

# Xxxviii. to Mr William Dalglish

by Samuel Rutherford

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*Samuel Rutherford's sermon reflects on the challenges of ministry, the importance of faith amidst suffering, and the call to deliver the Gospel with integrity and love.*

**Scripture:** Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 3:12, 2 Corinthians 2:15, Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 1:6

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Triumphant Faith"

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## Description

Samuel Rutherford, in a heartfelt letter, expresses his deep joy in seeing the growth of grace and zeal in God among his fellow believers despite his own trials and sufferings. He finds solace in Christ as a kind fellow prisoner, welcoming the cross that visits him, believing in a triumphant future beyond his current struggles. Rutherford wrestles with doubts and fears, yet remains steadfast in his faith, desiring to glorify Christ even in the midst of uncertainty and loss. He encourages his brother to stand firm in serving Christ with a pure conscience, emphasizing the importance of sanctification to withstand trials.

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## Transcript

REVEREND AND WELL-BELOVED BROTHER, Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you. I have heard somewhat of your trials in Galloway. My witness is above, my dearest brother, that ye have added much joy to me in my bonds, when I hear that ye grow in the grace and zeal of God for your Master. Our ministry, whether by preaching or suffering, will cast a smell through the world both of heaven and hell (II Cor. 2.15, 16). I persuade you, my dear brother, that there is nothing out of heaven, next to Christ, dearer to me than my ministry.

And, let me speak to you now, how kind a fellow prisoner is Christ to me! Believe me, this kind of cross (that would not go by my door, but would needs visit me) is still the longer the more welcome to me. It is true, my silent Sabbaths have been, and still are, as glassy ice, whereon my faith can scarce hold its feet, and I am often blown on my back, and off my feet, with a storm of doubting; yet truly, my bonds all this time cast a mighty and rank smell of high and deep love in Christ.

I cannot, indeed, see through my cross to the far end; yet I believe I am in Christ's books, and in His decree (not yet unfolded to me), a man triumphing, dancing, and singing, on the other side of the Red Sea, and laughing and praising the Lamb, over beyond time, sorrow, deprivation, prelates' indignation, losses, want of friends, and death. Woe is me, my dear brother, that I say often, 'I am but dry bones, which my Lord will not bring out of the grave again'; and that my faithless fears say, 'Oh, I am a dry tree, that can bear no fruit: I am a useless body, who can beget no children to the Lord in His house!'

Hopes of deliverance look cold and uncertain and afar off, as if I had done with it. If my sufferings could do beholders good and edify His kirk and proclaim the incomparable worth of Christ's love to the world, then would my soul be overjoyed and my sad heart be cheered and calmed! Dear brother, I cannot tell what is become of my labours among that people! If all that my Lord builded by me be casten down, and the bottom be fallen out of the profession at that parish, and none stand by Christ, whose love I once preached as clearly and plainly as I could (though far below its worth and excellence) to that people; if so, how can I bear it!

And if another make a foul harvest, where I have made a painful and honest sowing, it will not soon digest with me. But I know that His ways pass finding out. Yet my witness, both within me and above me, knoweth. And my pained breast upon the Lord's Day at night, my desire to have had Christ awful, and amiable, and sweet to that people, is now my joy. It was my desire and aim to make Christ and them one; and, if I see my hopes die in the bud, see they bloom a little, and come to no fruit, I die with grief.

But, my dear brother, go on in the strength of His rich grace, whom ye serve. Stand fast for Christ. Deliver the Gospel off your hand, and your ministry to your Master with a clean and undefiled conscience. Let us make our part of it good, that it may be able to abide the fire, when hay and stubble shall be burned to ashes. Nothing, nothing, I say, nothing, but sound sanctification can abide the Lord's fan. Now, remember my love to all my friends, and to my parishioners, as if I named each one of them particularly.

I recommend you, and God's people, committed by Christ to your trust, to the rich grace of our all-sufficient Lord. Remember my bonds. Praise my Lord, who beareth me up in my sufferings. As you find occasion, according to the wisdom given you, show our acquaintance what the Lord has done for my soul. This I seek not, verily, to hunt my own praise, but that my dearest Master may be magnified.

ABERDEEN, June 17, 1637

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