

# God Has Shown Us the Pattern: He Has Shown Us That Pattern Who Is Christ in Perfection

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The fundamental thing in Christianity is the Presence of the Lord, and we must learn Christ and be instructed concerning Him in order to have spiritual progress.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:8, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20, John 1:14, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 3:13, Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 12:26-27, 1 Peter 2:5

**Topics:** "The Presence of God", "Returning to Simplicity in Faith"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the need to return to the foundational simplicity of Christianity as exemplified in Christ, contrasting it with the complexities and additions that have emerged over time. He highlights that the true essence of faith lies in the Presence of the Lord, which is embodied in Jesus Christ, the ultimate pattern for believers. Sparks urges the congregation to evaluate their practices and beliefs against this divine pattern, stressing that only what originates from God will endure through the coming shaking of all things. He illustrates the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and adhering to God's instructions, as seen in the construction of the tabernacle and the ministry of Jesus. Ultimately, he calls for a personal and communal return to the simplicity of Christ's presence in all aspects of life and ministry.

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## Transcript

As this is the last of these series of special morning meetings, I think that it would be most helpful if, at the beginning, I were just to go right back and remind you of the ground which we have been covering. We commenced with saying that Christianity has become something very much more than it was at the beginning, that much has been added to the foundation which does not belong to the foundation. So that we find ourselves today in a Christianity very different from that which was at the beginning. Christianity today is a very complicated thing. There are all the divisions, and the organizations, and so very much more than was in the simple basic realities of the beginning. And we said that we were going to ask the Lord to bring us back to those first beginnings of that Divine work in our Lord Jesus. We went on to say that we believe that the Word of God shows that there is going to be a great shaking of everything at the end. And in that great shaking, only the things which were and are really out from heaven will remain. A very great deal of what has been built upon the foundation will disappear. We believe that this is stated in the Word of God.

Then when that time comes, and we feel that it has already begun, everything will be tested by the foundation. The ultimate question in the great shaking will be just how much the Lord is Present. So we went on to consider that fundamental thing, the Presence of the Lord. That is where the Lord began with the old Israel. And we quoted Exodus twenty-five, verse eight, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." That is the eternal thought of God, which goes beyond all time, THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM. We saw that that tabernacle or that sanctuary was, for the old Israel, the place of God's Presence.

Then we passed over to the New Testament, and found the new Israel being formed by the Lord Jesus. When the old Israel was put aside by God, then it says, "That the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us." So that in this dispensation, THE TABERNACLE IS THE LORD JESUS. It is not a thing, it is a Person. The Presence of God is wherever the Lord Jesus is. That governs everything. It is all a matter of whether the Lord Jesus is Present. Where He is, there is the Tabernacle of God. Just as in the Old Testament where the people were gathered around the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the governing thing in their lives by which they were made one people. All united by that one center, receiving all their life and their light from it. So in this dispensation, the Lord gathers people to Himself, He becomes the center of everything. It is in Him that they are united as one people, and from Him they received all their life and light. And this is all the matter of the Presence of the Lord.

So we went on to see something of the meaning of the Presence of the Lord as illustrated in the tabernacle of old. The first thing that we saw was that it was something presented to them by God from heaven. The Lord said, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount." The mount was a type of heaven, where the Lord came down to meet His servants, and there He showed the pattern of all things. That pattern was brought down from the mount and made known to the people. It was a presentation to them of the pattern that was in the mind of God.

We know that that tabernacle was a representation in every detail of the Lord Jesus. So that in this new dispensation, everything begins by a presentation of the Lord Jesus. That is why we have the Four Gospels, which were written after many of the Epistles, put in the first place in the New Testament. Those Four Gospels contain a presentation of the Lord Jesus. And He is there as God's pattern for His Presence. We must recognize the very great importance of those Four Gospels. They are God's pattern given down from heaven for us to see. God has shown us the pattern: and He has shown us that pattern in perfection. When Jesus finished His life on this earth, He was able to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." What was the work that God gave Him to do? Well, supremely it was to reveal the mind of God, so that He was able to say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In other words, He could say, 'I am the expression of the mind of God. And I have come down from heaven that you may have in Me the expression of the mind of God in every detail.'

