

The Riches of Christ in the Cross of Christ and in the Church of Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the riches of Christ in the cross of Christ and the church of Christ, highlighting the virtue of the death of Christ and the redemption of all.

Duration: 1:23:44

Scripture: Ephesians 3:17-18, Ephesians 5:27

Topics: "Riches Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of feeling spiritually attacked while innocently visiting a website. He emphasizes the existence of a spiritual conflict that originated from the beginning of time and has affected all realms. The speaker highlights the importance of embracing the sacrifice of Christ and not excluding Him from our lives. He also discusses the significance of the church and the value it holds in the eyes of God. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the immense sacrifice of Jesus and the altar that can contain all men.

Transcript

What thou hast said, separated from me, he can do nothing. We know it, we acknowledge it, and it applies to this very moment and hour. But Lord, we pray, close up the gap, remove every form and degree of separateness from thyself.

May there be such a oneness with thee that thou art able to bear thine own fruit through this ministry, and so shall the Father be glorified. For this we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

I pray and I must ask you to look at quite a handful of fragments of the Scripture. Going back to the first book of the Kings, first book of the Kings, chapter 8, verse 1, and King Solomon, these, then Solomon, assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel, unto King Solomon in Jerusalem, verse 22, and Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands toward heaven, verse 62, and the King and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord. And Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep.

So the King and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. Now the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 8, According to the riches of his grace which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the time, to sum up all things in Christ, things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, chapter 2, and you, When ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that now walketh in the sons of disobedience, among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ by grace, are ye saved, and raised us up with him, made us to sit with him in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, chapter 3, verse 17.

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith to the end, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the sins. Odd is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God. Finally, chapter 5, verse 27.

He might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without. Well, so far as I am concerned, I am to the last of these particular messages, and I have to confess to you, far from the end of what I wanted to say, and into this brief hour, not the sky, but the dinner is the limit, I am very much cast upon the Lord, dead in an immense amount, but he will decide. We shall register in the spirit, and it is enough.

We have been occupied with the riches of the unsearchable riches, and we have been allowing Solomon to be for us an illustration and interpreter of him who is a greater than Solomon. He, Solomon, being but a foreshadowing of Christ, foreshadowing is always so much less than the foreshadowed, but he helps us towards that greatness. We have contemplated aspects of that greatness.

Amidst the many aspects of Solomon's greatness, the greatness of his wisdom, the greatness of his riches, the greatness of his glory, the greatness of his food, that was one thing I wanted to have a whole hour on. The greatness of his honor amidst this many-sided richness of Solomon, there stand out most prominently, overall, the altar and the house. What we have read just now, and you would be well to read the corresponding record in the book of the Chronicles, what we have just read about Solomon gathering all the people, princes and heads of fathers' houses, the whole congregation to Jerusalem, all the dedication of the house of God, you notice, is very closely related to the cross.

You were impressed, perhaps you were not, you ought to have been startled with a number of the same, just unimaginable, but notice before you go further with that, that these two supreme, predominant greatnesses of the altar and the house are focused in the person as king. Keep that in mind. It is the person himself, now as king, sitting upon the throne of David, high, lifted up, it is he as such who gives the significance to the altar and the house.

They take their meaning and their character from him in his exalted position, in his glory. That is a statement I trust you will hold on to as we go on. Now consider the greatness of this altar.

I have not read the description of the building of the altar. If you do so, you will see that it was an immense altar, an immense altar, tremendously. The very thickness of it is said to be a hand breadth in thickness.

Now that is something. Mine isn't such a big hand, but even if that span of grass was the thickness of the walls of the altar, the whole thing when you get the full dimension, which means that it must have been a tremendous thing, a very weighty, not some light thing at all, then a much fuller description of it is given which makes you feel that this must have been an immense altar. And as for the sacrament, two and twenty thousand prophets.

Do you picture that? Coming, coming in a procession reaching almost to the horizon. Here they come, Talion upon the Talion of office. All wending their way toward that altar.

Two and twenty thousand of them. And that's only the beginning. Following them are thousands of sheep.

Almost unthinkable, unimaginable. Look and you see this dark line of oxen and sheep reaching right away, as I have said, almost to the horizon. Here they come.

