

Dependence

by George H. Alquist Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the critical importance of depending on Christ for strength and effectiveness in ministry and life.

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Abiding In Christ"

Description

George H. Alquist Jr. emphasizes the importance of depending entirely upon Christ while serving Him. He warns against an independent spirit that leads to frustration and failure, stressing the need for complete reliance on the Creator as creatures, the Infinite as finite beings, and the Master as servants. Alquist highlights that apart from Christ, our works amount to nothing, and that true success in ministry comes from abiding in Christ to produce fruit. He encourages a mindset of dependence on God for all things, as seen in the example of Paul the apostle who attributed his abilities and accomplishments to the grace of God.

Transcript

While serving Christ one must remember that one needs to depend entirely upon Christ. An independent spirit only produces frustration and failure as well as wood, hay, and stubble at the Judgment Seat of Christ. As creatures we totally depend upon the Creator. As finite we completely need the Infinite. As servants we look entirely to the Master.

There are many men today going about the ministry in their own power which is the power of the flesh. Many individuals possess great gifts and talents and enjoy unusual skills. However, none of these make a successful servant. A man may go on for years seeming to accomplish much for the work of the ministry, yet in the Lord's estimation little may be worthy of reward.

Our Lord in John 15:5 said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." These are powerful words. That which one does apart from dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ and by His Spirit amounts to nothing.

No matter how wonderful or impressive one's works might appear unto men, without our works being the product of abiding in Christ they will amount to nothing. As the branch of the grape vine cannot produce fruit unless it remains attached to the vine and draws its nutrients and power from it, neither can the servant of the Lord. It is in Christ that we find our righteousness, holiness, and our acceptance to produce fruit. Apart from Him all of our righteousness appears before God as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). We have

nothing in us, apart from Christ, that can produce good fruit acceptable to God. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing..." Romans 7:18

We must understand and remind ourselves often that all of our skills, talents, gifts, and abilities are a gift from God. We breathe His air, eat His food, live in His world, and enjoy His blessings. Without God there is nothing. If you are going to serve God you must do it with an attitude of dependence upon Him. Paul the apostle says in I Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Do you see Paul's dependence upon the grace of God to be what he was and to do what he did? Paul does not boast in his abilities, but rather he boasts in the Lord's ability in and through him. Paul sees himself as a willing branch abiding in the vine producing fruit. Remember, the fruit is called the fruit of the Vine not the fruit of the branches!

As we can do nothing without Christ it is also true that we CAN do everything with Him. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Philippians 4:13 The grace of God provides the power to do what we cannot do by ourselves, the power to be what we cannot be by ourselves, and the power to see that which we cannot see by ourselves. Grace enables us to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed we truly can do all things through Christ because as Paul said, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," I Corinthians 15:10

The things that made the great men and women of the past great was the grace of God upon them. What they accomplished for Christ they accomplished through their dependence upon Him. Paul said again, "when I am weak, then am I strong," II Corinthians 12:10 Paul found that when he trusted in himself he failed because of the weakness of the flesh. However, when Paul trusted in the Lord he found himself strong by the power of God through the spirit.

We must learn to depend upon God. Too often we depend upon men and organizations and not God. Far too often we depend upon money, resources, intelligence, and ability instead of depending upon God for the accomplishment of our tasks. We find that we are warned in the scripture to be careful of depending upon temporal props instead of eternal power. Psalm 20:7-8, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright." Psalm 33:16-17 says, "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength." Psalm 118:8-9 says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." These lessons are often hard learned! God is trying to tell us that it is not the strength or power of earthly things that secures the victory but rather the power of the Heavenly King granted in response to our dependence and faith in Him.

"Then he answered and spake unto me saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," Zechariah 4:6 Dependence! Let that word burn itself into your memory and allow it to become part and parcel of your life. Without it you will fall, yet with it you will succeed. We need to depend upon God for everything. II Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." God keeps His word. He provides all that you need to serve Him. All you need whether it be physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, financial, or material He will provide. After all, God wants you to be successful in the ministry and in the Christian life more than even you yourself want to be.

Do not get in the trap of depending on others for your sufficiency. If you do you will find that you will live on a treadmill of disappointments. When you get your eyes off of God and on to what others can do for you then you are in danger. Your sustenance comes from above from the Lord Jesus Christ and not from men. God does certainly use men to bless you and provide for you, but always remember that you are depending on Him and not on the vehicles that He may choose to meet your needs. Be thankful for those whom God chooses to use in your life to be a blessing to you. Be thoughtful and remember to let others know of your thankfulness, but always be mindful of your Source which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The dependent servant finds that his Lord never fails. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:24-33, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take not thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Hear ye Him!

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