

Letter 139

by James Bourne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing war against sin.

Scripture: Psalm 55:22, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 41:10, John 4:14, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Humility Before God"

Description

James Bourne preaches about the spiritual warfare believers face, the struggles with sin, and the importance of coming empty-handed to Christ for strength and courage. He emphasizes the need for humility, reliance on the blood of Jesus, and seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit in all aspects of life. Bourne encourages believers to be honest with God about their fears, sins, and concerns, trusting in His wisdom and guidance even in the midst of trials and confusion.

Transcript

[To the Rev. B. G.] London, 14 February 1833.

My dear Friend,

I often feel myself laden with your spiritual cares, and more incapacitated in my feelings to render you any essential service than I can express.

I perceive that we are called to war, that the enemy is powerful, and that there is no discharge in this war. My spirits often sink at what is before me; and the troubles of our church fill me with inconceivable fear. Sin, like an armed man, is hard to drive out of the conscience; and we never fail by all the human means possible to extenuate and palliate, and where we can do neither we strive, but only after the flesh, to make use of the way that the Lord has set before us in his word. By all these means we gain no ground, complete no victory, but lose our courage in contending, and the enemy sensibly gains the ascendancy; and then universal charity and tenderness prevail where there ought to be reproof; a care for our own honour but not for God's; a compromising spirit; a confederacy; a shunning of the cross; an increase of darkness, distance, and confusion.

How much have I known of this, and how little have I gained by it but misery! and all for want of coming empty-handed to Christ, the Fountain of living waters, which refresh, and strengthen, and arm. the soul for the contest, and give courage to worms to contend against all the powers of darkness. Being at a point in

our own consciences by feeling the powerful efficacy of the blood of sprinkling, we are quite sure of its humbling effects, and of its absolute necessity, not only for our salvation hereafter, but for our tender walk here.

When the Holy Spirit discovers and applies a crucified Saviour to our hearts, it is always attended with light, and we are at the time sure of the way we take. This is a fact, but I cannot reason upon it. I also know that this will create a great desire to be much with him whom our souls love, seeking him in season and out of season, and entreating him to guide us in everything we have to do that is difficult, either in the church or family. When he is in the heart, honoured and cherished there, let us remember that we have a Special Pleader at hand, the King's Leading Counsel, in whose bands our cause is sure to prosper; only we must make full use of him while he is thus with us, and must tell him the worst of our cares and fears and sins, and hide nothing; whoever or whatsoever amongst the people fills us with sorrow, we must tell him all, and he will most marvellously unfold his mind and will towards us, in a way that is inconceivable, and what we know not now, he will take some future opportunity of showing us; and we shall acknowledge his wisdom. He has many things in which he will instruct us, and if the trying circumstances and characters which alarm us were not placed before us, we should often want a word in season for such as are tried. Were there not an experience and knowledge of such characters, and were they not continued long before us, we should never see their windings and many crooks which by length of time are manifested.

All this time we are very little aware of the necessity the Lord has laid upon us of being "a saviour of death" to such as are appointed thereunto, as well as "a saviour of life" to the afflicted and broken-hearted repentant. How many amongst you have been and are discovering themselves, and making manifest that there is no fear of God before their eyes! This ought not to dishearten you, for God says, "If thou wilt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as may mouth;" and most assuredly if you do this, you shall be as all the rest have been, "hated of all men" for this very reason. I find it so. "But he that ENDURETH," remember this word and its meaning, "he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Keep in mind the almighty power of God as set forth in every page of Holy Writ, and call to mind all former times of extremity. Has not the Lord hitherto been a very present help, a shelter from all past storms, a strong tower from your enemies? Then still trust in the covert of his wings. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness," though we know not how or when it will be.

Your very affectionate friend in the Lord, J. B.

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