

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

-A study through D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon series-

Chapter 21 - The Final Cure

To close out this sermon series Lloyd-Jones stays in Philippians 4 and focuses on verse 13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This statement from Paul was not a silly or sinful boast. Paul here is boasting not of his own strength, but he is boasting in Christ. Paul is teaching the Philippians about the inward working of Christ in his life and how this _____ from Christ gave him the ability to be content in all situations. The Christian is a person who has a new life, a divine life, within them.

"What the apostle is really saying is not so much that he can do certain things himself, as that he is enabled to do certain things, indeed all things, by this One who infuses His strength into him."

"I need scarcely remind you that that is the point to which the apostle always returns. Paul never works out an argument without coming back to it. That is the point to which he always brings every argument and discussion, everything always ends in Christ and with Christ. He is the final point. He is the explanation of Paul's living and his whole outlook upon life."

"In other words he is telling us that Christ is all-sufficient for every circumstance, for every eventuality and for every possibility...The Christian life after all is a life, it is a power, it is an activity. That is the thing we so constantly tend to forget. It is not just a philosophy, it is not just a point of view, it is not just a teaching that we take up and try to put into practice. It is all that, but it is something infinitely more. The very essence of the Christian life, according to the New Testament teaching everywhere, is that it is a mighty power that enters into us; it is a life, if you like, that is pulsating in us."

"That is what Christians really are. They are not just men who have taken up a Christian theory and are trying to practice it; it is God doing something in them and through them...The Christian, essentially, is a man who has received a new life."

The gospel takes up the _____ person-works in the whole person. Being a Christian is not just holding to orthodoxy. Being a Christian is not just being moral. Being a Christian is not just claiming to love God. A Christian is a person who has been born anew by the Spirit of God and now has a new mind, new affections, and a new will. Where there once was only death and darkness, there is now _____ and _____.

"The Christian is not just a good, decent, moral man; the life of God has entered into him, there is an energy, a power, a life in him and it is that that makes him peculiarly and specifically Christian, and that is exactly what Paul is telling us here."

Christianity is not simply a religion to help you not be overcome by your circumstances. It is not a mere self-help religion. Many religions in the world can help people not be overcome by what is happening around them-they are really just various forms of Stoicism. _____ is something entirely different.

"All those religions are basically religions which are designed to help people to die to circumstances and surroundings, and to develop indifference to the world that is round and about them, to go through this life and world unaffected by circumstances...all such teaching is really hopeless, all those religions are finally pessimistic. Stoicism, in the last analysis, was profound pessimism. It really came to this, that this world is hopeless, that nothing can do any good, that the thing you have to do therefore is to get through life as best as you can and just refuse to let yourself be hurt by it."

"That is the very antithesis of the Christian Gospel which is not negative but essentially positive. It does not regard matter as essentially evil nor the world as essentially evil in and of itself in a material sense."

But we reject the negative view in toto supremely for this reason, that it fails to give the glory and the honor to the Lord Jesus Christ...Paul wants us to see that his victory is based upon his association with Christ...to be a Christian is not only to believe the teaching of Christ and to practice it; it is not only to try to follow the pattern and example of Christ; it is to be so vitally related to Christ that His life and His power are working in us. It is to be 'in Christ', it is for Christ to be in us."

What Paul is saying is that he is able to be content in every situation and able to do all things because of the power of Christ that is at work in him. This message, this gospel, is what the church is to be proclaiming in the world. This is what people _____ to hear-that there is life to be found in Christ, that there is a power that is able to help you, not only triumph over death itself, but also that will fill you with hope for the future.

"The Church has been talking about politics and the economic situation for many years but with no noticeable effect. That is not the business of Christian preaching. The business of Christian preaching is to put this to the people: In this uncertain world, where we have already experienced two world wars within a quarter century, and where we may have to face yet another and things that are even worse, here is the question-How are you going to face it all, how can you meet it all? For me to give my views on international politics will not help anybody; but thank God there is something I can do. I can tell people of something..."

How does a person get this Christian power, this _____ from Christ? This is an important question to answer. Paul talks about this power when he says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". There are two ways that Christians can go wrong here-they can focus just on the "I" of this verse and eliminate "Christ" or they can ere by focusing just on "Christ" and do away with the "I".

"There are many people who spend the whole of their lives in trying to obtain this power, and yet they never seem to have it...There is a great deal of confusion at this point. The first cause of confusion is to emphasize the 'I' only. In a sense I have already dealt with that. It is what the Stoic does, it is what the Hindu or the Buddhist does..."

"The Christian life is not a life that I live myself and by my own power; neither is it a life in which I am obliterated and Christ does all."

This Christian "power" is not to be obtained simply by _____ asking for it. The Christian is to strive to live the Christian life by faith, boasting in Christ alone, and as he does so he will notice the power of Christ working in him as he presses on after holiness.

"What I have to do is to go to Christ. I must spend my time with Him, I must meditate upon Him, I must get to know Him...I must maintain my contact and communion with Christ and I must concentrate on knowing Him."

"What else? I must do exactly what He tells me. I must avoid things that would hamper...There are no shortcuts in the Christian life. If in the midst of persecution we want to feel as Paul felt, we must live as Paul lived. I must do what He tells me, both to do and not to do. I must read the Bible, I must exercise, I must practice the Christian life, I must live the Christian life...to abide in Christ is to do what He tells you, positively, and to pray without ceasing. Abiding is a tremendously active thing."

"That, then, is the prescription. Do not agonize in prayer beseeching Him for power. Do what He told you to do. Live the Christian life. Pray, and meditate upon Him. Spend time with Him and ask Him to manifest Himself to you. And as long as you do that you can leave the rest to Him. He will give you strength...He knows us better than we know ourselves, and according to our need so will be our supply."