



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – February 28, 2021

To Know Christ...

So many people believe independence gives them the greatest power. A vast number see independence as the highest goal in life. Sometimes saints adopt this same mindset. This is toxic to our souls and certainly not spiritually minded. Jesus was the most wise and powerful man to ever walk the earth. (Can you solve any problem or raise the dead?) He was fully aware that He was not independent, nor self-sufficient. Listen to the words of Jesus, “**I can do nothing on My own initiative.**” (John 5:30 & 8:28) Knowing this, why do we continue thinking independence will grant us power? If we are being deceived into thinking that self-reliance and independence are the goal in this life, we have failed our Lord. Everyone needs help, no exceptions.

Even Jesus needed help and guidance throughout His life. Think about His statement, I can do NOTHING on My own initiative. How was Jesus able to live the perfect and sinless life? Was it self-reliance? No! Independence? Not that either. Perfection came through suffering. Listen to the end of Hebrews 2:10, “... **to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.**” Not self-willed determination. Do you remember the final hours of Jesus’ life? He is praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is stressed, troubled, and deeply grieved to the point of death. (Mark 14:32-36) If Jesus is to be empowered by independence, this is where he would have lost all hope, but He had the answer ... He insisted upon doing the Father’s will. (Certainly not His own self-reliant independent thinking, as we might be drawn to do.) Then God responds to His faithful Son, an angel is sent from heaven to strengthen Jesus. God the Father offers strength to His Son because Jesus is NOT self-reliant and independent. Later, as Jesus has already been scourged and beaten, His physical strength is depleting. He can no longer bear the weight of the cross He must carry. Independence would have left Him outside the bounds of help, but instead He fully submits, even when His own strength is gone. Then, God the Father uses Simon of Cyrene to help His Son carry the cross. (Mark 15:21) The same cross Jesus will soon be nailed to, suspended between heaven and earth, in full submission to His Father’s will. THAT IS POWER! The power is in submission, not independence nor self-reliance. When will the bull-headed learn this message: to no longer resist a Christ-like heart of submission over independence?

It’s time to look into our hearts and ask, do I really want to be independent? Self-sufficient? Self-reliant? Jesus was the most wise & powerful man to ever roam the earth, and He learned through submission even in the midst of suffering. That is where He was empowered by God. Hear the words of Jesus to the eleven (and us), “**I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**” (John 15:5) If we think independence will lead us to higher heights, we have tricked ourselves into thinking dead trees are thriving. If we are independent of Jesus, WE CAN DO NOTHING, even FRUITLESS! If we want to be empowered to overcome the difficulties, we must come to

know the Will of God, humbly submit, and persevere onward by His strength because God will grant the strength. He may even use other humans (like Simon of Cyrene) to help. Then through His strength and power, we will be found bearing much fruit for the Lord. When we humble ourselves under His almighty hand, He lifts us up since we are established by His strength. (1 Peter 5:6)

- Carey Terry