

Service and Servanthood of the Lord - Part 3 of 8

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the significance of servanthood and the empowering role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus and every believer.

Duration: 38:04

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Servanthood"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a higher realm in this world that counts for something. He highlights that Jesus, as the servant of the Lord, had no patronage or influential friends, yet he was significant and made an impression wherever he went. The speaker refers to various Bible verses, including Isaiah 42:1-4 and Isaiah 61, to illustrate the qualities and mission of Jesus as the anointed one. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to be led and governed by the Holy Spirit, rather than seeking attention or assuming artificial leadership.

Transcript

I turn again to the prophecies of Isaiah, prophecies of Isaiah, in chapter 9, at verse 6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end. On the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever, zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.

Chapter 61, 61, Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn, and so on. We are being engaged in this conference at present with the Servant of the Lord.

Basic fragment is from chapter 41 of these prophecies, Behold My Servant. When we put these two passages that we have read together, a question arises. If he was all that which we have in chapter 9, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace, if he was all that, why was it

necessary for him to be anointed with the Holy Spirit? For it is the same person in chapter 61 as in chapter 9. Is not that description of him the description of one who is perfectly self-sufficient? What could be added to that? What necessity had he to be anointed with the Holy Spirit? And of course the answer is found in the chapters between those two, and especially in what we have called the Servant chapters.

The Servant of the Lord, the capacity in which he came into this world, as he took upon him the form of a bond slave. His life, ministry, work here were not in virtue of his essential deity, not in the virtue of his personal inherent Godhead. But here, as a man, servant-wise, everything was done, and his whole life lived in virtue of an endowment, an anointing.

He himself very forcefully repudiated and undercut any idea that he was able to do or to say anything out from himself. Even in speaking of himself as the Son, he was emphatic in saying, and repeatedly saying, the Son can do nothing out from himself. Yet, he described himself as meek and lowly in heart.

And that is the language of dependence, not of self-sufficiency. And here is something, dear friends, which it is very important for us to recognize, and especially so for ourselves. Jesus was different from other men, and he was more than other men.

That difference was either definitely recognized and noted, or it was subtly sensed by the people of his day. He was different. He was different in his mental faculties, his wisdom and knowledge and understanding were of a different order.

It was not of the schools. Whence hath this man this knowledge, having never been taught? In other words, having never been in the school. The most subtle attempts to trap him and ensnare him in arguments and to corner him by the best brains of the nation found them very quickly in the corner, and he out in the open.

And they had to go away again and again, completely worsened, but it was of another order. It was different. This difference was found in his spiritual faculty, his discernment, his perception, how often it is said, and Jesus perceiving their thoughts, for anything was said.

Knowing what was in their heart, his judgment of situations, it was different. The difference was found in his sympathetic faculties, his understanding of people. Not a lot his disciples owed to his understanding of them.

His understanding, his compassion, his forbearance and patience, he was different. Ask yourself how you would have acted, even in the case of the Twelve, but it is written over all their difficult make-up, over all the trouble that he had with them. Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them to the end.

He was different. And I think we could say that he was different in his physical capacity, his powers of endurance, and what he achieved in so short a time, even physically, is a study in itself. We knew his nights of prayer without any relaxation, continuous drain upon him.

It made its mark, we know. Nevertheless, there is something different here in every part of his being, that is what I am saying. And then, he had a significance amongst men which was unmistakable.

This one signified something. He was not lost in the multitude and in the mass, but he was unmistakably significant. He made an impression, there was an impressiveness which was unavoidable wherever he

went.

Yes, he was different, and he was more. And yet, and yet, let it be clearly understood, that it was all derived, it was all derived. It was not just a man, but it was a man with God united.

It was a man who was not himself extraordinary, but was extraordinary because in the anointing, God had joined himself with him as a man. And it is not here, I am saying, his essential inherent deity. It is his manhood with God added.

It was derived. And from beginning to end, he was in a state of complete dependence upon that other than himself. That is not true, then he cannot help us.

But that is true, and that is just where he does help us. Yes, he was not just an extraordinary man amongst men. He was a man, but a different man.

