

Alone, Yet Not Alone

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that though believers may feel forsaken and alone in trials, they are never truly alone because God the Father is always with them, just as He was with Christ.

Scripture: John 16:31-32, Psalm 23:1, Psalm 23:2, Psalm 23:3, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 26:56, Genesis 22:6

Topics: "Faith and Trust", "Divine Presence", "Christian Perseverance"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound truth that though Christ was physically abandoned by His disciples during His trial, He was never truly alone because the Father was with Him. Spurgeon challenges believers to examine the authenticity of their faith, warns against presumption, and encourages steadfast trust in God's abiding presence. Drawing from Scripture and Christ's example, he offers comfort and practical encouragement for those facing trials and feelings of isolation.

Transcript

"Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." John 16:31,32.

OUR Lord looks for faith as the result of His teaching and I think that I hear Him say, at the end of every service, "Do you now believe? You have listened. You have made remarks about the speaker—do you now believe? You have been made to feel, you have brushed the tears away, but do you now believe? For anything short of believing leaves you short of salvation." I would like to put the question of my text to every hearer in this great house tonight. You have listened, now, to years of sermons—"Do you now believe?" You are getting gray. The Gospel is very familiar to you—you have heard it preached for many, many years—but, "do you now believe?" This is the crucial point. According to your answer truthfully given to this question, you may decide as to your condition before God, "Do you now believe?"

Christ loves faith wherever He sees it. It is to Him a precious thing. To you who believe, He is precious, He is an honor. And upon Him you who believe confer all the honor it is possible for you to confer. Your trust adorns Him with jewels, your confidence in Him puts the crown on His head! But our Lord is very discriminating. He distinguishes between faith and presumption, and between faith and our idea of faith. These disciples now said that they were sure—"Now are we sure that You know all things, and need not that any man should ask You." "Yes! Yes!" the Savior seemed to say, "That is your measure of your own faith. But I do not measure it in the same way that you do." If there are any here who say, "As to the matter

of faith, I need no caution, I scarcely need admonition, I believe! Oh, you cannot tell how firmly." No, my dear Friend, and perhaps you cannot tell how weakly you believe. At any rate, do not mistake your belief in your own faith for faith in Christ, for belief in your own faith may be only self-conceit, while faith in Christ gives glory to God and brings salvation to the Believer!

To take the disciples down a notch, the Savior reminds them that whatever faith they had, they were a long while coming to it. "Do you now believe? Three years have I been teaching you. Three years have I worked miracles in your midst. Three years have you seen Me and you might have seen the Father in Me, but after all this time have you at last come to a little faith?" Oh, Friends, we have never any reason to boast of our faith, for we have been very long coming to it! We now trust Christ—I hope that many of us can sincerely say that we lean all our weight on Him. We believe in God, we believe also in His Son, Jesus Christ—but it took months to drive us out of our self-confidence! It took years to lift us out of despair! It has taken all this time for the Lord, in the power of His own Spirit, to work out what little faith we have!

Then our Lord reminded them of another thing still more humbling—that as their faith was long in coming, it might be very quick in going. "Do you now believe?" He asks. "Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." O Beloved, a little trouble arises—an unforeseen difficulty occurs—and where is your faith? A little persecution, the idle banter of an unbeliever, the sarcasm of an agnostic—and where is your faith? Is it not so with many, that while in good company they can almost brag of their faith, but if the company is changed, they certainly have no faith to brag of? The men who were so glib of tongue are now quiet and though, before, they wore their helmets bedight with plumes, they would now hide them away, and hide their heads, too, if they could! They are ashamed of Him, now, in whom, once, they gloried! O Friends, let him that glories, glory only in

the Lord! Let the Believer never boast of his believing, lest he be reminded how long he was in coming to it, and how soon he may be parted from it!

Our Lord's disciples did not very readily take this caution. I do not suppose any of them took it. Certainly Peter did not, and the rest of them were very much like he. When Peter said to Jesus, "Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended." And, "Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You." Then we read, "Likewise also said all the disciples." We may say, tonight, "There is no man among us who will ever be a traitor to Christ! There is no woman here who will ever grow cold of heart!" That is our self-flattery. What others have done, however base and mean, we, too, are capable of doing. If we think we are not, it is our pride, and our pride, alone, that makes us think so. Our Savior, therefore, to call the particular attention of His disciples to their danger, said, not merely, "the hour comes," but, "Behold, the hour comes." He puts in a, "Behold!" An, "Ecce!" As the old writers used to put a hand in the margin, or an N.B., nota bene, to call attention to something special, so the Savior puts, here, a, "Behold!" "Look here!" "See this!" You who have just put on your armor think that you have won the victory—"Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone."

