

Part With Christ

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon highlights the significance of understanding our relationship with God through Christ and the call to live a holy life in response to His love and grace.

Scripture: John 13:1, John 14:1

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Holiness in Conduct"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of understanding our relationship with God through Christ, highlighting the completed work of Jesus and the importance of holiness in our walk. He explains that while we are saved by grace, our conduct must reflect our identity as children of God, and we must recognize the connection between our salvation and our daily lives. Darby urges believers to acknowledge their lost state and the transformative love of Christ, which calls us to live in a manner worthy of our calling. He reassures that even when we stumble, Christ's advocacy and cleansing power are always available to restore us. Ultimately, he encourages Christians to live in the light of their relationship with God, striving for holiness and reflecting Christ's love in their lives.

Transcript

Three things, beloved friends, especially come out in this chapter: 1st, the full and complete finishing, of the work which the Father had given the Lord Jesus to do; and 2nd, while that gives the full consciousness of the place we are in with God, there is the jealous care, and the holiness and watchfulness in the path in which we are called to walk down here; and 3rd, the blessed and gracious love of the Lord, "having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end," and the way He made Himself a servant in order to minister to us.

It is important for us as Christians to see our place with God in Christ; to know distinctly what that place is; many sincere souls do not know it, do not know their relationship with God, what the blessed Son of God has done for them in dying for them and bringing them to God, and at the same time, how that bears upon holiness of walk.

The Lord shews here that no defilement can be allowed, and then adds the measure of this. Suitability of walk and conduct flows from the place you are in: you cannot expect any one who is not a child or a servant to behave as a child or a servant. Evidently, then, it is of all importance to know the place I am in, as all my duties flow from it. The moment the relationship is there the duties are there, but you cannot get the relationship by doing the duties. It is of all importance to see the connection between the grace of God

that brings salvation, and our walk and conduct; we must see what the relationship is before we can have the consciousness of its duties. The Lord would bring us, perhaps through painful exercises, to the consciousness of the place we are in, and the gracious, loving provision there is for us in that place, never to allow unholiness. You see, beloved friends, if it were only the being saved, that would be a blessed thing, but He brings us into positive relationship with Himself, in infinite love and perfect righteousness. He came into a world of sinners for this. We have the treasure in earthen vessels, but the relationship is settled. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Therefore His first word to Mary after His resurrection is, "Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." My Father is your Father too. He puts them into His place; He has brought them into it and tells them where He has brought them.

But that is not all. The moment I estimate the cross according to the word of God, I get to this, as the apostle says, "If one died for all, then were all dead." I see One who came in unspeakable love to save me; God said: I have yet one Son, one thing I can do to see if I can waken up right thoughts and feelings in these husbandmen. But when they saw the Son, they cast Him out and slew Him. In calling ourselves Christians we profess to be in a world which has cast out the Son of God; we are in a world of sinners, condemned sinners.

God was dealing with man; He tried and tested man, who had got out of his place where God had put him in Paradise, to see whether He could reclaim his heart, and all that ended in bringing out the condition in which man was; it shewed that he preferred anything to God - money, pleasure, duties (I do not speak now of sin), but no object too small to govern the heart and to shut out Christ. Take dress: is that too small? Take money: it is the same case with all our hearts, you never found a natural man thinking of Christ as the object of his heart. If alone in a room for two or three hours, he thinks of his sorrows, of his joys, but not of Christ.

You never find a man ashamed of a false religion; a Mahometan, if you are making a bargain with him, will stop to say his prayers if the hour comes, and you may wait till he has done. Gods that even man might be ashamed of, they are not ashamed of, but you find true Christians ashamed of confessing Christ. The true God people are ashamed of, but of a false religion, never!

Any object and every object in the natural heart has displaced Christ. I own Jesus the Son of God has come and died for me, and do I prefer a bit of dress to Him? All this tells us what scripture says: that the carnal mind is enmity against God, that every object is dominant over it, and even when we do love God we are often ashamed of Him!

It is not now a question of trying to arrange ourselves a little and set things straight; but the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost; my natural condition is, I am lost.

Where men get their enjoyment, if you only bring Christ in, it is all spoiled; the natural man never enjoys Christ, and as Christians we have to watch ourselves, lest we slip into that state of things.

First comes the honest conviction that I am lost, and then I find what God has done, and that is another thing altogether.

