

BREAKFAST WITH JESUS NO. 2072

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1889,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.”

Or, as we have it in the Revised Version,

“Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst enquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.”
John 21:12.

THE Lord Jesus is thoughtful of bodily wants. In His earlier days He fed multitudes of people, on two grand occasions, with bread and fish. And now that He has died and risen from the dead, and is in the body of His glory, He still thinks of the hungering bodies of men, and calls to the fishermen, “Children, have ye any meat?” Finding that they have nothing, He makes a breakfast for them. “Come and break your fast” falls very condescendingly from His lips and it proves to us how He cares for the temporal needs of the poor.

Here is warrant for the servants of God endeavoring to feed the hungry crowd. We are not to buy them with so-called charities, for that our Lord never did. Loaves and fishes are a very poor spiritual bait and catch none of the right sort of fish. The feeding must come because they need it, and for the love of God, and with no ulterior aim. As the Savior fed the people, so, according to our ability, we may attempt to do, without fear that we shall therein be going beyond our legitimate province.

Our Lord and Savior was particularly mindful in this case of the wants of His own people. These seven apostles were supplied by His care. If any of you are in needy and trying circumstances, catch at this fact and be encouraged. He that said to the seven, “Come and break your fast,” will not forget you in the time of your need. On your part, now is the time for the exercise of faith. And on His part, now is the season for the display of His power. If you look to your fellow men perhaps they may fail to help you—they are far too apt to give the cold shoulder to those who are not well-to-do. But if you look to Him, you shall have your prayer answered.

“In some way or other the Lord will provide.”

I cannot tell how, any more than I can tell you how our Lord lighted that fire of coals, or how He procured the fish which was broiling on the fire. But there was the fire and there was the fish. And so, in the Lord's own way, it shall be seen that the Lord will provide. “Trust in the LORD and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed.” He that taught you to say, “Give us this day our daily bread” did not teach you an empty phrase. O you whose need presses so closely as even to make you acquainted with hunger, behold how Jesus pities you, and look to Him to aid you. For He is the same now as He was by the lake of Galilee.

Go a step further. As Jesus is so careful of the condition of His people that He will have their bodies fed, we may be sure that He will have their souls nourished. I said to myself, as I considered my return among you, “The first thing we will do when I get home shall be to feed the servants of God, that they

may be in good working order.” Our Lord began this third manifestation of Himself, not with prayer, but with provender. Much had to be said and done, but they must breakfast first.

They were to be questioned, rebuked, instructed, commissioned, warned, but they must first be fed. The essential thing that morning was a fire of coals and broiled fish and bread, for they must be put into good condition, and then they would be ready to hear what their Lord should say to them. Things that were of prime importance must yet be kept back a little while, until they could bear them and profit by them, and that they could not do while they were cold and hungry. Hence fire and food.

Now, if it was so with the body, how much more is it so with the soul? I want you, therefore, this morning, to ask the Lord to spread a table for you in the wilderness. May your song at this time be—

*“The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.”*

Many things call for your earnest attention, but it will be poor haste if you rush to work without refreshing the inner man. Pause a while and feast with your Lord in order that you may be able to attend to your pressing duties.

If you had a tree to fell, you would count it no loss of time first to sharpen your axe. When the axe is sharp, then the tree will come down all the sooner—sharpen, therefore, the axe of your mind. This morning have nothing to do but to attend to the feeding of your soul. The Lord’s first miracle was at a wedding feast, and in the miracle now before us He provides a breakfast. His is no starveling Gospel, He gives us all things richly to enjoy. Hear His cry, in the ancient Song of Songs—“Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Dear child of God believe and doubt not. Should a choice morsel come your way, partake of it with a believing confidence.

I. First, I shall invite you TO SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF A FEAST WITH JESUS.

Jesus says to you, “Come and break your fast.” And His words are never without the deepest meaning. See the importance of a meal with Jesus. It was peculiarly needful to these men because *they were in a needy condition*. They were wet, cold, and hungry. A fire of coals was a fine center for them, whereat they could dry their jerseys and warm their hands. The fish, fresh from the sea and from the fire, was most suitable for their hunger. Before them Jesus spreads the old food with which He always fed the people—food pleasant and easy to digest.

