

Nature and Purpose of the Church Now and in the After Ages

by T. Austin-Sparks

T. Austin-Sparks explores the nature and purpose of the church, emphasizing the significance of personal revelation and the role of suffering in effective ministry.

Duration: 1:17:22

Scripture: Genesis 1:3, Matthew 6:33, John 1:4-5, Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Eternal Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, T. Austin Sparks discusses the great transition from one humanity to another in the divine economy. He emphasizes the importance of having a heavenly vision, as Apostle Paul did, which reveals the place and destiny of man, the nature and dynamic of ministry, the nature and purpose of the Church, and the significance of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation. Sparks emphasizes that true ministry is centered on Christ and that people should encounter Christ when they meet a minister. He also highlights the importance of personally seeing Jesus in order to truly understand the Church.

Transcript

Atlantic States Christian Convocation The nature and dynamic of ministry and purpose of the church now and in the morning. What more can we say? And how better can we say than more of thyself? O show me, hour by hour, more of thy glory, O my God and Lord, more of thyself in all thy grace and power, more of thy love and truth incarnate. Answer that prayer in this hour, we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus.

In our concentration of the great transition from one humanity exposed, discredited, judged and set aside to another tested, perfected and installed in glory in our Lord Jesus Christ, we have come at length the closing hours of this time together to the all-governing vision in the light of which this transition becomes both clear and very practical. And we saw yesterday that with the Apostle Paul to whom this vision, this heavenly vision as he called it, was the secret and key to his whole life ministry. When he saw the Lord Jesus risen and glorified, four things became clear to him in that vision.

The four things we have mentioned, the place and destiny of man in the divine economy. Secondly, the nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation. Thirdly, the nature and purpose of the church now and in the after ages.

And fourthly, the immense significance of Christ crucified, risen and exalted. In these other three. Now yesterday, we were occupied with the first of these four things.

This morning we proceed to the second. The nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation. And we're feeling our way along.

Whether we shall get right to the end of the four is with the Lord. The nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation. The Apostle said, it pleased God to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the nations.

Now we must stay for a moment to ask and answer one question. What do we mean by ministry? I think we need a revised version on this matter of ministry. Immediately the word ministry is mentioned.

People's minds think of someone perhaps with a Bible in their hand, standing up and teaching out of the Bible or someone preaching the gospel to the unsaved. Someone having been shut up with their Bible, studying it and making some notes and coming out into the public and giving the results of their Bible study. Something like that is usually associated of mine with the word ministry.

It may be that here this morning when I speak of ministry in this dispensation, some of your minds at once think of something with Bible in hand from a platform or in a group, a circle, teaching, preaching. I hope the Lord is going to upset that idea entirely before we're through. Well the New Testament of course does have two things to say about this matter of ministry.

It does speak about special personal gifts for ministry in the church. He gave, the Ascended Lord gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. These are specific personal ministry gifts in the church.

Put a circle around that word in. Get your mentality adjusted again over that. You'll see what I mean in a minute.

There are these personal ministry gifts in the church. But the New Testament has much more to say about the ministry of the church itself. And it does say that these personal gifts in the church are for the purpose of enabling the church to fulfill the ministry, to do the ministry, to be the minister of Christ.

You remember the passage and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry. Don't put any break there in your sentence. The perfecting of the church, the making complete that is, of the church unto the work of the ministry.

I heard Dr. Campbell Morgan once say in this very connection, this passage, and God help the minister whose church does not fulfill the ministry. And it is in that second that we are occupied this morning. I'm not going to talk about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, these specific ministries, but about the ministry of the church.

And you know that the two letters with which we have been mainly occupied this week, two letters to the Corinthians have in view and very clearly and emphatically so the ministry of the church. All that the apostle is saying is with this background of the fulfillment of the divine ministry in Corinth. And as those letters are a vehicle down through the whole dispensation to our own time, it's what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church about its ministry.

In the first letter, the apostle is dealing with all those things which either frustrate or spoil the ministry of the church. In the second letter, he comes out very much more clearly and emphatically on the matter of the ministry as he uses these words, seeing then that we have this ministry. And you must remember that the apostle is writing to a church, a local church.

