

The Cross and the Two Humanities

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the significance of the cross in the Christian life, highlighting the distinction between tsutsi (natural) and pneuma (spiritual) humanity.

Duration: 1:08:54

Scripture: Acts 18:10, 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, 1 Corinthians 2:2, Hebrews 4:12-13

Topics: "The Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses a questionnaire that was sent to the apostle Paul by the church in Corinth. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the context in which the letter was written, highlighting that Paul spent two years in Corinth preaching and ministering. The speaker also emphasizes the centrality of the message of the cross in Paul's preaching, referencing passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:18 and 2:2. The sermon concludes by mentioning the power of the word of God, described as living and active, and its ability to pierce the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Transcript

Once more, O Lord, we ask for the miracle of the opening of the ear, the inner ear, the opening of the inner eye, that by the Spirit of the living God we may hear and see. For it is impossible for us to hear and see but for thy supernatural works, Lord Jesus. We pray for thy glory in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We are occupied with what the Apostle Paul in the end of his letter to the Galatians referred to as the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the opening and introductory time we just mentioned that in every book of the New Testament the cross is to be found in either a definite and positive statement or it is to be found by implication in what is written. That is, everywhere in the New Testament the cross in some way is kept in view.

And then we went on to break that up and in the letter to the Romans last night we were seeing the all-inclusiveness of the cross, how in that letter the cross is seen as touching every dimension, every realm, every sphere, every aspect of life. It all gathers into that letter and the cross is seen to be central to it all. Now after the all-inclusiveness we begin to break it down by looking at some of the letters as far as we are able to get this week, and that will not be very far.

And this evening we come to the first letter to the Corinthians, the cross in the first letter to the Corinthians and it is here in what I am going to call the cross and the two humanities. You need not be worried for a

moment about the title. You will understand before we are through, I think.

But let us just be reminded of how definite the cross is in this letter right at its early part in chapter 1 and verse 17, verse 18 For Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void. For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God. Unto us who are being saved the cross is the power of God.

In verse 23 But we preach Christ crucified. Chapter 2, verse 2 I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified to see how soon the apostle is on the basic matter of the whole letter. I want for a later purpose just to add to those passages the fragments known well to you from the letter to the Hebrew.

Chapter 4, verses 12 and 13 Beginning with a conjunction of very real significance as which we will look for, to which we will refer later. For, to give a continuation of something, for the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit of both joint and marrow and quick to discern the thought and intent of the heart and there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight. For the moment just note the thought of the heart.

Have you ever thought with your heart? Not the common way, is it, of speaking about thinking? So as to think with our head, the thought and intent of our heart. So just leave that for the time being. Now to the message and in order to really understand and to appreciate the place of the cross in this first letter to the Corinthians it is important, indeed it is essential that we know the situation to which the letter was addressed.

So with the briefest of introductory words let me remind you that the Apostle Paul was in Corinth for two whole years and what we know of him, about his visits and his ministry lead us to the very certain conclusion that he wasted no time during those two years. He did have a habit of preaching all night one young man of any race knew something about that. For two whole years the Apostle was there in Corinth and we may conclude that for hours on hours every day he was ministering.

Then he went away and he was away from Corinth for four or five years. During this time a very terrible deterioration in the situation the spiritual situation set in and rumors of it reached the ears of the Apostle brought by members of the household of Chloe evidently I think the servant in that household who visited the Apostle and brought the report of this sad and tragic spiritual deterioration. Apostle was dispatched and he went to Corinth to investigate and returned to the Apostle with the news that it was all too true.

The situation was indeed very bad and the Apostle sat down to write letters. He probably wrote three letters one possibly lost two we have and in the first letter which we are now considering the situation is uncovered the tragedy is exposed. We have this saddest perhaps most terrible of all the New Testament documents as to spiritual declension.

I pause there for the moment not rushing on to once more indicate that it is not the amount of teaching that you have that guarantees your spiritual growth. You and I would agree that if the Apostle Paul the Apostle Paul what we know of him were with us for two whole years every day pouring himself out as he said in another connection at another time making sure that they received the whole counsel of God. If the Apostle Paul had two years with us well that would settle the whole matter of our spiritual growth measure going on not necessary.

