ABIDE WITH US

Rev. R. Moxon – Luke 24: 29

Sing: Psalter 317: 3 + 4

Read: Luke 24: 13 – 35

Sing: Psalter: 134: 2+3

Sing: Psalter: 394: 3

Sing: Psalter: 302: 1+3

Sing: Psalter: 378: 1

Text: Luke 24: 29

*“But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.*

This text stands in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a very important one. It is not one of those doctrines which should be mentioned only once a year, on Easter Sunday, but one that should form a great part of the Christian ministry. It is a foundation stone in our most holy faith.

If Christ be not raised from the dead, then all our preaching, all your hopes, prayers, prospects are vain.

And you will find that when Judas fell by transgression and another apostle had to be appointed in his place, there is special mention made of the work that this apostle should do – to take part with the other apostles in preaching the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will find the apostle Paul couples the resurrection with the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and so couples them together that we must never have them separated. “He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”

Therefore the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ gives us proof that the atonement of Christ was accepted and was sufficient, and was equivalent for all the sins of the church of God. And by and through the resurrection comes the ascension and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, and from that comes the outpouring of the Holy Ghost: as we find that, after a given period, when Christ was seated at His Father’s right hand, He gave gifts to men, even to the rebellious also, that the Lord God Almighty might dwell among men.

Well, this chapter treats largely upon this important subject of Christ’s resurrection, but it is not my intention to do so tonight.

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I only mention these things to set your minds thinking, and pondering over, and examining this great subject of Christ’s resurrection.

And now I notice in this chapter that there were women early at the sepulchre, and they found that the grave of Jesus Christ was empty, and they were perplexed. Then we find a little further on that Peter visits the grave of Jesus Christ, and he finds it empty, and he wonders. And then we find further on that the whole of the apostles and disciples were met together, and they heard the story of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and they received the messages as idles tales, and they were astonished at the tidings which these women delivered to them

concerning this wondrous event. So that we have three words, you see, used on three distinct occasions, which show us how little the saints of God knew concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and what He had said unto them when He was with them in Galilee. It seems to my mind that the women who went so early to the sepulchre went with the intention of embalming the body. I do not think that they had much hope, or much prospect, or much faith that their Lord was risen, but they took with them supplies with the object of embalming His body.

I mention these things to show to you, friends how dilatory the saints of God sometimes are; how they seem to be as though they cannot perceive nor understand the words of the Lord. And this, I believe, is often the case with us, that is why I mention it, just to encourage you a little who may feel that you have no insight, as though you lacked understanding concerning the Word and ways and truth of God; and that it is with you as it was with them – wonderment, perplexity, astonishment.

All these words describe at different times and in different ways, how we often feel; astonished, wondering, perplexed concerning the Lord, concerning the things of the Lord, the Person of the Lord, the work of the Lord, the sermons of the Lord, the miracles of the Lord, the blood of the Lord, the resurrection of the Lord and the work of the Lord in our hearts.

What puzzled, what perplexed thoughts we are the subjects of, concerning these things!

Well, now, it appears from this chapter that there were two men in particular who took their journey on this eventful day to a place called Emmaus. Only one was mentioned by name – Cleopas, and if we look at another place in the Scripture we shall find that this Cleopas had a wife, and this wife was one of the women, who stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus was expiring, and when He gave those solemn word to that disciple whom he loved concerning His mother, that he should take her to his home and see to her welfare. Cleopas’s wife was there, and witnessed

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Jesus bleeding and dying on the cross; and yet with all this intimacy, with all that she had witnessed, and with all that she had said to her husband, yet here is this Cleopas with this other man journeying to Emmaus, and full of astonishment and perplexity and bewilderment concerning what had happened. They were greatly interested in it, but they could not get at it; anxious to know, but they could not get a knowledge of it. This, friends, is often the case with you and me. It may be so tonight, that you have come here tonight for something, and you may have to go away without it; to hear for your soul’s profit, and you may have to go without.

