

One of the Master's Choice Sayings

by C.H. Spurgeon

You need not depart from Christ, because He is always available to provide strength, comfort, and guidance in all circumstances.

Duration: 39:28

Scripture: Psalm 73:26, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 14:16, John 6:37, Romans 8:35, Revelation 3:4

Topics: "Faith And Strength", "Overcoming Adversity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that as believers, we should not be burdened by excessive serving or suffering. Our surroundings should not have control over us, but rather, we should have control over them. Through Christ's love, we are called to be more than conquerors in all things. The preacher encourages the audience not to depart from Christ because of any circumstances or challenges they may face. He reminds them that many others have faced difficult circumstances and yet remained steadfast in their faith. The strength that was given to those who came before us is also available to us. The preacher addresses the concerns of the audience, assuring them that no matter where they live or what they endure, they can still remain close to Christ. He emphasizes that being busy and engaged in work is not a disadvantage, as Satan is often far from those who are occupied. Even in the most arduous of tasks, we can find rest and strength in drawing near to the Lord. The preacher also addresses the issue of wealth, acknowledging that it can often lead people away from Christ. However, he reminds the few wealthy saints that they too can remain close to Christ and that riches do not have to hinder their relationship with Him. He encourages them to not let the responsibilities and burdens of wealth distract them from their fellowship with the Lord. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of remaining steadfast in our faith regardless of our circumstances, and the availability of God's strength and grace to help us overcome any challenges we may face.

Transcript

The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, one of the Master's Choice Sayings, a sermon published on Thursday, June 27th, 1907, delivered by C. H. Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. Matthew 14, verse 16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart.

Of course, the Master was right, but he appeared to speak unreasonably. It seemed self-evident that the people very much needed to depart. They had been all day long hearing the preacher, the most of them had not broken their fast, and they were ready to faint for hunger.

The only chance of their being fed was to let them break up into small parties and forage for themselves among the surrounding villages. But our Lord declared that there was no necessity for them to go away from him, even though they were hungry and famished and in a desert place. Now, if there was no necessity for hungry hearers to go away, much less will it ever be needful for loving disciples to depart from him.

If these who were hearers only and the bulk of them were nothing more, a congregation collected by curiosity and held together by the charm of his eloquence and by the renown of his miracles, if these needed not to depart, much less need they depart who are his own friends and companions, his chosen and beloved. If the crowds needed not through hunger to depart bodily, much less need any of the saints depart spiritually from their Lord. There is no necessity that our communion with Christ should ever be suspended.

To walk with Christ from morn till eve in him to breathe, in him to live, is no mere wish, no visionary's prayer. It may be realized. We need not depart from Jesus.

There is no need that the spouse of should wander from beneath the banner of his love. Mary may always sit at Jesus' feet. There is no law which says to holy fellowship, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.

Here shall thy communion cease. There is no set hour when the gate of communion with Christ must inevitably be closed. We may continue to come up from the wilderness, leaning upon the we need not depart.

Yet is it so commonly thought to be a matter of course that we should wonder from our Lord that I shall ask for strength from heaven to combat the injurious opinion. Brethren and sisters in Christ, there is no present necessity for your departing from Christ. At this moment, we may truthfully say of all the saints of God, they need not depart.

There is nothing in your circumstances which compels you to cease from following hard after your Lord. You are very poor, you say, but you need not depart from Christ because of penury. For in the depths of distress, the saints have enjoyed the richest, richest presence of their once houseless Lord.

Your poverty may be pinching you at this very moment. To be relieved from that pinch, you need not break away from Jesus. For fellowship with him may be maintained under the direst extremity of want.

Indeed, your need increases your necessity to walk closely with your Lord so that patience may have its perfect work and your soul may be sustained by the mighty consolations which flow out of nearness to Jesus. Want shall not separate the soul from communion with him who hungered in the wilderness and thirsted on the cross. You tell me that in order to relieve your necessities, you are compelled to exercise great care and anxiety.

