

Belonging

by G.W. North

Knowing we belong to God is the greatest security and the secret to living the life of God.

Duration: 47:53

Scripture: Psalm 27:8, Psalm 42:1, Psalm 62:5, Acts 17:24-27, Romans 8:23, Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 4:21

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering oneself to Jesus and removing all barriers and excuses. He compares this surrender to holding someone stiffly in your arms, and encourages listeners to let go and allow Jesus to come in fully. The preacher also discusses the need to be patient and understanding with others, just as Jesus is with us. He highlights the ability to let go as a glorious thing that can prevent emotional breakdowns. The sermon concludes with the reminder that we are called to live like God and to be united with Him and with one another.

Transcript

Some time ago, I heard an elderly lady, quite a bit older than I am, she was then, say, children and old people need love. I suppose we're all aware of that, where babies are concerned, but they aren't. Babies don't know that they need love.

They haven't got a clue what they need. But old people do know. They know they need it.

And I suppose this is one of the tragedies of the day in which we live. For old people know they need love. You say, well, you might say, well, I'm 10 or 20 or 30 or 40, and I know I do.

That's absolutely right, but think of what it'll be when you're 80. And how true this is. I think, probably, beloved, the most wonderful thing of all is to know that you belong.

You see, as a man, this was Jesus's security. This was his security, to know he belonged to God. See, Jesus is, as a man, his most wonderful security was to know, I am the father of one.

That was the greatest thing of all. And that was why he wanted us to come into this knowledge, to know that we belong. There was going to come a day in Jesus's life when he didn't belong to anybody.

And as you know, they were going to cast him out and burn him in the valley of the Son of Heaven when he was crucified. If somebody hadn't come along with a tool and said, here, he can have mine, nobody

would have had him, except perhaps Mary Magdalene, out of whom he cast seven devils, was willing to risk everything to have him. And what a tremendous and glorious revelation this is, beloved.

This sense of belonging. If you don't know you belong, you won't have anything that God wants you to have, really, of the vital things of eternal life. To say that the gift of God is eternal life, and believe it and yet not live it, is tragic.

And so many are struggling valiantly and often vainly to hold on to this thing. I believe what the Bible says, and so on. And of course that's absolutely vital.

But really to know that you're part of God, is the whole secret of it. To belong. You can't have fellowship if you don't belong.

If you don't know you belong, you'll never have fellowship. Never. And the whole basis of God is this trinity of fellowship.

They all belong to one another. All mine are thine, Father. All thine are mine.

The tragedy of the elder brother in the parable, that Jesus told, was that he didn't know that he really belonged. He didn't really know. Father had to say, well all that I have is thine.

He didn't know he belonged. It took the son a long time. He had to come to nothing before at last he knew where he belonged.

And then he went home. And how wonderful this is, beloved, to come to this glorious recognition that you belong. And when you know you belong, that's when you can really pour out, let everything go.

Jesus wouldn't have been able to have poured out everything on the cross if he didn't know he belonged. If he didn't know that Father was going to raise him from the dead, he wouldn't have been able to have done it. He knew his Father was going to do it, so he said, destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it again.

He was so certain that Father was going to do it, that he could say he was going to do it himself. That's wonderful. And when we come to this glorious intimacy with Father, everything else vanishes away.

I've come to see that the spiritual life grows out of this glorious union with the Lord. I know we believe it. I know that experts can stand up and preach it if they're given to words when they're twenty-five years of age, but they'll understand it when they're fifty-five, usually.

I know he's the spirit of revelation, but you've got to be a revelation of the spirit. And that makes a big thing. A glorious demonstration of this thing.

To live it with inward comfort. To live it as the Lord wants us to live it. And that's why the Holy Ghost is called the Comforter.

Because it is by him that we live this wondrous life. You see, Jesus hung on the cross and poured everything out and gave himself completely. And he did.

It's marvellous for you and I this morning. And so many times it's come back to my mind while I've been in the room this morning. And it's come back to my mind via my heart.

That's a big thing. That this great truth of the Lamb lying in Father's bosom. That the ultimate, of course, is New Jerusalem and the throne and there's the Lamb in Father's bosom.

Marvellous. And it's wonderful for the Lamb to so give himself to you. To say, come right in because nothing can stop him really once all your barriers are down.