How many days it will take to sacrifice all those. And what rivers of blood will be poured out as they are sacrificed day after day from morn to dawn. I have often felt that I would not like to have been of the priests and Levites who had that job.

Certainly needed a good many courses of Levites to slay that long. My point is the immensity of this sacrifice and the meaning of this altar. An altar that could contain all that.

Could put all that into effect. How great that altar. And a greater than Solomon is here.

A greater altar. A transcendently greater sacrifice is here in the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus. You see, this was after all but a historical thing.

A thing in time. It's written in the book. Belongs to a long past day, a long ago.

It's a record and a story of something that happened then. And it's a way back there and it stays a way back there. In itself it was the days of Solomon, their past and gone.

And all that. A historical thing. In the life of an affluent nation, when you pass Solomon and his altar and sacrifice to the greater, the greater than Solomon, it's there that you find the first point of the superiority, the transcendence of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is super-historical. That is, it outbounds all time. It ranges from eternity to eternity.

The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. And when all the ages passed in procession before our eyes, through the Bible, Old and New Testaments, we come beyond time when time is no more. And in eternity, the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, is the object dominating everything.

Super-historical. Outranging all time. By reason of a virtue, a virtue that was never in the two and twenty thousand options, thousands of sheep offered by Solomon.

A virtue. Do you know the letters of the Hebrews? Are possible that the blood of bulls and of goats take away sin? Read that letter again in the light of this. He, not by two and twenty thousand options and thousands of sheep, but by one offering, went further than all they did, did more than all they did, effected what they never could effect.

It was a virtue in his sacrifice. It is an impressive thing that in the earlier Christian literature, I mean the earlier narratives of the New Testament, the crucifixion is hardly mentioned. It is hardly mentioned.

The crucifixion. But the death is everywhere. He died.

He died. It is the death that is the prominent thing, not the crucifixion. The crucifixion is the historic aspect.

It is just the thing that man did. But within that man did, within that outward aspect of his death, there was a virtue, a mighty virtue, which was dealing with a force, an immense, unspeakably strong, deep force of evil that has accounted for all the centuries of this world's misery. And will account for eternity's misery, but behind, behind, deeper down than the crucifixion was the death.

A mighty, virtuous death. A virtuous death. Something that if you touch it, or it touches you, means a registration of something awful, something terrible.

You know, you and I are at all spiritually sensitive. We touch certain realms and certain things. We have a kickback.

What Brother Watchman, he used to call the earth touch. Touch that. You become involved in that voluntarily.

Voluntary involved in that, in this world. And if you are spiritually alive and sensitive, something there that stings you. You feel you have been tainted.

Feel that you have been pulled out of position. Feel you have got to get away and have a spiritual bath. Wash yourself.

Get before the Lord. Take the mighty efficacy of the blood. Get you back again into your proper realm as a child of God.

Aren't you? So, this is a real, real evidence that we are born again. And it becomes increasingly like that as we go on. Mark of growth is this deepening sensitiveness to what is life and what is death.

And it is the governing and deciding thing in guidance. The law of the spirit of life is the law of guidance. The mind of the spirit is life and peace.

That's a guiding law. But I must not be too detailed. Back of his sacrifice there was a virtue, a power, but never in all the sacrifices of Solomon.

It is not the crucifixion. You can wear the crucifix. Make a lot of the crucifix, the earthly, physical suffering.

But the New Testament puts its finger not upon that, but upon the mighty, mighty power of his death. It's a power that vetoes. A power that prohibits.

A power on the one side that says to a whole system and order and realm and universe, no. So, again, to be united with him in the likeness of his death is to become aware of what is and what is not acceptable to God because that is the effect of the cross of the Lord Jesus. Christian life is that.

Is that. Yes, it is super-historical. It reaches back to eternity.

It passes through all time and reaches on to eternity to be this mighty effectiveness and virtue of the death. Of the Lord Jesus. The crucifixion was less than 40 years old when the epistles were written.

If something like this had happened within the last 40 years of our life, we'd be talking about the things, shouldn't we? All that awful thing that happened. That killing. What happened there on that cross, on that hill.

We'd be occupied with all that. These apostles were not occupied with that. They are occupied with the inner meaning of it.

