

Jesus Dependent Psalm 16

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing Christ as our salvation, following Him, and presenting Him to the world.

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, Psalm 17:15, Matthew 3:6, John 13:3, John 14:6, John 20:17, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:13, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Dependence on Christ", "Spiritual Nourishment"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the multifaceted nature of Jesus Christ, portraying Him as the Son of God, the Son of Man, and our High Priest. He highlights that true knowledge of God and humanity is found in Christ, who embodies grace and truth. Darby explains that Christ's dependence and obedience to the Father serve as a model for believers, encouraging them to follow His path of life through faith and reliance on Him. He also stresses the importance of recognizing Christ as the source of spiritual nourishment, urging believers to feed on His sacrifice and love. Ultimately, Darby calls for a deep affection for Christ, who leads us to fullness of joy in the presence of God.

Transcript

I need hardly say that there are many aspects under which we may consider the Lord Jesus. There was His glory with the Father before the world was as Son of God.* He is Son of man; He is High Priest of His people. He was the manifestation of truth, and everything is made manifest by the truth. There is no real truth anywhere but in Christ. If I knew what God is, He is not known really but in Christ. If I want to know what man is in perfection, I see him in Christ. If I want to know what sin is, "He was made sin"; I see it there, the power of death? I see it in Him. Love? It is in Him I seek it. Hatred? True, it was not in Him, but it was made manifest by Him. All is known really through Him. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The truth shall make you, free indeed; and then, a little lower down in the context, the "Son shall make you free."

{*'as Son of God' is inserted from the original Morrish edition of Mr Darby's lifetime.}

We have seen Christ as the last Adam, and the power of redemption, the real deliverance He has wrought out for us. He is "the second man, out of heaven." "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And again we have seen, from Psalm 22, where Christ has brought us. Having come out of death, raised by the glory of the Father, He praises in the midst of the congregation, and gives us to chant the same song with Him, we being brought into the condition of the last Adam before God, although we

have the treasure now in "earthen vessels." Death and resurrection are in Psalm 22.

There are two other characters regarding Christ very precious, because drawing out the affections until by-and-by we shall see Him. He has not only delivering power, whether by life or death, but He is an object, in glory as in humiliation; and there is a third thing: He is a Priest for us, and this character in which He is to us is connected with these new affections, not as an object, but connected with affections.

Christ said, "I go to my Father and your Father," John 20 "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John 14. The congregation must not jar with His praise, and are therefore placed in the same position with Him before "My Father and your Father." Our place before God now is in Him, the Christ in glory. Such is our place, and we are predestinated to bear the image of the heavenly. This gives us power of hope; we are excited by it to run the race; it is not so much dependence marks it (although we must always be in dependence or fall), but the energy and joy of hope. We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. We do not hope for righteousness, we have it, or rather we are it. Christ is the righteousness; He has entered into the glory, and this is the consequence of the righteousness. "We wait for the hope of righteousness"; we wait for the glory. The Spirit now takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto us down here - then in glory. The law was a ministration of condemnation, the Spirit is the ministry of righteousness. When Christ was glorified, He sent the Holy Ghost down to seal our persons and make us partakers of the glory to come; the effect of this is, that beholding Him we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. This is practical realisation, and it becomes fruitful in us. Seeing Christ glorified, by the Spirit, has this effect on our hearts; we are conformed to Him. It is through looking at Christ in glory.

21 There is another thing of great moment, namely, our looking at Christ as Advocate. "When Jesus knew that his hour was come . . . he took a towel and girded himself." He became, in a certain sense, their servant. Whenever we see Him taking a place down here serving, the affections are drawn out in a different way from that which excites the energy of hope. God put before Christ an object of hope, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured," etc. So He gives us an object to encourage us and brighten our hope all through the way. We are not counting ourselves to have already attained, "but press on towards the mark." But when we think of ourselves in weakness and infirmity, there is the sense of dependence on One either to restore or to keep us going on. In this there is daily much exercise to be kept walking before Him (not touching what we are in Christ), and that is very fruitful; 1 John 1:7.

Am I under law? No! "We have an advocate with the Father," 1 John 2:1, 2. Have I to run to Him to be forgiven? No! We run away from Him when we have sinned. He restores us as Peter. Christ looks at him directly he has committed the fault and brings him back. So now He brings our souls back by the Spirit. He is an Advocate, the One who carries on our affairs before God. The same word is also used of the Holy Ghost who carries on our affairs down here. When we fail, or there is the need that we should fail because of self-confidence, it is Christ's work on high to bring us back to communion with the Father and the Son. I do not speak of our going to Him to do it, but I am dependent on Him to do it. "To humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart," Deut. 8:2. This God does to make us discern between good and evil, which it is needful for us to discern through the fall. He sets us in righteousness first, and then carries us on by His priesthood, maintaining us in the whole scene of our dependence. Christ is not so much an object in all this as an agent.

