

Taking Time to Wait on God - Part 2

by Derek Prince

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on God, recognizing Jesus as the head of our lives, and being led by the Holy Spirit, and encourages listeners to trust and obey God's initiative in their lives.

Duration: 33:19

Scripture: Psalm 118:13-18, Matthew 6:33, John 15:4-5, Romans 8:14, Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 2:19, Hebrews 12:6

Topics: "Church Growth", "Spiritual Dependence"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the four main functions of a head in relation to the body. The first function is to receive input, where every part of the body has the right to communicate with the head. The second function is to make decisions, as the head decides what the body is to do. The third function is to initiate action, emphasizing the importance of taking the initiative. Lastly, the head coordinates the activity of the members to carry out its decisions. The speaker also highlights the significance of our relationship with Jesus and the church, emphasizing the need to dwell in His presence and rely on Him for growth and effective functioning. The sermon references Ephesians 4:15-16 to emphasize the dependence of the body on the head for growth and edification.

Transcript

This is tape number I-4347. Derek Prince speaks on the subject, Building Christian Character. This message is entitled, Taking Time to Wait on God.

So we're going to make a confession, or a proclamation, which really is our testimony, summed up briefly. Taken from Psalm 118, verses 13 through 18. Now, the words that started are addressed to the enemy.

They're not addressed to God. So, don't be surprised. You pushed me violently that I might fall, but the Lord helped me.

The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly.

The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death. How many of you anticipate the Lord's chastening? The Bible says He chastens every son whom He receives. If you are without

chastening, you're not a true son, you're illegitimate.

As I've said, we've been through some real hard struggles. We're not the only ones. We know that many of you here have been through them too.

We were in New Zealand about three years ago for some meetings. And we were meeting with our international directors. And Ruth and I were located in a motel.

And she was having the most intense intestinal pain. And I was there kind of not knowing what to do. And she began talking to the Lord.

And she said, Lord, I commit the family to you. Then she said, Lord, I commit the ministry to you. Then she said, Lord, I commit Derek to you.

And I thought to myself, I'd better do something quickly. And I phoned some brothers. And they came around immediately and prayed.

And Ruth was raised up, but she was really at death's door at that moment. Later on, God directed us to take a sabbatical of six months in Hawaii. And we went on this sabbatical with great anticipations of a wonderful time.

In the beautiful climate of Hawaii. In a condominium that we owned just above the Pacific. And we envisaged Bible study and prayer and fellowship.

Turned out to be some of the hardest months of our lives. In the course of it, I became progressively more and more sick. And the doctors really couldn't discover what was wrong with me.

And eventually, a clever doctor diagnosed what's called subacute bacterial endocarditis. And it ceased to be subacute after a while. And I ended up spending 17 days in the hospital.

And six weeks on intravenous antibiotics. And it may not sound spiritual, but I thank God for antibiotics. You know that? There was a time in my life, many years ago, when I thought I'd never need medicine.

God deliver me from that pride. We went there because we felt we'd come to the end of one phase of our ministry. And I'd handed over the administration of the ministry to my son-in-law.

And we wanted to know what God had for us next in our lives. And so we thought if we give him six months, that will be wonderful. And it seemed a very long time to us to take six months away from ministry.

Well, at the end of six months we had heard nothing from God about our future. He had spent all that time dealing with problems in us. That prevented us from being ready to hear and respond to what he had to say next.

I don't intend to go into detail. But if a preacher speaks about problems. People always conclude it's one or other of three things.

It's either immorality or alcohol or misappropriation of funds. That was not it. But there are plenty of other ways that Christians can block God's purpose for their lives.

And I have a deep concern for all of you here tonight. I watched you enjoying the pageant and rejoicing in the beautiful music. But to tell you the truth, I'm confident that many of you are not where you ought to be

with God right now.

Statistically, I think that's absolutely sure. And so, my desire is to help you. Not to accuse you.

Not to condemn you. But to help you. After we've come through this period.

A dear brother in the Lord said this to me. He said, your decision to take a sabbatical saved your life. Because if you had gone on traveling and ministry.

You wouldn't have had the opportunity to have the close medical supervision. That eventually discovered your problem. You would have died.

And I want to say to some of you. It could well be that if you go on being as busy as you are. With as little time for waiting on God as you have.

You will die. When you don't need to. The gospel is a serious message.

It's a message of life and death. Now, the theme that was allotted for this conference. Was dwelling in His presence.

Because I was away in Israel and in Britain. I didn't get the theme. But I felt the Lord gave me a message.

And had I known the theme. It couldn't have been better suited to the message. I want to speak tonight for a while.

On something that I think is radically out of place. In the body of Christ. I'm not saying in every part of the body of Christ.

But in most of the body of Christ. There is something that is out of place. And it's a very important part of the body.

It's the head. In Ephesians 1. The last two verses. God says.

