

Chapter 3. THE CLOSED DOOR, THE OPEN REWARD.

"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." – Matthew 6:17-18

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. – Acts 4:13

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So, when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him...And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. – Exodus 34:29-33

The transition from the fellowship with God in the morning hour, to the interaction with our fellowmen, is often difficult. If we have met God, we long to maintain the sense of His presence, and our surrender to Him. We go out to the breakfast table, where, perhaps in the presence of our own family, the atmosphere is immediately different. And as the presence of people asserts itself, we begin to lose what we had found. Many young Christians had been struggling with the question on how to keep his heart filled with that encounter of which he does not feel at liberty to or has not yet had the opportunity to speak of. Even in religious circles it is, through lack of enthusiasm or boldness, not always easy to freely speak to people about those things that would give the greatest profit and pleasure. Let us strive to learn how our fellowship with people may be, instead of a hindrance, a help to maintain a life of constant communion with God.

The lessons from the life of Moses with a veil on his face, are very thought-provoking. Close and continual fellowship with God will in due time leave its mark and make itself manifest before people. Moses did not know that his face shone. The light of God shining from us will be unconscious, but it will deepen the sense of us being like clay vessels (**1Cor.1:3,4; 2Cor.4:7**). Sometimes the sense of God's presence in a person may cause others to fear, or at least, to feel uncomfortable in his company. When others notice what is in him, the true believer will begin to know what it is to veil his face, and prove by humility and love, that he is indeed a

man just like those around him. And yet, there will be the unmistakable proof, too, that he is a man of God, who lives in, and have dealings with an unseen world.

The same lessons are taught by our Lord concerning fasting. Don't make a show of your fasting, so that you don't appear to others as if you are fasting; meet with them in the joy and kindness of God's gentleness, as the Father's beloved and loving child. **Count upon God, who has seen you in secret, to reward you openly; to give you the grace of fellowship with Him, and to make known to others that His grace and light are upon you.**

The story of Peter and John confirms the same truth. They had been with Jesus while He was on earth, and after He ascended into the heavenlies, had received His Spirit. They acted on what the Spirit of Christ taught them. Even their enemies could see by their boldness that they had been with Jesus.

The blessing of fellowship with God may easily be lost by going too deep into fellowship with people. The spirit of the inner chamber must be protected by a holy watchfulness throughout the day. We don't know at what hour the enemy may come. The continuance of the morning watch may be maintained by a quiet self-restraint of not giving in to the fleshly nature. It is a good practise, if you live in a religious home, to apply the habit of sharing some spiritual truths on a fixed subject, and so give opportunity for a religious conversation.

When the abiding sense of God's presence and fellowship with Him – *"living in the fear of God all day long"* – has become the aim of the morning hour, with the deepest humility and the most loving fellowship with those around us, grace will be released and passed on to the duties of the day with unbroken fellowship with God. It is a great thing to enter into the inner chamber, shut the door, and meet the Father in secret. It is an even greater thing to open the door again and go out into an enjoyment of that Presence which cannot be disturbed by anything.

To some believers such a life does not seem necessary; the strain may be too great; or they reason that one can be a good Christian without it. Those however, who feel that if they are to influence the church and the world truly and mightily, they must be full of God and His Presence, will submit themselves to this one question: How to

bear in their bodies, their earthen vessels, the heavenly treasure which is the power of Christ resting on them the whole day?

Prayer: Father God, it is my deepest desire to have continual fellowship with You. I want to know your Presence every day and all day. Teach me how to fellowship with people in such a way that I will not lose the sense of your Presence, and that those that I meet with during my day, will sense your Presence resting on me. Amen.