But all the cares which are useful and allowable are such as will allow the continuance of fellowship with Christ. You may care as much as you ought to care, and I need not say how little that is, and yet you need not depart from him who careth for you. But you tell me that in addition to deep thought you have to expend much labor in order to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Yes, but you need not depart from Christ for that reason. The carpenter's son is not ashamed of the sons of toil. He who wore the garment without seam does not despise the peasant's mock or the servant's apron.

Labor is no enemy to communion. Idleness is far more likely a separator of the soul from Christ. Not to the idler's inherence court did Jesus reveal himself, but to hard-working fishermen by the lake of Galilee.

If Satan is never far away from the idle, it is pretty plain that it is no disadvantage to be busy. But toil amounting to slavery may weaken the body and prostrate the spirit, but even when heart and flesh fail, the heart may call the Lord its portion. There is no service beneath the sun so arduous that you need depart from Christ in it.

But the rather, while the limbs are weary, the spirit should find its rest in drawing near to him who can strengthen the weak and give rest to the laboring and heavy laden. Do you tell me that you are rich? Aye, indeed, how often has this made men depart from Christ. Gold and the gospel seldom do agree.

Religion always sides with poverty. So said John Bunyan, and his saying is true. Too often the glitter of wealth has dazzled men's eyes so that they could not see the beauty of Christ Jesus.

But, O ye few wealthy saints, ye need not depart. The camel can go through the needle's eye, for with God all things are possible. Men have worn coronets on earth and inherited crowns in heaven.

He who was the man after God's own heart swayed a scepter. To grow rich in substance does not make it inevitable that you should become poor in grace. Do riches bring you many responsibilities and burdens, and are you so much occupied with them that your fellowship with the Lord grows slack? It should not be so.

You need not depart from him. You can bring those responsibilities and the wealth itself to Jesus, and communion with him will prevent the gold from cankering and the responsibility from involving you in sin. Very often the servant of God who ministers to the church of Christ finds so much to do in watching over the souls of others and in caring for the various wants of the flock that he is in danger of losing his own personal enjoyment of his Lord's presence.

But it need not be so. We can make all our many works subservient to our personal communion with our Lord, and as the bee flies to many flowers and gathers honey from each one, so may we, out of many forms of service, extract a sweet conformity to him who was ever about his father's business. We need not be cumbered either with much serving or with much suffering.

Our surroundings are not to be our sovereigns, but our subjects. We are in all these things to be more than conquerors through him that loved us. Brethren, you need not depart because of anything in Christ Jesus.

Those whom we love most would not desire us to be always with them and never out of their sight. A guest is very welcome, but the proverb says that after three days he is stale. A mother does not always want her child in her arms.

Its face is the epitome of beauty, but at eventide she is glad that those dear blue eyes no longer shine upon her. She is happy to lay her treasure in its cradle basket. We do not always wish for the company of those whom we compassionate.

If they will condense their request and do their errand rapidly, we are best content. But Jesus Christ says to us, his poor dependents, his crying children, ye need not depart. When we are weeping, he will lay us in his bosom and give us rest.

When we are famishing, he will entertain us at his royal table till we forget our misery. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother in this respect, for we need not in this instance heed the wise man's caution. Go not into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity, for we may at all times and seasons resort to our elder brother.

We may ask him, where dwellest thou? And when we receive his answer, we may go forth and dwell with him and make his house our home. Do you not remember his words? Abide in me. Not merely abide with me, but abide in me.

The closest contact with Christ may be maintained with the utmost constancy. Ye need not depart, ye may tarry foray. Unchanged is his heart, he invites you to stay.

He does not despise nor grow weary of you. You are fair in his eyes and most comely to view. Then wish not to roam, but abide with your Lord, since he is your home.

