

The All Sufficiency of Christ

by Ross Ulrich

This sermon emphasizes the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ, highlighting the need to focus on Him for true joy, fulfillment, and victory over struggles. It addresses the importance of faith, denying self, taking up the cross daily, and avoiding distractions that hinder experiencing the power of Christ in our lives.

Scripture: Colossians 1:15, Colossians 2:2, 1 John 1:3, Luke 9:23, Ephesians 3:17

Topics: "All-Sufficiency of Christ", "Faith and Self-Denial"

Description

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Transcript

Hallelujah for that fountain, for that living stream, for that rock. His name is Jesus Christ. Hallelujah.

I greet you all in that name this morning, Lord Jesus Christ, and bring you greetings from Ghana, West Africa. Cynthia and I are here, not on a furlough, just for four weeks. Our son, Ethan, got married on the 10th of this month, and we spent some time in Canada, in South Dakota, in Maryland, and in North Dakota visiting family.

And thankfully, we got back here in time to enjoy one Sunday of fellowship with you. We would have been blessed to be here every one of those Sundays, but we're thankful to be here with you this Sunday and to worship the Lord together. Just share a little bit of update from Ghana.

Missionary team there is a bit small now. Well, I should tell you this, we're going back tomorrow, Lord willing. We leave tomorrow to fly back to Ghana.

The missionary team there is doing well. It's a small team now, not nearly like it used to be in some of the earlier years. Daniel and Christy doing well.

And Daniel is actually planning to be in the States most of next month. You all know that SENT was shut down for about three years. And we're trying to restart it.

And it's a bit of a challenge, especially with COVID thrown in there to restart. So Daniel is coming over to do some PR work, do some visiting of churches. And by God's grace, we are hoping to restart the SENT II

program.

SENT I did function last year, and we're looking forward to that again this year. I think I heard that some from this congregation are attending SENT I this year. God bless you, whoever you are.

And then, Nate and Lysana are also doing well with their young family. His time there is nearly over. They're planning to come back home permanently in mid-September.

He is in charge of the SALT program and the AgriPlus work there, which has been a tremendous blessing to the churches scattered in the villages. It has really been a blessing there. And we are letting them come back reluctantly.

We would love to keep them on there. His parents need care, and so we're blessing them to come back home and care for his parents. Hoping that the local churches will take up the responsibility to carry the SALT program, the overseeing of the SALT program.

But we are planning to continue overseeing the AgriPlus program. We believe that there's some good things that can happen there yet in helping to encourage and establish the churches with the AgriPlus program. Enoch Lewis is planning to oversee that.

We're still looking for someone to join him. We're thankful for his willingness to do that. Our son Aaron and his wife Gretel, that I suppose you all know, or most of you at least, are serving there among the Goanja tribe.

He has a burden to make disciples, and that was Jesus' burden as He was passing the baton to His disciples as He left. Go to all the world and make disciples. And Aaron and Gretel are doing that among the Goanja.

A disciple is not just a hearer, not just a learner, but a doer who goes and makes more disciples. And that's beginning to happen among the Goanja people, and it's exciting what God is doing there among the Goanja. Some of you may know Chad and Anna Martin.

They are stationed in Accra doing our paperwork with the government and business offices there for our mission in Accra. They're doing very well. We just thank God for them.

He's been such a fit because of His experience in Ghana with another mission before He came and joined our mission. It was like He really didn't need to be trained in. He already knew what to do.

He knew the government offices, and they have just been such a blessing hosting those who come to the country and go. Chad and Anna are from Oklahoma. Chad would be my wife's brother's son.

Sister Tanya Yoder, some of you may know her from Kansas. She's a single lady. She has been serving there for a number of years.

And the last while, she's been teaching literacy to the village women. A lot of people in Ghana still can't read. It's especially so among the women.

And she has been teaching literacy trying to especially target church leaders' wives so that they can also become teachers of other women. So for three months, she was out among the Konkomba women teaching them. I believe it was three different communities where she taught them how to read.