I pray you, therefore, Brothers and Sisters, and I speak to myself as well as to you, let us learn the lesson of our frailty. And though we are honestly trusting in Christ, tonight, let each one cry, "Hold You me up and I shall be safe." Let the prayer go up from all of you who are in these galleries, and from all who are sitting downstairs in those pews, from the most experienced and established of you, as well as from those who have but recently been brought to know the Lord— let each one cry, "Lord, keep me, for I cannot keep

myself!" Alas! Alas! We have seen even the standard-bearers fall! And when that is the case, how sadly do the common soldiers mourn! They who stood like rocks have been made to totter. God keep us! Christ of God, keep us by Your eternal Spirit! Amen.

Now I am going to take you away from that prefatory consideration, still keeping, however, much in the same vein. Let us learn, tonight, from our Lord, first, His trial—"You shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." Secondly, His confidence—"And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." And then, thirdly, His example, for in all this, we are to follow His steps. May we, if we have our Lord's trial, also have His confidence because we imitate His example!

I. First, then, notice OUR LORD'S TRIAL, for the same may happen to you.

He was left alone. Why, those 11 Apostles that are around Him, and to whom He is talking, surely they will not leave their Lord! They are so sure that they will stand any fire that may be directed against them—and yet not one of them will stand firm. They will all forsake Him and flee. In the Garden, the three who are His bodyguards will fall asleep and the rest of the disciples will do the same! And when He stands before Pilate and Herod, none of them will be there to defend Him—not a solitary voice will be lifted up for Him.

The sure ones left Him whom they so certainly believed—and they were honest men, too, when they spoke so confidently. There was no hypocrisy about what they said. They meant it! They did, each one, verily believe that he could go to prison and to death, and that he would do so rather than deny his Lord. In their own esteem, they were not boast-ing—they were only saying what they really intended to do. Here is the bitterness of your trial, when, in your hour of need, your good, honest friends are gone—your real friends fainting and weary. They cannot go your pace. They cannot confront the storm that you are called upon to face—and they are gone. Alas, for our dear Lord, what grief it was to Him! They who were so confident and they who were really true, yet, nevertheless, were scattered—and He was left alone.

They also really loved Christ. I am sure that Peter's was not a new love when he said, "You know all things; You know that I love You." He did love his Master. Even when he denied his Lord there was love in his heart towards Him. So was it with the other disciples—they all loved their Lord—yet all of them left Him! And poor weak things that they were, they turned their backs in the day of battle. It is a grief to our hearts to be forsaken of good friends and loving friends. I do not know, but if you were sure that they had been hypocrites, you might almost be glad that they were gone. But your very knowledge that they were true at heart, as true as such poor things could be, increases the bitterness that they should leave you. You need not think, when this occurs in your experience, that any strange thing has happened to you, for Christ was thus left alone.

Notice, that He was left by every man. "You shall be scattered, every man to his own." "Every man." When the trial comes, does not John remain? Does not he remember that dear breast on which He leaned his head? Is John gone? Yes, "every man." Christ looked and there was none to stand by Him. He must confront His accusers without a single witness in His favor! Every man was gone. Ah, this was a trial, indeed! But one true friend, a Damon or a Pythias, to be faithful to one another even unto death, and the trial is not so overwhelming. But, no, every man is gone to his own, and Christ is left alone! Of the people there is none with Him, not even one of those who had been His most intimate friends.

What were they? Well, every man was looking to his own safety— "You shall be scattered, every man to his own." Is not that the very essence of selfishness and of meanness, "Every man to his own"? This is all that Christ received from the best of His followers! They left Him and went, every man, to his own—to his

own house, to see to his own security, to screen his own character, to preserve his own life. "Every man to his own." Are these Your friends, O Jesus? Lover of men, are these Your lovers?

Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find that your friends would take care of you only that they must take care of themselves? They would keep you, but then you cost too much—you are too "dear" a friend! The expense of your friendship has to be looked at, and their income will not bear it. "Every man to his own." The Savior had also to feel this.

