

An Address on John 14

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon emphasizes the intimate relationship between Christ and His followers, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit and the importance of obedience and joy in their faith journey.

Scripture: John 14:1

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Association with Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the profound connection between Christ and His followers, illustrating how Jesus desires for us to understand our association with Him. He explains that despite Christ's rejection, He tirelessly works to assure us of His love and care, culminating in the promise of the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. Darby highlights the importance of knowing Christ as the way to the Father and the necessity of obedience as a demonstration of our love for Him. He reassures believers of their blessed position in Christ and the peace that comes from this relationship, urging them to keep their hearts focused on Him. Ultimately, Darby calls for a deep, personal connection with Christ, encouraging believers to rejoice in His happiness as they cling to Him.

Transcript

It is remarkable the pains the Lord takes to give us the sense of the way He has associated Himself with us and us with Himself; and how His heart goes out that our hearts may believe in His love, that He is interested in us and in our being with Him. In His rejection His heart would not rest and be satisfied unless He felt they had the consciousness of being associated with Himself.

The history of the Gospels is the history of His Person passing through this world, that would not have Him if He was that Person. Then He labours to persuade His own that He cares perfectly and completely for them - that He labours for them, and cannot be satisfied without having them with Himself.

When they came to Peter and said, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" as a good Jew, Peter says "Yes." Jesus says, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?" Peter says, "Of strangers." Jesus replies, "Then are the children free notwithstanding lest we should offend them . . . take and give unto them, for Me and thee." We get the Lord showing Divine knowledge and Divine power, yet putting Peter along with Him. His own Person is always guarded but they were both children (Matt. 17:24-27).

So at John's baptism; in the first step of the remnant, the Lord takes it with them, and man's place is shewn in the one Man, upon whom consequent upon what He was in Himself, heaven must open. It is the first time you get the whole Trinity brought out, the moment He has taken His place man amongst men.

52 Then man has to overcome Satan and He says, "I must go there too." (Matt 4:1-10).

Then you get man's place shown out in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elias are in the glory talking familiarly together. There again His Person is guarded - they disappear. "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." You get Him being this Divine Person whether in the lowliest place, or in the heavenly glory, but always bringing His disciples into the same.

So in John 20, Who was it that was told the highest position that can be thought of? Who was the vessel of the revelation to minister it? Not the Apostles, but Mary Magdalene. Attached to Christ's grave she cannot leave it. If she had not Him she had nothing. She gets the revelation and communicates it to the Apostles. You will find always through Scripture, that where there are those who cling to His Person, there divinely given knowledge is found. If you want to know keep close to Christ. It was not in order to know that John was so close to Him (John 18): he was there before.

Divine affections are connected with the work of the Lord, who had been thus drawing out their hearts to cling to Himself, and was now going away. They were troubled. The thing that He takes up still, is their having to part with Him. He was going to the Father. "Very well, I cannot give you up - I must make you fit to be with Me." "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet." "If I cannot be with you, you must be with Me, and I cannot have a spot in heaven." They were clean "through the word I have spoken unto you." But He cannot have them picking up dirt on the road, He must wash them. He became a Servant when He became a Man. Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end, that is out and out - right through. He will gird Himself and make them sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them even in glory. He makes Himself Minister of the blessing. His heart is not colder there than here, and this makes it doubly blessed to us. If my mother gives me a trifle I would not part with it for the world. There is not a joy we shall have in heavenly things that Christ will not give. He never ceases to be a Man nor to have Divine love in His heart.

53 In the first three Gospels Christ is presented to the world to be received, but this is not so with John. In chapter 1 the world knew Him not - His own received Him not. Therefore you find electing grace in John. Chapter 8 is the rejection of His word; chapter 9 of His work: chapter 10 "I will have my sheep in spite of all." Having been finally rejected in word and work you get Him owned in all the characters He was entitled to. Chapter 11, as Son of God in the resurrection of Lazarus: chapter 12, riding on an ass into Jerusalem as a testimony that He was Son of David. God took care that He should have that. Then Greeks come up desiring to see Him, and He says, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." But if He takes this larger, fuller place He must die. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

54 In chapter 14, it is what He tells them for their comfort while He is away. First, He is coming back again. Ye believe in God as an object of faith, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come to receive you to Myself. I cannot stay with you, but I am not going to be alone up there; there are many mansions, I will come to receive you.

In consequence of that you get two quite distinct things. First the object before the disciples - what they ought to have known then: second what they could not know until later. He does not leave us ignorant of the blessedness He is going to bring us into. "I am going to the Father." They say "whither goest Thou, we do not know the way." "Why I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father in Me!" If I am sending my child anywhere, the great point is what the person is there. So the Father was where He was going.

"Show us the Father." "You have seen the Father in Me and you have got it all." They knew where He was going because they had seen the Father in Him. They knew the way because they had found the Father through Him.

We know Christ shall see of the fruit and travail of His soul; that is an immense joy. What does He desire for the saint now? To be as like Him as possible. Then there will not be a thing in us to jar with Christ's heart. Still the essence of the blessedness is that it is the Father's house and we know Who is there. They had seen the Father revealed in Him that they might know where He was going. It shows the immense importance of the Person of the Lord Jesus. When the Christian sees Him he knows the blessedness of where He is going quite well. Thus we get the object already before them, and if they really loved Him they would prove it by keeping His commandments.

