

MORE AND MORE NO. 3459

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1915
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“But he giveth more grace.”
James 4:6*

PRACTICAL as the epistle of James is, this apostle does not neglect to extol the grace of God. He would be very unpractical if he did. There are some professors of religion who talk as if they loved the doctrines and loathed the duties. They cling to the faith, while they shrink from the works. They accept the principles that are announced, but refuse the precepts that are enjoined. Herein they err.

Yet we would be equally at fault and perhaps, commit a graver error, were we to be biased in the opposite direction. Did we constantly expound and enforce the great things to be done by us without reference to the greater things that have been done for us. Did we commend the fruits regardless of the root from whence they spring. Did we applaud the deeds of men without lauding the grace of God.

Happily we have been taught both the saintship and the service, the covenant engagements, as well as the creature obligations—the divine enablings and the divers abilities of believers that are set in motion. So that we discern without difficulty how the principle of grace combines and co-operates with the practice of goodness. In our conflict with the natural spirit of enmity, grace takes the form of, “more grace,” and it is bestowed upon us that we may be able to overcome and prove victorious.

We shall first consider *the words of our text in their natural connection*. Secondly, we shall *contemplate their general instructions*. Then, thirdly, we shall *connect them with a special application*, seeking, each one of us, to appropriate them to ourselves.

I. OUR TEXT IN ITS NATURAL CONNECTION.

Directly you look at the matter, you are struck with the contrast. It is not merely that a comparison is instituted, but *two potent motives are confronted*—the one a strong instinct, the other a liberal endowment. “The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace.” On our side it is a “spirit”—a turbulent passion. On God’s side it is a sweet *douceur*—a supply of more grace.

We fretful and murmuring, anxious and complaining. He, far from grudging, stinting, or withholding (which would be a fit retaliation), succors us and augments and multiplies His liberality, as if to compensate the aggravation of our waywardness by the enlargement of His concessions. The spirit that is in us complains of God, as though we were jealous that He gave more to others than to us. Still, the Spirit that is in God goes on to give, saying, “Is your eye evil because Mine is good? May I not do what I will with My own?”

The spirit that is in us undervalues what we possess, because, under some aspects, it may not be equally precious with that which somebody else possesses. But God, instead of taking away from us what He has given, because we judge Him so unworthily, only gives more. “He giveth more grace.” One might have supposed that, because “the spirit that is in us lusteth to envy,” therefore we should discover God opposing us, restraining the bottles of heaven, commanding the dew no longer to fall upon us, and withdrawing all the benedictions of His love.

But no, it does not say, “He is opposed to us and whereas we run in one direction, He runs in another. His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. And then, again, our ways are not His ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts. We do not rise to Him and He does not stoop to us, so as to lower His character, by meeting us with that return that would seem due to us, if strict laws of retaliation were carried out.”

Note that contrast. Note it always. Observe how weak we are, how strong He is—how proud we are, how condescending He is—how erring we are, and how infallible He is, how changing we are, and how immutable He is—how provoking we are, and how forgiving He is. Observe how in us there is only ill, and how in Him there is only good. Yet our ill but draws His goodness forth, and still He blesses. Oh! what a rich contrast!

Do we not get a *hint here as to the quarter from which we are to derive the weapons of war against our sin?* “The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy.” What will you say to this? Will you, therefore, sit still and consider that you are excused because this is a positive instinct of your nature? Say you that envy is a natural proclivity, a craving passion of many men, and that it is, therefore, to be accounted of rather as a mental cast than as a moral crime—a flaw in one’s constitution rather than a fault in his conscience? Or to say the worst, more of a distressing temptation than of a detestable transgression against God?

Ah! no, my brethren, there is not a word in holy Scripture that gives the least countenance or the faintest indulgence to any sin. Indulgences for sin may come from Rome, but they never come from Zion. I have known persons attempt to exculpate themselves after a fit of anger by a cool acknowledgment like this—“I was always hot-tempered.”

What is that but a bitter aggravation? You do but admit that your sin is of long-standing and frequent recurrence. You confess, indeed, your greater guilt, and there is no repentance to regret it, no force of conviction to forsake it. So it is with envy—“The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.” So much the worse for our spirit. So much the more guilty are we. This is not only an infirmity which our circumstances have betrayed, but it is an inherent quality of the animal, debased propensity of the creature.

