

The Pleasures of This World--the Blessed Hope

by John Newton

The sermon emphasizes the comfort and hope that believers can find in their trials and the love of Christ, which is a love that prevails over all opposition.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Isaiah 43:2, Romans 5:8, Romans 8:18, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 3:17, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 3:8, 1 John 4:19

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "Gods Love"

Description

John Newton reflects on the comfort and strength found in God during times of illness and trials, emphasizing the believer's assurance that all things work together for good and the nearness of the Lord in times of trouble. He encourages endurance and perseverance, knowing that our present sufferings are temporary compared to the eternal joy awaiting believers in the presence of the Lord. Newton praises the unfailing and unchanging love of Christ, urging listeners to magnify and exalt His name together, as His love brings joy, comfort, and makes life pleasant even in the midst of hardships.

Transcript

1768.

I have been some time hoping to hear from you; but Mr. **** was here last Saturday, and informed me that you were ill, or had been so very lately. This intelligence prompted me to write as soon as I could find leisure. I think the Lord has seen fit to visit you with much indisposition of late; I say He has seen fit, for all our trials are under his immediate direction, and we are never in heaviness without a need-be. I trust he does and will give you strength equal to your day, and sweeten what would be otherwise bitter with the essence of his precious love. I hope soon to hear that you are restored to health. and that you have found cause to praise him for the rod.

How happy is the state of a believer, to have a sure promise that all shall work together for good in the end, and in the mean time a sure refuge where to find present relief, support, and protection! How comfortable is it, when trouble is near, to know that the Lord is near likewise, and to commit ourselves and all our cares simply to him, believing that his eye is upon us, and his ear open to our prayers. Under the conduct of such a Shepherd we need not fear: though we are called to pass through fire and water, through the valley of the shadow of death, he will be with us, and will shew himself mighty on our behalf.

It seems almost needless to say, that we were very happy in the company of ****: the only inconvenience was, that it renewed the pain it always gives me to part with them. Though the visit was fully as long as I could possibly expect, it seemed very short. This must be the case while we are here: our pleasures are short, interrupted, and mixed with troubles: this is not, cannot be our rest. But it will not be always the case: we are travelling to a better world, where every evil and imperfection shall cease; then we shall be for ever with the Lord, and with each other.

May the prospect of this blessed hope set before us revive our fainting spirits, and make us willing to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Here we must often sow in tears, but there we shall reap in joy, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes for ever. I hope the conversation of friends whom I so greatly love and honour afforded me not only pleasure but profit: it left a savour upon my mind, and stirred up my languid desires after the Lord. I wish I could say the good effect has remained with me to this hour; but, alas! I am a poor creature, and have had many causes of humiliation since. But, blessed be God! amidst all my changes I find the foundation stands sure; and I am seldom or never left to doubt either of the Lord's love to me, or the reality of the desires he has given me towards himself: though when I measure my love by the degree of its exercise, or the fruits it produceth, I have reason to sit down ashamed as the chief of sinners and the least of all saints. But in Him I have righteousness and peace, and in Him I must and will rejoice.

I would willingly fill up my sheet, but feel a straitness in my spirit, and know not what further to say. O for a ray of Divine light to set me at liberty, that I might write a few lines worth reading something that might warm my heart and comfort yours! Then the subject must be Jesus; but of him what can I say that you do not know? Well; though you know him, you are glad to hear of him again and again.

Come then, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Let us adore him for his love, that love which has a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, beyond the grasp of our poor conceptions; a love that moved him to empty himself, to take on him the form of a servant, and to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; a love that pitied us in our lost estate, that found us when we sought him not. that spoke peace to our souls in the day of our distress; a love that bears with all our present weakness, mistakes, backslidings, and shortcomings; a love that is always watchful, always ready to guide, to comfort, and to heal; a love that will not be wearied, cannot be conquered, and is incapable of changes; a love that will in the end prevail over all opposition, will perfect that which concerns us, and will not leave us till it has brought us perfect in holiness and happiness, to rejoice in his presence in glory. The love of Christ: it is the wonder, the joy, the song of angels; and the sense of it shed abroad in our hearts makes life pleasant and death welcome.

Alas! what a heart have I that I love him no better! But I hope he has given me a desire to make him my all in all, and to account every thing loss and dross that dares to stand in competition with him.

I am, &c.

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