22 In this psalm (16) He is more the object before the soul - our food. Christ becomes properly the food of our souls, not Christ in glory, but here in humiliation. "I am the true bread that came down from heaven"; it

does not say the bread that went up to heaven. Then eating His flesh is needed for life. We must know Him as dead. We cannot feed on Him as the living glorified Christ, but as the dead Christ. What draws out our affections to Christ is what He was down here. He was going through all the difficulties here - made His passage through everything about which He has to intercede for us.

God had His food in the offering, but there was the meat-offering and part of the peace-offering which the priests ate. He says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. Then we find the Father has given us the very object He delights in for the object of our affection. The Father could not be silent, when Christ was here. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The perfection of the object is the reason of the imperfectness of our apprehension of it; but that is the way God brings our affections into tune with Himself. He could say at the beginning, because of His intrinsic perfectness, and at the end because of His developed and displayed perfectness, "This is my beloved Son." Then what do we say? In weakness and poverty, yet surely each can say with unhesitating heart, I know He is perfect. We cannot reach to His perfectness, but we do feel our hearts, poor and feeble as they are, responding. The Father has shewn us something of His perfectness. The Father is communicating of His delight. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," not in whom you ought to be well pleased (which is true too); but His way is to communicate to them of His own love to Christ. It is a wonderful thing that the Father should tell of His affection for Christ, and that when He was here amongst us, the Son of man on earth amongst sinful men.

23 A person need not know that he is righteous in Christ, before he can be attracted by this communication with Him. With the woman in the Pharisee's house it was what was revealed in Christ to her made her love much, not what she got from Him. The blessedness of what was in Christ had so attracted her and absorbed her mind that she found her way into the house, though not invited there. She was taken up with Him; she wept, but had nothing to say. Jesus was there. He commanded all her thoughts, her tears, her silence, her anointing of His feet - all noticed by Him, and all before she knew what He had done for her. Attracted there by what she saw in Him, she got the answer as regards peace of conscience from Himself.

Now a person may be attracted by grace seen in Christ, but the effect of that will be conviction of sin, and, if forgiveness is not known, the presence of Christ to the soul becomes quite the opposite of God's righteousness, and holiness will take the form of a law. Many rest satisfied with being only thus attracted for a season, but then they can slip back into any vanity, because righteousness is not known to the conscience. Righteousness sets us in conscience before God as Christ is - in the light. If I have not peace, I cannot have fellowship with another Christian. My sins are all my thought, if my conscience is awake. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship." It does not say, if we walk according to the light; but the case stated is being in the light. The Christian state is being in the light, and we have fellowship with one another and cleanness in His sight. There is no communion in sin, but wretchedness and misery. When we are there (in the light, as He is) we can feed on Him.

There is no real feeding on Christ as bread come down from heaven, when not feeding on His flesh and drinking His blood. The power of death must be known before the heart can be given to be occupied with Him. The Lord gives Himself to us, and He expects us to be occupied with this affection towards Him. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father." What a place! The Lord comes down here so low and takes such a place amongst men, that He reckons on their affection being such as to rejoice in His joy at going away, though it was for them to be left without Him. This affection that He looks for now cannot be known, unless He is known as salvation.

24 "In thee do I put my trust." This is quoted in Hebrews 2 to prove His humanity. There are two things make perfection in a man, dependence and obedience. They were in Christ, the contrast to what was in Adam when he sinned. Christ was ever the dependent and the obedient one. Independence is sin: there is the principle of sin in it. All thought of freedom from the will of another, where one's own will is at work, is a terrible thing. With Christ there was no will but His Father's. This was not any check but motive. It is most blessed for us to see Christ taking this place of dependence. It is natural to us to say, I must do something. But no! you should not eat or drink unless He tells you. Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord: yet it is all liberty.

So in family life, no person who has his father in his affections at all times would do anything without a desire to please him. Love makes it perfectly indifferent to the child what is to be done. It is done to please the father. Would not a child like even in eating and drinking to please his father? It is not the thing that is of consequence, but the relationship and affection to him. Satan tempted Christ to make the stones bread, when He was hungry, and He could have done so. He might have had twelve legions of angels, but He had taken the place of dependence and waits.

His heart could be moved with compassion; not only could He shew His power in working miracles. And it is in seeing the place of this dependent obedient One down here that the heart gets food. What traits are seen in Him! Asleep on the pillow, He can rise to still His disciples' fear. When sitting wearied on the well, He could converse with the poor woman who came there in need.