Bread, with a relish of fish, was the constant *menu* of all our Lord’s feasts. Jesus does not like to see His servants wet, and cold, and hungry. And so He provides for the removal of these discomforts. Depend upon it, what Jesus does not like to see is not good for us. It is not well for us to be unhappy. If, therefore, you feel this morning, in your inmost souls, uncomfortable and much out of sorts, your Lord does not wish you to be so. The thoughts of your own misery will hinder your thoughts of Him and prevent your rendering Him good service. My Master bids me, this morning, to see to it that all hands are provided with good cheer.

Gladly, therefore, do I invite you to the fire of coals which is furnished by His glowing love. Cheerfully do I set before you the holy food of sacred truth furnished by His Word, and I would thus fulfill His command to me, “Feed my sheep.” It is important, dear child of God, that you should be happy. It is important that you should be in a flourishing spiritual condition within. Therefore, come and break your fast with Jesus. Many a battle has been lost because the soldiers were not in good fettle for the fight. Let it not be so with you. You need stamina if you are to do hard and long work for Jesus and His truth, and there is no keeping up the stamina without heavenly food. It is important, considering the condition of many of you, that you should have a meal with Jesus at once.

Besides, *they were weary with a night’s fruitless toil*. As I told you in reading, it was “night” and “nothing” while Jesus was away. Have I not before me some servants of God who have not seen any good following their exertions of late? They have fished for men but the nets have remained empty. It is

dreary work, toiling all night and taking nothing. I know this, because I know still better the reverse of it. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have a successful season by the little river of retirement, when one is away from the great sea of the city!

In my late seclusion it has seemed to me that the fish kept coming up to my line and biting at my hook, though I had not of purpose baited it for any! The Lord sent me persons to receive a blessing and they had a quiet word, and went on their way rejoicing. Alas! it is not always so. You may have a widespread net cast into the great sea and no end of fishes all around you, and yet you may take nothing—that night's work yielded nothing but splash and haul, disappointment and fatigue. If you are in that condition, you evidently need encouragement. Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord will be your present want. The Savior calls to you, "Come and breakfast. Leave the boat and the nets and forget the night's vain toil and come and commune with Me." Weary worker, worried and weeping, cease your complaining, and come to the fire and the food which Jesus provides for you.

You will remind me that before the breakfast the disciples *had taken a great number of fish and had counted them*. Just so, and that is another reason for calling them to feast with Jesus. Catching fish is a fine business, but being fed is equally needful. No fisherman can live on catching and counting. It is a very deceptive thing for a man to sustain his faith upon the success of his labors.

Our tendency in a revival is to rejoice over converts, and count them "a hundred and fifty and three." It is not wrong to count your converts if Christ gives them to you—the awkward part of it is that you are apt to count in with the fish a number of frogs—I mean a sort of convert that Jesus never sent. You may, if you please, count every convert and say, "a hundred and fifty and three," but do not think that this will nourish your own soul. You cannot sustain the life of grace upon the grace received by others.

Believe me, you must in secret draw from the divine storehouse your personal supplies, or you will be famished. You will find it very hungry work if you try to live on catching and counting! You must be yourself watered, or your watering of others will dry up your soul. The most successful evangelist, if he attempts to live on his own work, will suck up the wind. If a teacher of children, or a conductor of young men's classes makes the food of his soul to be his success in the service of God, he will feed on ashes. O you that have had grand times in preaching or teaching, do not be content with these! Grace for your office is one thing—grace for yourselves is another. It is well to catch fish, but even that would be sorry work if you perished with hunger yourselves.

Again, dear friends, I think it was a very necessary thing that they should break their fast, *for the Lord Jesus Christ was going to search their hearts*. "When they had dined"—notice that, not till then—Jesus questioned Peter. When they had breakfasted, "Jesus saith, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "When they had breakfasted," not before. He would not deal with Peter, or any of them, while they had empty stomachs. I beg you to feed well this morning, because you will have to be overhauled before long, and it will be well to have heart to bear it. Truth will be preached to you another day which will blow quite through you, like a mighty wind—truth which will burn as an oven and like a refiner's fire. Get yourself in good order for cross-examination.