And, remember this happened when Christ's special hour was come. "The hour comes." Christ's hour, the hour of the power of darkness. It was then that they left Him. When He did not need their friendship, they were His very good friends. When they could do nothing for Him if they tried, they were His faithful followers. But the pinch has come— now might they watch with Him one hour. Now might they go with Him amid the rabble throng and interpose, at least the vote of the minority against the masses—but they are gone! Like your swallows, they have disappeared before the first frost has covered the brook. Like the green leaves of summer, where are they now in this wintry time? Alas, alas, for friendship, when it fails when most it is needed! And it failed the Savior then.

He was left, also, in violation of every bond. These men who left Him were pledged to stand by Him. They had given Him a promise to die with Him. These were His choice companions. He had called them from the fishing spots of Galilee and made them His disciples. These were His Apostles, the chief men in His new Kingdom. They were to sit upon thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. These, He had redeemed unto Himself. These were to be partakers of His Glory in the day of His appearing. Never were men bound to man as they were bound to Christ—and yet they left Him alone. Dear Friend, do not expect gratitude from your fellow creatures—it is a very rare thing in this world! The more you do for men, the less will be their return. I speak not, now, like one who thinks ill of my fellow men, but I know that it is so, alas, in many instances.

And if it is not your lot, you may thank God that it is not—and wonder why you are an exception to the rule. If, by-and-by, you shall come down in the world and need the help of those you helped in days gone by, they will, as a rule, be the last to help you and the first to tread you down! Certainly, with our Lord Jesus Christ, those who were nearest and who owed Him most, fled from Him, and He derived from them no succor. It was "every man to his own"—and they left Him alone to be bound and beaten by His unfeeling adversaries—and to be taken away to prison and to death.

There is the first division of our subject—our Lord's trial. I say, again, that a like trial may happen to some here. It has happened often to bold defenders of the faith, to find themselves left to hold the bridge alone. And it is a sharp, stern trial to the man who is called to endure it.

II. More cheery talk shall we have on our second head, which is OUR LORD'S CONFIDENCE. He says, "You shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

Observe, then, that Christ's confidence was confidence that the Father was with Him, and this confidence kept Him to His purpose. Look at the disciples flee—they are all scattered, every man to his own. Has Christ gone? Not He! John, Peter, James, Thomas, and all the rest are gone. Has Christ gone? Not He! There He stands. They have left Him alone, but there He is, still standing to His purpose. He has come to save and He will save. He has come to redeem and He will redeem. He has come to overcome the world and He will overcome it. They have left Him alone. They have not taken Him away with them. He is no coward. From His purpose He never flees, blessed be His name! He stood fast in that dread hour when all

forsook Him and fled. This was because His confidence was in God.

Next, observe that this confidence in God not only kept Him to His purpose, but it sustained Him in the prospect of the trial. Notice how it runs—"You shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone." Christ does not say, "I shall not be

alone." That was true, but He said, "I am not alone." I love to read the experience of the child of God in the present tense—the gifts, graces and promises of God in the present tense—"I am not alone." "The Lord is my Shepherd," as well as "I shall not want." "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." He is doing everything for me now. The blessed Christ says that the prospect of God's being with Him all through the trouble, and the Presence of God with Him now, is His comfort in the prospect of it. You who were here this morning know what a sad discourse we had from the text, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" [Sermon #2133, Volume 36.] I took this text for my evening discourse because it is the counterpart of the one we considered this morning, for our Lord could truly say to His disciples, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

Our Lord's declaration was contradicted by appearances. Did He not have to say to God—"Why have You forsaken Me?" How, then, could He say, "The Father is with Me"? It was true—and in a part of my morning sermon I tried to show that, while God forsook Him in His official capacity as the Lawgiver and the Executive of the Law, yet in His personal relation to Him, He did not and could not forsake Him. The Father was with Him! Oh, is it not blessed on the part of Christ to stand to this? He knows that His Father is with Him, even when He feels, in another sense, that the Father has forsaken Him! Beloved, if everybody leaves you, and even God seems to leave you, still hold to your confidence in God! Do not believe that God can forsake His own. Do not even dream it—it cannot be! He never did forsake His own! He never can and He never will! The Father is with Jesus Christ, even when He knows that He will have to say, "Why have You forsaken Me?"

Yet, it was assuredly true that the Father was with Christ when He was left alone. How was the Father with Him, then? Beloved, even when the Father did not look on Christ, or give Him one smile, or one word of comfort, He was still with Him. How so? Well, He was with Him as to His eternal purposes and Covenant. They had entered into Covenant together for the redemption of men, for the salvation of the elect—they had crossed hands and pledged each other to carry out the Divine purpose and the Everlasting Covenant. I remember that passage about Abraham going with Isaac to Mount Moriah, where Isaac was to be offered up. It is written, "So they went both of them together." So did the Eternal Father and His beloved Son when God was about to give up His own Son to death. There was no divided purpose—they went, both of Them, together. All the work of Christ was the work of the Father—and the Father supported Him in it to the very fullest!

