

# Ye Are Come to Zion - Part 5

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of Zion as a place of praise and worship, where God's satisfaction is found, and where the full response to God's mercy is demonstrated.*

**Duration:** 54:35

**Scripture:** Psalm 87:1-2, Psalm 87:7, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:3, John 6:9, Hebrews 12:22

**Topics:** "Zion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the citizens of Zion, referring to believers in Christ. He highlights the significance of the gates of the city as places of counsel and decision-making for the people of God. The speaker encourages the audience to look at the testimony of the people of God and recognize the abundance and resources they possess through their relationship with the Lord. He also mentions the disciples' request for spiritual nourishment from Jesus, highlighting the spiritual resources available to believers. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the blessings and wealth that come from belonging to the Lord and being citizens of Zion.

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## Transcript

We will read in that place in the world of God upon which the hymn we have just seen sung is founded. That is in the 87th Psalm. Psalm 87.

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.

I will make mention of Egypt and Babylon as among them that know me. Behold Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia. This one was born there.

Yea, of Zion it shall be said. This one and that one was born in her. And the Most High shall establish her.

The Lord shall count when he righted up the peoples. This one was born there. Selah.

Which means, think of that. They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, all my well springs are in thee. Letter to the Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 22.

Ye are come to Zion. It is always a most happy and a most helpful thing to have a suitable setting for preaching. This evening we might seek to speak about the blessings of the Christian life and tell those

who do not know and are not in the enjoyment of them what a good thing it is to belong to the Lord.

It might resolve itself into saying a lot of things, of arguing those things out, of trying to persuade but it would be hard work if there was not some kind of setting for all that. And I think the best argument and the best statement of that fact is found in the very atmosphere of this gathering. I was just thinking as you were singing that if I had been an unsaved person who did not know the Lord and was not really in the enjoyment of salvation and I had come in while that singing was going on, I should have been compelled if I had been honest to say these people are having a good time.

They've got something and that really is the best preaching isn't it. So I say to you that whatever I may state in words has a good strong and genuine backing by the situation in which we are found this evening. And if you cannot accept the argument, if that doesn't go down with you, the argument of words, then just look at the people, listen to the people.

And if you are not convinced that the people of God have got something worth having, well you are a very thick skinned. You are a dying heart. Well that's a little introduction.

The right kind of setting and introduction for a meditation on this 87th Psalm with its present application. There is that. All that is said there about Zion and the citizens of Zion.

Here in the New Testament is the statement. You will come to that. That is not something in the Old Testament.

Long ago and far away there is something here for you now. It is present for you to know and to possess. Zion we are coming.

Now let us look at this 87th Psalm and draw from it some of those things which are brought to us in the Lord Jesus at this very present time. His foundation is in the holy mountain. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. That is the first section. And as you see it contains some first contrasts.

Contrasts represented by two words on each side. Jacob on the one side contrasted with Zion on the other side. The tents of Jacob on the one side, the gates of Zion on the other side.

A double contrast. And the statement is that the Lord very much prefers the one to the other. Indeed it is touched in strong language the Lord loveth this more than that.

And of course our inquiry is as to what it is that is the foundation, the basis of this discrimination and this partiality of the Lord. What is it that the Lord loves so much more? It is not a statement that the Lord does not love Jacob nor the tents of Jacob. He does but he loves Zion and the gates of Zion very much more.

Why? Well you see Jacob represents the simple pure mercy of God. Whenever we come on Jacob, whether it be the man himself or the people going by his name, that which his name represents, we always invariably find ourselves in the presence of that which calls for and demands the mercy of God. The very name Jacob, the subplanter, is that which is not for the mercy of God.

There is no hope for that. There is no place for that. And yet how very much of divine mercy is exhibited in relation to Jacob.

How often in the prophets, in the prophets, and that is significant because in the prophets Israel had sunk into the Jacob realm again. From the great Israel, the prince with God position, they had fallen into the place of men governed by the flesh, fleshly interests. And so the name of the prophets for Israel is so often that of Jacob.