What it means in the spiritual realm. Ours and all others. This is something tremendous.

It's the spiritual and inner meaning and power of the cross. It's the new testament of this immense thing. Of course, it's only a figure and type and it's given to us in Solomon to show us figuratively, symbolically and type how great, immense and massive is the death of Jesus, the sacrifice of our Lord.

Now, you see, I can strive to find words to set this forth, but I know I'm defeated when I start. Because I know that it is going to take all the ages of the ages to tell this story. They will be singing the song of the Lamb forever.

We know so little, but all we can say here at a time like this is that to seek that the Lord shall make an impression upon us. This cross about which we talk so much and think we know because we've got the terms, the language, the phrasing, identification with Christ, union with him in his death and burial and resurrection and all the rest of it. We think we know, but we haven't begun to know the immensity of what Jesus was and did in his cross.

Solomon is after all but a shadow and yet and yet figure. Two and twenty thousand oxen and thousands are trailing for days toward the altar being sacrificed. All the land around is saturated with them.

Priests by relay after relay being exhausted to accomplish this thing and it's a mere shadow of the reality of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's extra-historical. It is extra-terrestrial.

We stumble at the language. Language will defeat us. Extra-terrestrial I have said.

That is, it is above this earth, above this world. It reaches far beyond what is here. It is, may I use another phrase, it is super-cosmic.

This cross, this death of the Lord Jesus not only takes in all that is here on this earth, but it reaches unto heaven. The heavens were defiled. The heavens were defiled.

Something happened in heaven before it happened on the earth. It began there, when the angels who kept not their customs cast out, held in everlasting chains. The devil who led them lost his place.

A great schism took place in heaven, the beginning of all schisms unto this day. That's where it began and that's where it came from. It is such a bigger thing than this world.

Paul in this letter, so-called Ephesians, does give us a glimpse, doesn't he, of wrestling is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities of world rulers of this darkness, hosts of wicked spirits, as the realm of the cross has its range and its reach, what Paul calls, in the heavens. In the heavens. One of the most difficult phrases in the New Testament, the whole Bible, to define and explain.

We haven't time even to attack it. But our point is, it's the virtue of the death of the Lord Jesus reaches through all ranges and all realms until it reaches the very throne of heaven itself. And there the Lamb is the testament to the universality of what was done at that spot, at that moment in time here.

How vast a range is the death of the Lord Jesus. Solomon's sacrifice, great as it was, didn't reach beyond it. The locality, death of the Lord Jesus, bounds all locality, is super-celestial.

Coming nearer, we've read Ephesians, we have redemption in His blood. Oh, lovely thing, redemption. We rejoice in redemption.

Thing about it, one of our favourite words and topics, redemption. Redemption. I am redeemed.

But do you notice that it's a compound word with a prefix. Re. Look again at all the words with that prefix.

Reconciliation. Restoration. Re.

Something was, and it was lost. Something was, and it was forfeited. Something was sold into the slave market.

You know your New Testament knows so much about this. This cross, this death, is a redemption, a recovery of all. Not only man's condition and man's loss, but more than that, a recovery of all that God lost in man.

Of God's purpose, God's intention, of God's destiny, it was for the time being, lost to Him. And there's a very much larger context, of course, to our gospel. Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Just sheep, if you like, hens, if you like, all that and more. But the loss, the loss that took place is almost indescribable when you trace it to God. You know right there, right there, where the Lord Jesus is speaking about the loss of the Son of Man coming, coming for the purpose of seeking and saving that which was lost.

He includes what we call the parable of the prodigal. Wrong, misnomer, altogether. Of course, you go on using it like that.

But when he comes to this man, this son, who is called the prodigal, he is far away lost to the Father, lost to the home, lost to the family. How does it translate that into heavenliness, heavenly things? The Lord knows what he's talking about when he makes that man discovering and coming alive to his lost condition and the causes of it when he makes him say, puts into his mouth these words in his return, Father, Father, what does he say? I've been a bad boy. I made a mistake.

I did the wrong thing. I brought a lot of trouble upon myself. All this is because of my fault.

He made him say that. Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. For Jesus is meticulously careful in how he puts things.

This loss is against heaven. It's heaven that is lost and sin is robbing heaven of its rights and the Father of his rights. That's sin.

