**THIRSTING FOR THE SPRINGS - SERMONS BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**01. WHY TELL IT? by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"He made as though He would go further."*

*Luke 24:28*

"He made as though He would go further." Is there any ministry concealed in this apparently trifling incident? The Master knew whenever He turned aside into the disciples' house He would receive most hearty welcome and entertainment. "He knew what was in man," and He therefore discerned the grace of hospitality hidden in their hearts. He knew that they were hospitably disposed. Why, then, did He make "as though He would go further?" He wished to elicit a voluntary expression of their hospitality. They were not wanting in goodness; it only needed to be exercised. The hospitable disposition was not absent; it only required to be evoked. And so "He made as though He would go further." The hidden goodness then sought expression. Feeling confessed itself in appropriate speech. The sentiment of hospitality found voice, "But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: because it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent."

"He made as though He would go further." The loving device was practised not for His own sake, but for the sake of the two disciples. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." It was not that He might obtain a night's lodging, but that they might obtain a larger heart. Goodness expressed is goodness confirmed. Hospitality uttered is hospitality enriched. Feelings that never find utterance may die from slow suffocation. To confess a sentiment is to strengthen it. To hide a sentiment may be to lose it. And so the purpose of the Master was to strengthen the better nature of His companions by eliciting its expression. These men were stronger and wealthier when their hospitality had uttered itself at the gracious constrain of the Lord. And so, through this apparently meaningless incident we pass into a spacious principle. And the principle is this. If you wish to strengthen a feeling, express it; if you wish to destroy it, deprive it of a tongue. In the domain of gracious feeling expression is confirmation. The principle receives many applications from the Word of God, and it is to one or two of these applications that we will now direct our attention.

**(i) The Sentiment of Gratitude.** -- Every body is familiar with the repeated and urgent counsels of the Old Book calling us to the expressions of thanksgiving. "O give thanks unto the Lord." "O come let us sing unto the Lord." "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving." What occasion is there for this urgent and impetuous counsel? Is it not enough that we should feel grateful? Is not the very sentiment of gratitude creative of a delicious odour which is acceptable unto God? Why should I seek to give the feeling expression? Why should I utter my thanks? Why should I sing? Questions like these imply a misinterpretation of the nature of feeling. Gratitude unexpressed, inevitably cools into apathy. To express our thanks is to augment our thankfulness. Of course I am not thinking of mere conventionalisms, of the hollow courtesies or the flippant graces which form the tinsel of ceremonial functions. I am speaking of the thanksgivings which find expression in sincere and serious speech. Now, let us see what such expression implies. In the first place, it necessitates the exercise of thought. Therefore, to express one's gratitude requires that a man be thoughtful. When I am about to express myself seriously concerning anything the thing itself is looked at in quiet and fruitful deliberation. If I am about to speak to God concerning His bountiful gifts, which He has showered upon me, I shall be obliged to gaze thoughtfully at the gifts in long and helpful contemplation. That is why the Psalms which most abound in thanksgiving are most alive and discerning as to the multitude of the mercies in which our life abounds. "When I seek to count them!" He is contemplating the marvellous succession of the Divine mercies. "Thy mercies are in the heavens, and Thy faithfulness reaches even unto the clouds." That is ever the influence of thought upon feeling. It vivifies it. If thought is alive, and bright, and definite, feeling will be quickened into intensity. If thought is dull and languid feeling will assuredly be torpid.

When all Thy mercies, O my God,

My rising soul surveys,

Transported with the view, I'm lost

In wonder, love, and praise.

I am therefore not surprised when I read the word of the Psalmist: "It is a good thing to give thanks!" "It is good to sing praises!" "A good thing!" It is not merely pleasant and welcome. It is healthy and nourishing. The ungrateful man may chill and pain his benefactor; but that is only a secondary evil. The greater evil is that he maims himself. The ungrateful becomes evermore the dwarfed.

**(2) The matter of personal faith in Christ.** -- Here again we move under the dominion of the same principle. We are strengthened by confession. If we only knew it, it is more difficult to be a secret disciple than an openly avowed follower of the Lord. Secrecy deprives us of the stimulus of publicity. It robs us of the supports that belong to a public confession. And so the Bible has a great deal to say concerning the giving of expression to our personal faith in Christ. "Everyone who shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." That is not a veiled threat. It is a statement of cause and effect. The one makes me fitted in character for the other. It is the fitness of the officer for the office. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'' "Whoso ever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God." "They that believed came and confessed." There must surely be something of gracious influence in this experience, or it would never be counselled with such strenuous urgency. All these quotations only re-emphasise the principle that inner sanctities are strengthened and enriched by open confession. A man's faith in God is fortified by the experience of confession. Just think of it for a moment. It is always a sound rule in life to regard one's shrinkings with intense suspicion. Our shrinkings are very frequently the index to urgent duties. I do not say that they are always so. A man's shrinkings may be the instinctive recoil of a refined and sanctified spirit. But a man's shrinkings may be, and very frequently are, the recoils of timidity and cowardice. I must, therefore, look closely at my duties, lest perchance they hide my duties. Now men shrink from the public confession of Christ. Does the shrinking indicate a duty? Men will do anything, and will prefer anything, rather than make a public confession of their belief in the rights and kingship of Christ. And yet such a confession would often act with great spiritual energy in the counsels of the world. It would stop many an unfair conversation. It would dry up the applause from many a filthy jest, and expose the jester to the chilling reproof of a silent reception. It would elevate many an enterprise whose tendency was towards the dust. These would be some of the influences upon others; but what would be the influence upon self? It is difficult behaviour. Yes, and, therefore, presumably the right. It is usually safe to give the preference to the difficult path. It is the "narrow way " that leads to the kingdom. It is in the way of difficulty that faith finds its most nutritious food. Public confession is a kind of public pledge, a public consecration of life; and consecration always means amplification. By consecration my life is prepared and enlarged for the reception of the wondrous ministries of the Holy Ghost. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus ... thou shalt be saved." The great exercise will stir up and strengthen the forces of salvation within thee, and thou shalt assuredly be led to the perfected life.

**(3) The Declaration of Christian experience.** --I have had certain experiences in my fellowship with God. He has graciously given me unveilings of truth. New lights have broken upon my eyes from old lamps. I have come upon new wells of consolations. What shall I do with them? If I want to enrich them I must make them known. Our experiences become the more precious when we share them with our fellows. It is the witness who is first blessed in witness-bearing. Here, again, confession is amplification. "Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul." "I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation." "I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation." "I have not hid ... I have declared!" "I have not concealed ... I have told!" It is this "declaring" and this "telling " which I am afraid is so lacking in our modern religious life. We have little of the testimony meeting. We have little of the "speaking to one another" of the Lord's dealings in personal life. I am persuaded that we are great losers by the abstinence. Who can tell what it might mean to others if we opened out to them a little of our secret intercourse with God? To quietly tell some man how the Lord found and redeemed you! To quietly tell some heart-broken mother how, after many tears and many prayers, your own lad was reclaimed! To quietly testify what the Lord did for you in the time of your sorrow, and how you saw a bright angel in the dark grave! To quietly tell how the Lord lifted you out of the miry clay and set your feet upon a rock! What might be the influence of all this upon the hearer, who can measure? As to the influence upon the witness himself, I am persuaded that his experiences would be enriched even while he witnessed. The meal in the barrel would be multiplied even while he distributed it. The witness himself would have to say: "The half hath not been told! "