

The Significance of Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, and Exalted

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the significance of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and exalted, and how this revelation impacts the destiny of humanity, the nature and dynamic of true ministry, and the nature and purpose of the church.

Duration: 1:07:51

Scripture: Psalm 119:18, Isaiah 6:1, Malachi 4:6, Matthew 16:24, John 12:21, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Galatians 6:14

Topics: "Christ Crucified"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the theme of the closing of the book in failure in the Old Testament. He explains that the New Testament introduces a new humanity brought in by Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes that the Apostle Paul had a profound vision of Jesus Christ, which revealed four important things to him. These include the place and destiny of humanity after Christ, the nature of a life ministry during the period between Jesus' ascension and second coming, and the fact that Satan's activities can be used by God for His purposes. The sermon concludes by highlighting the failure of the old humanity in the Old Testament and the transition to the new humanity in the New Testament.

Transcript

Lord, when we say to Thee, Open Thou mine eyes, That I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law, Thou knowest that the most wonderful That Thou canst show to us is Thy Son. And so, not things, but Him, Open our eyes, that we may see Him this morning. It is to Thee, not to men, but to Thee that we say, We would see Jesus.

And O Lord, grant it in Thy mercy that when we leave this place, We are able truly to say, We have seen the Lord. Be it so, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

Now we come to the last of these hours, at this time, in which we have been occupied with the great transition, having said at the beginning that the whole Bible is occupied with God and humanity. The Old Testament with an old humanity, throughout showing how utterly unreliable that humanity is, and eventually proved a failure as the Old Testament closes. I think you've noticed that not in chronological order, but in spiritual order, the Old Testament closes with Malachi, and what a sorry picture in Malachi.

The closing of the book in failure. The New Testament is occupied wholly with the introduction and development of a new humanity, brought in with the Lord Jesus Christ. And from that point, the whole of the Old Testament is occupied with this new humanity of which Christ is the representative.

It's birth, it's growth, and it's eventual and ultimate glorification. Well, that is the general background of these morning hours this week. And we came two days ago to the all-inclusive vision of the Lord Jesus.

And began, as we shall never finish, though we stayed here all our life, began to see what there is in Jesus Christ, what he has brought in, and what the Apostle Paul and the others, of course, John, Peter, the Apostle Paul, I think, in a fuller way than any, saw in the Lord Jesus when, as he put it, it pleased God to reveal his Son in him. What an immense revealing that was, which grew and grew all through the life of the Apostle. And we said that four things came to the Apostle in that vision, that heavenly vision, that inward singing of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, in Jesus glorified, he saw, according to the eternal thoughts of God, the place and the nature and the destiny of humanity, the humanity after Christ. Then he saw the nature and dynamic of a life ministry, of a ministry through this long dispensation between the ascension of the Lord Jesus and his coming again, what the ministry is, the vocation. He saw that when he saw the Lord Jesus.

We spent a lot of time on it, not enough. Then he saw the nature and the purpose of the church, now and, as he put it, unto the ages of the ages. These three great things he saw and then he saw a fourth.

With that, we are going to be occupied this morning. Jesus of Nazareth glorified the man in the glory. And as he gazed and gazed inwardly upon that seeing, that vision, that revelation, he saw these three things that we have mentioned and then he saw the immense significance of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and exalted.

These are the things, of course, which fill all his writings. You have to approach them before you. Let me repeat.

The immense significance of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and exalted. We are totally incapable of sensing, recognizing, conceiving what happened to this man, Saul of Tarsus, when he saw the Lord Jesus. You see, he had thought of Jesus, the Nazarene, as an imposter, a false teacher, a false leader, one who was leading people astray and all the feelings of animosity, hatred, bitterness, of which that great soul was capable, overflowed against this man, Jesus of Nazareth.

He made it his life business, his tremendous abilities, natural abilities and his training and all his knowledge made it his life business to blot out any remnants related to that man, Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. He viewed the cross of Jesus Christ as his deserved crucifixion, the end. And that in shame, deserved shame, deserved ignominy, deserved disgrace.

And more from his Jewish standpoint, viewed that man on that cross as cursed of God, cursed of almighty God. This was his mind about Jesus of Nazareth. When he saw Jesus on the way to Damascus and he was smitten with the like, who and what it meant and said, because of the overpowering who art thou, Lord.

I say we can never enter into that mentality. I am he, I am Jesus. I say we cannot enter into what that man must have felt.

Jesus, man, glorified in the seat of power capable of smiting even such a man as Saul. Frustrating him, leaving him one who has got to be lifted up by men and by the arm led blind to the place where he was. The overwhelmingness of it he began to see.

In that one, that it was not a crucifixion and it was not a death such as he had thought of death. But that Jesus Christ crucified and teaching should him to have seen. That death, that shameful death, that awful death was his own death.