I have sinned against heaven. That is why there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repented because heaven has got back that which was stolen from it. Heaven has recovered, recovered what heaven lost.

And more than that, the angels are more concerned for the Father than even for heaven. The Father has got back that which is his right, stolen from him by the great thief, a great thief. Well, you see, we have redemption.

Oh, how great a thing redemption is, isn't it? Not only man, it is the universe. The universe is full of conflict, full of strife, full of controversy in the very atmosphere of this universe, our contending. It's a terrible thing when in our spiritual sensitiveness we get into that atmosphere, that realm where the two things are clashing, that which is of the Lord, that which is of heaven, that which we know to be our real realm and life, we come into the atmosphere where there is antagonism and hate, and it's a terrible thing to feel the very hostility that is in the atmosphere in this world.

Many who have labored in heathen countries know what I'm talking about if you don't. Go there. I have been.

I remember my first visit to India. My, I went out where there was idol worship, where the idol was stuck up in a place with a fence around, and the people were thirty, afraid, in hospital, in terror. And it was not just something objective.

You felt, as you feel in those temples, those heathen temples, something evil, something evil. You want to get away. I'm going to say a thing now that put me into a lot of trouble in certain realms.

I felt that on my first visit to St. Peter's Rome. First visiting Rome, you want to see all this. I went to the college seat.

I went to this place and that, and then I wanted to see the St. John's Chapel, and I wanted to see India. And I went in. Dear friends, this is no fiction, imagination.

I went in innocently to see a sight. I was a Christian, and when I got in there, the sense of death, death, so overwhelmed me that I felt physically ill. I couldn't stay long.

I looked round, I watched what was going on, and I had to get out. Not until I got right away did I feel better. There is something there in the realm of a spiritual antagonist, as you do understand, saying that in this very universe there is this, this conflict because of what began at the beginning, coming from heaven through all realms and polluting all realms and at last registering its pollution upon this earth.

Death. But Calvary has it. The death of the Lord Jesus has delivered from that.

Glorious and wonderful thing to be delivered from that. I'm not talking of geography. It's where you need an explanation of the meaning of the heavenlies.

See the heavenlies, you get a mentality up there somewhere. I want to say to you that all that is in the heavenlies, good and bad, registers in your spirit. You are as near to the heavenlies in your spirit as you will ever be geographically.

A poor Christian. He didn't know what he was talking about when he said to his men who he sent up into all this, first of all, you look round and see if you can find this place that the Christians call heaven. And

they came back and reported.

He said, I asked them to look for this thing. They said, of course they never found any such place. Poor man, poor man.

If he'd become a Christian, he would know. He would know there is something more than a geographical realm when you speak of the heavenlies. You're speaking about super cosmic forces of evil and antagonism.

But, blessed be God, we have redemption through his blood. On that, good to be outside of that world, isn't it? Had a week outside of it. Or in some of the meaning of being outside.

Well, you have to go back, but you need not be going. They are not gone, even as I am redeemed. And then, thank God, this creation itself is redeemed.

And it's waiting now for the day when that redemption will be consummated. And the creation, as Paul puts it, shall itself be delivered from the bondage of corruption. When this earth as it is and this world will have been brought up with all that is in it and a new heaven and a new earth redeemed.

That was effected and secured in the death of Jesus Christ. In the death of Jesus Christ. You want an hour on 1 Corinthians 15.

Wonderful revelation of redeemed resurrected physical bodies. A great question. I thought that I might have had some time to talk about this.

How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? Cremated bodies. A handful of dust taken out and scattered on the waves of the sea. The body burned to cinders in some farm compound.

How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? And here's the exceeding greatness of his wisdom. Thou fool. Thou fool.

You are governed in your ideas by your own natural wisdom. You fool. The wisdom of man is utter foolishness.

How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? You have got a spirit. You have got a spirit. As believers that spirit has been born in you.

In that spirit is a divine life, indestructible life, incorruptible life. That is the germ and God in your physical disintegration shows that spirit and then gives it a body as it pleases him. Gives it a body.

You get the germ and quicken it. The body corresponding will follow. This is a mystery of course.