That He put all things under the feet of Jesus. And gave Him to be head over all things. To the church which is His body.

There's an interesting difference in language. God put all things under the feet of Jesus. They were subjected.

But when it relates to the position of Christ. He gave Christ. The most wonderful gift He could give.

It was not subjection. It was not domination. It was the most precious and wonderful blessing.

That He could offer to the body. Was to have Jesus as head. And He's head over all things.

Not over a few things. Not over most things. But over all things.

And I'm going to deal in a moment. With the functions of a head. But I just want to ask you right now.

Could you honestly say. In the presence of God. Jesus is head over everything in my life.

There's nothing that's outside His control. There's nothing which is not the expression of His determined will for me. In Ephesians 4. Verses 15 and 16.

Paul writes and it's the middle of one of his long sentences. He says. Speaking the truth in love.

Or being honest in love. We may grow up in all things. Into Him who is the head.

Christ. From whom the whole body joined and knit together. By what every joint supplies.

According to the effective working. By which every part does its share. Causes growth of the body.

For the edifying of itself in love. Notice the whole body depends on the head. And it's only through its relationship to the head.

That the body derives nourishment. And is able to grow and function effectively. If the relationship to the head is impaired.

The whole life of the body is automatically impaired. And then in Colossians. Chapter 2. And verses 18 and 19.

Paul says. Let no one defraud you of your reward. Or let no one disqualify you.

Would be a better word. Don't lose what God intends you to have. But this person who defrauds.

Takes delight in false humility and worship of angels. Intruding into those things which he has not seen. Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

What I would call a super spiritual person. Who claims to be super spiritual. But that's actually very carnal.

And Paul says. Don't let such a person deceive you. And cheat you out of your rightful inheritance.

And then he says of such a person. In the next verse. Verse 19.

Not holding fast to the head. From whom all the body. Nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments.

Grows with the increase which is from God. The NIV says. Having lost connection with the head.

As soon as we lose connection with the head. We are headed for error. Some form of deception.

Some kind of false teaching. Something that is out of line with the truth of God. The only condition of safety.

For the body. Collectively. For each believer.

Individually. Is to be rightly related to the head. Every true believer.

Has a divinely prepared. Direct connection with the head. Jesus Christ.

Let no one ever interfere. With your personal connection. With the head.

Pastors are wonderful people. But they cannot take the place of Jesus. The function of a pastor is not to be your head.

It's to help you cultivate your relationship. With the one who is your head. It's not to tell you the answers to all your problems.

It's to show you how to find the answer for yourself from Jesus. Some people are lazy. They just want some human being to solve all their problems.

It doesn't work that way. And some leaders are despotic. They want to take control of people.

I've been through all that. And thank God I've come out of it. And I have no desire to be in it again.

You have to have your own personal relationship with Jesus. You have to be able to hear him speak to you. You have to be able to be directed by him.

You have to have something inside you. That tells you when he's pleased. And when he's not pleased.

You have to be sensitive to the head. Now I want to speak about four functions of a head. This is not a lesson in physiology.

I'm not competent to give one. These are just simple practical perspectives. In my way of thinking.

A head or the head has four main functions. First of all to receive input. Every part of the body has a right to communicate with the head.

And the head receives communication. Number two to make decisions. The head decides what the body is to do.

Number three to initiate action. And the key word is initiative. Because the one who takes the initiative is the head.

And number four. Having taken the initiative to coordinate the activity of the members. Carrying out the decision of the head.

I'll say those just once again. Because I want you to be considering your own relationship with Jesus. And also considering the relationship of the body, the church.

As you know it today here in America. All right here are the four functions. Number one to receive input.

Number two to make decisions. Number three to initiate action. And again I want to say the word initiative.

Is a key word. And number four to coordinate the activity of the other members. As they carry out the decision of the head.

Now in the body of Jesus Christ, the church. The headship of Jesus is effective only through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the only means by which Jesus can communicate with the body.

Direct the body, control the body and preserve the body. So we are talking not merely about a relationship with Jesus. But what goes with that a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

I'll give you just a few of many scriptures along that line. In John chapter 16 verses 12 through 15. Jesus is taking farewell of his disciples.

And he says, I still have many things to say to you. But you cannot bear them now. However, when he the Spirit of truth has come.

He will guide you into all truth. So Jesus is saying, I can't tell you everything you need to know now. You're not in a condition to receive anymore.

You're already overwhelmed by what I've told you. But that doesn't matter. Because the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit is coming.

And he will guide you. He will take over from me your direction. It's interesting that the translation says.

When he the Spirit of truth has come. Because the original text is Greek. Those of you that know anything about genders.

There are three genders in Greek. Masculine, feminine and neuter. He, she or it.

Now the Greek word for spirit, pneuma is neuter. So the normal pronoun would be it. But the rules of grammar are broken.