Shame, all that for me is in my place. I died, that was my death. A misconception of me.

Saul of Tarsus. Oh, what a revolution. He had a great idea of himself and his own abilities.

But look. Moreover, he saw closely to his teaching and not reading in anything making up something. You can sit down with yourself and prove everything that I'm saying.

He saw not only that that death, that awful death as a judgment upon a kind of man was his death. It was the death of the whole human race in Adam. What does he say? Because we thus judge that one died in the place of all therefore all, Conover says, in him.

Therefore, it was the death of the whole race as in Adam all died. Our death, the death of the whole race, the humanity to which we belong by nature. Therefore, all died.

But then he came to see this also in the death of Jesus that it was not death as an end. It was a death that destroyed death. In a sense, it was a death which was the end of death.

And he tasted death for all men. It's true. But then he destroyed him, that is, the devil.

So from the death of death he saw in the cross, this is in Christ risen, the death of death has taken place. He's alive forevermore. He saw more.

He saw that that cross was, use the word we've used before, it was a cosmic death. That is, it reached out beyond the individual and beyond the race to that whole encompassing realm of evil forces which had brought about this condition, making that judgment necessary. And as he went to the cross, he said, now is the prince of this world come.

He stripped off principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross. A cosmic cross, a cosmic death, touching the outermost bound of the lower heavenly. Came to see all this revelation of God.

Well, that's so much as to Paul himself. Further over this matter of the... You see, if the revelation of Jesus Christ comprehends all those three things that we have said, comprehends the destiny of humanity. One side of humanity's destiny is judgment out of Christ.

The other side of humanity is glory in Christ. He comprehended that, a subject for a lifetime. If in the seeing of Jesus Christ, in his heart revealed, he saw the nature and the dynamic of all true ministry during this whole dispensation.

Then if he also saw, began to see and saw with increasing fullness as he went on, the nature and the vocation of the church now and in the ages to come. If he saw all those three mighty things in the face of Jesus Christ, in the person of Jesus Christ, that is, in the presence and revelation of Jesus Christ. If he

saw all that, remember, this is the vital thing for this morning.

He saw that all that human destiny, all that ministry through the centuries, and all that face and vocation of the church in time and in eternity, he saw that it was all centered on you, saith Jesus Christ, and him crucified. For all this content is in the cross of the Lord Jesus. He saw that the cross of Jesus Christ was the climax of humanity.

The climax of humanity. It was the zero hour of the old Adam race. The place at which in the darkness, more than natural darkness, God said, the door is closed.

The door is closed upon a certain kind of humanity. This is zero for that humanity. It's always bringing us back to that, that one fact.

And putting his finger upon this and that, something else, and saying in us, that went out. The cross has closed the door on that. Terrible, terrible thing it is to go back upon the cross of our redemption.

Only apostles have got cross has said an eternal no to a whole kind type and way of a certain humanity. If you are sensitive to the Holy, what the Holy Spirit will allow and what he won't, or you ought to, Oh, young Christians especially, but all of us, how important it is for us to know the Holy Spirit in this way. You go to this one, going round asking your questions, ought I? May I? Should I? Can I? No need for that at all.

And if anybody begins to tell you, they are doing a wrong thing. They are doing a wrong thing. You ought to know in your own heart, by the Holy Spirit, if you are born of the Spirit, you ought to know the Spirit making you uncomfortable about certain things, not whispering in your ear in words and saying, but inside.

You are free to do these things as I once did. You know what I mean, don't you? The Holy Spirit is only bringing you back to the cross. Zero to that.

The end of that, that belongs to the old humanity. I mustn't start with too much detail. The cross is not just a historic thing.

The cross is not just something in the Christian. The cross of the Lord Jesus is a devastating thing on one side. It is the zero hour of the Adamic way.

It is further the registration of the subjection of the prince of this world. Now the whole world lies in the wicked ones, says the apostle. The whole world lies in the lap of the evil.

By nature we are in that realm, in that kingdom. The great work is out of the authority. But by nature we are the prince of this world.

At the cross as we have said, Jesus said now is the prince of this world cast out. You know there is such a thing as victory and there is something there is a more than victory. There is being a conqueror and there is being more than conqueror.

What do I mean? Well, not many of you, a few, can remember, although in America perhaps you didn't take much account of it, didn't know much about it, but some of us lived through the great war, war in South Africa. You know how that went on, what devastation and desolation that war saw in South Africa. Last the British came the upper hand.

He was one of the great generals. As Barber watched, watched their way, their life, learned the truth about them, he began to change. At last, even into the first world war he came as a helper, great helper on the side of the British.

