

# The Glory of God - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering ourselves to God's mastery and going through the pathway of brokenness and travail in order to reach God's full end.*

**Duration:** 46:59

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 10:4, John 11:1-44, John 11:47, Romans 11:33, Philippians 3:10, Revelation 21:23

**Topics:** "Glory Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the teachings of John's Gospel and applying them to our own lives. He highlights the idea that the Lord Jesus has control over every situation and that true transformation requires a new creation in life, not just patching up the old. The speaker also emphasizes the priority of seeking the glory of God in our lives and the need to align our priorities with His. Lastly, he discusses the attitude of Jesus towards humanity and how it reflects God's attitude towards human life as it is.

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## Transcript

Lord, we once again confess that unless thou dost open the eyes of our understanding, we are going to listen to words and we are not going to be really eternally benefited by our listening. O Lord, grant unto us, grant unto us that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of thy son. Lord, let this be a time when eyes are really opened.

There's a veil over the heart of man naturally. He cannot, he cannot understand the things of God. There's a great deal of the natural about us still.

We shall never fully see until we are in thy presence. But we know we can go on seeing more and more all our lives if thy spirit does his work in us. Pray that it may be so even in this hour, in this hour.

Now quicken us by thy spirit. Minister divine life to us. We being freed from all grave clothes may come forth, may really come forth in newness of life.

For thy name's sake. Amen. I bring you back again to this 11th chapter of the gospel by John in which we were moving this morning, reminding you that this chapter represents the culmination of the life, teaching and works of the Lord Jesus during the days of his flesh.

When we say the culmination that is quite evident in what remains of the chapter beyond what was read. You notice verse 47. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council and said what do we? And the rest shows that this was the last of a number of such councils and in this last council they decided definitely and finally that this man must die.

This must be the end of this. So that here we have that which marks the culmination of his life and work at that time. The finality, note the finality is marked by the act which is the fullness of the very purpose for which he came.

And more than that, it is the fullness of divine councils. Behind this chapter there are these two wonderful things. The eternal councils of God coming to their completion in his son at this time and then the councils contrary to God to bring their son to an end, to destroy him.

The divine councils are summed up in what is in this chapter. Now no doubt you dear friends have read John 11 many times and perhaps you think you know. If you were asked what John 11 is about you would, most of you know your New Testament talks, well of course it's the raising of Lazarus from the dead and perhaps that's all you'd have to say to it.

And so saying, forgive me if it sounds a bit critical of your apprehension, so saying it would indicate how really you have missed the way. We all of course have said that in time past. As we've gone on we've come to see something more.

And when I tell you that this chapter, of course it's a long chapter so far as words and verses go in our arrangement, yet it's not complete in itself. This chapter does contain all the major features and factors of God's ways unto glory. You got it? The end of all God's ways and works is glory.

His own glory. It sometimes seems a torturous way, as these sisters felt it to be while it lasted. Sometimes seems to be anything but glory.

And you might very well decide as perhaps they decided at a certain point the end is not glory. This is not glory. This is sorrow, distress, disappointment, despair, and all that really from God's standpoint in the way of glory.

Unto glory. Let me repeat. When God takes anything in hand, you must lay hold of every half sentence of mine.

When God takes anything in hand, the end is going to be his glory. You need have made no mistake whatever about that. The end of all God's ways is his glory.

Glory at the end. Read your Bible in the light of that. And you have your Bible in one chapter.

The 11th of John. I have said this chapter contains the main features and factors in the ways of God unto glory. What are some of these main factors? A very big one is the incarnation of the Son of God.

Son of God making flesh. God manifest in the flesh. That is a big one, isn't it? The very purpose, object of the incarnation of God taking flesh, becoming incarnate is found in this chapter.

The very purpose of it. Now hold that for a bit. The method of God in redemption.

Redemption is a big factor, isn't it? No one will dispute that. Redemption. Is a big factor in the eternal counsels of God.

And the method of redemption is the substance of this 11th of John. Another thing, and I am quite sure that while you would have agreed with those other two, if you know anything at all about God's ways, you will agree with this, that God's ways are very strange. God's ways are very strange.

They are beyond human explanation. Comprehensive. While God is in process of moving toward his end, it is very difficult to follow him.