Prepare your soul for the hour of trial when the business of the hour will be to answer the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Ah, dear friends! if heart-searching trials come upon us when we are lean and famished, they pull us down dreadfully, for we are out of condition, but the same measure of heart-searching administered to us when soundly nourished by communion with Christ, will do us much good.

*"Though cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;
When I have fed with Christ at home,
My soul defies them all."*

He that is right with God can bear to be questioned. He that is nourished and built up with heavenly food can bear to examine the grounds of his faith and to test the foundations of his hope. Such a man can face the enquiry—

*“Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His, or am I not?”*

So, therefore, because heart-searching times will come before long, I entreat you to comfort your souls with a morsel of bread.

Remember, also, that *they were about to receive a commission*—they were to be told to feed Christ’s lambs and sheep. But I think I hear you say, “That commission, like the examination, was directed to Peter.” I know it. But I am also sure that when the Lord said to Peter, “Lovest thou me?” the question went home to them all. What the Lord said to Peter especially, He was saying to them all, in truth.

Have you never felt, when a word of warning has been addressed to your friend, that it was even more applicable to yourself than to him? An indirect admonition is, to some natures, more powerful than one personally directed. Nathanael, Thomas, James, John, and the others were quite as truly addressed by the Savior as “Simon, son of Jonas.”

The arrow shot at Simon was not lost upon the sons of Zebedee. Certainly they were all of them to feed the lambs and pastorize the sheep, and the commission which was given distinctly to Peter was meant for all the Lord’s servants. See, then, the necessity for their breaking their fast. If they are to feed others, they must be fed themselves. “The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.” He that waters others must be himself watered. “They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept,” was a very sorrowful lament, and the Lord would not have His people imitate it.

Jesus was going to give them a blessed work to do, and therefore He would put them into working order before He allotted it to them. O brothers and sisters, it may seem a very small thing for you to feed your own selves, but it is not so. I would have you strong yourselves, that you may labor for others. You cannot be made a blessing to those around you till you are blest yourselves. Your usefulness largely depends upon your personal joy—“The joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Once more, *our Lord was going to give to one of them a warning* and by that one to hint much the same heritage of trials to the others. “Another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Crucifixion awaited Peter, and a martyr’s death in some form awaited all those who were present, except John. This the Master lets them know, but He does not mention it till they have dined. Do not reckon upon an easy journey between here and heaven. If you do, you will be mistaken, for “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” If the Lord loves you, He will chasten you—it is the covenant mark. Marvel not when you fall into manifold trials, but rather rejoice in this, that you have evidence herein that your Father has not forgotten you, but is still training you for His heaven.

But while we give you that warning, we invite you to come and feed on heavenly bread, and refresh your souls with those spiritual luxuries whereby men are made ready for labor and suffering. “Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness,” that you may be prepared to do that which is good and delight yourself in sacrifice. It is no trifling matter, therefore, when I say to you, in the words of the Old Version, “Come and dine,” or in the more exact phrase of the Revision, “Come and break your fast.”

Thus much for the importance of the matter.

II. Secondly, I want you to SEE JESUS HIMSELF ACTING AS YOUR HOST.

It was Jesus who cried to them, “Children, have you any meat?” It was He that said, “Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.” It is He that gives the invitation, “Come and break your fast.” Jesus is Master of the feast.

He condescends to the feast. Is it not wonderful that the Holy Lord should have communion with His faulty followers? Yet He will breakfast with us—with us who doubted Him, as Thomas did. With us who denied Him, as Peter did. With us who forsook Him and fled, as all the rest did.

He, always sinless, was now without physical necessities. He had risen from the dead and He did not need to eat, yet did He still have familiar fellowship with sinful man. On one occasion He ate a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb. And I suppose that on this occasion He also ate with them. For one does not ask others to come and dine, and then Himself refrain from eating. He communed with them by that bread and by that fish. It was wonderful condescension. But will the Lord still come and commune with us? Will He, “without whom was not anything made that was made,” have fellowship with a sinful mortal like me?