What had happened? Oh yes, he was conquered, but there was more than me, an ally. Oh, you say, is Satan for us then? Oh no. An analogy breaks down here, but what do we find in the New Testament? I would have you know, brethren, the things which befell me have fallen out for the furtherance, and those things which befell were satanic activities, and the Lord has taken hold of Satan's work and made them serve his ends.

That's all authority in heaven and on earth makes the enemy, in the long run, serve his purpose. String through your noose. Saints in Caesar's house was the registration of this subjection to Jesus Christ of the prince of this world.

Further, it was the sentence of death upon the world itself. The world's spirit your country side, but the cross as Paul saw it in Jesus Christ was the D-Day of a new creation. D-Day, what's that? Deliverance Day.

Deliverance Day. Peter must walk in here and say to us, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, who hath begotten us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto an inheritance incorruptible and done who are kept by them. A new hope of a new creation.

Creation breaks into new life. New hope. Through the cross.

In the resurrection. Jesus from the dead. Now all that surely does give us the ministry and the church.

The ministry and the church issuing Matthew from the cross. Inherent in the cross. No church without the cross.

No ministry without the cross. So hence, hence the cross is the ground upon which the Holy Spirit encamps for ministry. And understand why it is that there's been such an assault made upon the cross to get it out of the preaching.

To put other complexions upon it that are true of it. You in the power of the Holy Spirit live the life of the cross and minister Christ. The Holy Spirit comes on that.

He comes on that. Want to know where the Holy Spirit encamps? Takes up his position for cooperation. Takes it up always on the cross.

You never come through to a genuine a genuine true knowledge of the fullness of the Holy Spirit unless the cross is foundation. And it's the only safety. The only safety.

Amidst of many things that are false and counterfeit. I want to know about everything. What place the cross has there.

Not as a teaching a theory, a doctrine and something in the Bible but where's the cross in the life there. That is the Holy Spirit's camping ground, Christ crucified as preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says here is the wisdom of God as the wisest thing from heaven and the power of God the most powerful thing from heaven Christ.

It is the minister be careful about came to the by the Holy Spirit a theory something to talk about. Indeed is that the talks of by the Spirit on the ground of the ministry. And what will he disallow.

Learn a lot about that you know. The old days when I was very much in the preaching realm. Later I was preaching I quoted went home.

What has happened? The Lord said to me you know that poet is a modernist a liberal theologian Only great truths make your sermon a success. I learned a lesson a life lesson. Really we are under the cross.

Do you understand this? Am I being too detailed?

Oh no for ministry and I have defined what ministry but the function of the Christian to minister Christ That's the ministry giving Christ This ministry began there must be the source of all true Holy Spirit and as for the church its nature and its purpose now and forever what has God in mind from eternity about this elect vessel what is it what does it exist for in the divine council only to be itself the vessel, the embodiment of all this meaning of the cross as with the ministry and ministers so with the church it must be a crucified church to preach a crucified Christ and to bring by the Holy Spirit all God's knowledge to men church is a crucified church now do you look at the beginning and see we at the beginning of these meditations saw the devastation that took place not only in

those of the world but with the disciples how their own humanity was devastated at the cross, scattered and desolated they are men who've got nothing nothing left and they come to the cross of the Lord Jesus of the Lord Jesus the church begins he gathers the scattered fragments here there he's putting the vessel together again but on other ground why did he tarry 40 days why to make sure that they were on new ground that they had really grasped the significance of the resurrection as a new ground and why did he lead them out as far as Bethany and went from them full view into glory to let them know that the church is on new ground and on heavenly ground now on heavenly ground and that the headquarters of the church is not at Jerusalem all is to be gotten from heaven now because of this

man who is exalted he's the head, he's the governor but it's heavenly am I using language that you don't understand or is it too familiar Christ is installed in heaven as the representative sent down from heaven is to govern everything, deal with everything, work in everything and in everyone firstly on the relegation to judgment of the old humanity and the development the initiation and the development of this other humanity, that's what the Holy Spirit is here for see the writer of the Hebrew letters makes it very simple about father and children and sons doesn't he my son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord chastening of the Lord as a father chastens his son well what about your fathers who have sons what are you doing with them the New Testament puts full stature of manhood in

