

Expository Thoughts On John - JOHN 11:7-16

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

Then after this, he said to his disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples replied, "Rabbi, the Jewish authorities were just now trying to stone you to death! Are you going there again?" Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks about in the daytime, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks about in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

After he said this, he added, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I am going there to awaken him." Then the disciples replied, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." (Now Jesus had been talking about his death, but they thought he had been talking about real sleep.)

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and I am glad for your sake that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So Thomas (called Didymus) said to his fellow disciples, "Let us go too, so that we may die with him."

We should notice, in this passage, how mysterious are the ways in which Christ sometimes leads His people. We are told that when He talked of going back to Judea, His disciples were perplexed. It was the very place where the Jews had lately tried to stone their Master--to return there was to plunge into the midst of danger. These timid Galileans could not see the necessity or prudence of such a step. "Are You going there again?" they cried.

Things such as these are often going on around us. The servants of Christ are often placed in circumstances just as puzzling and perplexing as those of the disciples. They are led in ways of which they cannot see the purpose and object; they are called to fill positions from which they naturally shrink, and which they would never have chosen for themselves. Thousands in every age are continually learning this by their own experience. The path they are obliged to walk in is not the path of their own choice. At present they cannot see its usefulness or wisdom.

At times like these a Christian must call into exercise his faith and patience. He must believe that his Master knows best by what road His servant ought to travel, and that He is leading him, by the right way, to a city of habitation. He may rest assured that the circumstances in which he is placed are precisely those which are most likely to promote his graces and to check his besetting sins. He need not doubt that what he cannot see now, he will understand hereafter. He will find one day that there was wisdom in every step of his journey, though flesh and blood could not see it at the time. If the twelve disciples had not been taken back into Judea, they would not have seen the glorious miracle of Bethany. If Christians were

allowed to choose their own course through life, they would never learn hundreds of lessons about Christ and His grace, which they are now taught in God\

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