In the design and method of the Atonement, the Father and the Son were together. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," but Jesus so loved the world that He gave Himself. The Atonement was the gift of the Father, but it was the work of the Son. In all that He suffered He could say, "The Father is with Me in it. I am doing that which will glorify Him and content Him." He went not alone to prison and to death! In all things He did that which pleased the Father—and the Father was with Him in it all.

All the decrees of God were at the back of Christ. It is written in the sealed Book, but who shall read it except the Christ? Whatever is written there is written in support of Christ. There is not a decree in the

Book of Destiny but works out for Christ's Glory and according to Christ's mind. It is not merely 12 legions of angels that are behind the Cross, but the God of the angels is there, too! It is not merely the forces of Providence that shall work together to achieve the purpose of the Creator, but the God of Providence, the Infinite Jehovah, is in league with Jesus and He can say it, as He goes out to die, "I am not alone: because the Father is with Me." Is not this a glorious Truth of God, that our Lord Christ was not alone? So far as earthly companions were concerned, the Words of God written by Isaiah could be literally uttered by Christ, "I have trodden the winepress alone." Every man was gone, but God was always with Him!

Since then, it has been made manifest that God was with Christ. He proved it by raising Him from the dead. Did not the Father also prove that He was with the Son by sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost with many signs and wonders? Jesus is not alone! All the work of the Holy Spirit since, in convincing men of sin and leading them to Jesus, is proof that He is not alone. Beloved, all the history of Providence, since the day when Christ was taken up into Heaven, proves that He is not alone. Alone? The Christ alone? Why, the beasts of the field are in league with Him! The stars in their courses fight for Him! Every event of history, give it but time and space, will make His Kingdom come! Every turn of yonder enormous wheels of Providence shall make His chariot of triumph come nearer and nearer over the necks of His foes.

Even now, by faith, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor."—

"Look, you saints, the sight is glorious!

See the "Man of Sorrows" now,

From the fight returned victorious,

Every knee to Him shall bow:

Crown Him, crown Him;

Crowns become the Victor's brow." Jesus is the focus of all power and wisdom. God is with Him and the day comes when He shall appear in His Glory. In His millennial reign among the sons of God it shall be seen that He is not alone—and when He shall come in the Glory of the Father and all His holy angels with Him, then shall He be able to say with even greater emphasis, "I am not alone: because the Father is with Me." And when He sits upon the Great White Throne and divides mankind—His friends to the right, His foes to the left—and pronounces eternal wrath upon rebels and opens Heaven to Believers, then shall all worlds know that the Man of Nazareth is not alone! Alone? I seem as if I must laugh at the very thought! All Heaven and earth, things present and things to come, time and eternity, life and death, are all with Him. Men may forsake Him, but He is not alone!

III. Now, I want, in the third place, to teach the lessons of OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE. As my time has nearly gone, I must speak very briefly of these lessons.

First, learn fidelity when others fail. Are you a Christian? Do you trust Christ? Do you love Him? Then never desert Him. "Oh, but," says one, "the current runs the other way now." Brother, let it run—it will leave off when it has run away. I believe in Him who rose again from the dead, whose righteousness does justify me, whose blood does wash me whiter than snow. "But the philosophers tell us that this is not scientific!" I am unscientific, then, and I delight to be unscientific! "Oh, but the deep thinkers say this is inconsistent with progress!" Well, let it be inconsistent with progress. "Oh, but all the world denies it!" So

much the worse for the world. Let it deny the Truth of God if it will. That was a grand spirit of Athanasius when he said, "Athanasius contra mundum"—that is, "Athanasius against the whole world."

And every Christian may be of this spirit and ought to be of this spirit! Is this Book true? What matters it though every Tom Fool says that it is a lie! Let Tom Fools say that if they will, but it is true, and hold you to it! If God the Holy Spirit has taught you to trust in Christ, trust in Christ no matter what other people do. What? Do you live on the breath of other men's nostrils? Do you count heads and then jump with the larger number? Is that your way? Why, surely such a man as that is hardly worth saving! Is he a man, or is he not a cat that must look before he jumps? No, if you are a man, and you believe in Christ, stand up for Christ—

"Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!

