

The Heavenly Calling - Part 14

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the superiority of the new dispensation, particularly the manifested presence of God's son, and how it surpasses all past dispensations and figures.

Duration: 57:28

Scripture: Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 3:1-4, Hebrews 3:6, Hebrews 3:14, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Heavenly Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the greatness of Jesus Christ and the superiority of the dispensation that believers have entered into. The speaker highlights that Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power, and this should bring comfort to believers, even when their personal world seems to be falling apart. The sermon also discusses the Son's greatness in comparison to angels, emphasizing that Jesus is far superior. The speaker concludes by stating that in the end times, the knowledge of the greatness of Christ will be crucial for believers, as all other things will pass away, and Jesus will abide forever.

Transcript

Yesterday morning we began to consider the superiority of what has come in with this dispensation to that which belonged to the old. We only made a beginning on this matter and when we say we made a beginning on the last but one day of the conference it is quite evident that we are going to have 12 baskets full over when we finish. But really we have not got into the heart of this letter to the Hebrews and there is so much more that could extend for a long time.

Perhaps that is how it ought to be. We do not want to come to an end. We want to feel that the land is a land of far distances.

The land into which the Lord can lead us even without a conference. Well this morning we are going on a little way into that land. The land of the superiority of this dispensation over all past dispensations.

It may seem to some of you that I am repeating much of what I have already said. If that is so it is only that we may go beyond it. Perhaps I could say what the apostle said.

It is not absent to me to say again the things that I have said but for you it is good. Well now let us come to this particular matter for it is the supreme matter in the letter which means that it is the supreme matter in

the dispensation. How much higher and fuller is what has come in with the Lord Jesus than ever came in in old times.

Now you will have the letter to the Hebrews open before you and you will see that right at the beginning this is the dispensation of God's son. That is it is the dispensation of God's son in a new personal manifestation. We believe that he was present in the old dispensation and that he appeared to men in other forms but this letter says that in this dispensation he has come in a new form.

So it begins with the manifested presence of God's son. It says that in the old dispensation men met God in portions and in different ways. First verse says that it was in diverse portions and in diverse manners and God met men and men met God in the prophets.

Now the prophets were the servants of God and men met God through the servants of God. In this dispensation they meet God in God's son personally and there is a statement that God was in Christ. Son implies father.

The son of God implies God. So in the son we meet God not now in servants but in son. And this reaches absolute fullness in the matter of divine revelation for it pleased God that in his son should all the fullness dwell.

When a thing is full there's no room for any more. You are pouring water into a vessel when it is full you say it's full don't put any more in. It is just full.

And it pleased the father that in the son should all the fullness dwell and there's nothing more to be added. Now do not just take these as words. Do understand that in every fragment there is this truth.

In the dispensation in which you and I are now living God has come to us in all his fullness. There is no more to be added. In his son we have the absolute fullness of God and it is out of that fullness that he speaks to us in his son.

And God has only one son in that sense. It is his only begotten son which means that there's no one to come after him. Therefore God's last word is in his son.

The son brings both the fullness of God and the finality of God. It is that that gives the solemnity to this whole letter. It says if you fail to hear the voice of the son there's never another voice for you.

God is never going to speak by another voice. God has spoken in his son and he is never going to speak again by any other means. Hence this letter contains this word of warning and this word of exhortation because this is the fullness and this is the end.

Be sure that you give heed. But it is not only God speaking in his son. There is a way of speaking.

God's speaking is always God's acting. In this dispensation God is active in and through his son. Coming to touch with the Lord Jesus is more than to come into touch with a teaching.

It is to come into touch with a living active person. It is God with whom we have to do. It is a glorious thing to come into touch with God in Christ.

But it says here that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living. No it is not a book. It is not a teaching.

It is not a philosophy. It is a living positive powerful person. It is no other than God in action.

You have any doubt about that just remember the book of the Acts. It is called the Acts of the Apostles. Well everybody knows that that is a wrong name.

For the apostles in that book only amount to three or four. Most of the apostles are never heard or seen in that book. They are mentioned at the beginning and then you hear no more about them.

