

“ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer “
Revelation chapter 2 verse 10

How important to us, as having immortal souls and having to do with a holy God, is the position we stand in relation to the Word of God, whether against us are directed its threatenings, or whether for our comfort are its blessings. Not one jot or tittle will ever fail from being fulfilled in each of our cases; God never overlooks anything; all that has gone forth out of his mouth, his arm, either of grace or of justice, will perform: therefore an essential, and one of the most profitable occupations of our spirits, will be a prayerful searching and examination of our case. How do we stand with our hearts and consciences bare before the Word of God? If we have a concern as to its verdict it is an argument for us. The Holy Spirit of God leads his people to fear its threatenings, to desire its blessings, and to love its precepts, and there is an inclination in the soul to run as enabled in the way that is set down in the Word of God.

An ignoring of the word; a disregarding of the word is one of the most fatal marks we can bear; while an enquiring spirit, a humble spirit, a praying spirit, is one that the Spirit of God dwells in. Indeed it is of God, because the Lord leads his people to see their need, to bring out their desire for what He has in store in the person of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, in store in the purposes of his grace, and in his own time and way to be made good, and each to be made a happy possessor of what He himself has promised. How blessed will be the fulfilling of the promise to the soul; this made the psalmist say” The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters.” Another thing which we shall dread if we are rightly exercised will be to be left without exercise, to be left of the Spirit of God, as it were, in our own carnal minds; it is the worst affliction that the Lord’s people can suffer from, but it is a proof of this, that they have that capacity which, when God makes His word effectual, it will be sweet and blessed. When by our own carnal wanderings we seem to have gone back into our wretched state and condition, we shall say as the prophet said speaking for his people; “ I will return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.” That is what we feel if God has had mercy upon our souls, and we have ever had a taste of his mercy and grace. You can depend upon it you will never be satisfied with that which does not emanate from the purposes of his grace, and which does not lead your soul to Him who is the sum and substance of the gospel, and He who is the heritage and the portion of His people.

What did the Psalmist want? He said he wanted to come to the altar. Why come to the altar? Where the sacrifice was. My friends, we must come by and through

the Lord Jesus Christ; that is the right way to come to God.

We shall come humbly if we come through Him; we shall come safely, and we shall come in a blessed state, for "The Lord giveth grace to the humble"; and he that walks humbly walks surely.

He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide

Whatever the world may think about it, let the child of God once be quickened to taste the bitterness of sin, the evils of his wandering heart, and to know a little of the love of God, he wants to stand on the right side of the Word of God; he wants the blessings to be for him;

Give me to read my pardon seal'd
And from thy joy to draw my strength;
To have thy boundless love reveal'd
In all its height and breadth and length.

You want to find the grace of God a river to swim in; you want to find it reality. The Psalmist said before his death; "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation and all my desire though he maketh it not to grow." The Lord has a favour to his people and nothing can change it. He paid too dear for them not to take care even of their circumstances, not to take care even of their transitory experience as it were. He does not forget them; he comes to them when in deep trouble, before they go into the trouble, and when the trouble threatens them; when their enemies seem to have all the power; when they feel as if they shall never stand another day, and they would not if it were not for Him who comes in with his "Fear not." What is His "Fear not" based upon? Upon Himself; on the eternal purpose of the Three-One-God. If you look through the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ perhaps you will notice what struck my own mind for the first time this morning, the spirit of prophecy that runs through the words of the Lord Jesus from the time he sat down to the supper. What does that prophecy embrace? It embraces the eternity of purpose in God, and it embraces the fulfilment of His purposes in the eternity that is yet to come; one was on behalf of His people; the other will be in the experience of His people. The church has an experience in its measure like His. It is a hell they have to pass through, but He went through it, and this is where I see grace shine in a way that one has said:-

Let all the heathen writers join
To write one perfect book;
Great God, if once compared to thine,
How mean their writings look.

Not the most perfect rules they gave
Could show one sin forgiven;
Nor lead one step beyond the grave,
But thine conduct to heaven.