Saying to a brother this afternoon, the Lord is always a bit ahead of us. He made a remark that, something to this effect, that the Lord accommodates himself to our measure to help us through. I said, brother, I'm sorry.

I must qualify that. He does not. He does not.

The apostle Paul, who knew a good deal about the Lord, said of his experience, pressed out of measure. There was another translation, beyond our measure. Under the hand of the Lord, beyond our measure.

The Lord is always a bit ahead of us. It wouldn't do for us to be equal with the Lord, would it? We would soon be taking the place of the Lord. If we were right up sides with the Lord in everything, well, our dependence upon the Lord would very soon go.

So the Lord gets ahead of us, beyond us, beyond our measure, puts us out of our depth in order, in order to enlarge our capacity. We'll never grow if that were not true. Simple way in John's gospel of putting that by way of illustration is when he put it for his own sheep, he goes before them.

Of course, you've taken that sometimes as a comforting statement but there's profundity in every clause of the divine word and this gospel in particular reveals that. When he put it forth his own sheep, he goes before them. He's always ahead of them and they're always a bit behind him.

He's too much for them, in a sense. They've got to move on and still move on if they're going to come up to that degree of the Lord where he is. And when they get there, they'll find he's gone ahead again.

Keep going. Learning all the time. The apostle Paul explained this when he said right at the end of his very full life, that I may know him, that I may know him.

I haven't caught up yet. It's still beyond me. The mystery of God's ways.

The strangeness of what we call Providence. Spell it with a capital P. The strangeness of Providence. That's a major factor in God's ways.

It's in this chapter. It is. And another thing, which is not by any means a small thing, the far-sightedness of God.

How much beyond our seeing he is. Oh, let us come to the chapter. How much the Lord Jesus was beyond the seeing of these sisters and the disciples.

They just could not see beyond this present happening. This present experience. A thing which was immediately before their eyes.

That was their horizon. God in Christ here is moving on the principle of far-sightedness beyond the incident, beyond the present. However big this was to them, he was far beyond it.

His horizon was far outreaching this thing and he was acting accordingly. And the far-sightedness of God is no small factor in the ways, works and dealings of the Lord. You see that? And it's all here in one chapter.

Sit down with it again. Spend much time. You can go on years and years with this one chapter.

That's no exaggeration. Find how unfathomable are the ways of God. The works of God.

Now, having said that, let me step back for a moment and remind you of something here which we must get hold of. And do believe me, dear friends, it's not just the teaching of John's Gospel, one or all the chapters that I'm concerned with, as teaching. This has got to come right into our very history.

It's got to be taken out of the Bible, out of the history of Jesus during his time here, and put right into our history. We shall never get anywhere unless that is true. It's applied truth, not theoretical truth that is here.

So let me say the thing that comes out at us as we quietly, thoughtfully dwell in this chapter, is that the Lord Jesus has this situation in his hands. Let me put that another way. If this is God incarnate, it is God with whom we are having to do here.

It is God with whom we are having to do. And when you come to this chapter, you see how the Lord Jesus has everything in hand, and in his hands, and he's not letting it go out of his hands, all the way along. Look at the various aspects.

He said he would go back into Judea. The disciples immediately reacted. The Jews about recently sought to kill thee there.

You mustn't go back there. You mustn't go back there. See the move? To take things out of his hands.

To take his movements out of his hands. To govern his movements, his judgments, his decisions. But he's not having it.

His statement has been in hand, and disciples or no disciples. He's going on. He's got something that he's after.

He's in charge. Messengers are sent to him. A way up there somewhere? About Lazarus.

And undoubtedly, though it's not recorded, undoubtedly the story means this. Lazarus is saying, come please, come quickly. Come as quickly as you can.

That was from the beloved sisters. That would have taken it right out of his hands, and ruled his judgment. Ruled his feelings.

Governed his movements. Set a time that he did not set. Take it over.

No? He abode where he was. He abode where he was. He's got it in hand.

Not going to get it out of his hand. Whether it's the appeal of those whom he loved, and it is stated that that was so. The appeal of a situation which could appeal to any sympathetic heart? No.

That is not going to decide this thing. It's in his hands, and he is going to decide the ground on which he works, the time in which he works, and when he's going to move. And nothing, nothing will move him.