How? Old Paul says, in this we groan. In this we groan waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Bringing back of the body to what it was before this corruption, this seed of corruption was sown.

Not fully perfected but I believe it was a glorious body then. This is a point of dispute. But I think when Adam and Eve became aware that they were naked, that symbolic language, that some kind of covering had been removed from them.

I believe that covering was a covering of some glory. And they became aware that they had lost something glorious as their covering. They were naked.

The New Testament takes up that word naked and relates it not to physical but to a spiritual state. Oh, I'm getting you too deep. But to redeem the body means to bring it back to something which it lost.

Which it lost. Have we anything to go upon to establish that? I think we have. I think we have.

I have seen people pass from this life. I'm very near to myself. The compass of my own life.

One, a child of God who had lived, sacrificed and suffered for the Lord. Only for the Lord through many years. The other, a rejecter of the Lord persistent, consistent through the years.

I've seen them both under my own eyes pass out. And as this one passed, all the radiance, the physical radiance, the glory on that face, the renewal of childhood almost. That's not death.

Passing out. Waiting, waiting, waiting. The last year.

Oh, there was such darkness. I tried to see. Oh, it was beautiful.

Not a ray of light. I'm not exaggerating. I'm giving an instance.

It's like that, you know. Sometimes I wish it were more true. Peace.

Sometimes, you know, the real enjoyment of the Lord, it makes a difference to our faith. Even in poor bodies. Suffered much.

Undergone a great deal. Pouncing, pouncing the peace and glory of the Lord in the face of many lives. You don't have to be introduced to a true child of God.

You've got the face, you see. You've got the very face, you see. You're a Christian, aren't you? Others, nothing there.

God is not there. This is simple. Do you know what I mean? Yes, we have evidence now that there is a glory which belongs to this body.

A glory which sin has marred. Taken away. Sin does take the glory out of the face.

But the redemption of the Lord shall be made, says Paul, like unto His glorious body. For a body of His glory. Crossed as He could.

Oh, how great is this. Today's work of the Lord Jesus, His sacrifice. Being so much greater than Solomon.

His inclusiveness. And not all blood of fools comes to Him. But comprehending them from the day of Abel.

Through all the sacrifices of Abel up to Abraham. Abraham up to Israel and Moses. All the way.

And then, throw in this fist. Throw it all in. Throw it all in.

Christ of the One Lamb comprehends it all and does what all men never did and never could do. This one offering embraces all. And it's final.

One offering forever. Having made one offering forever. So far as His work is concerned.

Far as His work is concerned as the offering. It is finished. It is due.

Oh, let me say this before we have it. And they brought the Paschal Lamb to the priest. After it had been laid up for fourteen days.

For scrutiny and examination. Brought to the priest. Who was an arch critic.

A master critic. It is over. It is through and through with those cleaned eyes.

Who would find one blemish. One blemish. One spot.

One wrinkle. It was rejected. If after its period of probation.

The priest absolutely finds not one hair on that lamb that was another color. He lifted his hand on the head of the lamb and pronounced formula. S-L-S-R-E It is perfect.

Those are the words the Lord Jesus used on the cross. And he offered himself. It is.

It is. It is perfect. The apostle tells us.

He offered himself. It is absolutely perfect. I know.

Blessed be God for this unspeakably marvelous thing. For the first time for himself. I gloriously.

Without spot. Or wrinkle. Or any such.

With S-L-S-R-E These are unsearchable. Finality. Of.

Cross. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. I've only touched the cross you see.

I told you I was going to be beaten. I haven't started on the house. Solomon my son is yet young and tender.

Says David and the house which he built. Is exceedingly beautiful. It is for the Lord.

Blessed be God. Very great and very wonderful. You suffer me a few minutes.

In this. For here we pass from the pipe. Oh magnificent.

I wonder what your conception of that. That temple of Solomon is. It was very great in itself.

I'll ask you to join me. And. Probably no bigger than this at all.

As I mentioned. Outstanding. Greatest.

Lord. And majestic. And well.

In this thing. You come to the house. He is built.

He calls my house. Your house. Whose house are we? This house.

This house which he is building. Is the embodiment of the. Constant greatest value.

All this immense sacrifice was. In the dedication of the house. It was a dedication.

