

Doubts-- Christian Growth

by John Newton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's sufficiency and presence, even in times of trial and uncertainty, and encourages believers to persevere in faith and prayer.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Christian Growth", "Gods Presence"

Description

John Newton preaches about the unwavering presence and grace of God in the lives of believers, emphasizing that even in challenging circumstances and limitations, God is able to work all things for their good. He highlights the importance of desiring Gospel ordinances and the assurance that Jesus is always near, especially in times of trial and solitude. Newton encourages a deep faith in Christ, who sees us even when we cannot see Him, and reveals God's compassion and tenderness through the Gospel as a way for believers to find strength and comfort in His everlasting love.

Transcript

June 20, 1776.

Madam,

It would be both unkind and ungrateful in me to avail myself of any plea of business, for delaying the acknowledgment I owe you for your acceptable favour from-- which, though dated the 6th instant, I did not receive till the 10th.

Could I have known in time that you were at Mr.--'s I should have endeavoured to have called upon you while there; and very glad should I have been to have seen you with us. But they who fear the Lord may be sure, that whatever is not practicable is not necessary. He could have overruled every difficulty in your way, had He seen it expedient; but He is pleased to show you that you depend not upon them, but upon Himself; and that, notwithstanding your connections may exclude you from some advantages in point of outward means, He who has begun a good work in you, is able to carry it on, in defiance of all seeming hindrances, and make all things (even those which have the most unfavourable appearances) work together for your good.

A sure effect of His grace is a desire and longing for Gospel ordinances; and when they are afforded, they cannot be neglected without loss. But the Lord sees many souls who are dear to Him, and whom He is

training up in a growing meetness for His kingdom, who are, by His providence, so situated, that it is not in their power to attend upon Gospel preaching; and, perhaps, they have seldom either Christian minister or Christian friend to assist or comfort them. Such a situation is a state of trial; but Jesus is all-sufficient, and He is always near. They cannot be debarred from His word of grace, which is everywhere at hand, nor from His throne of grace; for they who feel their need of Him, and whose hearts are drawn towards Him, are always at the foot of it. Every room in the house, yea, every spot they stand on, fields, lanes, and hedge-rows, all is holy ground to them; for the Lord is there. The chief difference between us and the disciples, when our Saviour was upon earth, is in this: they then walked by sight, and we are called to walk by faith. They could see Him with their bodily eyes, we cannot; but He said, before He left them, "It is expedient for you that I go away." How could this be, unless that spiritual communion, which He promised to maintain with His people after his ascension, were preferable to that intercourse He allowed them whilst He was visibly with them? But we are sure it is preferable, and they who had tried both were well satisfied He had made good His promise; so that though they had known Him after the flesh, they were content not to know Him so any more.

Yes, Madam, though we cannot see Him, he sees us; He is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. In a natural state, we have very dark, and indeed, dishonourable thoughts of God; we conceive of Him as at a distance. But when the heart is awakened, we begin to make Jacob's reflection, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And when we receive faith, we begin to know that this ever-present God is in Christ; that the government of heaven and earth, the dispensations of the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace, are in the hands of Jesus: that it is He with whom we have to do, who once suffered agony and death for our redemption, and whose compassion and tenderness are the same, now He reigns over all blessed for ever, as when He conversed amongst men in the days of His humiliation. Thus God is made known to us by the Gospel, in the endearing views of a Saviour, a Shepherd, a Husband, a Friend; and a way of access is opened for us through the vail, that is, the human nature of our Redeemer, to enter, with humble confidence, into the holiest of all, and to repose all our cares and concerns upon the strength of that everlasting arm which upholds Heaven and earth, and upon that infinite love which submitted to the shame, pain, and death of the cross, to redeem sinners from wrath and misery.

Though there is a height, a breadth, a length, and a depth, in this mystery of redeeming love, exceeding the comprehension of all finite minds; yet the great and leading principles which are necessary for the support and comfort of our souls may be summed up in a very few words. Such a summary we are favoured with in Titus ii. 11-14, where the whole of salvation, all that is needful to be known, experienced, practiced, and hoped for, is comprised within the compass of four verses. If many books, much study, and great discernment, were necessary, in order to be happy, what must the poor and simple do? Yet for them especially is the Gospel designed; and few but such as these attain the knowledge and comfort of it. The Bible is a sealed book till the heart be awakened; and then he that runs may read. The propositions are few. I am a sinner, therefore, I need a Saviour, one who is able and willing to save to the uttermost; such a one is Jesus; He is all that I want- wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. But will He receive me? Can I answer a previous question? Am I willing to receive Him? If so, and if His word may be taken, if He meant what He said, and promised no more than He can perform, I may be sure of a welcome: He knew, long before, the doubts, fears, and suspicions, which would arise in my mind when I should come to know what I am, what I have done, and what I have deserved; and, therefore, He declared, before He left the earth, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." I have no money or price in my hand, no worthiness to recommend me and I need none, for He saveth freely for His own name's sake. I have only to be thankful for what He has already shown me, and to wait upon Him for

more. It is my part to commit myself to Him as the physician of sin-sick souls, not to prescribe to Him how He shall treat me. To begin, carry on, and perfect the cure, is His part.

The doubts and fears you speak of are, in a greater or lesser degree, the common experience of all the Lord's people, at least for a time: whilst any unbelief remains in the heart, and Satan is permitted to tempt, we shall feel these things. In themselves they are groundless and evil; yet the Lord permits and overrules them for good. They tend to make us know more of the plague of our own hearts, and feel more sensibly the need of a Saviour, and make His rest (when we attain it) doubly sweet and sure. And they likewise qualify us for pitying and comforting others. Fear not; only believe, wait, and pray. Expect not all at once. A Christian is not of hasty growth, like a mushroom, but rather like the oak, the progress of which is hardly perceptible, but, in time, becomes a great deep-rooted tree. If my writings have been useful to you, may the Lord have the praise. To administer any comfort to His children is the greatest honour and pleasure I can receive in this life. I cannot promise to be a very punctual correspondent, having many engagements; but I hope to do all in my power to show myself, Madam,

Yours, &c.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-newton/doubts-christian-growth/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net