And then the next three months, she came to Tamale and was teaching our Tamale sisters Fraw Fraw, it's a different language group, Fraw Fraw Language, how to read. And well, they didn't all pass with flying colors. Some of them still struggle.

I mean, can you go really from not knowing how to read to reading well enough to read your Bible in three months? That would be pretty amazing, wouldn't it? Some of them do. They are just motivated. And of course, some of them don't.

They'll need to join the class next year again. But we are very encouraged and thankful for Sister Tanya's work there, a valuable work. She is right now back home again.

She's in Ghana six months and home six months. Her mother has, I believe, it's Parkinson's, and she helps to care for her mother, helps to take some of the load off of her family for six months out of the year. Did I miss anybody? We are very involved in the Bible School there at Tomalee, Cynthia and I. That only meets three months out of the year.

The dry season, when the men aren't farming, they come out for Bible School, January, February, March. That's a very intense time for us. The other months of the year, I do improvements at the Bible School.

I visit the missionaries. I'm involved in leaders training, otherwise, different things. God has put on our hearts a vision of planting churches, not by what we think of as conventional church planting methods, but trying to get back more to the way Apostle Paul did it, back to the way the disciples did it, of making disciples and instead of gathering them into large groups like this, letting them meet more naturally in homes and where there's an accountability, where every disciple not only hears, but commits to do.

And then the next week comes back and reports on how it went. And we're excited about that. I believe that's a lot of what happened back in the early church.

And I believe that's why without internet or jets or even cars, the Gospel spread to the ends of the world in a record time. And so we're jealous for that. We believe that there is a worldwide persecution coming.

We believe that the church needs to be edified, be able to meet in small groups. Besides the fact that if every church group needs to take time and money to build a building, it's going to take hundreds of years yet to get the job done. And so that's some of our vision.

The early church didn't meet in church buildings. They met in homes or schools. When you read the Bible, at a riverside, I think it was around the year 300 somewhere where they began to meet in dedicated buildings that were called prayer houses.

So that's some of our vision. You can pray for us that God would give us grace to flesh that out. That's what's on our heart.

Let's bow our heads for prayer before we get into the Word this morning. Father, we thank You for Your Son. That You, God, became flesh and dwelt among us.

We thank You, Lord, for Your redemption. We thank You, Father, that in Christ Jesus You have given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness. We thank You that in Christ Jesus You have made us Your heirs.

God, we cannot fathom what all that means, but we say thank You. We say hallelujah. We thank You that in Christ Jesus You have conquered death.

He is alive forevermore, never to see death again. And You have given us the confidence that though we die, yet we shall live. Hallelujah, Lord.

We thank You that You have written our names in Your book of life in heaven. Father, I pray that if there are any here this morning who don't have the confidence that their names are written in Your book of life in heaven, God, that they would know that before this day is out. Lord, God, Lord, that they would come to trust Your love.

Lord, open our eyes this morning, whether we're saved or whether we're still lost. Would You open all of our eyes to see Jesus Christ in His glory? Lord, open my eyes. Lord, open our eyes to see Christ Jesus, Your Son.

We just take authority against any wicked spirits that would try to keep that from happening. We rebuke You in the name of all names, the Lord Jesus Christ. Father in heaven, pour Your Holy Spirit upon us this morning.

We need You, Lord. Thank You that You're all we need. In Jesus' name, amen.

Lord, as laid on my heart a message to preach on the all-sufficiency of Christ, if you were going to choose one New Testament book to teach about the all-sufficiency of Christ, which book might you choose? Thank you, Colossians. We're going to spend more time there. We're going to look at some other Scriptures too, hopefully, but we'll spend more time in Colossians.

Paul says in Colossians 1, 27 and 28, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man and all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Him we preach, Paul said. And that's my desire.

My only desire here this morning is to lift up Jesus Christ, to preach Christ. It's not about a method. Paul used methods.

We use methods. But it's not about a method. It's not about a set of doctrines, although Paul preached a lot of doctrines and Paul talked about the faith, which is a body of doctrine.