You may be perplexed about your standing before God, wanting a testimony from God, calling on Him to speak to your heart. And you are very much perplexed about this, and have been long perplexed. It may not be settled tonight, or it may be settled tonight; our times and our circumstances are in God’s hand.

Well now, we find that as these two men journeyed on their way to Emmaus, a Stranger drew near and joined Himself to them and asked them questions, and He wanted to know what these lamentable communications were about that they had one with another. This shows us that Christ’s disciples can be sad, that they can be sorrowful, that they can have communications which are of a doleful nature, that they can be positively miserable as they journey along. Do not wonder then, my dear friends, if you are dark and sad, do not wonder if you have got soul trouble, do not wonder that you are perplexed concerning the Lord Jesus, concerning the things of the kingdom of God; it is the way, God’s way, His appointed way. This, my dear friends, has ever been the path to heaven more or less.

*“Once they were mourning here below,*

*And wet their couch with tears;*

*They wrestl’d hard, as we do now,*

*With sins and doubts and fears.”*

Jesus was with them, and they did not know it. Jesus may be very nigh to thee and thou dost not know it. He may be with thee in that trouble, and watching thee in thy trouble, and seeing that there is no more laid upon thee than thou art able to bear, but just sufficient to ballast thee, and to make thee go steadier than thou wouldest if thou hadst not been in that trouble. And yet they did not know it. He weighs and measures out our troubles, friends, does Christ; and it was in kindness that He drew near to these disciples, and yet they did not know Him. And many times He is near when we cannot perceive Him. How it behoves us to be careful and

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not to say as Zion said of old, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.” The Lord never had forsaken or forgotten her.He never will forsake Zion, and He never will forget her. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget.” But it does not look likely, and if you were to tell a woman that she might forget her child, she would not thank you for telling her that.

But still, the Word of God says, “She may forget; yet will I not forget thee.” No, He cannot forget His people. He has written their names on the palms of His hands, their walls are continually before Him. He has loved them with an everlasting love; He will never forget or forsake them.

But still, the thought arises. He conceals and hides Himself so that they cannot behold Him; that has been the experience of the saints of every age.

But now we find that eventually they come to this village of Emmaus, and when they get there Christ makes as tough He would have gone further, as though He would have bid them good-night; as though He would have left them at that turning point for them to go into the village, and He to go somewhere else. But these disciples seemed as if they wanted this Stranger’s company; there was something about Him that pleased and edified them, that cheered and instructed them, and therefore they did not want to lose Him and they answered in the language of our text:  
“But they constrained Him, saying Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.

I would like, friends, if I can, just to speak a little in this way:

1. The constraining effect of these disciples.
2. The way that they asked for Christ to stay with them.
3. The reason why they asked Him.
4. The result of their asking.

These things all seem to hang in this text.

First then our text says, “They constrained Him.” What are we to understand by that, friends? Well, I think that the great and important thing taught in these words is prayer; the effect and the influence of prayer,, proving to us that “the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Friends, if any of you are ready to give up; and I dare say some of you are. Perhaps I should not be far wrong if I were to say some of you have given up, wearied out with your prayers, with your petitioning. Some of you may be slacking your public prayers at the meetings, feeling many times so bound in spirit so downcast afterwards.

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The prayers are wearisome, as a hindrance to the prosperity of the church and to the peace of the church; and maybe you are slackening in your closets and at your bedside. Friends, let me encourage you, if I can, to keep on seeking, not to give it up; keep on coming, coming in spite of every hindrance, in spite of every foe. These disciples, in this text of ours, friends, “constrained Him,” they influenced Him, they persuaded Him.