Take comfort, you who are conscious of sin, from the fact that His last near companion here below was a thief, and the first that passed the pearly portal with Him and entered into His kingdom was that self-same justly executed one. Come along with you, you child of God, conscious of your gross unworthiness—come, for He invites you now to feast with Himself. This shall be your nourishment, not only the food which He prepares for you, as His own company.

Notice that Jesus, as the host, *prepared the feast.* We shall never know how that fire of coals was kindled—some speak confidently of it as the work of angels. But why introduce angels where they are not needed? They can kindle fires, doubtless—but so can the Savior without their aid. There was the fire of coals and there was the fish laid thereon. Where did He get the fish? All sorts of idle speculations have been raised about His having bought it from a passing boat. There is no need of such inventions. Doubtless both fire and fish were the products of creative power. We have before us one of those miracles which were commonplace to the Savior. He spoke, and there was the fire and the fish laid thereon, and a crisp cake hot from the coals.

Dear friends, your soul can never feed except upon what Jesus has prepared for you. His flesh is meat indeed. But there is no other meat for souls. He has not to kindle a fire for your comfort—it is burning now—it has been kindled long ago. There was never a morsel of manna in the mouth of any child of God but the Word of the Lord supplied it. There was never food yet for a true heart but what it came from Him who is our life, and the food of our life. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” said they of old—but that is exactly what He does. All that He gives to us of spiritual nourishment is of His own preparing.

What is equally wonderful to me is this—after the Lord had prepared it, *He Himself was the waiter at the feast.* Read verse thirteen—“Jesus then comes and takes the bread, and gives them, and fish likewise.” When there are seven at table, a host might well be justified in saying, “Dear friends, you are welcome to all that is before you, pray help yourselves.” But we cannot help ourselves—He who prepares the feast must also bring the food to us. “Jesus then comes and takes the bread, and gives them, and fish likewise.” Only one serving man, and that the Lord Himself!

O Master, we know there is good spiritual food in Your Word, but we are not able to appropriate it. Come You and Yourself lay home the promise to the heart. You know what a way our Lord has of *making* us to lie down in green pastures—we do not even lie down of ourselves. He places the nourishing Word in the heart. Remember that passage in Hosea, which stands in the original, “Behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart.” I can speak to your ear, but Jesus speaks to the heart.

The Lord Jesus, by the work of the Holy Spirit, has a way of conveying the heavenly food into us, that we do receive and inwardly digest it, and it then enters into the secret part of the soul and is assimilated, and we are truly built up thereby. I pray that the Holy Ghost may thus work at this time. See your host. It is the Lord Himself who lovingly condescends to commune with you, and in a wonderful way prepares the feast, and with boundless condescension Himself helps you to it.

All the while He was doing this *He showed Himself.* “This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples.” The chapter opens by saying, “And on this wise showed he himself.” When the

Lord was handing out that bread He was showing Himself and they could see Him in that act. And when He brought them the fish to eat, they saw Him revealed as the very Christ. They saw more of Him in giving the bread and the fish than they would have seen if He had stood still to be gazed upon. Jesus feeding us is Jesus revealed. If He had stretched out His hand for them to examine the nail-prints, they would not have seen Him so well as when that hand gave them food.

Oh, if the Lord Jesus will come to you individually, as I pray He may, and bring you heavenly food this morning, you will see Him—see Him with eyes full of tears. Are there not times with you when divine truth comes home to you in such a sweet, comforting, nourishing way that you have said, “It is the Lord. He is Himself the sum and substance of His own blessed Gospel. He has Himself brought me into His banqueting house and His banner over me is His own love”? A vision of Christ is the most filling thing in the world. If we may but see Him in glory, that shall be the heaven of heaven.

If I were the dying thief, I would be happy to die with Him side by side on the cross, and count it bliss to be with Him there. But what must it be to pass through the pearly gate with Him, and to be with Him in His kingdom, as that same dying thief was! This is your morning’s portion—do not miss it. “He showed himself.” Is it weeks since you have seen your Lord? Oh! then, heave a great sigh and say, “Lord, show Yourself to me.” Is it days since you have had actual fellowship with Jesus? Oh, that your heart might break after Him now! Do not be satisfied to let this morning’s sitting break up without your having seen the Lord—everyone of you who are His true disciples.