And yet how much there is in the prophets of God's great mercy to Jacob. He will have mercy upon Jacob. It's just wonderful, it's just wonderful when you think of all that that name means.

To see how God went out to Jacob. The patience of God, the long-suffering and forbearance of God. God never giving up.

Jacob was at his worst. Yes, Jacob always symbolizes that which draws out the mercy of God. Jacob postulates mercy, mercy.

Well the Lord loved Jacob and showed Jacob great mercy in such terms as patience and long-suffering and forbearance. Longing love? Yes he did. But do you think that that is all that the Lord wants? That, that which just demands his mercy, mercy, mercy all the time? That with which he has got to be patient, long-suffering because of what it is? Do you think that is wholly according to the Lord's heart? Surely not, surely not.

Then what is it that the Lord looks for, longs for, delights in more than that? Thank God that he's a God of mercy and he is merciful to us in our Jacob's state. But don't let us conclude that because God is so merciful to us as sinners, all that we are in our human weakness, failure, constant breakdown, don't let us conclude that however great his mercy is, that that is the thing that satisfies him fully, just to have us as objects of his mercy. And so he contrasts Jacob with Zion and Zion represents something more than the mercy of God, it represents the full response to the mercy of God and something more.

When you come into what is represented by Zion, then you find that which answers back to the mercy of God, that which says his mercy has not been in vain. You like to change the word from mercy to grace, you can, but the grace of God has not been in vain. He has not just had to go on being merciful and merciful and merciful and that's where it begins, but no, his grace has begotten something, his grace has provoked something, his grace has drawn out something.

And Zion is represented always as the place of praise, praise, praise. No, it was there in Zion, sons of Korah carried on the singing, the singing. Zion is a place of psalm and if psalm, singing, praise is genuine from the heart, it means an expression of appreciation of the grace of God.

That's the true note in Christianity, isn't it? So much of our singing and it is really the only real singing religion in the world. There are dirges in other religions and awful noises, but singing, praising, rejoicing, you don't find it in any other religion. It's only in Christianity.

It's made up so largely of hymns, isn't it? And so many of our hymns are just the answer back of the heart to the grace of God. God inhabited the praises of Israel. So Zion represents something more than mercy, it represents that which comes back to God because of his mercy.

It means that all that the Lord Jesus has done, has taken effect, is really producing something in us and the Lord loves that. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. The Lord loves Zion while he loves Jacob, he loves Zion infinitely more.

He loves the people who have so apprehended his mercy and his grace that they have nothing now for which to live but to give back to the Lord that which his mercy merits. That's all. The tents of Jacob, the gates, this is another aspect of the contrast, the first contrast.

And it is only a following out of what I have just said because these couplets go together, they're apart from each other. Dwellings or tents of Jacob and gates of Zion. What is represented by the second couplet? Tents, gates.

Well you see there are two distinct pictures if only you could recognize it. It's a transition, it's a change of position and time all together. When you contemplate the tents of Jacob, you are contemplating them in the wilderness.

Every day you will find the Old Testament, when Jacob is in tents, they're in the wilderness. When the people are in Zion, they're no longer in the wilderness, they're in the city. Different position, different time all together, almost a different dispensation.

They have passed out of the wilderness, now into the land, they have reached the city. Zion is a realized thing. They've been looking towards Zion through the wilderness, now they have arrived.

Tents and the gates. But what does that mean? Well you see in the wilderness, in the wilderness, in their tents in the wilderness, they were learning by discipline. Learning by experience to know the Lord.

Gaining spiritual history. What a time of spiritual education it was. The wilderness wasn't it? Spiritual education under the hand of God.

What hard lessons they had to learn. What severe blows they suffered. Yes it was a time of testing, a trial.

It was 40 years which always implies probation. Time of testing to find out and to prove and to bring to some position along that line. That is the implication of the tents of Jacob.