55 He then goes to the second part of the christian blessedness. (verse 16). As I have got the object in the revelation of the Father and the Son, I now get the Comforter from the Father to give me this association with Christ, "at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." It is not merely the Father and the Son as in the first part, but now they learn another thing, that He who is gone to Heaven is in the Father, and that the Father has sent the Comforter to make them know that they are in Him and He in them. Thus I get the Christian's state consequent on the coming of the Holy Ghost. Thus I get sure blessedness - divinely given certainty of our place in Christ. I know that I am in Christ who is there, and I know Christ is in me here. It is not a question of hope, but the Holy Ghost is dwelling in us.

There is no thought of the world receiving the Holy Ghost. The world ought to have received Christ. The world did see Christ and ought to have known Him. The Holy Ghost is not in the world to be received as Christ was. The world cannot receive Him; it never says they cannot receive Christ. The Holy Ghost comes and is the seal of believers called out of the world to be a peculiar people. He belongs to and is known of believers only. He is not like the first Comforter. Christ was there and could not be in them. He was with them but had to go away. The Holy Ghost is in us, and stays with us. Christ was amongst them here, but not in them. He was absolutely alone in that sense - most accessible, affable, but alone. This other Comforter stays here, abides with us and in us. It is a thing that is only known by having it; but the effect of having it is that I know I am in Christ. He gives the consciousness of being in Christ. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. On the other side we know Christ is in us. Thus we get our full complete blessedness before God on one side, and the measure of our practical responsibility down here on the other. I am accepted in the Beloved; I have got a new place - not in the flesh at all. Responsibility as a child of Adam is completely and entirely over - not as a Christian, but as a man. There is none righteous no not one. I do not want the day of judgment to tell me what I am. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost. It is not a state of probation. Man has plenty of debts and not a farthing. You come and tell me how to conduct myself, but I have nothing to live on. My standing and responsibility is that of a child of God, in Christ not in the flesh. Christ has answered for my sins not in the first man but in the second; the debts are all cleared. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. There is the blessed place I am in. The sealing of the Holy Ghost comes at the recognition of the grace of

the forgiveness of sins. There we are white as snow. The Holy Ghost says "I will dwell in that man." God cannot seal an unbeliever, He seals a believer. It is a blessed place, high above angels. When once I believe that the Son of God became a Man and died for me, glory is only a natural consequence. Nothing is too good for us; all the rest is easy to believe.

56 The other side of that is where Christian responsibility begins. Saved, in Christ, sealed with the Holy Ghost, there is no responsibility; I could not get into a better place in heaven. But if that is true another thing is true: if I am in Christ, Christ is in me down here, and I say, now let Him be seen. Conflict is consequent upon that. The Lord does not enter into conflict with Satan for us, till He takes His place. My place is settled in Christ and my duties are settled by Christ being in me. It is not a question of what I am doing, but of Christ being in me. I am to manifest the life of Jesus and nothing else: it requires watchfulness and diligence. I ought to walk as He walked. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. What is the obedience of Christ? He never had a will of His own. The Father's will was the source of all He did. In Matthew 4. Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God command." "Nay I came to obey and serve - not to command - I have no word out of God's mouth." The obedience of Christ was having God's will as the origin and motive of all He did, not only the rule. "If I am a Son I do not depart from the place of a servant." That is the way Satan was perfectly silenced. There is no harm in eating when hungry. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He can do nothing without that word, and Satan can do nothing.

57 It is Christ who is our life dwelling in us, that life living "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If I had a direction telling me all I ought to do, it would not do. I want to know His will to test my state. If God has not a will I am to do nothing. But it needs spirituality to discern His will - "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." When I am uncertain, there is something that hinders, and I detect it. If the eye is single the whole body is full of light. As I get then the full blessedness of being in Christ, so I get Christ in me. That brings on the present dealing and government of God with us in this path. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me . . . and I will love him and manifest myself to him." We get the positive enjoyment of the place; and that does depend upon the conduct - the place does not. "Grieve not the Spirit of God." If I grieve Him He grieves me, and the effect of the Spirit's presence in me is to make me unhappy - conscious of having grieved Him if in disobedience. Some people are afraid of commandments; I am not. If I did everything right, and it was not obedience, I should have done nothing right. Commandment brings in authority and therefore I like it. He adds "If a man love me He will keep my words." There must be obedience. He leads me in the path.

58 All responsibility comes from the place I am in. The relationship that exists is the ground and measure of the duty. Every responsibility in conduct flows from the place a man is in. Am I child for ever; does that take away my duty? On the contrary it makes it for ever.

Two things remain in the chapter. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." See the manner of Christ's giving. "My" - that gives it its character. It is not the way the world gives. It sometimes gives generously, but it gives away. Christ brings us into the same place with Himself. What He gives He does not give away, but with Himself. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you." He brings us into all blessedness in Himself.

59 There is one other thing - the most wonderful thing in the Scripture, because it shows how He looks for the heart to cling to Him. "If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father." It is as

though He said, "You will be thinking of my happiness." What a place to put us into! What a thing to be expecting from us! Have your hearts that thought of Christ, so bringing us into enjoyment of all He has Himself, and expecting us to be interested in His happiness? Do you believe this?

What I feel is that if you get the consciousness of the blessed privilege of being in Christ before God, that cannot be true without His being in you.

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