The law came to require from me, but He came to bring salvation to me, because I was lost. If I own myself as a sinner, I cannot go into heaven as a sinner of course, so the question is, What has He done for me that I may be cleansed? Supposing I have been brought thoroughly to confess that I am lost, I turn

to Christ, and what do I find there? That when I did not think of God, God was thinking of me; that is what I get, and I have then, with no seeking of mine, what the spring of God's thoughts and heart were towards me, that He spared not His own Son. If I acknowledge myself as a sinner, I find what the blessed Son of God has done. I find the spring of His heart. He cannot allow sin, He is perfect in holiness and righteousness, and I find Him doing, what love always does when it is real, considering the whole state of its object. I was dead, and He comes into death, judgment was against me, and He takes the judgment. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and I see One coming in love and goodness and grace which astonishes me, as it did the poor woman by the well. He must bring us into truth and light. He says, You are so vile, you are not fit to shew your face to a decent person; but there is the revelation of God in Christ; it comes not as a claim upon me, but as grace to me; it tells me I am a sinner, or why should it come? It brings all that out to me. If the highest measure of grace is the cross of Christ, it is the very thing that shews me where I was. Why should I go down into some dreadful ditch, if there was not some one there to pull out?

I get this perfect work done, finished, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," so that He is set down at the right hand of God, accepted by God. He gave Him in love and accepted Him in righteousness. God is satisfied, more than satisfied, glorified about the sin. The cross is the place where good and evil met completely, absolutely. I get all the evil of man shewn out against Christ; He was going about doing good, healing all their diseases, and even Pilate could say, What do you kill Him for? It was enmity against God.

But if I get all the wickedness of man's heart, what do I find on the other side? Absolute obedience and perfect love to His Father. "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Where do I learn love? "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us."

There is no such perfect display of perfect righteousness anywhere, as in Christ drinking that dreadful cup. I get most solemn righteousness and the perfect love of God to the sinner too. If we look at the moral glory of the cross, I get the whole question of sin perfectly settled, and God has glorified Christ up there. What did He die for? For my sins, according to the scripture. If I come as a poor vile sinner to the cross, I see Him bearing my sins in His own body on the tree, and now in glory. Has He got them there? I see Him standing here for me in righteousness drinking that dreadful cup, the very thought of which made Him sweat great drops of blood, and then, having purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Not like the Jewish priests who were often offering the same sacrifices, but for ever sat down because the work is finished. If the work is not perfect, it never will be. I am not speaking now of your appreciation of it, but of the work itself; if we live near to God, we shall appreciate it more every day, but the work is done.

I get then, beloved friends, this blessed truth - that coming to God by Him I find that work which is a proof of the love of God to me when I was a sinner, and I find it done and accepted when I was a sinner. Of course my heart is changed too, or I should not care about it in that way.

He is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, having brought me to God by that work. And God is anxious in His love to put it before us in every shape in which it can meet our need.

You say you are guilty; but God has justified you: defiled by sin; yes, but God says, I have cleansed you with the precious blood of my Son: but you say, oh! I have offended God dreadfully - so you have, but, I

have forgiven you. Then the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost, and is given to every one who believes. "In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." "If any man confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." Oh! that those words rested in our hearts and consciences, beloved friends!

There is the place we are brought into, but we shall not get fully into the glory till the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, "I will come again and receive you unto myself." "When he shall appear we shall be like him." "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them." The purpose of God is (I am speaking to you as believers) to bring us into the same glory as His Son.

I earnestly desire for your hearts, that you should get clear hold of that - how all is cleared of the first Adam, that we might have all the blessing the second Adam gets. He became a man that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren; the dignity of His Person is always maintained, but He will never be satisfied until He sees you there in the same glory, with Himself and as Himself for ever.

If I pay a man's debts, and leave him without a farthing, he is a ruined man still; but Christ has paid our debts, and has, so to speak, given us an immense fortune besides, and, "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The scripture teems with passages which shew the way in which we are associated with Himself. As soon as Christ was gone up into heaven, the witness of divine righteousness, the Holy Ghost, came down, that we might know it, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." How can I say Father, if I do not know I am a child? It would be hypocrisy. If the conscience is purged by the blood of Christ, relationship is known by His Person, and then I must walk as a child; but I must know that I am a child first. I cannot expect people to walk as Christians if they are not Christians; something else has to come first: they have to confess their sins, and be saved.

Now if you believe in the Lord Jesus, beloved friends, can you say, I know I am in Christ? "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." I have to manifest the life of Jesus in my mortal body, but I must have it first; how can I manifest it if I have not got it?

Supposing I have listened to that word, "My Father and your Father," He has brought me into the same place as Himself, and I am waiting for God's Son to take me there in person; death has lost its sting, and if I die, it is to be with the Lord. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The full result will not be till He comes again, and the marriage of the Lamb takes place; we are not in the glory yet, we know.