Oh! how defiled must the nature be to which vice is as natural as a black skin to the Ethiopian or as a spotted skin to the leopard! In vain your every plea—you cannot lighten the sin, albeit you may heighten the shame. There is no cause to tamper, but there is a call to arms. “He giveth more grace.” This is as much as to say, “Sit not coolly down and parley with the spirit that is in you lusting to envy, but up! Resist, withstand, and oppose till you quench it!”

Here is counsel to instruct you in this arduous encounter. That evil spirit must be met with a pure, a devout spirit. The weapons of this warfare are not carnal—they are only to be found in the armory of grace. “He giveth more grace.” You cannot overcome your sins by denouncing them, or frustrate their malignity by fostering an admiration of virtues that never grew in the soil of your own hearts.

Nor can you, resolve as you may, keep the moral law. Neither is it possible, by religious services in the future, to make amends for the perversity of your past life. Such proposals and such efforts would become the race of Ishmael, for they are under bondage.

But we are the children of the free woman and we are not moved to holiness by the hope of gaining heaven, or the fear of being sent to hell. We live under a different covenant from that. They have to do with Sinai, which made men tremble—we are not under the law, but under grace, so other arguments persuade us.

When we want weapons wherewith to fight against our sin, we turn to love divine and say, “Behold how God has loved us. Can we act unloving to Him?” Or we go to Calvary and there see what a bitter thing it is to our Well-Beloved. We take the spear that pierced His heart to see if it cannot pierce the heart of our sin. And we take the nails that nailed Him to the tree and pray the Holy Spirit to crucify our flesh, with its affections and lusts.

Our warfare is not carried on by weapons from the armory of Moses—the shield and spear of David suit us better. By faith in the living God, who defends us from danger and guards us with strength, we shall bring down the lion, rend the bear like a kid, and vanquish the Philistine. By the help of His right hand we expect to kill the enemy. We are not going back to legal bondage—we have “more grace.”

And with grace there always comes joy, and peace, and security. That doctrine which, it has been often argued, gives liberty to sin does really set forth the way in which to overthrow and conquer it. The

text, then, gives an indication of the place where we may find the shield and buckler of our sacred war—“He giveth more grace.”

And then the text, besides giving thus a contrast and a suggestion, appears to me to give us *an encouragement for the continuance of our spiritual warfare*. “He giveth more grace.” You had grace at first with which to struggle against the envying and every other sin. You are now alarmed because the warfare of your spirit is so protracted. “He giveth more grace” to continue the struggle. As long as there is one passion in your soul that dares to rise, there will be grace in your soul to answer.

Are you distressed because you don’t appear to be making the headway you could wish against sin? It is a blessed distress and I would not mitigate it, but meanwhile, let us not degenerate into unbelief. Know this, that though there may be more temptation, God will give more grace. And though advancing years may bring more infirmity and consequently, more temptation, He will always give you more grace.

As long as the fight shall last, the help will last. You shall have manna all the while you are in the wilderness—it shall never cease to drop till you come where you no more require it, having crossed the Jordan. Fight on, then. Never think of saying, “I cannot overcome this sin.” By God’s help you must, for no sin can enter heaven with you. You must overcome it. It cannot be permitted that you sit down in peace with any foe to purity. You are never to have peace with any sin.

When, first of all, the Lord Jesus made peace with us, He proclaimed war against sin on every side and of every size, and the loyal Christian never dreams of peace, but contemplates only a perpetual fighting against sin, expecting to have perpetual grace bestowed.

And then it seems to me that, in this matter, we have *a prediction of victory*, for if he giveth more grace, it seems to me thus, that He promises so to augment the force of grace that the sin must ultimately yield to repeated assaults. There shall be more grace than sin—where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Such shall be the climax of every Christian’s experience when it comes to be summed up.

O sin, you cruel, deadly foe! You do seek to capture us, and if possible, to slay us—but you shall not prevail. Sin seeks to enter, grace shuts the door. Sin tries to get the mastery, but grace, which is stronger than sin, resists and will not permit it. Sin gets us down at times and puts its foot on our neck—grace comes to the rescue and faith prompts us to say, “Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, yet shall I rise up again.”

Sin comes up like Noah’s flood, but grace rides over the tops of the mountains like the ark. Sin, like Sennacherib, pours forth its troops to swallow up the land—grace, like the angel of the Lord, goes through the camp of Sennacherib and lays sin dead. O glorious grace, you shall certainly get the victory! “He giveth more grace.” Surely, therefore, there is a prediction, here, of ultimate victory. “The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy,” but for us there is victory, and to JEHOVAH shall it be ascribed, for he giveth more grace. Such, as it seems to me, is the instruction to be drawn from the text, if we take it in its connection.