He is not just talking about his own ministry. He has much to say about that. But he is speaking of the church's ministry.

And the we, the we is the church at Corinth. We have this ministry. We have this ministry.

And you know the associated phrase, we have this treasure in vessels of fragile clay. Is that only apostles? No, it's all of us. We come to that again presently.

So what we are really concerned with this morning is the ministry of all believers or the ministry of the church. Having said that, we can proceed to a consideration of the nature and the dynamics of ministry. I'm once more referring to the apostle, the particular apostle who is writing these letters.

Just remember that he is a representative or example minister. That is how he speaks of himself through these letters. What was true of him as to ministry, he was saying has got to be true of the church.

He didn't put it in this way, but this is very clearly what he is saying. What is true in my ministry as to its source and its nature and its power has to be true of all believers and of the church. He is a representative minister, not an exclusive one.

He may have dimensions beyond anyone else's, but that is just his representative character. The Lord is saying by this man that here you have an example of what ministry is and how ministry is produced and what are the principles and laws of ministry and inclusively what is the background of ministry. That is how you must look at the apostle as a group minister, quite true, but as in principles a representative minister.

In principles a representative minister. And he begins, as it all began here, he goes right back to the Damascus road to the beginning of his Christian life and ministry for you will remember that it was there, there right at the commencement when the Lord met him on his way to Damascus that the Lord gave him his commission to whom I send it, whom I send it. And he goes right back to his conversion to the beginning of his life in union with Christ and he says this, As to life, as to vocation, ministry, that I might proclaim him among the nations, God revealed his son in me.

Now you've got the source of everything. It is this vision of the Lord Jesus. That is the nature of the ministry.

That is the source of the ministry. That is the dynamic of all true ministry. That is all true ministry in this dispensation.

This dispensation issues and proceeds from an enshining of divine light revealing Jesus Christ. It pleased God to reveal his son in me. That gives us a secret.

Oh yes, Saul of Tarsus is on the way to Damascus and on the way he saw a light from heaven. Objective, objective. Something that blinded him from without.

That light turned out to be the glorified Lord Jesus. And Paul is saying here in this fragment to the Galatians that he not only objectively saw that light and that glorified man, something happened inside of

him. Inside of him, he says, Jesus of Nazareth, whom I am on the way to persecute and whose persecution has become the one passion of my life, Jesus of Nazareth, that imposter, as I believe, that evil man, that deceiver, that carriage hooded, an overwhelming significance.

He has been here amongst us, walking the streets of Jerusalem, of Galilee, up and down the country. That same one has now appeared to me. Same one, not a different one, only in appearance and in knowledge, but the same one.

What does this mean? The way to the desert he went. And it is, dwell upon this. And that light which had shone on him was shining in him.

He was seeing, seeing the significance of whom? God's Son, oh yes, quite true. But no, Jesus of Nazareth glorified the man. The man having reached the ultimate of God's intention for man.

That's what it's about, because I knew him as a man. Whether I saw him in the flesh or not, that's it. I knew him, all about him as a man amongst men.

Human eyes could not discriminate between him and other men, only there was something about him that was different. But he's a man amongst men. And this is that same man, transfigured.

He had to think in the light of that inward revelation. People who know the Greek here know that this word, it pleads God to reveal his Son in me. The word is the subjective objective.

Is that too technical? Yes, I saw objectively, but I also saw subjectively. And until that happens, dear friend, we're not in the way of effectual ministry. You may be seeing by what is said to you throughout this week, you may see in a sort of objective way.

Everything, objectively, oh yes, oh yes, that's very wonderful, very wonderful. But has it broken through from the objective to the subjective and you say, I've worked, I've never seen it like this, I've never seen him. And that's it.

That is what happened to the Apostle and it was, I say, the beginning of his Christian life and of his ministry and they both went together. You got that? Do you know that you as a believer, as a Christian, are constituted for ministry from the day of your new birth? That you are ordained a minister the moment you are regenerated into this new humanity. Understand that? Don't wait for the day when someone will ordain you for ministry.

No, no, no, no. Your calling from the beginning is unto ministry. It may be difficult to swallow, but we'll go on.