Of course, I can only say this in a general way this morning. I could take up these Gospels and show you a thousand ways in which the Lord Jesus was revealing the mind of God. In everything that He said, and in everything that He did, there was something of God. And He was personally the comprehensive embodiment of the thoughts of God. Now God has given that pattern to us. In giving His Son, He has given the pattern of all things for His Presence.

May I, dear friends, appeal to you on this matter. I told you when I first came that I have not come to give you Bible teaching as such. When I go away from this country, one question that will be in my heart will be this: 'What is the practical results of it all?' That is going to be the great deciding factor on the value of this

time together, so I have to seek the Lord very earnestly every time I speak to you. And I have to ask the Lord that He will not just give me a lot of things to say but that He will leave you with something that you have to face up to. So I say to you, that the fundamental thing is always the Presence of the Lord. It is not any one of the thousand things that make up Christianity. The ultimate criterion is, 'Is the Lord there?' and 'Is the Lord in all things there?' 'Is the Lord in what they do?' and 'Is the Lord in how they do it?' Because with the Lord how things are done is as important as doing the things. Is the Lord in the people individually there? And are their lives marked by this supreme thing? THE LORD IN THEM.

I have no doubt that you love the Lord. I am not raising any question about that. But, I do say again, we are involved in a great system which is a very complicated thing, and a great deal of it is not of the Lord. It is something that man has brought in. Man has put his hand upon the things of the Lord, and man has made things according to his own mind, and therefore a great deal has come in which is of man and not of the Lord. And when we say that, we are not only thinking of Christianity in general, we are thinking of ourselves. This is true of ourselves. We have all come into something called Christianity, and we have all taken on something of Christianity, and there may be a great deal that we have to get rid of, and come back to the simple fundamental reality. And the fundamental reality of all realities is THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. We have got to know that the Lord is with us, and that the Lord is with us in all that we do, that this did not originate in our mind. It did not originate in our will, it did not originate in our emotion. It did not come from our soul, this thing has come from the Lord in every detail like the tabernacle. Just like Jesus Christ, in every detail it has to come to us from God.

That ought to send us back to our knees - to go through all our work. It may be necessary for us, from time to time, to stand back and ask the Lord about all that we are doing. 'Is this out from God, or is it something out from ourselves? Is this way of doing things the mind of God, or is it our mind? Is the Lord in this, or have we come into it?' You see, that is a great deciding matter. Make no mistake about it! Everything that is only of man is going to perish. Sooner or later it will be shaken. Every man's work shall be tried in the fire, says the Word of God.

So the first thing, then, is a presentation and a seeing of the Lord Jesus. I wonder if I may refer to a personal experience in this matter. I do not want to talk about myself, but I want to help you by illustrating. For many years, I was what was called a minister in the denominations. I was a minister of what are called churches. I was a minister of two denominations at the same time. So I had the big religious buildings. And I wore a clerical collar and attire, and I was in that whole system of organized Christianity. I had a big pulpit. And I preached sermons, and I was paid to do it. Well, I was very earnest. I really believed that I belonged to the Lord. My heart was reaching out to the Lord.

But, the time came, when the Lord showed me Jesus Christ. He began to reveal His Son in me. You see, I knew the Bible. I was teaching the Bible everywhere. When I went to a big church in the north of London, they had no Bible teaching meeting. They had only a very small prayer meeting. But I decided that we would have, what we called, a Bible school. So I got a big blackboard made, a blackboard as big as this whole platform. I decided that I would give Bible lectures. So I started going right through the Bible. I went from Genesis to Revelation. The result was that that place was crowded with people for the Bible lecture. I say that to show you that I did know something about the Bible.

The day came when I saw the Lord Jesus, and all these other things were like nonsense. All this church business was like little children playing at going to church. All this dressing up in clerical clothes, oh, how silly it was! I really had not seen the Bible. I had it all in my head, but really the Bible was a closed book.

When the Lord showed me His Son, all these other things went. It was like nonsense to me, I saw that the Lord Jesus is the Church, not these things. I saw that the Lord Jesus is everything in the Bible. The Bible is not a book, the Bible is Christ. I saw the Bible in Genesis, I mean, I saw Christ in Genesis. All through the Bible I saw Christ. It made everything else so foolish. It simply turned me inside out and upside down. All those other things had to be left behind. I saw the Lord Jesus. I do not mean I saw Him with these natural eyes. But what Paul meant when he said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." That is what happened in my case.