The Jews, of course, ever ready to criticize and put him in a bad light, and discredit him, said could not this man, could not this man who gave sight to the blind, of course that this man should not die, should have been healed, saved from death. All these forces are at work in every realm, from the center to the circumference of his relationships, to get him under control. He's not having it.

He has this matter in hand, and that's a very important thing. Why? He states it. He states it.

The sickness is not unto death, finally, absolutely. Sickness is not going to end in death, but for the glory of God. Yes, all right.

But then, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there. Oh, what are you going to make of that? Put yourself in the position of these sisters with a beloved only brother, slowly passing out, in the grip of this apparently fatal sickness. Their hearts are round, full of distress, anxiety, breaking, and they know that he knows, and this is his attitude.

I'm glad that I was not there. For your sakes. Well, he has got hold of this situation, you see.

He's in charge. We are dealing with God, and God is in charge. And if God is working to a certain end, you can't hurry him.

You can't take over from God and make him do what you want him to do. He's going to reach that end, and it may be a very trying way for us, for our flesh, our natures. But he gets it in.

He's in charge. How glibly we sing our hymns. How superficial we are.

The Lord is never superficial. I watch what I'm singing, and I noticed you sang two things this afternoon, and I wonder if you were challenged on both of them, or either of them, how you feel. You notice you sang, teach me to love thee as thine angels love thee.

The Lord help us. The Lord help us, if that's our idea. It's only redeemed souls who know the meaning of love to God, and angels don't know that.

You'll only love God if you've been redeemed and saved from the death. That's the only true love. And the love of God manifested to man is in terms of his salvation.

It's a two-way love on the basis of redemption, and angels know nothing about that. They have no experience of it. You want something better than angel love.

However, I don't mean to criticize your singing. You mean well. Ah, but then you finished that last verse about, high along to climb the utmost height.

And I thought, the utmost heights are only reached through the utmost depths, if this chapter means anything at all. Will you sing it again? And that brings me, you see, to the point I'm making just now. You and I, dear friends, the Lord help us, the Lord help us, but you and I will never reach God's full end, only along the pathway of brokenness.

That's what this chapter says. While we are whole and substantial and well-knit and self-confident, we're not going to reach God's end. No, no, no.

You see, God, right there at the beginning of the Bible and of human history, planted something in human experience which became the law of all true, true knowledge of God after that. See, the great issue in the garden was knowledge, wasn't it? Knowledge of good and evil, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. They made a bid for knowledge under the instigation and inspiration of the devil, made a bid for knowledge.

And God came along on that, that declension, on that breakdown, and established a law. A law by which, he said, you shall never have true knowledge, true knowledge of me, only on this law. Everything that is going to be true and real in the future is not going to be got so easily as you thought.

The law of travail was planted right at the heart of human life. Remember the words, don't you? Travail. Travail was introduced as a law for the future.

And you and I know very well that true love only comes out of travail. Or put it another way, we never value anything that costs us nothing. We can let it go very cheaply if we've not paid any price for it.

But if we have paid a price, if it's been costly, if it has meant something to us of real suffering or sorrow or trial, that's infinitely precious to us. We don't let that go. We don't let that go easily.

And so God came right in at that point and put this law of travel into human life, human history, and said you tried to get everything cheaply. Cheaply. You'll not get anything that's worth having without cost in the future.

And from that point you notice all the way along, along, along, until you come to the travail of his soul, the travail of the garden, the travail of the cross. He shall see the travail of his and after that is the preciousness. It's the law, you see.

The law that there is no reaching the heart of God and having true knowledge without costliness. And Peter learned that by the deep way. By the deep way.

He tried to get things cheaply. So it's good for us to be here, Lord. Let's build three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, and I suppose, although he didn't say it, we will have some tabernacles, we will stay here.

Peter was like that. But he went the deep way of utter devastation by the cross of the Lord Jesus and years after he wrote unto you that believe is the preciousness. The preciousness.

And the last picture of the church is of the city and its gates are of pearl, pearl, the very symbol of agony, of blood, of tears. That's how it's made. It's costly, very precious, because it costs.

All that, I said this is a comprehensive chapter, didn't I? Come back to it, here they are in this thing. These dear sisters, how they are baptized into the passion, the agony of the cross and have to know a tasting of death in order that they might know the preciousness of resurrection life. Nowhere to come to it otherwise.

