

Our Need and Christ's Sufficiency

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our weaknesses while trusting in Christ's sufficiency and God's unwavering support in our spiritual journey.

Scripture: Matthew 12:20, Romans 7:14, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:13

Topics: "God's Grace", "Trust in Christ"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the balance between recognizing our shortcomings and understanding Christ's sufficiency in our lives. He encourages believers not to be discouraged by their failures or high expectations, as God is always working within us to perfect us for His glory. The sermon highlights the importance of focusing on Jesus rather than our own inadequacies, reminding us that while we may struggle, God's love and grace are sufficient to cover our sins. Yohannan reassures that God does not give up on us, and we must trust Him to mold us into His image. Ultimately, it is through Christ that we find strength and the ability to serve, regardless of our perceived shortcomings.

Transcript

We all have expectations for ourselves. We all have ways we would like to be different. Perhaps we would like to be more patient or less prone to anger. When we do not measure up to the standards we have set for ourselves we become discouraged. But we have to realize that God is not discouraged with us. He never gives up on us. He never stops working with us. Balance is needed between knowing our sins and insufficiency and knowing that it is God who works within us, perfecting us for His glory.

When you pray, do you oftentimes get weighed down with confessing your own sins and repenting for every wrong thought and failure? Sometimes it seems we can't get over this, living with constant memories from the past and old sins that caused great pain. Many people live continually with the words, "If only . . . if only . . . I wish," playing through their minds, unable to move past their failures. Sometimes we feel that we don't pray enough. We are not spiritual enough. We don't have enough of a burden for the lost.

We feel we are not good husbands, good fathers, good wives, good mothers or good children. We think negative things about ourselves, and we begin to dwell on these thoughts, beating ourselves up because we don't spend money wisely, don't study enough or don't pray enough. We all have this problem--me included. Our expectations of ourselves can take us into spiritual darkness. This happens because we become our own judge. We become our law. We become our guide and teacher, the one who evaluates

ourself.

In the end, it is a cesspool of self-centeredness and anguish. Matthew 12:20 says, "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench." Philippians 1:6 says, "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." Ten looks at self and one look at Jesus will make you a hypocrite. You will have to pretend to be spiritual, living with conflict and mental torture because you don't measure up to your own standards.

Hear the frustration in Paul's voice when he writes of the great insufficiency of I in Romans 7:14-23. If you are this kind of individual there is no rest for you. This happens because you become too introspective, taking the focus off of Christ and placing it on yourself. But one look at self and ten looks at Jesus will keep you going. Romans 7:24-25 says, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our LORD!" Yes!

It is through Jesus Christ our Lord! It is good to know our weaknesses and failures, for how can we confess our sins unless we see them as sins? Toward the end of his life, Paul calls himself the worst of sinners (see Timothy 1:15), knowing that in his flesh there dwelt nothing that was good. This is being honest about our true condition. But in this honesty, we must also know God's longsuffering and faithfulness in working with us in our many weaknesses. It is in knowing our true condition that we understand the fullness and completeness of God's great love for us.

We could never fully understand and appreciate what Christ has done for us until we know something of our wretched state. Knowing the offense in us causes us to understand the depth of His grace--that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The danger lies in dwelling on our sins, failures and shortcomings. We must look to Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, the giver of all good gifts--our Master, Savior, Redeemer and Friend. We must trust Him. We must have faith that He will mold us into His image and that He will not give up on us.

It took 20 years for God to make Jacob into Israel. But did God give up on him? No. High standards are very good. We encourage people to read *The Road to Reality*,¹ *The Calvary Road*,² *True Discipleship*³ and other books whose authors challenge a deeper life and commitment. The tremendous challenge is to constantly abandon all and follow the Lord--walking away from friendship with the world and keeping ourselves free from the pollution of watered-down Christianity. None of us is capable of serving God in our own strength.

That is good. None of us measures up. It is the strength and grace of Jesus that allows us to serve. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). We have to fully understand both parts of this verse--the first part, "with man this is impossible" and the second part, "but with God all things are possible" (emphasis added). Keep in mind--wherever you are in your spiritual walk with the Lord, God is not concerned about whether you are now a mature, strong person.

No. He is looking at your heart. Let Him work with you. Trust Him to do His work in you. I want to encourage you. When you have these struggles in your spiritual life--when you feel weak, like you are not measuring up--just be yourself. Admit your sins and shortcomings. Don't try to prove anything to anyone. The worst thing you can do is become a hypocrite and pretender. One thing God hates more than anything else is hypocrisy. Let us be honest with each other. I share my weaknesses and problems.

One time when I was speaking to seminary students, I shared about the struggles I have in many areas of my life. It shocked the students. One of them said to me afterwards, "We never thought someone like you would have struggles in your life." I replied, "You must be joking!" The truth is we all struggle with one thing or another. But even when you are discouraged about yourself, God is not. He loves you. He has forgiven your sins--the ones you have committed, the ones you are committing and the ones you will commit until the last second of your life.

It's all taken care of. You cannot make yourself spiritual by weeping and fasting and punishing yourself. As much as you are concerned about your inner life, putting yourself down and dwelling on failures and sins will not help. Remember, it is God who is working with you and He will not let you go. He is faithful to complete the good work He started in you. NOTES 1 K.P. Yohannan, *The Road to Reality* (Carrollton, TX: gfa Books, 1988). 2 Roy Hession, *The Calvary Road* (London: Christian Literature Crusade, 1950). 3 William McDonald, *True Discipleship* (Kansas City: Walterick Publishers, 1975).

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