

# The Heavenly Calling - Part 10

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*T. Austin-Sparks explores the transition from Israel's failure to the establishment of a new spiritual Israel through Jesus as the light of the world and the importance of spiritual enlightenment for believers.*

**Duration:** 53:20

**Scripture:** John 9:1

**Topics:** "Heavenly Calling"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing a personal experience of being in darkness and searching for light. He emphasizes the feeling of helplessness and being a prisoner to darkness. The speaker then connects this experience to the concept of spiritual darkness and the need for the light of Jesus to set people free. He references Bible verses, such as John 8:12, where Jesus declares himself as the light of the world. The speaker also mentions the commission given to the Apostle Paul to turn people from darkness to light. The sermon concludes with a reference to the story of a blind man in John 9, highlighting the power of Jesus to bring light and transformation into people's lives.

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## Transcript

In the sixteen points in the Gospel by John, which mark the course of transition from the earliest route to the new. We come this evening to number twelve, and we are in the eighth chapter of the Gospel by John. From verse twelve through into chapter nine.

I think we had better read some of this. Again, therefore, Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.

God shall have the light of life. Again, therefore, Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.

God shall have the light of life. And whither I go, that ye know not whence I come, or whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man.

Yea, and if I judge, my judgment is true. For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. Yea, and in your law it is written that the witness of two men is true.

I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Verse twenty-six. I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you.

Howbeit, he that sent me is true, and the things which I heard from him these speak I unto the world. Verse thirty-one. Jesus therefore said unto those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered unto him, We the Abrahams see, and have never yet been in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, ye shall be made free? If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham, yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no recourse in you.

Now we ought to read the whole of the rest of that chapter. And once more, it is a pity that the chapters are divided here. Because chapter nine is the demonstration of all that is in chapter eight.

In a very practical way, Jesus shows the truth of what he has been saying. And so we have this in chapter nine. And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, as long as it is day.

It comes the night, when no man can work. Solange ich in der Welt bin, bin ich das Licht der Welt. When he had thus spoken, he sat on the ground and made clay, and anointed his eyes with the clay.

And said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam. He went away therefore, and washed, and came singing. I think you know the rest of that story.

But it is perfectly clear that this story, this incident, is set in the background of Israel. That is, the earthly Israel. And the effect of this long section of the record is intended to show that Israel, after the flesh, is blind.

If ever men demonstrated how blind they were, these people did, in all this argument. Jesus is making them give themselves away. Jesus bringt sie dazu, dass sie sich selber bloßstellen.

Das heißt, er bringt sie durch. Diese Leute sehen einfach nichts. Das ist keine Tatsache.

They are as spiritually blind as was that man naturally blind. So that what we have here is set in Israel's blindness. All with the object of showing this specific characteristic of the new spiritual Israel, which the Lord Jesus was bringing into being.

Now can you just hold that for a few minutes? Don't forget it. I don't want to have to say it again. But I'm going away from it for a few minutes.

Because there is one marvelous truth which embraces all these things that we are saying. And that truth is this. That no thought that God has ever expressed dies.

There is no lapse of any thought that God has expressed. In the Israel of old, God expressed his thoughts. His thoughts were in the very conception of Israel.

They were in the very constitution of Israel. They were in all that was said about Israel. They were in all that was revealed as to God's purpose concerning Israel.

In a multitude of ways, God had expressed his thoughts in Israel. Now that Israel failed to answer the thought of God. They would not give God the answer to his expressed thought that he desired.

Those thoughts of God concerning Israel were never realized because of Israel's rebellion. So Israel is put aside. But God's thoughts are not put aside with Israel.

All those same thoughts are taken up in a new Israel. Jesus himself becomes the inclusive new Israel. You remember he referred to Jacob.

Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. And he said to Nathanael, Afterward, that is later on, you shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. So Jesus is the new Israel in person.

All the communications of God and heaven to man are by way of Jesus, the new Israel. All God's thoughts in the past ages are taken up in the Lord Jesus. All that was ever intended by God concerning Israel and that Israel lost is carried on in the Lord Jesus.

And then transferred by Jesus to his companions. The companions of Jesus and of the heavenly calling. The new Israel which is a spiritual Israel.

Now I have opened a very big realm for you. It would be impossible for me to number all the characteristics of God's mind concerning Israel. Let me just indicate what I mean.

You know God marked Israel up as a people distinct from all other people by appearance. Some years ago before he went to the Lord, I knew a very distinguished Hebrew Christian. He used to travel all over the world.

And he said this to me, Wherever I go in all parts of the world, I always know when I meet a Jew. They may have lived for generations in this country and in that. But there is something about them that they never lose.

Without being told that they are Jews, I always know. God marked them out as a people distinct from all other races. Now see how that is taken up in the Lord Jesus.

And see how that is taken up in all the true companions of Jesus. Not by the shape of our face. Not by any outward form.

But it is perfectly true that wherever you meet a true Christian in this world, you know them. Before being introduced. There is never any need for anybody to bring them to you and say, this is a Christian.

