

Abide in God's Shade, Warmth and Light

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of abiding in God's presence and following His guidance in all aspects of life, particularly in relationships and decision-making.

Duration: 49:45

Scripture: Exodus 13:21-22, Psalm 37:23, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 14:12, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Abiding"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of delighting in God's way and following His footsteps. He uses Psalm 37:23 as a reference to highlight how God establishes the steps of those who delight in Him. The speaker urges the audience to keep their eyes fixed on God, represented by the cloud and fire, and to not move without His guidance. He emphasizes that walking in God's way is essential for a fulfilling and heavenly life, and encourages repentance and a desire for God's presence.

Transcript

Today is an engagement service, someone from France, and from Australia, although she said to me I'm not an Australian, I'm from here. But I don't know, I think she was born here. Where are you? I don't see you, you're so small.

Where's Anita? Were you born here in South Africa? Were you born here? Australia? Oh, then you're an Australian, but you can nevertheless become a South African. Now we start with our service, our engagement service. Anita or getting engaged, I'll ask them to come forward.

Only you who are getting engaged. Where is Anita? She... Ah, you're too small. Sorry, I didn't see you, I just saw this big man, and not you.

Someone said she's still young. I said no, she's not young. According to history, Mary was much younger when she got the child in Bethlehem.

Do you hear? Anita, this is the ring Peer gives to you as an outward token of that he gets engaged to you. I thought a child was crying. But I see it is the unulation.

But it's a unulation of joy. Did you understand that? I thought there were children there making a noise. And I was looking to see the mothers that can't keep their children as they should.

In the meantime, they rejoicing. They were unulating. Did you see how they rejoicing? Yes.

At the way God is leading her and guiding her. And this man as well, he's a missionary. Where's your father? Could you stand up that the people see you? And the brother, and the sister.

The sister is studying at college and the brother is here too. We are sorry that her parents couldn't come. But it's a bit difficult just to come for the engagement and then you come for the wedding.

Although they won't get married as quickly as I did. I got engaged and after two weeks I got married. But then it took three years before we got our first child.

Today I see the wisdom of God. Maybe at that time the people said, oh, they have got to get married. But at that time I was still young and I couldn't think so far.

But nowadays I think, hey, maybe the Lord saved me. People are speaking enough lies. But there, if they would have said such a thing, they would have been wrong.

God willing, their wedding will be on the 30th. Next month. Not this month.

They still like to go home and see their own country. After November, the prices of the airlines go sky high. But now they still are cheaper.

So they get married just before the prices go up. Their parents can be glad concerning their children that they get married in such a way. That's a joy to us.

If young people get married in purity and holiness, shall we pray? We thank you, Lord, for the testimony, for that what you've done in their lives. We praise you. And we rejoice with their parents that they have lived in a way that has brought great joy to their parents.

Bless them, Lord, that the remaining time before they get married, if you keep us, they'll be a bright outshining for you. Amen. I'll speak Zulu, then you can speak English.

They all understand Zulu, do they? What about the French people? You know what Zulu means? Zulu means heaven. So you better learn it, otherwise you get there and you can't speak the language. Yes.

On my heart, the text I wanted to speak about was Isaac and Rebecca. But then I thought, oh no, I can't, I've spoken so often about it. And people may say, he always speaks about the same thing.

Then I said, oh, I'll leave that for another day. Next Saturday we've got a wedding. Their wedding will be on the 30th next month.

So maybe it's for another day, I don't know. But I prayed and I said, Lord, please give me a word that will be a blessing to everyone here. In Numbers 9, verse 15.

In verse 15. On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and that evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. So it was always the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.

And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, where the people of Israel camped. At the command of the Lord, the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the Lord they camped. As long as the cloud rested over the

tabernacle, they remained in camp.

Actually, I should read right to the end of the chapter. But for the sake of time, I'll end there. When the children of Israel had erected the tent of tabernacle in the wilderness, after finishing it, a cloud came and covered the tabernacle.

Though it was there, it was very high over the children of Israel. But on that day it came down and the cloud settled over the tabernacle. In Psalm 105 verse 39, it says God covered the tabernacle.