All that they were going through in order to learn in the wilderness. The school of the wilderness. Gates of Zion.

What's happening in the gates of the city? By fear are the elders gathered together, the mature people and counsel in a position of that knowledge, possessing that knowledge gained through experience which is being turned to account for the people of God. Gates are the places of counsels in the Bible. A conference of the people who know.

The judges sit in the gates. People of intelligence are there conferring together and making decisions in the interest of the people of God. They are the people who have learned and have brought the good of their learning, of their education, of their training into practical application to the nation.

See the point? Yes the Lord loved them in their tents in the wilderness, there's no doubt about that. But not a lot of patience and forbearance through the 40 years. Here in the gates of the city all the good of their discipline, their training, their education is gathered and turned outward to the good of others.

And the Lord loves that you know. He does not want us all our lifetime to be in the wilderness learning, learning, learning, going through it, being tested, being tried, being brought to understanding. He does look forward to the time when you and I will be in a position to turn what he has taught us to account for others.

That's far more precious to him. Now are you in the wilderness or in the gate? You people still out there wondering about learning, slowly learning by discipline and adversity? Or are you a responsible person in the gate? Those who know their Bibles of course have the advantage over those who don't as to this matter of gates and the councils in the gate that I embedded for others. In the Bible the idea of gate is that the city councils took place there to decide matters, to judge matters for the good of the people.

The Lord wants people like that, like that. You know that is what the apostle was speaking about to the Corinthians. People to the Corinthians.

His word to the Corinthians. He had to say to them now look here some of you have got difficulties between yourselves and you're taking your matters to the lower parts of this world. You're going before the world to judge of your matters.

That's a mark of immaturity. That's a sign that you haven't got very far on the way. Now you ought to be able to judge one another and judge your own effects.

And if you would judge yourselves you would not be judged of the Lord. You ought to be in a position to decide these matters not take them to worldly wisdom. See what the Lord loves is that kind of maturity which means that well we know from the way in which the Lord has taught us, disciplined us, know what we ought to do and are able to help others.

The difference between the tent and the gate you see. The Lord yes he'll be very patient with you while you're in the wilderness but don't think that he wants that to be the beginning of the end of everything. He looks for the day and it will be the day of his so-called greater joy when you and I will be in the gates of Zion.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob. Then the psalmist goes on to another set of contrasts and they begin in this way. I will make mention of Egypt and Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia.

Contrasts with the whole lot. Not each one alone but with a whole lot put together is one word. One name.

You can bring all the greatest names of this world together lump them together and there's one name that is more than all together. Zion. See the contrast Zion.

I think we need not stay to speak of what these various things represent. Egypt well we know we know what Egypt stands for. The power of this world.

Babylon the pride of this world. Philistia the presumption of this world. Tyre the commercial glory of this world.

Ethiopia the darkness of a human heart in this world. Over against that by contrast by prospect by value from heaven's standpoint stands Zion. Psalmist says here are people who are boasting.

Boasting that they they were born in Egypt. They belonged to Egypt. Glorifying they had been born in such a place.

They held the franchise. Others were boasting Babylon was their native country and city. Oh wonderful Babylon.

Wonderful Babylon. I was born in Babylon. A man boasts.

Another boasts that he was born in Philistia and so they go on. Tyre. Wonderful Tyre.

Read the 37th chapter of the prophecies of Ezekiel. You'll see what men boasted in Esther. Tyre.

Tyre built up to the very heavens. Exalted to the heavens. Glory of the commercial power of this world.

Well read all. With all your vaunting and boasting that that is your heritage. That is your heritage and when you have put all those together and made all of them that can be made and it's not a little.

It's not a little. When it says that Moses accounted for the approach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Israel. It did not of Egypt.

It did not mean that the treasures of Egypt were things to be scoffed at. Only it only puts the reproach of Christ on a so much higher level. Because the treasures of Egypt were undoubtedly very great.

You know anything about the glories of Egypt in her great days. You know that it's no small thing and Babylon and the rest. Oh this is this is no small thing to have been born there.

