

Death in the Pot Christ the Answer

by T. Austin-Sparks

Christ is the answer to human inadvertency and unintentional sin, providing a perfect humanity that satisfies God.

Duration: 24:41

Scripture: Leviticus 2:1

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of making unintentional mistakes and the regret that comes with them. He emphasizes that many of us can relate to this experience and have made similar mistakes under pressure or necessity. However, the speaker reassures that there is hope and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, who understands our human frailty. He references the story of Elisha and the provision of a meal offering as a symbol of God's provision for our mistakes. The speaker concludes by highlighting the importance of spiritual responsibility and the lessons we can learn from God's dealings with us.

Transcript

In the second book of the Kings, the second book of the Kings, chapter 4, at verse 38, and Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a death in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. And he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild goods, his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of potter, for they knew them not.

So they poured out for the men to eat, and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, O man of God, there is death in the pot, and they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring meal, and he cast it into the pot, and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat, and there was no harm or evil thing in it. You recognize this is one of these many recorded incidents in the life of the prophet Elisha, subsequent to his receiving the mantle of Elijah, and the double portion of his spirit.

Every one of these is a part of a whole, and the whole is the testimony of life overcoming death. This brief story has several features which we will note, and I think we shall find in them something true to all the word of God, that is abiding meaning and value. We begin by noting again that it is related to the sons of the prophets, men of those schools of the prophets, founded for the training and educating of men who were to succeed them and carry on the testimony of the Lord, become responsible people in that testament.

It is necessary to keep that connection in mind because it has something to say to us. There is a sense in which we are all in the Lord's school for training in the matter of spiritual responsibility in his testimony. Indeed we could say that that is the explanation of all his dealings with us, and of the strange happenings which he allows in our lives.

It is education, spiritual training, and to responsibility in his testimony. The Lord has no place for irresponsible people, or people who carry no responsibility. That's the connection.

Then there was a death in the land. It was a time of straightness, a time of pressure, a time when things were anything but easy, and all such times are perilous times. A time of pressure, a time of adversity, a time of difficulty, of straightness, when things are hard.

That is a perilous time in this sense, that we are very often found governed by the necessity of the time, and we yield to the pressure of circumstances, and do something, or try to do something. We've been occupied with Abraham on our first evenings. The situation was a very difficult one for Abraham, indeed humanly impossible, and he yielded to the pressure of circumstances, or of what seemed to be a necessity, took action, and we know the terrible result of that in Ishmael.

We have quite a number of such instances in the Bible, and perhaps the most outstanding of all is a comfort to know that our Lord Jesus did not escape this temptation, for there is no doubt that the temptation of the devil in the wilderness to him was to act under the pressure of necessity, and he hungered after 40 days and 40 nights fasting, and the devil came and said, command these stones that they become bread. If you don't you'll die. It's necessary for you to do something.

The circumstances demand that you do something. It's always a perilous time to be under pressure, duress, in a time of adversity. This was a time of death, and so they must do something, and they go out to do it, and you see what happened.

It's a part of the whole story. It's only a part. It leads on to the very blessed sequel, but the next feature, this inadvertent wrong, mistake.

As they gathered, one gathered this wild vine. It says that they knew it not. Under pressure, doing something, and inadvertently making a mistake, which involves, in real peril, the effect to the whole life itself.

Out there in that world, the curse was lurking secretly, but all wild things and poisonous things came from that initial curse. When God said, curse shall be the ground because of you, the curse was lurking, as it always is. That curse which has in it the very element of death, it's about, it's there, not always able to detect, to identify, it's in the world, it's everywhere, the deadly thing, just waiting for them, shall we put it like this, to act like this, indiscriminately, or by sheer force of seeming necessity, for their very life, a trap waiting.

You notice that this inadvertent error, mistake, mistake, not only involved the one who gathered the vine, it involved all those who were in relation with the testimony. The enemy is very subtle, he can only just drive one child of God, one servant of God along this line, and entangle him or her, he knows that this is a communal pot, that it's not an isolated thing, he's got others in view, and they were all involved in this mistake. The result, the touch of death, evidently they drew out and tasted and detected that there was something poisonous, the touch of death, because that is the point of the whole story, and of all these

stories you see.

Death in some form or another, abounding, the work of the curse, but then, the end. And this is where the message turns from being one that is somber, perhaps not very helpful, although enlightening, where it turns to become, I think, tremendously helpful, when discerning their mistake, recognizing that they had become involved in something evil quite unintentionally, they did it under pressure, under seeming necessity, they made a mistake. And I suggest, dear friends, that there are not many of us here today who, looking back over our lives, are unable to see more than one occasion when it was like that with us.