There was this difference. In him was recovered the man that God intended every man to be. And God never intended every man to be God or deity.

God intended from the beginning to have man with himself in union. Here he is. Here he is.

The man of God's original intention and thought recovered. Hence there are two things that the Bible, shall we say the Holy Spirit, takes very great care to make clear about him. The first thing is the demoting of him of all things which other men require for significance.

For having or taking on any significance, other men must have certain things. Well, they must have education. The education of the schools.

They must have money or riches. They must have perhaps wealth, and what that means. Position.

Important friends and helpers. Friends at court. Influence and work on their behalf.

Patronage. Or they must be possessed of forcefulness, of personality, and assertiveness. All these things are the things and others with them that other men must have, some or all, to give them significance.

Take all these things away and the very foundations of human accountableness are removed. But what we have is a very careful and meticulous and thorough demoting of him of all those things. He hadn't one of them.

He was a root out of a dry ground. That is as to where the house of David had come. So that all that had been in the past generations was now dried up.

He had nothing by birth. Only something remote from his present position. He had no riches.

Work a miracle to pay a tax had no riches. He had no education in the academic sense. They recognized this, having never learned.

No doubt he as a boy did his amount of schooling, but that is not the thing we're talking about. It's this higher realm that you must have in this world if you're going to count for something. No, he had no patronage.

He had no influential friends. No friends at court. And these other personal things were lacking.

No forcefulness of his own assertiveness. Listen, behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon him. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

Bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking frank shall he not quench. That's not personal assertiveness and forcefulness and obtrusiveness and ostentatiousness, quietness, reserve, gentleness. No, all this from birth to cross is one story of how utterly lacking in his case were all those things which go to make a man important in this world, to give him any significance.

And yet he was more significant than all the others. But his significance, his accountableness rested upon nothing in this world. Rested upon another basis altogether.

How meek and lowly he was. How unassuming, unassuming, unobtrusive, yet how forceful. All that I have said, to which much more could be added about the impact and registration of this man in this world, could not be exaggerated.

He, in a phrase, could not be hid. Sometimes tried to hide himself. He just could not be hid in that right sense.

The second thing that is made so clear about him is the place that the Holy Spirit had in his life from birth onward. Everything is attributed to the Holy Spirit from infancy to manhood and then in his public work from the Jordan onward. It's all attributed to the Spirit.

His whole significance then is made perfectly clear as resting upon the Holy Spirit and not upon what he was himself as man. I know the dangerous and delicate ground that I'm on, but you will have sufficient understanding, I'm sure, to see what I mean. Yes, and in the last terrible moments, the momentary withdrawing of the Spirit, momentary but very real, the momentary withdrawing of the Spirit, his forsakenness found him as capable of despair and brokenheartedness as any other man.

He tasted the despair that any other man can know and outside of Christ will know when made fully alive to separation from God. It's all that. But what is the message for us? What is the message for us? And it has a message for us.

Firstly, this same anointing is the new birthright of every consecrated believer. No mistaking that if you read your New Testament. The Holy Spirit is the birthright of every born again and consecrated child of God.

Same Spirit. And that means that if we have that same Spirit as he had, and he has only recovered to God the kind of man that God ever intended us to be, we have received the Spirit. That Spirit gives a significance to us which is other than more, which is different and extra.

Every child of God and every consecrated believer ought to be different and more than other people as he was. John says, as he is, so are we in this world. Should be like that? Every one should take on a significance that is different and that is more, if you like, that is super-human or super-natural.

That is more and other than we are when we are not born again. Perhaps that means very little emphasis, but you see where that leads us. This is a fact.

I do want you to take hold of it and believe it. Grasp it in faith that in union with the Lord by the Holy Spirit, you and I are supposed in our very constitution by new birth to be different from others and more than others with faculties that are different and that are more. It is the birthright, it is not the extra gift, it is the birthright ought to be in us by second nature, the second nature being the divine which comes by the Holy Spirit.