But without Christ, it's empty and dead. And so I would like us to see the all-sufficiency of Christ this morning. The all-sufficiency of Christ.

And whether you're here struggling because you're not sure whether Christianity is gonna work for you and the world keeps calling you, or whether you're already a believer this morning, Christ is the all-sufficient one for you, for me, for whatever our needs are, He's the all-sufficient one. So I'd like to start here in Colossians chapter one and look at how Christ is all-sufficient for our salvation. Colossians chapter one, we'll start in verse 11 here.

Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet or suitable to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, hallelujah, and has

translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Christ is our all-sufficient one. He is our Savior.

He alone can deliver us from the power of darkness. I like what Colossians 2 says, where it says, Christ made a show of them. Who's the antecedent of them? It's the powers of darkness.

He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Satan thought he had conquered when he had Christ crucified. He thought, I've got Him, I've got Him.

And for three days, there was Jesus in Hades. But after three days, Jesus burst those bars of death and came out with the keys of death and of Hades. Satan had them, but now he doesn't have them anymore.

Jesus is holding them. Revelation chapter one, Jesus is holding those keys. He triumphed over the powers of darkness by His death and resurrection.

I don't know what sort of demonic bondage you might have gotten yourself into and how hopeless Satan tries to make you feel. I want to tell you what, he wants to step on you and push your will down so that you don't exercise the will God has given you and say, Lord, I believe. You're able to do this.

You're able to set me free. Satan works on the will. He doesn't want you to exercise that will God has given you because in Christ, there's salvation.

He's delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, hallelujah. Listen, even if you've killed somebody, even if you've slept with somebody else's husband or wife, even if you've whatever, you write it in there, there's forgiveness for you, amen, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Let's go on down to verse 20 in the same chapter.

And having made peace through the blood of His cross, oh, thank God for the blood. Thank God for the blood. I was an enemy of God because God hates sin.

And without Jesus Christ, I'm a sinner. But His blood has washed me. His blood has washed many of you.

Whoever you are here this morning, His blood can wash you. Thank God for that blood. I see my Muslim friends sometimes getting ready for their prayers, and I don't know if you've ever watched them do their ablutions.

They carefully wash their hands, they wash their feet, slip off their sandals or their shoes and wash their feet. They often wear slip-ons because they've got to do this five times a day. Wash their feet, and then they even wash around their ears and their face and put a little in their mouth and spit it out and wash their feet.

They wash their face and spit it out to get their mouth clean. Sometimes I ask them, what about your heart? What about your heart? That's the most important thing. That's what God sees.

That's what He wants to be clean. What about your heart? What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. But the blood of Jesus can do it, amen? He's the All-Sufficient One.

He's our Savior. Okay, having made peace, peace with God. Do you have peace with God this morning? Can you say hallelujah? I'm ready for Jesus to come back.

It is well with my soul. If you don't have that peace this morning, please don't leave here without it. You can have it.

It's in Jesus. It's for you. Don't believe Satan's lies.

It's for you, whoever you are sitting here this morning. However deep you've gone in the depths, it's for you. Jesus came to save to the uttermost, having made peace through the blood of His cross by Him to reconcile all things to Himself.

By Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, and you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled. You can be brought back to Jesus Christ. The Father is looking out of His window.

He's looking out of His window every day. When's He gonna come back? Is He coming? Is that Him? When's He gonna come back? And one day, one day, that Father saw His Son. He could tell it was His Son, even while He was a long way off.

The Father ran, threw His arms around that smelly Son, His ripped up clothes, and gave the orders to start the party. My Son has come back. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death. Jesus took your sins and my sins on Himself. That's why He died.

He didn't just come down here to give us nice teachings, good teachings. He came down to be the propitiation, the atoning victim, the sin sacrifice for my sins and your sins. If you believe, there's reconciliation with the Father.

He's looking out His window. He wants to throw His arms around you. Yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy.

Somehow we've gotten a wrong idea of that word holy. We think it means you're sitting there in some kind of straitjacket and you can't do anything fun. The word holy is related to the word whole, which means healthy.

