

The Place and Destiny of Man in the Divine Economy

by T. Austin-Sparks

This sermon explores the place and destiny of man in the divine economy, focusing on the transition from the old humanity in Adam to the new humanity in Christ.

Duration: 1:03:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:16, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Galatians 1:15, Ephesians 1:17-18, Colossians 1:27

Topics: "Destiny Of Man"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a comprehensive and revolutionary vision of Jesus Christ. He explains that Jesus is the summation of all of God's previous forms and ways of self-revelation. The speaker also highlights four major aspects that come with truly seeing Jesus: understanding the place and destiny of man in God's economy, grasping the nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation, recognizing the nature and purpose of the church now and in the future, and acknowledging the immense significance of Christ crucified, risen, and exalted. The speaker references 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 to support his points.

Transcript

Lord, we have to appeal to Thee again for Thy compassion. What a pathetic thing it would be if we tried to do heavenly work with our flemlings, divine work in our own human strength. And that is just where we are now.

We need Thy sympathy, Thy compassion, or our speaking and our hearing will really profit us nothing, will have no eternal value. O Lord, help us with Thy divine help at this time that we may speak under the anointing and with the unction of the Holy Spirit and also the same way here. Anoint our ears, anoint our ears, and give us a hearing that is not just our natural hearing.

We may this morning, by the power of the Holy Spirit, hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Grant us this mercy for Thine own name and glory be seen. Amen.

We have, as you know, been occupied these morning hours with the great transition from an old and discredited humanity as in Adam to a new accredited humanity in Christ. Our first attention was with the

exposure and the devastation of that discredited humanity as we saw it representatively gathered round the cross of the Lord Jesus in Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas Iscariot, and Peter and the two on the Emmaus road. What a devastation the cross was.

Or an exposure of the old humanity at its highest, at its best. There could have been nothing worse when we were finished. Then we went on to the battleground of the two humanities as we have it in the two letters to the Corinthians.

On one side, the natural man, which is the old humanity. On the other side, the spiritual man, the new. We stood and did little more than look into those letters in a general way, pinpointing a few things in the letters where the carry over of the old to the new is shown.

The conflict between the natural man and the spiritual man or that which is natural and that which is spiritual. Touching so many things, even the most sacred things. The sins of the spirit touched by the hand of the natural man and taken up and used for the natural man's gratification and glory.

That's what is in the first letter to the Corinthians. Very much more detail is there with which we are not going to deal at all. We've only just touched it in order to indicate something.

I trust that you have seen the indication how dangerous it is and with what tragic consequences the touch of a natural hand on spiritual things can be. Bringing out that most terrible warning. Warning to Christians as in Corinth.

Christians, born again people, called at the beginning saints or separated unto God. That terrible warning where Israel's tragedy in the wilderness is taken as the ground of the warning. They perished in the wilderness and the apostle uses that to warn the Corinthians.

But that can be, the battle can be lost in the wilderness if there is any compromise between the natural and the spiritual. If you still, while being geographically, so to speak, out of Egypt. Egypt not being spiritually out of you.

Well that's just where they were. Well now that's all the negative side. And we came yesterday morning to point out that the answer that the apostle gave to that whole compass of things in the first letter, the ten questions raised by the Corinthians in a letter to him, covering so much ground.

The answer that he gave was not in a code of rules and laws like the mosaic, but in principles. And all principles gathered into one principle which mounted and amounts to this question. How much of Christ is in this? How much of Christ is in your divisions? Is Christ divided? Pinpointing the whole question of division, you see.

Is Christ divided? Were you baptized into Paul? Christ, the principle of solving that problem of divisions and all the other matters which I'm not going to even refer to now. The answer to these problems, the solving of these difficulties is focusing on Christ. Now then, how much does this minister Christ? How much does this represent a Christ? Everything is tested from that standpoint.

And judged and settled. Your behavior, or you may have what you think to be your liberties in Christ. You're no longer under the law, you claim to be at liberty in Christ and you're enjoying your liberty.

And so your liberty leads you to do certain things. See, I'm not under law, I'm under grace. I can have my pint of beer.

All right, if your conscience says you can. But what about that dear brother whose curse and damnation was drink, who's been saved and you invite him to your home and offer him drink? What about that? You may undo everything. And I've known that to be done.

