

God Has Something to Say

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the spiritual value of Christ and living a life of the new creation, governed by the Holy Spirit, in order to have a true impact on the world.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 2:2, Mark 1:24, Luke 4:18, Acts 16:7, Romans 8:14, 1 Corinthians 1:23, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 2:8

Topics: "Living by the Spirit", "Spiritual Value of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that God has a profound message for our hearts, demonstrated through the life of Jesus, who lived a spiritually rich life in a mundane world. He highlights that Christ's earthly existence was safeguarded by God to ensure that His value remained spiritual, not temporal, and that true appreciation of Christ comes from a heart transformed by the Spirit. Sparks urges believers to recognize that they are called to live ordinary lives on a higher spiritual level, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and to seek God's direction in their actions rather than relying on their own plans. He stresses the importance of being constituted and anointed by the Spirit to fulfill God's purpose effectively, warning against the church's tendency to operate without divine guidance. Ultimately, the sermon calls for repentance and submission to the Holy Spirit's leading to regain the church's impact in the world.

Transcript

God has something to say right into our hearts by bringing His Son here into this world from infancy onward and having that life here in a world like this for thirty-three years. He is working out something, is doing something, and He is doing that in the spiritual realm; and He wants to repeat that in the Church and in the members of the Church, the Body of Christ. One thing is particularly and jealously guarded by God in the case of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. It is this, that whatever Christ was it was spiritual; there was nothing from cradle to grave which made Him anything naturally or temporally.

It could have been otherwise, and men were looking for it to be otherwise, and were offended that it was not so. ".....born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2), a king born in a stable and cradled in a manger - shut out, excluded, not given room! And from cradle to grave it was like that: nothing, nothing that could be taken hold of naturally and temporally to credit Him with particular value and importance, but everything to the contrary; and God jealously guarded that, would not allow it to be otherwise, kept Him at that level.

Why? For this reason and because of this principle which abides. That whatever Christ is in value, it is spiritual. It is the spiritual value of Christ that God has safeguarded, not allowing men and the world to take

Him up and say, Here is some great One; look at this and that and the other thing about Him! No, you can say nothing like that about Jesus of Nazareth, nothing at all. He is to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, but to us who believe, Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God (I Cor. 1:23), but a hidden wisdom, not of this world nor of the rulers of this world.

Do you realize that it is the spiritual value of Christ that God has so jealously safeguarded by the conditions of the incarnation and of His life while here on this earth; and that is what we want to seek to work out, to recognize? Christ has become so much other in Christianity, and thereby He has lost His impact, He has been stripped of His dynamic, embellished with an embellishment that God never countenanced. The only embellishment of Christ, if we dare use that word, the only true glorifying, the only true exalting of Christ is that of the spirit, of the heart, and therefore it is only possible for the redeemed, who know that they are redeemed, to glorify Christ truly.

The Lord repudiates all the garlands laid upon Him which are temporal in this dispensation; He will not have them. What He wants is a spirit that appreciates and values, a heart that goes out in grateful worship. You notice how, through His life, that was always the thing upon which He put His seal. Any recognition of His spiritual value, and a humble brokenness at His feet - ah, there He found what His heart wanted..... A heart appreciation of Christ is the only true one. So we have to see the spiritual value of Christ during those thirty-three years, and to come to two things about Him which are of abiding meaning, not only in Him personally, but as John says, "which thing is true in Him and in you" (I John 2:8).

One, that He was constituted by the Spirit for life. He was begotten of the Holy Ghost, He was born of the Spirit; the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, was there at birth. You will see what I am after in a moment. We mention the fact that at thirty years of age the Spirit came upon Him. What is the difference? If He was filled with the Spirit from His birth, if He was born of the Spirit, why should the Spirit come upon Him thirty years later? You have to explain that. To begin with, the answer is this - He was constituted by the Spirit for life - to live His life by the Spirit, "which thing is true in Him and in you." We cannot live the life of children of God, much less as (mature) sons of God, unless we are constituted to do so by the Holy Spirit.