Go no longer abroad, lie down on his breast in unbroken repose, for there you may rest, though surrounded with foes. Secondly, no future necessity ever will arise to compel you to depart from Christ. It will always be true, ye need not depart.

You do not know what your wants will be, yet though you are no prophet, your words will be true if you affirm that no want shall ever necessarily divide you from Jesus, because your wants will rather bind you to him. It please the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. We will draw nearer to him in time of need to obtain the grace we want.

We shall never be forced to go elsewhere to find supplies for our spiritual wants. There stands another trader over the way, who fain would have you deal with him. His infallible holiness, says he styles himself.

But, ah, if you want infallibility, you need not wander from him who is the truth. And if you desire holiness, you need not withdraw from him who was the holy child Jesus. To gain all that the superstitious profess to find in Babylon, you need not depart from the son of David who reigns in Zion.

They tell us that we must confess our sins to a priest. We will stay at home and lay bare our hearts to the great high priest who sprang out of Judah and who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. They teach that we must receive absolution from one chosen from among men to forgive sins.

We go at once to him who was raised from the dead, that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. They tell us that we should continue in morning and evening prayers. We do so, and offer our matins and our vespers where no bells call us, save the bells upon our high priest's garments.

Our daily office may not be according to the use of Sarum, but it is according to the use of those who worship God in spirit and truth. They cry up their daily sacrifice of the mass, but in him who offered one sacrifice for sins forever, we find our all in all. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

You need not depart to pope or priest, church or altar, for you may rest assured that there dwells in the man Christ Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, all that your spiritual wants shall need for their supply. And on no occasion for any wants that can by any possibility arise, need you go down into Egypt for help or stay yourself on Assyria or Babylon. You will experience great trials as well as great wants.

That young man fresh from the country has come to town to live in a godless family, and last night he was laughed at when he knelt down to pray. My young friend, you need not forsake the faith, for other saints have endured severe ordeals than yours and have still rejoiced in the Lord. Yours are only the trials of cruel mockings.

They were stoned and sawn asunder, yet neither persecution nor nakedness nor sword divided them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord. Many also are those with whom God in his providence deals severely. All his waves and billows go over them.

Through much tribulation they enter the kingdom, and everything in the future forbodes multiplied adversities, but yet they need not depart from Jesus their friend. If like Paul, you should come to a place where two seas meet, if you should experience a double trouble, and if neither sun nor moon should give you cheer, yet you need not suspend but may rather deepen your fellowship with the man of sorrows. Christ is with you in the tempest-tossed vessel, and you and those who sail with you shall yet come to the desired haven.

Therefore be of good courage, and let not your hearts be troubled. The Son of God will be with you in the seven times heated furnace. He has said, When thou passest through the water, thou shalt be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. This proves to a demonstration that you need not depart from Christ in great trials. You will also encounter many difficulties between here and heaven.

Those who paint the road to glory in rose color have never trodden it. Many are the hills and dales between this Jericho and the city of the great king. Let who will be without trials, Christians will have their full share of them.

But there shall come no difficulty of any kind between here and paradise, which shall necessitate the soul's going anywhere but to her gracious Lord for guidance, for consolation, for strength, and for ought besides. Little know we of the walls to be leaped or the troops to be overcome. But we know full well that never need we part from the captain of our salvation or call in other helpers, death will probably befall us.

But we need not depart from Jesus in the hour of our departure out of this world. On the contrary, when the death do lies cold on our brow, we will sing. If ever I love thee, my Jesus, tis now.

We will say with the apostle Paul, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Straight on into eternity, and on, and on forever, that word depart never need cross our path. As never in eternity will the great judge pronounce the sentence, Depart, ye cursed, upon his saints, so never in his providence nor in the severest trial will he render it necessary that the saints should in any sense depart from him.

Never, O time, in thy darkest hour shall I need depart from him. Though round me thy blackest tempest lower, and both sun and moon grow dim, faster and faster each grief shall bind my soul to her Lord above, and all the woes that assail my mind shall drive me to rest in his love. There is no necessity then in the present, and there will be none in the future, for departing from communion with the Lord.