To be native of those places. But when you have given them their due and said all that could rightly be said about their glories. Their position.

Something that overtops them all. Of Zion it shall be said. Notice that sentence begins with yea.

I wish it had begun with but. But the yea is quite as good. It's an emphatic exclamation.

Which simply means more than all that. Of Zion it shall be said this one and that one was born in her. Hmm.

The citizens of Zion. The citizens of Zion have weighed up Egypt. Moses was a true spiritual citizen of Zion.

Although he never literally literally came to Zion. But he was a true citizen of Zion. He weighed up Egypt.

He summed up Egypt. He took the measure of Egypt for 40 years. For 40 years he took the measure of Egypt.

And then by a deliberate calculation he came to a conclusion. It's better to be in the reproach of Christ. Not in the final glories of Christ but in the reproach of Christ.

Nice word. The lowest level of union with Christ is better than the highest level of union with this world. That's not an exaggeration is it? If words mean anything that's what it means.

Far better far better to be with Christ in his offerings than to be in all that this world has to offer outside of Christ. That is the Christian's testimony. That really is what it means when you've rightly understood what Christ has done and offered.

It's more than all. And after all after all the Christian, the simple Christian who knows his or her Lord truly looks pathetically upon these poor people of the world. You've got all that but I'm sorry.

You think you're having a good time and having but I really pity you. You really don't know anything about it. That's what it means.

I say the citizen of Zion has weighed up Egypt, has weighed up Babylon, has weighed up Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia and written it off as a bad garden if you lose Christ. Paul was a great citizen of Zion. He looked at all his heritage naturally, his birth, his birth yes and this for life indeed.

A Hebrew of the Hebrew, of the tribe of the tribe, a Pharisee of the Pharisee, everything else. And he he looks at it all splendidly in the face and see how much other men make of this and how he made everything of that himself once. It was his life, it was his glory, it was his ambition, it was his sphere of interest and then he found Christ and he looks at all that.

I count it as the very refuse compared with Christ. He uses the word refuse about all that but you never do that until you've got something with which to compare it. This is a comparative matter.

It is something very wonderful for those who have nothing more but if you have Christ. If you're a citizen of Zion, well it's poor stuff after all, it's poor fare, all that however much it is. Contrast.

Right between these contrasts the Psalmist puts this, glorious things are spoken of thee, O Zion, the city of God. Glorious things are spoken of thee. I would take a long time to dwell upon the glories of Zion but there are two things that we could just mention in that dimension.

What would you consider to be the most glorious thing that could be true of your life? If something could be said to sum up your life at the end as really quite truly expressing and representing the value of your life what would it be? Well I don't know exactly the best way in which to put it but as I view that it would be something like this. To have brought satisfaction to the heart of God. If only, if only my life could mean that God was well pleased.

That the good pleasure of God rested upon my life. That God could say well done, well done, good and faithful servant. I would want nothing more than that.

Nothing more than that. Could you have anything more than that? What could you ask for? You see Zion is that which brings God's satisfaction and that's the most glorious thing that can ever be said about anything. Glorious things, glorious things.

I would want nothing more than that. Nothing more than that. Could you have anything more than that? What could you ask for? You see Zion is that which brings God's satisfaction and that's the most glorious thing that can ever be said about anything.

Glorious things, glorious things. It's only bearing out all that we've been saying through this conference what Zion means to God. As answering back to him for his pleasure.

He takes delight in Zion, in her stones and in her walls. Yes, we call Zion precious. Precious.

To himself and unto you that believe is the preciousness. It's the preciousness of Zion to God. That's a glorious thing to be spoken isn't it? And dear friends you have come to Zion.

Here is the Lord Jesus who has found the full, final, utter pleasure of his Father. So much so that because of his life and because of his work the Father says my beloved in him I am well pleased. If God could say that to you and to me well what should we feel like? What should we feel like? We wouldn't sleep for a

year of nights with joy and have made us accepted in the beloved one.