It was for life; and here you are going to have thirty-three years with a mighty climax of what it means to live by the Spirit, and everything in that life for those years is the working out of the Spirit dwelling within. Constituted to live, just to live, that is the point. For thirty years you know very little about Him, and what you do know is that He was not doing specifically and immediately the ultimate thing for which He came. You know that for thirty years He was more or less a private person living a private life, doing the work which many other men did - an ordinary trade, probably looking after a widowed mother and helping to look after and support a large family, and learning privation and how to make ends meet, so that later He knew the cost of two sparrows in the market and the fact that if you could buy two farthings' worth you would get an extra bird thrown in.

How did He know that? He had probably lived it through. But through all that, He was living His life by the Spirit, and God was causing a man to live on the basis of the new creation by constituting him by the indwelling Spirit. Perhaps my way of saying it may be open to correction, but you see what I am after. And, dear friends, in this new creation in Christ Jesus, we are called to live here not romantic lives at all, not lives of great public attraction and interest, but ordinary lives; to do our job, learn our lessons, experience adversities, carry responsibilities, do the thousand and one things which belong to the ordinary person's life, but to live on a higher level than the ordinary person.

And that cannot be done unless we are constituted to do it by the Holy Spirit. But it can be if we are. And one aspect or one side of the Holy Spirit's purpose in coming is to enable men and women to live the life of men and women in this world, on this earth, but on another level. Do believe that. So many people think that immediately they become Christians and are interested in the Lord's work, they have to come out of the ordinary realm of daily life and become something special, that the Holy Spirit being within them, of course they must give up their day job and go and find some other kind of work for the Lord.

Don't you believe it! I do not believe that the Lord does that sort of thing with anybody until He has made them live a life on a higher level in spheres where everybody has to live. If you cannot do that, give up hope of being sent by the Lord into some other kind of sphere or work. If you try it by direct means or back doors, you will find that the Lord is never got over in that way. We have to be brought back here to live on the new creation level in this old creation world by being so constituted of the Holy Spirit.

Is there any impact in that? I am sure there is challenge in it. So face your situation and understand why the Lord holds you in it and does not let you out. You have got to live there by the Holy Spirit before the Lord will make a change. So for thirty years He lived an ordinary life in an extraordinary way. He was constituted from birth by the Holy Spirit to live in the realm of the new creation while still moving in the realm of the old. We are constituted from new birth for that very purpose.

That is one thing. Then we come to this matter of the anointing at thirty years of age. What is this? Ah, this is a new phase. He was anointed of the Holy Ghost for specific work, for that supreme thing for which He had come and been chosen of God, anointed of God for the remaining three and a half years and all that that meant. I want to get inside of that. You see, the Lord Jesus had a spirit in Him, His own human spirit, and in His case His human spirit was sinless; and yet it was necessary that the Spirit of God should utterly dominate that human spirit and hold entire government over it.

When it came to working out the great purpose of God, not only living a life but now working out something very much more serious and grim than that, the great purpose of God - it was necessary that the spirit of God should utterly dominate Him for this reason - to hold everything unto God, that everything should be out from God, not even out from His own spirit. This whole work of God had to be held very strongly into God so that it was wholly and utterly of God. You get back into the Old Testament, you have it in type and representation.

You know how, again and again, the Spirit of the Lord came upon this one and that one, men represented as being already consecrated to the Lord. In all the typical sense, they were sanctified people. Bezaleel and Aholiab were consecrated men, separated unto the Lord. In the type, they were sanctified men, but the Spirit of God came upon them. You see, even consecrated men are not to be left to themselves, not to have ability in themselves and act out from themselves. Taking Bezaleel and Aholiab as examples, the Spirit of God came upon them.