We are very, very little things compared with Paul here we are having ministry day after day three times a day. It's no guarantee of anything unless we learn the lesson that the Apostle comes to teach in this letter, this first letter by which such a terrible almost unthinkable result would ensue from his ministry. So he wrote the first letter and this letter does disclose a lot of terrible things.

You know what it contains about the behavior of these Christians the courage going into law before the world and the ungodly against one another. I'm not going to stay with all these details of the moral decline to such a low, low level almost unthinkable you might say the very lowest level of insect moral level. Divisions.

There are divisions among you. There are divisions among you. Well evidently some at Corinth were exercised about the situation and they had sent to the Apostle eleven questions for him to answer.

I read that to you. They're answered in this letter eleven questions.

But the point oh let it come home to us it's going to hurt us it really is going to hurt us it's going to pierce us if we listen and take heed it is going to be like the 2H poem listen then after all that ministry of such a man pouring out his heart perhaps night and day with tears because the Lord had said to him when he arrived in Corinth I have my people in this city I have now after all that out of the heart of this church there comes this questionnaire eleven questions are not not very profound matters indeed rather simple matters some of them you would think oh surely they they've got past that but the point is indicating indicating an almost utter lack of inward spiritual perception judgment understanding a lot of mental questions perhaps on practical matters but questions I dare

not say what I'm almost inclined to say no reason just is full of mental questions indicating how little we have inwardly our divine understanding well by the way that's how it is here it's a bad situation isn't it on almost every aspect of life and you would hardly think of the Christian life because there was a time when first handling this letter I said well are these people born again people at all is it possible that such people should be Christian that they that's the position to which the apostle addressed himself and look right at the outset of his addressing himself to the situation he introduces in this three fold way with such precision the cross I decommend I made up my mind I revolve to know nothing among you say Jesus Christ and him crucify now you got on to the the line you

see there these people were not on the line of the cross apparently and that was the reason for this situation that explains everything they were on another line that is what we are going to come to presently they were on another line and it was the line of this world brought within the area here of Christian thinking always the most dangerous thing with the terrible result because you would think that to be addressed like this really has no application so wait a minute please I'm not saying that in this congregation or in this company these sins are being perpetrated immorality of the grotesque type and form and other such things moral kind I don't know about division I know about division depends on what you mean you see after all divisions are in the spirit before they are on the

outside however leave it for a moment it may not be and it may yet be that some of these things are true whether all or few they represent a position a situation which is a denial of the cross and which will explain Corinthian position which is as Paul calls it a position of carnality which means why you haven't grown at all I could not speak to you as I'm the spiritual but as I'm the chronic we are yet they they after two years of his ministry like that and being left for another four or five years to work it out yes always still baby still baby as you would know you're not getting old what a terrible position and I say again whether that be

wholly or only partly the situation with us any of us we are in the presence of something that is going to be our deliverance from any such cause or

situation sooner or later that is why I express that little fragment we who are being saved the cross for those who are being saved you got that well now this whole letter just is built up upon two words two words which represent two different humanities two contrary kinds of people who can be in Christianity and who can be Christian I'm not talking now about saved and unsaved I'm talking about we who are in the cause of being saved who we got inside we're on the road and even so if this letter means anything even so after we have come in and are the Lord on this this mysterious ground mentioned by the apostles beginning of the letter so kind he is and generous unto the saints which are at college well I won't stop with that that's a wrong idea that's what a saint is a saint is two or

three weeks ago I came upon something that I thought was very good this matter of sainthood a mother took her little girl to a church building with stained glass windows and there were figures in the windows stained glass windows little girl looked to see said to her mother mother who are those people mother said oh they are the saints little girl put that in her mind and went away there to afterward the mother took the little girl to the home of the dear old child of God and it was a wonderful time with this old believer and when they came away the mother said to the girl she's a real saint stained glass windows and saints how can these those be saints and she thought and thought and she said oh I know I know now what a saint is a saint is one who lets the light through a saint is one