Now that was a visible sign and symbol of God's presence. What's Israel? In the beginning there was the cloud, but it was high up. But now it came down, settling over the tabernacle, symbolizing the presence of God. God being among His people.

Then at night, that cloud changed into fire. The Bible describes it as the cloud of glory. And that fire was also the fire of glory.

Now you know how in the wilderness it is very hot during the day? But God, with that cloud, using that as symbolic of His presence, being the umbrella of shade over His people. But in the desert, it is very cold at night. But they were then warmed by the fire of glory upon the tabernacle.

The nation of Israel was a huge nation, about three million. Think therefore how powerful that fire was to give warmth to all those people. And the cloud to give shade.

In that cloud and in the fire, God's glory was evident. And that glory was the symbol of God's very own presence. It is marvelous to be God's children, to experience His glory.

And as we walk with Him, we experience that cloud and fire. Such a life is awesome to experience God's glory with you, being His sons, being His daughters. They could see the evidence of God Himself, His nature, His glory, His beauty and His holiness.

Not just any other cloud, not like other clouds, but the cloud of the presence of God. And that fire wasn't just like any other fire, it was the fire of God's own holiness. What a privilege the children of Israel had to experience God's presence in that manner all the time.

During the day, it was symbolized by the cloud. If it was at night, a cloud wouldn't be visible. A fire during the day wouldn't be visible, but at night it was perfectly seen.

God was among His people day and night. God made His law for them, saying, look to the cloud. If the cloud stops, you too must stop.

And if the cloud halts for a week, you too must halt. If it stops for a month, you too must stop for the whole month. Even if it should stop for a whole year, the children of the Lord must also stop for that year.

The same with the fire. They were in a hurry to get to the land of Canaan where it flowed with milk and honey. But God said, I will lead you.

And He revealed Himself that they could see with their own eyes, hear with their ears. And should the cloud then go up and start moving, they had to break camp and start following the cloud. They were led by the cloud and the fire, gazing upon it, looking at the fire.

Dear friends, can you imagine something better than that? Is there something that surpasses that? There's nothing in the world like that. But what a tragedy it would have been if that cloud would have lifted and gone forward and the people of God would have stayed behind. Or if God's people would have moved without that cloud and that fire moving and would run past it and run ahead of it.

They would have left God behind. Anita and you, dear, never forget this. Always keep your eyes on that cloud and that fire.

Never run ahead, never stay behind. Keep your eyes upon God the way you've done it in the past few weeks. And you remember that I've said, there is no life and no glory and no beauty better than this, the way you experienced the Lord.

And if you lose this, oh my, there couldn't be a greater tragedy in this world than that. And you remember that I've said, there is no life and no beauty better than this, the way you experienced the Lord. And if you lose this, oh my, there couldn't be a greater tragedy in this world than that.

Nothing is glorious as clinging to God, sticking to Him, not taking one step outside of Him. God didn't allow the children of Israel to take even one step without Him. Then they would have been godless without God.

They would have left Him behind or they would have been left behind by Him. If the body of Christ, If the body of Christ, When Peter came to me and said he feels this on his heart, I said, now you go back and pray and make sure with God, that's how we do it. We don't flirt around.

It's not a matter of romanticizing it, but it is listening to the cloud, looking to Him. And to Anita as well, I said, don't feel obliged because nobody is pressurizing you. You go now and you seek God.

What does He tell you to do? And I do cross-question a couple of people. If they feel it's God's will, I ask them how it started. How did God lead you? How did you find God's will? So friends, Don't say that we tell you, you've got to do it, you are told who to marry, that is nonsense, you are brainless to say such a thing.

If you say that's what Sisyphus' way, you are a spiritual fool. It's not Sisyphus' way, it's God's way. Here you've got it black and white.

No Christian has the right to take a step without God commanding him to do it. And if you say, well in our church they're not so strict, they don't teach us the vete, the sooner you get out of it, the vete. I usually say go back to go to the other churches, but no matter which church it is, if you make a decision, if you do something without God showing you and doing that before him, no matter which church you are, you're in the wrong place.