It is not the book of the Acts of the Apostles. It is the book of the Acts of God in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. And indeed it is a book of Acts.

Whatever teaching there is there it comes out of the Acts. Well now we go on to this next thing. The son is introduced.

He is presented. And then he is described. It is a wonderful description isn't it of the son.

But we ask who is this son? Because his name is not mentioned until you get into chapter two verse nine. It is the son without a name. Who is this son? Well verse nine chapter two tells us.

And tells us for the first time who the son is. But we behold him who has been made a little lower than the angels. Even Jesus.

Perhaps it seems a very simple thing to say that Jesus is this son and this son is Jesus. But perhaps you don't recognize a certain thing about this. It is very rarely after his resurrection and ascension that he is called Jesus.

When he has gone back to heaven he is usually the Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ our Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

His full title is given him when he is enthroned in heaven. And if someone comes right back from that down here and just uses the title Jesus. You know that they are referring to his humiliation and the purpose of his humiliation.

It has to do with his work on earth for our redemption. So look at verse nine again. We behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels.

Even Jesus because of the suffering of death. The name Jesus is the name of the one who suffered death. Who tasted death for every man.

And it was the son of God who did that. It was the son of God who as Jesus tasted death for every man because of the suffering of death. That is the son that is introduced here.

He is identified by his name Jesus. He shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin. Then the next thing is the position and function of the son.

Right back at the beginning again. God at the end of these times has spoken unto us in his son whom he appointed heir of all things through whom also he made the world. This son known to us as Jesus by God's appointment is the heir of all things.

All things are to come to him by right of God's appointment. Please do not be weary with me. This is one of the first things said about the dispensation in which you and I live.

It does not look very much like it now. For we do not yet see all things put in subjection under his feet. But it says here emphatically right at the beginning that he is heir of all things.

Therefore everything has got to come to him in the end. God is going to sum up all things in Christ. Things in heaven and things in hell.

He is appointed heir of all things. If we were speaking in human language there was somewhere in the past eternity an occasion when the Godhead had a conference to discuss the future of everything that was going to be made. And the father said I make my son the heir of all things.

I appoint him my heir and I decree that all things in the end shall come into his possession. Now you're dealing with almighty and eternal God. And when he decides a thing like that nothing can prevent it.

Whom he appointed heir of all things. But he didn't leave it there. He turned to the son because this is our way of speaking.

And he said now my son I'm going to use you as the agent in making all things. Through whom he made the world. This son whom we know as our savior and lord was God's agent in the creation of the world.

And then it says a third thing and this is of course something so difficult to understand. This son upholds all things by the word of his power. Things do not collapse because he is holding all things upholding all things by the word of his power.

And things will not collapse until he says they should collapse. If this is true it's something very wonderful for us. We're hearing so much about the disintegration of the universe.

The blowing to pieces of this world. A lot of people are getting very frightened about this. Well if this is true that is here.

The universe and the world can never go to pieces until Jesus says so. Men may get very near to doing it and then it recedes. It just doesn't happen.

It's got like that several times. But the word of his power has stopped it and until he says now go it won't go. He upholds all things by the word of his power.

May we go as far as to say that should be our personal comfort to us. Sometimes it seems that our own personal little world is going to pieces. That we have come to the end of our little world.

Well it applies there. Not until Jesus says so. He will hold things together until he wants them to go to pieces.

This is the son identified. This is the son described. And then we move on into the larger body of the letter.

The son's greatness by comparison with other great things and people. Thus far having become by so much better than the angels. That is the next highest thing to God and the son.

The angels. Oh there's so much said about angels in the bible. Peter says the angels who are great in power.

In the book of judges the angel is said to have had a very striking appearance. His face was striking to behold. The person who saw him was afraid that they were going to die.

They said I have beheld the angel of the Lord. His face was like unto an angel. Judges chapter 13 6 if you want the reference.

The angels have a very vast knowledge. Jesus said this. Of that day and hour knoweth no man.

Not even the angels. If anybody ought to know this the angel should. Their knowledge is so full and so great.

