

## “HEARTINESS IN THE LORD’S SERVICE”

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“I WILL run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.” Psalm 119:32

The great physician knows at once where to look for the cause, when He sees any thing amiss in the outward life of His children. He knows that all spiritual disease is heart disease, and it is heart remedies that He must apply.

Heartiness in Action is the subject to which our attention is directed in our text and it is one of much importance. We may have **contracted** hearts, shut up in self—taking narrow views of God’s claims and our own privileges. And, however much we may **stand** or **sit**, or **walk** in the way of God’s commandments, we may not be able to “**run**” in them. We cannot **run** in the Lord’s commandments except in the strength and vigor imparted by Him.

We will classify our observation on this subject under the following heads.

- 1) What heartiness is.
- 2) What heartiness does.
- 3) Whence heartiness comes.

### What Is Heart Enlargement?

(1) The heartiness spoken of here, in other words “enlargement of heart,” is cheerfulness in doing God’s will—love for that will. It is all of this, and a great deal more. We might obey merely because we think we ought to obey. True Christianity has to do with both judgment and conscience. Our judgment may be well informed, and we may act upon it in all we do and in all we abstain from, as regards the commandments of God. But our judgment can never make us hearty in running the way of His commandments.

Conscience can make us do things because we **ought** to do them or leave things undone because we ought not to do them; but it cannot make us **hearty** in our obedience. It is possible to perform a duty, and yet not to have our heart in it. What good are works, brethren, in which the love of our hearts is not given? When the heart is operated upon by God’s holy spirit, love is inwrought with it. The heart, then, not only knows but it feels so much of the beauty of God’s commands that it **delights** to **run** in them. Its interests, its affections are in them. It loves to be hearty.

Perhaps some of our service has been **labor** to us, for want of the heartiness which would have made it all joyous and pleasant. So, dear ones, let us have our hearts “enlarged” to have them capable of energy, even the energy of love in all we do for Him. The word **walk** may be used to denote the ordinary habitual obedience of daily life. But the word **run** signifies **energy**. “I will **run** the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.”

### What Heartiness Does?

(2) Let us now see what heartiness **does**. Heartiness in action has a good effect on others. We know the effect one gloomy, unwilling or despondent person can have on others. On the other hand, we see how one who is hearty and joyous is able to infuse spirit into those who otherwise would have dragged heavily through their service. Often those with whom such an one comes in contact finds out for the first time, from what another is doing, what they themselves can do. There is a sympathy and an influence in our contact with each other. What influence are we exercising? What are we to those in our class, or in the Church of which we are mutual members?

Have we ever been hinderers, and has our want of heartiness dampened the ardor of others? If we are **really** alive in the cause of the Lord we will be a help to others. Let us strive to be a help to others. Let us strive to be a living energy, to be a sunbeam, and not a cloud. This heartiness in action embraces a large circle, which those who “run” in the way of God’s commandments ever widens and increases. These do not keep running around and around in the same circle. As spiritual power increases within the heart, so does the sphere of action. Heartiness in the

Christian life must find vent. Take the case of one of the Lord's children who is strong and vigorous in spiritual life, but weak in body. His contact with others is limited. Yet his interest and prayers may pervade a circle which embraces all those "of like precious faith" throughout the world.

As Christians we want our heart action to be so strong as to energize us to activity in behalf of **all** the Lord's people, as opportunities arise. Nothing but an enlargement of the heart by the holy spirit will make us understand the meaning of the words of the apostle, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others." Thus let us copy the example of one of whom it is written, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

### **Are We Giving of Our Substance?**

**Giving** is one form of action for God. Giving of our substance. This was commanded of the Jews "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase." We may be poor, yet rich in action according to our opportunities, and accepted for what we **have**, not what we have not; as illustrated by the widow casting in her two mites. This poor widow seems to picture in some respects the Church of God. She was looked down upon, both by those in the temple and by the world. She was very poor. We can imagine how the Pharisees looked down upon her. Yet she, and she alone, received Jesus' commendation.

And so, for the most part, the Church is hidden from the eyes of the world, as regards position either in temporal or spiritual things.

They are considered by the world as being very poor. But poor as they are, they are possessed of title deeds of exceeding wealth. O that we might more and more appreciate and think of the possessions which are to be ours if faithful overcomers!