O dear friends, you that hear about Christ and just let it glide by—what are you worth? What sort of Christians are those who do not know the vitals of Christianity, the secret enjoyments of rapturous love? Outside, in merely external religion, everything is cold and dreary, and I do not wonder at people getting weary of it and giving it up. The glory lies within the veil. We must see Jesus. Our home is where God reveals Himself to His people. Little drops of religion are poor things. Oh, for Madame Guyon’s *torrents*! Oh, that the sacred torrent would bear us away! That mighty river, not the river Kishon, but what if I call it Kedron?—the Kedron of His suffering love, which is a torrent indeed! Oh, to be borne along by the stream of free grace and dying love, until one is conscious of nearing the unfathomable depths of love unsearchable!

Thus much about our host. Mine is a poor talk. God grant that, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you may get far beyond me and see Him, whom having not seen we love!

III. Now, SEE THE PROVISION.

I have tried to beckon you into the feast and I have also tried to point out our host. Now, attentively regard the provisions. There are two parts. First, there was what He had mysteriously prepared—the fish laid upon the coals, and secondly, what He had graciously given, for He said, “Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.” It was the same sort of fish, no doubt, but it came in two ways.

First, let us note *the mysteriously prepared provision*. See the fish which is broiling on the coals! Mysterious fish! Mysterious coals! Feed now with all your hearts upon the mystery of everlasting love. “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Feed on the mystery of the covenant of grace, when, on your behalf, the blessed Son of God stood Sponsor and Surety before the great Father and the Father covenanted for His Son’s sake to bless His chosen. Oh, the mystery of the eternal gift of the elect to Jesus and the gift of Jesus to His elect! Before the world began all this was provided for our need. Cannot you feed on this?

Think, next, of the kinship of Christ to you. He came to Bethlehem that He might take our nature. He lay an infant on a woman’s breast. He was cradled as a Child. He abode here a suffering, wayworn man. Was not that a beautiful verse we sang just now, which began—

*“Jesus, our Kinsman and our God,
Arrayed in majesty and blood
Thou art our life, our souls in Thee
Possess a full felicity”?*

Yes, He is brother to you—of your nature, of your flesh, and of your bones—your *Goel*, next of kin, sworn to redeem you, and even espoused to you. Jesus is brother to you who are in adversity. Feed on that.

Here is another fish of the kind found only in the sea of mysterious love—I point you to His effectual atonement. He has finished His lifework for you and poured forth the price of your redemption—minting it from His own heart. He has washed you from your sins in His own blood. He has made you kings and priests unto God. He has bought you with a price, so that you are not your own. The dying Christ bore your penalty—the living Christ has ensured your acceptance and your immortality. “Because I live,” says He, “ye shall live also.”

While He shows Himself to you this morning, He gives you these ancient things to feed upon. Come, feast upon the love that had no beginning, the love that can know no end, nor change, nor be measured. Remember your living and everlasting union with Him. The union between you and the Ever-blessed is inseparable. “Who shall separate us?”

Come, fall to! I pray you, break your fast, you who are most weary, and worn, and sad! Sit not back from the table, but eat to the full. My beloved, eat of these fish laid on the coals—these mystic, marvelous things—in the preparation of which you have had no hand, but which Jesus aforetime has prepared for you.

But the feast was also made of *what the Lord had graciously given and they had drawn out of the deep*. The Lord has caused us to obtain many precious things by His own Spirit, and these we have made our own, taking them in our net and dragging them to shore. Let us feed on mercies experienced. Just now to myself these are very many—“a hundred and fifty and three.” I can scarcely count the favors the Lord has given me of late. My net is not broken, but I wonder it is not. For the draught of benefits is so great—He daily loads me with benefits. I desire abundantly to utter the memory of His great goodness.

Cannot you do the same and in the memory find a feast for love? “A hundred and fifty and three”—an odd number but large—a number which, if you have been careful in your gratitude, may be very exact for all that—even the last three must not be forgotten.

*“Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise.”*

“How precious, also, are thy thoughts unto me, O God!” The Lord has dealt well with His servants, according to His Word. Let us rejoice in His name as He has revealed it to us.