who lets the light through well I don't know how much these Corinthians were letting the light through but Paul said they were saints and the point is they were on the inside of the Christian community and on the inside you can have these two humanities represented by these two words which I'm going to give you keep you in suspense for a minute or two but I'm I'm wanting to lay a very sure foundation for what I'm saying I'm not just giving you doctrines proofs and theories I'm here to get right down to root of the Christian life that is what we all want isn't it we want reality alright these two words then that constitute this whole letter are the basis upon which everything that follows in the New Testament rests until that is settled which is represented by these two words you can't go

into 2nd Corinthians for that's a big advance upon 1st you cannot proceed to Galatians we're still moving on you cannot go into Ephesians or Philippians and Colossians with all that they represent are the minds and the thought of God for us we cannot go on to any of them until this issue is settled and herein I see the sovereign providence of God by the Holy Spirit putting this as the first practical application of the cross in the Christian life for I say upon this this rests everything that follows right to the end and this distinction represented by the two words explains the very incarnation itself it explains the baptism of the Lord Jesus it explains the anointing of the Lord Jesus with the Holy Spirit it explains the battle into which the Lord Jesus was precipitated with Satan and

his kingdom it explains the very cross itself including the resurrection it explains the advent of the Holy Spirit the very coming of the Holy Spirit and it explains the training under the Holy Spirit government of the life of the Christian that's a few things, isn't it fundamental to the Christian life, you got them all?

All those things are explained by the two words that I am going to remind you of and if I added one other thing to all those that I have mentioned I would add the building of the church because that comes here, doesn't it in chapter 3 other foundations in no man's way with the standard which is laid let every man take heed how he builds it's the building of the church and it's the building of the Christian life and there are two

possible issues, two possible issues connected with that building depends on what you put on it on the foundation would haste stumble going up in flames and smoke and you being saved get as by fire and all your life work would have gone up in smoke that's a terrible prospect do you possibly think that's possible for you for instance or on the other side stones,

soda, precious stones which I am not going to explain as symbols the things which will abide and secure not just being saved and creeping into heaven we have a way of saying in England I don't know whether you say it by the very skin of your teeth just getting in or having an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom these are the issues bound up with this basic distinction represented by these two words, are you ready now for them, here of course if you were reading your Greek New Testament you would be more impressed than with the English translations the Greek words are simply tsutsi, tsutsi or tsutsiko whole or Polish the other words pneuma or pneumatika pirit or pirit whole or pirit now in our translations that Greek word tsutsi or tsutsiko is translated natural but what we've

lost in that translation natural the natural as poor as this the natural ah no this is a species of humanity this is a kind of person or race holy humanity this isn't a very far prize it only describes a change of a letter from tsutsi to psychic getting nearer now a psychic or a holy full humanity or in contrast the contrast of a different species of being a spirit a people of spirit not just and only of soul I say the whole letter is built upon that contrast that distinction and that helps us write into this letter doesn't it why all this situation why this declension, this spiritual decline why this state of being why these quarrels and contentions and schisms and divisions this constant assertion of the ego I am a foe I am of a foe I am of he says I, for every one of you who says this,

I every one of you says I that's a kind of humanity it's the humanity of selfhood of the ego of the assertion of man's soul and you know what the assertion of the soul is or what the soul is look again into the legend you've got it so clearly defined their craving for worldly wisdom you know all that the apostle has to say right at the beginning of the letter about the wisdom of this world the wisdom of this world why talk to these people so much about wisdom of this world oh because they're very interested in the wisdom of this world the wisdom of this world philosophy if you like but they're too technical a term natural hical wisdom the wisdom of the soul which is just the intellectual realm to begin with intellectual Christianity covers a lot of ground a lot of things but just this

projecting of the mind into things with a thousand and one more than eleven questions curiosity and interest you know and playing with scripture in the mental way going out in the natural mind into the realm of the things of God and the apostle has something to say about that the intellectual side of the soul an intellectual Christianity a mental thing after all interest in Christian things in Christian truth in the bible all that has to do with Christianity an interest that is merely a mental interest not only that but you go from the intellectual and you find yourself immediately in the next sentence in the presence of another aspect of the soul that is the desire for power the desire for power ah look at the world today and you'll see what that means the desire is the lust for power