Now let us take it out of the connection and—

II. USE IT AS A GENERAL TRUTH.

“He giveth more grace.” Does not this mean that *He gives new supplies of grace*? The grace you had yesterday is of no use today. It would breed worms and stink like the old manna. The man who has no new experience of divine love, but tries to live on the memory of the past, will find the food very musty and apt to breed diseases.

The child of God will never prosper on Tuesday through Monday’s grace—and you will not find the supplies of grace for last year keep you afloat during this year. “He giveth more grace.” Grace is like a river—its waters are ever sweet and fresh as it comes rushing from the eternal hills. Like the sunlight, it never sends the same beams twice. It is always fresh, always new. Blessed be God for this! There are perpetual streams of grace.

And He gives *larger supplies of grace*. He gives new drops to the blade, He gives a greater watering to the corn in the ear, sends heavy showers when it comes to the full corn in the ear. There is

comparatively little grace with him who is but a babe in grace, though enough for his present need. There is more grace for the young man who has temptations to avoid that he may cleanse his way. And there is the most grace for the valiant man who is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Little faith has grace, but great faith has more grace. Little love has grace, but God gives greater grace where there is greater love. None of us have got so far but what there is much beyond. Suppose a man says he is perfect? You may conclude that he does not know himself, or the course that lies before him, for if he be perfect in his own estimation, he has not a perfect standard to judge himself by and probably he is not so perfect in his humility as it is desirable he should be.

“God gives more grace,” that is, *higher, larger, deeper, stronger grace*, so that we may go from strength to strength. When it is said, “He giveth more grace,” it means that He gives higher styles of grace, for there are differences and degrees of grace. One man has grace—a proportionate amount of it, but it is of one kind. Now the grace of patience appears to me to be a higher grace than many others, and to come late to some of us. We have not got to it yet.

We have got courage and we have faith in a measure, and that will produce every other virtue, doubtless, but as yet we have not the full closeness of fellowship, the perfectness of acquiescence, the keen susceptibility of the presence of God, and certain other and higher forms of grace of which we cannot now particularly speak.

But these are not things that are reserved and laid by—He gives these higher graces—they are to be had. There is no degree of grace which we ought not to seek after—not with the covetousness that seeks grace for a graceless object like self-exaltation, but with that sacred eagerness which longs for more grace that God may have more glory. God gives to His people the highest forms of grace and therefore, they ought to be encouraged to ask for them.

This precious Word of God which I have before me, dear friends, on which my heart is fondly set, and which my tongue gladly repeats, expresses *a statute of the Lord which we ought to live upon every day*. “He giveth more grace,” By the grace of God I have got to the end of another day. Well, then, I need to go to Him again at my bedside, ere my eyes are closed in slumber, and seek fresh fellowship with Him—“He giveth more grace.”

What He is prepared to give, most certainly I am prone to need. Tomorrow, when I go forth to follow my calling, I know not what may befall me, for I have not trod that way before—but “He giveth more grace.” Every day there are fresh supplies of grace as fresh needs for grace arise. And oh! how I ought to recollect this in my pleadings for others!

Should I not pray for my minister, that he might have more grace? If I do not profit under his ministry as I could wish, I should pray more, being confident of this very thing, that “God gives more grace.” And if I do profit as I could wish, then I have new reasons for praying that he will continue to get more grace, for God has promised to give it.

Have I a child whom I hope to see grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as I see the buddings, the beginning of grace in him, I should plead for more grace. And how, my Christian brethren, in the service of the church, should I fail to plead with God on your behalf?

Much blessed use, too, beloved, may we make of this verse *when called to any fresh service*. If you, who never preached before, should be invited to speak to a few people, do not measure your ability by your inexperience. He who calls you to more service will give you more grace. Or should you be about to move from a little to a larger occupation, you may be timid—cast down because of the littleness of your strength—but “He giveth more grace.”

Possibly, you are entering into deeper trials. You have only been a coaster before, and you kept among the headlands near the shore. Now you are to cross the sea and get out of the sight of land. Well, the pilot knows all about the sea which you are about to traverse—trust Him. “He giveth more grace.” I know you have more fear. The only way to overcome it is by more grace.

