

Gods Order in Christ - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the profound significance of knowing Christ as the foundation for understanding divine order and fulfilling our eternal purpose.

Duration: 55:51

Scripture: Jeremiah 9:23

Topics: "Order In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of heavenly order and how it has been disrupted by Satan. However, Christ is the one who restores this divine order through his person and work. The church is then described as the vessel through which this order is manifested and administered in the future. The speaker also highlights the concept of 'summing up' all things in Christ, bringing back and centering everything in him to create a harmonious whole.

Transcript

It goes down to the deepest. It is the very range and compass of his person and his work that show how great he is. So much greater greatness than all others.

It is the universality of the Lord Jesus that is his supremacy. There is no language or tongue nor human speech into which that story cannot be interpreted, which cannot grasp something of its meaning. That has been proved and is being proved continually.

It encompasses all language and all languages. Although it has text and over text, the greatest intellects of all the ages. It is enjoyed, appreciated and loved by the simplest and the most unloved.

It meets the problems and difficulties of the mature of the age. And yet it is the delight of little children. Of all the various temperaments into which the human race is classified, there is no temperament that does not find in him something to meet its own peculiar problems and demands.

Jesus and his love are a notion of the profoundest mysteries and treasures. He is a mine of inexhaustible wealth. In a word, it is going to take all eternity to reveal his.

That is what we are up against when we so easily say, tell me the old, old story. It just cannot be told. But it may be that in these hours of our fellowship together, little more of the life of that story will break upon our heart.

There is a phrase in the words, Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty. They shall behold the land of far distances. And that twofold statement can quite truly and I think rightly be applied to him.

He is the king in his beauty and he is also the land of far distances. Now to come into relationship, a living relationship with the Lord Jesus is to come sooner or later to the impasse of the incomprehensible and just have to say, Lord you are beyond me. Lord, I cannot comprehend.

You are too much for me. That of course on the one side means difficulties. It puts us into a difficult position that we cannot trace him and follow him and understand him.

But on the other side we would not have it otherwise. We would not have a little Christ whom we could comprehend and all together understand with our little mind. No, he is beyond us all together.

And what you and I as his people are destined to come to if we go on with him is just this. That he is ever reaching farther and farther beyond and drawing us out beyond ourselves. Beyond our resources of mind and will.

Yet drawing us on and making us know that we have got to go on. We just cannot stand still. We have to go on.

Now dear friends, the Bible rests upon one tremendous affirmation. Upon a truth which it affirms in a thousand different ways. And that truth is this.

That everything related to the great destiny for which man was created is bound up inseparably with the knowledge of Christ. I say that you have two tremendous things there. The greatness of the destiny for which man was created.

The Bible has a very great deal to say about that. That destiny, that great divine purpose in creation demands for its realization the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is bound up with the knowledge of God's Son.

Within that compass of divine purpose we have man's creation. Man's redemption and salvation. Man's transformation.

Man's glorification. And then man's eternal vocation. These are all features of the great purpose of man's creation.

I repeat them. Salvation. Transformation.

Glorification. And eternal vocation. All that rests upon the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

None of it is possible without knowing him. We look at a little child from the day that he comes into this world. And the one thing parents are watching for continually and waiting for, and waiting for, the sign of intelligence.

For the normal development of a human life is marked by growing intelligence. That is, the ability in the first place to identify objects. Very simple, but very real.

When, first of all, parent is able to recognize that the child knows him or her. Identifies them. And so its development of its very life is marked by this growing intelligence.

This ability to identify objects. Then to interpret and grasp their meaning. Comes so slowly and yet it's there.

It's there. To apply those recognized, identified objects to practical value. Turn them to account.

Know that they mean this and they are meant for this or that. The application of their intelligence to practical needs or situations. I say these are the indications of normal development.

It's along the line of growing intelligence. Dear friends, if that is true in the natural, it is at least equally true in the spiritual. The mark of spiritual growth.

The growth of the spiritual life is this power to recognize the meaning of Christ. To identify him in things. To interpret him.