Therefore when the Lord Jesus Christ speaks, He speaks words that will bear His people through. There is no breaking of the cable of eternal love when all the power of Satan is at its worst, because the chain was as it were tested by God; it was tested by the devil, and it was tested by the enmity of all his creatures combined. Now He says "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." Oh my friends, what are the promises of God based upon? Are they upon the flimsy foundation of human merit, or creature obedience? Are they upon the uncertain caprice of the will, the fluctuating will of a creature who is nothing but a polluted particle of dust. No. God has placed the weight of immortal souls, and well being of His people on One of whom we read, "God hath laid help on One that is mighty," and He said Himself, "Behold, here am I". Where is it that He says, "Behold here am I". The other side where every enemy is dead, in the presence of God where all their fears are dissipated, because the cause of them is removed. Now He says to them, while the earth seems giving way beneath their feet, when their heart is full of fear, when as He told them, in the world they have tribulation, He says this, "Fear none of those things." It seems as if He calls all of them and takes them upon the mountain top, the Pisgah of the eternal purposes of God towards them, with their enemies below in the plain, and as if He says to them, "You have got to combat with all those foes; you have got to descend the mountain, and come into a place where you won't be able to see in front of you, or behind you, your enemies will be so thick." As He said to his disciples himself; "I tell you beforehand, that when it cometh to pass ye may remember that I told you of them." But here he says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer". Why? One reason was this; where was their life? Was it not in His hand when He ascended up on high? Did not every turn in His sufferings; did not every fresh phase of the agony of His soul break as it were the chains that held His people, and did He not discomfit all their enemies; did He not gain the victory for them when He died, as one said:-

He conquer'd when He fell

Now He can say, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;" because their life is in His hand, and mind you that is a pierced hand; that is a powerful and a loving hand. "They are in His hand," and He says, "Because I live ye shall live also." They are members of his body, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. "Which thou shalt suffer." You see it is a solemn experience, but though a solemn experience it will have an end, and the tried and exercised child of God will come through, as the Psalmist said, "We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

There is a burning up of many things, and there is a purifying by water of many things, but "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." You see it is only what we are alive to, and what is against us that we feel; it is what we have to meet that we feel the force of, it is the current that runs against us; it is in the whirlpool into which we have to come that we feel to need a strong arm to bear us through without being taken down under it and lost forever. It is no affliction and no trial if we only meet with those things that are agreeable to our temperament and our nature. It is oppositions and contraries that produce suffering; it is these contraries that the child of God knows and the world does not know. When the Lord says "Fear not," His word is based on his love and on his blood, therefore the opposition will be something that will come against His love and blood; it is based on His eternal purpose towards His people, therefore it must be something that is antagonistic to His purpose of grace towards our souls.

The soul loves the Lord Jesus Christ because it is united to Him, it partakes of his nature; it is born of incorruptible seed, and therefore it is that opposition that comes against that new nature in Christ Jesus that causes it suffering. You see the sheep return again from wandering; but equally so the "sow that that was washed turns again to her wallowing in the mire". "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

Now we must know what labour is before we get to heaven, else it cannot be a rest to us, and unless you and I know what it is to suffer in this way, the words do not apply to us, and as we said at the outset it is how the Word of God affects us that we shall or shall not receive its benefit and its fulfilment.

Let me tell you that everything will come to an end but what is recorded in this Book. This is the compendium as it were of all the wisdom that will make us wise. The many mercies that we enjoy as creatures pass away in the using, but we have to do with God, and our state is determined when this poor feeble light is spent, and we enter upon an unending and unchanging life. Oh the

immensity! The weight! And the solemnity of having an immortal soul, can only be rightly known where God himself makes it known; it is not known any where else but where God himself lays the weight, and where God himself gives an entrance of His word into the heart. Do we know it? Have we ever felt this, "The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." Nothing ever makes truly wise but what comes from this word of God, and what the Spirit of God teaches. He teaches us to profit, and He leads in the way His people should go. But let us try and come to the text, "Fear none of those things-which thou shalt suffer." Now your suffering in this sense of the word will be deeper than any natural suffering. There are some who meet here from time to time who know what suffering is physically, and yet if you were to go to them, and dropped the lead to the depth of their natural suffering and say, "Is this all the pain you know?" and if you went to their alleviations in their sufferings, and their temporal mercies, and you dropped the lead to the depth of that and said, "Is this all the comfort you know?" In each case you would have a decided negative. You see sin and a sinful nature teach the living in Jerusalem, who know the plague of their own heart, that though our sufferings in a temporal sense come because of the fall, they know this:-

Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow;
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Does your soul stand as it were before a heart searching God sometimes when you have a sight and sense of the deformity which know you are subject to? It is a mercy to feel it, though none but God knows the cause of many a groan and many a sigh that escape out of your heart while you cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner,"..... "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold Satan shall cast you some of you into prison". To have a heart favourable to Satan's work in alluring our souls away from the Lord Jesus Christ; to have a principle which is favourable to the temptations of the enemy; is that which, as we are rightly exercised, will cause suffering in our souls that the world is a stranger to. A professor that is satisfied with the form, or a person that professes no form, know nothing of suffering in this way and manner; yet that is one of the springs from which flow such sufferings for the child of God. Does he not have to feel and say, "Oh! Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" What is the cause of it?