Paul said about this that it was, it corresponded to what happened at the creation. And such a wealth there is here, you never hope to even touch it. He said, thank you Corinthians, now the great letter of the ministry.

God, who said, who said, let there be light, let light be, has repeated that divine spirit in a spiritual way in our hearts, has shined into our hearts. Has said in these darkened human hearts, let light be. Shined into our hearts with what object? To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

For those of you who have heard this before and heard me say it before, bear with me as I just say it, for this moment with that word glory. Oh yes, it was objective glory for Saul of Tarsus, he saw. But what is that glory? What is the glory of God? What is the glory of God? We've been hearing in the second session about the God of glory appearing to Abraham.

What is the glory of God? The glory of God is his absolute satisfaction with anyone or any situation. When God is satisfied, something emanates from him. You know that in simple ways in Christian experience? If there's something over which you may have had a battle, a real battle, you've got through to what the Lord has been trying to get you to, and the battle is over, and you're responsive wholly to the will of God, what happens? Oh, such a sense of blessedness inside, isn't it? The fight is finished, the battle is over.

There's rest and peace and joy within, that's death and now. That's glory. That's glory.

Because it's on the way to that ultimate accomplishment of the whole will of God in a humanity, when the glory will be universal, God is satisfied. You see, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ just means this. The Lord Jesus was so satisfying to the very nature of God, that there was about him something of peace and rest and joy, carried with him the satisfaction of God.

I do always those things which are pleased. That's the glory. Don't think of glory just as this object is shining, blazing something.

Think of it shining into your heart. It's in the face of Jesus Christ, that is. Oh, how can I explain it? I want a morning on this alone.

It is just this. That inside, we've come to the place where we are satisfied with the Lord Jesus and meet the satisfaction of God. Isn't that it? Not what I am, but what thou art.

That, that alone can be my soul's true rest. Thy love, not mine. That's glory.

St. Paul says, God carried out this new spirit in my heart, in your hearts, Corinthians. He shone in. He said, let light be.

And there was light. But it was a light that was never on land or sea. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Now that, I say, is the spring of ministry. The spring of ministry. What is it? What is the ministry? What do you mean by ministry? Get your revised version now, mentally, about this.

Ministry is the outshining of Jesus Christ from our life. That's all. That's all.

You don't need to have complications. You don't need to have any artificial or mechanical means. You may study a Bible and you may give the most wonderfully organized and arranged Bible readings, but the question is, is that ministry? Or are you emanating Christ? Are you translating Christ? Is Christ coming through? Are people sensing Christ? Not your study.

Not your library. Not your commentaries. Not your versions.

Not your translations. Which so many keep always in view, and you know where it came from. There was a preacher who was always quoting without giving the source of his quotation.

This book, that book, this authority, that authority. And there was a man sitting in front of him who knew it all, knew where he got it from. And every time he made a quotation, he gave the author.

But that's not all. The preacher got so annoyed with this man, he said, I do wish you would be quiet. And the man said, himself.

Well, if we're laughing at ourselves, it's all right. You see the point? Where has this come from? Where did we get it? How did we get it? I'm not saying Bible study is wrong. But I'm saying, through it all, has Christ appeared? And is he appearing? And you may be a preacher, a Bible teacher of renown, and it may stop there.

The question is, whether I'm officially that, or just a humble member of Christ, without any public gift at all, without any human ordination, I can be ministering Christ. In some way, ministering Christ. And that's the ministry.

That's the ministry. That, I say, is the source of the ministry. And the apostle is making it that.

It began in me. And it's going on in me. And all that I have to say to you, you believers, is what I am seeing of the Lord Jesus, growing inward, unveiling of God.

Now, how does, that's the source of the ministry. That's the source of all ministry, from beginning to end. How does the ministry grow, proceed? And this, these letters, and especially the second letter to the Corinthians, is going to touch us quite deeply, acutely, I think, on this matter.

The procedure of ministry, the growth of ministry. How? How? More study? More books? Is it? Oh no. Oh no, dear friends.

That's not the way of growing, continuing ministry. And ministry has got to grow all the time. Deepen and enlarge all the time.

