

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 111

Consider!

Text: “*Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things*” (2 Timothy 2. 7).

The Apostle Paul here writing to Timothy has been speaking of one or two important things, and then suddenly he stops. There is a pause, and he comes out with this word: “Consider what I say.” O what an important word this word *consider* is – not to go hastening on, not to be swallowed up with vain, empty repetition, but to stop, and to pause, and to consider.

A few days ago I happened to see a sermon by Dr. Owen on “Walking about Zion.” I thought this was an interesting subject; I would like to see what he had to say, and how he handled it. “Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.” He did not take it at all like I expected he would. He seemed to emphasise this one word, *consider*. Especially Zion’s bulwarks, consider them. You know what they are. You think about them sometimes. But it is important that with the Holy Spirit’s help you should *consider* Zion’s bulwarks – things like the Rock of Ages, the everlasting love of God to His people, His gracious presence with them, the security of the people of God. Now stop and consider them. Apparently Dr. Owen was preaching in a similar time to ours. There was some kind of plague or some kind of crisis in England at the time, but he did emphasise this point: in this time of great need for the Lord’s people, the importance of considering – in his case, the wonderful bulwarks that are the glory and defence of Zion.

So I bring this subject before you this evening with this emphasis on *consider*. “Consider what I say” – just for a few minutes first of all as it concerns ourselves, and secondly as it concerns our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are a lot of things to consider there. So often we pass over them; we believe them; we go on to something else.

So the first of our readings this evening (Haggai 1. 1-11) was especially about considering the things concerning ourselves. That was a time of great trial and distress for God's ancient people. Sadly, they had become exceedingly careless. Yes, they still believed the truth; yes, they still kept to all the ceremonies of the ceremonial law; but here was darkness and deadness and unconcern. Then the Lord raised up the prophet Haggai. The wonderful thing is, his ministry lasted a very, very short time, and also, we do not really know anything about him, but his short ministry had a wonderful effect under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

But did you notice in the few verses I read, twice the prophet said, "*Consider your ways*"? If we consider our ways, we find that they are sinful ways. They are ways that are not right in the sight of God. They are ways of disobedience to Him. But we do need to consider our ways. In another place, we have that very close and solemn word: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Well, we know there is a latter end. We know what it is. We know the seriousness of it. We know our need to be prepared for it. But do we really, before the Lord, consider our latter end?

Another word is this: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." Now surely at present with this virus, and all the restrictions and all the confusion and problems that are being caused, this is a day of adversity. "In the day of adversity consider." There are so many things, beloved friends, to consider. Has the Lord a controversy with us? Is there a rebuke in those things? Is there a stirring up of our nation? Where have we gone wrong? Where have we come short? We are part of this nation. "In the day of adversity consider." But it is that one word. These things are there. We know what they are. But do we really stop, pause, think, consider them? What is the end of them? What is the Lord's answer to them? What is the position where we should be found at this time? "Consider your ways."

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." But then our second reading (Hebrews 3. 1-6) deals with this other vital point, our only hope, our only remedy: "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Again, we all know about the Lord Jesus. We hear of Him; we are pleased to hear of Him; we sing of Him; but how much time do we really spend in a right consideration of our Lord Jesus? It is especially considering our Lord Jesus in His Person and in His finished work, and how this is the remedy for ourselves, for our country. How we should consider it! How we should pray about it!

Beloved friends, in this beautiful Epistle to the Hebrews, three times there is the call to consider. The first really deals with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in His precious offices: the Apostle of our God, a great High Priest. “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” We love to hear and sing of His everlasting priesthood. May we be led by the Holy Spirit in faith to consider Him. It is the Person of Christ.

But then the second of these *considers* in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Consider how great this Man.” That is speaking of Christ made a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec – a Priest upon a throne, a kingly Priest – and to consider His greatness, His grandeur, His glory. Do we really know it? How much do we really know? Do you ever feel condemned by that hymn – we do not sing it very much:

“Lord, while I wander here below
What ill's my soul annoy!
For 'tis of Thee I little know,
And ah! still less enjoy”?

How much do we really enjoy these things, and we are called to enjoy them?

But considering the greatness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. At this time in our own country, at this time in our churches, and here at Bethel, and in our families, and in our own hearts, “Consider how great this Man.” He is on the throne. He is almighty. He will have the last word. It is ours humbly to submit in confession, in repentance, at His feet, begging that He will undertake for us, do everything.

And the third *consider* in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “*Consider Him* that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” So there is a call to remember our Lord and Saviour in His bitter sufferings even unto death – to remember them, to think on them, to consider who it was, and what He suffered. “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners.” And who can estimate that? There is a reason for it, and how it is needed at present with all the things around us: “Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

“Consider your ways.” “Consider Him.” I think I have told you, years ago, before I came to Bethel, I was preaching one Lord’s day at Zion, Leicester, and the text was, “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against

Himself.” In the morning I only got as far as those first two words: “Consider Him.” They asked me in the afternoon if I would go and visit a godly old lady who was in hospital. I was pleased to go; I esteemed her; I knew her quite well. Normally she suffered from extreme deafness, but this time a lot of her trouble was something wrong with her ear, some kind of abscess which was causing her much pain and discomfort, and it seemed as if it made her totally deaf. I could not get her to understand a single word. She was pleased to see me, but I could not speak one word she could hear.

In the end, I thought, “What do I do?” I tried to pray with her. I do not think she heard a word I said. Before I went, I got a piece of paper and wrote my morning text, “Consider Him.” Twelve months later I was preaching at Zion, Leicester, again, and the dear old lady was back in chapel. “O,” she said, “When you visited me a year ago, I couldn’t hear anything, but those two words you wrote on the paper, ‘Consider Him.’ O,” she said, “I had a good day considering the Lord Jesus!” Now that is real religion.

So I leave it. But beloved friends, this point of *consideration*. We need the Holy Spirit to help us, to lead us in it. We need to be blessed with a spirit of meditation. We need to be given real faith and true repentance.

“Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Thursday, 15th October, 2020