Christ these are his actual words as you know and this applies of course to the sisters as much as to the brothers, one man in Christ all one man in Christ, sorry the translators haven't given us the full translation but it is all one man, it's best given all one man in Christ Jesus are with a man according that is why Jesus was here for those three and a half years a man amongst men but different from all others conformed to the image of his son now I am going to close soon but I want to get very near to this not only the nature of the church this is the nature of the church and the church's vocation but position of the church now and in the ages to come and because this is a very large matter I am going to focus on one thing to try and help you I am going to focus upon the matter of

prayer I am convinced that in all the recovery that has to be made the recovery of prayer in the way in which I am going to speak of it now is very very important, have you ever seen dear friends what the position of the church is if it is in its right position and rightly constituted and now I am not talking about the church universally, it applies there let's come to a local church where is Christ he is seated at the right hand of God what is that right hand the place of power, the place of authority the place of government as head of the church which is his body he has been vested invested with all authority in heaven and in earth you sometimes question that Christ's authority here in this world when you see things going as they are going, wondered about that all authority in heaven

now dear friends if you have a nucleus of the church in any one place a nucleus in any one place rightly constituted on the basis of the cross and the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus the Lord you are united with that throne and if you get to prayer on that basis as such an instrument you are going to touch things in the heavenlies and on the earth haven't we lost something haven't we lost something I have, and I think to hear probably, I have told of a personal experience on my first visit to the United States in 1925 talking to a brother at my side at the breakfast this morning who is from Boston that experience took place at that time when I first met him in Boston I had come out and I was just learning then, just learning the great principles of the church, the cross and the

church and I had come out to speak at a convention in Park Street Congregational Church of course that is well known now and I went into my hotel into my room and evil came over me it was so terrible this ministry which is the word of God against the enemy and fleeing the blood but nothing happened trying to fight the spiritual battle never getting through it came to me so clear stand into the prayer for you of the Lord's people now that's very simple isn't it but I stood there in my room on my behalf now of course that isn't the end of the story to London, to my and I told them of my experience wrote and said, will you please let us know exactly the time that that happened making allowance for a difference of five hours between London and Boston give us the very hour that that happened

so I told them that very hour we were met for prayer we felt that you were having a great battle and we felt that we had got to take up that battle for you and pray it through and we did now do you see what I mean forgive the personal reference and forget that but the principle my three thousand miles difference in world time just nothing that very moment the church prays far away something happens the enemy in the heavenlies is touched authority in heaven and the situation on earth is touched authority on earth in touch with the throne don't you think we want something like that now are there not forces of evil in the heavenlies that need to come under the impact of that all authority in heaven are there not situations even in the church of the churches where that authority in the earth

needs to be brought in to change them and the church is the vessel of that the instrument of that all for local companies on that ground power of the cross and the authority of the risen and exalted lord that's a great need ask the lord about that when you get back where you are all be careful of a technique about pro prayer warfare and attacking the devil be careful he'll make a mess of you he'll wait his time but get hidden in the cross remember that this is not your strength your wisdom it's a crucified vessel that's going to do this but oh the lord does need a recovery of that kind of vocation and it's not going to stop here I've said the vocation of the church in the ages to come oh it may not be then against the devil but I quoted a scripture the other day and told you I don't

understand what it means no you not said Paul to the Corinthians we shall judge angel we shall judge angel that doesn't mean that angels are doing wrong and going to be brought into judgment by us in

eternity it means government telling them what to do what is required of them or it means I don't know what it means but it means something we shall judge angel it's the church that is going to be the administrative instrument of Christ through the ages to come it's got to learn administration now and that was the point of those words of Paul to the Corinthians you are going to the corpse of this world to get judgment from worldly men worldly wisdom can't you learn to judge yourself amongst yourselves you ought to because in eternity you've got to judge angel you better learn now go to judge

angel you better judge these things that you are taking to the corpse you ought to have wisdom for judgment now learning oh we are in a school a wonderful school learning to fulfill such a vast vocation in the ages to come this is the school for that and if we are really through the cross under the Holy Spirit under the anointing spirit and we are all we are all baptized in one spirit into one if that is true perhaps we've got to get clearer as to what that baptism is and that anointing and what that body is but this is it we are now under the Holy Spirit tuition which is a practical tuition and not a theoretical one under his tuition that we shall graduate when the Lord comes into that vocation which we have been called and to which we have been appointed from eternity the councils of

God to be his governing vessel in this universe too wonderful to grasp beyond you is it is beyond me but this is what Paul teaches and it's to begin now as now says he unto the principalities in the heavenlies may be made known the manifold wisdom of God in the church to wonderful vocation see how far we fall short now this morning that's enough I'm sure for you to grapple with much more to be said but that's quite enough for now be quiet about it, think about it all this dear friends all this that I have tried to say to you, the Lord has tried to show you issues from an experimental knowledge of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ it does and you have seen now what that cross means on both its sides may it not be a subject a doctrine teaching theory but the mighty reality that it is in

every realm we pray when we touch realms like this as much that tries to grapple and stifle and make it difficult both to speak and to hear so that now at the end of this course for this time we must appeal to thee as on the throne to exercise thyself and thy authority thy power to make these things realities living realities to us not the subject of the Barna convocation in 1968 not the theme that certain people followed in their ministry but oh God save us and bring us into the good of what thou dost say make it live make it a power in us may it register in earth and in heaven in the name of the Lord Jesus Amen

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