Much can be said about this matter. Just observe God's care for his people, giving them a cloud when it's hot in the desert. At night when it's dark and cold, he is there to enlighten his people, he is there to warm them, he is there to stand by their side.

We don't have time to speak about David and other great men of God, what they said about this matter. I'll just take Psalm 37 verse 23. The steps of a man are established by the Lord when he delights in his way.

Do you delight in God's way? God going before and you only walk in his footsteps? You go where he goes and when he stands, you stand. Go and read the whole chapter in Numbers and the verses I didn't read for you. If the fire stops at night, then you stop too.

But if the cloud moves during the day, you move, but don't take a step without him. Anita, for the rest of your life, let this be a lesson to you. No matter what happens, whether it's in bright sunshine or darkest night, keep your eyes fixed on the cloud and the fire.

Anita, for the rest of your life, let this be a lesson to you. No matter what happens, whether it's in bright sunshine or darkest night, keep your eyes fixed on the cloud and the fire. God chose him to move.

Otherwise, you live without God. This will turn your lives into heaven, a foretaste of heaven because of the presence of God, or it will turn your lives into hell. Nobody is too old here amongst us.

Nobody is too young. This is the way that we should all walk in if we are saved out of Egypt, out of the world. And on the way to God's promises.

But we haven't got the cloud now. We haven't got that fire. We haven't got the glory.

But we've got something better. And that's the beauty and the glory of the Lord Jesus. May he always be before your eyes.

Forget people. Forget the world. Let your eyes be fixed on Jesus.

He alone. And if he's in you, the glory of that fire will be present in you. If Jesus is in you, the glory of that cloud will be in you.

God covered them. God kept them. God led them.

Can you think of something better? Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. We say it so glibly, so easily, and it doesn't mean a thing to us. We hear it here and we walk out of this and we forget it again.

Then we are fools in God's eyes. God spread out that cloud over them as a covering. He covers you.

You've got Jesus as a covering for your life. And he's the fire that gives you light at night. Even if it's pitch black, the light will shine bright in its glory.

Not only for you to see, but for everyone. Now before I close, and in closing, I'm asking you a personal question. Is this true of your life? Every day, every hour, every second, or isn't it? Is this what you are teaching your children? This walk with God? Don't call yourself a Christian.

You're not a Christian if you don't walk this way. This is the everlasting way. This is God's way, not the way of Kwasi Zabantu.

I'd hate to be in the way of Kwasi Zabantu. But I love to be in God's way. And I love to delight in his beauty.

And as we read in Psalms... As it says in that Psalm, the steps of a man are established by him for those who love his way. Do you love his way, or do you love the world? Loving fashion and the opposite sex, well then, you are pure heathen on the way to hell. There is no other way.

Here is the way. If you don't want it, well, remain in Egypt. However, Christians, believers, here is the way.

You hear you from Korea, this is the way for you. If you don't walk this way and walk this life, you are damned and doomed forever, unless you repent. This is the way for you, even if you come out of Korea.

And all you others, wherever you come from, this is God's way. And if you are not on that way, then repent today, right now. And the Lord confessed to the Lord and said, Lord, forgive me.

I don't want you to leave me, Lord, but rather, I want you to cover me always. I don't want you to leave me, Lord, but rather, I want you to cover me always. I want thy fire to be in me forever, O Lord.

So, no matter how black the night, I will always behold your beauty and the eternal way. This sermon has been very, very, very short. But I wouldn't like to talk for a long time today.

And at the end, you don't know where we started. I pray that God will take every word that you've heard and indelibly print it into your heart, that you'll never forget it. And may it not only be imprinted, but engraved.

You've got no right to say, I walk with God, if your life isn't like this. Shall we bow our heads and pray? I ask you, O Lord, that your words wouldn't be in vain for us. You came down from heaven.

You dwelt amongst your people. Day while the sun was shining. You didn't want them to suffer, but instead, you covered them with your cloud.

You didn't want them to experience cold at night, but with your warmth, you would warm them up. Keep them warm. We ask you, Lord, that all of us who have left Egypt, the land of sin, the world, and the ways of the world, and our own ways, and our own will, that we do your will, O God, always, day and night.

Amen.

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