

Jesus Is Absolutely Necessary



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Abide in Him

Jesus made it quite clear that without Him you can do nothing. He said that it is in Him that we live and move and have our being. Also, Jesus let us know that when spiritual contact is broken with Him, one becomes spiritually dead and absolutely helpless. As far as eternal things are concerned, without Him you can do nothing.

With this thought in mind, I want you to realize that breaking contact with God is easy to do if you fail to read the Bible and pray as you ought, if you fail to assemble with the saints, if you fail to measure to God's Word, or if you refuse pastoral authority. Any of

these things can break your contact with God, and then your peace and joy will be gone. Next, your testimony will dry up, and the services will become boring. When that happens, a person usually drops out of church activities, and eventually one stops attending the worship services altogether. Friend, if you get to that place, you will be hard to reach, if you ever can be reached.

You need to realize that Jesus is absolutely necessary. The vine is the source from which life flows into the branch. Bearing fruit necessitates that the branch be engrafted into the vine. Only by allowing the pruning and the cultivating process, through the preaching of the Word, can you

remain alive spiritually. The Prophet Jeremiah said to break up the fallow ground. This is the reason God's Word must be preached and the reason it is necessary that you assemble yourself with God's people. A child of God must be pruned, or dug around.

In John, Chapter 15, Jesus talked about the vine. Unless a grapevine is pruned, it is only a matter of time until there is not much fruit on it. Also, if you plant a garden, unless you dig around the plants they will not produce as they should. The same is true spiritually. This is the reason it is so essential that you assemble yourself with the saints and listen to a man of God preach God's eternal Truth. My friend, you need

to allow God's Word to prune you and dig around you so that you can bring forth much fruit.

Jesus is indispensable, because He said in John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing." To live for God, you must abide in Him, and then He will abide in you. My friend, to abide in Him, you must measure to the Word of God. You must get in the Word of God and let it become a part of you. He will abide in you when you measure to God's Word and do what the Word tells you to do. This means that Christ must be the main consideration in your life; He must come ahead of everything and anyone else.

The Need of Consecration

In the world you can see the spirit of rebellion on every side. The same spirit tries to work on the saints of God. You can see rebellion in the schools, in the work force, and in the penitentiaries. Many people rebel against pastoral authority. They feel that they do not need a pastor, and they refuse to submit. People in the world are looking for high positions, worldly wealth, and great prestige. These things are not sin, but there is something much more important, and that is eternal things.

The Word of God speaks of the rich fool who had lots of material goods but had no place to store them. In essence, he said, "I have no place to store my goods. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and then I will take care of my soul." However, God called him a fool because he put material things ahead of Him. My friend, God has not changed His mind today. God still calls one a fool who puts material things ahead of serving Him. The most foolish thing a person can do is to put other things ahead of the things of God.

Today we see many half-hearted souls who do not put their hearts into serving God. Many who claim to be Christians are worldly minded. My friend, you definitely need to

face the reality that the Word of God speaks of. Peter let us know that God requires wholehearted devotion. In fact, Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." He said to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." In other words, he was saying that Christ must be the prime tenant in your heart. He must come ahead of everything else—your finances, your companion, your children, your grandchildren, and your brother or sister.

God is looking for consecrated individuals. He wants to show Himself strong. He has a message to deliver to this lost and dying world. This world is in deplorable condition. I do not think Sodom and Gomorrah could have been any worse than what we are seeing today in our world. God is looking for individuals who are sold out to Him, to show this world something better than what they are living. God has provided the plan of salvation. Sinner friend, God can save you and turn your life around. He can sanctify you and keep you free from sin. No matter what your environment is, God can keep you.

Is Your Heart Perfect Toward the Lord?

Second Chronicles 16:9 states, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." The Lord is letting us know that His eyes are looking for people whom He can move into and rule over. Christian friend, He wants you to go out and show the world the perfect plan of salvation. God has a law of sowing and reaping. Our nation is reaping today because people have failed to serve Him.

We are living in a world where

so many people are religious. God wants His people to show this lost and dying world that there is more to serving Him than just nominal religion. He wants you to show others that He has keeping power. God is real; He is not dead. God wants you to show others what He can do. A change takes place when one gets saved. The plan of salvation is much more than saying, "I'm a Christian" and putting your name on a church book. When one gets saved, God changes that person and makes him or her a new creature.

Down through time, many have drifted away from truly following Christ and, as a result, followed man-made religions instead of the true salvation of Christ. Matthew 17:3-4 reads: "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Verse 8 says, "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." Notice that they saw no man but Jesus.

We are living in a world where the devil uses many things to try to draw away our attention, to lure us away from the right track. In Revelation, Chapter 17, you can read that John saw a harlot woman, or false, man-made churches that were ruled by men. She was decked with gold and precious stones. The Scripture says when John saw her, he wondered with great admiration (verse 6). In other words, he saw something outstanding; it was something for the flesh to desire. Then, in verse 7, John said the angel (or the messenger) spoke to him and said, "Wherfore didst thou marvel?"

