

(Audio Book) We Still Have Jesus

by Vance Havner

This sermon emphasizes the enduring presence of Jesus in our lives, highlighting the futility of seeking fleeting experiences or relying on worldly things. It encourages a return to a simple trust in Jesus, who remains constant amidst changing circumstances, failures, and fears. The focus is on rediscovering a deep love for Jesus and allowing His power to work through us, despite the failures of the church or the world.

Scripture: Matthew 17:8, Hebrews 13:8, John 20:29, Acts 4:12, Philippians 2:9

Topics: "Enduring Presence of Jesus", "Trust Amidst Change"

Description

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Transcript

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus. Matthew 17 to 8 Peter wanted to build three tabernacles to house his mountaintop experience. That didn't work, but when the glorious experience had passed he still had Jesus.

I remember how, years ago, I felt that I needed a deeper experience. I was growing dull and stale. I left my church for a few days and took a train for a little town deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

There I nearly exhausted myself climbing a high peak and spent an afternoon praying in a deserted schoolhouse. But I didn't find my experience and came back rather crestfallen. Some time later I had the same impulse again.

Away I went in the springtime to my old home in the hills. I set out one sunny morning for my hideout in the woods. The stage was set, as it were, and I felt that if I could get into the right mood I would get the fresh touch from heaven that I needed.

But try as I would, nothing came of it. I sat half asleep, smitten with spring fever, and listened to the birds in the treetops. I finally stole out of the woods in low spirits, feeling more stupid than ever.

Again, down in Florida one winter, vacationing among the orange groves, I felt the same urge again. I took long walks beside the lake and sought to stir up the dormant fires within me. Nature and the weather certainly cooperated.

But I was tired from months of preaching, and the exalted frame of mind just wouldn't come. One afternoon, as I strolled along the water's edge, I found myself repeating a poem I had learned years before. We cannot kindle when we will the fire which in the heart resides.

The spirit blows and is still. In mystery our soul abides. But tasks in hours of insight willed can be in hours of gloom fulfilled.

I thought of Jesus' word about the wind blowing where it wills, and how we cannot trace the movements of God's spirit nor regulate and produce them as we will. I thought of Peter and how he wanted to keep the experience. When he had something better, he had Jesus.

And then and there I rejoiced that although experiences come and go, I always have Jesus, the same yesterday and today and forever. When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace. Everything else may come and go.

All else may fail. All else may change. But we still have Jesus.

I rejoiced that God has not seen fit to give me a dazzling experience. If he had, I might have talked about it, and then people might have tried to have the same experience, and failing, they might have grown discouraged. But I have Jesus, and I can always lead them with him, and know that heaven and earth may pass away, but Jesus never fails.

It is easy to be a Thomas and demand some rare experience, forgetting that Jesus said, Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. Most people live by dry faith anyway, and one can be a greater blessing if he lives by simple trust in him having not seen he loves than if he were forever relating mountaintop thrills and mystic visions. I am not discrediting your colorful experience if you really had one.

It is so easy to dramatize and glamorize such things. I have attended ministers' meetings where a brother could report receiving two new members into his church in such a way that you would think a new Jonah had risen and converted his Nineveh. But you cannot over-magnify Jesus, and when you are occupied with him you are always on safe ground.

You never lie awake nights regretting what you said when you brag on Jesus. I used to become almost vexed trying to make the saints over. Some of them can be notoriously stubborn, and then we preachers want to skin them alive.

Oh, we call it righteous indignation, of course, but that isn't what it is. Eventually we learn or we should learn that he is the center, and when we preach him we never get off center. One can understand the Dutchman who grew weary of so much doctrinal controversy and said he sure would like to get into a good old Jesus meeting.

When Moody went to Scotland the church was in a poor way. There had been the disruption thirty years earlier, and now the free church had sunk into formalism. Liberal teaching from Germany had crept in.

It was a crisis, and Moody, knowing nothing of all this, came along, not as an expert to settle their troubles, for then he would have settled nothing. He came preaching Christ and him crucified, and it was said, it seemed as though someone set to music the tune which had been haunting thousands of ears. That is the note we need to hear.

We need a revival, but we shall never have it by listening to lectures on revival. A revival is the church falling in love with Jesus Christ all over again. We are in love with ourselves, in love with our particular crowd, in love with our fundamentalism, maybe, but not in love with him.

We need to get back to him. Whatever else fails, we always have Jesus. Sometimes health fails, but we can take it to him and say, He whom thou lovest is sick.

Some turn to the great physician and are healed. Some are not. But in either case, whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.

We still have Jesus. Sometimes our feelings fail us. John the Baptist, rugged preacher of the wilderness, folded up in prison, even as you and I, he became uneasy about Jesus.

But Jesus hadn't failed. He was running on schedule. The disciples on the stormy sea saw the Lord and thought he was an apparition.

They saw a ghost when they should have seen him. We have our ghosts, our bugaboos, our hobgoblins. A man found himself wandering through a graveyard.

He got out of there in record time, falling over several tombstones, scratching himself while racing through the bushes. The next morning someone asked him, Don't you know a ghost can't hurt you? Yes, sir, I know that. He replied, But they can make you hurt yourself.

Our imaginary fears can indeed do that, and fear has been called the dark room where human negatives are made. The cure for fear is Jesus. Be of good cheer.

It is I. Be not afraid. Sometimes friends fail us. The psalmist lamented that his own familiar friend, in whom he trusted, who did eat of his bread, had lifted up his heel against him.

Paul declared that no man stood with him in his hour of trial. But he went on to add, But the Lord stood with me. He still had Jesus.

When loved ones are taken, Christ remains. There is a precious word in the account of the death and burial of John the Baptist. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus, After you have buried your John, you still have Jesus.

Sometimes the church fails. The true church shall not fail, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But the professing church fails so often to rise to its opportunity.

When the disciples failed to cast the demons out of the boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus had not failed. He said, Bring him to me. The church faces a demonized world today, and, alas, it must often be said of us, and they could not, Silver and gold we have, but we are not saying, Rise and walk.

Peter, who once had asked, What shall we have? could say to the cripple at the beautiful gate, Such as I have I give. The church today reverses the process, and instead of considering what we can give, we ask, What do I get? We are riddled with divisions, and much of our activity defeats itself. We are powerless before a needy world, but Christ has not failed.

Let us bring men to him. His touch still has its ancient power. We still have Jesus.

When we look out upon the world, we see certainly it has failed. We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus. There is so much that we see not yet, change and decay in all around we see, but Christ changes not, he abides, and he is still accessible.

It was a devout Christian doctor who once said in quiet conversation with a great preacher, What the world needs is an emperor, and his name is Jesus Christ. Well, the world does need a king, and one day Jesus shall reign. Men cannot master the world's problems.

After the first world war it was the big four. This time it is the big three. But our troubles will not be over until there is only one, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

If you are unsaved, whatever else you may have tried, there is still Jesus. He stands at your heart's door, and if you will open the door, he will come in and abide. Then you can say, Whatever comes, whatever goes, I still have Jesus.

I've tried in vain a thousand ways my fears to quell, my hopes to raise, but what I need, the Bible says, is ever only Jesus.

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