

That Ye May Know the Way by Which Ye Must Go: For Ye Have Not Passed This Way Heretofore

by Phoebe Palmer

Phoebe Palmer's sermon encourages believers to pursue holiness through faith, obedience, and community support on their journey toward the New Jerusalem.

Scripture: Genesis 15:7, Joshua 3:4, Psalm 84:5, Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Sanctification", "Faith Development"

Description

Phoebe Palmer preaches about the journey to the heavenly city, emphasizing the need for continuous advancement in faith and holiness, rather than lingering in unbelief and disobedience. She shares stories of individuals who earnestly sought holiness, experiencing powerful encounters with God when they surrendered fully and believed in His promises. Through examples of unwavering faith and perseverance, she encourages believers to trust in God's willingness to sanctify and empower them for a life of holiness and obedience.

Transcript

"That ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." -- Joshua.

"Patient the appointed race to run,

This weary world we cast aside

From strength to strength we travel on,

The New Jerusalem to find.

Our labor this, our only aim,

To find the New Jerusalem."

She verily believed that the entire course of the traveler journeying to the heavenly city may be onward and upward.

"Ye have to pass a way that ye have not passed heretofore," said the courageous Joshua to the unbelieving Jews, who had been forty years accomplishing in zig-zag, and almost aimless wanderings, a journey that might have been performed in fewer days than they had taken years. It was thus, she conceived, that many professed followers of Jesus, in consequence of unbelief, necessarily ending in disobedience, are years in accomplishing that which might have been performed in fewer days.

She could find no Scriptural reason, why each successive day might not witness the heavenly traveler at a higher point of elevation in his homeward course than the day previous, and she felt confident that there should not be a perfect rest of spirit, without this assurance. In the early part of her career in the way of holiness, she resolved not to be satisfied without knowing that she was thus making daily advances in the knowledge and love of God -- "the way of holiness."

She was much encouraged when about to start in the way by an observation from one who had made considerable progress. "More," said he, "is to be gained by one act of faith, than could be accomplished by years of painful toiling without it." The justness of this statement she had cause to observe, not only from a review of her own experience, but also strikingly exhibited in a variety of instances which came under her observation.

"O!" said one of Christ's little ones to her one day, who had but three days before received the Spirit of adoption, "I feel as if I could not rest short of anything which it is my privilege to enjoy." This was at the close of a social meeting, where the witnesses had just been testifying of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus to cleanse from all unrighteousness. "I feel," she continued to say, "that I want to be holy -- I must be holy!"

The sister assured her in reply that the very desire for this blessing was a sure intimation, of not only the willingness, but the intention of God to give it, and that it was only for her to persevere in looking for it, in order speedily to obtain it.

She returned home -- wrestled with God Jacob-like during the night, and about nine o'clock the next morning came off a prevailing Israel. Having found the pearl, she ran with intense eagerness to tell of the power of saving grace to "sanctify throughout body, soul, and spirit," and the fruits, that were at once and continuously apparent, gave abundant testimony to the genuineness of the work.

At another time, on meeting with a youthful disciple, the friend who introduced him to the notice of this child of Jesus, said by way of introduction, "This is one of the lambs of the flock." On addressing herself to him she said, "Brother, I am told that you are one of the lambs of the flock, and as such, did you ever think what a sweet resting place you have! You know, Jesus carries the lambs in his bosom, and now what may you not ask with the expectation of receiving? Surely he now says to you, `Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'"

He expressed a longing desire for holiness, and felt that he could not be fully prepared for every good word and work without it. She told him the Almighty Savior loved him so well, that when on earth it was not too much for him to spend the whole night in prayer on a special occasion, and asked whether he felt the need of the blessing enough to be willing to do likewise. She then related, for his admonition and encouragement, the case of the Canaanitish woman -- the seeming inattention of the blessed Savior -- the discouraging observation of the disciples -- the apparent repulsiveness of the allusion, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

She assured him that this was permitted for the trial of the faith of this woman, and that the blessed Savior's heart was doubtless all the time melting with love and desire to impart to her the desire of her heart, but was only waiting to make her an honorable example to all succeeding generations of victorious faith, perseverance, and humility.

He concluded to wrestle with God until the blessing was given, notwithstanding he might at first seem to be repulsed; and about two or three hours afterward, while crying, Lord, sanctify me now! the blessing was given in such power, that body and soul were overwhelmed with the divine presence and glory. Another brother, who had, during a meeting for social worship, expressed a strong desire to be fully conformed to the will of God in all things, was asked by this sister, on returning from the meeting, whether he was really so much in earnest on the subject of holiness, that he would be willing to make a present effort for the attainment of it, by spending a little time in conversing, and in making an effort to obtain it by faith. He replied that he would be willing to try all night if he thought it would do any good.

She referred to the sacrifice that God required of Abraham, Gen. xv, 7-19; and the assurance that Abraham must have had in his own mind of the intention of God to accept an offering that he had himself demanded. The brother acknowledged the reasonableness of Abraham's faith, and also the manner in which God would have been dishonored had he dared to doubt the ultimate acceptance of his sacrifice, notwithstanding the heavenly fire was so long delayed.

She then assured him that God, just at that moment, was demanding a sacrifice at his hand. He had, also, most explicitly pointed out the nature of that sacrifice, and was now beseeching, by the voice of his word, that he should present it. See Rom. xii, 1.

She asked whether he was willing to sacrifice body, soul, and spirit upon the Lord's altar, a living sacrifice, never to be resumed. He replied, "Yes." "But when will you do it?" said the sister. "By the help of the Lord, I will do it now," he replied. A pause of intense interest ensued, when the sister, perceiving that another step must be taken ere he had entered, said, "But, brother, do you do it now?" A moment of hesitation, and he exclaimed, "Yes, glory be to God, I do! I DO!" and with most joyful lips he began to rejoice in Christ as his full Savior; and continues, to the present day, a joyful traveler in the King's highway.

On one occasion, a brother, who had been, for some time, endeavoring to have his goings established in the "way of holiness," expressed himself as quite confident of having laid all upon the altar. "And will not God receive the offering!" asked the sister. "I have no other evidence than his word," he replied. "And is not that sufficient?" said the sister, surprised at his incredulity. "What! believe with no other evidence?" he exclaimed. Wounded at the evident, though unintentional, lightness with which the authority of the blessed word was regarded, she gave her views, in answer to the last inquiry, thus: "Suppose, brother, you should call in with a much-loved friend, in whom you had the most unbounded confidence; you begin to make a statement of some circumstances in which I am greatly interested; when through with the narration, I say, 'And how do you know this to be so? What evidence have you of its truth!' With an air of satisfaction and confidence, you turn to your friend and say, 'My friend saw the whole transaction, and informed me of it.' With disappointment I exclaim, 'Why, brother, is that the only way you know of it? Have you no other evidence?' Would you not feel grieved, and think I had greatly dishonored your friend?" The brother burst into tears, and replied, "O! I never thought of unbelief in that way before. My sin has found me out!"

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