and virtues with the grace and leading of the Holy Ghost. For a soul that only fasteneth it[self] on to God with very trust, either by seeking or in beholding, it is the most worship that it may do to Him, as to my sight.

These are two workings that may be seen in this Vision: the one is seeking, the other is beholding. The seeking is common,--that every soul may have with His grace,--and ought to have that discretion and teaching of the Holy Church. It is God's will that we have three things in our seeking:--The first is that we seek earnestly and diligently, without sloth, and, as it may be through His grace, without unreasonable heaviness and vain sorrow. The second is, that we abide Him steadfastly for His love, without murmuring and striving against Him, to our life's end: for it shall last but awhile.

The third is that we trust in Him mightily of full assured faith. For it is His will that we know that He shall appear suddenly and blissfully to all that love Him. For His working is privy, and He willeth to be perceived; and His appearing shall be swiftly sudden; and He willeth to be trusted. For He is full gracious and homely: Blessed may He be!

Source:

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