

“YOU CAN DO NOTHING”

Jesus said: “Apart from Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5

In everything the life of the branch is to be the exact counterpart of that of the Vine. Of Himself Jesus had said: *“The Son can do nothing of Himself.”* As the outcome of that entire dependence, He could add: *“All that the Father doeth, doeth the Son also likewise.”*

As Son He did not receive His life from the Father once for all, but moment by moment. His life was a continual waiting on the Father for all He was to do. And so Christ says of His disciples: *“Ye can do nothing apart from me.”* He means it literally. To everyone who wants to live the true disciple life, to bring forth fruit and glorify God, the message comes: You can do nothing. What had been said: *“He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit,”* is here enforced by the simplest and strongest of arguments: *“Abiding in Me is indispensable, for, you know it, of yourselves you can do nothing to maintain or act out the heavenly life.”*

A deep conviction of the truth of this word lies at the very root of a strong spiritual life. As little as I created myself, as little as I could raise a man from the dead, can I give myself the divine life. As little as I can give it myself, can I maintain or increase it—every motion is the work of God through Christ and His Spirit.

It is as a man believes this, that he will take up that position of entire and continual dependence which is the very essence of the life of faith. With the spiritual eye he sees Christ every moment supplying grace for every breathing and every deepening of the spiritual life. His whole heart says Amen to the word: You can do nothing. And just because he does so, he can also say: *“I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me.”* The sense of helplessness, and the abiding to which it compels, leads to true fruitfulness and diligence in good works.

Apart from me ye can do nothing. What a plea and what a call every moment to abide in Christ! We have only to go back to the vine to see how true it is. Look again at that little branch, utterly helpless and fruitless except as it receives sap from the vine, and learn that the full conviction of not being able to do anything apart from Christ is just what you need to teach you to abide in your heavenly Vine. It is this that is the great meaning of the pruning Christ spoke of— all that is self must be brought low, that our confidence may be in Christ alone. *“Abide in me”*—much fruit! *“Apart from me”*—nothing! Ought there to be any doubt as to what we shall choose?

The one lesson of the parable is—as surely, as naturally as the branch abides in the vine, **You can abide in Christ.** For this, He is the true Vine. For this, God is the Husbandman. For this, you are a branch. Shall we not cry to God to deliver us forever from the *“apart from Me,”* and to make the *“abide in Me”* an unceasing reality?

Let your heart go out to what Christ is, and can do, to His divine power and His tender love to each of His branches, and you will say evermore confidently: *“Lord! I am abiding; I will bear much fruit. My impotence is my strength. So be it. Apart from Thee, nothing. In Thee, much fruit.”*

Apart from Me—you nothing. Lord, I gladly accept the arrangement: I nothing—Thou all. My nothingness is my highest blessing, because Thou art the Vine, that givest and workest all. So be it, Lord! I, nothing, ever waiting on Thy fullness. Lord, reveal to me the glory of this blessed life.