I'm glad that I was not there for your sakes. Farsightedness, seeing that although he was running this risk of being terribly misunderstood, everybody, sisters and all, were misunderstanding him, incapable of comprehending him. He accepted the risk in his farsightedness.

He saw beyond. I'm glad I was not there for your sake. What is the ultimate? Should I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God, the end of all God's ways, glory.

How rich then, how full all this is. We're in the presence of God. And when we're in the presence of God, we're in the presence of our profoundest realities.

Oh that we might have the grace, when the Lord is, has us in hand, dealing with us, we should not wrench ourselves out of his hand, but remain there unto the inevitable glory. I'm so hesitant, dear friends, to just add words to words. I do want to make sure that what I say today is going deeper than your heads, going deeper than Christian theory, doctrine.

First of all, as we began this morning, there has got to be the basic and utter committal to the Lord. Now, of course, I suppose there are few here, if any, who would not say that they have surrendered their lives to the Lord. They are given to the Lord.

And perhaps you'd I'm utterly given to the Lord. You don't know what you're talking about. Sorry to say that, but I say it out of long, very long experience.

We shall never get beyond the point, dear friends, beyond the point where there is no more battle to get perfectly adjusted to the mind of the Lord. You heard that? Doesn't matter how long you live here, if you're walking with the Lord, there will be right to the end occasions for you to find it not easy to accept some new revelation of the mind of God for you. Indeed, you'll have a new battle on this.

That's what I meant when I said you don't know what you're talking about, if you say that. That is not, of course, to discourage or to discount any consecration that you have made. But there has to be a basic and initial fundamental committal in which we say, now, Lord, I do not know all that it is going to be, how it is going to work out, what it is going to cost, but I put myself into your hands.

I'm yours. I am committed. You are my master, and I want you to have the absolute mastery of my being.

And if at any time it becomes difficult for me to yield to your mastery, I'm going to seek grace to adjust to it. There must be something, an attitude taken, which is complete committal. And I ask you, not with the sum total of all that it means known to you, but I do ask you, has the Lord got the mastery of your being, of your life? And as we were saying this morning, it touches every point and aspect.

Has he got the mastery of your business, your business relationships, your business transactions? Are you doing business that does not lie in line with the glory of God? That is, are you doing business that's a contradiction to the glory of God? I knew a young fellow who got on very well in business and had tremendous prospects, but he was in the biggest tobacco manufacturing firm in Europe. Good position. Great prospects.

He came up against this matter of whether the Lord was glorified in his doing that kind of business. He decided, no, that kind of thing is not to the glory of God indeed. As I see it working out, it's contrary to the glory of God in human lives.

He decided, no, that kind of thing is not to the glory of God indeed. As I see it working out, it's contrary to the glory of God in human lives. He surrendered this position, came right out of it, for a time was very tested by his action and by the position he'd taken, a faithfulness to God.

The Lord looked after him in the end, but I'm not throwing that in to say you'll get a reward, you'll get compensation. The point is, not policy, but principle. This world is governed by policy.

By policy. What is politic? What is diplomatic? That's the whole spirit and law of this world. The law of Jesus Christ is not policy, diplomacy, principle.

And the principle is the glory of God. That's what it means to be committed. Your home in the committal.

Your domestic relationships in the committal. Your social life and relationships in the committal. And so we can go on, you see.

It's not just getting on your knees and saying, Lord, I'm yours, I give myself to you absolutely, and the Lord tomorrow comes along and says, what about this? Oh, I didn't mean that. The Lord is very practical. Forgive me being like this, but we must, you know, we're in times, very serious times, when God is coming very near to his people to shift out.

To shift out. The end, the end is going to be a tremendously sifting time amongst the Lord's people. Peter says, speaking about the time of the end, time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

And if it begins at us, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear? There. Sifting. And it will be sifted down to this.

Is your priority in life settled? Really settled? And that priority, the glory of God. If so, you'll go through. Whatever happens, you'll go through.

You'll reach God's end. The glory, this God with whom we have to do. A few minutes more, perhaps, along.

Come back to this chapter. We're dealing with the ultimate things, the primary things, the eternal things here. The chapter is just divulging these things.

God's attitude, God's attitude toward humanity as it is. I'm going to say a very difficult thing for you, perhaps, to accept. It shouts at us in this chapter.