Thirdly, they need not depart, that is to say, no force can compel the Christian to depart from Jesus. The world can tempt us to depart, and alas, too successfully does it seduce with its fascinating blandishments. Its frowns alarm the cowardly, and its smiles delude the unwary, but none need depart.

If we have grace enough to play the man, madam bubble cannot lead us astray. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. We need not be taken in the world's traps.

There is one who can deliver us from the snare of the fowler. We are not ignorant of the devices of Satan and the temptations of the world. We are not compelled to fall from our steadfastness, and if we do so, it is our willful fault.

There is no necessity for it. Many live above the world, many in as difficult circumstances as ours. There are those in heaven who have found as hard hand to hand fighting in the spiritual life as we do, yet they were not vanquished, nor need we be, for the same strength which was given to them is available for us also.

But, saith one, you do not know where I live. Perhaps not. You do not know what I have to endure, cries another.

Most true, but I know where my Lord lived, and I have read that he endured such contradiction of sinners against himself that Paul holds him up as a pattern to all his people, yet he did not depart from holiness nor from love to you. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Perseverance to the end is possible to every believer, nay, it is promised to him, and he may have it for the seeking.

You need not depart from Christ, my young friend. The world cannot drag you from Jesus, though it may entice you. Yield not, and you shall stand, for there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.

But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Satan is a very cunning tempter of the souls of men, but though he would fain constrain you to depart from your Lord, you need not do his bidding. Satan is strong, but Christ is stronger.

His temptations are insinuating, but you are no longer in darkness that you should be deceived by him. You need not depart, even though surprising temptations should assault you unawares, it ought not to find you sleeping. Has not Christ said, What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch? You will not be surprised if holy anxiety stands sentinel to your soul.

Prayer and watchfulness will warn you of the enemy's approach, and therefore you need not be driven to forsake your Lord. Eh, but it may be that, in addition to the world and to Satan, you are very conscious of the terrible depravity of your own heart, and indeed that is the chief ground of fear. The heart is deceitful, prone to wonder, and ready enough to depart from the living God, but you need not depart from the Master because of that.

The newborn nature takes up arms against the body of sin and death. The Holy Spirit also dwells within to conquer indwelling sin. Shall not the life which is from above subdue the natural death? Shall not the Spirit of God purge out the old leaven? You need not depart from Jesus.

It is true that you have a fiery temper, but it must not prevail. There is a cure for that plague. Perhaps we are inclined to levity, but we need not let our frivolous nature reign.

Grace can overcome it, and well, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. There is no unconquerable sin. There is no day gone that shall not be broken in the presence of the ark of God.

There is no temple of the Philistines which shall not fall beneath the might of our greater Samson. We need not, as the result of temperament or because of any sin that doth so easily beset us, depart from Jesus, for grace is equal to all emergencies. Do you call to mind that there may be another force employed beside that of the world or of Satan or the corruption within, namely the lamentable coldness of the Christian church? Truly it is to be feared that more have departed from close walking with Christ through the chilliness of inconsistent professors than from almost any other cause.

Newborn children of God too often feel the atmosphere of the church to be as freezing as that of an ice well. Their holy warmth of zeal is frozen, and their limbs are stiffened into a rigor of inactivity, so that it is a marvel that they do not die. And die they would were not the spiritual life immortal and eternal.

But, brethren, even in the midst of the coldest church we need not depart from a near and elevated fellowship with the Lord. The church of Rome is a church defiled with air and debased with superstition. But was there ever a nobler Christian woman in this world than Madame de la Mothe-Gaon? She did not depart from Christ, though in the midst of a pestilent atmosphere.