How many of you want to be healthy here this morning? I want to be healthy. If you're not healthy, you can't really enjoy life. You can't live it to the full.

Think of holiness like that. That's really what it is. It's only that Satan has skewed our perspective.

Holiness is healthiness. And when you see it from God's perspective, it really is. So Jesus took our sins in His own body on the cross to present us holy, spiritually healthy, unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

Isn't that awesome? That you and I, sinners, someday can stand before God and God is going to accept us as His sons and daughters. And the record's clear. It's washed away by the blood of Jesus.

And He doesn't even remember those things that we remember. They're gone. Are you there? If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.

Rabbi Paul made a minister. If ye continue in the faith, this faith in Christ is so key. We'll see more about that later.

Jesus is the only reconciler. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by Me.

There's no other way to heaven. There's no other way to have peace with God. It's through Jesus Christ.

Alright, let's look at the verses here in chapter 1 that we skipped. Let's go back to verse 15. I would like to see that Jesus Christ is the Almighty, the Eternal, the Supreme One.

Verse 15 says, Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. Let me read that in the NIV. I feel like it's not quite as clear here in the King James.

The NIV says in verse 15, The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. The firstborn over all creation. Now, the reason I like to make that clear is because if you don't understand it clearly, it makes it sound like Jesus Christ was created.

In verse 15 there, the firstborn of every creature. Was Jesus Christ created? No. He's the I Am from eternity past.

Was His body created? Yes. Was Jesus created? No. And there you get into that strange mix of God and man that no human being on this side of glory can fully explain.

There are things about the nature of Christ that cannot be explained by our finite mind. You have to take them by faith as a given. It's important for us to understand that.

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus Christ was created. Are you aware of that? They do not believe that Jesus Christ is God. When you ask them whether He's the Son of God, they'll say yes.

What they mean is, well, we're also sons of God. So yes, Jesus was one like that. Well, a little higher than us.

And this is an old heresy. There was a man named Arius around the year 300 A.D. who studied these verses and came to the conclusion that Jesus Christ was created. Though he still said Jesus is the Savior, but he said Jesus isn't God.

He was created. He's somewhere between God and man. He's a mediator.

He's our Savior, but He's not God. That's heresy. There's no salvation in that.

If that's who your Jesus is, you can't be saved. So, He's the image of the invisible God. The firstborn over all creation.

And He is the image of the invisible God. And again, Scripture says no man can see God and live, right? And yet, when the disciples said, Jesus, show us the Father, and it suffices us. It will be enough for us.

Jesus said, I've been so long with you, and yet you haven't known Me. Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. Now how do you say? Why do you say, show us the Father? Jesus is God.

100% God. And Jesus is man. 100% man.

And I can't explain that to you, but I believe it! And He is the only Savior, the only One who can reconcile us unto the Father. He is the Almighty. Verse 16 says, for by Him... He's talking about Jesus Christ.

By Him were all things created. John says in chapter 1, without Him was not anything made that was made. Nothing was created without Jesus Christ.

And it's interesting because Jesus Christ in John is specifically called the Word of God. And when God wanted to make the universe and the world, how did He do it? And God said, He spoke, and there it was. That's the Word of God.

Jesus is the living Word. Without Him was not anything made. Verse 16, by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible.

Whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him. Everything, these tangible things, the water in this goblet, this wood, the plastic that these flowers are made, these artificial flowers, everything, the metal, everything was made by Jesus Christ. But not only that, He says, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ set up President Joseph Biden? In Paul's day, it wasn't Joseph Biden. It was Nero. Caesar Nero.

And Paul said he was the minister of God. All things were created by Him and for Him. God in His sovereignty uses the powers of this world to accomplish His ultimate goals.

I'm not saying that we need to endorse everything Nero did or Joseph Biden did or President Trump did. But it is God who sets them up. Verse 17, He is before all things.

Here you see Christ's eternity. He's eternal. He is before all things.

