

Gods Order in Christ - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the significance of Christ in embodying God's order and the contrast with the disorder resulting from rebellion in the world.

Duration: 56:36

Scripture: Genesis 1:2, Ephesians 2:1-2, Revelation 12:7-9

Topics: "Order In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of order and harmony in God's creation. They highlight how God has arranged the seasons and the movements of heavenly bodies to govern the earth. The speaker also marvels at the intricate design of the human body and suggests that anyone with knowledge of it should be in awe of God. They explain that when humanity rebelled against God and left their environment, they entered into an environment of poison and lack. However, the Bible is about bringing humanity back to God and restoring them to their rightful environment. The speaker concludes by discussing the relationship of Christ to this eternal heavenly order and how God has determined to gather all things together in Christ.

Transcript

We are continuing along the line which we believe the Lord has indicated for us at this time. As there are those who were not with us earlier, in the briefest possible way, I will try to link them into this consideration and then go a little farther as the Lord enables. We began with a fresh contemplation of the greatness of Christ and then we went on to remind ourselves that everything which has to do with the realization of God's great purpose in creating man and this world and its universe is a matter of knowing God in Christ, which of course means knowing Christ.

Every aspect and detail of God's will and God's way and God's end, for us, it is a matter of knowing the Lord Jesus. All progress, as all life, rests upon that, knowing Him, the knowledge of Christ. This life here, the Christian life, is meant to be one of continuous growth and development and progress, but that only takes place as we come to know more and still more of the meaning of the Lord Jesus.

This progress will not stop when we leave this world and when time gives place to eternity. And of the increase of His kingdom, there will be no end. Stagnation is no mark of life and life there will be ever manifesting itself in new and more wonderful fullnesses and forms.

Therefore, the knowledge of Christ, which will in time and eternity be the secret of growth and progress, will continue in heaven. And it will take eternity, not to exhaust, it will want a few eternities to exhaust the knowledge of Christ, but to know, even as now in the greatest degree we cannot know. Well, that was the next thing.

All growth, progress, fruitfulness, rests upon this growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus. That brought us to this, that seeing He is so vast, so immense, so many-sided, we can only see Him from one standpoint at a time. We have to move around, see Him from every angle.

And at this time we are just looking at the Lord Jesus from one of the many angles, points of view. This particular aspect of His significance, that He in His person and His work stands related to an eternal heavenly order. He Himself, in His wonderful, complex person, is the very embodiment of all the principles and laws of a great heavenly order.

When everything is conformed to Christ and takes its character from Him, it will be one glorious, harmonious whole, perfected into one. Everything. Not two or three or ten thousand, but just one.

Glorious unity. So that is what we are seeking to grasp at this time. The relationship of Christ to this eternal heavenly order.

We have, of course, laid our foundation in the Word of God. We have allowed that to come to us in one marvelous statement through the Apostle Paul. That in the fullness of the times, the fullness of the times, God has determined to gather together, or re-gather together, all things in Christ.

Seeing that the very word contains that idea of re-gathering. It implies, if it does not declare, that there was a glorious order at one time when everything was as God meant it to be. All the sons of God shouted for joy as they beheld the marvel of His creation and His order.

That was. It implies that it has been lost. In the place of that order there has come disorder.

And it declares that it is going to be restored in Christ. That is the great significance of the Lord Jesus from this standpoint. We repeat, He personally is the embodiment of that.

And His work is related to that. That led us to the place where the great river of revelation divides into four. One, that God is the God of order.

Dwell a little while on that this afternoon. Though it altogether defeats us. It is so great, so full.

This fact of God being such is clearly revealed. Firstly, in His creative work, in His creation. Secondly, in the great representation that we have in type and symbol in the Old Testament.

Thirdly, in His redemptive work. And fourthly, in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In all these four ways, the wonderful revelation that God is the God of order.

Think just for a minute or two, the first of those, revealed in creation. While, of course, we are confronted with so much in this present world and system, which seems to shout disorder, derangement, discord and confusion, even in nature. There is still discernible, in nature, a wonderful background of an ordered system.

That is something that, of course, has engaged men for their whole life. And is a marvelous universe itself of instruction and of fascination. Here is a brief extract from a big work by one of the most outstanding biologists.

He writes thus, The hosts of living organisms are not random creatures. They can be classified into battalions and regiments. Neither are they isolated creatures.

For every thread of life is intertwined with others in a complex web. This is one of the fundamental biological truths. The co-relationship of organisms in the web of life.

No creature lives or dies to itself. There is no insulation in nature. One organism gets linked onto others and becomes dependent upon them for the very continuance of its race.

Flowers and insects are fitted together as hand in glove. When we learn something of the intricate give and take, supply and demand, action and reaction, between plants and animals, between flowers and insects, we begin to get a glimpse of a vast organization in the creation. Well, take it for what it is worth.