Do not be over-anxious to make more provision, or trust to the exercise of more prudence, or rely upon anything you have got, else you will make shipwreck in that manner. But go to the Lord for more

grace. It is the straight way, the right way, the safe way—and in that way you will ever find that more grace will carry you through more trouble.

Possibly you are about to undergo sharper tests than ever. You are to be tried this time as to whether you are really God's servant. Well, if the Lord permits Satan to tempt you, He will give you more grace. He who preserved you in prosperity, will preserve you in adversity. He who kept you in the high places will not forsake you in the lowlands. He who blessed your substance will not suffer you to starve in time of famine. If you need more grace, you shall have more grace to supply your need.

Do not be afraid, dear brother, as to what may happen to you. Go in this your strength—seek the Lord's guidance. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. If God should bid any one of us go right through a wall of adamant, we are to go straight through it and we shall clear our way. He cuts the gates of brass and breaks the bars of iron asunder. Ours is to obey—not to reason or ask why. Ours is to dare and die, if need be, for Him—not to halt or draw back.

When He bids us go, He will clear the way. Through the Red Sea, Israel went. "Forward," was the word, and the floods divided and stood upright as a heap. So shall it be, if providence should call you to the most extraordinary pathway ever trod by human pilgrim. He that calls you will preserve you and cause you to triumph in the way of obedience, for "He giveth more grace."

Again, let us endeavor to—

III. MAKE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE TO OURSELVES.

I would urge each dear brother and sister here to take the words and see what they say to you. "He giveth more grace." Do you suffer from spiritual poverty? It is your own fault, for he giveth more grace. If you have not got it, it is not because it is not to be had, but because you have not gone for it—you have not sought for it—you have not walked in such a way that you could possess it and exhibit its fruit.

If there is anyone—a hired servant of our Father—that is hungry, it is not because our Father's larder is bare, for He has provided bread enough and to spare. And if there is one of our Father's children who cannot fill his belly, it is not because there is not food enough, nor because there is not abundance on the Father's table, but because he chooses to go after the swine husks in some form or other.

We might rejoice, we might triumph, but we take the course which leads to poverty, littleness of grace, leanness of soul. It is our own choice—not the Lord's. The text forbids us ever to lay blame on God. "Have I been a wilderness to Israel?" You might well consider this. You have little love—have I given you little cause for love? Your zeal burns very low—have I given you objects so contemptible that you might reasonably relax your fervor? Ah! no. "He giveth more grace."

He always gives. You hungry ones, that stand shivering there, faint and ready to die—it is not because the oxen and the fatlings are not killed, and all things are not ready—you that pinch yourselves and starve yourselves are not straitened in Him, but straitened in your own heart. May God teach us this lesson! May we come now to God with open mouths that He may fill them. May our desires be strong and our faith a mighty enthusiasm, that, according to our faith, it may be done unto us.

Spiritual growth, if we have any, must never be the subject of our self-congratulation, but *we must give all the glory to God*, for if you look at the text from another point of view, the more grace we have, the more has been given us. If we have it not, it is our own fault, but if we have it, it is not our earning, but His bestowal.

If you have more than another, you have no cause to thank yourself for it. If you can say, "I bless myself that I have more grace than my brother," you have already shown that you are naked, and poor, and miserable, though you think yourself to be rich and increased in goods. All grace leads us to gratitude. Grace never leads us to lift ourselves up and say, "I have done well to obtain it." Grace, like the cargo in the vessel, makes the ship sink deeper in the stream. He that has most grace is the lowliest man. You shall measure your rising in grace by your sinking in humility.

Oh! beloved, what satisfaction and what security we should feel in meditating on the goodness of God. Verily, God is good. This is not an occasional display of His bounty, but it is the universal order of His government in the church, "He giveth more grace."

There is no time given here. You do not find any timetable in Scripture, saying, “At such an hour of the day he giveth more grace,” or “At such a time in the year he giveth more grace,” but it is day by day, all the year round, long as the cycles roll, while the dispensation of mercy lasts. So long as there is an heir of heaven that wants, our Father, who is in heaven, supplies. “He giveth more grace.” What a blessing for us that the grace of God is “unlimited” as to time.