And yet even the angels do not. The angels have a vast knowledge. There is an overwhelming number of angels.

Revelation chapter 5 verse 11. The number of the angels is ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. That is spoken of angels.

They are a vast number. These angels are very near to the throne of God. They have access into the presence of God.

That comes out in one of the beautiful things that Jesus said about little children. He said you must not offend one of these little ones. Because their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven.

Of course we don't understand that. Something very mysterious. But Jesus says the angels have access to the throne of God.

They are very near to God himself. There is only one who is nearer to God than the angels. The work of the angels is very varied.

Look again because we're keeping very close to Hebrews. Verse 13 of chapter 1. But of which of the angels hath he said at any time sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them shall it that shall inherit salvation.

And what a lot of work they have to do. All the airs of salvation all over the world in every generation. This says that the angels have got to look after them and to look after their interests.

Do service for them that shall be heirs of salvation. Well of course we don't see them. But if the bible is true they are there.

And they are very busy people. They have very very much and very varied service. All the various needs of these airs of salvation are their concern.

So the angels are a very high order. But in this letter the Lord is saying that the sun is far greater than the angel. Here it says he has obtained a greater name than they.

Verse 4. Having become by so much better than the angel. Now if you read all that there is about angels in the bible you will have a very wonderful revelation. And then you come to this fragment about the sun who is Jesus so much better than the angel.

That's where the superiority begins. And we dear friends have come into the dispensation of that. The superiority of Jesus to all the angels.

Perhaps we haven't made enough of the ministry of the angels. But evidently they are very busy for us. Perhaps many many things that we are saved from is because they were very watchful.

Well we begin with the angels. And then we go on with Moses. You will notice what it says here.

Chapter 3. Wherefore holy brethren, companions of our heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, even Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all God's house. For he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. Get hold of that phrase.

More honor than Moses. For every house is builded by someone, but he that built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all God's house as a servant for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken.

But Christ as a son over God's house. The writer is saying we're not going to take anything away from Moses. We give Moses honors a great servant of God.

But Christ is greater. The son is greater than Moses. Abraham was the father of the nation.

Moses was the builder and constitutor of the nation. What a large place Moses has in history. Not only had he a very large place in Israel, but he had a large place in the world.

Many of the best legal systems in this world are based upon the economy of Moses. Because through Moses it was said thou shalt not steal. We have all the police forces in the world.

Thou shalt not kill. Well we have all the police forces in the world on that. I wish we had a few more forces in relation to some other things that Moses said.

The point is Moses has come to have a very large place in history. The Jews in Christ's day always appealed to Moses as the final authority in anything. Their charge against Jesus was that he made himself greater than Moses.

They therefore believed that there was no one greater than Moses. Now this writer of the letter to the Hebrews with great boldness says, but there is one greater than Moses. Give Moses all the honor that is due to him.

But the son is greater than Moses. And then he goes on to speak of Aaron. Aaron was the first high priest.

And being a high priest he was the representative of the whole priesthood system. Aaron was over all the other priests and Levites. Aaron was over all the sacrifices.

Aaron was over the whole sanctuary. Aaron went in alone to the place of the most holy. No one but Aaron was ever allowed to go into the holy of holies.

The writer here is saying that son is greater than Aaron. Far greater than Aaron. And he tells us why.

Aaron died. Aaron died. And anybody who dies never makes anything perfect.

When he dies he has to leave something unfinished. What the writer is saying, Aaron died. Therefore his work was not perfect.

Death cut across it. It was never finished. There had to come a lot of other high priests to try and carry it on.

Many more priests. Many more sacrifices. All being added to try and make this thing perfect.

Chapter nine of this letter tells us that they never did make anything perfect. All the priests and all the sacrifices never made anything perfect. And this is the wonderful thing that the letter says.

Many high priests. Thousands of priests. Millions of sacrifices.

Rivers of blood. And never bringing anything to perfection. And then the son came.

One priest forever. Who will never die. Therefore his work will never be cut short.

We have a one priest forever. Because there that wonderful paragraph about Melchizedek comes in. And everybody is wondering who Melchizedek was.