We are come to Zion. We are accepted in the one who has the perfect approval of God. Oh how difficult it is for us to believe that, to accept that, to apprehend that and yet it's a refuge to which we must constantly flee and harass and pursued by the accuser who would remind us of ourselves and our sinfulness and our failures and constantly belabor us with the effect of an evil conscience.

Our refuge is what? Flee into Christ and say in him God covers all my sin. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Taking the whip out of the hand of the enemy and mashing him with it.

Justification by faith. Made just through faith. Accepted in the beloved.

Beloved. So the word comes back repeatedly. Beloved of God.

Beloved of God. Beloved of God and that to such miserable creatures as you. We are come to Zion.

Glorious things. Glorious things are spoken of thee. And then the prospect of Zion.

For Zion as we have said is not just a place and a thing. It's a people. It's a people in union with God's Son.

What is the prospect of Zion? The prospect of that people. Oh just contemplate again the things that are said about the church in the ages to come. The church in the ages to come.

What a place. What a vocation. Unto the ages of the ages and the crowning word now.

Now. Unto him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages forever and ever. That word church is only a synonym for Zion.

Glorious things are spoken of thee. We cannot dwell upon the glories that God has prepared and given and unto which he has called his church for the ages to come. Glorious things.

My dear friend if you're outside of Christ you're missing something. You are missing something indeed. You're missing everything.

Whatever you're gaining now you'll lose it all and have nothing left. But glorious things are spoken of Zion. The people of God.

Whatever we do not have here we've got something that is more than all. The Lord shall count when he write it up the peoples. This one was born there in Zion.

Which raises the question forthwith. Have you been born in Zion? Have you been born again from above? Have you been born anew by the spirit of God? Have you got another place where your name is enrolled in the Lamb's book of life? Are you registered in heaven? Can you, can you present your certificate of new birth? Have you got the credentials of this heavenly country in your heart, in your life? What are they? With absolute assurance you know. That's something.

That's something. You know. You have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are not in conflict with heaven but you are on happy terms with heaven. You have peace. These are the credentials of new birth and many other things.

Do you know anything about that? You know what I'm talking about? Most of you do. I know that it may be somebody does not. Let me say to you that if the Lord Jesus when he was in this world said to any man you must be born again.

He meant you can be born again. If you must you can and you can be born again. I know word Lord shall count when he righted up people this one was born there.

See now think of that. Think of that. They that sing as well as they that dance shall say all my well springs are in thee.

The citizens of thine have resources to draw upon of which others know nothing. They have invisible means of support. You hear people talking about having no visible means of support.

Well that's all right. That's a glorious position to be in if you're a citizen of God and no visible means of support and plenty of invisible means of support and no less real for them. The Lord Jesus lived on that basis.

The wilderness satan came and said command that these stones become bread. But he had bread. Bread of which satan knew nothing.

The disciples that like us were well came to him said master eat. But I have meat to eat that you know not of. Yes spiritual resources and those resources are for the citizens of Zion.

All my well springs are in thee. We do know something about that. What it is to draw upon the Lord for our life our subsistence and more than that.

Drawings are such an abundance. We are not just going about in a half-starved condition. We have enough and blessed be God it doesn't matter how many of you come we've got something to give.

Isn't that true? Good thing to be in that position. Hungry people let them come. Let them queue up.

We've still got something to give. Yes all the time that's the testimony isn't it of the citizen of Zion. We lack nothing.

We have plenty. Always a margin for others. We have an affluence.

We are wealthy people. All my well springs are in thee. This is testimony that this is what is offered you see.

How it should be may I come to Zion. This is presented all this is presented to faith. May the Lord give us a new heart to lay hold on this heritage of the children of Zion.

I would want nothing more than that. Nothing more than that. Could you have anything more than that? What could you ask for? You see Zion is that which brings God's satisfaction and that's the most glorious thing that can ever be said about anything.