The plague is in the heart, but look at the encouragement there is in the Bible for sensible sinners, those who mourn their defilement. Is there not a way of escape? Satan tempts us to believe that the root of the matter is not in us; it

cannot be or we should be different to what we are. Some of you know what it is to mourn the absence of communion with God, because there is an ability as it were about Satan's power and temptations to make you fear that you are cut off from being a child of God by what emanates out of your natural mind. When other people look on you and perhaps say you are a child of God you think; oh if they only knew they would never say that. Perhaps it is almost like mocking you sometimes from people to commend you in any way as being a subject of grace, to speak approvingly of you. Why? Because you are in prison; you are in a different experience to what they think you are; perhaps you have laid there for a long time. Do you know what it is to have irons on when you are in prison? I do. "He shall cast some of you into prison".

That means he will not open the door and allow you to walk in quietly; he shall with force as it were lay hold of you, and there you go into a corner with broken bones. And is such a case to be met? Yes. After such personal contact with evil? After such defilement of spirit? Yes, there is a remedy. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Let us see where it comes in. Isn't there sometimes a secret shrinking in your spirit against being forced into the position where you find yourself, shut up in unbelief and coldness? Isn't there a little tender spot somewhere that wishes you could be different? Something that cannot be comfortable in it, and is prison to you? If unbelief is a prison to you, you have got faith, and if you feel that you are being forced away from the place where you would be, you have a right spirit, and Satan is not able to alter it. He may cast you into prison, but he cannot cast grace out; the Lord can cast the devil out, but the devil can never cast Christ out. Where did Jonah go down to?

Not into a cave in the mountains, but he went down to the foundation of the mountains, and he said the earth with her bars was about him for ever. Notice this, they couldn't confine the grace in his heart, nor his prayers; somehow his prayer found a way out from the nether regions where there was not a gleam of daylight to be seen. They say that in the depths of the sea the darkness is intense; there all animal life is either without eyes, or those creatures that have eyes are furnished with phosphorous lights; yet even when Jonah was at the foundation of the mountains he had something in his soul that went to heaven.

That prayer in the soul of a child of God is a proof that he need not fear the things that he suffers. Why? Because He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it even until the day of Jesus Christ. The family of God know the Lord Jesus Christ to be their all and in all, especially under a feeling sense of some of the places they get into, and the things that they suffer from; all their hope and desire is conveyed in these words, "All my desire is before thee, and

my groaning is not hid from thee." There is life in the soul of the child of God that is carried on.

The world may entangle him, and cause him much suffering, the same as they did Peter, but they never enter into the depths of godly sorrow for sin that Peter knew; they could go on with their betrayal of Christ; the servants could go on about their daily avocations unconcerned after they had transfixed the heart of the apostle with such darts. "Fear none of those things." The Lord Jesus Christ loves His people, and even when it comes to the extent of Jonah's sin, and David's sin, and all the sins of the election of grace, a "Fear not" drops in. Why? Because it is sin that is at the bottom, and he died for sin, and He loves sinners to that extent that He died for their sin so that their sin should not separate them from his love, or from his person; therefore He himself removed every obstacle out of the way. Now can you imagine two hearts like that coming together? Do you know a little of the truth? Think where Christ came from to you; what He endured for you; then to know a little in your own case what you have been the subject of, yet you have been brought from it to Him. His work from the standpoint of salvation, and in your own experience, endears Him to your soul, makes you put your head in the dust, and to know what this means, often quoted but not much understood:-

The more thy glories strike my eyes
The humbler I shall lie:
Thus while I sink my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high.

This will be one of the blessings of heaven, to know that He has removed the foundation of all my fears, and that He has brought me to himself to praise Him.

May He add His blessing. Amen.

NB The original typed copy of this sermon was found in a book given to Bexley Strict Baptist Chapel library. We do not know the original owner of the book.