And a new thing began from that time. A new ministry began, a new work of God began. And I am here today on the other side of the world because of that. I have come to you not as a Bible teacher, but to speak to you of what I have seen of the Lord Jesus, and to say to you that the fundamental thing is seeing Jesus. Of course, that is not something that happened years ago. It only began to happen forty years ago, and it is still going on today. If I am faithful to the Lord, it will go on to the end of my life. It is a continuously growing seeing of the Lord. You see, that is where it began in the Old Testament, and that is where it began in the New Testament. We have to come back from all our things to the Lord.

Now after the pattern was shown, both in the case of Israel in the tabernacle, and in the case of the Lord Jesus to the apostles, the next thing was to instruct the people concerning the pattern. So the people were told about it. It is quite clear that all the people were gathered and told about this pattern. They were all involved in this. They had to do the making of all things. They had to provide the gold, and the silver, and everything else. So, although it is not said in the Bible, it is quite evident that Moses called all the people together. And he said, 'Now the Lord has shown us a great pattern.' And then he would have begun to explain to them all the detail. He would say, 'Now there are things to be of gold, and there are other things to be of silver, and then there are the various fabrics that are needed, and the different colors of the different fabrics.' And so he would go through the whole pattern. He would say, 'Now this is what the Lord has commanded, and all you people are involved in this.' He instructed them concerning the pattern.

Now the Lord Jesus came from heaven as the Tabernacle. "HE TABERNACLED AMONG US," said John. He is the full revelation of God's mind. And then the Lord Jesus began to instruct His disciples concerning Himself, by word and by deed, He was instructing them concerning Himself. As they watched Him, and listened to Him, they were really coming to the knowledge of God's mind for them. So we have our New Testament, and the New Testament is the embodiment of all things concerning Christ, with one object only in view. All these many details about the Lord Jesus relate to only one thing. It will take you a long time to count up all the details of the tabernacle. It will take us all eternity to sum up all the things concerning Christ. But in the New Testament we have a great many things concerning the Lord Jesus. But in the great many things is only one thing. And that thing is the Presence of the Lord. You see, it is a comprehensive thing; it is a detailed thing. The Presence of the Lord relates to that little detail. I could show you that from the New Testament. If things were not done according to the mind of the Lord in the New Testament, everything went wrong. The Lord only went on with them when everything was according to Christ.

So the second thing is for us to be instructed concerning Christ. There is a little fragment in the New Testament, which to me is a very important and significant one; the apostle is writing concerning things which were wrong. He just used this phrase 'You have not so learned Christ!' That is not the way in which you learn Christ; that is not the learning of Christ. See, how important that is? It is as though the apostle was saying, everything must come from your having learned Christ. These things have come from men, from yourselves. In all things we must learn Christ.

Now the third thing. We spoke about the two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab. It says that these men were filled with the Spirit of God, for all manner of workmanship. So that the work, when it began and was carried on, was not just done in the wisdom of men. The Lord did not say, 'Now, here is the pattern, you get on with it. You take it into your hands and just work it out.' The Lord did not do that. He took these two men, and He filled them with the Spirit. And they became His instruments in showing how things have got to be done. My point for the moment is not the men, the Lord may take hold of men for this kind of thing. But my point is this, **THAT IT HAS GOT TO BE DONE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.** If men come into this as God's instruments, they must be men filled with the Holy Spirit. As we pointed out, this is how it began in the New Testament, 'Seek ye out seven men filled with the Holy Spirit.' That related to the carrying on of the work. It must all be done under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Dear friends, today I can see in much of the Lord's work, men who are in positions for which they are not anointed. They have been put into the position by men. Men have thought that they would be, well, good men to have in the work. Of course, they love the Lord, they are very devoted to the Lord, and they want to work for the Lord. So, the leaders take them and put them into positions. As you go on you will see they were never anointed of God to hold that position. Leadership in the work of God is anointed leadership. It has to be seen by all spiritual people that that man and that woman is anointed for the position which they hold. They are not there because they themselves have pushed themselves in, and they are not there because the other responsible people thought it would be a good thing to put them in. No, it is quite evident that the Lord had anointed them for that position, and therefore the Lord is with them. They may have many human imperfections, there may be things about them that you naturally do not like. You know how faulty they are naturally, but you have to say, the Lord is with that man and that woman. They are in the right position because the Lord has put them there.