The power to interpret him. To explain him. And then to apply him to practical situations, our own and others.

That is knowing the Lord. And I say again that is the way of spiritual growth to full manhood. To the fulfillment of the ultimate vocation.

And let it be recognized at once that what is true in the natural is true in the spiritual in this sense. That no creature is born into this world without an object. No human being, if any other, is brought into this world without an end in view.

And the end is vocation. Life has altogether missed its way and purpose if it fulfills no vocation. If it becomes an end in itself.

If it does nothing in this world that makes a contribution of some kind to the whole course of things. And to benefit, vocation is the object, the end of all life and all development. That is true in spiritual life.

Progress toward eternal vocation. That is what the Bible reveals. And essentially along the line of spiritual intelligence or the knowing of Christ.

Now God has placed supreme importance upon this very basis. Hear his word. Thus saith the Lord.

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches.

But let him that gloryeth. Glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me. Above all other things in which men do or may glory, God puts this with this tremendous emphasis.

Thus saith the Lord. The supreme thing with him is to understand and to know him. This morning we have read how the Lord Jesus put this matter in relation to the most vital thing.

Even that of eternal life. There is no more vital thing than that. It is the key to the Bible in one sense.

Eternal life. And this is life eternal. That they might know thee, the only true God and him whom thou didst send, Jesus Christ.

Life eternal with the Lord Jesus is placed upon this basis. Knowing him, that man, Paul, Paul the aged with a long life of learning Christ. And of perhaps incomparable revelation of Jesus Christ.

Is now standing at the gate of eternity and crying. That I may know him. You might say that was the cry with which Paul entered into heaven.

That I may know him. And alongside of that, you remember, he said, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Not to be learning, dear friends, is to stop growing.

For growing is the long lead line. The knowledge of Christ is the beginning of salvation. The knowledge of Christ is the whole meaning of the Christian life.

The knowledge of Christ is God's motive in all discipline and training. You and I find ourselves in those hands of the Father of our spirits. Who is putting us through a hard school and on a difficult way.

The one question that should always be in our hearts. Not why, as to his dealings with us in a general sense or any murmuring. But what do you want me to learn by this? What is there of Christ that I am to understand by this means? For, I repeat, all the dealings of God with us have but this one thing.

Our education as to Christ. The knowledge of Christ. And, dear friends, the very essence of glory will be the knowledge of Christ.

Perhaps that sounds a strange word. But it's not so difficult to understand. When at last we see in him the answer to all our questions and our problems.

And he becomes the answer to every cry of our need and heart. We see him as he is. And he fills all the vacuum of our longing.

That will be glory. That will be glory. It is now in the smallest ways, isn't it? If after a very difficult time we have been brought to deep and terrible suffering, we have our eyes opened to see something of Christ which meets our need, that's glory.

That's glory. He becomes our glory. Glory is not just something of an external shining radiance.

It's a state of heart. Full satisfaction. Full gratification.

Possession of a full explanation and understanding. That will be wonderful. So that the knowledge of Christ will be the very essence of glory.

But having said all that, mark you, dear friends, that this is not in the first place a knowledge in the reason. This is not the satisfying of the natural mind and intelligence. Reason.

This knowledge of Christ is essentially in the first place spiritual knowledge. It is what we might call life knowledge. Life knowledge.

It means life. It brings life. It is life.

We know by life. We may not yet be able to interpret it in human language, even to our own satisfaction, to explain it. But we've come into a knowledge of the Lord which has brought life, which is life.

This is life, that they might know. This kind of knowing is life knowledge. It is altogether deeper than natural intelligence.

We do not say in the first place that now we know because the thing has been explained. We say we know because that meets my heart need. Because something has happened in me through that.

Brought us into life. It is spiritual knowledge. And it is by way of experience.

The Lord's school of instruction, training, teaching is not to tell us things or to write them in a book for us to study up and memorize and say we know now. This is not a manual education at all. It's the education, it's the knowledge which comes by experience.