Have you not a net full of answers to prayer? Some here present have received such blessings that they may be compared to great fishes. When we have many fishes we expect them to be small fry, but ours are all great fish. Oh, the great goodness of a great God to great sinners in the times of their great need! Let us be satisfied with the Lord’s great goodness to us when in trouble we have sought His face. “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” “I sought the LORD, and he heard me.” Come, feed upon what you have already tasted and handled, both of His word and work. Rejoice in what you have seen Him do in you, and for you. Why, here are great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three.

The provision on the lake shore was more than enough for seven men, however hungry they might be. Was it not? They might eat as much as they liked without any fear of exhausting the supply. And after the meal, they would not have left twelve baskets full alone, as there had been at the former feast, but a superabundance for their brethren, or for any wanderers along the shore. Now, dear friends, try for a minute or two to dwell upon the wonders of God’s truth and grace to you. Think of what He did in your conversion. What He has done in the time of temptation—how He has supplied your needs, and how He has given you enjoyments of His love.

I was looking back through former volumes of my sermons and I noticed how often a sermon occurs without a date upon it. I know what that denotes. It means that I was ill and in great pain. Two or three

times in almost every year I have to hear the Lord preach to me in the chamber of sickness, and I am unable, therefore, to preach to you. These were bitter things at the time, but I bless the Lord for them all, and for raising me up again and again, and renewing my strength. He will not leave me now. Cannot you also turn to your diaries and remember the loving kindness of the Lord, and speak well of His name? All this will be to you a fire of coals and fish drawn from the deep sea.

I have almost done. I do not know whether you have been fed, but I hope you have. I would again invite you in Wisdom's name, saying, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."

IV. But lastly, SEE HOW THE GUESTS BEHAVED THEMSELVES.

I hope if you are fed well, you will behave in the same way. These guests of our Savior's, we find, "durst not ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." Come, let us get close up to our Lord.

When a soul draws near to Jesus, *its words are few or none*. Notice what the disciples said to the Master on this occasion. They only spoke one word and that word was "No." John spoke to Peter, but not to the Lord. All the time before breakfast and all the time they were at breakfast, they never said anything to Him but, "No." That one deep "No" betrayed the vacuum, the emptiness, the hunger—that was all they had to say. You, also, may say as much to your Lord as that—"Lord, I am nothing, nobody. I have nothing. I can do nothing without You." Not another word is recorded as coming from them.

That devotion which must always show itself by shouting may be very genuine, but it is to be feared that it is superficial. Deep waters run silently. Great feeling is dumb—there is a frost of the mouth when there is a thaw of the soul. Words are often a wall between our spirit and the Great Spirit.

I think I remember reading of George Fox sitting down with a crowd of people round him, for a long time, and never saying a word. They were all watching and waiting. And if it had been myself, I should have stood up full soon and have said something, like a fool. But he was a wise man, and he sat still. It takes a very wise man to hold his tongue so long. George Fox kept silent that he might famish the people from words. A grand lesson for them and one that might be useful to some of you.

You must have words! Fine words! Wonderful words! A big mouthful of words is fine food for fools. Some preachers seem to think that saints can feed on their eloquence but they need more substantial meat. Could we not put things prettily if we were to try and throw out to you great bouquets of flowers? What would be the good of it? You want food. You want Christ. And if you could get Jesus Himself, words would be an impertinence—your own words as well as mine.

As there were no words, so there could be *no doubtful questions*. Whenever a man gets away from communion with Christ, he begins to ask a host of questions. Persons who have no religion have always a selection of religious questions, varying from the stupidity of, "Who was Cain's wife?" onward to, "What will man become by evolution?" When a soul has drawn near to Jesus and has been fed by Him, it is no more troubled with doubts than a man at the equator is bitten by frost.