I knew that to be done in the case of a dear man whose whole world was no furniture, the children had no clothes, they slept the whole family in one room on a bed of straw and he brought home no money for their food because of his drink. Everything like that because of drink. He was gloriously saved in an open air meeting we had.

And in a little while children were paid in clothes and he had on a nice suit and he came to the meetings clean and rejoicing. And a brother invited him to his home in his liberty in Christ and offered this man beer and the whole thing awoke. The man was back again where he was before.

What about that? It's Christ you see. How does this minister Christ, your liberty? We're governed by what our brother is calling the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Well that's negative again, I didn't intend to say that.

But these things are answered by principle and the principle is Christ. Christ. Do they build up? Now having come past that with all that there is left in the letters we come on to the positive side.

Perhaps you'll be happier now. On to the positive side. And I want you just to look at one or two fragments from the first letter to the Corinthians.

It's only a fragment. In chapter 9 and verse 1. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Is that cause that I want you to take hold of and hold for a minute or two. Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? And we'll go over to the second letter.

Second letter chapter 4 and verse 4. In whom the God of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should not dawn upon them. Verse 6. See it is God that said light shall shine out of darkness who shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? God has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

I'd like to add a fragment from another letter in the Galatian letter chapter 1 which is in a rather large section just lift out a bit from verse 15 Galatians 1 verse 15 But when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the nations It was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me. Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Because the context, the immediate context of those words is the apostle authenticating his apostleship and answering those who said he was not an authentic apostle because he was not one of the twelve and that's connected with that charge but it has a very much larger and more comprehensive context than that as you see from these other verses and many more like them The answer, have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

It pleased God to reveal his Son in me God, the same God who said in the beginning let light be has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ which of course means in the person of Jesus Christ Now then, what we are going to be occupied with is

this all-governing, all-dominating vision of Jesus Christ and I hesitate to say it on this almost the last day of this convocation this brings in four of the greatest matters with which we can have to do seeing of Jesus how comprehensive and revolutionary it is these four things and I'm not imagining that I'm going to deal with all these this morning these four things as you see are major things Firstly, the place and destiny of man in the economy of God that's no small thing in itself that comes in with a seeing of Jesus our Lord I'm glad the Apostle added that last clause our Lord I'm tempted to stay there and point out that in the New Testament the name Jesus by itself is only used when it relates to his pre-resurrection life if the name Jesus is used alone you will find that the context is of his pre-resurrection life after that the Apostles never called him Jesus I know they always linked on our Lord, our Lord Jesus the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, our Lord and if you are in the habit of saying Jesus, Jesus, Jesus you're on wrong ground you're on pre-resurrection ground now it's a habit with some people well that's by the way, but note Jesus, yes, but our Lord and his Lordship came into view after his resurrection and ascension right there on the Damascus road Lord who art thou?

I am Jesus if you knew as Jesus Lord not Jesus what will you have me to do Lord what will you have me to do the very beginning of a revolution of a transition from knowing after the flesh to knowing after the spirit well that again is parenthetical let's get on the first of these four magnitudes which come in with a true spiritual seeing of Jesus is the place and destiny of man in the economy of God the second the nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation is that a little thing? that's immense isn't it thirdly the nature and purpose the nature and purpose of the church now and in the after ages is that a little thing? that's immense isn't it and fourthly the immense significance in that three fold context of Christ crucified risen and exalted these are four very big things

aren't they and they are all comprehended by have I not seen Jesus our Lord it pleased God to reveal his son in me and when he did this is what I began to see that's what the apostles say this is what I began to see these things he doesn't tabulate them like that I have just taken them as the content and substance you see of the new testament and this is what it amounts to where we begin we'll make an onslaught on on this to begin with and I can do without chalk I couldn't comprehend that on a blackboard seeing our Jesus our Lord or God revealing his son in us illuminating unveiling the place and destiny of man in the divine economy Mark you I'm keeping close to the new testament if I'm not reading it and quoting the scriptures in their form I'm keeping very close to that moving out and

you who know will see that I think but I must say here that though it might get me onto controversial ground it doesn't matter very much if it matters at all I am a firm believer that the apostle Paul had a very real hand in the writing of the letter to the Hebrews whether he actually wrote it or dictated it well you can quarrel about that as long as men have been quarreling about it but I am certain that Paul had a very definite and direct influence upon to say the least the writing of that letter to the Hebrews and you will recognize in what I'm going to say that it's there comes out of that now Paul even in this first letter to the Corinthians takes up man from his inception from the beginning chapter 15 the first man Adam starts with man goes right back to the beginning of humanity