And experience simply means that something has been done in us by a certain process. We know in that way. We know the Lord in our constitution.

How much better it is to know him constitutionally that is in our being. He has become a part of our being. Not just something explained to our mind.

That's the way in which we learn Christ. It's very practical, deeply practical. Now that is all by way of leading up to our present particular consideration.

You will realize in the light of this little that has been said that Christ is many-sided, very-sided. He is far too great to be comprehended though we spent all our days. We can only look at him from time to time from particular standpoints.

There's one thing that has been very much on my heart for some time growingly. I have put it aside but it comes back and will not be put aside which I feel to be the Lord's word for us concerning him at this time. Of all the ways in which Christ is to be known unto life and unto growth there is one way in the word of God which we might be tempted to say is supremely important.

But we could say that of every way in which he is to be known. It is this. To rightly understand Christ is to see that he relates to a heavenly and eternal order of things.

That word order lies right back up everything in the Bible which means in history. Everything that the Bible has to say to us is related to an eternal order that God intended to obtain in this universe. And his key to that order without which nothing of all his glorious purpose is possible.

His key to that heavenly and eternal order is Christ. The person of Christ is the very embodiment of all the principles of a universal order. If we could comprehend Christ, if we could discern Christ, if we could understand Christ, if we could know Christ we should see that in that one universal person are gathered up all the laws of a great heavenly order.

We are told that in him, through him, by him, and unto him were all things created. His creative activity is marked by a marvelous order. We shall say more about that as we go on.

Creation, as it comes from his hand, as it is projected by him, is a marvelous system of coordinated forces and objects in a wonderful relatedness and harmony. Everything in its own place and everything in its own time and everything with its own function. Go on, so you will come back to it.

His redemptive work, all of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus has this one thing in mind, the recovery of a lost order. He stands in his person, in his creative work and in his redemptive work related to this whole matter of an eternal heavenly order. The Holy Spirit, who is the custodian of God's purpose concerning his Son, is occupied with this thing preeminently, a heavenly order.

The will of God as done in heaven to be done on this earth in like manner. You want to know the meaning of the Holy Spirit? This will be perhaps a suggestion to you if you turn again to the world. The answer is here.

The Holy Spirit is meticulous about order. Will not overlook disorder. For divine order to be overlooked, violated, ignored or frustrated is to perpetuate the loss, the suffering, the disappointment and the despair of the creation.

For the hope of the creation lies in the direction of God having it according to his order. The Holy Spirit is supremely concerned with this matter. Now this is a thing which divides up as it goes on.

And so we come at once face to face with the fourfold opening up of this whole matter of the heavenly and eternal order in Christ, in Christ. To be tempted to stay with that alone. For here, dear friends, here we are given the explanation of that very phrase.

In Christ. Because in Christ, who is the sphere of everything of God, we have this eternal order. But firstly, God as a God of order.

God as a God of order. Secondly, Satan as the arch enemy of that order in Christ. And the instigator of all disorder and confusion.

That as the hallmark of God is order, the hallmark of Satan is confusion. Those are big things which cover a lot of ground. Christ in person and work is the recoverer of a lost heavenly order.

And fourthly, the church is the elite vessel in which in the ages to come that heavenly order is to be first expressed and then administered. In which in the ages to come that heavenly order is to be first expressed and then administered. You got those four things? Would you like me to go over them again? Just to mention them.

We'll open them up in a moment. God is a God of order. Satan is the instigator of all disorder and the arch enemy of heavenly order.

Christ in person and work is the recoverer of a disrupted divine order. The church is the elite vessel in which in the first instance that recovered divine order is to be manifested in the ages to come and administered. Oh, those of you who have any knowledge of the Bible will see at once how the whole of the scriptures open up along those four lines.

The end of God is glory. And comprehensively the Bible shows that glory is inseparable from order. And order, divine order, is always the way to glory.

Just as to the contrary, confusion always results in shame. Well, that's true enough. So the Bible is supremely, comprehensively concerned with this one great issue.

