

The Sufficiency of Christ

by Don Currin

The sermon emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ and warns against relying on human reasoning and substitutes for Christ.

Topics: "Christ Alone", "Sanctification"

Description

Don Currin delivers a powerful sermon on confronting the Church's waning confidence in the Son of God, highlighting the dangerous trend of seeking 'Christ And' instead of relying solely on Christ's sufficiency. He emphasizes the pervasive influence of man-centered philosophies in the contemporary church, leading many to replace Christ with various practices and principles. Currin urges believers to turn away from human reasoning and instead trust in Jesus Christ for all their needs, as He alone provides sanctification, salvation, and divine power for life and godliness.

Transcript

Confronting the Church's Waning Confidence in the Son of God

In his classic satire *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis imagined this mythical letter from the demon Screwtape to his apprentice, Wormwood, who was attempting desperately to prevent a Christian believer from practicing biblical Christianity:

My Dear Wormwood,

The real trouble about the set (beginning) your patient is living in is that it is merely Christianity. They all have individual interests, of course, but the bond remains mere Christianity. What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of "Christianity And." If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian colouring.....

Your affectinate uncle,

Screwtape

C. S. Lewis exposed in his allegory one of Satan's clever strategies against the Church that Christ alone is not adequate for His people. The Devil has successfully cast a shadow upon the sufficiency of Christ by convincing many believers that what they really need is "Christ And". His scheme of Christ plus

something has been pervasive in the contemporary church and opened the door to a flood of man-centered philosophies that include Christ plus visualization, Christ plus psychology, Christ plus mysticism, Christ plus emotional healing, Christ plus self-esteem, Christ plus knowledge, Christ plus superstition, Christ plus spiritual warfare, Christ plus church growth strategies, etc. Believing that Christ alone is inadequate to sustain them in their needs, countless Christians and spiritual leaders have relied heavily upon human reasoning to remedy their moral, emotional, and ecclesiastical ills.

Unfortunately, the problem has worsened as there are those who have completely replaced Christ with religious practices and principles to solve their problems. How tragic! Personally, I'm tired of Christianity without Christ! I'm tired of principles without a Person. I'm tired of ten-step formulas that are promoted as a sure cure for all the evils known to man. As a teenage girl in our church on one occasion lamented, "At times I feel as if I am more committed to godliness than I am to God."

Contrary to the experts, the Scripture sounds a certain sound when it declares that Christ has been made unto us sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30), that He saves His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), and that his divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). Perhaps those who feel they need a seminar every three months, or should get specialized counseling periodically, really need to look to Jesus Christ to put their chronic woes into remission.

John Newton expressed in one of his hymns the frustration of attempting to bring his passions under the control of God by using cheap substitutes for Christ. Then he relates his fulfillment of trusting the Son of God only:

By various maxims, forms and rules-

That pass for wisdom in our schools-

I sought my passions to restrain,

But all my efforts proved in vain.

But since my Savior I have known

Are all my rules reduced to one-

To keep my Lord by faith in view-

This faith supplies, and motive too.

A. W. Tozer affirmed, "That man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience real relief when he stops tinkering with his own soul and looks away to the perfect One. While he looks at Christ the very things he has so long been trying to do will be getting done in him."

How long will believers look to men? How long will those in the church depend upon self for deliverance from temptation? C. H. Spurgeon was right when he said that "failure follows on the heels of self confidence." Isn't high time that men cease to rely on the arm of the flesh? Perhaps the question to ask oneself is "when the Son of Man comes will he find faith" in me?

In the midst of a spiritual awakening in the British Isles in the early part of the last century, a chorus was birthed. The lyrics reveal the utter dependence on God that those who were converted had-

I cannot do without Him,
I can not stand alone.
I have no strength or goodness,
no wisdom of my own,
But thou beloved Savior,
are all in all to me,
And weakness will be power,
while leaning hard on Thee.

Asahel Nettleton, one of the prominent ministers in the Second Great Awakening, made it his practice not to spend prolonged periods of time counseling people who were under an awful burden of sin. His reasoning was he found that it discouraged them from seeking Christ alone for salvation. He recorded in his journal an experience he had in Nassau, New York, in April of 1830:

I have since thought that the effect of my leaving them as I did in the advanced stages of their conviction was evidently beneficial. It drove them from all human dependence. Distressing as it is, and cruel as it may seem, it is necessary for them to feel that no arm but God's can help them.

For those who would censure Mr. Nettleton as a careless prophet who was probably unfruitful in his labors because of his passivity in "drawing the net", an estimated 30,000 souls were ushered into the Kingdom of heaven under his ministry.

Perhaps God is attempting to use the frustration and futility that you have encountered from your reliance on other sources. If that has been your experience, look to the Son of God Who is mighty to save and sustain.

The story is told about the late William Randolph Hearst who invested a fortune in collecting rare works of art. On one occasion, he read about some valuable pieces of art and decided to add them to his collection. He sent his agent abroad to locate and purchase them. Months went by before his agent returned to report to Hearst that the pieces of art had at last turned up- they were stored in his own warehouse. Hearst had purchased them years before! Likewise, it may surprise you that the divine aid that you have desired for years may be within your grasp if you will only rest confidently and completely in Him.

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