We were driven, we were harassed, perhaps distraught, pressed out of measure, we felt that we must do something, and we did something on that ground, and we regret it to this day, what it involved us in, and others too. Well, it's a very real-to-life story, this is, but that's not the message. Maybe a warning, maybe enlightening, but the message comes at the end.

They cried out, oh man of God, there's death in the pot, and he said, then bring meal, and he cast it into the pot. They drew out, there was no evil. What's the message? I hope I'm not reading something into this, but if the rest of the story is true to principle, I think this issue is true.

I have to go back to the book of Leviticus for the real clue to this issue. I'll find it in the second chapter, those chapters dealing with the various offerings to be brought to the Lord by his people, all of which, as you know, are related to the one thing, life, life with God. Second chapter of that book, at the beginning, we have the meal offering, the meal offering.

We know a type of Christ as the meal offering, composed of fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt. I'm going to stay with all that, simply to sum it up in its inclusive meaning. Fine flour, ground very fine, bread corn, his brews.

Well, this meal offering, quite clearly, is a figure of the incorruptible humanity of the Lord Jesus. A human life without corruption in it, without the poison in it, without the harmful element in it, without any elements of the curse, therefore, of death, his perfect humanity, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, with the frankincense mingled, making it a sweet savor offering, as differing from other offerings, the whole bound offerings, the offering for sin, they were not sweet savor offerings, they were offerings of judgment, but the meal offering was a sweet savor offering. Frankincense made it that.

The mingled salt eliminated any possibility of corruption, and then, baked in the fire, tested, perfected, through the fires of suffering, he presented himself to God as a man, to satisfy the heart of God. Incorrupt, a humanity. See the connection? You and I, in our human frailty, our human folly, and in the corruption that is in our natures and in our hearts, do many, many foolish things, and involve ourselves and others in a great deal of trouble, bring something very much like death very near, but, this is not done by calculations, deliberately, in rebellion, so many of these things in our lives are inadvertent, unintentional, unpremeditated, we just get caught in them, under pressure, whose consequences, of course, are very serious.

What are we to do? Is it hopeless? Is there no way out? Cannot our human failures, follies, and weaknesses be retrieved? Must that be the end? Is it death? Because we've made a mistake, however grave it is, God has provided his answer for all human inadvertency. All unintentional sin or mistakes, he's got his answer in a perfect humanity in his Son, an offering to himself that satisfies him for all your and my mistakes. You know, in the great provision, under the law, there occurs this very phrase, if a man sin

unwittingly, then a provision is made.

This man went out to the field, gather what was there, and unwittingly, no thought of bringing back poison to poison all his fellow students, unwittingly, not knowing what this thing was, perhaps it was a part of his education that he had to learn the difference between things that are good and bad, and undoubtedly he did that day. We do learn in this hard school of mistakes. If we can't learn by our mistakes, well then we are pretty hopeless.

No doubt he learned a very big lesson that day by his error of judgment, and by acting without sufficient thought and consideration or prayer, impulsively, like Saul did and lost his kingdom, but he learned his lesson, this man, no doubt about it. The great thing I'm quite sure that remained in his heart was this, I've made a terrible mistake. I have been responsible for an awful blunder.

I nearly involved not only myself but others in disaster, but the Lord has made a provision to meet all my foolishness, all my ignorance, all my unintentional wrong. Christ meets our need in that way. I think there's a lot of comfort in that, don't you? See the whole question is the question of death through corruption, and it's still true of us, in us, that is in our flesh dwelleth no good thing.

We are still very corrupt. Our heart is desperately wicked, desperately wicked, but the Lord has provided it. He's greater than our heart.

It's one more aspect of our appreciation of the Lord Jesus. I trust that this comes to you as it does to me with some real helpfulness. You often looking back over your life and saying, oh if only, if only.

I have not done that. Of course, perhaps some of you people have no regrets about your life at all. There's not a thing that you can look back upon having a regret.

Well, behold the perfect man. But most of us are like that. We are aware that there are many things that we wish had never been, we've never done.

If only we had had the life then that we had now, we should never have done them. But they're done. What do we do about it? Is it hopeless? The Lord has taken the full measure of human frailty and met it with an answer in his Son.

Of human foolishness. We may have to meet the Lord in another way if it's rebellion, if it's deliberate. But most of us can truly say to the Lord we, we would not have done that had we known, had we understood.

It was not intentional. It was not deliberate. It was not rebellion.

It was just inadvertent, under pressure. And I realize dear friends that this is a limited message, can only apply to some and certain situations. You want to take all these incidents in the life of Elisha to get the whole range of the Lord's provision.

Whether it be for a nearman or a woman and her son or whatever it may be, here is one point in the whole story of a wonderful provision in the Lord Jesus to meet us where we've got into trouble by our own foolishness, our own weakness. A meal offering of a perfect humanity that satisfies God.

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