To put in the pronoun he. Why? To emphasize the Holy Spirit is a person. He's not just something.

He is someone. And you can't relate rightly to the Holy Spirit. If you merely relate to him as an it.

He's a he. He's a person. God the Father is a person.

Jesus Christ the Son is a person. And the Holy Spirit is a person. And Jesus says from this time forward.

My relationship with you. Will be affected through the Holy Spirit. And then he goes on to say.

For he will not speak from himself. But whatever he hears he will speak. And he will tell you things to come.

I believe the church. Should have direction concerning the future. Supernatural direction.

From the Holy Spirit. Not everything. But the things we need to know.

My personal view of the world situation. Is that the church that goes into the future. Without the Holy Spirit to guide.

Is going into disaster. I think we have only just glimpsed. The troubles and the pressures.

That are coming on the whole world. And not least on the United States of America. And we are going to need the Holy Spirit.

To warn us of things that are going to happen. So we won't be in the wrong place at the wrong time. One of the prayers that Ruth and I pray continually.

Is to be always in the right place at the right time. But only the Holy Spirit can make that possible. Then it says in verse 14.

He the Holy Spirit will glorify me. And please note. That's one distinctive mark of the Holy Spirit.

There's a whole lot of things in the charismatic movement. Which are said to be the work of the Holy Spirit. But they lack the mark of glorifying Jesus.

Anything that exalts a human personality. Is not from the Holy Spirit. It may be spiritual.

But it's not from the Holy Spirit. Bear that in mind. Whatever the Holy Spirit does.

His ultimate aim is always to glorify Jesus. If Jesus is not in the center of the stage. The scenario was not from the Holy Spirit.

That's enough I think of that passage. Let's go on to Romans 8 verse 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God.

These are sons of God. The word there is not a child. But a grown-up son.

How can you live as an adult Christian? There's only one way. To be regularly led by the Spirit of God. That's what we call in English a continuing present tense.

Those who are regularly or continually led by the Spirit of God. They are sons of God. And some of the people who talk most about the Holy Spirit.

Know least about being led by him. I've been a Pentecostal for more than 50 years. I'm not ashamed of it.

I thank God for Pentecostals. I owe my salvation to them. But the people who say.

Well I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1986. And I spoke in tongues. And that's it.

Are probably far out of touch with the Holy Spirit today. It's not a one-time experience. It's an ongoing relationship.

2nd Corinthians 3. 17. Now the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is.

There is liberty. The Lord in the New Testament. Is equivalent to the sacred name Jehovah.

Or whatever you want to call it. In the Old. So not merely is God the Father Lord.

Not merely is Jesus Christ the Son Lord. But the Holy Spirit is Lord. He himself is God.

And where he is Lord. There is liberty or freedom. Again with my background in Pentecostalism.

I've seen the snare that many fall into. And charismatics just follow them. Assuming that because you got blessed.

Through dancing and jumping last time. Every time you want to get blessed. You have to dance and jump.

Brothers and sisters that's not liberty. That's bondage. Liberty is doing what the Holy Spirit directs.

At any given time. In any given place. And there's a lot of variety in the Holy Spirit.

He's got more than one act. And then in Ephesians 2. Two verses. Verse 18.

Verse 22. For through him. That's Jesus.

We both. That's Jews and Gentiles. Have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Notice all three persons of the Godhead there. Through Jesus. By the Spirit.

To the Father. That's the way up. Verse 22.

In whom. That's in Jesus. You also are being built together.

For a habitation or a dwelling place of God. In the Spirit. So in Jesus.

God dwells us. Dwells in us by the Spirit. God indwells by the Spirit.

Those who are in Jesus. Both directions. Upward and downward.

The link is the Holy Spirit. If you miss out the Holy Spirit. There's no connection.

You can have all sorts of good doctrine. And religious activity. But if the Holy Spirit isn't there.

You have no contact with God. He is the only way. By which we can contact God.

Now. I want to discuss briefly with you. The issue of initiative.

And I want to come to the point. Where I apply it very personally. One of the words that's used again and again in the Bible.

Is the word choose or choice. And I'm not going into it doctrinally. But the truth of the matter is.

We are the product of God's choice. If God hadn't chosen us. We'd never become believers.

The initiative did not proceed from us. It came from God. How many of you know that? You didn't get saved because you were trying hard.

You got saved because God decided to save you. And if he hadn't decided to save you. You could have done whatever you like.

But you'd never been saved. That's humbling. Because it shuts us up.

To total dependence on God. Which is just what we're all afraid of. Now Jesus said to his apostles.

In John 15 verse 16. You did not choose me. But I chose you.

That's very clear isn't it. There's no doubt about that. You didn't make the choice.

I made the choice. I don't think that's the choice for salvation. That's the choice for apostleship.