How, would you please? Not just at this moment, but again, pick up your second letter to the Corinthians. And before you have got very far, indeed, almost immediately, you're in that letter, you come on some words, which are repeated, repeated, again and again. What are they? Affliction, consolation, affliction, consolations.

Underline those words. Right at the beginning of the second letter. And in that connection, the apostle brings forth his own great experience.

I would have you know what befell so great a death. We had the sentence that it was death. We despaired of life.

We were pressed out of our measure. Then right through that letter, the apostle is constantly striking that note of sufferings, sufferings, sufferings. We have this treasure, which is this ministry, the revelation of Jesus Christ in our heart, we have it in vessels, and I like the literal translation, of fragile clay, capable of being broken and smashed, beyond our measure of endurance, even unto despair, we despair of life.

And then he'll give us a couple of catalogues of his afflictions. My, you ought to sit down and think about death, if you're thinking about ministry. All that he himself met, encountered, and went through, from center to circumference, at the center, at the center, was unfaithful, disloyal, and treacherous brethren.

Moving out from that center, in every large and circles, the many implications in this letters were the statement of what people were saying about him. He wasn't a true apostle. He's not one of the twelve.

He never saw Jesus after the resurrection. He's not a true apostle. He is an imposter.

He is a deceiver. As deceiving, remember, as deceiving, and yet, and yet, he is the, just going round, cadging. This is implied, they're getting money from Christians, as poor, yet making many rich.

See, all these are implications, a whole list of them. And if any man, if any man has suffered, I more than them all, then he speaks of the many times he was in prison, how many times he was, he received the stripes, how many times he was in the deep, and shipwrecked, and in the deep, how many times he was in hunger, and in nakedness, and in peril. See, man, robbers, and fellow Christians.

It's a terrible double list that he gives in these chapters of 2 Corinthians. Read them again. No wonder that word has such a large place at the beginning, the afflictions of Christ which abound unto us, that the confirmation is awful.

That's the ministry. That's how it goes on. You say, how, how am I to be a minister? How can I be an effectual minister? How can my ministry grow? I will tell you this.

It will not be by your running around trying to get open doors for ministry. It will not be by your telling, talking about yourself and what you've got with, you know, that thought behind, this will open a way for me. Oh, that's not a very pleasant realm, is it? No, not that way.

How will the ministry grow, proceed, deepen and become more fruitful? Will you? Will you dare to really say to the Lord, Lord, make my life a ministry of Christ? Will you dare? I wonder if you're going out of the ministry now. Going to withdraw, resign. Believe me, dear friends, if the apostle is representative, and if those servants of God who have been most spiritually fruitful, not who have done the biggest organizations, but the most spiritually fruitful, we'll touch that at another point in a minute.

If these are really true ministers of Jesus Christ, look at the background of their life, the secret sufferings, that hidden history with God under his hand. Those periods when even a man like this man, Paul, perhaps the greatest minister that Christ ever had, will say, I despaired. I despaired of life.

I was pressed beyond my measure of endurance. That's how the ministry grows. If you're going to be a true minister of Christ, ministering Christ, he's going to take you into some deep experiences.

There is an experience that you will discover something that is going to be of great value to others. Great value to others. It is the crucified and suffering servant of God who is really the fruitful one.

Of whom you can say, that man is not talking out of his library from his books, that man knows what he's talking about, he's been there. He has been in it. This has come out of the travail of his soul.

That's how the ministry grows. Read 2 Corinthians again. In the light of that, it grows.

Oh, I say these things to you, but God only knows how I hold my breath. We do know. If the Lord has done anything at all, so little, so little, it's been by a hard way.

It's been by a hard way. The afflictions of Christ that we might know the consolations of Christ. And what do people want? Information or consolation? I know what your answer is over there.

I want you to notice that this is something terrific in the whole cosmic realm. But after all, dear friend, ministry is not just limited to the people to amongst whom we move. This kind of ministry, and you may not appreciate the word, is cosmic ministry.

What do I mean? Well, I mean this. The God of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, left as a precaution, as a move, a strategic move, left the light of the knowledge of the glory of God should shine upon them. If our gospel is hid, it is hid in them that are perishing, in whom the God of this age.