Remember too the names of Jansenius and Arnold and Pascal and Fenelon, which are an honor to the universal church of Christ. Whoever walked in closer communion with Christ than those holy men did. In the midst of the darkest ages there have shone forth the brightest stars.

And John wrote by inspiration, Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. Often am I told by some brother in a country village where the minister seems to have gone to sleep twenty years ago and has never awakened since, that he finds it very hard to rejoice in the Lord for his Sabbaths are a burden instead of a joy. My dear brother, you need all the more grace if this is your case.

You must have more vitality within if you see so much death without. You need not depart from Christ. On the contrary, by becoming an example of living near to Christ yourself, you may be the means of quickening others.

For thank God, grace is contagious as well as sin. At any rate, it is certain that though many influences may seduce us, no force can compel us to depart from Jesus. No power in earth or hell can force me to depart.

Christ is my strength unconquerable. He fortifies my heart. Fixed in his love I stand and none shall drive me thence.

Enclosed I am within the hand of love's omnipotence. Regarded from another point, our text may teach us that there is no impossibility in keeping close to the beloved. Many believers think that if they have fellowship every now and then with Jesus, with long intervals between, they are quite as much advanced as they need be and have probably reached as far as human nature is ever likely to go.

An affectation of superfine godliness is suspicious, but at the same time a higher standard of religion than is commonly seen among professors at this time can be maintained and ought to be maintained. We ought to attain to such a walk with God to so calm and serene a frame that the light which shines upon our pathway shall be constant and clear. Enoch walked with God for hundreds of years, so cannot a man nowadays walk with God for twenty years? Enoch lived in the dark age of the world comparatively, so cannot we who live under the gospel dispensation continuously walk with God? Enoch begat sons and daughters and so had all the cares of a household, yet he walked with God, so cannot we who have the like cares yet still by divine grace be enabled to maintain unbroken communion of Christ? I know the places high where they stand who consciously abide in Christ, but will not you strive to climb there and bathe your foreheads in the everlasting sunlight of Jehovah's face? I know that it would require most jealous walking, but you serve a jealous God and he demands holy jealousy from you.

Oh, the joy of living in the embrace of Jesus and never departing from it. Oh, the bliss of sitting always at his feet abiding with the bridegroom and listening to his voice. Surely the gain is worth the exertion and the prize is worthy of the struggle.

Let us not, since the attainment is not impossible, murmur at the difficulty, but rather in faith let us ask that we may begin tonight to achieve the blessed result and continue to achieve it till we are privileged to see the face of Christ in heaven. Others have done so, why should not we? Brethren, the way to maintain fellowship with Christ is very simple. If you desire to retain in your mouth all day the flavor of the wines on the leaves well refined, take care that you drink deeply of them by morning devotion.

Do not waste those few minutes which you allot to morning prayer. Lay a text on your tongue and like a wafer made with honey, it shall sweeten your soul till nightfall. During the day when you can do so, think about your redeemer, his person, his work, pray to him and ask him to speak to you.

All the day long lean on the beloved. During the day serve him and constantly say, Lord, how can I best serve thee in my calling? Consecrate the kitchen, consecrate the market room, make every place holy by glorifying the Lord there. Converse much with him and it will not be impossible for you to abide in him from the years beginning to its close.

You need not depart. There is no mental or spiritual impossibility in the maintenance of unbroken communion with Christ if the Holy Spirit be your helper. Once more, we need not depart.

That is to say, there is no reason that can be imagined which would render it a wise and proper and a good thing for a Christian to depart from Christ. Suppose that the search after happiness be the great drift of our life. As the old philosophers assert, then we need not depart from Jesus to win it, for he is heaven below.

If you desire pleasure, forget not that the pleasures of God which are in Christ, his joy, the joy that fills his great heart, are more than enough to fill your heart. I sometimes hear people say as an excuse for professors going to doubtful places of amusement, you know, they must have some recreation. Yes, I know.

