

If I Don't Have It Today I Don't Need It Today

Michael Durham | *illbehonest.com*

Jesus is saying - listen to Jesus: In this illustration, the vine, the branch - the branch gets what is given to it and expects nothing different. It gets what it needs. I have a saying that I preach to myself: If I don't have it today, I don't need it today. It has so liberated me. Because I know my God is good. And if I needed it today, I'd have it today. But since I didn't get it today, I didn't really need it today because He promised to meet my needs. All of my needs. All of my needs.

I don't want to make this about us, but when we were transitioning away from the pastorate into itinerant ministry, we knew that that meant no regular income, no health insurance, no place to live (because we lived in the parsonage). But we knew this was what God wanted. And I was preaching in the state of Texas a few weeks before my last Sunday in my church, and unbeknownst to me, they had a business meeting and the church voted to extend my salary and all benefits and we could live in the parsonage for one year to help us transition into this ministry. What a blessing!

Now it's the fall of the year. December is coming quickly. And my wife asked me one day, she said, "Sweetheart, what are we going to do when Oak Grove is no longer our resource?" And I said to her, "Well, sweetheart, Oak Grove has never been our resource. It's been God all along and if He won't use Oak Grove He'll find some other resource." But what she didn't know: I had the same question myself. I was just trying to act brave.

And I remember that fall a few weeks later after trying, trying to elevate my faith; trying to raise my faith to a certain level that I could believe God to financially keep us and meet our needs. The Lord convicted me and showed me my heart that I wasn't abiding. I wasn't abiding. He said to me that that spirit is the same spirit of the Pharisees. It's self-righteous. I'm looking at my faith and I'm leaving it up to me to somehow ratchet it up, get it up to an appropriate level, and when God sees that level of faith, then He'll provide my needs because He'll see my faith. Because that's all He responds to, right? Without faith, it's impossible to please God. So if I could get my faith to a certain level, God will see it. He'll be pleased. And He'll take care of us. And that is self-righteousness. Who am I to think that I can raise my faith? That I have such power to increase my faith to certain levels that God is now obligated to me? Do you see the sin that was in that? The wickedness? And the Lord showed that to me.

Here's the application: If you need a miracle tonight and it's in the Vine's will for you to have one, you'll have one. You'll have one if you trust the Vine for all you need. If you don't need a miracle, you'll not get one. And you ought to be able to rejoice with great contentment because you trust the Vine for all you need. You don't worry for one reason. Why? You're abiding. You're trusting to get only what you need and you're so confident in Him that you trust He will not fail.

Now some of you are thinking people and you've already come to the conclusion that that sounds like fatalism. Que sera sera. Whatever will be will be. No, it's not fatalism. Listen closely. The reason it isn't fatalism is because if it were God's will to display His power and grant

you a great deliverance, but you did not ask in faith, you will not receive it. Don't forget the words: "You have not because you do not ask." This is not fatalism, but a deep-seated confidence that God's will is best and that His will is your will. That is faith at its best. This is the Everest of faith.

This excerpt was taken from the full sermon: How to Abide in Christ (Part 1) by Michael Durham from the 2020 Men's Retreat.