

Drowning in the Sea of Self

by Chip Brogden

To be saved by Christ, one must come to the end of themselves and stop struggling, trusting God to intervene and provide salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 62:1, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 18:3, John 5:30, Romans 13:14

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Faith And Trust"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the importance of coming to the end of ourselves in order to fully surrender to Christ, drawing a parallel to a drowning man who must stop struggling before he can be saved. He highlights the need to trust in God's plan, even when we cannot see beyond the present moment, and to give up our own efforts to save ourselves. By committing our lives to God and embracing a childlike dependence on Him, we can experience true peace and trust in His guidance.

Transcript

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14)."

Watchman Nee relates a story from one of his experiences as a Christian leader in Communist China. A group of young Christian brothers were gathered together to take a swim in one of the many creeks that run throughout the countryside there. Since most were not good swimmers they were careful to remain close to the banks so as not to get in water over their head.

One of the brothers got out a little too far and begin to struggle in the deep water. Realizing his predicament he began to cry out to his neighbors, who by now were out of the water and drying off. "Help! Save me!" he yelled, all the while thrashing his arms and legs in a futile attempt to keep his head above water.

Brother Nee knew that only one man was experienced enough at swimming to provide some assistance, and he turned to him for help. But strangely enough, the would-be rescuer calmly watched the man's plight but made no move to save him, to the great consternation of Brother Nee and the rest of the group. "Why don't you do something?" they all screamed in unison. But the man just stood there apparently unconcerned.

After a few moments the drowning man could stay afloat no more. His arms and legs grew tired and limp and he began to sink underwater. Now the slow-moving lifeguard dove into the creek, and with a few quick

strokes reached the victim and pulled him to safety.

Once all was well, Brother Nee was beside himself. "I have never seen a Christian who loved his own life quite as much as you," he scolded. "How could you stand by and watch your brother drown, ignoring his cries for help and prolonging his suffering?"

But the man calmly explained. "If I were to jump in immediately and try to save a drowning man, he would clutch me in panic and pull me under with him. In order to be saved, he must come to the end of himself, and cease struggling, cease trying to save himself. Only then can he be helped."

The spiritual lesson here is hard to miss. Nee concluded, and we also conclude, that just as a drowning man cannot be saved until he stops struggling, so must all who would be saved by Christ. Until you come to the end of yourself Jesus will not intervene.

You may be thinking, "Oh, I AM at the end of myself!" Yet you continue to make your own plans, your own decisions, your own choices. You think, reason, debate, argue, and seek counsel according to your own devices, your own thought, your own way. How hard it is for you to stop struggling and give yourself completely into the hand of God.

Why is it so hard? Maybe because you don't really know God. And you will not commit your life into the hands of Another so easily, without some definite knowledge first. You want to KNOW, then you will TRUST. But Jesus bids us to TRUST, that we may KNOW.

May I share a personal experience with you? I find that no matter how far in advance I wish to know God's will for my life, He never reveals much of anything beyond Today. Perhaps because my finite mind cannot grasp all that will transpire between Today and Tomorrow, between This Week and Next Week. Perhaps because if I were to get a glimpse of what will be, or what can be, my doubts would come to the surface and alter my path.

It's as though Life is a journey through thick fog. No matter how hard you strain your eyes you just cannot see beyond the next step.

I believe that God would not have us do any great thing, only the next thing. If we will commit our lives to Him, give Him the preeminence in all things, and stop trying to save ourselves, I believe we will have more peace and heart-trust.

To struggle and thrash about like a drowning man is not faith, but desperation. And it will not bring you the help you need.

Psalms 62 expresses this thought exactly: "I stand silently before the Lord, waiting for Him to rescue me. For salvation comes from Him alone. Yes, He alone is my Rock, my rescuer, my defense and fortress. Why then should I be tense with fear when troubles come (vv. 1, 2 Living Bible)?" Good question. Why should we be afraid? Since David realized salvation comes from God alone, he could well afford to stop trying to bail himself out of every situation.

What does it mean to trust like a little child? Think of the Lord Jesus lying in a manger. Totally dependent upon his earthly parents for food, for clothing, for shelter, for protection. He cannot do a thing for Himself.

Fast forward a few years. Now Jesus is a Man. Now He may feed Himself, clothe Himself, find His own shelter, defend Himself. But inwardly, He is still as dependent upon His Father as He ever was. Not the earthly, but the Heavenly. His own Words: "I can do nothing of Myself. It is the Father Who works in Me. I am come to do His will, not Mine."

The sooner we give the reins of our life over to the direction of an all-knowing God, the sooner we will experience the blessed assurance and calm trust that are only to be found in the heart that has come to the end of itself, and has committed itself unreservedly to follow Jesus.

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