What is such a ministry? It is the undoing of that devilish work of spiritual blindness. Oh, spiritual blindness is not just natural, it's satanic. And you've got to have something that strikes there beyond the merely natural conditions.

Strikes right home to the source of that condition. He has blinded. He has blinded.

He is the God of this world. And the trouble at Corinth, the trouble at Corinth, as the whole of the first letter shows, is that the world has laid its deadly paralyzing hand upon those people. The world, do remember, dear friend, do remember this, and it's a tremendous thing to say, but it is true that the old humanity lies under a curse.

That sound strong? But have you never said this, a cursed self? It's this accursed self that's in the way all the time. Perhaps you do not use strong language like that, but that's what it is, isn't it? Oh, yes, that humanity lies under a curse from the beginning. And this world lies under a curse.

It lies under a curse, which means that that humanity and this world can never go through to God's end as it is. The end of that humanity and of this world is what? Destruction, removal, right from the face of God. Paul saw this controlling influence, the world of Corinth had come into the church of Corinth.

In its mentality, its manner and procedure, how the world does it, how the world does it. What does the world do? Well, let somebody do somebody else wrong, and that wrong person is away to the court to get his rights. That's how the world does it.

That was Corinth. So I could go on. Oh, yes, our natural man lies under a curse.

Our old humanity lies under a curse. It cannot, because God has put his veto on it. It cannot receive the things of veto.

And this world is vetoed as to God's things. And who has done it? The God of this age, prince of this world. And when God breaks in, I don't know whether Pember is right or wrong.

I think there's a lot of truth in what he says that the condition that we find at the beginning of the book of Genesis, darkness, the chaos, and so on, was a judgment upon a former creation. Well, if you like that, all right. But God said, let there be light, because darkness is not of God, it's of the devil.

And here we have it in the spiritual part. He has blinded, the God of this age, blinded and brought into darkness this old humanity. And when God says, let there be light, the work of the devil is undone, but judgment is removed.

And that should be the effect of ministry. The ministry of Christ should be out of darkness into light. And you remember, you remember the commission to the apostle at the beginning, just a little secret.

The first sermon that ever I preached was on these words, to whom I send them, to turn them from darkness to light. That's the right translation, not that, no, rather that's the wrong translation. The right is that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive an inheritance.

This is ministry. The turning from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, to have an inheritance which they lost in Adam, this very fool. That should be the impact and influence of our presence as ministers of Christ.

You know, when he was present, he did say a lot of things. He did preach, mostly to his disciples, preparing them for their work ahead. But it was not only what he said.

If it was as much what he said as it was his personal presence, he would come somewhere. He hadn't said anything. When demons cried out, I know thee whom thou art, the Holy One of God, they could not hold their peace.

His presence drank. His very presence was an exposure of man, an exposure of Satan, his presence. And that is the ministration of Christ, O Lord, make us ministers.

Make me a minister as far as I can bear it. That the impact, the impact of registration, the influence of people moving into the light, moving into the light, really seeing the light in an inward way, are the light not of truth, or even of scripture to begin with, but through the light of Jesus Christ. That's all I have time to say this morning about ministry, unless I add this word again from Corinthians.

The test of ministry is in its eternal value. Now the apostle associates the two things, affliction and eternal value. He says, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us far more exceeding an eternal weight of glory, while, now don't stop there, get your conjunction, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

For the things which are seen are temporal, passing, transient, but the things which are not seen are eternal. The test of our ministry is perhaps not going to be what we see in our own lifetime, but what is afterward, going on for eternity. Don't you want, when you get to glory, to discover that you meant far more than you knew you did? There's a great deal more value in your being here than ever you saw.

Oh, this soul life of the old humanity does want to see. It's always doing things to see. See the results, see, while we look not at the things which are seen.

I think this is one of the most testing words in the Bible to the old man, isn't it? How can we live on what is not seen and what is in the eternal future, and be satisfied? That's not the old humanity, but it is the new. The eternal man. Now I'll go on for a little while to the next.

The nature and purpose of the church, now and in the ages afterward. That's big, isn't it? And here again we need a revised version. A revised version of what we mean when we speak of the church.

