

Communion With Christ; Broken and Restored

by Hudson Taylor

The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining communion with Christ and the dangers of drifting away from Him due to worldliness.

Scripture: Psalm 45:10, Hebrews 2:1

Topics: "Worldliness", "Communion with Christ"

Description

Hudson Taylor emphasizes the fragility of communion with Christ, warning that believers can easily drift into worldliness despite their love for Him. He illustrates how the bride, representing the believer, often forgets the call to remain separate from worldly influences, leading to a gradual separation from the Lord. Taylor highlights the importance of heeding God's exhortations and the dangers of small compromises that can spoil one's spiritual fruitfulness. Ultimately, he encourages believers to seek restoration and full communion with Christ, reminding them of His unwavering love and desire for fellowship. The sermon concludes with a call to remain devoted to Christ while living in the world, emphasizing the joy found in His presence.

Transcript

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest we drift away from them." (Heb. 2:1).

The experience of most of us, shows how easily communion with Christ may be broken, and how needful are the exhortations of our Lord to those who are indeed branches of the true Vine, and cleansed by the Word which He has spoken, to abide in Him. The failure is never on His side. "Lo, I am with you always." But, alas, the bride often forgets the exhortation addressed to her in Psalms 45. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the KING greatly desire thy beauty: For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."

In this section, the bride has drifted back from her position of blessing into a state of worldliness. Perhaps the very restfulness of her new-found joy made her feet too secure; perhaps she thought that, so far as she was concerned, there was no need for the exhortation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Or she may have thought that the love of the world was so thoroughly taken away that she might safely go back, and, by a little compromise on her part, she might win her friends to follow her Lord too. Perhaps she scarcely thought at all, glad that she was saved and free, she forgot that the current - the course of this world - was against her; and insensibly glided, drifted back to that position out of which she was called,

unaware all the time of backsliding. It is not necessary; when the current is against us, to turn the boat's head down the stream in order to drift; or for a runner in a race to turn back in order to miss the prize.

Ah, how often the enemy succeeds, by one device or another, in tempting the believer away from that position of entire consecration to Christ in which alone the fullness of His power and of His love can be experienced. We say the fullness of His power and of His love; for he may not have ceased to love his Lord. In the passage before us, the bride still loves Him truly, though not wholly; there is still a power in His Word which is not unfelt, though she no longer renders instant obedience. She little realizes how she is wronging her Lord, and how real is the wall of separation between them. To her, worldliness seems as but a little thing; she has not realized the solemn truth of many passages in the Word of God that speak in no measured terms of the folly, the danger, the sin of friendship with the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love, of the Father is not in him." "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of GOD." "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? . . . Wherefore: Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you, And will be to you a FATHER, And ye shall be to Me sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY." We have to make our choice: we cannot enjoy both the world and Christ. The bride had not learned this, she would fain enjoy both, with no thought of their incompatibility. She observes with joy the approach of the bridegroom. "The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart; Behold He standeth behind our wall; He looketh in at the windows, He glanceth through the lattice." The heart of the bride leaps on hearing the voice of her Beloved, as He comes in search of her. He has crossed the hills; He draws near to her; He stands behind the wall; He even looks in at the windows; with tender and touching words He woos her to come forth to Him. He utters no reproach, and His loving entreaties sink deep in her memory.

"My Beloved spoke, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; The time of the singing of birds is come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; The figtree ripeneth her green figs, And the vines are in blossom, They give forth their fragrance. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away. All nature is responsive to the return of the summer, wilt thou, My bride, be irresponsive to My love? Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." Can such pleading be in vain? Alas, it can, it was! In yet more touching words the bridegroom continues: "O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the steep place, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice! For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Wonderful thought that God should desire fellowship with us; and that He whose love once made Him the Man of Sorrows may now be made the Man of Joys by the loving devotion of human hearts. But strong as is His love, and His desire for His bride, He can come no further. Where she now is He can never come. But surely she will go forth to Him. Has He not a claim upon her? She feels and enjoys His love, will she let His desire count for nothing? For, let us notice, it is not the bride longing in vain for her LORD, but the bridegroom who is seeking for her. Alas that He should seek in vain!

"Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; For our vineyards are in blossom,". He continues. The enemies may be small, but the mischief done is great. A little spray of blossom, so tiny as to be scarcely perceived, is easily spoiled, but thereby the fruitfulness of a whole branch may be for ever destroyed. And how numerous the little foxes are! Little compromises with the world; disobedience to the

still small voice in little things; little indulgences of the flesh to the neglect of duty; little strokes of policy; doing evil in little things that good may come; and the beauty and the fruitfulness of the vine are sacrificed. We have a sad illustration of the deceitfulness of sin in the response of the bride. Instead of bounding forth to meet Him, she first comforts her own heart by the remembrance of His faithfulness, and of her union with Him "My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth His flock among the lilies." My position is one of security, I have no need to be concerned about it. He is mine, and I am His; and nothing can alter that relationship. I can find Him now at any time, He feedeth His flock among the lilies. While the sun of prosperity shines upon me, I may safely enjoy myself here without Him. Should trial and darkness come, He will be sure not to fail me. "Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away, Turn, my Beloved, and be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Careless of His desire, she thus lightly dismisses Him, with the thought, a little later I may enjoy His love; and the grieved bridegroom departs! Poor foolish bride! She will soon find that the things that once satisfied her can satisfy no longer; and that it is easier to turn a deaf ear to His tender call than to recall or find her absent Lord.

The day became cool, and the shadows did flee away; but He returned not. Then in the solemn night she discovered her mistake: It was dark, and she was alone. Retiring to rest she still hoped for His return - the lesson that worldliness is an absolute bar to full communion still unlearned. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not!" She waits and wearies: His absence becomes insupportable. "I said, I will rise now, and go about the city, In the streets and in the broad ways. I will seek Him whom my soul loveth I sought Him, but I found Him not!" How different her position from what it might have been! Instead of seeking Him alone, desolate and in the dark, she might have gone forth with Him in the sunshine, leaning upon His arm. She might have exchanged the partial view of her Beloved through the lattice, when she could no longer say "Nothing between," for the joy of His embrace, and His public confession of her as His chosen bride. "The watchmen that go about the city found me: To whom I said, saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, When I found Him whom my soul loveth." She had already obeyed His command, "Arise, and come away." Fearless of reproach, she was seeking Him in the dark; and when she began to confess her LORD, she soon found Him and was restored to His favor:

"I held Him, and would not let Him go, Until I had brought Him into my mother's house, And into the chamber of her that conceived me." Jerusalem above is the mother of us all. There it is, that communion is enjoyed, not in worldly ways or self-willed indulgence. Communion fully restored, the section closes, as did the first, with the loving charge of the bridegroom that none should disturb His bride. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles, and by the does of the field, (By all that is loving and beautiful and constant) That ye stir not up, nor awake My love, until she please."

May we all, while living down here, in the world, but not of it, find our home in the heavenly places to which we have been raised, and in which we are seated together with Christ. Sent into the world to witness for our MASTER, may we ever be strangers there, ready to confess Him the true object of our soul's devotion. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: They will be still praising Thee. A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God. Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield: The Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly O Lord of hosts, Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee. " (Psa. 84).

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