Nor is there any restriction as to the way of our getting it. When “He giveth more grace,” you need not apply through certain appointed priests, or use a prescribed ritual, or put yourselves in certain peculiar postures. No, no. Nothing ceremonial—everything substantial. This provision, like every other promise, is in and through Jesus Christ, the Mediator. If you do but go and seek from Him, He gives what none others can give—He giveth more grace.

Oh! for the agony of prayer that will lead us to the mercy seat with power, and for the humility of soul that empties us in order that there may be room for God to fill us! Oh! for the life of faith which believes that God will do great things, and expects Him to do them! How then should we, each one, have to say, “He gives me more grace: blessed be His name! He leads me on from height to height, enlarges my capacity, and still fills me—makes me feel that there is a greater capacity yet to receive, and an undiminished fullness when my capacity expands.” Turn the meditation into music in your heart. Let the rich melody charm your thoughts. Henceforth may our song be, “He giveth more grace.”

Are any of you seeking more grace? If He has given you grace to seek, He will surely give you more grace—grace to find. Are any of you grieving for sin? That is of His grace—He will give you more grace to rejoice in the pardon of all your sins through Christ. Have you begun to pray? That is according to His grace bestowed on you—but He will give you more grace to continue in prayer until you receive such answers as are the ripe fruit of your supplications.

Thank God for little grace—mind that you do. If you have only starlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you moonlight. Or if you have only moonlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you sunlight. Then, if you have sunlight, thank Him fervently and He will give you shortly as the light of seven days. Be thankful, since a little grace is more than you deserve, be thankful for the least grain that the Lord adds to it.

Oh! that you might be all led to believe in Christ. It pleased the Father to give Christ Jesus to us and in Him all fullness dwells. He cannot give you more, because in this one gift every other gift is concentrated. You cannot want more than Jesus. With Him you shall find that you receive more and more grace adequate to your needs and according to His exceeding riches of glory. So shall you praise Him more and more forever and ever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 24:1-16; 1 SAMUEL 30:1-13; 1 JOHN 1:1-3

Our subject is the value of divine guidance, and we shall, therefore, read two passages of Scripture illustrating the truth which we hope to enforce.

GENESIS 24:1-16

Verse 1. *And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.*

Happy man that can say that, who has a blessing everywhere! And yet Abraham had his “but,” for as yet Isaac was unmarried and perhaps he little dreamed that for twenty years afterwards he who was to build the house of Abraham was to remain childless. Yet so it was. There was always a trial for Abraham’s faith, but even his trials were blessed, for “God blessed Abraham in all things.”

2. *And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:*

According to the Eastern manner of swearing.

3. *And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:*

This holy man was careful of the purity of his family—he knew what an ill effect a Canaanitish wife might have upon his son, and also upon his offspring. He was, therefore, particularly careful here. I would that all parents were the same.

4-5. *But you shall go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I bring your son again unto the land from whence thou camest?*

The servant was very careful. Those that swear too readily they know not what, will ere long swear till they care not what. Better still is it for the Christian to remember the Words of Christ, “Swear not at all, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath.” Doubtless the doctrine of the Savior is that all oaths of every sort are lawful to the Christian, but if they ever are taken, it should be with deep circumspection and with earnest prayerfulness—that there be no mistake about the matter.

6. *And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.*

He knew that God had called him and his kindred to inherit the land of Canaan and therefore, he was not willing that they should go back to their former dwelling-place.

7. *The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.*

What simple faith! This was the very glory of Abraham’s faith—it was so simple, so childlike. It might be many miles to Padan-aram, but it does not matter to faith. “My God will send his angel.” Oh! we are always making difficulties and suggesting hardships, but if our faith were in lively exercise, we should do God’s will far more readily. “Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” Brethren, let us be of good heart and of good courage in all matters, for doubtless the angel of God will go before us.

8-11. *And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.*

Now I think I may freely say that this looks something like what we call “a wild goose chase.” He was to go and find a wife for a young man left at home. He knew nothing of the people among whom he was to sojourn, but he believed that the angel of God would guide him aright. What ought he to do, now he had come near to the time when the decision must be made? He should seek counsel of God—and observe that he did so.

12-14. *And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.*

I do not know that he is to be imitated in setting a sign to God. Perhaps not, but he did his best—he left the matter with God, and a thing is always in good hands when it is left with Him. There is a deal of wisdom in this sign, however. Why did he not say, “The damsel that shall first offer me a drink”? No, she might be a little too forward, and a forward woman was not a fit spouse for the good and meditative

Isaac. He himself was to address her, first, and then she must be ready, with all cheerfulness, to do far more than he asks. She was to offer him a drink and draw water for his camels. She would thus not be afraid of work, she would be courteous, she would be kind, and all these meeting in one might show him, and by this test he might very wisely discover that she was a fitting woman for Isaac, and might become his spouse.

