

The Imitation of Christ

by Thomas a Kempis

The sermon emphasizes the importance of resigning oneself to God's will, trusting in His providence, and committing to His plan for true freedom and peace.

Scripture: Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 16:24, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas a Kempis preaches about the importance of forsaking oneself and fully surrendering to God in order to experience great peace and freedom in heart. He emphasizes the need to constantly resign from self and seek God's will in all things, without exceptions or reservations, to truly please God and grow in virtue. Kempis also highlights the significance of seeking counsel from God in all situations, turning inwardly to the heart for help through prayer, and committing all things to God's disposal for ultimate profit and well-being.

Transcript

Son, forsake thyself and thou shalt find me. Stand without choice and without all manner of self and thou shalt win ever; for anon, as thou hast resigned thyself and not taken thyself again, then shall be thrown to thee more grace.

Lord, how oft shall I resign myself and wherein shall I forsake myself?

Ever and in every hour, as in little, so in great. I out-take (except) nothing but in all things I will find thee made bare: else, how canst thou be mine and I thine, unless thou be deprived outwardly and inwardly from all thine own will? The more swiftly that thou lost this the better it shall be with thee; and the more plainly and clearly it is done the more shalt thou please me and the more thou shalt win.

Some resign, but with some exception, for they trust not fully to God; wherefore they labour to provide for themselves. Some also first offer all but afterwards through a little temptation they go again to their own selves and therefore profit not in virtue. Then folk come not to true liberty of heart, nor to the grace of my jocund familiarity except with whole resignation and daily offering of themselves first being made, without which unity of fruition (pure enjoyment) standeth not, nor shall stand.

I have said to thee full oft, and yet I say again: Forsake thyself, resign of thyself and thou shalt enjoy great peace. Give all for all, seek nothing, ask nothing again; stand purely and undoubtingly in me and thou

shalt have me; thou shalt be free in heart and darkness shall not over go (overwhelm) thee. To this enforce thyself, this pray thou, this desire thou, that thou may be despoiled on all manner of self, and thou, bare, follow bare Jhesu (Jesus only) and die to thyself and live everlastingly to me. Then shall end all vain fantasies, wicked conturbations and superfluous cares; then also shall go away inordinate dread and inordinate love shall die. [Part 3, Chapter xlii]

Son, thou oughtest diligently to attend to this that in every place, every action or outward occupation thou be inwardly free and mighty in thyself and all things be under thee and thou not under them, that thou be lord and governor of thy deeds not servant, but rather exempt and a true Hebrew going in to the lot and liberty of the sons of God that stand upon these present goods and behold the everlasting that behold things transitory with the left eye and heavenly things with the right eye: whom temporal things draw not (them) to cleave to them but they rather draw such goods to serve God well with as they are ordained of God and instituted of the sovereign workman that leaveth nothing inordinate (unordered) in his creation.

Also if thou in every chance standest not in outward appearance nor with the fleshly eye turnest about to things seen or heard but anon in every cause thou enterest with Moses to ask counsel of our Lord, thou shalt hear oftentimes God's answer and thou shalt come again instructed in things present and that are to come.

Moses at all times had recourse to the tabernacle for doubts and questions to be assoiled and fled to the help of prayer for relieving of perils and for mischiefs of men. So thou oughtest to fly into the secret place of thine heart beseeching inwardly the help of God. For Joshua and the children of Israel, as it is read, were deceived of the Gibeonites, for they asked no counsel first of our Lord but giving too much credence to sweet words were deluded with a false pity.[Part 3, Chapter xliii]

Son, at all times commit to me thy cause for I shall dispose it well in convenient time. Abide mine ordinance thou shalt feel profit thereof.

Lord, right gladly I commit to thee all things for little may my thinking profit. Would God that I cleaved not over much to chances that are to come that I might offer myself to thy well-pleasing without tarrying.

Son, oftentimes a man is sore moved about a thing that he desireth; but when he is come to it, he beginneth to feel otherwise; for affections are not abiding about one thing but they be shufted from one to another. It is not therefore a little thing, yea, it is not among least things for a man to forsake himself; true profit is denying of a man's self and a man so denied is full free and full sure. But the old enemy, adversary to all good, ceaseth not from temptation but day and night he lieth in a wait if he may bring headily (headlong) the unware man into the snare of deceit.

Work therefore and pray, saith our Lord, that ye enter not into temptation.

[Part 3, Chapter xliiv]

Son, if thou set (put) thy peace in any person for thine own feeling and living together (with them) thou shalt be unstable and unpeaced (not at peace). But if thou have recourse to the truth living and abiding, the friend that goeth from thee or dieth from thee shall not make thee sorry. In me ought to stand the love of the friend and whoever seemeth good to thee and dear in this life is to be beloved --for me.

Without me friendship is not worth and may not endure: and the love is not very true or pure that I couple not. Thou oughtest to be so dead from such affections of men beloved, as in thee is; thou shouldest will to

be without man's fellowship. The further that a man goeth from all earthly solace, the more he nigheth unto God. Also the more profoundly that a man goeth down into himself and waxeth vile to himself the higher he styeth (climbeth) up to God.

He that ascribeth any good to himself, he letteth (hindreth) the coming of the grace of god into him, for the grace of the Holy Ghost seeketh ever the meek heart. If thou couldest perfectly make thyself naught and void (empty) thyself from all love of creatures then should I well into thee with great grace. When thou lookest to creatures thine affection is withdrawn from the creator.

Learn in all things to overcome thyself for thy creator and thou shalt then be able to attain to the knowledge of God. How little ever it be that is beheld and loved inordinately, it tarrieth (keepeth men) from the highest love and draweth (them) into wickedness.[Part 3, Chapter xlvii]

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