I want you to realize that the devil is still putting on quite a show yet today. Some places have big church buildings that cost millions of dollars, and thousands of people attend. If you do not know God's eternal Truth, you might still marvel at such places. This church amal-

gamation is taking in everything and everybody to war against the saints. There has never been a time when we have seen the eighth beast forming as it is today. What is the purpose of it? It wants to move in on the saints of God and take away our freedom. Certainly these false churches call themselves "religion."

How Can We Know What Truth Is?

John told us exactly how we could know what Truth is. We are living in a time when we have religion on every side, yet the crime rate is getting worse. We are living in a time when men stand behind pulpits and declare salvation, yet they tell people, "You can't live above sin." Well, let us see what the Word of God says about it.

When John came back from the Isle of Patmos, he wrote three Books. He wrote 1 John (containing five chapters). He got right to the point and told the people exactly the way it was. He told them clearly that whenever people claim to be preachers or saints of God and say a person cannot live above sin, they are of the devil. John came right out and said that whoever sins is of the devil. He wrote in 1 John 3:8-10: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest [made obvious, or made visible], and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

John wrote in verses 17-19: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth." In verse 24 he stated, "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

John wrote in 1 John 4:2, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." What was John saying? Everyone who is born of God is changed; he is a new creation. Because he is a new creation, old things are passed away and all things are new. They confess it, or they show that they are children of God.

In verse 6 John said, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." When people refuse to hear God's eternal Truth, John said we know whether they are of God or whether they are not of God. You can read of some people in the Word who had double eyes. He let us know that your eyes have to be singular. In other words, you must have your eyes focused on either God or the world. You cannot eye both at the same time. It is recorded in the Word of God that some people had double vision, and they erred from the Truth.

Consider Judas. He was trying to eye Christ and money. Demas' eyes were on the world. At one time, Peter was prejudiced and could not be told anything. Matthew 6:22 states, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." I thank God for those who will preach God's eternal Truth. Certainly, as a pastor, I want to have many people come in, but I would rather have quality than quantity.

How Can You Maintain This Christian Life?

God's eternal Truth will separate the wheat from the chaff. When people measure to God's Truth, we will have quality. We might not

have quantity, but I would rather see people sing and testify in the Spirit. I would rather see people praising God than to see a house full of deadbeats. Thank God, the Truth will set you free. Obeying the Truth is a decision that we each have to make.

Getting saved is a blessed event, but it is equally important to stay saved. We eat bread to nourish the outward man in order to keep alive, and it takes the same spiritually. No one can stay alive spiritually unless he feeds the inward man. Getting saved is wonderful, but one must maintain that experience.

Jesus said in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." He said in verses 50-51, 53-54: "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus was simply stating that you must have a daily diet of God's eternal Word. This is not just sitting down and reading for an hour or two. You must study and meditate on God's Word. Also, you must pray and seek His divine guidance daily if you are going to maintain your salvation. Just as food maintains the physical body, the Word of God maintains the spiritual body. To keep the inner man alive, you have to hear God's Word where the Truth is preached in its fullness, eat God's Word, and study God's Word.

Not many places preach the full Gospel, and there are very few camp meetings over the land today where you can see the Spirit of God working in a mighty way. My friend, if

you partake of God's Word, it will keep you alive. If you do not partake of it, you will die, spiritually speaking. When you accept the Word, it gives you life. Jesus said in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This Scripture will do away with "sin-more-or-less every day" religion.

What was Jesus talking about? He was not talking about the firmament darkness, but the darkness of sin. When you follow Christ, you do not sin anymore, but you have the Light of life. There is a Light guiding you. When you truly get saved, my friend, the sin business is over. You cannot sin and still have that Light guiding you. In other words, you cannot sin and have the Spirit of God leading you; it is impossible. If people are sinning, they are in darkness. The light dispels darkness.

"We Ought to Lay Down Our Lives for the Brethren"

Jesus sacrificed Himself to give us the basis for our acquaintance with God. He said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Peter also said that Jesus bought us by His blood. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [or conduct] received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." He also said in 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

When Jesus hung on the Cross, it satisfied God. We read in Isaiah 53:11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Why? Because the

price was paid; the debt of sin was paid. The plan of salvation was put in reach of every man. There is no excuse for anyone not being saved. When you hear the Truth and the Spirit of God guides you, God wants you to come to Truth, or come to the light. He wants you to be sanctified and to lay down your life for the brethren. God saved you to give you a work to do. There is a great work to do in this vast world of sin.

John said in 1 John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Your life needs to be spent with one thing in mind, and that is to lead souls to Jesus Christ. When you go to work, you need to sow some seeds so that you might lead some soul to Christ. He wants you to lay down your life for others.