By Him, all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence, the supremacy. He is Lord.

He's been given a name above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. It gives me hope to remember that there's a man sitting at the right hand of God. Isn't that an awesome thought? Jesus is God.

Amen? But Jesus is man. Amen? And when He rose from the dead and ascended to the Father and was glorified over there, He didn't stop being a man. That's why we're joint heirs with Christ.

He took on not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He became flesh and blood. And now He's glorified.

Yes, He's glorified, but He's still man. The Easter Anthem says, Then first humanity triumphant passed the crystal ports of light and seized eternal youth. Jesus, the first begotten from the dead, gives me hope and gives you hope.

Hallelujah. Verse 19 is an amazing verse. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

Let me read to you what it says in the NIV in that verse. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him. God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him.

Jesus Christ. And this is also borne out in the next chapter. Verse 9. Let's jump over there.

It says, For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. Again, that's in the NIV. The King James says, For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And I can't explain that to you. How can you get all of God into that one person, into Jesus Christ? Bodily. How? I don't understand.

But I believe it. I know that Jesus emptied Himself. There in Philippians 2 where it says, He made Himself of no reputation.

He emptied Himself. There were some of the characteristics of the glory of God that Jesus veiled or somehow emptied Himself of in a measure to come here and redeem us. I don't understand all that.

But He's God. And in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Father. John says it this way.

And John, I believe it's chapter 1, says, For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. I hope you have the Spirit of God. But even if you're full of the Spirit of God, you don't have all of God's Spirit.

There's only one man who ever lived who had all of God's Spirit. And that was the Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, that's why we need each other in the body of Christ, right? Because I don't have all the Spirit of God and you don't have all the Spirit of God.

But when we come together, truly, if the body of Christ is functioning as it should in the community, the body of Christ will do exactly what Jesus Christ would do in that community. I won't do it all myself. You won't do it all yourself.

But together as the body of Christ. The body of Christ. Amen.

All God's fullness dwells in Him. He's all-sufficient. He's the Almighty.

He's the Eternal. He's the Supreme One. He is the treasure trove of all we truly need.

Jesus Christ. Do you believe that? Do I believe that? Jesus Christ is the treasure trove of all we truly need. I think of that song about the prodigal son that says, but the husks I gathered round me only mocked my soul's sad cry.

You've been there. I know you have. To try to find happiness.

To try to find fulfillment. And you've tried this. And you've tried that.

And maybe you're still trying it. And you won't find it. Those husks can never satisfy.

That's why the world has to keep changing them. You know? They have to keep changing them. Well, it used to be every ten years.

Now I think the fads change about every six months. I'm not sure. It's getting faster.

They have to keep changing them because, well, you know, it gets old after a while. It doesn't do it. You've got to do something else.

Jesus is the only One who can satisfy, can give true joy and fulfillment. He's the treasure trove of all we truly need. Look in Colossians 2. Let's start here.

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen My face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love. And unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ, of Christ in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Jesus Christ is the treasure trove of all you and I really need in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

He goes on in v. 6 and 7, And as you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him rooted. Think of a plant. Rooted.

An oak tree. Rooted. Anchored.

Secure. Are you looking for security in life? Are you looking for security in life? It's in Christ Jesus, I'm telling you. No other foundation can be laid.

Well, people try to lay lots of other foundations, don't they? But in the end, they break up. They quake. They shake.

They crumble. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Rooted and built up in Him.

When you get your roots down in Jesus, you will be built up. It doesn't happen in one day, but you keep your roots in Jesus and you'll be built up. Your life will prosper.

I want security. I want growth. Here it is in Christ.

Rooted and built up in Him. And established in the faith as ye have been taught. Abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Let's look at 1 John 1. One of the things that I see about our present generation is our present generation is quite self-centered and wanting to please themselves. It just shows up in a multitude of ways. Looking for happiness.

Looking to please themselves. 1 John tells us how to have real joy. 1 John 1, verses 3 and 4. That which we have seen and heard.

He's talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the Apostle John who had seen, who had heard, who had touched Jesus both before and after His resurrection. That which we have seen and heard.