mankind and he follows right through mankind and the battle of the humanities until he reaches the point of man glorified chapter 15 how marvelous that chapter is you know I have stood back from that chapter I've read it so many times I've stood back and said how could alien mortal man know that and it can only be because he had seen Jesus Christ it's the only answer that there are bodies terrestrial and there are bodies sea-less there are bodies earthy and there are bodies heavenly and as we have borne the image of the earthly so we shall bear the image of the heavenly and he describes something of the nature of this

heavenly body this heavenly physical body this glorified manhood an amazing unveiling of the destiny of man in the economy of God so he takes up manhood first in Adam and

then by the cross smites that race in Adam discredits it rejects it puts it aside and starts with a new man if any man be in Christ there is a new creation the old past all new the history of man in this letter from his conception in the heart of God his inception in the creation of the first Adam his rejection in this letter and then in the new man Christ oh what a man this is in glory in this we groan in this we groan but what's the groaning about oh for that for which I was created God meant me in this we groan waiting waiting to quit our redemption the redemption of our body putting on of our new man when this corruptible shall put on incorruptible why don't you groan for that incorruptible this mortal dying shall put on immortality eternal and living how did Paul get all that have

not I seen Jesus our Lord it pleased God to reveal his Son in me God God or repeated his divine fear in me he said over the world in chaos and darkness let light be and there was light a fear of God and he's done that says Paul in me he has repeated and said in this darkened darkened humanity let light be when he said that I in that light saw his Son and I saw his Son I saw all that God intended and intends for mankind his destiny in the economy of God all that is there in chapter 15 as you know he tells he tells out of this seeing that the world to come the world to come the little as you know is the inhabited earth to come whereof we are speaking this is Hebrews isn't it the world to come is going to be entirely subjected to this man and this humanity for thou madest him this is Hebrews

2 thou madest him in order to have dominion over the works of thy hand thou hast put all things in thine economy and intention under his feet but we don't see that true of the old humanity it's discredited it's lost it's lost that kingdom but we see Jesus we see Jesus the representative man of this new humanity the inclusive man the last Adam of this humanity we see him crowned with glory and honor that's the destiny of man in the intention of God that's what Paul is saying here by the Spirit but he of course shows us in these letters and by his influence at least we allow in the letter to the Hebrews he shows us God's intense interest in man and God's infinite patience and perseverance and pains with man through history God never never finally wiped out any mankind until it had gone

beyond the point of no return and said we will not we will not finally we will not that was Noah's thing preacher of righteousness and the effect was in them we will not so God said the end of all flesh is before me God never did anything like that until the cup of iniquity was full to overflowing and there was no because of man's subtle determination not to have the revealed will of God but apart from that look at the that infinite pains and patience and perseverance of God I hope I don't offend anybody when I say this I don't mean to offend anybody but I think God chose the Jewish race because it needed more patience than any other race on earth because it was going to extend him to the fullness of his patience and it did God is marvelous in his sovereignty sometimes think he chose me

for no other purpose than to just show here what mercy he has well that would take us into another part of 1 Corinthians wouldn't it?

God hath chosen the weak the foolish the ignoble things which are not alright you see by what patience what long-suffering what pain what perseverance is shown by the apostle and the part of God with mankind because God has set such store by this kind of creation and if God should never have a humanity like that at the end then God is defeated utterly as he's not God the God of the Bible he must he must and he will he shows more over here the apostle shows by the spirit that all God's dealings with his

own children his the terms are family terms his own children his own family he shows that all God's dealings with his own children and family had this end in view the transition unto the glory bringing many sons to glory bringing many sons to glory but linked with that my son despise not

thou the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked or reprov'd of him whom the Lord loveth he chastens he scourgeth every son that he places by him in that wonderful chapter in Hebrews about God's dealings with his children his family showing that no no chastening for the present seemeth to be joy but grievous for the present but grievous you and I know something about that but afterward afterward there's an afterward and it is that afterward that God is working toward in his dealings with us difficult as they may be we come on to that again I don't know whether this morning but here is the principle you see oh God is not against us when we are having a hard time the devil says he is have a bad time and there's a little demon at your ear at once accusing God maligning God

