

# Letter 49

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's presence through earnest prayer and spiritual diligence in times of distress.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 114:7, Psalm 116:1, Psalm 118:5, Psalm 118:16

**Topics:** "Divine Presence", "Faithfulness"

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## Description

James Bourne, in a letter to Revelation C. J. regarding his friend Mr. Maddy, emphasizes the importance of seeking God's presence and mercy in times of distress. He encourages them to diligently pray and call upon the name of the Lord, citing examples from the Word of God where God answered those in need. Bourne urges them to make God their strength amidst challenges, assuring them that God's right hand works valiantly and will not abandon them. He advises against distractions and deviations from spiritual matters, emphasizing the need for faithfulness and truth in spiritual counsel.

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## Transcript

[To the Rev. C. J., concerning his friend Mr. Maddy.] October 1832.

My dear Sir,

I have for this last year been frequently going to Greenwich Hospital, and could not but remark how often a lame pensioner was coupled with a blind one; and so I cannot but call to mind how in my early days, before I had much understanding in divine things as respects myself, I was often obliged to bear testimony to many truths which as yet I had not fully proved. This seems in a measure to be your present case with your friend, and you may say to him, as one of old said [Psalm cxiv], What aileth thee that thou art driven back? and I may add, "Tremble, thou Earth, at the presence of the Lord." You and I must now pause, and ask, Will he indeed turn the flinty rock into springs of water? The presence of the Lord, it is true, is with both you and your friend; but something yet further is wanting before you can be satisfied what this presence is for, whether for judgment, or for mercy. Now, if you can prevail upon the Lord Jesus Christ to hear your prayers, and can in any wise perceive that he has kind intentions towards you, even in the most distant hope, and that only for a very short time, yet while it lasts it will draw forth such an expression as this, "I LOVE 'THE LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications." I was in deep sorrow and trouble, in gross darkness and ignorance, but in calling upon the name of the Lord I found him merciful; he acknowledged the sincerity of my heart (made so by his Spirit) and helped me [Psalm cxvi].

Having believed and received this, I can declare it to my friend, and recommend to him to be exceedingly diligent at a throne of grace. There is no end of instances in the Word of God of men calling upon the name of the Lord in their distress, but not one instance of a failure; and it is here added [Psalm cxviii.], "The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place." I am sure that if both you and your friend make not God your strength in all the perplexing dispensations that are come and are coming over your heads, you will not find the salvation that you seem to be seeking for. "The right hand of the Lord" alone "doeth valiantly;" and if you make him your strength, though he chasten you sore with many fears and misgivings, yet he will not give you over unto death.

Be faithful to the utmost of your spiritual understanding, and enter not into any other field. As your friend wants, or seems to want, spiritual counsel, tell him all the truth, and fill not your letters with postscripts and additions of deviations on other subjects, which will certainly blunt the edge and divide the attention, half for the world, and not half for the Lord. I hope it will please God to direct you, that this labour of love may not prove in vain. I am,

&c. J. B.

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