And once all the excuses are gone. And once all the seeking after sin is gone. And once all the wanting to promote your own ego or go your own way and all these things are really gone.

He can come right in and right in and right in. Hallelujah. And that's a marvellous thing.

Have you ever held someone or something in your arms and you've got it there. But you've got it all right. But it's all tense and rigid and all that person is.

And if you want to pull them to you, you've got to nearly rock them off their toes. But they'll still come as stiff as a plank when they do. Do you know these people? You can almost feel their nerves going like, I don't know what inside someone at the door, would you like to go? Two men.

And you can sort of feel their sort of nerves shooting like anything when you get hold of them. And they're all afraid and all that. Well, have you ever thought that perhaps that's what you're like in Jesus' arms? Have you ever thought that? It's one thing for the Lord to be able to pour himself and you are there in him, but oh, to be so assured and so at rest that you can start to pour out your love.

What a big thing that is. And it's only when you know you really belong that you can do that. And I'm not here just to enlighten your mind this morning.

That's not the point. It is one thing to be enlightened, but oh, to be in it, to be able to pour out. You know, there's a marvellous hymn and I'm very glad that John Wesley did translate it and put it into our book.

It was written by a man who spoke about how he thanked God that God's bright beams on him had shined. And how he was able to, at last, to release himself to God, to be able to sort of let go. The profoundest peace and the utmost rest comes from that.

When God has done so much and we're able really to release. And you know, beloved, don't you, that God is working in this great way to bring us into the glory of his love. That we should come to the place of utmost release.

And as I was sitting there this morning, more and more, this was the real joy of my heart. To this sense that he'd so loved me and so understood me and so worked in me that I could let go utterly. I was talking to someone only last week and this person, oh, I don't know how old this person would be, 50 perhaps, you're the first one I've ever been able to talk to.

Think this, 50 years and at last, ability to let go. Ability to let go. What a glorious thing this is.

All the pent up things inside. And we don't really know much about it actually. This is why people have breakdowns.

It sort of builds up, builds up, builds up. Then they crack. Then they realize that something's been going wrong perhaps for 20, 30 years or been building up all that time.

They didn't know. Nobody does know until they've gone. And the Lord brings us to the place, beloved, where everything's right.

It's a tragic certainty in this age in which we're living that everybody's building up for a breakdown and may be building for it for 30 years until they can really let it go in Christ. You might be here. I might be here.

This is the whole secret of it. This glory of the, oh Lord. Thank you Lord that I can love you.

Really love you. Isn't this a marvelous thing when God brings us there? And it isn't until we get there really that we begin to enter the secrets of God. And that we find that so many things that are light to us and we would say they've been revelations to us and God has done this for us and God's done that and he has.

Praise him. We realize that there is nothing as to what we're going to enter into now, what we're experiencing. Amen.

Let's go to the Ephesian letter, shall we? The astounding glory of what the Lord reveals, say in chapter 4, verse 17, this I say therefore and testify in the Lord. Now see what he's saying. He's doubly emphasizing this.

He's not just saying it but he's testifying it to you in the Lord. He's testifying it to you. Now Paul is on testimony here.

He's not just now a means of communication from God by the inspiration of the Spirit. He's testifying it to you. Beloved, take his testimony.

His life is crying out to us. His life, his knowledge, the build up of the years as he is now in a Roman prison near the end of his life. He's crying it out to us, beloved.

Crying it out to us. Don't walk henceforth as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind. That's the first thing he had said.

Mental position. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God. There it is.

Alienated from the life of God. Praise God. In other words, beloved, we're to live like God.

We're to live like God. And you see, as I've already said, the great secret of the life of God in the Trinity is that they belong. They all belong.

Together they make God. Separated they wouldn't. Ever thought of that? Separated.

Together they make God. Hallelujah. They are our glorious God.

And it's all from this sense. There wouldn't be any love to offer to men. There wouldn't be anything to give to anybody unless these three belonged in perfect repose in one another.

Isn't it a marvellous thing? And we're not to be alienated from the life of God. The life of God. Oh, glory.

Think of it. I hope you have the power and ability to think of it. I'm not trying to insult your grey matter.