We might think that Christ having gone up into glory, all His service was over; but it is not so; love never gives up itself, and never gives up the happiness of those it loves. If a child goes wrong, the Father's heart yearns over him; he may have to punish, but the heart goes after him. Christ's love is perfect, and it never gives up its service if it can make the loved one happy, and this we get here. The supper over - He came from God and was going back to God in all the blessed perfectness in which He came, and what does He do? He says, I am among you as one that serveth. Is there an end of His service now? No; He rises from supper, testifies He cannot stay with them here, but tells them He must have them with Him there. He could not stay as Messiah, I am going away as your Forerunner, I go to prepare a place for you.

We get this in two ways: first, He is as priest, serving, "He ever liveth [think of that!] to make intercession for us." That is not exactly for sin, but that we may not sin. I a poor sinner upon the earth, and He always at God's right hand occupied with me.

But in this chapter I get another thing. Supposing I do sin, how are my feet to be washed? (This alludes no doubt to the custom of the priest's consecration; his body was washed when he was consecrated, but whenever he went to do anything at the altar, he washed his hands and feet - it was as much as to say, there must be holiness). He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet; he cannot be regenerate over again. The word used for washing the body and washing the feet is not the same in this chapter in the original.

We are cleansed by water and by blood; but then there is always this danger: here I am, walking through this world always ready to defile me, there is the danger of picking up dirt upon my feet, and when the Lord goes into heaven He takes what heaven is as a measure of our walk. He does not pray that we should be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. Looking up to the Lord in glory we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I see Christ in glory, I know I am going to be like Him, and I say, I want to be as like Him now as ever I can. That is what Paul meant, "that I may win him." He sees Christ in glory, knows he is going to be like Him, and now tries in every possible way to be like Him here.

But supposing we fail - there is no excuse for doing so, it is our own carelessness and neglect - but He says, I am going up on high and I shall wash your feet. I have washed you here, "ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you." Peter was ashamed of seeing the Lord there like a servant to wash his feet, but when he hears he must be washed he says, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." No; He says, that is enough. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father . . . and he is the propitiation for our sins." The propitiation is unchanged, but another service comes in. If I have sinned, I do not say, I am not under the blood of sprinkling, but, can the Father have fellowship with an unholy thing? No! It says, "if any man sin," not, "if any man repent." The advocacy brings us to repentance to be sure.

If only I have let an evil thought come in, do you think God has communion with that? It were blasphemy to say so. I have found my pleasure, if only for a moment, in what made Christ's agony on the cross, horrible to say so, but if it made His agony, it cannot be imputed to me. I am convicted, humbled, like poor Peter led to repentance. It was not because he repented that Christ prayed for him, but Peter repented because Christ prayed.

What I get in the present work of the Lord Jesus is this: if by anything I defile my feet, He takes away the taint, because I belong to this place. He does not raise the question whether I do belong to it, He acts because I do belong to it. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Holiness is maintained because I am in this relationship. God says, I cannot have defiled people in my house; He chastens that we may be partakers of His holiness. He brings the word of God, which reveals what I am, to bear upon my conscience. He restores my soul and leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

The Christian is standing between the first coming of Christ, which accomplished redemption, and His second coming which takes him to glory, and meanwhile the Holy Ghost is given to every one that believes; He makes me cry, Abba Father, the witness that I am a child, and is the earnest of the inheritance. He gives me the certainty of the efficacy of Christ's work when He first came, and leads my heart on to the glory.

But I must have holiness, and I get grace still working and giving me the measure of what I am. It tells me I am going to be like Christ, and he who has this hope purifies himself - and I get the measure of my walk - "even as he is pure." Not that I have attained, I never shall until I am with Christ. but I ought to be always

going on, never to soil my feet, never to do anything inconsistent. There are three things: we are to walk worthy of God, who has called us to His kingdom and glory; worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. It is put before us in these three shapes.

We get the perfect settled consciousness of the relationship into which we are brought, and then the conduct which suits those who are in this place.

Do your souls know, beloved friends, supposing you profess it, that your consciences have got hold of the efficacy of His work? "Peace I leave with you"; can you say you have got it? Do you fear the judgment seat? There is no place in which a Christian may be so bold, because, raised in glory, as He is, so are we. Do you believe that your sins will be no more remembered? Many a one sees it in scripture and says it is true, but can you stand in thought before the judgment seat, in the consciousness that it is so? - that you are divine righteousness before God?

One more question. If you can thus stand, are you seeking to be in everything the epistles of Christ? whatever you do, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus? (We shall need carefulness, searching of the word, &c., exercises which make good soldiers.) The motive is the great thing. If I love my father, and he wishes this book to be laid this way instead of that, I put it so, because I love my father.

The Lord give us to have His will as the one object of our lives, the motive of all we do, to remember that we are not our own but bought with a price. May He give us to have our eyes upon Him, that we may know His love and seek His will!

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