power politics power this and power that to have power in your hands to wield power in this world and over lives coming from yourself you're searching of yourself to get it and don't tell me that any one of us here, any one of us is not infected by that you will come to me someone will come to me and in a very humble and lowly voice tell me what a poor creature he is and all along that line in that tone and I'm listening more inwardly and what am I really hearing I'm hearing the murmuring of an inferiority conflict and an inferiority conflict is one of the most evident signs of the desire for power it is indeed an advanced creature who is

saved from this desire of being some body and something, or let me put it the other way, of not being ignored, not being ignored oh it's a testing thing

isn't it this being ignored taken no notice of walked over and walked past they didn't even look at me ah here's your desire for power, subtle and deep as the devil himself there is a false humility you know which is the essence of pride I thank thee Lord that I am not as other men that the boys are the hypocrites are the Pharisees of Christ this desire for power and the apostle puts his finger upon this in his letter power the power of God and the power of men are in two different realms all together and the power of God we see mainly in the weakness of the cross the cross because it is a symbol of human weakness is the symbol of heaven's mightiest power but how can men look at it like that but leave that a minute, coming back and another aspect of the soul the soulish humanity in the

emotions now you've got to be very patient with me, you really have to I'm going to get it in the emotions and that can be so much of the soul in the spiritual realm Paul says these people more than any others were blessed with spiritual gifts tongues and perish not what is this? are people like this? are people like this? boasting of their gifts flooring in their spiritual gifts are these powers no doubt so much in that realm that often they would obsess you and challenge you and put you really on the spot over it that if you haven't got these gifts well you're written off as a Christian the emotional aspect of this and let me say and this is where I get myself into trouble I've got to be patient spiritual gifts of this type are no necessary proof of spiritual character and spiritual

caliber you may have them all and be an immature child if this letter means anything they are not proof of spiritual maturity at all because the apostles had them before Calvary they healed the sick cast out the rest of it with divine power before ever the tragedy of their breakdown the crucifixion and their being patted all abroad and forsaking him and leaving him everyone they had this gift no guarantee of safety do you understand? to be just so much so little emotion and interest and fascination I'm not saying that there are no true spiritual gifts but you see where we are this is all on a natural basis after all in this Christian world this Christian life it could all be all this intellectual volitional emotional all this and yet such a poor spiritual condition and I'll get you down

to the word of God I wouldn't dare to say these things to myself but here it is this is a humanity on the other side over against that with such emphasis such emphasis the apostle places he that is spiritual the Corinthians who had so much teaching so much given to them of divine truth to them he says he that is spiritual is able to weigh things up and come to right heavenly conclusions about things he has spiritual judgment spiritual perception about this holical man the natural man is our translation cannot cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God he cannot know them it's only the spiritual man receives who understands through humanity it is hard to receive dear friends I don't think I'll be altogether wrong in saying there's a great deal of this kind of thing amongst Christians

Christians in the world today is not here it's like this the inconsistency the contradiction the limitation of spiritual life and understanding you can be evangelical in America you call it fundamentalist you can be that and not be a spiritual person I have met many who would lay down their lives for the fundamentals of the faith the deity of Christ the inspirations of Scripture and what not and I can't have any fellowship with them on the things of the Lord there's a bigger gap it seems to me between an evangelical Christian and a spiritual person as there is between an unfaithful and a faithful you know what I mean a really spiritual person where things flow you can talk and get on with the things of the Lord in the most blessed living fellowship it just comes out spiritual person and

with an evangelical Christian so often if you begin to talk about the Lord they raise their eyebrows and open their mouths so you're talking another language now that is not untruth that is truth there are many even in what is called the ministry leaders of God's people who you cannot have real spiritual fellowship on the things of God you can only just go so far they are interested in Christianity they are interested in foreign missions they are interested in things but when you want to get down really as spiritual food to your heart gratification you cannot get it they are evangelical right enough but they are not spiritual it's so difficult to get this over I think you have enough understanding to appreciate what I'm saying and this is the thing I put all those things you see on this