You soldiers of the Cross!

Lift high His royal banner—

It must not suffer loss!

From victory unto victory

His army shall He lead,

Till every foe is vanquished,

And Christ is Lord, indeed!

Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!

The trumpet call obey.

Forth to the mighty conflict,

In this His glorious day!

You that are men, now serve Him,

Against unnumbered foes;

Your courage rise with danger,

And strength to strength oppose." And when the many turn aside, stand the more boldly and the more confidently, for your confidence and boldness are all the more needed at such a time. Your Lord did not forsake His grand errand when all men forsook Him. Do not renounce your lifework and your faith, even though all others should renounce theirs.

Next, with your Master, believe that God is All-Sufficient. Read this—"You shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because"—what? "Because there will be half-a-dozen of you faithful"? No. "Because three of you will cling to Me"? No. "Because the Father is with Me." Oh, we do not count as we should! There is a million against you. Is God for you? Well, then, you are in the majority! What, after all, is a million, but one and so many ciphers? Trust in God and let the millions

go their way. God is enough! When he that spoke in the academy found everybody leaving him in his speaking except Plato, he still kept on. Someone said, "Speaker, you have no audience but Plato." "No audience but Plato?" he said, "Plato is enough for 50 orators!" So, truly, if you have no other Helper but God, stand where you are—for God is not only enough for you, but for all the faithful, weak as we may be!

Next, learn another lesson. Rest in God, despite appearances. Are you very poor? Are you weak? Are you slandered? Are you scourged with God's heaviest rod? Yet kick not at Him any more than your Lord did! He said, "The Father is with Me," even though He had to cry, "Why have You forsaken Me?" Believe Him when you can not see Him! Believe Him when He smiles not! Believe Him when He frowns. Believe Him when He smites. Believe Him when He slays, for that is the climax of it all, to say like Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is His to do what He likes. It is mine to trust Him—let Him do as He wills! I throw my arms about my God and say, "My God, my God," even when no sensible joys are felt—and I am obliged to walk by faith.

Lastly, struggling child of God, standing firm for the Truth of God and the right, expect that your trouble will not last long. Did you notice how Christ puts it, "Behold, the hour comes"? Only an hour! "Behold, the hour comes." It is not a year, Brother, it is not a year. It is not a month. It is not a day—it is but an hour. "The hour comes." To Christ it was certainly a long hour when He hung upon the Cross, but He calls the whole period from the bloody sweat to the death on the Cross, "the hour." It is the part of faith to shorten days to hours. It is your part, tonight, to remember that if you have to suffer and to stand alone for Christ, it is but for an hour. How willingly have we waited when it has been but for an hour! How cheerfully have we gone on in the dark when we have known that it was only for an hour! Our trial is but for an hour! Literally, before another hour strikes, some of us may be with God—but whether it is so with us, or not, we may still sing—

"Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose, They only make Heaven more sweet at the close. Come joy or come sorrow, whate'er may befall, An hour with my God will make up for them all."

But if not literally only an hour, yet certainly the longest reign of persecution is but short. It is soon over when we once get Home. I think that it will help to make a merry holiday in the land that flows with milk and honey, to sit one of these days by one of those rippling streams and say, "I remember when so-and-so forsook me and I stood fast by the Truth of God as I knew it and believed it. They all forsook me and it did seem hard to bear at the time, but my loneliness did not last long, it was soon over—and when the Lord said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant'—it did not seem, then, that it had been an hour, but only the blinking of an eye, or as when, in the night, the candle is blown out and lighted again by its own smoke, so short was the time of darkness."

So it shall seem in Heaven as if we never had suffered anything for Christ. The martyr shall go in the red-hot chariot from the stake—and when he gets to Heaven, he will have forgotten that he burned to death, in the exceeding joy of beholding his Master! It is but an hour and we shall meet before the golden Throne of God and stand upon the sea of glass, and sing forever, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father—to Him be Glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON JOHN 16:16-33.

Verse 16. A little while and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father. Remember that the disciples were on the verge of great trouble. Their Leader and Friend

was about to be taken away from them by a cruel death. They were to be tried as they had never been tried before. The Savior, therefore, prepared their minds for the trial. I have often noticed that before a great trouble comes, the Spirit of God secretly comforts

in a very remarkable manner those who are to be tried. Perhaps, tonight, without knowing it, we may be near some great affliction or sorrow. If so, may the Lord store us with comfort and strength for the coming hour of need!