I suppose few men have talked and written more about the church than I have. But on this very thing, I find that I am being forced, forced to a revision. Not to abandon what has been said, taught, and believed, and acted upon.

But as we go on, a great deal that we did at the beginning of what we called our church teaching, a great deal has, shall I say, broken down. Well, what are you finding about the church today? Begin with, you may be saying, where is it? And looking around everywhere, is this the church? God help us. This doesn't come up to Ephesians.

Far from it. It's very much more like Corinthians. What is it? What is its function now, and in the ages to come? Because, you know, Paul always links those two.

Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all ages forever and ever. Function of the church afterward, as well as now. Well, of course there are various symbols of the church.

Church is called the house of God. It is called a temple. It is called the body of Christ.

It is called the bride. So on. Are these different things? No.

There are only aspects of one thing. Each of those definitions or designations or titles is only a functional aspect of the church. House of God.

House of God, place where he lives. Temple of God, where he is worshipped. Body of Christ, the vessel of a personality.

Should I grammatically say this is not I? No. No. The I is inside.

A lodger for the time being. The I will go. Body will stay.

Body of Christ, a function. A many-sided function of the expression of the personality. That's all.

It's an aspect. The bride, not some other entity. As some people teach.

Not some other entity. Only expression of the affectional relationship. Christ loved the church.

Gave himself for it. So ought husbands to love their wives. The affectional relationship between Christ and his church.

These are symbols of the one thing. Of which these are but aspects. That's what we've got to come to.

Our revision of mentality has to take place. What is the inclusive designation? You have it in Ephesians, which is of course the great church letter. He has broken down the middle wall of partition.

Between Jew and Gentile, racial, human, divisions, compartments. He's removed the division and has made of the twain what? One new man. Got it now? The inclusive designation is a man.

One new man. A new humanity. A new humanity.

You understand what I mean when you have to have your mentality revised? How many people say on Sunday morning we are going to the house of God? What do you mean? We're going to church. What do you mean? This is traditional Christianity. The way it's gone you see.

Oh we all say these things. It's the way it's talked about. But it's a mentality.

What is the church? It is the aggregate of new creation people. Men and women, Jews, Gentiles, everything. Not remaining as they are naturally, Jews and Gentiles and so on and so on.

But just one new man. One new humanity. That is the church.

And what humanity is it? That touches on the function doesn't it? There's the nature. There's the nature. Oh do take this dear friends.

Do take this to heart. What is God doing? What is he after? Is he after making a new institution called the church? A new ecclesiasticism? Something that has a denominator amongst men? The, may I, the Baptist church? The Methodist church? The Presbyterian church? What a contradiction in terms. Any of them.

Pentecostal church. I must say these things in order really to get this revision through. This mental revision.

This heart revision. Is God doing that? Is that what God is doing? Not a bit of it. He's not in it at all.

He's only with the people. Not with the thing. But God is doing in this spiritual way what he did at the beginning.

He is saying and proceeding. Proceeding with his concept. Let us make man.

Let us make man. The church is the one new man. Let us make a man.

Not an institution. Or any of these things that the church is called. No, let us make a man.

Because that's what he's doing with you and with me. He's not trying to make of us any of these many things. Christians are called and named by which they go.

He's just getting to work on us to constitute us the man. You remember what we said at the beginning? He called them man and woman. He called them man.

Here, in this, and sisters be careful how you take what I'm going to say now. There is neither male nor female. How that is used today.

But I say, no, here it's a man. That is, it's a humanity. It's a humanity.

I can't explain to you because I don't know what that humanity is going to be afterward in glory. Jesus answering a question about marriage and repeated marriages. Whose wife, a certain woman, a certain man would have out of all he'd married afterward.

Jesus said, ye do err in the resurrection. They neither marry nor are given in marriages. But I'll ask the angel.

Well, that gets me out of my depth. But you see, it's a kind of humanity that's different. That's different.

All the questions will arrive. Shall I know my husband in heaven? Shall I know my wife in heaven? All right. All right.

Wrestle with that if you like. But we shall know. In a way in which it's far better to know.