the very explanation of the incarnation is that God brought into this world a different humanity from ours another humanity of heaven and not of earth of God God and not of man another humanity which this world could not understand or follow or appreciate the world knoweth you not for it knew him not it knew him not the incarnation was the introduction of a different humanity a matter to dwell upon for many hours the incarnation, the baptism the baptism the baptism is the setting aside in a temporally of one kind of humanity and the bringing in of another Paul explains this he later says why bury something that's good don't do that no it's rejected it's a humanity that is discarded rejected by God unacceptable only place is burial bringing in of another humanity the anointing with all the

difference of two races between an anointed and an unanointed person wants a lot of dwelling upon doesn't he, what is the anointing well in a word it is God committing himself committing himself and to what does God commit himself, the anointing ah the battle you see immediately the battle set in after the baptism and the anointing and it was on one issue to try to get this man who has taken heavenly ground through death, burial and resurrection under the government of the Holy Spirit to get this man to go back onto natural ground, you think of it study it again, get him off his heavenly ground what a battle all through life that is with us come down is ever the word of the tempter, come down from the cross we will believe come down from that position you have taken come down, to your

advantage to come down, you gain everything only when you come down and how intense is that battle sometimes isn't it, when you are up against it, when you are on the cross in weakness and suffering and agony and alone the cross is meaning that to you the battle does raise to take easier ground, to sacrifice something, to compromise somewhere to get out of the offence of the cross as Paul calls it the battle the battle of two humanities what kind of person you are going to be of heaven or hell be the battle the cross gathers all this together again the Holy Spirit, why the Holy Spirit why the Holy Spirit what is your answer to this it is all being put into into little categories the Holy Spirit this and that if you don't do this you haven't got the Holy Spirit you don't know anything

about the baptism the Holy Spirit, why the Holy Spirit to make a different humanity of it a spiritual person a spiritual person by the Spirit of God may include many things but it's just that the difference in what we are by the Holy Spirit and then I spoke about the training what is the meaning of our training because as soon as we really get into the hands of the Spirit don't be discouraged in what I'm going to say John Christian if you are here you are in for it you are in for it you are in for real discipline, real training, you are going to get into a hard school for your natural life for your soul life now that is going to be real training what the writer called chasing child training discipline, oh what a hard school this is for the natural man when our soul life is being starved

the mental side I cannot understand, I cannot see why, I cannot explain the dealings of God my whole mental ability is haunted and frustrated and I just don't know what think about the nature of it yes your soul

being starved it's going to come through only only on the ground of your spiritual that's what the Lord is after get us away from living on things to living on himself alone the starvation of our emotions my word how we go into the deep freeze sometimes spiritually no am I saying wrong I don't want to cause anyone to stumble but there can be times, there can be times in the life of a child of God when he sees the Lord has departed from him, when you cry and I go, oh that I knew where I might find him I go on the right hand but he's not there nonetheless and he is not there, where

is the Lord today yes truth why well this is a part of the training of the new man a different kind of man the emotional emotions are sometimes frozen all your lovely feelings and you agree with the man who wrote, God forbid that we should invite it, but he did write where is where is the preciousness I knew when first I saw the Lord where is the soul refreshing view of Jesus in his world return oh holy God, return you felt like saying that sometimes oh it's a normal spiritual life nothing abnormal about that nothing really in the design or anything strange about that this is normal to anybody who is going right on with the Lord you'll have these times when the whole of you is in great distress and your only way out and through will be what you know of the Lord in your spirit how much

spiritual life you have how much spiritual measure you have yes he is working in our dreams by setting aside this natural holy, full, spiritual life and building up the spiritual those are the two words representing true humanity now you see, the cross is introduced this is not my philosophy, my construction, this is just what is here in this letter I said and repeat the letter is built and constructed upon these two words, two different humanities the whole humanity and the spirit humanity the natural man's humanity and the Christ man's humanity the apostle begins with a distinction first it is hope all the way through as the ground of challenge, instruction and counsel and advice and warning and conclusion the whole thing in the most glorious way in effect he says by this letter, you