Come into their presence. There is something about them. It's different.

And when you begin to talk, you know you have met one of your own race. Their outward features may be those of Chinese, Indian, British or anything else. But there are spiritual features which mark them out as different from all others.

And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. They are different. There is that about them which is quite different from all others.

Now that is a truth. We must very sacredly safeguard that truth. There are far too many who bear the name of Christ who cannot be distinguished from the world.

Indeed they are just trying to behave like the world. But my point is this. Whatever the express thought of God was.

In any one of a thousand ways. If Israel left that thought, it is taken up in Jesus Christ. And it is transferred by him to his companions.

The companions of Christ always take some. And that is why somebody started the name Christian. And the believers were first called Christians in Antioch.

Someone said these are Christ ones. That is just the meaning of Christian. Now that is the very large truth within which we are speaking in these days.

Israel was called to be God's instrument of light to the world. God raised up Israel to be light to all the nations for him. All the nations were intended to come to know God through Israel.

To see what God is like. To come into the knowledge of God. Israel was sent in the nations for that purpose to be the light of the world.

God intended to reflect himself through Israel on this earth. The light of God was intended to fall upon Israel like a mirror. And then from Israel to be reflected to shine forth to all the nations.

There were times when it was like that to some extent. But what a tragedy Israel was in that particular time came when God was rather veiled by Israel than revealed. Israel became a terrible contradiction of God.

When you pick up these gospels you read all these arguments between Jesus and the leaders of Israel. You read all that is in these gospels as to the Jewish rulers. The way they behave.

The way they talk. The spirit that they show. You say well if that is God I have nothing to do with God.

That is a terrible misrepresentation of God. And because of that God put Israel aside. But in this particular respect he did not put his thought aside.

At that time when Israel was about to be rejected into the world came God's son. He took up the thought of God that was intended to be realized in Israel. And he said right in the midst of this dark and blind Israel I am the light of the world.

Israel has failed. I take the place of Israel. And in me and through me shall all the world know what God is like.

While I am in the world I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. God always intended that the races of this world should have the light of life.

Life giving light. Liberating light. Oh how light liberating.

When I came out of my room to come into the meeting tonight there was no light on the stairways. It was as dark as night. I was feeling everywhere to find where the light was.

I was afraid to walk to the top of the stairs in case I fell down. I was helpless. I was a prisoner to darkness.

And I could do nothing until I found the light. And here I am. Quite safe and sound.

I was a prisoner of darkness and I might never have got here. When the light came I was set free. I could go anywhere.

Do anything. If the sun shall make you free ye shall be free indeed. How does the sun make us free? Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

While I am in the world I am the light of the world. And the effect of the light is to set men free. Do you remember the commission given by the Lord to the apostle Paul at the time of his conversion? It is most illuminating and instructive in the light of what we are saying.

The Lord said to Paul giving him his commission to the nations. To whom I send thee. To turn them from darkness to light.

And from the power of Satan unto God. Prisoners of Satan and therefore in the dark. To turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.

And every person of the human race by nature is in the prison of the devil. I think perhaps some of you here have heard me quote from John Bunyan's Holy War in this connection. I hope you have all read his Holy War.

You have probably read his pilgrim's progress. You will remember that the Holy War sets forth the battle for Mansoul. And all the forces of Apollyon attacking to capture Mansoul.

Mansoul is represented as a city. And Apollyon calls his leaders together. And he says this.

If we are going to capture Mansoul. We must first of all capture the Burgomaster. And the name of the Burgomaster is Mr. Understanding.

We must capture Mr. Understanding and put him in a dark dungeon so that he does not see what is happening. Now there is a bit of genius in that. The word says having the understanding darken.

The God of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving. So that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus should not shine unto them. If light comes upon Jesus to any soul that soul is liberated.

The whole strategy of Apollyon is upset. Hence how important it is to the God of this age to blind the minds of men. To put Mr. Understanding in a dark dungeon.

And make sure that he does not see what is going on. And that is the state of every child of Adam after the flesh. The Lord was saying to Israel that's where you have got to.

You who were intended to be the light of the world are now involved in the very darkness of the world. You are a contradiction to all God's thought and intention. Well that is quite clear and evident isn't it.

But that is the negative side. We repeat what Israel failed to realize is taken up in the person of God's Son. And transferred to the new collective Israel called in the Hebrew letter the Companions of Christ.

Do you see what the Companions of Christ are supposed to be like? They are supposed to be the very vessels in which this truth is fulfilled. They are supposed to be the very temples of Christ. And in them he

is to be the light.

Christ in you. The hope of glory. Now that would lead us to a very large study.

You know that the New Testament has a very great deal to say about spiritual understanding. The tremendous importance of spiritual knowledge. It puts a very high and great value upon this faculty of spiritual sight.

You remember that great passage in the second letter to the Corinthians? Chapter four. God who said let light be has shined into our hearts. In other words has said let light be in our hearts.

Has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. That the excellency might be of God and not of ourselves.