You will see that that gathers up into a few sentences something that is capable of tremendous enlargement. See it everywhere. Behind this creation there is a mind.

Behind this creation there is a mind that loves to have things properly ordered and related. Behind this creation there is a perfect spiritual system. God is the God of order.

What is true in natural history is seen to be true everywhere else. God has arranged the year in seasons. God has arranged the cooperation of heaven and earth in that the heavenly bodies govern the movements of the earth, the moon, the tides, and so on.

Well, we wouldn't know where to stop if we were to allow ourselves to go on with this. It's like that. There's one hymn in our supplementary book that we've never sung here yet, the spacious firmament on high.

Notice that the conclusion of that hymn is it all declares a mind divine. Well, if we wanted to go on with this we haven't to go far away to the celestial bodies or to objects outside of ourselves. We've only to have a little intelligence about our own human bodies and to see that the human body in health is a marvelous system of related, dependent, interdependent, cooperative functions, principles, and elements.

Just like that, I think that anybody who really has any knowledge of the human body ought to be the greatest worshipper that there is, ought to be bowed before the wonder of this thing where we could be held in the grip of a fascination alone if we were to spend our time upon it this afternoon. But there it is. It's a marvelous unity in diversity.

It all speaks of this hand-in-glove principle of one thing fitting into another in perfect harmony and symmetry. There's another side to that, I know. I'm going to speak about that presently.

But there it is. We've done no more than stated a fact that wherever you can trace the hand of God before the other hand comes upon it, either the hand of man or the hand of the devil, you'll find this beautiful harmony, this wonderful order coming to the Old Testament. Anyone familiar with it will not need an exhaustive proof of this great truth.

The Old Testament representations of God's mind. We begin with God bringing order out of chaos, where everything begins. God, who is the God of order, reacts against this state of chaos and his reaction issues

in a wonderful order, a beautiful order, a perfect order.

What is true as to God bringing order out of chaos as to the elf is seen to be a principle that is working all through the Old Testament. You see it at work in a representative people. And here, dear friends, is the glory and the tragedy of Israel taken out of the nations to be the embodiment and the manifestation of a heavenly order on this earth.

That's the glory of Israel. The tragedy of Israel is that Israel has ended in chaos. However, there it is.

You see them in Egypt. And what was true in nature was true spiritually and morally of Israel in Egypt. Chaos, no order.

Darkness, barrenness, frustration, confusion, hopelessness. That's the state of the people in Egypt. But see them.

Exodus is the book of emergence from all that. And they are not a rabble, a crowd of refugees going out into the wilderness. They're ordered.

They're ordered. Ordered by their ranks. Trace these marks as you read carefully.

No, they're just not a mixed up crowd, disorderly, running amok to get out of Egypt. See them. Marching like an army.

Their searing ranks and their appointed order. It's order out of chaos. See them.

And sign the eye. God has given his pattern for their national life. No one ever looks at one of those pictures that we have of Israel assembled around the tabernacle.

I'm not to say that it is as clear cut as that or was as clear cut as that in reality. But there's no doubt about the exquisiteness of the ordering of the hosts in their tribes. There they are.

Marvellous symmetry, marvellous balance, a marvellous arrangement. The tribes under their own particular banners in their own particularly appointed place in relation to that central object, the tabernacle. And then, the order of the service.

Exodus were coming out from chaos to order and there's the order established there in the wilderness. Leviticus is the book of the ordering of worship and what a marvellous system that book is of the order of worship. My dear friends, on that only you've got the rest of your life.

It is not just that God said this and that and that is to be in the way of sacrifices and offerings and feasts. You'll notice there's a marvellous sequence, an ordered sequence that need is supplied at every point. It's a progressive, ordered development of worship, of approach to God all under a specified and particularised government.

Wonderful book, that book of Leviticus. Move into the book of Numbers and you know the very name of the book indicates what it's all about. This is the book of the marchings through the wilderness.

Everything is numbered, everything is tabulated, everything is ordered. Like that, you pick up the detail I indicated. Passover, the many years till you come to the temple and this is one of the things that almost overwhelms you.

Marvellous, meticulous order about this temple. Every detail, every measurement. Size of everything, the place of everything, the material of everything and what shall we say about the courses of the singers and the courses of the priesthood.

All in course, the round of the clock. Everything is prescribed for. When the queen of Sheba came and looked at the order of the house there was no more breath left in her.

That was the impressive thing. Everything is here so quietly, harmoniously, beautifully regulated. All speaks of a master mind.

That's God. He gave the pattern for that. He gave the regulation for that.

And even though that was disruptive and the captivity came and they passed their 70 years in exile, the return of the remnant and the rebuilding of the wall and the house is again marked by this. We have read and we have studied the book of Nehemiah from other standpoints. Perhaps we have not been impressed with this particular about it.