have to begin by becoming a spiritual person your spirit born anew from above the holy spirit having charge of you making you at the beginning a spiritual person and right through growingly a spiritual person and then what? chapter 15 says that which is natural oh here we are, our word again is that which is so little afterward that which is spiritual and where does that end up? the spiritual body the spirit is so that living spirit is so that which has been the work of the holy spirit in us which we are really and truly in the innermost part of our being what is called the inner man the inner man this born developed as a seed and given a spiritual body a spiritual body ah raising questions don't worry I so often ask do you think we shall know each other in the life afterward yes and no

if you think that you are going to know me by seeing these people no no not this body not this body but a body given of a different order of spiritual body I can't define the spiritual body I have no time for it for one thing if I were able place and blood cannot says the apostle inherit the kingdom no brother he gives to each seed a body as it pleases him oh thank god going to be in a body that after all pleases the lord oh what troubles in this body you see why the apostle is saying in the course of this letter and more in the next letter our outward man but our inward man is renewed day by day in this we grow waiting to be clothed upon with our body which is from above every seed a body is given and then in that spiritual body I suppose is like the body of the lord Jesus after his

resurrection that's all I can say or the body of the lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration a different type a different humanity it will be a humanity you know one another as human beings not as angels don't sing again oh to be an angel that's an inferior thing to what you are called to oh no we are not going to sprout wings this is something far far higher a spiritual man with a spiritual body I think we may be learning a lot I

don't know in our time we've lived now seen men going into space getting out of their spacecraft and floating in the air with the law of gravity absolutely nullified but for them there has to be a special equipment an artificial equipment to live in that realm but we will need no artificial equipment when we are called up to meet and to live in that rarified

atmosphere it will be quite natural you see what I mean well this is the difference in the humanity it requires a different kind of person to do that doesn't it different people and finished it's the cross that effects this right at the heart of the two humanities to bring one progressively down less and less that's what's happening how far have you gotten how you say I'm beginning to feel myself to be less than nothing poorest most inferior kind of being have you now this is not exaggerating have you groveled in the dust of the consciousness of your own worth that's alright that's quite alright provided there is a corresponding spiritual growth of another species another order another kind the cross is working on the one side as ever it was meant to do to bring one kind of man to an end

and on the other side to bring in a new kind of man the cross does it now I must safeguard all that I've been saying by this don't anyone go away saying it's wrong to have a soul wrong to have a mind wrong to have feelings wrong to have a will if that's all the soul then I must kill my soul that Buddhism Buddhism the governing principle as you know Buddhism is the final annihilation of desire oh god save us no I'm not saying it's wrong to have a soul what I'm saying is the soul is not to be the governmental thing the spirit is to be the governmental thing to control even our souls say to our reasoning now look here there you may be thinking altogether differently from the way in which the lord thinks let's take this to the lord and get his mind about it our mind our reasoning would say

yes this is right this is good this is the thing but wait a minute let us subject this to the holy spirit and we may discover that our thinking was all out of line with the lord all we may have strong feelings emotions now let's get hold of this they're not going to run away with us control us let's bring this to the lord is this right all this this emotional soul should be controlled by the spirit the holy spirit in our spirit no it's right to have a soul there is such a thing in the word of god as the salvation of the soul receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your soul my word don't they need soul saving how then the work of the cross building up the spiritual man spiritual life I think that's good enough for tonight enough for us to get on with isn't it as you see the

cross in this first letter to the Corinthians had a very very perfect word to say a very far reaching issue to secure if you have not been able to understand follow anything or everything don't turn it aside well I can't understand all that no if you are a true child of god you are going to learn this it is true it will be spread right over your life and it will be the very best thing that can happen the greatest thing is the confirmation the confirmation of it all the manifestation of the sons of god we collect that from Romans don't we the new species the new humanity sons of god I don't know whether we'll get to Galatians this week but that's the issue so we leave it to the time to rephrase Lord we do turn from all the words and the ideas and the thoughts even the truths as such in

themselves and pray lord from our hearts give us spiritual understanding oh may we be amongst the spiritual men who see their own sins and have a capacity that no natural man at his desk possesses but be pleased of god revealed by the spirit to spiritual men Lord teach us what to do and help us in this way we may become a different order of being from that city of Adam we ask in the name of the lord Jesus Amen

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