Do you notice what is surrounding that marvelous statement? It is connected with Moses going up into the mountain where God was. And receiving the law at the mouth of God. And then coming down the mountain.

Not knowing it but his face was shining. It says that he wished not that his face should shine. But the people saw it.

And they could not look. The light was too strong. And they could not look upon the face of Moses.

So Moses took a veil and put it over his face. And hid the glory of God behind the veil. Now says the apostle bringing this right up to date.

From that time until now there is a veil upon the heart of Israel. Israel is incapable of looking upon the glory of God. God says the apostle when it shall turn to the Lord.

The veil will be taken away. Now by the Lord I mean the spirit. And where the spirit is Lord there is liberty.

When the Holy Spirit removes the veil from the heart. And shines Christ in. There is liberty.

The life is liberated. Oh it is a wonderful thing just to see something of the Lord by the Holy Spirit. I am just hoping that that is what is happening here in these days.

Well if it is not happening in you it is happening in me. I am having a glorious time. Heaven is open.

We are seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And we are set free. Who will say that there is not the liberty of the spirit amongst us in these days.

I think we can say about this as Jesus said about something else. Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Now what I have said is the statement of fact.

And when the facts have been stated. We are only at the beginning of the matter. You will never be liberated by the statement of fact.

I may stand here for years and state facts it will make no difference to you. Something has got to happen. It has got to begin to happen if you are not already born again.

And what has got to happen to you right at the beginning of your Christian life is what happened to this man born blind. You have got to be able to truly say exactly the same words as he said. One thing I know.

A lot of things I don't know. But one thing I do know. Whereas I was blind now I can see.

That is the characteristic of the beginning of a true companion of Jesus Christ. But that is only the beginning of seeing. The Apostle Paul had given a tremendous amount of teaching to the believers in Ephesus.

He said to them I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. He spent some years with them. And he was just pouring out to them the light that he had.

They were therefore Christians who had a lot of instruction. And after all that Paul went to prison. And in prison he wrote a letter to them.

And he said I pray for you. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus for you. And this is what I pray to God for you.

With all that you have received. This is what I pray for you. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father of Glory. Will grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of his Son. The eyes of your heart being enlightened.

That's not for their salvation. They've been saved a long time. They have been taught very much.

They have gone a long way with the Lord. But still Paul prays this prayer. In effect he is saying all that you have received.

All that I have given you is nothing compared to what there is yet to see in the Lord Jesus. And for all that you need to have your eyes open. You need a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

How important this is. And you notice how he finishes that letter. Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood.

But with principalities and powers. With world rulers are this darkness. And spiritual hosts of wickedness.

And what is it that they are seeking to do? Rob you of the light. Paul says there we are not ignorant of his devices. Take the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of them.

The wiles of the devil are to stop you getting more light. To rob you of the light that you have. To bring in something that will blind your eyes.

To get your eyes off the Lord Jesus onto something else. Perhaps onto yourself. Or onto some worldly interest.

And as soon as that happens you will go into bondage. You will be helpless prisoners again. This matter of spiritual enlightenment is a great battle.

There is always a battle bound up with receiving more true spiritual light. Well we must just close for the present. We have come only to the door of a very great matter.

But we close by repeating what we said. This great thought of God is taken up in Christ and transferred to his companions. I thought that I might say something this evening about Christ's battle with his own companions in the days of his flesh on this matter.

He had chosen twelve. The number of the tribes of Israel. He had made them his companions.

But oh what a difficulty he had to make them understand. He had sometimes to say, do you not understand? And he had to put his teaching into little children's parables. To try and get through their thick minds some understanding of spiritual truth.

A sower went forth to sow. And you know the picture. It's the picture for little children isn't it? And all the other parables.

And when he had finished them all. He had to tell them that he had to do it like that because they hadn't got understanding. All the way through he was battling with their dark minds.

And he was pointing on to a day when they would understand. Because he knew that day was coming he didn't give them up. In that day you shall ask me no more questions.

When the spirit of truth has come he will guide you into all the truth. And I have thought that the Lord Jesus must have been very happy on the day of Pentecost. Have you read Peter's address to the multitude on the day of Pentecost? Here's a nice little piece of Bible study for you.

Make a list of all the subjects included in Peter's address on the day of Pentecost. That address is just packed full of the Old Testament. And people are saying why it's all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

That is what Jesus labored three and a half years to get them to understand. And on the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit had come.

The Bible was wide open to them. They saw it all. They were set free.

By the truth. By the light. I think Jesus in heaven must have been saying my this is what I lived for and what I suffered for.

These men are seeing at last. These are my companions. Companions of Jesus are those who see as he sees.

How true that is of all companionship. There is really no companionship between two people if they don't see alike. You might want to keep together.

But oh how difficult it is when one doesn't see what you see. You can just go so far no further. Says the scripture how can two walk together except they be agreed.

Real companionship rests upon mutual understanding. And I think there are few things that Jesus wants and longs for more than to have people who understand him. This is what God ever wanted.

And this thought is taken up in his son. And is passed on to the son's companion. John says if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another.

Fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with one.

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