trying to get a twist in your mind that questions God gets you right back into the garden again God says gets you on to the old Adam ground again no I can say this more easily than I can go through it so can you hear it more easily than you can go through it but it's that afterward what afterward what afterward oh the end of 1 Corinthians 15 all this yet thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ his dealings with us are governed by this great destiny for which he has made us and called us now all this the apostle shows all this is represented by the perfected man in glory and all this is not only represented by him there as the ultimate of God for mankind but it is secured in that man in the glory it's security and in this connection the apostle uses a

figure from the Greek about the Holy Spirit having been given to us as an earnest of our final redemption you know what the figure is well what is it you see some goods some produce at a depot I suppose you call it depot on a railroad station it's destined for something for somewhere and there is stamped on it sample sample destined for so and so it's an earnest it's a first it's a prophecy that there is more to follow and a great deal more to follow this is only the beginning this is only a piece of what's coming and the apostle uses that figure of speech Greeks understood quite well what he was talking about he says he has given us the spirit as the sample the earnest the prophecy of what is to be secured it's all there secured in him to come to us and he has sent is it a reverend to

speak of the Holy Spirit like this he sent the sample if you and I really have the spirit what have we got oh the earnest of our inheritance what is it we have this witness this assurance and the working of this power holding us unto something unto a destiny oh thank God for that holding to quote Peter who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation to be real to be revealed in the last time kept by the power where would any of us be today if there had not been that holding of us when we really did let go when we really did say say we can go no further this is the end and when we would we would have it been left to us well the miracle is we're here kept by the earnest of the spirit unto that because it is secured unto us in Christ so the apostle says cast not away cast not

away your confidence which hath great you have need of patience but after you have done the will of God so much isn't there in all this he shows that it is all represented in the man perfected in heaven but more it is secured in him up there I'm glad it's up there out of this world beyond any power to undo the security now the apostle shows then that the advent of Jesus Christ into this world was this first of all it was the summation of all God's former forms and ways of his self revelation God who at sundry times and in divers places spake unto the prophets spake by the prophets many sided fragmentary bit here through this one a bit there another bit through that one all speaking bits pieces fragments he summed them all up now

gathered them all together made one sum of them and it's the

summation of all when his son comes into this world incarnate that's what's here see Jesus and you see the summation of all God's previous methods and ways and times of self revelation it's the full and the final revelation of God in Jesus Christ that's what this young man saw of Tarsus with his background of the Old Testament in his mind so that he could quote the whole thing without the book with that he saw Jesus Christ the risen glorified Lord and his bible became a new book and he saw that in that one everything was gathered everything was summed up have not I seen Jesus our Lord when I saw him I saw no more fragments things complete now no more bits and pieces it's one great glorious whole no more then now and afterward it's all eternally present in him now the summation of all

God's previous ways of self revelation then he saw and this meant so much you know to a Jew and an educated Jew so thoroughly educated as was Saul of Tarsus he saw that Jesus our Lord was not only the summation of all God's previous ways of revealing himself it was the consummation of a whole economy the whole of the mosaic economy that's why I say I'm sure that Paul had a hand in this Hebrew letter because the whole of the mosaic economy has gone over in that letter hasn't it and what is the purpose of the letter the transition from that to Christ he's the high priest he's the sacrifice, he's the altar he's the temple, he is everything that economy represented in type and figure but he is the consummation of that the end of that and the introduction of an entirely new economy it's a

heavenly one in the heavens not made with hands or the terms are so definite not of this creation he says not of this creation the consummation of a whole economy Christendom hasn't grasped this yet it's still clinging on to the old economy in its vestments its robes its ritual its external thing they have just seen that this is all finished with and now our robing yes we're priests but of a different order and our robing is the robing of his righteousness and no other can appear before God all our adornments are spiritual spiritual oh how I'm battling all the way along to keep things out because of the detail do you know Peter has seen this I've gone over to Peter now but Peter speaks to the dear women and again the unfortunate translation but understandable because it's difficult to

grasp if he put it literally if it were translated literally but Peter to the dear sisters be patient whose adorning is not the plaiting of the hair and the wearing of jewellery so on what is the word adorning adorning original is whose world whose cosmos is the world whose cosmos whose world whose realm and system of things is not this getting yourself up making an impression oh I'm not holding any brief of carelessness and slovenliness and that sort of thing but what world do you live in how you appear to others what impression you make by these awful things no Peter says of the saintly women whose world is not there that's not their world that's not their world that's not their cosmos their system but the ornament the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit there's a parenthesis again