But the recreation which the Christian experienced when he was born again has so completely made all things new to him that the vile rubbish called recreation by the world is so vapid to him that he might as well try to fill himself with fog as to satisfy his soul with such utter vanity. No, the Christian finds happiness in Christ Jesus, and when he wants pleasure, he does not depart from Jesus. Perhaps it is said that we

require a little excitement now and then, for excitement gives a little fillip to life, and it is useful to it as stirring is to a fire.

I know it, and I trust you may have excitement, for the medicinal power of a measure of exhilaration and excitement is great, but you need not depart from Christ to get it, for there is such a thing as the souls dancing at the sound of his name while all the sanctified passions are lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Holy mirth will sometimes so bubble up and overflow in the soul that the man will say with Paul, whether in the body I cannot tell or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth. Joy in Christ can rise to ecstasy and soar aloft to bliss.

If you desire to wear the highest crown of joy, you need not depart from Christ, but it is said we require food for our intellect. A man needs to develop his intellectual faculties. He must needs learn that which will enlarge and expand his mind, certainly by all manner of means.

But, O beloved brother, you need not depart from Christ to get this, for the science of Christ crucified is the most excellent, comprehensive, and sublime of all the sciences. It is the only infallible science in the circle of knowledge. Moreover, by all true science you will find Christ honoured and not dishonoured, and your learning, if it be true learning, will not make you depart from Christ, but lead you to see more of his creating and ruling wisdom.

The profoundest astronomer admires the son of righteousness. The best-taught geologist has no quarrel with the rock of ages. The greatest adept in mathematics marvels at him who is the sum total of the universe.

He who knows the most of the physical, if he knows aright, loves the spiritual and reverences God in Christ Jesus. To imagine that to be wise one needs forsake the incarnate wisdom is insanity. No, to reach the highest degree of attainment in true learning there is no reason for departing from Christ.

We must have friends and acquaintances, says one. You need not depart from Christ to get them. We admit that a young woman does well to enter the marriage state.

A young man is safer and better for having a wife. But, my dear young friends, you need not break Christ's law and depart from him in order to find a good husband or a good wife. His rule is that you should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

It is a wise and kind rule and is an assistance rather than a hindrance to a fit marriage. But, says one, I do not intend to depart from Christ though I am about to marry an unconverted person. Rest assured that you are departing from Jesus by that act.

I have never yet met with a single case in which marriages of this kind have been blessed of God. I know that young woman say, do not be too severe, sir. I shall bring him round.

You will certainly fail. You are sinning in marrying under that idea. If you break Christ's law, you cannot expect Christ's blessing.

To be happy in future life with a suitable partner, you need not depart from Jesus. There is nothing in life you can want that is truly desirable, nothing that can promote your welfare, nothing that is really good for you that can ever make it necessary for you to depart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if this be true, do not some of us feel very guilty? I could weep to think that I have so often departed from close fellowship

with my Lord and Master when I need not have done it.

I am cast down and weary and cumbered with much serving occasionally. I know my faith is in Christ, but I have not the calm, unstaggering faith I desire to have. But I know that with a thousand cares, and I have ten thousand, I need not for a moment lose serenity and peace of mind if I can reach the place which by God's grace I will reach yet.

Do you not feel ashamed that your family troubles and perhaps your family joys have taken you off from your Saviour? Some of you have a great deal of leisure, and yet you slide away from Christ. Let us be ashamed together. But let us remember that while this verse stands true, if we have departed from Christ and the enjoyment of His fellowship, we can offer no excuse by saying that we could not help it.

We do it willfully. We do it sinfully. It is not to be thrust on the back of circumstances.

It cannot be laid on the devil, nor blame to this, nor blame to that. It is our own fault. We need not depart.

There never was any need for it, and there never will be. May God's grace descend mightily upon us, so that we may henceforth abide in our Lord. May those who know Him not be led to seek Him by faith even now, and find Him, and then even they shall not need to depart from Him at the last.

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