

Xvi. to Mr Robert Blair

by Samuel Rutherford

The sermon encourages believers to submit to God's will, even in the midst of suffering, and to find joy and courage in their faith.

Scripture: Psalm 42:1, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:18, Hebrews 13:3, 1 Peter 4:12

Topics: "Suffering And Joy", "Persevering In Faith"

Description

Samuel Rutherford, in a letter to a fellow minister, encourages him to find peace and contentment in God's will despite facing hardships and challenges in their ministry. He reminds his brother in faith that suffering is an integral part of serving God and entering His kingdom, emphasizing the need for courage and joy amidst trials. Rutherford shares his own struggles as a prisoner in Aberdeen, expressing a longing for spiritual refreshment and connection with other believers. He concludes with a message of hope, urging his fellow minister to hold fast to the truth they suffer for and to remember their shared commitment to Christ.

Transcript

Blair became minister of Bangor in Northern Ireland in 1623. But after nine years there he was deposed for nonconformity with a number of other ministers. A group of them took ship to emigrate to America in search of religious liberty but were forced by the weather to return, which is the occasion of this letter. In 1638 Blair was called to be minister in Aye and later in St. Andrew, where he became a close friend of Rutherford. In 1661 he was summoned before the Privy Council for a sermon on the Covenant and deprived of his church. He died in 1666. See also Letter LIV.

REVEREND AND DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER, -- Grace, mercy, and peace from God

our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be unto you.

It is no great wonder, my dear brother, that ye be in heaviness for a season, and that God's will (in crossing your design and desires to dwell amongst a people whose God is the Lord) should move you. I deny not but ye have cause to inquire what His providence speaketh in this to you; but God's directing and commanding Will can by no good logic be concluded from events of providence. The Lord sent Paul on many errands for the spreading of His Gospel, where he found lions in his way. A promise was made to His people of the Holy Land, and yet many nations were in the way, fighting against, and ready to kill them that had the promise, or to keep them from possessing the good land which the Lord their God had given them. I know that ye have most to do with submission of spirit; but I persuade myself that ye have learned, in every condition wherein ye are cast, therein to be content, and to say, 'Good is the will of the Lord, let it be done.' I believe that the Lord tacketh His ship often to fetch the wind, and that He purposeth to bring mercy out of your sufferings and silence, which (I know from mine own experience) is grievous to you. Seeing that He knoweth our willing mind to serve Him, our wages and stipend is running to the fore with our God, even as some sick soldiers get pay, when they are bedfast and not able to go to the field with others.

When they have eaten and swallowed us up, they shall be sick and vomit us out living men again; the devil's stomach cannot digest the Church of God. Suffering is the other half of our ministry, howbeit the hardest; for we would be content that our King Jesus should make an open proclamation, and cry down crosses, and cry up joy, gladness, ease, honor, and peace. But it must not be so; through many afflictions

we must enter into the kingdom of God. Not only by them, but through them, must we go; and wiles will not take us past the cross. It is folly to think to steal to heaven with a whole skin

For myself, I am here a prisoner confined in Aberdeen, threatened to be removed to Caithness, because I desire to edify in this town; and am openly preached against in the pulpits in my hearing.

There are none here to whom I can speak; I dwell in Kedar's tents.

Refresh me with a letter from you.

Dear brother, upon my salvation, this is His truth that we suffer for. Courage! Courage! Joy, Joy, for evermore! O for help to set my crowned lying on high! O for love to Him Who is altogether lovely - that love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown!

I remember you, and bear your name on my breast to Christ. I beseech you, forget not His afflicted prisoner.

Your brother and fellow prisoner.

ABERDEEN, Feb. 7, 1637

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