

The Centrality and Supremacy of Christ (Galatians 1:15,16)

by T. Austin-Sparks

The centrality and supremacy of Christ is the key to overcoming the Devil and achieving deliverance.

Scripture: Galatians 1:15

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "The Supremacy of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the centrality and supremacy of Christ in the believer's life, arguing that true Christian activity should focus solely on preaching Christ rather than promoting movements, institutions, or teachings. He asserts that the church's existence is contingent upon the revelation of Jesus Christ, and that a genuine inward revelation of Christ is essential for unity and victory over spiritual adversaries. Sparks highlights that believers must recognize Christ's authority over sin and darkness, and that true victory comes from understanding and appropriating Christ as our perfection and salvation. He encourages believers to shift their focus from their struggles to the sufficiency of Christ, as the Holy Spirit works through our faith in Him.

Transcript

"It pleased God... to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him" (Gal.1:15,16)

1. Everything Tested by Inwardness

Since Paul's day so very much of Christian activity has been the furthering of a movement, the propagating of a teaching, and the furthering of the interests of an institution. It is not a movement, nor to establish a movement in the Earth and to get followers, adherents, members, support. It is not an institution, even though we might call that institution the church. The church has no existence in the thought of God apart from the revelation of Jesus Christ, and it is judged according to the measure in which Christ the Son of God's love is in evidence by its existence. It is not a testimony, if by that you mean a specific form of teaching, a systematized doctrine. No, it is not a testimony. Let us be careful what we mean when we speak about "the testimony". We may have in our minds some arrangement of truth, and that truth couched in certain phraseology, form of words, and thus speak about "the testimony"; it is not the testimony in that sense. It is not a denomination, and it is not a "non-denomination", and it is not an "inter-denomination". It is not Christianity. It is not "the work" - oh, we are always talking about "the work": "How is the work getting on?" - we are giving ourselves to the work, we are interested in the work, we are

out in the work. It is not a mission. It is Christ! "...That I might preach Him." If that had remained central and preeminent all these horrible disintegrating jealousies would never have had a chance. All the wretched mess that exists in the organization of Christianity today would never have come about. It is because something specific in itself, a movement, a mission, a teaching, a testimony, a fellowship, has taken the place of Christ. People have gone out to further that, to project that, to establish that. It would not be confessed; nevertheless it is true, that today it is not so much Christ that is our work.

Now beloved, an inward revelation is the cure of all that. Am I saying too hard a thing, too sweeping a thing? The existence of all that represents the absence of an adequate inward revelation of Christ. If Christ the Son of God's love is central and supreme in the heart of the believer so much else goes down, it must go down. Controversies with God will divide, but those artificial things, those things resultant from man's activity and his projecting of himself, insinuating of himself into the interests of God, those things cannot abide where there is an adequate inward revelation of the Lord Jesus; they cannot be. These two things are before us: one, because of the revelation of Jesus Christ in our hearts we have a passion for Him; on the other hand, because of the absence of a

sufficient revelation of Christ in our hearts we are out for other things which we would say are in His interests, and for Him, but which can never, never satisfy God's heart. It is the satisfaction of the heart of the Father, which is in view.

Beloved I am speaking about the individual. I am not justified, and you are not justified, in claiming to be Christians except in the measure in which Christ is manifested in me, in you; and all the force and weight and ingenuity of hell is out against that. Believers have far more to provoke them to un-Christ-likeness than anyone else in the world. Believers have far more assaults to churn them up and to make them betray Christ than anyone else. Hell is dead set against the revelation of Jesus Christ. Everything begins with this, the revelation of Jesus Christ within.

2. Christ - The Unifying Center and Object

As I have said before, if we have any other interest that we are trying to further, something that we call a testimony, perhaps meaning by that a system of teaching, or a fellowship, or a denomination, or the contrary, the opposite, any of these things, well, the history will still be more divisions, it is bound to be. If it is Christ, only Christ, central and supreme, we have the answer to the Devil; we have the secret of victory, we have the secret of fellowship, we have the power of His resurrection. Oh, how important it is for us to see that the body represents His victory. The body is His victory in the sense that it is the reversing of all independence, and that independence of spirit or action is a violation not only of the truth of the body of Christ, but of the power of His resurrection.

3. Our Place in Christ's Supremacy

It is necessary to carry the work of the cross to the full issue of Christ's absolute victory in the realm of all principality and power, in the realm of the authority of darkness. Forgiveness of sins is a great blessing, the atonement for our sins is a great blessing, and to be saved from hell at last and go to heaven is a great blessing. We would not minimize them for a moment or take from the greatness and grandeur of those things because of the infinite cost with which they were purchased for us, but I say again, it is necessary for us to carry the work of Christ through to its full issue, and its full issue lies in the realm of principalities and powers. It lies in the realm of the authority of darkness, the jurisdiction of darkness. That is important for the sinner to know, that it is not only a matter of being forgiven his sins and saved from sin, but that the

sinner should know that in salvation all the authority, the jurisdiction of principalities and powers, of the adversary, Satan himself, has been destroyed and broken, and out of that jurisdiction, that authority, that rightful hold of Satan, they have been rescued - rescued by Christ in His cross. It means that Satan has no more power because he has no more right. His power depends on his right, and his right is based upon the state of things in our hearts, and the cross deals with the state of things in our hearts and destroys or removes the ground of his right, and breaks his power.

Carry it right through. Now all that is in Christ for us. Christ in Himself embodies His supremacy over the adversary because in Him there is no one of that ground that that adversary must have upon which to encamp and construct his rightful authority to hold in bondage. In Christ there is no such ground; Christ is in us when we believe and the authority of Satan is broken because Christ is in us. Christ being in us there is no ground for the jurisdiction of Satan. To be delivered not only from sin (let me say it again) but also from the authority of Satan is a tremendous thing. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen..." (Rom.8:33,34). What is the value of that? The accuser comes along and tries to lay a charge against us. What is our ground of answer? Oh, our ground of answer is this: "It is Christ that died, and is also risen." That is the way to answer the accusation of the enemy. Christ has triumphed over sin and over all the ground of Satan's authority. You and I can never meet the enemy in ourselves. He would win the argument every time. But if we present him with Christ, what can he do? "The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me" (John 14:30). These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. What power does the devil have? In Christ's death and resurrection all his power has been destroyed. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom.8:33).

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:27). Do you follow that? That is the provision God has made, and if only we had a fuller, readier apprehension of Christ we should find that to be the way of victory. What is it that the Holy Spirit works upon in order to make the victory in us actual? It is not our struggles to be better. The Holy Spirit never helps us in a struggle to be better. We may struggle on forever, and die struggling, and the Holy Spirit will not help us if that is the way in which we think we are going to be either saved or sanctified. What is it with which the Holy Spirit will cooperate? It is our faith apprehension and appropriation of Christ as our perfection, as our salvation. "Oh," you say, "yes, but we are sinful and there is so much wrong about us; are we to close our eyes to our own faults and sins?" You are to open your eyes to Christ. Stop looking at yourself and your own sin and get your eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus as perfection for you to God, and from God to you, and as you take Him by faith - "Not what I am, O Lord, but what thou art" - "I in myself am bad. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing, but Lord, You are my salvation, You are my righteousness, You are my holiness, You are my sanctification, I hold on to You for all that" - the Holy Spirit makes that good to us. It is our appreciation of Christ that is the Holy Spirit's ground of activity; that is the way of deliverance.

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