The wonderful organization. You notice one whole chapter is taken up with next unto him and next unto him and next unto him. It's all arranged.

It's all ordered. It's all, if you like, organized. We can use that word in the Old Testament.

We can't in the New. There it is. Nehemiah represents a master organized in the things of God.

All this, all this is under divine direction. It all points to this. God is a God of order.

We must be impressed with this, friends. It's not something to be contemplated objectively, historically. You and I have got to be tremendously impressed with this.

See how God is very particular how things are done and what things are done and who does these things and the relationships that obtain amongst those who are employed. God is very particular. And as we have said, this is not just because God likes to have things just so.

He's made that way. We know quite well that real progress and real fruitfulness, real achievement demands order. We come into a place that is all upside down and disturbed and everything all over the place and we've got a job on hand.

We begin by saying, well, we can't do anything until we've got this straightened out. That's God. We can't get on until we've got it straightened out.

We shall never get anywhere until things are put straight. And that begins in the individual life. Well, we come again to that.

But I don't want to just be piling a lot of data upon you. This is something of a very vital spiritual consequence that we get it into us that God is particular and He's not going to overlook. He's not going to side-pass anything.

He'll have it so, or He'll not have it at all. He'll be patient. He'll work.

He'll wait. He'll do a lot to get it so. It may take years to get it so, but that's to our loss.

If He could have it His way, He would get on with His job forthwith by having things according to His order. Frustration, delay, unfruitfulness are always due to this absence of God's way of doing things or God's object in things or what God wants done and the way in which He wants it done. That's perhaps enough by way of emphasizing the fact that God is the God of order.

I've only opened to you a window through which you could see a universe. We come to the next thing, the disruption and disorder. There is a sense in which the Bible throughout is occupied with the confronting of this long-grown-out, obdurate, incorrigible disorder and with the evil forces which are behind it.

You meet it everywhere. The battle for this, the bringing it in or the preserving of it, the dealing with interfering forces is found almost everywhere in the Bible. The Bible shows the source of this disruption and disorder.

I'm not wasting time, dear friends, to gain your assent to the fact that the disorder is. We're all too aware of it. Everywhere in this universe, in this creation, there's a disrupted order.

There is a disorder. There's a great schism everywhere. That's true, isn't it? Well, taking it that you agree that it is so.

The Bible shows us where it came from. The Bible shows us the range of it. It shows us its entrance into this world.

It shows us its development in this world. It shows us its nature and its effects. And it shows us its main cause.

All that is too much, but let us look at it. This disorder, the Bible shows us, began in heaven. Tiberius tells us of a revolt that took place in heaven.

It speaks of one who rose up to challenge the supremacy of God and of his son, the heir of all things. It shows us that there was a great complicity between that one and a vast host of angels who are said not to have kept their first estate. That's the scripture word.

But are reserved in everlasting chain. This revolt in heaven. That's where it began.

Then it entered into this world. Entered through the door of man. We know the story of its entrance.

It was a disrupting element that came in. It was a rebellion against God. First result? The man himself became a divided creature.

A center of civil war in his own nature. Man is by nature no longer a unity. He is himself a clash of two worlds.

Psalmist prays, unite my heart. Unite my heart. Our hearts are divided things.

Man is a division. And man in himself is a conflict. It started then and spread.

And when I speak of man, I am uniting the man and the woman. For both in themselves individually this became true. And then of course it becomes true of them as too.

To divide the husband and the wife. And he did it. He struck right home that marvelous oneness.

See the scripture goes out of its way to describe, to emphasize the oneness. They shall be one flesh. The twins shall be one flesh.

So much to say about that oneness of husband and wife. But there this disruptive influence and power came in and divided them. Real lesson, real lesson.

From husband and the wife it reached to the family. And it is not long before you find the family disrupted. Cain and Abel.

One murdering the other. Cain and Abel. One murdering the other.

Destroying the family life. From the family reaching out to embrace the whole race. Do you know how the book of Genesis contains the story of racial disruption? Confusion.

It spread. It has become universal. It is in the lower heaven, the spirit of it.

The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. It's in the air. Prince of the power of the air.

You can breathe it. You can sense it in this world. Antagonism.

Hatred. Malice. Much more like that.

It's come right into the human life of the individual. And right into the human relationships to the nearest two. It's come right into the family.

And what a problem family life is now. And what a key it is to so much more. Until the race is shot through and through with this disrupting and dislocating spirit and power.

Yes, it's here. It's seen where it came from. Where it started.

How it came in. It's range. It's development.

It's nature and effects. To set every man's hand against his brother. It's main cause.

It's main cause. That perhaps is a very important thing. It's all important.

But this is something that we must stay with for a moment. The main cause. Do remember that the Bible always regards this matter as a rebellion.