He said I've chosen you twelve. And then he said one of you is a devil. That's a remarkable thing to say isn't it.

That's something to ponder over. But we won't go into it. Then he said you did not choose me.

But I chose you and appointed you. Or placed you. That you should go and bear fruit.

And that your fruit should remain. That whatever you ask the Father in my name. He may give you.

I understand from that. That the only enduring fruit. Proceeds out of the choice of God.

Only that which God has chosen. Will produce enduring fruit. You can have all sorts of religious elections.

And programs in the church. And religious activities. But if God didn't initiate them.

There will be no permanent fruit whatever. And then Jesus also said. And whatever you ask the Father in my name.

He may give you. You understand that. To be able to pray effectively.

To the Father. Proceeds out of the choice of God. We can pray all sorts of prayers.

But if they don't proceed out of the choice of God. Then we have no assurance that God will answer them. I sense myself.

I mean this is my impression. That God is urgently dealing with the church in the United States. To bring us back to the place.

Where we realize our total dependence on God. I think we've had a measure of success in the charismatic movement. I wouldn't call it a movement any longer.

Because I don't think it's moving. But we have had a measure of success. But we've forgotten.

That it all came from the mercy of God. We didn't deserve it. It wasn't because we were clever.

Or spiritual. Or well educated. Or country hicks.

It wouldn't matter. So initiative is expressed through choice. So the only things, as I understand it, in our lives.

Where God is really involved. Are the things which God has chosen. I think that applies to marriage.

If you're considering getting married. My advice to you would be. Marry the person of God's choice.

Find out. Don't make your own decision. I've been married twice.

My first wife is with the Lord. My second wife is here with me. My first marriage lasted 30 years.

And our present marriage has lasted 14 years. Both have been happy and successful. And not a lot of people can say that in the world today.

The reason is. God chose. I didn't.

I've never chosen a wife. I'm not saying everybody has to have it that way. But that's the way it was with me.

God knew I wasn't intelligent enough to make the right choice. I say that sincerely. When it comes to abstract reasoning.

I'm successful. When it comes to understanding people. I'm at a loss.

So God. Very. Directly.

Intervened and overruled in each situation. And in neither instance was I trying to get married. I don't know.

Listen. Young women and young men. I've never dated.

But I've been married happily twice. You don't have to date in order to get married. And that applies to older people too.

I'm not saying it's wrong to date. But don't depend on dating. Depend on God.

So we turn to Acts chapter 1. Just before the day of Pentecost. The eleven remaining apostles. Had assembled in Jerusalem with a lot of other people.

But then there was one missing. Because there had to be twelve. I really don't know exactly why there had to be twelve.

But there had to be twelve. Because there were going to be twelve foundations in the new Jerusalem. And twelve gates to the city.

And anyhow. So the apostles knew. They needed one more.

Because Judas had dropped out. So. Peter says.

He's the leader. In Acts 1 verse 21. Therefore of these men who have accompanied us all the time.

With the Lord Jesus. Who went in and out among us. Beginning from the baptism of John.

To that day when Jesus was taken up from us. One of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection. So there's certain basic qualifications.

There had to be people who had been present. All through the ministry of Jesus. From the baptism of John.

To his resurrection. They had to be people who had witnessed him after his resurrection. Until the time of his ascension.

So they checked over the people. And they proposed two. Verse 23.

Joseph called Basabas. Who was surname Justice. And Matthias.

Now both of those. Fulfilled all the required qualifications. But only one of them.

Was chosen by God. And what was important to them. Was to find out who God had chosen.

And now this would not be considered. Spiritual in Baptist circles. Actually I think the new.

The Living Bible says they tossed a coin. Says here they drew lots. But it's the same thing.

Why? Because they've come to the point. Where their own understanding could take them no further. They knew it had to be one of the two.

They didn't know which. The thing that mattered was God's choice. How find God's choice? Well.

Draw straws. Or toss a coin. I'm telling you that.

Because I want you to see how totally different. The perspective of the early church was on this issue. What mattered was God's choice.

Any legitimate way of finding that out. Was all right. So it says they proposed two.

They prayed and said. You Lord who know the hearts of all. Show which of these two you have chosen.

To take part in this ministry. And they cast their lots. And the lot fell on Matthias.

And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. He became the twelfth apostle. But you see the thrust of everything.

In the whole area of apostleship. From the choice of Jesus. To the choice of Matthias.

Was God's choice. Because God's choice. Expresses God's initiative.

And God's initiative. Expresses God's headship. And anytime we take the initiative.

Out of the hands of God. We have shut off the headship of Jesus. We have been actually extremely presumptuous.

May God forgive us. Basically I think the church. Is going to have to come on its face.

Before God and say. God we have been totally presumptuous. And we repent.

And we ask you to forgive us. Please stop your machine at this point. And turn the tape over.

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