

How God Uses His People in Soul Winning

By C H Spurgeon

Christian Duties | *The Sword & Trowel*

November 2008

‘And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go’ (John 11.43, 44).

In many things our Lord Jesus stands alone as a worker. No other can unite his voice with the fiat which says, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ Yet in certain points of gracious operation the Master associates his servants with him, so that when Lazarus has come forth he says to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’

In the raising of the dead he is alone, and therein majestic and divine. In the loosing of the bound he is associated with them. In this he remains majestic, but his more prominent feature is condescension. How exceedingly kind it is of our Lord Jesus to permit his disciples to do some little thing in connection with his great deeds, so that they may be ‘workers together with him’.

Our Lord as frequently as possible associated his disciples with himself. Of course, they could not aid him in presenting an atoning sacrifice, yet it was their honour that they had said, ‘Let us go that we may die with him,’ and that in their love they resolved to go with him to prison and to death. Our Lord understood the fickleness of their character, yet he knew that they were sincere in their desire to be associated with him in all his life story whatever it might be. Hence, when he afterwards rode into Jerusalem in triumph, he alone was saluted with Hosannas; but he sent two of his disciples to bring the ass on which he rode, and they cast their garments upon the colt and they set Jesus thereon, and as he went they spread their clothes in the way. Thus they contributed to his lowly pomp, and shared in the exultation of the royal day.

Further on, when he would keep the feast, he expressly dwells upon it that he would keep it with them; for he said, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.’ He sent Peter and John to prepare that passover; he directed them to the large upper room furnished, and there he bade them make ready. Anything that they could do they were allowed to do.

Their Lord was willing to have led them further still; but through weakness they stopped short. In the garden he bade them watch with him on that dreadful night, and he sought sympathy from them,

Backward and forward, thrice he ran,

As if he sought some help from man

He cried in sorrowful disappointment, ‘Could ye not watch with me one hour?’ Ah, no! They could go to the brink of the abyss with him, but they could not descend into its deeps. He must tread the winepress alone, and of the people there must be none with him. Yet as far as they could go he disdained not their dear society. He allowed them according to their capacity to drink of his cup, and to be baptised with his baptism. If their fellowship with him in his sufferings went no farther, it was not because he warned them back, but because they had not the strength to follow. According to his own judgement they were intimately associated with him, for he said to them, ‘Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.’

Beloved, our Jesus Christ still delights to associate us with him as far as our feebleness and folly will

permit. In his present work of bringing sinners to himself, he counts it a part of his reward that we should be labourers together with him. In his working people he beholds the travail of his soul as well as in the sinners whom they bring to him. Thus, he has a double reward, and is as much glorified in the love, and pity, and zeal of his servants as in the harvest which they reap.

As a father smiles to see his little children imitating him, and endeavouring to assist him in his work, so is Jesus pleased to see our lowly efforts for his honour. It is his joy to see the eyes which he has opened weeping with him over the impenitent, and to hear the tongue which he has loosed speaking in prayer and in the preaching of the Gospel. It is his joy to see any of the members he has restored and healed occupied as members of righteousness in his service. Jesus Christ is glad to save sinners at all, but most of all glad to save them by the means of those already saved.

Thus he blesses the prodigal sons and the servants of the household at the same moment. He gives to the lost salvation, and upon his own called and chosen ones he puts the honour of being used for the grandest purposes under Heaven. It is more honourable to save a soul from death than to rule an empire. Such honour all the saints may have.

Reference

From a sermon preached by C H Spurgeon, 20th April 1844.