The house takes the. Dimensions. Spiritual dimensions.

From the altar. If that altar is immense. Like this and that sacrifice.
Incalculable. How great this house must be if. All that is required for it to be.
If it takes up all that into it. Takes its character from. All that in the altar.
What a house it must be. If this house cost all that. Cost all that.
You must. Use your imagination. That possession of.
Books. Books and. Read.
Read the story and the context. People willingly offer. But it costs.
It costs. Represent. Great cost.
Here it is. You can lift it. If you lift it.
All concentrated in the house. Christ. Loves.
And takes it. There is a world. He has.
Has enough. Time. To be.
Up he goes. And sells all the books. He gets a picture of Philippians 2. It is so.
Fantastic. The feel. Of this world.
And the world is that. Christ. To heaven.
Heaven's throne. His rights in heaven. Of equality with God.
And he sells it all. By best himself of it all. Aren't it not a prize.
Of heaven's. Heaven's glories. Heaven's rights.
Heaven's prerogatives. Everything that he had as the eternal son. In nature.
So. He loved the church. And gave himself.
As he might present it. You and I dear friends need. Recover.
Something beyond. The truth of it all. The doctrine of recovery.
It is the preciousness of the Lord. And if we. Did that.
Not. Not just objectively. As some wonderful.
Wonderful idea. A wonderful teaching. Realize.
That man was part of that. His whole life. Every part.
What a difference it would make. Our behavior. It's meant to do that.

But if it doesn't do that. With all that we know about the church. We don't know anything.
Talk to me. Church doctrine. Church doctrine.
Church ground. However you may put it. How much.
They are embracing. All that for which Christ died. And not excluding anyone.
Not becoming excluded. All. Who are embraced.
By that. Sacrifice of God. In himself.
You cannot be narrow. Small. Legalistic.
Exclusive. You have seen. Because in seeing the church.
You have seen Christ. Cannot separate. See him.
See the church. See the value of the church. Because of its brotherhood.
Speaking of communion. All the composition of it. All manner of things.
And the purpose. And the goal. No it isn't.
Challenge to our part. This is. The essence.
Of the preciousness. Of the Lord Jesus. Sing our hymns.
Sing our hymns. We sing. You know you sing a lot of things.
Post-doctrine. We sing a hymn. Marching to Zion.
And. Walking the golden street. Walking the golden street.
Post-doctrine. There is only one street. One golden street.
We have all got to live on the same street. Beside each other. And live together.
Oh now you are going to give up Christianity. See what I mean. This preciousness of the Lord Jesus.
Is going to make it possible for us. At least to live together happily. It will be Christ and not ourselves.
It is an element of our humanity. We will be bonded together. By Him.
That is the pure God. Pure. That is the church.
And we can never, never found it. Never get beyond it. We can get into it.
The church. Again super mundane. Or how I do wish I could get this over to Christians.
Biggest problems I think that many Christians have. Are connected with the church. What it is.
What it is. Is this church. They bring it down to the local church.

Church local. Local assembly. Is it.

What we see. What we see. In Christians.

Who are supposed to be members of the body of Christ. What we see in local companies of believers. Oh is this the church.

Is this the body of Christ. Is this Ephesians. Or how impossible it is.

Along that line of mentality. See that the church exists at all according to New Testament. Isn't this our trouble.

It's my problem how to get this over. You see dear friends. You and I. In ourselves are not the church.

We are not the church. And we are not parts of the church. We are excommunicated.

Not in it. Therefore the church universal or local is not the aggregate of Christian bodies. The real real church is the measure of Christ in everyone.

See that when we come to the tables. Christ is the church and it's just the measure of Christ that is in us that makes up the church. You can't join the church.

Transform again your phraseology. There's no such thing as joining the church. If you are not an organic part of Christ.

Produced by his divine life that's different from your own. You're not in the church. But if from new birth you have become inwardly an organic part of Christ.

The church is there. It's when we meet not in bodies but in spirit. We can meet in bodies as congregations.

No church. Call ourselves church. No church.

It is when we meet in spirit, in the spirit, that Christ is present. Spontaneously may I say naturally present. It just is.

Don't make it. Don't form it. It may shock you when I say that the apostles never had the idea that they've got to go out and form churches.