Why? Because there is a Divine pattern to be meticulously followed and carried out, and it is not going to be left even to people who are most devoted to the Lord to do the Lord's work out from themselves. Only the Spirit of God knows what and how and when, and that is very important to God. Not what we, in most earnest devotion, think should be done for the Lord. He does not accept that. Not how we, with all the best motive in the world and the heart most real in its desire for the Lord's glory, think it should be done; and not when or where we, though given to the Lord, think or feel it should be.

Not a bit of it! Paul was a very consecrated man, out and out for God. There is no doubt about him, about his true zeal for God (I am speaking of his post-conversion zeal). He is a man who knows the Lord, whose spirit has been quickened, and whose spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; and yet he will essay to go into Bithynia and to preach the word in Asia, but the Spirit of Jesus will suffer him not (Acts 16:7). He will be forbidden of the Holy Ghost to go in the way on which he set out.

You see the point. Now I am not saying that Jesus and Paul are identical, but I am saying that the Lord Jesus is a representation here on this earth of a man living in this world on the new creation basis and principle. I am not leaving out His Deity. I am talking in the realm of God bringing here an example, a perfect example or representation of a new creation man, and the principles of the life of such. To live that new creation life he must be constituted by the Holy Spirit.

To fulfill the work of God he must be anointed, because everything has to be held to God - held for God, come out from God - and only so can there be the effect and the impact; and it is an impact when the Holy Ghost gets hold of us and moves us in His direction. Because the Lord Jesus lived on that basis and principle of a life lived in and by the Spirit and a work carried out under the government of the Spirit, His earthly life here was a constant registration, both amongst men and in the spiritual realm.

If there is one thing patent about His life here on earth, it is this: wherever He went something started up, nothing just lay dormant. People and demons were stirred; His presence meant that. The presence of the Lord Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus will cause Zacchaeus to confess his miserable, contemptible sin and wrongdoing. That results from the Lord's presence. And the very demons cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?

I know thee who thou art - the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). What is the matter with them? He is there under the Anointing, in the power of the Spirit; something is going to happen, it must happen. Here is the meaning of Christ's life on the earth: it was to show what a life in the new creation is like, and what its effect is, how it is first constituted and then governed by the Spirit. And, by all the teaching of the New Testament, this is intended to be true of us, true of the church and of believers.

O God, make it more true! That must be our prayer. This is where we must have our response, our reaction. It is not enough merely to accept the tale of the life of Jesus, the story of His birth and of His going about doing good: but what is the effect of this in the realm of things spiritual? What is the abiding value, as far as you and I are concerned, and the Lord's people? It must touch a realm beyond this earthly one and stir to the depths the realm of evil spiritual intelligence.

His life was a mighty challenge in every realm because the Spirit of God was upon Him. He did not move on the ground of His personal devotion to the Father. He moved by intimation and direction of the Spirit of God. You can see why the Church has lost its impact. It is because it has concluded that once you have consecrated your life to the Lord you can do anything you like, arrange for the Lord, plan, scheme, do all sorts of things for the Lord. The Church has been doing that for a long time: it is doing it now.

Their argument is that it is for the Lord. How far is it getting? What is the comparative value of it? I leave you to answer that. It was not like that at the beginning, in the case of the Lord Jesus, in the first days of the Church when the Spirit by the Anointing really did govern. In a very short time far, far more was achieved than was done in a very, very long time afterwards. No, we are consecrated to the Lord, but we have to have the Lord's direction for every movement and not conclude that because we are out for the Lord we must just do all we can.

Let us get it from the Lord, and only so will it be effective. It is not easy, perhaps, or it does not seem easy, but it is something to which the Lord calls us and it is the way back to effectiveness. At any rate, let us put it like this: there is going to be nothing unless it is under the Anointing, and the Anointing means full charge of all life and all activity. Here is the place for repentance, repentance that there has been so much of ourselves and so little of the Lord. Here is the place for submission, that He shall be Lord in the power and reality of the Anointing. The Lord grant it.

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