We can't get away from it, much as it hurts us and we don't like it. The attitude of the Lord Jesus toward the situation and all concerned with it is God's attitude toward human life as it is. And here in this chapter you find human life represented by a number of different aspects.

You've got these wretched Jews, scribes and Pharisees. Well, you're not surprised about God's attitude toward them and that. But you move in, in, in to the heart of it.

Here are these dear sisters. There's this dear man, Lazarus. And these dear sisters, as far removed from scribes and Pharisees and ruling Jews as could be humanly.

You would say lovely people, lovely people. What's the attitude of Jesus? Non-committal, non-committal, holding reserve. It says he stayed where he was, two days, and then at last when he came he has been dead four days.

Four days between receiving the news and arriving and as you know the state of things which naturally would have prevailed, they mentioned to him his attitude. Why did he let Lazarus die? He could have

raised him, he healed many others, raised others dead. Why? Not this one, so beloved.

Why did he allow the sister's hearts to be broken, torn, sorrow and distressed? Why this attitude? This is God's attitude to humanity at its best, in Adam, as well as at its worst, but at its best. This humanity at its best is something that God has set aside in Adam. And he's not going to patch it up.

He is not going to give it medicine to cure it. He says it must die. The only thing is resurrection, a new life altogether, a new life altogether, something different from the natural at its best, the earthly at its best.

You think I'm exaggerating, I'm going too far. I want you to pick up this gospel and begin and go from beginning to end. Why? The marriage attendant of Galilee, his attending, the wine fading and that terrible predicament arising, they have no wine, says his mother, in a kind of appeal and expectation to him to do something.

Consternation is over the whole situation. There's no resource left. It's an end of the very thing that makes the feast, that makes life.

What have I to do, woman, what have I to do with you? Nine hours, not yet. The appeal of a predicament, the appeal of an opportunity, the appeal of a mother's heart, appeal of a difficult situation. No, not at all, none of that.

There's something more in this than just patching this feast up. There's got to be something that is above the natural, that is newness of life, not the old thing patched up. This whole thing must die and then resurrection alone is going to be the answer.

That's the explanation. Something different. The old creation is bankrupt.

That's his attitude. It's bankrupt. The only prospect is a new creation life.

This beginning of signs did Jesus, in Canaan and Galilee, and showed forth his glory. Glory, the end of God's ways. How? In something that is beyond all natural possibility.

That's the beginning. Lazarus is the end of a story. In between? Oh, take them all.

I dare not start. I remind you of them. Mind you, poor Nicodemus, with all his religion and all his learning, to whom Jesus says, art thou the teacher in this world? No, it's not these things.

All the religious knowledge, learning, position, and tradition is bankrupt. You must be born from about this natural life of yours. Don't be all like that.

Won't get you through. Man at the pool of Bethesda, Bethsaida, a little later, thirty-eight years lying in that condition, struggling every day to get onto his feet or to get into the water, and tried out for thirty-eight years and perhaps a dozen times a day and see whether you have much hope left at the end of that. Jesus comes on the scene.

Without the use of the pool, without any artificial means, without the line of nature, he who is the resurrection and the life has come on the scene. Another sign, another showing how hopeless, how hopeless the natural is until Jesus comes in. But it's with another kind, another order.

The woman of Samaria, at Sykesville, what a story. Moral bankruptcy, isn't it? Moral bankruptcy. Go call thy husband.

Mm-hmm. I have no husband. As well said, thou hast had five husbands, and he who thou now hast is not thy husband.

Moral bankruptcy. And everything, everything has been exhausted in that realm. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to life eternal.

Oh, Lord, give me drink of this one. And so I could go on, you see, all the way along, the man born blind, born blind, until you come to Lazarus and you have all this gathered up into Lazarus in one chapter, showing that the glory of God, thou should see the glory of God, glory of God, is in something that only God Almighty can do with human life. He's not going to patch it up.

Men can do that. You call in the doctors and they may help to keep this thing alive for a time. But no, he says, let it die.

The glory is not in that kind of thing at all. It is in something absolutely new, different. The end of all God's ways is like that.

I must stop for the time being. But I do trust that you will interpret things in the light of this. Have you suffered? Have you been knocked about? Really knocked about and suffered? What are you doing about it? What are you doing about it? Are you putting it merely and only into the category of things common to men?

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