What I am meaning is this. The ability to sit down quietly away in a corner or perhaps in a busy queue and let that absolutely thrill you and run through you. The life of God.

Amen. Man, look at you and say, here's the life of God. This man is the life of God.

This woman is the life of God. Oh, isn't this a precious thing? I think it is, you know. More and more as I go on with the Lord.

Don't let it sort of run away through your mind as a nice Bible phrase, you know. Live the life of Christ on earth or something like that. It's all so easy to say it as an accepted fact.

This man is the life of God. What a precious thing this is, beloved. And this is why he's testifying it, you see.

For instance, beloved, look at verse 19. It subsists in feelings. Because it's all per contra, those who are past feeling.

Hope you're not past feeling, are you? I hope you've just come alive in feeling. And life is a life of feeling. Don't give it to me that it's mind and this, that and the other.

It's a life of feeling. If love isn't feeling, it's nothing. Amen.

Love is feeling. Oh, glory be to God. This is a marvellous thing, isn't it? God has brought us to this, beloved.

The death of us is that we're feeling this. That isn't to say we don't feel a pin if it's stuck in us. We do.

And we make a terrible fuss about it if we haven't got any love. It isn't that we can't feel it if we fall over and bark our knees. But I'm not speaking in that realm at all.

The life of the inner man, oh, to be people of feeling. There's a precious truth here in the Acts of the Apostles. And you know it, it's when Paul was at Areopagus or Mars Hill in Athens.

God, verse 24, who's unknown in verse 23, unknown to the Athenians. God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing his Lord of heaven and earth, dwereth not in temples made with hands, neither is worship with men's hands, as though he needed anything. Seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things.

And hath made of one all nations of men, the word blood isn't in the original, hath made of one all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. And hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him. See it? Feel.

I think perhaps you may agree with me in verse 26 that if God has determined the times appointed and he set, determined the bounds of their habitation, then it's as much as we may feel for these astronauts in space, it's entirely their own fault for God didn't determine that to be a habitation of men. And though from the thing, you know, everybody being focused on three astronauts out in space and what it is, beloved, it's their own fault. It's their own fault.

And if they get on the moon and never get back, that's their fault. I hope I don't sound callous. Perhaps if I'm, you think that's callous, then you might think God's callous because he could send a flying saucer to pick them off there, I suppose, if he wanted.

If you believe in flying saucers. Or all the sort of hocus-pocus, airy-fairy stuff that people were having us float about on, worse than if we were floating about on a cloud. No, beloved, he put us on the earth.

He came on this earth and shed his blood. If men will poke their nose into other things, that's entirely their own fault. Wouldn't you do anything to rescue them? Oh, yes.

I'd rescue anybody in hell if I could, but I can't. And God hasn't equipped me with wings and an asbestos skin and all this thing. I can't fly up there and touch them.

If only men would see what God is trying to do. Not that one's heart doesn't go out to them. And we do have feelings.

But I want to come back to this great thing. We're to feel after God. And we're a people of feelings.

Glory be to the name of the Lord. And when you feel dreadful inside, and when you feel dark, and when you feel all the hellions of the pit are chasing you, and when you feel in the heart of your mind it's time you felt for God, you're desperate. Amen.

And when you feel there's no end to your troubles, and when you feel there's no beginning anyway, and you don't know where to go, that's time you felt after God. Amen. And the will of God is that you feel after him and find him.

And Jesus says, here I am, I'm the way. And it's all so lovely. When the Lord does this, he's not unaware, beloved, that we are people of feelings.

And so I want you to go back with me into the Ephesian letter. And this man is testifying. In the mind, in verse 18, verse 17, Gentiles are walking in the vanity of their mind.

That's what they're doing. Everybody you know that isn't a born again spiritual Christian is walking in the vanity of their mind. Everybody, without exception.

I am testifying to you, says Paul, that that is because of the ignorance that is in them, verse 18, because of the blindness, that word blindness is hardness, because of the hardness of their heart, and their understanding is darkened. Their past feeling, and they've given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness. Amen.

You know these people that are greedy for the filth? Greedy for the filth. They've got an appetite for it, which is beyond the normal. That's greediness.

Isn't it wrong to have an appetite for lunch in about an hour's time? Or quarter of an hour's time, sorry. Hallelujah. But to have a greed for the rottenness and the wrongness.