I have been asked this week who was Melchizedek. You can go to the bible and you will never find the answer. And you will certainly not find the answer outside of the bible.

This mysterious man comes in from nowhere. And where he goes to no one knows. He has not beginning nor end.

That is so far as the record is concerned. Neither beginning nor end. And that is taken up as illustrating the Lord Jesus as the high priest.

Neither beginning of life nor end of days. He is an eternal high priest. I like to see that high priest in John chapter 13.

That high priest rising from supper. And taking the priestly girdle the towel. And going to the spiritual labor.

You remember the labor in the tabernacle don't you? And it was as though this one went to the labor and filled the basin with water. Came and washed the disciples feet. A symbolic act of cleansing.

It's the high priest doing it. And it's very beautiful. Because over that incident there are written these words.

Just look at those men. What kind of men they were. And then right over them this.

Having loved his own which were in the world. He loved them unto the end. That end is not in time.

If eternity ever ends that's where it is. He loved them with an everlasting love. This high priest.

This greater than air. Whoever lives. Who lives forever to make intercession.

That is what it says here. And then with one sacrifice forever. They used millions of sacrifices and never never made anything perfect.

He with only one sacrifice did it. It done forever. And he was the sacrifice as well as the priest.

As priest he offered himself without blemish unto God. If we go on like this dear friends you will begin to believe that there's something better here. Better than Moses.

Better than Aaron. Do you know why God put those two men together? They were brothers. Moses and Aaron were brothers.

But they were very different brothers. And yet they had to live together and work together. Why was that? What was the difference? Moses was the governor.

Moses represented government and authority. Well we know that. What came through Moses was thou shalt and thou shalt not.

Moses governed Israel. Moses exercised authority in Israel. But God is not only like that.

Aaron was the man of love. The man of sympathy. Priesthood means that you know.

Priesthood means love and sympathy. Love for the poor sinner. Love for the poor sinning world.

Sympathy with men. God puts these two things together. It would not do to have all of one.

It would never do to have only an autocrat. You must unite with him the governor, the authority, a heart of compassion. And if you get that, those two things put together, you have a very good Israel.

Now here in this letter you see it saying that Jesus the son is better than Moses and better than Aaron. On the one side he can say all authority has been given unto me in heaven and in earth. The father said sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Here are two pictures in this letter. Two wonderful pictures. The one is of Jesus crowned with glory and honor having sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens waiting till his enemies are made the footstool of his feet.

With all authority in his power he is in the place of government and alongside of that is this other beautiful picture. We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Not only authority and government but love and sympathy and so much greater than Moses and Aaron. Yes his authority is a greater authority than that of Moses. His government is a greater government than ever Moses exercised.

But his sympathy and his love is far greater than that of Aaron. I think you may have had enough of this. I have haven't finished with the superiority of the son.

We haven't touched his work. The work of making purification for sins. But you can read it and I'm afraid that's where we have got to stop this conference.

Perhaps it is just like a window opened into heaven. You get the right window you can see quite a lot. You can see great things and you can see far things.

The best that I can hope is that it's just opened a window. As you look through this window you are seeing one thing. How superior is Jesus Christ to all else.

And how superior is the dispensation into which we have come and how superior are all the resources at our disposal to all that ever was before. Now dear friends this is not just a conference subject. There's one thing that I am strongly convinced of.

That if we are getting near to the end of this dispensation and many of us believe that we are. The one thing that is needed to be known is the greatness of Christ. And this is the thing that God will emphasize at the end.

All other things are going to prove to be very small. All other things are going to pass away. But Jesus is greater than all.

He will abide forever. That will be the only strength of God's people in the end time. So that more than being just a subject for a conference it's God's message in a day in which we live.

Dr. A. B. Simpson to whom I referred last night said over 50 years ago I believe that the last movement in this dispensation will be a movement back to Jesus Christ. Perhaps that is why the Lord has led us to consider Jesus Christ. You can take it from me dear friends that you are going to need this Christ.

You are going to need to know how much greater he is than all other things. Shall we pray?

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