Now let's get inside. They never conceived that they were called upon by the Lord to go and form churches. What they did was to go and preach Christ.

And not only preach Christ but bring Christ in their own person. And when people responded to and received Christ into their life they spontaneously came together. All of the other apostles never said now let's go out and find these people and get them saved and then collect them together and form them into a church.

Never. Church was as our brother said born. It was a spontaneous birth.

And it was the bringing together of Christ in a corporate way. And it's inward. You can violate the church.

Immediately you get out of the spirit. Sin against the church. Immediately you get onto natural ground.

Only when we abide in Him. Abide in Him. There's a lot there is in Him.

Abide in Him. We abide inwardly in the Lord. The church is formed and grew.

It is the increase of Christ Himself in us that makes it. It doesn't mean of course that we can behave anyhow careless. Let us get our true ideas.

Because Peter is very clear about this. His spiritual house. His spiritual house.

And it's impressive how Peter begins his letter. He's going to speak to you about his spiritual house. God's spiritual house and the living stones.

And he begins by saying unto the spirits. What are you talking about? Saints scattered all over the world. And you are going to say one house.

One spiritual house. You mean that geography is not the first thing? Being together in one place? The first thing? No. It's wherever Christ is.

Wherever Christ is. There are two or three in any place with Christ in them. That is the church represented.

He is the church. It's His own body. Not ours.

For how impossible it is to get it over. But you may get an inkling. How close for a finisher.

I'll close by reminding you. This thing. More than Solomon's house.

Magnificent and wonderful as it was. This thing is eternal. Timeless.

Not only super mundane above the earth. All that belongs to the earth. But eternal.

Chosen in Him before the foundation. Unto Him in the church. Unto all ages.

This is a sign. When we are called by Jesus Christ. That's not the beginning.

That's not the beginning of things. It's only stepping into what began long, long ago before we had a beginning. This is an eternal thing.

And you say why? I say that we know that already. But thank God. I do thank God when I look at the history.

I see the forces against it. Tremendous forces against it. Even in the early days of the apostles.

Before the last of them had left this earth. Immortals. The masters of Roman politics.

All that has happened. All that has happened. Christians in the many parts of the world.

In the nations of China, in Germany. Anywhere you like. All that has happened.

By the gates of Hades. The council of Hades. Have really, really been set against this thing.

They have stood at nothing to fight this thing out. Because all it passes is a mere flea bite in the whole thing. Fight this out.

Nations. Empires. Councils.

Ideologies. Get rid of this. And it grows.

And it grows. And it goes on. Artos, yes.

Lay down their lives. It goes on. His church.

As the church of Jesus. Never will prevail. The gates of Hades shall not prevail again.

Shall not prevail. It is timeless. We may go.

On he goes. With his church. We'll all be caught up in the end.

Great day when he presents us. Hopeless. Hopeless before the presence of his glory.

Without spot in exceeding joy. I'm quoting scripture to put us into that. Though we may have died in the martyrdom of persecution or whatever.

Has come in time. Has come in time. He goes on.

With his church. I'll leave it there. Big enough for you to contemplate.

After all, dear friends, let me say again. All that I had ever hoped would be the result of this ministry. I have been so much exercised about it.

And not least how uncertain I was ever going to be. My expectations have only been an impression of it. And such an indelible, deepened trust.

Not only have to remember it as something wonderful. That is all true. God has called me.

I'm in the first Lord. I'm in the thing outbounding all ages and all realms. Outbounding all enemies.

And that is the first Lord. I'm called into something immense. Oh how great our Christ is.

How great his house is. How great his house is. God make this govern our conduct.

Our behavior. Our manner of life. Our influence upon other people as we meet believers.

So may this be there. These people are people of dignity. Represent something.

These are not for mean contemptible. Dignity about that otherwise insignificant little man. He speaks of another realm.

God give us significance. It came from thee we believe. We hand it back to thee.

Do what you can with it Lord. Work upon it. Keep it alive.

Watch over it to protect it. And we say through it all. Through it all.

Unto him be the glory. In the church. By Christ Jesus.

Unto all ages forever and ever.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1217.mp3>

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-riches-of-christ-in-the-cross-of-christ-and-in-the-church-of-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net