The harder you work for God, the bigger the payday will be. This is what it is all about to make Heaven your home. It is not merely because you went to an altar of prayer. God said He would reward every man according to his work. If you get saved and then sit down and do nothing, my friend, you will not have a reward. On the other hand, if you spend your life working for God, sowing seed and winning souls for God, saying little things to encourage others and give them a smile, He will reward you for everything you do. Every individual will be rewarded according to his own works.

The Foundation of God Is Sure

You must keep the commandments that God has given. There are basically two commandments. First, He said to love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul. Second, He said to love your neighbor as yourself. The foundation upon which people are saved stands sure. Paul taught Timothy this in 2 Timothy 2:19 when he said, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The

Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity [sin or unrighteousness]." In other words, Paul was simply letting us know this: God set the standard before the foundation of the world, and it has never changed; furthermore, it never will change.

Hebrews 12:28 tells us God's kingdom cannot be moved: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Only one thing will make you a saint, and that is meeting God's standard and getting your sins washed away. You must be cleansed inwardly. God is never going to change the standard for you or me or anyone else. It is the same standard for all of us.

In our lifetime we have seen many new developments, and our world is ever changing. We have modern ways to travel, quicker ways to cook our food, and automatic washing machines to wash our clothes. Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure. God does not change because things are modern. Down through the years, people have tried to modernize God's plan, but it will not work.

God will not stand for His plan to be modernized. He ordained it before the foundation of the world. If the world were to last another two thousand years, the standard would still be the same.

You may change and modernize, but remember one thing: the foundation of God stands sure. We have a kingdom that cannot be moved, and God has set the bounds. God set the standard for us to live by, not Hollywood or Paris or New York. What is the standard that God has set for us to live by? It is holiness, and it has never changed. You cannot have one sin in your heart and still be holy. You cannot wilfully do something that you know is wrong and still be holy. You cannot follow after the world and still be holy. You must make a choice. God

has never changed.

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 6, you can read about some people who failed to follow God's plan explicitly concerning the ark of the Lord, and the Lord smote more than fifty thousand men because of it. Today you will not find a lot of literal dead bodies laying around, but when people try to change God's plan, you are going to find a lot of dead souls.

Coming Christ's Way

Christ is the means of access to this spiritual life. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The only way to life is through Christ. In John 10:9 Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." There is only one way to enter the church, only one way to enter into eternal life, and only one way to make Heaven your home, and that is by coming Christ's way. In other words, you must obey God's eternal Word.

Everything in the kingdom began, is carried on, and ends with Christ. He said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Anytime something is severed from the vine, it dies. Jesus said in Revelation 21:6, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Without Him nothing is made. In Colossians 1:16-18 Paul said: "For 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: And he is before all things, and 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."

God must have the preeminence in all things. He must come ahead of everything else in your life. This is what is defeating many parents today, because they are giving in to their children. I repeat, God still has the same standard. People may not

like it, but it is the only thing that will cleanse you and make you pure and holy; then, my friend, you must live God's standard every day of your life. It is a passport to Heaven. If you do not live it, then Christ will depart from you.

Jesus said in Revelation 22:16b, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Christ must be your all in all. It is necessary for Him to have preeminence in your life; therefore, you have to give him first place in your heart and life. Nothing can be put ahead of Him if you want to make Heaven your eternal home.

One Thing Is Needful

Do you know what you need to do? You have to make room for Christ in your life. My friend, without His having first place in your life, you absolutely cannot survive spiritually. We read in Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Christ will freely give you all you need to be successful in this Christian life. He will give you all the grace you need and all the light you need. He will walk with you and talk with you, if you will serve Him.

You may say, "Well, I live in a difficult environment." God said He would freely give you all things. He has all the grace you need, and He will load you daily with benefits if you will call on Him. He wants you to live so that you will glorify Him.

In Romans 4:19-21 the writer, speaking of Abraham, when God spoke to him and said He was going to give him a son, said: "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." My friend,

God wants you to live for Him, believe Him, and trust Him. You should not doubt the things that God has said. If God tells you to do something, He will take you through it, my friend. If you do not stagger at what God has said, He will give you the power to go through it.

Jesus said in Luke 10:42, "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." In Psalm 27:4 David said, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life." You cannot be in God's kingdom unless you are a pure vessel. God wants you in His kingdom, and you cannot enter it unless you are born of the Spirit; then every day you must put forth effort to stay holy so that you can live in God's house. I can be in the church every day. I am not talking about the building; I am talking about His kingdom.

It does not make any difference how much of this world's goods you have accumulated or how many automobiles you have in the driveway, the only thing that will count when you draw your last breath is what you have done for Jesus Christ. That is what will matter when you stand before the judgment bar of God. Many people will be speechless if they do not do what God would have them to do now.

Friend, Jesus said one thing is needful. Are you making excuses for why you are not serving God? Why are you not going all the way with God? Why are you not selling out to God completely? He will give you all things so that you can live in God's house. You can be in His kingdom every day of the week if you will obey Him. Then when you draw your last breath, He will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter in." You ought to settle it with God. You do not know what the next year holds for you. Friend, how do you stand before God?

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