

God's Mind About the Church

by T. Austin-Sparks

The Church's ultimate effect in the spiritual realm is rooted in God's mind, and seeing this gives us spiritual strength, power, and a dynamic that enables us to have a spiritual impact.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:22

Topics: "Spirituality", "The Church"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of the Church in God's divine plan, asserting that individual Christians alone cannot fully engage with spiritual forces without the corporate body of the Church. He highlights that true spirituality is rooted in understanding God's mind about the Church, as revealed in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. Despite the visible shortcomings of the Church, the Apostle Paul maintained a triumphant spirit because he grasped God's ultimate purpose for the Church. This inward revelation empowers believers to rise above disappointment and despair, recognizing the eternal reality of the Church that transcends temporal appearances. Ultimately, a true spiritual understanding leads to dynamic impact and resilience in ministry.

Transcript

In the Divine scheme of things it is the Church which has the ultimate effect in the spiritual realm. I mean that individual Christians, though they may be born again, as individuals will not get very far in touching the outermost realm of spiritual forces. There a real registration has to be a corporate one. It will be the Church eventually which will be the instrument of Divine government in this universe.

Spirituality means what the Church is in God's mind. When we come to contemplate the Church in its wholeness and entirety, of course, we come mainly to the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. There we find God's mind about the Church. We must realize the necessity for our seeing and apprehending what the Church is in God's mind, not as we find it in the churches, not as it actually is here; and we must stand on that ground, or we shall be helpless in this matter of spiritual impact. I mean that if we are going to accept what we find in the New Testament as to the churches as being the expression of all there is, we are very soon going to give up the fight and shall not get very far. If we are going to accept that as the standard, we are going to be crippled, and the measure of our spirituality will be very small indeed, and therefore the measure of our impact likewise. The Apostle, who was mainly responsible for these churches coming into being, repudiated their condition, would not accept it, was fighting against it. Why? Because he had seen God's mind, that was his position, his vantage ground, his strength. If he had

never seen God's mind and only saw this, what a disheartened, disappointed, despairing man he would be! He had seen God's mind about it.

It is the Church that is in view in these epistles, and spirituality in Ephesians and Colossians means first of all an inward revelation of God's mind about the Church. It is a tremendous thing for spiritual strength, for spiritual power, for spiritual ministry, for spiritual impact, for spiritual food - yes, for every spiritual value - to have really had a heart revelation of God's mind about the Church; not simply to have studied Ephesians and Colossians, but for it to have broken in upon your heart, to have seen it in an inward way. I say that is spirituality with an impact; it is spirituality with a dynamic, and what a dynamic it is!

Look at the Apostle. He looks out at the end of his life over the churches. He knows them intimately, and he has to say: "All that are in Asia have turned away from me" (II Tim. 1:15). They have repudiated Paul, to whom under Christ they owed everything. He looks out, and what a spectacle, what a heartbreak! And the man in his circumstances of imprisonment and isolation and limitation, looking out on that, might well have died of a broken heart or have sunk down into the uttermost despair and written his life off as a failure, and all his work as for well-nigh nothing. But this man is not down there, he is in triumph, he is delivered, he is saved, he is emancipated from all that. The facts are true and real, and yet he is triumphant. Why? Because he sees God's mind about the Church and he knows that if God ever had a mind about a thing He is going to have the thing like that; and no matter what appearances say, in the end God will have His Church like that. God has not conceived a thing and projected it to be cheated out of it. There it is and it will be!

When you have grasped that, you are able to get closer to these letters and see the value of spirituality. A true spiritual apprehension is an emancipating thing. The spiritual is not the unreal, it is the most real of all. It is far more real than the temporal and visible. The eternal, they are the real things. You do not see this Church here on the earth; it is not seen, but it is there in the unseen with God, and it is the eternal thing. If only we saw the invisible, that as an extraordinary statement: "He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27) - if only we saw the invisible, meaning if only we saw in the spirit what can never be seen in the flesh with our natural eyes, it would be a tremendously emancipating thing, because we should see that that is the eternal thing that must be. When all else passes, that will be. Spirituality buoys you up.

There is so much disappointment in the churches, in the things seen, that you might give up in disgust, close down your work, go and do some other job; but you do not do that if you have really seen. You may tell yourself that you are a fool not to face facts, that you are simply putting on blinkers, not taking account of realities; but because of something that God has done inside, you cannot accept that, you must go on. You cannot accept the total ruin theory if you have had a revelation.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/gods-mind-about-the-church/>

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