

“Our Absolute Dependence on God”  
(Acts 17:24-25)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. This morning, we saw Paul telling the Athenians, in response to their worship of their gods, that the true God is independent.
  - a. He has existed from all eternity.
  - b. Only He is eternal.
  - c. He is that One who must be, that cannot not be.
  
2. Therefore He doesn't need anyone or anything.
  - a. He doesn't depend on anything for His existence.
  - b. He doesn't need anything He has made.
  - c. He doesn't even need the religious service they are offering Him.

B. Preview.

1. But this wasn't the only point Paul was making.
  - a. He tells them, God doesn't need your worship/service; but you need Him.
  - b. God is not dependent on you; you are dependent on God.
  - c. So you had better find out what God wants.
    - (i) You had better find out who He is; what He is like.
    - (ii) What He will accept for worship and what not.
    - (iii) How to be reconciled to Him through His Son.
    - (iv) What you need to repent of.
    - (v) Because He has fixed a day of judgment.
    - (vi) They won't be saved through their ignorant worship.
    - (vii) They can only be saved through worshipping the God who is responsible for their existence.
  
2. This evening, I want us to consider how dependent we are on God; how we need Him for absolutely everything:
  - a. For our existence.
  - b. For our provision.
  - c. For our salvation.
  - d. We should praise Him for all these things.
  - e. We should help others to see how much they depend on Him as well.

II. Sermon.

A. God does not depend on man for His existence, but man depends on God.

1. God is not the creation of man's desire to worship; He created us.
  - a. We realize we haven't always been around; we came into being in time.
  - b. We're know we're not the result of a cosmic accident.
    - (i) Not a big bang.

- (ii) Not micro/macro evolution.
  - c. We didn't make ourselves.
2. God is the One who made us, who sustains us, who holds us up in being.
- a. He created all there is when before there was nothing but Him.
  - b. He made man in His image, special, separate from the beasts.
  - c. And He is the One who keeps us in being.
    - (i) He sustains all He has made; it doesn't sustain itself.
    - (ii) If He let go, everything would disappear into nothingness.
    - (iii) We owe our very existence to Him.
    - (iv) "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3).
    - (v) We depend on Him for our being.
    - (vi) "In Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28).
- B. Second, God is not sustained by what man does to serve Him; but man depends on God for his provision. "Nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things" (v. 25).
1. God has everything He needs in Himself, but we don't. There are so many things we need.
- a. We need food:
    - (i) God doesn't need food at all.
    - (ii) But we can only survive for a few weeks without food.
    - (iii) To be healthy and function normally, we need about three meals a day.
  - b. We need water:
    - (i) God doesn't need water.
    - (ii) But we can only go a few days without water, before we'll die.
  - c. We need clothes.
    - (i) God is never in danger of exposure, or even discomfort.
    - (ii) But we can only exist within a certain temperature range.
    - (iii) Clothes expand that range.
    - (iv) In certain climates, without them, we would soon die.
  - d. We need shelter.
    - (i) God isn't threatened by anything; doesn't need shelter.
    - (ii) But without shelter, we would never survive severe weather: tornado, hurricane, blizzard, etc.
    - (iii) We need shelter to control our environment, even to survive for the few years in which we live.
  - e. We need companionship.
    - (i) God has all the companionship/fellowship He needs in Himself (Triune).

- (ii) But without companionship/friendship, we would go mad.
  - (iii) Man is a social creature: he needs company.
- f. But we also need protection.
- (i) God is always perfectly safe; nothing can threaten Him.
  - (ii) But we live in a hostile environment: from other men, animals, unfriendly bacteria, viruses, poison.
  - (iii) We need protection, something to defend us, to keep us safe.
- g. Along these lines, we need justice.
- (i) No one can ultimately hurt God: He will bring everything to justice.
  - (ii) But others can take away everything we have; leave us with nothing.
  - (iii) We need protection; we also need recourse to obtain just restitution of that taken away.
- h. We need air to breathe, land to live on, gravity to hold us down, protection from cosmic radiation, medicine for illness, surgery when things go wrong in us, sun, rain, the ability to procreate to continue as a race.
- i. We also need the ability to utilize or enjoy everything God gives us:
- (i) Just because we have them doesn't mean they're going to do us any good.
  - (ii) If our bodies can't absorb food, we'll starve.
  - (iii) If they can't assimilate water, we'll dehydrate.
  - (iv) If they don't produce their own heat, clothes won't keep us warm.
  - (v) If we don't have peace in our society, what we need to survive can destroy us.
- j. The point is, there are many things we need, needs we can't meet for ourselves.
- k. Far from being independent, we are dependent on God for everything.
2. We need God to give us all our needs, or they won't be met.
- a. He is the One who provides them.
- (i) He created all good things.
  - (ii) He is the One who gives us all these good things to enjoy.
  - (iii) "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (James 1:17).
  - (iv) "He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man's heart glad, so that he may make *his* face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man's heart" (Psalm 104:13-15).
- b. He is the only One who can provide them; if He doesn't, we won't have them.

- c. We are utterly dependent on God.
- C. Finally, God's happiness does not depend on man, but man's happiness depends on God: we depend on Him for salvation, our ultimate happiness.
1. God is eternally happy, but we aren't.
    - a. We were born guilty.
      - (i) Guilty of Adam's sin.
      - (ii) We committed many more sins.
    - b. We were born with sin in our hearts.
      - (i) We were the enemies of God.
      - (ii) We would never have chosen Him.
    - c. We were liable to miseries of this life.
      - (i) We forfeited every good thing through our sin.
      - (ii) We forfeited any right to enjoy God's creation.
    - d. We were under the sentence of everlasting misery.
      - (i) We would have perished forever.
      - (ii) We deserved everlasting destruction in hell.
  2. With regard to our ultimate happiness, we are absolutely dependent on God.
    - a. Only God could provide a way to remove our sin.
      - (i) Only He could cleanse our hearts of corruption.
      - (ii) Only He could reverse the curse we brought on ourselves.
      - (iii) Only He could save us from hell.
      - (iv) Only He could keep us from falling away.
      - (v) Only He could bring us safely to heaven, and He has through Christ.
      - (vi) We are utterly dependent on God for our ultimate happiness; there is nothing we can do to get it apart from Him.
    - b. Men claim that God is the source of their problems. But it is just the opposite: "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works" (Psalm 73:28).
      - (i) God is the reason we exist, He is our provider and sustainer, He is our Savior and the One who makes us happy.
      - (ii) He is our all in all.
      - (iii) That is why we need Him. We are absolutely dependent on Him.
      - (iv) As Paul told the Athenians: God doesn't need us, we need Him; without Him we would die; without Him, we wouldn't even exist; without Him we would perish forever.
      - (v) Let's remember how much we owe Him and give Him all the glory.
      - (vi) Let's also remember how many need Him and bring them this knowledge. Amen.