However precious may have been the human relationship. Husband, wife, wife and husband. Here precious.

Very precious. Oh, isn't it better when a husband and wife know each other in the spirit than in the flesh? At the best. Oh, isn't it lovely when they flow together? I'm sorry for any man whose wife does not flow together with him and be his help.

Meet. Really helping him but is all the time trying to draw things to herself. Or the other way around.

To flow together. By one spirit. One vision.

One objective. That their united lives will manifest Jesus Christ. In the home and in the neighborhood.

There's something very precious about that, you know. I had a son. The Lord took three or four years ago.

He was my son. As my son. Well, we had a good relationship.

There was no strife between us as father and son. Son and father, difficult to talk. But, but he and I had such spiritual fellowship that I could open my heart to him as fully as I could to anybody.

And more than to most people. He was not only my son. He was my spiritual friend.

You know what I'm talking about. That's how we're going to know. And it'll be a better kind of knowing.

Don't worry then. Oh, you will. Then shall I know.

Even as I have been known by the Lord. Let's get on. The vocation of the church now and in eternity is going to be just the emanation of Christ.

The emanation of Christ. It is now intended to be that. God help us and help the so-called church.

Oh, it is not this and that and one or more of a hundred things that are the idea about the church today. It all, it is all boiled down to this one thing. The presence of a different kind of man in the individual and collectively.

Taking it universally. Are you not impressed with how Peter, having passed through the great transition from the old Jewish humanity, has got right through after his battles with the Gentiles, Caesarea and Cornelius' house. After his battle down at Antioch, well, when James and the elders came down to Jerusalem, he withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles.

The simulation, Paul called it. When he got through it all, thank God Peter got through it all. What did he say? Opening his letter, wonderful, to the saints scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia and Athenia.

Ying, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Athenia. You are all scattered. The dispersion has taken place and you are all scattered you saints and yet you are a spiritual house.

One house. Not so many houses, one house everywhere. What is this? It is where the Lord is dwelling in men and women, in men and women.

The church universal according to the divine concept is just one man in the earth. It is wonderful, isn't it, how we discover that when we meet somebody we have never met before and they are the Lord's. Until you begin to ask or they begin to ask what you belong to, you just begin to talk about things of the Lord, oh, one man, one blessed man.

Well, that is very elementary, isn't it? It is very simple, but that is what the church is universally, that is what the church is locally, locally. People come in to the local company, they don't come in and say, well, this is how they behave, this is what they do, they have baptism, they have the Lord's table and they have this form of worship. No, these things may be alright, they may have their place, they may be a part of a divine order, but what is it they are to meet? Not our baptism, not our Lord's table, not our method of procedure, not our technique, God is in this place, they meet the Lord.

They may not be able to put it like that, they may not be able to define it, explain it, but the impress is something there. Well, these people have got life, these people are in the good of something that you won't find anywhere else, that I haven't found anywhere else, so we put it that way, it's the Lord. Oh, that all our local companies were just like that, whatever way we go on, the thing that impresses, the Lord is here, the Lord is here.

I've moved from the universal to the local company, I'm going to move down to the individual, to the Corinthians, the apostles say, don't you know your bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you? I am a microcosm of the church, or intended to be a microcosm of the church. What is it? What is true of the universal? It's true in my case, it's Christ that people, when they meet me, need I say any more this morning? I think that's enough. Very much more of course could be said.

Time has gone, it's enough, I can say more in a half an hour than you can live out in a life, but here it is. What broke upon this man Paul's heart was not something that he studied up, read up, worked out in his mind, he saw Jesus as Lord. And all this, all this, and I'll say this, you don't know anything about the church if you haven't seen Jesus Christ, however much you've read and talked about it, if you have not seen him, you don't know what the church is, if you have seen him.

And he is a lifetime of seeing, you see him, you begin to see and go on to see what the church really is. It's not a thing and it, it is a him, it is a person who is dwelling in persons, that's the church. Make the truth live in us.

Oh Lord, may that divine fear take place, light shine into our hearts, the eyes of our understanding be enlightened, we may see light in thy light, for thy name and glory and satisfaction, Amen.

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