"I believe in the Bible," said one. "How can you do that?" sneered another. "Because I know the Author," was the fit reply. If you are walking in the light with your Lord, questions and doubts are heard no more, but you adore in deep restfulness of soul, "knowing that it is the Lord." How did the disciples know this? By reason? Well, the knowledge is not unreasonable. But we rise higher—we know Jesus by contact, by converse, and by a consciousness—or shall I call it an omnipotently overpowering conviction?—which needs no supporting argument. When we fall at His feet in lowliest reverence of joyful love, we believe and are sure. We become doubt-proof. As an iron-clad throws off the ball which is hurled at it, so a love-clad heart defies all the suggestions of skepticism.

They ate the bread and fish that morning, I doubt not, *in silent self-humiliation*. Peter looked with tears in his eyes at that fire of coals, remembering how he stood and warmed himself when he denied his Master. Thomas stood there, wondering that he should have dared to ask such proofs of a fact most clear. All of them felt that they could shrink into nothing in His divine presence, since they had behaved so ill.

Yet were they also *silent for joy*. Did you ever feel the bliss of dying to self? As you near the vanishing point of self, the glory of the Lord dawns on you with immeasurable splendor. To grow bigger, and bigger, and bigger, until you fill the halls of fame and your name echoes round the world, is the ambition of the vain and it is an abomination. But to grow less and less, till the Lord God is all in all, is the joy of saints and it is an offering of sweet smell.

*“The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie:
Thus, while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high.”*

They were *silent in wonder* as they gazed on the risen One. He was all over wonder to them—a world of beauties and of miracles. When He fed them, when He gave them the bread, when He gave them the fish—it was a melting season. They remembered how He washed their feet, but then He was in His state of humiliation. And they marveled yet more that now He was risen He would still be among them “as one that serves.” They were dumb with surprise, and gratitude, and love.

I suppose they could not speak because *they felt such deep, unutterable reverence for His majesty*. They felt, with Jacob, “How dreadful is this place!” God was manifest in the flesh and they beheld His glory. Hence Peter speaks of himself as “a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” What could they do but, while they apprehended that glory, remain quiet and inwardly adore? Quietism alone may gender evil, but the practice of occasional quiet affords healthy nourishment to the soul. A sitting silently at the feet of Jesus is of more worth than all the clatter of Martha’s dishes.

Communion with Christ will teach you a reverence which words cannot express. There is an exceeding weight of glory which would break the backs of all the words of all languages should we essay to load them therewith—

“Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise.”

“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.”

Brethren, have you fed? Have you had breakfasted with Jesus? If so, I am well content. But I would remind you that when you come hither again, you must hear what your Lord has to say by way of question and command, for, “when they had dined,” solemn business began. It must not be with us as with Israel—“The people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play.” But we rise to work, and suffer, and to go far towards heaven in the strength of the meat we have enjoyed.

Someone will ask, “Have you not a word for the unconverted this morning?” Indeed, I have something better than words. When we set forth the provisions of grace before the godly, we are really inviting poor hungry sinners. The sight of food is a fine creator of appetite. When the prodigal returned to his father, they brought forth the best robe and put it on him, and they put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. But when it came to the eating, what was done? The father did not say, “Bring forth the fatted calf and feed my son with it. His words were—“Let *us* eat and be merry.”

Why, I thought he was caring most for his returning child? Yes, but he was faint, and sick at heart, and needed to have his appetite aroused. One sure way to induce another to eat is to eat yourself. If he stands there and his sadness has taken away his appetite, do you eat and be merry, and you will soon find that his mouth will begin to water and he will be ready to feed with you. I do hope some people will feel an appetite coming to them this morning and will cry, “I long to feed on heavenly bread and to have my heart refreshed in the presence of the Lord Jesus.”

O poor heart, believe in Jesus and He is yours! Children of God, just as you can enjoy Christ and show that enjoyment in your lives, you will be fascinating others to your Lord, and thus by your means I shall not have preached in vain to the unconverted.

O you who would fain come to Jesus, look at the first chapter of this Gospel of John. The word is there, “Come and see.” While in this last chapter of John it is, “Come and dine.” Remember that the first thing to do is to “Come and see,” or look to Jesus. He says, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” Look to Jesus, see Him dying in your stead to put away your guilt. Look with the appropriating glance of faith, trusting in Him. And then ere long you shall feed on Him, to your heart’s delight. The Lord send His blessing upon this word, for His name’s sake! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 21

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—908, 820, 385

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