That which we have seen and heard. Declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us. And truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Are you having fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ? Heart-sharing. All things in common.

And these things write we unto you that you may be straight-faced and sad. No! These things write we unto you that your joy may be full. I want to tell you, Satan is a liar.

He is a liar. And he doesn't just lie to the people injecting cocaine in their veins out there in the ghettos. He lies to you and me all the time.

Happiness and joy isn't found by being able to buy a bigger place or getting it perfectly decorated. Wow! Inside and out. I love beauty.

And so, I understand this drive. But when you've got it all perfectly decorated, there's still a knowing emptiness if that's your joy. It's not in having fun and having pleasure.

Perfect joy. It's not in how many people like me on my social media accounts. No.

No. It's in God's smile, brothers and sisters. Perfect joy is when God is smiling at you and you know it.

And it doesn't matter anymore how many people don't like what you're posting on social media. And they don't like your Jesus and they don't like that veiling on your head and they don't like whatever it is about your being unashamed of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter anymore if Jesus is smiling at you.

He's the treasure trove of all we truly need. Brother John in the worship time mentioned those verses in 2 Peter 1 where he says, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power, supernatural power, has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue. And that just brings up a question.

If this is true, if this is really who Jesus is, why do Christians so often time live substandard, unlike Jesus, ungodly, unholy? Why? If Jesus is really what these scriptures say He is, and He is, He really is, then why do we sometimes struggle with ungodliness in our lives? And I would just like to, in closing here, give three reasons. They're all summed up in this. Faith is the key.

Faith is the key. Yes, Jesus is all sufficient. He's everything I need.

He's everything you need. Not only for fulfillment and joy, the true joy that no one can take away from you and isn't fleeting as soon as whatever's gone or burned up or stolen or ruined. He's the true joy.

And faith is the key that unlocks all these things in Christ for us. I believe that Satan tries to get us on a wrong focus. I heard a Bible teacher one time, actually I read it, I was reading a work of his, and he said that sometimes we pray this prayer like the apostles prayed, Lord, increase our faith.

And Jesus gave a strange answer to that question if you study that out there, and I believe it's Luke 17. Lord, increase our faith. Wouldn't it be nice if the Lord could just somehow get a big syringe and pump faith into us? And this brother was suggesting that faith has a lot to do with focus.

And he was proposing the idea that faith isn't so much something that needs to grow so much as we need to get our faith focused on the right thing. He said you are trusting in something, and as I thought through it, it's true. You're trusting in something.

Either we're believing Satan's lies, either we're believing ourselves, either we're believing man, and whatever it is, or we're believing Christ. And so a lot of it has to do with focus. And so I believe that one of the reasons that we struggle with ungodliness and unholiness in our lives, when Christ is all we need, is because of a wrong focus of faith.

And oftentimes, a focus on self. And I'll just share my personal testimony there. I've shared it here before.

When I got saved, I thought, you know, this is great. This is wonderful. Now I've got a clear heaven above me.

And it was wonderful. And clear sailing. But several years later, I began to have some struggles with some of the old sins that I had struggled with before I was saved.

And those temptations came back strong. And it was like, God, what's going on here? You saved me. I know You changed me.

What's going on here? And I didn't get just a real clear thus saith the Lord, the Lord let me struggle and seek and search. And I believe God, I know God had His reasons for doing that. And I remember sitting at the table in Wawasee.

Yes, I was on the mission field. After the family was in bed, sitting there with my Bible, poring over Romans 6 and 7 and 8. And I was feeling like I'm drowning in Romans 7 where Paul was saying, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The things that I don't want to do, I do. The things that I want to do, I don't do.

Have you been there? Have you been there after you're saved? And God helped me to see, I should say it this way, He's helping me to see that in me, in Ross, there dwells no good thing. I had this concept that, yes, Jesus saved me from my sins. Hallelujah! The guilt of those sins is gone.

