

Epistle 24

by George Fox

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dwelling in the truth, walking in uprightness, and fearing the Lord, while warning against presumption and the dangers of the wicked.

Scripture: Psalm 21:2, Psalm 34:10, Proverbs 28:1, Isaiah 61:3, Matthew 11:29, Ephesians 6:11, Colossians 3:9, 1 Timothy 5:14, 1 John 2:17, Jude 1:6

Topics: "Spiritual Integrity", "Humility", "Truth"

Description

George Fox emphasizes the importance of dwelling in truth and walking in love, patience, and humility, urging Friends to maintain their spiritual integrity and resist the adversary through righteous living. He highlights the need for unity in Christ, warning against the dangers of pride and worldly distractions that can lead to spiritual decay. Fox encourages believers to grow in wisdom and understanding, focusing on eternal values rather than temporary worldly gains, and to remain steadfast in their faith against the wiles of the devil. He reassures that those who abide in God's will will find true joy and peace, while those who rely on earthly foundations will ultimately face judgment. The sermon calls for a deep, genuine relationship with God, rooted in the fear of the Lord and the power of truth.

Transcript

To all Friends every where, dwell in the truth, and walk in the love of the truth, in patience, and every one in your measure keep your habitations [Jude 1:6], and learn that good lesson of Jesus Christ, to be low and meek in heart [Mat 11:29], giving no occasion to the adversary [1 Tim 5:14] by evil doing. But walk all honestly and uprightly; for the upright and meek in heart know God, and God delights in the upright and righteous. And walking in uprightness, ye will be bold as lions [Prov 28:1], resisting the wicked with your spiritual weapons, not by bloody hands, as the wicked are tearing and rending the just that dwell in the truth. For the lions want, and hunger, and rage; but ye that fear the Lord, shall want no good thing [Psa 34:10]; and they that wait upon the Lord, he will give them their hearts desire [Psa 21:2]. I witness the words of the Lord to be true, praised be his name! Oh! Friends, dwell in the fear of the Lord, and take heed of presumption, that your minds run not out into vanity and lightness, that the world may not take occasion, and the truth suffer. But every one keep your habitation where God hath called you; and take heed of deceit, and form nothing in your own wills or minds, but grow up in the inner man, (putting off the old man with his deeds, [Col 3:9]) as trees of righteousness, which the Lord hath planted [Isa 61:3], growing in wisdom and understanding to do the will of God, and not your own wills. He that doth the will of God, abideth [1 Jn 2:17] in that which endureth for ever, and seeth all flesh to be as grass, and the glory of the

world to pass away [1 Pet 1:24]. Wo unto you proud men, who compass the earth [Mat 23:15], to set your nests on high [Jer 49:16]! all your gods of gold and silver must perish, and that mind that holds them up must perish. But all Friends, mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another's hearts [2 Cor 3:2f]; meet together every where, growing up in the spirit to the Lord, the fountain of life [Psa 36:9], the head of all things, God blessed for ever! Let not hard words trouble you, nor fair speeches [Rom 16:18] win you; but dwell in the power of truth, in the mighty God, and have salt in yourselves [Mark 9:50] to savour all words, and to stand against all the wiles of the devil [Eph 6:11], in the mighty power of God.

For God hath raised up his own seed in his saints, which seed, Christ, is but one in all, and spreads over all, and throughout all; and we now are through him come to have dominion and power over the evil one, and to tread upon that which hath been too strong for us, the enemy of our peace, and the enemy of our unity with God and one with another. So in that, which is raised up in us, which trampleth upon the earthly, dark power, have we unity with God, and fellowship with his son [1 Jn 1:3], and unity one with another [1 Jn 1:7]; so are known to one another in that, which none, who are of the world, knoweth [1 Cor 2:8?].

So our life is hid [Col 3:3], and our happiness, joy, and delight hid from all, who are ruled and governed by the prince of the air [Eph 2:2], from under whose dominion and government we are redeemed by the only redeemer Christ Jesus, not with corruptible things [1 Pet 1:18], neither is our redemption of man, nor by man, nor according to the will of man, but contrary to man's will. And so, our unity and fellowship with vain man are lost, and all his evil ways are now turned into enmity; and all his profession is now found to be deceit, and in all his fairest pretences lodgeth cruelty; and the bottom and ground of all his knowledge of God and Christ is found sandy, and cannot endure the tempest [Mat 7:26f].

For being brought off from that foundation, and having suffered the loss of all, which seemed beautiful upon the sand, (which was there builded according to that wisdom which was not eternal, but was earthly, upon which the curse of God was [Gen 3:17], and yet doth remain, where it is standing,) we declare against that bottom and foundation, by the power of God, in that light of Christ, which discovers all false foundations, and makes manifest all sandy bottoms, which man hath builded upon.

For where the only true seed takes root, there all man's plants and plantations are plucked up; for there the earth, in which the earthly plants grow, is broken up, ploughed up, and ripped up, and all things made manifest, which have lain hid in it. For in the earth dwell all the noisome creatures, and the evil beasts [Ezek 14:15], which are hurtful to the creation: for in the earth the devil dwells and walks; but the earth being ploughed up, he is made manifest, and the seat of his dwelling is broken up.

That mind, which doth speak of God, but lives not, dwells not, nor abides in the fear of God, that mind must suffer, and pass under the judgment of God, for the curse of God is upon that mind: for that mind is earthly, and of the earth, upon which the curse of God is [Gen 3:17]. And that mind may talk of God, and speak of God, but not in union with God, nor from enjoyment of God in the spirit, nor from having purchased the knowledge of him through death and sufferings; but from hear-say of him, and from custom and tradition.

But the true fear of God doth destroy that mind, which speaks of him, but doth not live in his fear: and that mind is raised up, which doth abide in his fear; and this is acceptable sacrifice, which is pure, clean, holy, and without spot. Then that which knows God, speaks of him, which hath purchased the true knowledge of him through suffering; and to such there is no condemnation, but joy and peace. And this mind sings true

praises to God, the other in hypocrisy; and therefore the wo is unto it.

And this mind is stayed upon God [Isa 26:3], the other is gadding after the creatures, committing fornication with other lovers; and speaks of God, but is not subject to God, and must pass through condemnation.

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