But beloved, you've got to have a comparable thing in you for the cleanliness. Hallelujah. You know this morning when the Lord came on me to give out the word, especially about the soul, the heart and the flesh, I could see this.

I could see someone, perhaps you wondered why I stayed on my feet. Reaching out after God. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

I'll pour, He says. I'll pour. Hallelujah.

When that which God says is normal in you. It's not just something that goes on in the high peak of the week, i.e. the morning meeting on Sunday. But something, when the flesh is crying out, cries out seven days a week.

Hallelujah. Praise thy name, Father. When this is in us, beloved.

Oh, hallelujah. You're poised on the brink of revival. You're poised on the brink of great outpourings.

I mean, I use this word revival. You know, some of you have heard me comment along these lines before. I don't want to go back over it.

But the whole glorious truth is that we're there. Amen. Glory, glory, glory.

Expectation. Expectation. And then God uses all that's in the natural to feed the spiritual.

Everything. Everything that one sees in the natural is fed back in as a spiritual truth. That's the great thing.

Everything. Bless the name of the Lord. It rises in you as a spiritual revelation.

Hallelujah. We're moving into these great, great truths of God. And if I'm in the life of God, really living the life of God, we'll go right down, you see, and we'll get to the Spirit of God, verse 30.

The Holy Spirit of God is a precious thing. You know, I hope that the Spirit conveys to you the thought of power. I hope not that we want to get, I want some power.

No, I hope that you understand by the Spirit, the real dynamic driving power, the source of life of you, if you have Spirit in you. Is this right? The Spirit of God. Hallelujah.

Oh, it conveys the whole idea of God being in it from the center of His being. From the very roots of Him, if I may put it that way. And that's why you read in, say, back into the third chapter, where the prayer is that He's bowing His knees, verse 14, saying to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom thy whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that you have been rooted and grounded in love.

That's right. That from the roots of yours, the very ground of your being, the substance of your life, your beginnings, where everything builds up from, where everything is produced from. Hallelujah.

There. And this is the thought that you've got to get into your whole mind about Christ, about God, that He's in this by His Spirit, the very Spirit of God has sealed you. Is that right? And when you're in this tremendous place of being sealed, you've got this tremendous thing in verse 32, you've got the as God, the life of God, so that I should be as God.

Act as God. Amen. Not that I think I have power to make it rain or not.

It isn't in these realms that I want to have power anyway. It isn't that I think I have power to create a world or not. I don't want any real power in that realm at all.

I'm such an idiot, I'd make a mess of it if I did. They'd collide, they wouldn't keep on their courses like God's done it. It isn't that I have any fancy ideas along that line.

But oh, beloved, in the lines, in the ways that matter, being kind to someone, to you, tender-hearted, you see, it's all feelings. It's all feelings. We're in the realm of feelings.

Forgiving one another as God. Oh, glory be to the name of the Lord. Isn't it a marvelous thing that we can be as God here and act as God in His realms.

And we can bring assurance of forgiveness to somebody's heart. And they feel you've forgiven them. And they feel your kindness toward them.

And they feel that you're tender toward them. Isn't that a marvelous thing? We've been rectified then. We're really righteous now.

For righteousness is rectification. It isn't merely having the past blotted out. It's having my roots and springs and spirit rectified so that I can be right with God and to God and right with you and to you.

Isn't that a marvelous thing to be there? It's all love, you see. It's all in feeling. Hallelujah.

See, well, my feelings are sort of a quixotic, or if you like to use mercurial, or they're up and down, or this, that, or the other. Well, beloved, that's where you're needing healing. Stay by.

You'll get healed alright. Stay around. That'll all be healed.

Amen. Isn't that lovely? It'll all be healed. You see, and some of the things where you think you're very sensitive, you've got to be healed there.

You're very touchy, really. And of course, the Lord understands you're touchy. You see, there's this and there's that and there's the other.

But know you belong. I mean, wouldn't you be touchy if you had an open sore now and I went and put my finger on it like that? And people do it quite ignorantly, you know. Love them.

They don't love. I remember once I had an accident when I used to work for my living. It's still the sort of classic that we talk about in our family.

Well, we really want to talk about somebody, you know, really. I remember somebody cut my leg nearly off. They got through to the bone with an axe.