It seems as if Christ alone valued the poor widow's offering, because He alone could read the heart. And so we, the **Lord's consecrated** children, are content to hold our rank in the estimation of Christ and our heavenly Father only. We are **known** to them. They are the ones who approve our deeds, and treasure up our name against that great day. In all our giving, whether it be of our substance or our service, we should be able to say, "Lord, this is for **Thee**. This is not the cold offering of duty, but it is that of love." We stand as it were, each one alone before God. We will delight that our Lord knows all. We will say, "Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Deeds of love do not procure salvation, but they are very precious as tokens that our love is true. So, as we make our offerings, let us do it with such **love** that the Lord can say, as He did to the poor widow, "She hath done what she could."

### **Living Examples**

We are furnished in Scripture with many examples of "Heartiness in action." Jesus is the great example in whom we find all excellency. He was hearty indeed, in running the way of God's commandments. His ear was open, His heart was enlarged for service. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He came to do the will of His Father. These are His words, "I **delight** to do Thy will, O my God. Not My will, but Thine be done." Jesus was hearty in all His words and errands of mercy. He toiled from morning till night. How earnest were His exhortations, how ready were His deeds! Our Lord is still active. He is our Advocate with the Father. He loves, he makes intercession for us. He is a present help in every time of trouble.

We find another example in Paul the great apostle to the Gentiles. He was hearty in action for the Lord. He was "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in deaths oft." We read of his receiving stripes, beaten with rods, thrice suffered ship wreck. He was in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers. He suffered weariness, thirst, hunger, cold and nakedness. And in addition, there came upon him daily the care of all the churches. He counted his life not dear unto himself. He gloried in tribulation.

The Apostle Paul was a living example of the precepts which he gave—"fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." And let us remember, dear brethren, that we are all called to heartiness in

service, as was Paul. The same One who appeared to Paul will give **us** of His grace, as He gave it to him. Our sphere is not that of an apostle, but our hearts may be like Paul, and we may fill our sphere as he filled his.

Note what Paul says of the “heartiness in action” of the Macedonians: “For to their power I bear record, yea and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves.” We remember also how Israelites offered for building their tabernacle. “They came every one whose heart was stirred up and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all His service, and for the holy garments.”

David was large-hearted, and would have built a house for God; and when he was directed not to carry out his intention because he had shed blood, he showed his large-heartedness toward God by the preparation he made for the accomplishment of his design by his son, Solomon. Nothing can excuse us, brethren, from the Lord’s service, in the place appointed for us. A record of shortcomings is kept, as well as of diligence.

### **Whence Cometh Heartiness?**

(3) We now **enquire, whence does this heartiness come?** We answer: Like every other good and perfect gift, it comes from our heavenly Father, “with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.” It is wrought in us by His holy spirit. “It is God that worketh in us, both to **will** and to **do** His good pleasure.” The natural human heart knows very little of the spirit of love; but the spirit of God after we have been begotten by Him creates love in our hearts, and then the heart will do under the impulse of love what it could not be induced to do under any other power.

If we have then at any time tried to warm our hearts to energy and power, and if we have found ourselves active in duty but wanting in real heartiness, let us apply to God for more of His holy spirit to supply our need. In vain will we turn to any other source. In vain will we devise methods of our own; the living principle will be missing. Heartiness in the service of the Lord must be inwrought. Heartiness embracing all service, and continuing in all service, must be the working of the holy spirit within our hearts. Those most hearty in service are those living closest to the Lord.

We may have the heart for action; but have we faith and energy to persevere, and such other Christian graces, as are necessary to carry us through? There will come temptation to desist. Satan will endeavor to discourage us. He will represent to us our own weakness and the enemies strength; just as he did to David by the mouth of Saul, when he was about to attack the Philistines.

### **Go In His Strength**

We remember the zeal of Peter in his desire to go to Christ upon the water; but when he saw the great waves, his faith proved to be small. **He** was hearty **also** when he said, “though all men be offended because of **Thee**, yet will I never be offended.” In the case of David there was no failure. We know how Peter failed. The remedy for our weakness is to be found in the verse under consideration. “I will go in the strength of the Lord.

We notice the faith and determination in service for God as exemplified in Moses, Elijah, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in Daniel and in many others of the Old Testament. And coming again to the New Testament, we note how Peter and John, when brought before the high priest and his kindred shewed their determination in action. “We cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.”

So dear brethren, if we see our way clear as to the duty of action, let us determine to advance in the strength of the Lord. If we separate ourselves from divine power we come under the depressing influence of our own weakness, and we might be tempted to retire from active service. The remedy for this is to always bear in mind in whose name and strength we originally set out; that we had said, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” We thus ascribe all the praise where it is due.