The anointing is the great factor in all things concerning Christ for this reason, it is not individual anointing. There are not so many anointings as there are people. There is only one anointing, and that is on Christ as the Head. We only come into the anointing when we are in Christ, and when we are under the Headship of Christ. We are not under the anointing if we choose our own position, or if men put us into positions. The anointing is Christ's anointing, we have the anointing when we are entirely under His Headship. Well, of course, that is too big a matter for us to consider just now. But my point is here in the course of the formation of things according to Christ, the governing principle is the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The next thing that we saw was that all spiritual progress is governed by the Presence of the Lord. You can imagine a situation in the wilderness. I can imagine that all these people, when the tabernacle was taken down and packed up, and the trumpets were blown to march on, the people were full of enthusiasm - 'Now we are going on to the promised land, now we shall soon be in the promised land.'

So they were all full of interest about this going on business. And then the cloud over them stopped, and the Lord told them to unpack the tabernacle, and to set up the tabernacle. We are going to stay here for a while, and perhaps the people said, 'Oh, why have we got to stop and wait and lose time, we want to get there, why stop here and wait? How long are we going to stay here?' And if the cloud remained many days, as it did, they could have said, 'Oh, why are we losing all this time? Why are we not getting on with the business?' And why was it? You see, the Lord wanted them not to be occupied with the journey alone, but with Himself. He wanted them to move as they were occupied with Him, and so when they had some time of being occupied with the Lord, the Lord said, 'Now, we will go on.' He did not say so, but He meant, 'We will stop again later on. Now the Lord does that in different ways. We get hold of things and we want to go on with things. We get full of our own energy in the things of God and we say, 'Now let's get things

done.' And we go on like that. Sometimes the Lord says, 'Stop a bit.' He may bring us up short by something that happens, some kind of adversity, or suffering. Something happens and we know the Lord has said, 'Stop, you are too busy to listen to Me, you are too occupied with My things to be occupied with Me personally.' And so we must have a time of being occupied with the Lord. My point is that all spiritual progress is by the Lord's Presence.

Now when Moses called the people together, all the willing hearted people brought what they had for this work. In that way, the Lord put responsibility upon the people. You see, the tabernacle did not fall out of heaven all completed, only the pattern came out from heaven. And then the Lord said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern." He put responsibility for this matter upon the shoulders of the people. They had to understand the pattern and take the responsibility for the fulfillment of it. When they did that, then the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

But there were some times when they departed from the pattern, we will look at just one of those times. Aaron had two sons, they were Aaron's two elder sons. Their names were Nadab and Abihu. Nadab and Abihu came after Aaron in the priesthood. Now Nadab and Abihu must have known all about the pattern. They must have known what God had said about every detail, and there was one thing amongst all the others that God had said. When the priests go in before the Lord with their censers, they are to take the fire from off the altar. Now where did that come from, that fire on the altar? I expect you have read the story. Here is the altar, here is the wood on the altar, everything is ready. Did the priest go and strike a match and light the wood? Or, whatever was the way in which they made fire, did they do it like that? Did they make the fire and take it to the altar? No, that altar fire came from heaven. When the altar was set up, and the wood was put on it, and the sacrifice was slain and laid on the wood, the fire of the Lord came down, and that fire never went out. They never had to do that a second time. All the time that the tabernacle was in that place, the fire continued day and night. No man had to make fire. Nadab and Abihu did not take the fire from the altar, but they went and made some fire themselves. They got it from somewhere else by some other method, and they put that fire in their censers, and went in before the Lord, and the Lord smote them [so] that they died before the Lord. They offered strange fire. It was not the fire that had come from the Cross. It was their own fire, the fire of the flesh, the fire of the natural man, the fire of their souls, and not of the Spirit. The Lord says that is strange fire. It was not according to the pattern, and the Lord judged that. I must leave you to interpret it.

You see what a big thing 'responsibility for Christ' is? **THE LORD HAS PUT THE RESPONSIBILITY ON US.** He says, 'If you make all things according to the pattern, I am with you. You will have blessings; I will go on with you. If you begin to introduce things that are not according to the pattern, but of man, that will bring spiritual death.' May the Lord give us spiritual understanding.

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