Perhaps you are wondering or asking in your mind, what does this mean where we simple believers are concerned? It's all very wonderful, very great. Well, here we are, little company, Christian people. How is this a message for us? Will you be patient? Dear friends, this is our most vital account to you and to me.

We are a part of a great whole. We are not just fragments which have shot off into space with an independent and unrelated life. We are called by the grace and sovereign will of God into a great purpose.

And what is true of the whole is true of every part. And you and I are going to learn, if we learn anything about Christ, that we are a part of the disruption of a divine order. And that grace, grace in its deepest and grandest interpretation is to bring order out of our chaos.

It is to introduce heaven into us and us into heaven according to that which obtains in heaven. Oh yes, we are going to learn this in many, many different ways. That what God is doing with us and has called us into is just this, to conform us to the image of his Son.

But that is not just conformity to a person, that is conformity to a divine order. His Son is an order of God, the order of heaven. I don't know how you read the four Gospels.

You read them as the life of Jesus, here on earth, what he did and what he said. Purely as a historic record, I suggest to you that you go back to those Gospels with this one thought. Here is the embodiment of another order of things in constitution and in behavior, in ways of life, in laws and principles governing the life.

Here is heaven in evidence. Here is heaven in control. Here is another world embodied.

They are not of the world even as I am not of it. Here is another world coming in this person. Read the Gospels in the light of that and you will begin to see that he does not do and speak as the people of this world would, even the wisest.

He is getting everything from heaven. Every word he is getting from heaven. He is governed by heaven.

That is the meaning of the so oft-repeated phrase, the kingdom of heaven. The rule of the heaven. Kingdom of God.

The rule of God. As we learn Christ, so we pass from this world in our inward life more and more and find ourselves more and more in conflict with it and incapable of accommodating ourselves to it and being at home and happy in it. It becomes more and more a far country, something to which we do not belong.

That is true in the consciousness of the true child of God, but growingly so. Growingly so. The true child of God, as he or she goes on in this inner spiritual change, knowing Christ, will often ask the question, what is happening to me? I used to be able this and that, but I cannot now.

One time, I had no qualms, difficulties, but today I have a question. It is growing like that. I think if we stayed here long enough, we should find this world an utterly impossible place, spiritually, to live in.

We can only live in it as heaven came down to help us stay here at all. Well, that is a way of putting things. We are just going home, that is all.

All the time. All the time. Now, to refer to our great interpreter again of these things, the man who had such a full and exact knowledge of the scriptures in the first place and then added to that, to whom was given that peculiar and that so great revelation of heavenly things, especially of Christ.

To that man, the great issue of all things was this very thing. The recovery of a lost divine order in this universe. He stated that.

Here is one fragment of that great statement. Unto a dispensation, an order, an economy, a government, a rule, and to a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ. Heaven, you know.

Now we are faced with a tremendous statement. The implications of it in the first place. There is a word here, almost an unspeakable word in our language.

In the Greek it requires no less than 19 letters. A compound translated to sum up. And in its original meaning, it is this.

To bring back and center in one all things. To bring back, to recover and center in one all things. To gather up all that which has been lost and focus it and embody it in Christ.

Do you see the implications? First of all, the implication is there was an order once. There was an order once. Obtaining in God's universe a perfect order.

Secondly, that order has been lost. A great disruption has taken place in the universe. And thirdly, the regathering, the recovering, the restoring of that lost order in Christ.

That's what Paul saw to be the significance of Christ. What a range. What an interpretation of everything.

What a word. To gather up all the fragments of this shattered vessel. All the parts of this disrupted and confused universe.

To repair the damage and to make of all one beautiful expression of heavenly order. That's the work of the person of Christ in redemption. Paul uses the word so often to reconcile all things unto himself.

Reconciliate. Implying the situation is such as to find God enough a state of conciliation with it and it's not in conciliation with God. Everything has gone to pieces and is under a terrible strain where God is concerned.

Because things have broken down, the divine order has been shattered. This one Jesus Christ came into this world. In the first place in his own person, embodying that which he's going to recover objectively.

