We Can't Do It Alone

John 15:1-5; Philippians 2:13-15

Introduction: The Challenge of Faith in an Unseen God

Believing in what we cannot see is not easy. Trusting in the invisible, in a world where "seeing is believing," often feels like an uphill battle. Faith, however, is not about having all the answers or seeing all the steps clearly—it's about trust.

- Trusting in God's **omnipotence**—He is all-powerful.
- Trusting in God's **omniscience**—He knows what we cannot know.
- Trusting in God's **omnipresence**—He is always with us.

Faith challenges us to trust in God's promises even when they seem far away. And here's the truth: we can't do it alone.

Learning from the Disciples' Journey

Seeing Jesus but Not Understanding Him

The disciples walked with Jesus. They saw His miracles. They heard His teachings. Yet, they still struggled to understand His divine nature.

- They saw His love and power when He fed the multitude and believed.
- They saw Him heal the Syrophoenician woman's daughter and trusted.
- They saw Him walk on water and command the winds and waves, and their fear turned to faith.

But despite witnessing all this, their understanding remained incomplete. Why?

1. **Preconceived Notions:** They had their own ideas of who Jesus should be—a warrior to overthrow Rome, not a savior to redeem humanity.
2. **Earthly Focus:** Like many of us, they were concerned with the material and the immediate. They wanted an earthly kingdom.
3. **Spiritual Blindness:** Even as they walked with Jesus, their eyes were closed to His spiritual reality.

Jesus' Patience and the Role of the Holy Spirit

Jesus knew their limitations, just as He knows ours. He wasn't fooled by their words or actions; He saw their hearts. But He didn't leave them in their blindness.

- At Pentecost, Jesus provided the Holy Spirit as their guide, comforter, and teacher.
- The Holy Spirit opened their spiritual eyes and empowered them to carry out their mission.

Like the disciples, we need the Holy Spirit to help us see beyond the physical and to rely on God's strength. Without Him, we cannot understand or fulfill God's purpose.

The Vine and the Branches: Our Dependence on Christ

In **John 15:1-5**, Jesus declares:
"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

The Meaning of the Metaphor

- **Jesus as the Vine:** He is the source of life and strength. Without Him, we can do nothing.
- **The Father as the Gardener:** God prunes away what is dead or unfruitful in our lives so we can thrive.
- **We as the Branches:** We are entirely dependent on the vine for nourishment and growth.

The Importance of Pruning

God's pruning is not punishment—it is preparation. A gardener removes dead weight so the branches can flourish.

- **Illustration:** A man once admired the vines growing on his favorite tree. But over time, the vines became dead weight, burdening the branches. When a storm came, the tree's branches broke under the strain. The man learned that even healthy branches can only bear so much dead weight before they fall.

Lesson: God's pruning protects us from collapse, ensuring we can bear fruit even in the storms of life.

God's Work Within Us: Philippians 2:13-15

Paul reminds us in **Philippians 2:13 (AMP):**
"For it is [not in your own strength] but God who is effectually at work in you [energizing and creating the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

God's Initiative and Empowerment

- **Not Self-Generated:** Our capacity to do good originates with God, not ourselves.
- **Divine Partnership:** God plants desires in our hearts that align with His will and empowers us to act on them.
- **God's Purpose:** His ultimate goal is for us to live in alignment with His plan, bringing Him glory.

Practical Application

1. Stop relying on your own strength—recognize that God is the source of your power and purpose.
2. Allow God to shape your desires and intentions to align with His will.
3. Trust God's guidance, knowing He will equip you for every good work.

How Do We Apply This Message?

Remain in Christ

1. **Through Prayer:** Stay connected to Jesus by cultivating a daily prayer life.
2. **Through the Word:** Let Scripture cleanse and renew your mind, as Jesus says in John 15:3, *"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."*
3. **Through Community:** Surround yourself with other believers who will encourage and strengthen your faith.

Rely on the Holy Spirit

1. Ask for the Spirit's guidance in your decisions and actions.
2. Listen for the Spirit's voice through prayer and reflection.
3. Trust the Spirit to empower you to live out your faith.

Recognize Your Dependence on God

1. Acknowledge that without Christ, you can do nothing of eternal value.
2. Surrender your ego and desire for control, allowing God to work in and through you.

3. Embrace God's pruning as an act of love, preparing you to bear more fruit.

Closing: We Can't Do It Alone

Brothers and sisters, let me make this plain: **we can't do it alone.** Jesus is the vine. We are the branches. The Father is the gardener. The Holy Spirit is the sap that brings life and strength. Without Him, we are powerless.

- You can't bear fruit without staying connected to the vine.
- You can't overcome life's challenges without God's strength.
- You can't fulfill God's purpose without His Spirit working in you.

But here's the good news: **we don't have to do it alone.**

- God is always working within us, energizing us to will and to act for His good pleasure.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to live out our faith and remain in Christ.
- Jesus invites us to abide in Him, promising that we will bear much fruit.

The Hoop: Living Connected to Christ

Let me bring it home!

Jesus is the true vine! Stay connected to Him!
The Father is the gardener! Let Him prune what needs to go!
The Holy Spirit is your strength! Trust Him to guide you!

You don't have to walk this journey alone. You don't have to face life's storms in your own strength. Jesus said, *"Abide in me, and I in you."* That's not just an invitation—it's a promise!

So remain in Him! Stay connected! Trust in His power! Let the life-giving sap of the Holy Spirit flow through you!

Because when you abide in Christ, you will bear fruit. And when you bear fruit, God is glorified!

Blessings,

Pastor Gool