He was able in love to go through all; He was thoroughly man - able to touch others, being untouched by evil Himself. The fact of being untaintable made Him go forth in love dispensing blessing to all. "O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, thou art my Lord," v. 2. Now I take the place of a servant. Thou art my Master. To the young man in the gospels He said, "Why callest thou me good? none is good but One, that is God." I am my Master's; I am taking the place of dependence, leaning on Thee, looking to Thee. Then comes fellowship.

25 Verse 3. "My goodness extendeth not to thee; to the saints that are in the earth, the excellent," etc. No matter how feeble, how poor, how ignorant, they are "the excellent." It is not what they had, but what they were. He has taken the place, going before the sheep, finding out all the difficulties because He leads, and meeting all the dangers in the path before them. There is not a step of the path of life that He has not trod. He has shewn the path of divine life up to blessing. "In whom is all my delight." All His affection flowed out to them. He takes delight in them, not necessarily in their state. There was enough in Him, and He did draw out the affection of His Father, as a man down here (of course, as the Eternal Son also*) in this path of life. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life." How dependent for everything! He does not say, I will rise up, but "Thou wilt shew me." He passes through death in dependence on His Father (there was the blessed perfectness of a man with God); and, at the close of His career, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God, he riseth from supper," John 13. He could go back unsullied to the throne of God, and take man back with Him into the glory, out of which He came. There is manhood now in the presence of God.

{*'Eternal' is inserted from the original Morrish edition of Mr Darby's lifetime.}

In Matthew 3 is John's baptism. They came to Him confessing their sins: "fruits meet for repentance" were needed. The beginning of all excellence is to confess we have none. "Fruit" was confessing they had brought forth none. The instant the Spirit of God is working, Jesus goes to be baptised with them; not of

course having any sin to confess, but doing His Father's will He takes His place with them; He had come for that; and the consequence is, that He takes His place after to praise in the midst of the congregation. He must be alone in death, but no sooner is He risen than He must have them with Him; He then will be in company.

Verses 4-8. "I have set Jehovah always before me": still dependence - perfection: "because thou art on my right hand, I shall not be moved." "Thou wilt shew me the path of life." It is most blessed to hear Christ say this. It is the path of death in verse 10; how did He find that of life? Adam found the path of death in his fall and his self-will, but back from it never. The tree of life was never to be touched in the garden of Eden; he had taken the other path. Thus we see there are two trees all through the world - that of responsibility, and the gift of God which is life. All man does ends in death (but it is too late to speak of that); he is dead in trespasses and sins; but now Christ came, bringing life into a world that drove Him away, where Satan the prince of it was, and everything was bearing the stamp of its prince.

26 In this place of death then He makes out a path for us. He is shewn by His Father and God the "path of life." He was the life, but then the path of life had to be tracked through this place of death, where no one thing testifies of God - one wide waste, where there is no way. Christ has tracked the path Himself: it is for the Christian I am speaking now. The gospel shews He gives it to those who believe. He had to make out the path of life through a world of sin and wretchedness, in obedience, up to God. It must be through death for us, because we are sinners. Now He says to us, If any man serve Me, let him follow Me. We must take up the cross. The cross to Him was atonement - that was the path. As He came for us, it must be by the cross. He has gone through it perfectly and absolutely. What is the consequence? The end is, "In thy presence is fulness of joy." He would rather die than disobey.

Notice well that death is gone to us - the end is gained; but we have to tread this very same path that He trod up to His presence, where there is "fulness of joy." Christ is the blessed Object for our affections. Alas! how little affection we bear Him. In the wide waste of sin, "a dry and thirsty land where no water is," He could say, "Thy favour is better than life." Why all this? It was for His own glory and His Father's doubtless, but it was for these "excellent of the earth." "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

We have to follow Him. It is not the quantity we do, but the measure of presenting Christ that is the value of our service, in a world where there is nothing of God. "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father." In that world the Son of the Father has marked out this path of life up to the Father. "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence" - in the controversy with man in this path; then in the end "I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake up in thy likeness," Psalm 17. Here we get the two parts of the blessedness for us - with Christ, and like Him, in the Father's presence. If we were constantly before Christ, with the consciousness of not being like Him, it would be constant distress. Now we are unlike alas! but "in thy presence is fulness of joy." With Him and like Him we shall enjoy the light of the Father's countenance. In Revelation 4, elders are first seen sitting in peace, then prostrate in worship.

27 In the Psalms we get Christ walking with the Jewish remnant - Christ first humbled, and glorified in the end; His own experiences. Christ is the object of our study when we have righteousness in Him. When brought into blessing, we can study Him who brought us there. It is this searches the thoughts, affections, motives in the path; then we go through the death in taking up His cross; then in the end we are to be like Him. The Lord give us to know the blessedness of being identified with Him, following in the path He has tracked out for us.

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