

George Muller Sermons

Chapter 9 - An Address on 2 Corinthians 5.7 'We walk by faith, not by sight'

As long as the child of God is in the world, he has not in actual possession what he will have when with the Lord, and especially, what he will have after the return of the Lord Jesus; he is not yet what he then will be; he does not see what he then will see. But while we are yet in weakness, whilst in the body, in comparative ignorance, and have still to contend against mighty enemies, God has been pleased to give to us a revelation of Himself in the Holy Scriptures, to be our rule of action, to comfort and encourage us, to make Himself known to us, to make the Lord Jesus known to us, to tell us of the blessedness of the world to come, to show us the way to the Father's house, and to reveal to us the vanity of all that this present world can give. This Word of God, the revelation He has made of Himself, is to be credited, to be received fully, in childlike simplicity; and, in doing so, heavenly realities become present things to us by faith. We have not to judge by feeling, by seeing, by reasoning, but by believing, viz., by exercising faith in what God says: and thus have our ways and our actions to be regulated; thus our joys and sorrows.

God is not seen by the natural eye: but we have to seek to see Him, and. to set Him before us daily, hourly, momentarily, by faith; and to bring Him and keep Him nigh to us by faith. The presence of God, the habitual presence of God, because we believe that He sees us and hears us continually, has to regulate our life. We have to live in this world as those would who exercise faith in the truth that their heavenly Father is continually their Provider, their Protector, their Helper, their Friend; that He is ever nigh to them, that He is a wall of fire round about them continually. If the child of God thus treated God, exercised faith in Him, looked upon Him practically as the living God ever near to him, how peacefully and happily would he walk through the world!

The Lord Jesus, the loving, sympathising Friend, is not seen by the natural eye; but faith says, I rest upon that word, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) And thus the heart is made happy by the belief in a present living, loving, almighty Saviour.

The Lord Jesus has not yet taken His power to Himself manifestly. He does not yet manifestly reign: but faith looks for the fulfilment of all that which is said of the return of the Lord Jesus; and therefore, though we are not yet actually with Him on the throne, reigning with Him, we believe that He will come again, and we comfort ourselves, whilst yet in the conflict, in poverty, meanness, and suffering, by the precious statements made in the Holy Scriptures regarding the time of His appearing; and we walk thus on in peace and joy, though we do not yet see His glory with the natural eye.

We are now in a body of humiliation, which is often weak, yea, sometimes in pain and suffering. The manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place; we are not yet in our glorious body, such a body as the Lord Jesus has had since His resurrection: but we have the promise of such a glorified body; this is revealed for us in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore, though we do not yet actually possess it, we have to lay hold on God's promise regarding this, and to walk in the faith of this promise: thus our hearts will be sustained under present weakness, pain, and suffering.

We have the promise of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away; but we have not yet entered upon the possession of this inheritance: we are poor, mean, without possession at all, it may be, so far as sight is concerned; we have, therefore, to exercise faith in this promise, to lay hold on it, to seek to enter into it, in order that we may be full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Scriptures tell us of Satan being bound, yea, bruised under our feet; but this has not yet taken place; we are yet in the warfare, we constantly experience his power still: we have, therefore, for our comfort to lay hold on the blessing promised in this respect; and thus our hearts will be cheered and comforted.

And thus, regarding all the numberless promises which God has been pleased to make, in so far as at any time they are applicable to our position and circumstances, both with respect to temporal and spiritual things, we have to exercise faith concerning them; and the comfort, support, and blessing intended by them to our hearts, will be enjoyed by us. For instance, the promise in Matthew vii. 7-11: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your is in

heaven give good things to them that ask Him? If we believe that it will be even as the Lord Jesus said, with what earnestness, perseverance, expecting faith, shall we give ourselves to prayer! Though the answer be long delayed, though, as to sight, the answer to our prayers can never be received; yet, since we believe, walk by faith, we shall continue to expect an answer to our prayers, as assuredly as our petitions are according to the mind of God, are asked in the name of the Lord Jesus, and we exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to help us.

Again, the testimony of God the Holy Ghost, in Romans-viii. 28, is: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Now, if we lay hold on it by faith, bring to it in faith our greatest trials, difficulties, afflictions, bereavements, etc., our hearts will be comforted, we shall obtain peace to our souls. I have been a believer in the Lord Jesus for forty-four years, but I have invariably found that my greatest trials have proved my greatest blessings; they have worked for my good. But suppose we did not see this to be so, while yet in the body, we have nevertheless to exercise faith concerning what God says; we have to walk by faith, regarding that word of His, That all things work together for good to them that love God, and then will the heart be comforted and sustained.

Three years ago God allowed two most heavy trials to befall me. They continued month after month. I said to myself, This too works for my good; and I continued day by day, while the afflictions lasted, to make known my requests unto God, that He would graciously be pleased to sustain me under them, and, in His own time, deliver me out of them. There was hanging in my bed-room in a frame a text, Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it (Ps. lxxxix. 10), upon which my eyes fell as I rose in the morning; and my heart said to my heavenly Father, I do open my mouth wide; wilt Thou graciously be pleased to do according to Thy word? and wilt Thou fill it! I continued patiently, believingly, expectingly, to look to God for help, and He did deliver me out of these two most heavy afflictions, and I have thus become further acquainted with Him. All this I say for the comfort and encouragement of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ. Will you, then, the next time that you are in trial, seek to remember this for your comfort? You may not be able to see how such and such a heavy trial can work for your good; but it will most assuredly, as God has said. And if even in this life you should not see it, you will do so in the world to come; but generally we see it already in this life.

The reason why the children of God are so frequently overpowered by difficulties and

trials is, because they attempt to carry their burden themselves, instead of casting it upon God, as He not only graciously allows them to do, but commands them to do; and therefore they lose the promise which is coupled with the command; they find themselves not sustained. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee (Ps. lv. 22). This does not mean simply that we should pray to God in our trials and afflictions, but that we should exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to help us under our trials; and by this we know whether we have only used words in prayer, or whether we have, in believing prayer, exercising faith in God, spoken to Him about our trials. If the latter was the case, then, though the trial still lasts, the burden thereof is gone, because we have laid it upon God, to bear it for us; but if we have not exercised faith in God, we are still carrying the burden ourselves.

All these matters are so deeply important, because if we do not walk by faith we cannot be happy in God, and therefore cannot bear such a testimony for God as we should bear were we indeed happy. Our very countenances should testify of our peace and joy in God, in order that thus the unconverted may be stirred up to seek for themselves after that which makes the children of God so happy.

We have, then, to believe what God says. Nor must we look to our feelings, nor expect help from our natural fallen reason; nor must we be discouraged, though all appearance were against what God says; for faith begins when sight fails. As long as we can see with the natural eye, and our natural fallen reason will yet help us, faith is not needed. This is often lost sight of by the children of God; and hence they are so much discouraged, because they do not walk by sight, which was never intended for them while they are yet in the body. If there is then one thing that we need more than another, it is an increase of faith, in order that we may take right steps, surer steps, firmer steps; yea, run with alacrity in the ways of the Lord. - To the end of our course we therefore should pray, Lord, increase my faith!

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