A weapon for us to use to constrain and to persuade Him to grant just the blessings which He hath promised. You know the Lord Jesus Christ, when He was here on earth, spoke a parable to his disciples to this end that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” When you cannot pray, pray; when you are tired of praying, pray, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. And let me tell you this, friends, that prayer oftimes is most acceptable when we think it is least, and we oftimes pray best when we think our prayers are worst, and oftimes pray best when we do not speak at all. This is a wonderful grace, to be brought low, to be brought into the dust of death, to be brought to nothing; and to feel that there is nothing but a desire for God, a groan and a cry to God, a real, earnest desire that the Lord would come to us and enable us to come to Him, and that we may have His blessing resting upon us!

Look, my dear friends, at Jonah, right down in the depths of the sea, ready to give up; yet, “I will look again toward Thy holy temple.” And, friends, how did that end? Oh, he said, “Salvation is of the Lord.” And salvation was speedily of the Lord, for the fish vomited up Jonah on the dry land. When he was brought to the last gasp, then Divine and speedy and signal help was afforded unto him, Look again at that which is mentioned in the Word of God, that secret prayer is successful prayer, silent prayer is successful prayer. Some of you cannot pray in public, some you dare not pray beside your wife. Some of you would blush with shame if you were to try and speak in prayer. Let me tell you, that the Lord can hear you when there are no words at all. Christ said, when He was here on earth; “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Friends, you have got the word of Jesus, in your secret places, in your silent closets, when no eye sees you but His. And what did Christ say concerning Nathaniel? When thou was under the figtree I saw thee.” Nathaniel thought he had got into a corner out of sight, but Jesus saw him under the figtree. “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” Then again, just look at Moses. The Lord says, “Wherefore criest thou unto Me?”

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Moses had never said a word, but the Lord looked down into his heart. He had heard something welling up in Moses’s heart at the borders of the Red Sea, and He said, “Wherefore criest thou unto Me?”

And the Lord gives Moses an answer to that unspoken prayer, to that inward prayer, and He says, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. “ A blessed answer that was indeed. Look again at Hannah, when Eli thought she was drunk because her lips moved, and without doubt there was agitation in her heart, and Eli noticed something that seemed to indicate an emotion, and he thought she was drunken, and he charged her with it, But she said “No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.” Sorry because there are things that we are troubled about and that we cannot manage to do for ourselves, and which only God can do for us. What a mercy and what a blessing it will be if you and I are enabled to follow out this injuction which I am trying to lay before you this night. Look at Jacob. How he in his petition seemed to get the ear and hand of God. And see how he prevailed, how he kept on wrestling until the breaking of the day. “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.

This is what I call constraining, prevailing, successful prayer, friends; and who can be satisfied – can you be satisfied? – if God never hears or answers your prayer? I cannot. Thus as the poet says:

*“That were a grief I could not bear,*

*Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer;*

*But a prayer hearing, answering God*

*Supports me under ev’ry load.*

If you get an answer to prayer it comforts you, and nothing will comfort you more than having an answer to your petition. This, I say, is what the people of God want.

Well these disciples, you see, they constrained Him. The Lord encourages us in this business in His Word. It is said in the Song of Solomon, “Let Me hear thy voice;” and oftimes the voice of prayer is choking, you seem as if you are overcome: but the Lord, amidst all the hesitating, stammering, choking, says, “let Me hear thy voice;” “let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” Friends, I do wish these words of mine would enter into your hearts and would help and encourage you to try and come again if you have not succeeded. If you have seemed to be defeated, come again. If your enemy has got a victory over you, and stopped your mouth, come again. Well, now our text says, “But they constrained Him.” I take it they succeeded; the text assures us that such was the case.Let us sing 394:3.

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Then in the Second place it tells us how they prayed, but I do not take it for granted that they used only these words; I think they used many more words. They said, “Abide with us;” but I should say they said many a thing besides that; but still, this is recorded, as it was the chief thing they wanted, but what arguments they may have used are not written. Job tells us in one place that, if he could get near to God, he would fill his mouth with arguments. Yes; many a time we feel like that. If we could just get near to God, get to the throne of grace, we would tell Him everything about everybody, everything about ourselves, everything that we desire, we would unburden and ease our minds if we could only get near. But I seem sometimes as if bound in iron, cannot move heavenward at all, and this is hard work for a child of God when he seems shut out from the presence of the Lord.