Cannot be defected from that for a moment on any consideration, on any bribe, or by any suffering. He's going through with what he calls the will of God. And dear friends, while we use that phrase, sometimes glibly, sometimes seriously, we do not always recognize, if we ever recognize, that the will of God is the expression of this perfect order.

Thy will be done enough as it is in heaven. Only we knew how things are done in heaven. We just see a beautiful harmony, complete accord.

The utter absence of any jangling, confusion, contradiction or inconsistency. Everything, that's God's will. He came for that.

For that it could only be, as we shall see later, by the cross. In which he had got to take hold of this enormous force of disruption and confusion and break it forever. Produce or reproduce that order which we find commencing in the New Testament.

We shall leave that for the moment. To rightly understand Christ, to rightly know Christ, is to see that he stands related to this of which we are speaking, this universal, beautiful order of God in the creation. Christ himself is the seed of that order.

He's a seed of that order. You take your seeds or your bulbs, and if you get the bulb of a hyacinth and place it in the air, you don't expect a cabbage to appear. Within that small organism there is the order of hyacinths.

That's the nature, that's the life, that's the species, that's the kind of thing that is there. So it is in every organic creation, every seed has its own life producing after its own kind. That's scripture, isn't it? After its own kind.

Christ is the seed of a heavenly order. In him is implicit that order of God. Life is in him.

The order or the form is in him. The nature of that is in him. The nature of that.

The order requires a kind of nature. Oh, for language, for words, ability, to explain, a disposition. The kind of person that he is, he's so different.

Always crying and praying to be like Christ. Yes, in him is the nature which, when it becomes universal, will be seen in a certain perfect harmony. And order.

He is the constitution of everything. Paul finds himself begging for words in this very thing, and he's a master of language. And languages.

He speaks about Christ filling all things, and all things filled into Christ. You can't grasp that language. It's just this, he's going to be the constitution of everything.

And that everything is to be an expression of this mind of God. How things should be. What things should be.

How they should behave. You and I behave as we do because we have a certain constitution. We are made like that.

Make the whole creation like Christ, and it will behave like Christ like that. He is the nature, the constitution of a great divine system. Don't like that word, but we have to use it.

A great divine system or order. I'm afraid I have to stop at this point before we come to this first matter. God as a God of order.

I think I'll leave that with you until the afternoon. You can be thinking in the light of your Bible. God as a God of order.

For if there's one thing that the Bible reveals about God it is that. On the other hand, the Bible is a tremendous testimony all the way through. Against disorder.

You want to see what it is all about, what it means, why this and why that. It's this conflict between a divine order and a satanic disorder. Like that all the way through.

That's the battle. And I say again, before we are through, it's got to come down to our own lives. In a very intimate way.

Take the great truth. Capable of having a tremendous effect upon us. At least this, dear friends.

That we must, we must make it our business, if this is the business of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of the cross. We must make it our business.

To come under the rule of heaven. The rule of Christ. The rule of the Holy Spirit.

So that all the discords and conflicts go out. Of our individual life and of our collective life. We are more and more an expression of Him.

Whose life, character, work and ways have no inconsistencies, no contradictions, no conflicts in Himself. He is the sum of this beautiful harmony. Do believe this amongst other things.

Whatever else it means. When that great song, the song which we read in the book of the Revelation. Tremendous of every language, every tongue, nation, kingdom, people.

Singing. Singing. The thing about it will be that there is not one discordant note.

It will be the most marvelous harmony. Why? Because the center of it all is one person who pervades all. His work is done.

He has. Redeemed by His blood out of every nation. He has brought together all the broken pieces.

All the plan of God. And here it is. Redeemed.

And the mark of His work is this. Out of all the divided peoples of this earth. Divided by language, divided by color, divided by temperament.

Divided in a score of different ways He has made one harmonious whole. Singing one song. With no discord.

It's the mark of order. That is the mark of His redemption.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0024.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/gods-order-in-christ-part-1/>

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