

The Wednesday Word, May 10, 2017: God's Hidden Face
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I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding His face from the descendants of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. ~Isaiah 8.17

Child of God, do you not find that your most difficult times are those in which the Lord "hides His face"? When God leads a child of His into some deep sorrow of life - some sickness, reversal of fortune or some great loss - such sorrow is bearable if his child can say with confidence, "Even if He leads me through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for my God is with me!" If we sense that God is present with us, we fear no harm even if thousands upon thousands are opposed to us.

But God purposefully hides His face from His people. He withdraws the tokens of His presence. He lets our minds become clouded with doubts. He allows a fog of emotional distress to hide His presence with us. We cannot see Him for He has hidden Himself. The thought that God would hide himself from us only serves to strengthen our distress for we conclude that He would not do so if He loved us.

We surmise that any gracious thought of God toward us would certainly lead to His bestowing rich temporal blessings upon us - "smiling down from heaven" so to speak. But our experience teaches us differently. Sometimes at the very point at which it would seem most helpful to us for God somehow to affirm His presence with us He becomes invisible. He hides. We call out, yet it seems no one is listening. We read His Word yet it seems no one is speaking. We feel horribly closed off and alone

We are all familiar with lighthouses. They serve to warn ships of the location of the shoreline so as to prevent them from crashing on the rocks. But, what of foggy nights when the light cannot be seen? A lighthouse is useless in a dense fog until the ship is too close to avoid danger. At such times, a fog horn is sounded. It may not be as cheering as the light on a clear night. But it tells the captain of the ship all that the light could tell him. It assures him that those concerned for the safety of the ship are still there. And it provides him with the information necessary to avoid the shallow waters of destruction.

The Lord Jesus did not say, "My sheep see my face and they follow me." He said, "My sheep HEAR MY VOICE, and they follow me." His voice is the gospel. It is the gospel to which we must ever be attentive. Who knows, our seeking to "see Him" may be the very reason He has hidden His face. We have sought subjective experience rather than objective truth. So He hides His face so that we will be forced to listen to His voice. When we cannot see, let us listen carefully.

When the light is obscured by the fog of our natural selves or even by providential circumstances, let us listen. And as we listen, let us wait, knowing that the face of the Lord will once again appear to our hearts. His voice assures us that He is near and this gives us hope that, in time, He shall appear. And as we wait, let us trust. Sometimes, we do not "see His face" for

very long stretches of time. In this our faith is tested. We walk by faith, not by sight. We must simply trust His word - His voice - or we will despair of His goodness and seek our safety elsewhere. God grant that in seasons of no sight, we will content ourselves with the sound of His voice.