Glorious things, glorious things. It's only bearing out all that we've been saying through this conference what Zion means to God as answering back to him for his pleasure. He takes delight in Zion in her stones and in her walls.

Yes call Zion precious. Precious to himself and unto you that believe is the preciousness. It's the preciousness of Zion to God.

That's a glorious thing to be spoken of. And dear friends you have come to Zion. Here is the Lord Jesus who has found the full final utter pleasure of his Father.

So much so that because of his life and because of his work the Father says my beloved in him I am well pleased. If God could say that to you and to me well what should we feel like? What should we feel like? We wouldn't sleep for a year of nights with joy and hath made us accepted in the beloved one. We are come to Zion.

We are accepted in the one who has the perfect approval of God. Oh how difficult it is for us to believe that, to accept that, to apprehend that. And yet it's a refuge to which we must constantly flee and harass and pursued by the accuser who would remind us of ourselves and our sinfulness and our failures and constantly belabor us with the pip of an ego conscience.

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Accepted in the beloved. Beloved. So the word comes back repeatedly beloved of God.

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Glorious things, glorious things are spoken of thee. And then the prospect of Zion. For Zion as we have said is not just a place and a thing.

It's a people. It's a people in union with God's Son. What is the prospect of Zion? The prospect of that people.

Oh just contemplate again the things that are said about the church in the ages to come. The church in the ages to come. What a place.

What a vocation. Unto the ages of the ages and the crowning word now. Now.

Unto him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages forever and ever. That word church is only a synonym for Zion. Glorious things are spoken of thee.

We cannot dwell upon the glories that God has prepared and given and unto which he has called his church for the ages to come. Glorious things. My dear friend if you're outside of Christ you're missing something.

You are missing something indeed. You are missing everything. Whatever you're gaining now you'll lose it all and have nothing left.

But glorious things are spoken of the people of God. Whatever we do not have here we've got something that is more than all. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the peoples.

This one was born there in Zion. Which raises the forefront. Have you been born in Zion? Have you been born again from above? Have you been born anew by the spirit of God? Have you got another place where your name is enrolled in the Lamb's book of life? Are you registered in heaven? Can you, can you present your certificate of new birth? Have you got the credentials of this heavenly country in your heart, in your life? What are absolute assurance? You know.

That's something. That's something. You know.

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These are the credentials of new birth and many other things. Do you know anything about that? Do you know what I'm talking about? Most of you do. I know but it may be somebody does not.

Let me say to you that if the Lord Jesus when he was in this world said to any man you must be born again. He meant you can be born. If you must you can.

And you can be born again. Final word. Lord shall count when he righted up people to this one was born there.

See now. Think of that. Think of that.

They that sing as well as they that dance shall say all my veiled springs are in thee. Citizens of thine have resources to draw upon of which others know nothing. They have invisible means of support.

You hear people talking about having no visible means of support. Well that's all right. That's a glorious position to be in if you're a citizen of thine.

No visible means of support. Plenty of invisible means of support. And no less real for them.

Lord Jesus lived on that basis. The wilderness Satan came and said commander these stones become bread. But he had bread.

Bread of which Satan knew nothing. The disciples the tigers were well came to him said master eat. But I have meat to eat that you know not of.

He has spiritual resources and those resources are for the citizens of thine. All my well springs are in thee. We do know something about that.

What it is to draw upon the Lord for our life. Our subsistence and more than that. Drawings are such an abundance.

We are not just going about in a half-starved condition. We have enough and blessed be God it doesn't matter how many of you come we've got something to give. Isn't that true? It's a good thing to be in that position.

Hungry people let them come. Let them queue up we've still got something to give. Yes all the time that's the testimony isn't it of the citizen of Zion.

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We have an affluence. We are wealthy people. All my bell springs are in thee.

This is testimony that this is what is you see. How it should be. Ye are come to Zion.

This is presented. All this is presented to faith. May the Lord give us a new heart to lay hold on this heritage of the children of Zion.

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