15. *And it came to pass, before he had done speaking,*

Ay, he did not know that promise, “While they are yet speaking I will hear,” but God keeps His promises before He makes them and therefore, I am sure He will keep them after He has made them.

15-16. *That, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.*

And so on—I need not read the rest of the story, because we now find that, through earnest prayer, the good servant has been rightly led.

We will now turn to another passage where we shall have another instance of a difficult case—where another person put his case before the Lord, and sought guidance and found it.

1 SAMUEL 30:1-13

Verses 1-2. *And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.*

What a singular providence! There was a blood-feud between Amalek and Israel since Israel endeavored to exterminate the Amalekites, and it is written, “The Lord shall have war with Amalek for ever and ever.” Yet God holds in these tigers and will not let the lions devour their prey.

3-4. *So David and his men came to the city, and behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.*

They were tired and weary after a long march with Achish, and then another long march home. Oh! how they longed for their couches! How they desired to sit down and converse with their wives and their little ones! Tears did not seem a sufficient expression for their sorrow, and yet when a strong man weeps—a burly warrior like Joab, a rough, coarse man like Abishai, or a strong young man like Asahel—there must be deep grief. They wept till they had no more power to weep.

5-6. *And David’s two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*

He had not only his own personal sorrow, but that of all his people. And then, instead of comforting him, every friend had turned into a foe. His house was a heap of ashes—he might have said—“Ahinoam is not, and Abigail is not, and my children have You taken away. All these things are against me.” But he had more faith than Job, and so he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

7. *And David said to Abiathar, the priest, Ahimelech’s son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.*

Ah! that’s the thing! Bring hither the old family Bible. Let us go to prayer about it. Down on our knees and tell the Lord the case.

8. *And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.*

But it is easier said than done. Where are they? How shall they find these fleet Amalekites who fly away so rapidly?

9-10. *So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.*

Worse and worse you see! But the case is in God's hands and no matter what the circumstances may be. All's well that ends well, and God always has the enemy in His hands.

11-13. *And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? And from whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.*

Shame on his master, I say, and yet there are some who stop their men's wages as soon as they get a little ill! Shame on them, I say. It might be fit for an Amalekite to do this, but certainly not for an Israelite. So this young Egyptian tells David all about what they had done. And David follows them, smites them with the sword, takes away their plunder, and moreover, gets a great spoil to himself, and so the Lord hears the voice of David.

Now Abraham's servant and David were men in like difficulties with us, but they asked guidance of God and received it. Let us be sure in every time of difficulty to do the same.

1 JOHN 1:1-3

Verse 1. *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life:*

The fact that Christ was really in the flesh, that He was no phantom, no shadow mocking the eyes that looked upon Him, is exceedingly important, and hence John (whose style, by the way, in this epistle is precisely like the style which he uses in his Gospel)—John begins by declaring that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in His eternity was from the beginning, was really a substantial man, for he says, "We have heard him"—hearing is good evidence. "Which we have seen with our eyes"—eyesight is good, clear evidence certainly. "Which we have looked upon"—this is better still, for this imports a deliberate, careful, circumspect gaze.

But better still, "Which our hands have handled"—for John had leaned his head on Jesus Christ's bosom, and his hands had often met the real flesh and blood of the living Savior. We need have no doubt about the reality of Christ's incarnation when we have these open eyes and hands to give us evidence.

2. *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

That same eternal Being who is Very God of Very God, and is worthy to be called essentially Life, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and the apostles could say, "We beheld his glory."

3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,*

See how he does hammer this nail as if he will drive it fast! How he rings this bell that it may toll the death-knell of every doubt!

3. *That ye also may have fellowship with us:*

But John, what is the value of fellowship with you, you and your brethren, a parcel of poor fishermen? Who wants fellowship with you—hooted, despised, mocked, and persecuted in every city—who wants fellowship with you?

3. *And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

What a leap from the fisherman to the Father's throne, from the poor, despised son of Zebedee up to the King of Kings! Oh! John, we would have fellowship with you now! We will have fellowship with

your scorn and spitting, that we may have fellowship with you, and with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.