“But they constrained Him saying, Abide with us. Friends, this is what the living people of God want above all other blessings, and have wanted in every age of the world, “Abide with us;” “Abide with me.” It is what I want now. It is what you, if you are living people, want this night – an abiding sense of the presence, company, favour and grace of Jesus.

Yes, this is what we want – “Abide with us.” And you know there are such a variety of ways in which Jesus is revealed to us in the Word, and so many different characters. If Christ is sometimes set forth as a Friend, then we want Him to abide with us as a Friend; to be a Friend to us, and to reveal His friendship to us, and to show us how much He cares for us and loves us, and how He will stand by us, save and help us; to protect us, and to take care of us, and to reveal to us the secrets of His grace, love and mercy. Never leave me, never fall out with me, never forsake me, never turn round and be my enemy; never suffer me to forsake Thee and get away from Thee. Now are these, dear friends, the very feelings of your heart, that you want the friendship and the smiles of Jesus, the promises of Jesus applied with power and comfort to your heart?

And don’t you think, if you had that, you would be satisfied? “Abide with me,” and abide with my brethren, and be Thou that Friend that loveth at all times. If you could have Him, you would never have a distant or a hiding God, would you? You would have Him with you all day long. You would have Him with you all day long. You would like a child on his mother’s knee, sucking at the promises, milking out, and feeling that you were growing stronger in the ways of God. This is the prayer, to abide with us and be our constant Friend. Then again; Jesus speaks to us as a “Brother born for adversity.” As such we want Him to abide with us as our elder Brother, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. They, the young children of the family, looking up to Him as the elder Brother and He, revealing to the eye of faith, His father’s will and power, and telling you how He is heir of all

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things, and how you shall be joint-heir with Him. There is a dear living relationship between Jesus and His people, and we want Him as a Brother to abide with us. I have often thought of that saying of Paul’s in Romans 8, concerning the brotherhood of Jesus Christ, where he speaks of being a heir, and of the people of God being joint-heirs with Him, and that, if they suffer with Him, they shall also be glorified together. It seems to me as if He said, “Now, we will share it out, and you shall have just like Me.

When I get to glory, and sit on My throne; as My Father hath appointed unto Me a kingdom, so appoint I unto you. All that I get you shall have, All the glory, joy, pleasure, you shall share in it. Abide then, with us, and show us our interest in these things. Let us have Thy companionship and Thy relationship, and know that we really are attached the one to the other. This is the desire of the living family of God, and I want you, my dear friends, to feel the importance of these things.

And when we look at Jesus as the Husband of His church and people, He looks upon His people as His bride and wife. The wife wants the company of the Husband. She wants Him to abide with her, to provide and to protect her,to be a kind and loving,faithful Husband, never to give her up.

And His word is that He never will, for “He hates to put away.” When did I give your mother a bill of divorcement, says He? Never! Never! Never!

Whatever bills of divorcement have been given, God never gave one to His people. “I will betroth thee unto me for ever…. in lovingkindness and in mercies. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jesus having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” right to the end. No matter what else changed, nothing could make that love to be removed out of the way. There it was fixed, fixed upon His people everlastingly; unending, undiminishing.

May we enjoy it!

“But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us. “And I may make use of every name, of every character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and apply them to this text and they fit in. It is a petition an anxious desire welling up in the hearts of His people, that they may have Him in all His characters and relationships.

Then the Third thing in our text is: The reason assigned why they thus made their request to Him. They said, “For it is towards evening, and the day is far spend.” And o, friends, the day of life with some of us here is fast waning, the sands in our glass are passing and quickly running out, it will soon be over with some of us. As I have said, we may never see each other again in the flesh; the day of working, and the day of service, is getting well nigh over with some of us…

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It may be the last opportunity that some of you will have of ever coming to this house it may be the last sermon that some of you will ever hear. I have preached the last sermon to many of the children of God; they have gone away from church never to hear again.