17, 18. There said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said, therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? We cannot tell what He says. It was only too plain. We often do not understand our Master because we imagine that there is some deep significance in His Words when their meaning lies upon the very surface. If you would understand the Gospel as you understand the common talk of life, it would be wise. If we could but bring men to believe God as a child believes its mother—practically and really—then their salvation would be a very simple and speedy matter.

19. 20. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice. Sometimes the world appears to have the best of it. Its mouth is full of laughter while the child of God cannot speak for sorrow. Ah, well, there is time enough for a change. We may very well let those laugh today who will have to gnash their teeth forever! Judge not God by your present circumstances. Take the rough with the smooth. Be willing to go to Heaven up the bleak side of the hill.

20. And you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. So, the more of it the better! If your sorrow is to be turned into joy, then the more sorrow, the more joy! Happy is he who endures trial, since his trial is to be turned into happiness!

21. 22. A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And you now therefore have sorrow. But your sorrow is the pang of life.

22. But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you. The joy that comes by sorrow in connection with Christ is the joy of which we shall never be bereaved. Let us thank God that there is a joy which no man can take away. Happy are they who have it!

23. And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. This is a grand promise! If we dare ask in the name of Christ and it is not everything that we could ask for in His name—if our petition is such that we honestly judge that we may put Christ's name to it, if it is a thing that Christ would have asked, if it is a thing that Christ could have asked—let us ask in Christ's name, and the Father will give it!

24. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. You have not been bold enough. You have asked a few petty things, but you have never fully made use of Christ's name. How many Christians have never learned to pray in the name of Christ! They say at the end of their petition, "For Christ's sake." That is good as far as it goes. I may ask a man to give me such and such a thing for the sake of another—that is good pleading so far as it goes. But if I dare to use the authority that my friend gives me to put his name at the

bottom of my request, that is another and a higher thing! To ask in the name of Christ, to plead under His authority—this is to pray, indeed!

24. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. "That your joy may be full"—a ripe joy, a joy that fills your being, that sparkles in your eyes, dances in your feet, leaps in your heart—an unutterable, inexpressible joy! "That your joy may be full."

25, 26. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time comes when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day you shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. Though that is true,

27. For the Father Himself loves you. What a delightful little sentence! "The Father Himself loves you."

27. Because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. God's first love to us is from Himself. There is another love that grows in His heart because of our love to His Son. You love your child. The reason lies in your own heart. After a while, that dear, loving, affectionate child has won a farther place in your affection, and you love him because of his choice and special love to you. Remember that Psalm, "Because He has set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he has known My name." Our love of God wins from Him another love of a

different sort, although it comes from the same Fountain as the first—"For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

28-30. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speak You plainly, and speak no proverb. Now are we sure that You know all things and need not that any more should ask You: by this we believe that You came forth from God. One does not see any reason why they should have been made so strong in faith just then. But we were not there to hear Christ's words. There is many a message which depends upon the tone and manner of the speaker for its influence over the people who hear it. When you read the story, afterwards, without the earnest manner and the living tone of the speaker, you do not see why it had such a strange effect upon his hearers. So we do not quite see here, by the calm reading of this narrative, why the disciples leaped, all of a sudden, into such confidence.

31. Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? He did not feel so sure of their faith as they did. We often think we have great heaps of the gold of faith, and it glitters very brightly, but it is not the precious metal, after all. So Jesus said, "Do you now believe?"

32. Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These poor creatures, who were so bold and so over sure, would all be runaways! If persecution were to arise in our day, I wonder how many of us would be found true men? Ah, you think you are true blue, but you would run at the first touch of water, not to mention fire! Are there not many of us who are but poor Believers? If our faith were sharply tried, would it stand the test?

33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Christ wants His disciples to have peace. Are you fretting tonight? Are you afraid of Monday? Are you fearful about the trials of the week? Christ wants you to be at peace! Be quiet. Be quiet. Let all be still within your heart and wait your Father's will. "In the

world you shall have tribulation." On God's threshing floor the flail will be kept going. If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings—and good soldiers of Jesus Christ must expect to pass through the same experience. As long as you are here, you will be tried—"In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Think of that! The Christ who is about to sweat great drops of blood and to die on the Cross of Calvary, says, "I have overcome." It is not Julius Caesar's, "Veni, vidi, vici," but it is Christ's, "Veni, vidi, vici"—"I came, I saw, I conquered." "I have overcome."

And as He has overcome, so shall you, if you are His true follower!

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