I won't show you the mark. It was when we used to have a business of our own that had to do with woodcutting and one thing or another. And I was showing someone and, well, he never would have had anything sharper in his hand than a bodge, as we say.

But he missed the thing and hit me altogether. I don't know how in the world a man could miss it, but he did. Well, anyway, I came home and I sat indoors and I think my wife was out.

I don't know. Were you in? I don't know. I think she was out.

The children were at school. I put my leg up on a chair like that, you see. And in comes one of our daughters.

I won't tell you which one. You may guess. And she sees Daddy sitting there.

She comes right across to him and sits on the place. God healed it. It's all right.

She didn't mean it. She didn't know. Don't you see? Lots of people like that.

I was touchy. I really was touchy. Did you do this? No, I didn't.

I just went green and couldn't say anything. I didn't correct her. I didn't say anything.

Did you rebuke her? No, of course not. You don't do that. You put up with it.

You put up with it. That's what you do. And now you're beginning to get like Jesus.

And that's what you'll read in the verse higher up. I oughtn't to have shut my book, but it's there in Ephesians chapter 4. It's there. And it says this in that same fourth chapter.

Verse 21. Is so be that you have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. That's right.

And Jesus didn't rebuke you when you put... did he? See? Jesus didn't do it, did he? You could still go that same night and love him and he'd love you, couldn't you? When everybody else thought you'd made an awful mess. And you weren't really in a place to understand that you had. And you justified yourself quite a bit to the Lord.

And you needn't have done because he understands. The whole glorious place, beloved, is the place of love. Amen.

Do you believe you're there to be as God? As God. Oh, to be able to let everything go and really love. You'd be sitting in this meeting this morning.

Could you let your heart go, lovely? Could you? Did you let yourself go? Couldn't you? Couldn't you do it? Well, do you belong? Are you sure you belong? Now, don't boast with that with texts of scripture. I'm not the devil tempting you. I want to encourage you.

In your heart, do you know you belong? Oh, I'm going to get in on this. Oh, I'm going to get in on this. Well, of course you don't belong.

That's why you're trying to get in. Do you see? That's not the way of faith. That's the way of unbelief.

Because if you believed, you'd be in. And God's not so dreadful as to say, well, I'll leave him out there a couple of years. Keep telling him himself he's in.

Now they'll be ready. That would be torture. God gathers you right in.

That's what he does. So that you feel in. Wanted.

Loved. Restful. Assured.

Amen. And babes and old people need loving. The babes don't know they do.

But the old people do know. And the realization, beloved, as you grow with God is that more and more you'll need love, love, love, love. That's what you'll need.

You won't need any criticisms. What you'll need is love. Hallelujah.

And because you know you need it, you will be giving it to others. That's right. And when you can give it to others, when you're absolutely released and can give and give and give and give.

Not because you're the perfect one or you think you've reached the ultimate, but because you're so free from yourself that you can just let it flow out. Isn't that a marvelous thing? Amen. Now let's pray, shall we? Come on to the feeling level, beloved.

Don't work anybody up or work anything up. It's all feeling. We haven't come for a religious exercise this morning.

But for spiritual life. Glory to God. This precious thing that thou are doing in our hearts.

Thank thee, Lord, that all the time thy spirit is at work in us. We praise thee that sometimes he's just like the dew. Sometimes he comes like the rain on the mown grass.

Sometimes he's like the water floods pouring out. Sometimes he's like a rushing mighty wind. Sometimes he bears the sweet zephyrs of Eden across our souls.

Sometimes, Lord, he cleaveth the mountains and divides the seas. And sometimes he speaketh as one close to the ground, moving upon us, Lord, in all his glorious, wondrous awakenings. We do bless thee for it, Father.

Oh, God. Oh, God, our Father. We love thee more and more.

Hallelujah. We praise thee, Father, that sometimes it's like the dawn stealing across the night sky as the night endeth. And sometimes, Lord, it's like the burning of the noonday sun.

But it's all of thee. And we bless thee that days come and days go, but thou remainest ever the same. Hallelujah.

How we bless thee for this, oh, God. And want to go about our Father's business in all the sweetness and rapture of belonging to thee. All so confident, restful, and eternal.

Amen.

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