Several very striking cases of this sort, friends, have come under my notice of people listening for the last time to what the Lord has got to say.

It may be so with some who are here. “The day is far spent;” and o, if this should be the last time! Says the poor sensible soul, “Abide with me, dear Jesus. If I have done here, done going to the house of God, done Thy work here, abide with me. Be with me, now that I am coming to the end of my journey; be with me, smile upon me.

“*If Thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,*

*Cheerful I live, and joyful die;*

*Content, when mortal comforts flee,*

*To find ten thousand worlds in thee*

I say, we want the abiding presence of Jesus, and the abiding presence of the blessed Spirit, and we feel much more as we grow older and weaker, “Abide with me; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”

You know, when it is daylight and daytime, we rise up and go to our work, and there is pleasure in walking about the streets when it is sunshiny; but when it gets dark it is vastly different, and many times it is so in our experience. There is the light of the sun vanishing, and there is the brightness of the day declining; and o, things around us are growing dreary and gloomy, and we feel that we want the presence and the blessing of the Lord more than ever we did in our life.

Sometimes we find that the daytime of prosperity is coming to a close. Friends, I have had both days of prosperity and evenings of adversity; days of light, and nights of darkness. It is nice to be in prosperity, it is nice to be in the sunshine, it is nice to be feeling a little of the Lord’s presence and blessing.

It is nice to get up in the morning and feel that the Word of God comes like honey to your soul, and you sing the praises of God all the day long.

But when the day is waning, and night is coming on, and the day of adversity and trial is coming on; we need the Lord then to abide with us. Whatever Thou takest, do not go Thyself. Whatever afflictions and adversities I am in, abide with me. Whatever temptations, o be Thou with me, to sustain me and to strengthen me. We feel sometimes we can bear everything if He stays with us, and the poet says:

*“I can do all things, and can bear*

*All suff’rings if my Lord be there;*

*Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains*

*While His left hand my soul sustains.”*

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And if we have not Jesus, what a poor plight we are in indeed; and the evening is at hand! These things are coupled together – the decline of day and the approach of night; and these are the reasons assigned why these disciples so urgently prayed for the Lord to turn in and abide with them.

Night, darkness, death and eternity are coming on; “Abide with me.”

In the Fourth place the text says; “And He went in to tarry with them “Oh, what a mercy. That which they asked Him for was granted, what they petitioned for He bestowed upon them. This is encouraging, if we can see it right, that He went into to tarry with them. I would like to look at this journey to Emmaus as being symbolical of the church of God, for with regard to her

there is a night-time coming on, and I am greatly mistaken if we do not live in times when the day is well nigh spent, and when the evening is at hand.

Everything seems to denote it, friends, so far as I can see and judge; and if ever there was a time when the Church of God needed the abiding presence of Jesus it is now. How men grow slack and tire in the ways of God! What evils abound on every hand! When we look round we can see truth fallen in our streets, and few concerned about Zion’s welfare, Zion’s

prosperity, Zion’s purity, Zion’s loveliness, Zion’s glory.

I say in the night-time we need presence of the Lord, and the answer to the disciples petition, “Abide with us”. That the Lord might turn in here and abide with you! And He went in to tarry with them.”

May He tarry with you and me individually, in our public assemblies, in our private rooms, in our meditations, to be with us when we read and meditate and think about His preciousness. “He went in to tarry with them.” Then again, friends, how nice it will be for this text to be fulfilled in our individual experience, and especially in our inmost soul, to have an abiding sense of the presence of Jesus in our hearts, to have Him there the Hope of glory. To have the indwelling of the blessed Spirit, for Him to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God; that He would give us a living religion, a religion that is from above, and a religion that will land our souls above.

May He add His blessing to these feeble hints, for His namesake.

Amen.