But note, this significance is unique. It cannot be accounted for on any natural ground whatever. The child of God, the Holy Spirit indwelt and governed believer is inscrutable as he was.

They just could not get to the bottom of him. They were defeated in every attempt to understand and explain him. They had again and again when they tried to reduce him to their level, bring him within their compass, they had to just give it up and go away.

Something here is not of that with which we are familiar. It is different. It is a significance that is unique.

It is not just natural. What does this amount to? Well dear friends, it amounts to this. It means this so far as we are concerned.

That there should not really be one insignificant person in the family of God. That on one side. Will you, will you believe that? Will you take hold of that? That there should not be one insignificant member of this family.

In so many local families there are always many who are just occupants of the chairs, just there, whose voices you never hear in prayer or worship, whose presence may or may not mean much. I do want to say to you all that from God's standpoint, you matter. You matter.

You count. And you are intended to count. Do you really believe, do you really believe that if the Holy Spirit of God is in you, resident within you, that makes no difference and gives you no greater value? Do you really believe that? Are you quite ready to accept that you don't count? You are an insignificant person.

It doesn't matter very much or anything at all. The very, the very truth of the anointing forbids any such idea. But note, this significance is not something put on.

God forbid that anything that I should say should have the effect of making you assume some position and try to be something. There is no need to assume. There is no need to presume.

There is no need to pretend. There is no need to pose. There is no need to assert yourself.

You need not take on uniform or voice or anything else to take on the highest significance. These are all the artificial ways of making people important and bringing them into prominence. Or they're trying to gain some notice.

It's all false. You need nothing of that at all. You may be the humblest.

You may have nothing by birth, nothing by education, nothing by your status, nothing at all of wealth or of popularity or even of personality and you may count more than those who have all those things without this, the indwelling Spirit. And you're supposed to. It is spontaneous and it is unconscious.

It's unconscious. You need not try to be a leader and take on the ways of a leader and the voice and so on. Something fails, opposes.

Get rid of all that. If the Spirit of Christ is in you and you are under the Holy Spirit's government, though all unconsciously there's a significance about you and an influence and a meaning in your life that is more than that of all those who have all the other things without the Spirit. We need to be redeemed from our inferiorities as well as from our superiorities and come to this basis of the servant of the Lord who wrought so mightily in his servanthood.

In his servanthood, not as a despot, not as one of the world's monarchs, not as one of the peers of knowledge and education, worldly wisdom. Not in any of those capacities but as a servant, leaving his mark upon this world, a servant, a bond-slave. Oh, what a bond-slave, just leaving an impressive mark.

But all unconscious. That's the holy thing about it. Immediately we become self-conscious in any work of the Lord.

Drawing attention to ourselves or assuming something becoming artificial. We just do death's right to this Spirit. But all unconsciously led and governed by the Spirit.

If we were asked to define it, the only thing that could be said is, the Lord is with him, the Lord is with her. That's all. You meet the Lord.

What an immense thing that is to be able to say that about anybody. The Lord is with them. That is the essence of significance.

That is the very meaning of leadership. We are not looking for and to take on all those things which men regard as marks of leadership. We are looking for men and women of this kind.

One thing, you go to the Bible, you'll find that that's the definition of all leadership, the explanation for all leadership, the Lord was with you. The Lord was with you. It's not just natural.

In many cases, the natural was lacking, but they counted. In other cases, there were many natural things there, but their leadership could not be attributed to that. They wouldn't have got through, Moses would not have got through with all the learning of the Egyptians, unless the Lord had been with him.

With it all again and again he was at the point of despair and breaking down. The Lord is with the Lord, and so it was with the Lord Jesus. I think now to you that he worked and lived and got through to the end because of what he was as a man in himself.

The verdict of the apostle about him was, for God was with him. For God was with him. For himself, he said, the spirit of the Lord is upon me.

All that followed was that. Mighty, counsellor, father of eternity, wonderful, and all the rest which gave him his real significance. I say again, dear friends, there should not be spiritual and not natural.

It is heavenly and not earthly. It is more. It is other.

May the Lord make us all, everyone, a significant one in the right sense.

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