But somehow I had fallen into the idea that now living the Christian life is up to me. Well, there's an aspect of it that is up to me. But basically, it's continuing to trust in Christ.

As you therefore receive the Lord, so walk ye in Him. How did you receive Him? By climbing up a ladder? No, you accepted it by faith and that's how you're going to have to continue to walk in holiness or it's not going to turn out holy. As long as I maintain that attitude and realize, Lord, in me, Christian now, 40 some years, missionary so many years.

No, no, no. In me, in Ross' flesh, there dwells no good thing. My righteousness is Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah! And as long as I stay in that place, there's victory. It doesn't mean there's no temptation, but there's victory. God was helping me to see that I have a wrong focus.

And I was a hard learner. I was a hard learner. It's all about Jesus.

It's not about how good you're getting this thing together now. It's all about Jesus. I think another reason that we don't mine out of Christ and into our veins all of His strength and goodness that He has for us is because of Satan's shortcut or Satan's lie.

It's simply this. You can follow Christ without denying yourself and taking up the cross. That's a lie.

If any man will come after me, Jesus said, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. Are we free from the law? Yes! Hallelujah! But, am I walking in the flesh? Am I denying myself? Taking up my cross? Following who? Jesus! The Lord! The One who poured out His blood to save me. This is a struggle.

Daily struggle, brothers. And God knew it was going to be. And that's why the Scripture says, Paul said, I die daily.

And Jesus said, deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me. It's not what I want to do with my spare time. Not what I want to do with my spare money after I've paid the rent or the mortgage payment or whatever it is and the groceries and the things I need and then put my money in the offering.

Now the rest is mine! No, it's not! It belongs to Jesus Christ just like my body does. It's His! And if that's not the case, you're not His disciple. So this lie from Satan that you can follow Christ without denying yourself and taking up your cross, it cuts off the power of God in our lives.

I believe another reason, the third reason, that we don't experience the power of this Lord Jesus Christ in our lives and all of His fullness is because of distraction. And of course the enemy is behind this too. Distraction.

Again, I guess this comes back to focus, doesn't it? The focus of our faith. Do you know that Satan doesn't mind losing some battles in your life if he can get your focus off of Christ? We read that recently in a book and it was so good. Satan doesn't mind losing some battles in your life if he can get your focus off of Christ.

This happens in a multitude of ways. Even people who are in spiritual warfare experience this. Okay? So you're in spiritual warfare and you begin rebuking the adversary and guess what? It works.

And you begin focusing more and more if you're not careful to be led by the Spirit of God on where? The enemy. Well, we need to know who our enemy is. I remember Brother Denny praying, God, help Ross to see the enemy.

I thought, wow, that's a different prayer. Yes, God wants us to see the enemy, but not focus on the enemy. That's why David could stand in front of Goliath without fear.

He saw him, but that wasn't his focus. He saw somebody much bigger. So distraction.

Ofentimes we're distracted even by good things. Ministry. And I believe we need to serve Christ.

I'm not against that at all. But be careful that your ministry doesn't distract you from Christ. Family.

I believe in the godly family. I'm jealous for godly families. But don't let family become your main focus.

Let it be Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ is your true center focus, ministry will be worked out in your life. Your family will be worked out in your life with the riches of God at your disposal.

Work. I'm not against work. We need to work.

Be careful that it doesn't distract you from Christ. School. I'm not against school.

There's times when you need to get educated about something to serve the Lord better. Go for it. But don't let that become your main focus.

This thing of distraction. Jesus Christ our all in all. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And Paul says in Ephesians that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. It's that faith that unlocks what is in Christ to work in our lives. I would like to close this time here this morning with a time of worship.

He's so worthy, brothers and sisters. He's so worthy. One of the reasons we're defeated is because we don't take time to just gaze on Him.

To meditate on Him. To raise our hands to Him. Push everything else out of our minds.

And worship Him. He's worthy. He's worthy.

I would like you to just stand to your feet wherever you are. Spend time worshipping the Lamb. He's worthy.

He's worthy.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/kVKx41LPtXM.mp4>

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