needs your forbearance but you see one system of externals of externals is gone and it's all now a system of the spirit in the heart a heavenly for a heavenly people now some people have seen the principle and they've tried to put it into effect by putting on a certain kind of raiment and becoming a sect who wear that kind of raiment they've seen the principle alright but you can't fulfil a principle in that way it's the spirit that comes out expresses itself the end of an economy it's consummation and then we're keeping close to Paul the transition to an entirely new regime the regime of the man perfected and installed in glory as God's model for this new humanity according to Christ is the phrase so often used is according to Christ according to Christ not according to Christ

that's the test challenge according to the perfected man and humanity installed in heaven God's pattern to which he is working he is working and here we come back again to the place of the Holy Spirit in the letters to the Corinthians especially the first letter place of the Holy Spirit look through and what is the ultimate supreme function of the Holy Spirit though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels though I give all my goods to the poor though I give my body to the poor have not love supreme work of the Holy Spirit is the character of Jesus Christ not love as I think you can put that on you know you can put that on it can be a pretension a way of behaving and speaking people can come put their hand on your shoulders beloved I've been treacherous behind your back point out

your faults to someone else unfeigned love the apostle says unfeigned love it's the spirit of Jesus Christ you're not surprised when he's finished his letters he says this benediction that has become so commonplace and lost so much of its contextual significance as applying and relating to the whole Corinthian situation the grace of our Lord Jesus what is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ look elsewhere grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who though he were rich yet for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might become rich that's the grace of the Lord Jesus self emptying you'll say that to the Philippians won't you grace of our Lord Jesus Christ it's Jesus Christ isn't it all the time the love of God how do you know it in Jesus Christ only never in any other way the love of God

the fellowship of the Holy Spirit the communion the unity the removal of those divisions and that divisive spirit I am of Paul, Apollos, Peter and so on the communion fellowship of the Holy Spirit shall I go on I don't think I can I've got to start on the next thing and it will take me over I've got I think about 17 minutes no not that and I brought my clock here this morning keep a hand on me have to start on that next great thing how seeing Jesus is the source character of all ministry in this dispensation I don't want to spoil it I think it would better don't you spoil it will you would you start to chatter immediately on everything under the sun and dissipate forgive me saying that but let us hold this quietly before the Lord because it challenges us how far are we here able to say

with the effect of it the revolution the transformation the transition have not I seen Jesus our Lord it pleased God to reveal His Son in me and when that happened my word what a lot went it just went and what a lot came how different how different I have called this section the all governing and dominating vision the seeing of Jesus our Lord go and ask Him to do that with you and let me just say this it's not something that's going to be all done at once oh no some of us after many years are seeing more today of the significance and meaning of Jesus our Lord than we've ever seen all through our lives it's got to be like that thank God it's got to be like that we'll always have a margin a plus an extra always right to the end I wish I could start now as a young man with what I've got I

could live my life right through again many years with what I've got now that's my trouble Dr.

Tozer once said you know all ministry should have such an overflow that no man ever finishes his sermon you know what he meant you come the end of your time you've got far more than your time will allow you so we could it ought to be like that over the Lord Jesus oh how much more I see than I have ever been able to say or could say today I see He is so vast, truthful immense we are here dear friends not to talk about the greatness of Christ as a subject but to be the expression of it the expression of it it may defeat us we may go to the grave if He doesn't come fearing oh we haven't begun yet but it should be like that He is so great so wonderful may the fear take place if it hasn't but if it has and their eyes the eyes of our heart have been enlightened we've begun to see something of Him remember there should be no stalemate over this no arrested progress as at Corinth no undue babyhood alright to be a baby when you're a baby a

horrible thing to be a baby when you have the years of maturity that's how it was at Corinth growth was stunted was arrested because of what they had really failed to see the Lord Jesus they'd heard the teaching they knew what the apostle was talking about He has to come back with this the eyes of our heart be enlightened He has to come back with this second letter to them the veil taken away and we all with unveiled unveiled face see another face glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and are changed into the same image from glory we pray so Lord we can only say that with the presentation of the truth thou would go beyond take us beyond and grant that every life here may stand in the good of the unveiled face of Jesus Christ the glory therein may stand in the good of having seen Jesus our Lord oh make that true of every one of us very true wonderfully true and growingly true until we finally see His face we ask it in His name Amen

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