A rebellion. It's the spirit of rebellion. The more we know of our own natures.

Under stress. Under trial. Under pressure.

The more true we know this to be right in our constitution. Something that rebels. And would even rebel against God.

And his ways. And question his wisdom and his love. It's in us.

Terrible truth and fact. That we are ready to face if we know ourselves at all. The seat of this rebellion is in man himself.

He is a disrupted being. Not only disrupted in his relationship with God. But disrupted in his own personality.

Man is a divided creature in himself. We are that. We are that.

The spirit of rebellion came in. And that word iniquity which is such a characteristic word of the Old Testament. Iniquity.

Has its roots in this very idea of rebellion. Rebellion. Now the real nature of this thing lies here.

And perhaps we can illustrate this again best by looking at the physical body. Because the doctors can close their ears for a minute. Those who know something about this.

Physical. The laws of physical health and disease. They tell us that it is all a matter of the environment of the living selves.

This is a quotation. It's not mine. It is the cell environment that is responsible for whatever disease affects the human body.

Either in the immediate environment of the cells. The presence of a poison. Or the absence of some essential ingredient.

Is that too technical? Well you can pass over if you like the technicalities. But they had come down on this. All these millions of living cells are environed by this lymph stream.

Which provides what is necessary for their life. This lymph stream is their environment. If some poison gets into that stream.

Or if something essential to their life is lacking. Then the living cells fall into disease. And the body in its whole order is upset.

And sickness is only disorder. Isn't it? It's disorder. I have taken the illustration.

God has written his spiritual laws in all his creation. And I think pre-eminently in the human body. You see? All this disorder.

Resultant sickness. All the pain and the agony by this disruption is due to man leaving his environment. God is our environment.

God is man's true environment. In him there is no darkness at all, no poison. In him is all that we need for our life and for our health.

Man left his environment. He took himself out of the environment of God. He took his life into his own hands.

To say what he would do and not do. What he would have and not have. He became a law unto himself.

Rebelling against God as his law and his environment. What happened? He entered into an environment of poison. And of fatal lack of what is necessary to his very life.

Now, friends, take up your Bible. Start again with that thought. See, this whole Bible is about bringing man back to God.

Bringing man into God. Restoring man to his environment. In him we live, move and have our being.

Fundamental truth of the spiritual life. There is one thing I suggest to you or hint at. Which, if you could grasp it, would be such a tremendous help to you.

When the Lord says anything. When the Lord says anything. It may look on the face of it to be something very simple.

Not at all profound and wonderful. But anything that comes from the Lord. Though it be apparently very simple.

Contains all the vast knowledge and understanding that the Lord has. And not to take account of that simple, simple thing, you may think. May bring you into a vast amount of trouble.

When the Lord Jesus says, Abide in me. Oh, that sounds so simple. It sounds so ordinary.

Abide in me. It contains all this history. It contains this great principle and truth.

If you get out of your environment, you're exposed to all the poisons. All that creates spiritual disease. Abide in me.

For your health's sake. For your life's sake. For the sake of everything.

Abide in me and I in you. You got that? You look again at any seemingly little thing that the Lord says. And if you could see, you would find you've got a universe of meaning in it.

Well, the main cause of it all is getting out of your rightful sphere in God. That's what happens. Cure, as we shall see when we come to the redemptive work.

Get back. Get back into your place. Get back into your cover.

In God. For sake. You're wandering, which is away, which is outside.

Leave your independence. Come in. Now you see, this carries with it the whole matter of the absolute, undivided, unquestioned supremacy, sovereignty of God in the life.

For us now, in and through Jesus Christ. Put that another way, the absolute surrender, yielded, unquestioning acceptance of the authority of Jesus Christ as head. It's the way of life.

It's the way of health. It's the way of fruitfulness. It's the way of progress.

And we know, we know so well that frustration, limitation, unrest, barrenness and all that is because, because there's still some unyieldedness to him in the life. As Adam took things into his own hands and said, I will be the Lord of my life. I will say what I will do and what I will not do.

There was set up this independent mind and this independent will, the cause of all the trouble. We are like that by nature. And I'm afraid we haven't got so far away from it in grace.

We meet one another and what do we meet? We meet a man or a woman who's got a mind of their own. And a will of their own and a way of their own and will never be taught by you or told by you what they should do. Unteachable, stubborn, mule-ish, knowing.

Dear friends, though it might be on a right matter that somebody is very firm and very strong, let us remember that there's a vast deal of difference between human strength, natural strength and spiritual strength. It's a different kind of thing altogether. If you meet the person who immediately you touch them, begin to talk with them, let you know that they're not going to take anything from you.

They've got their mind made up. You may be meeting something that will disrupt the body spiritual, the corporate body. May bring about a real arrest, not only in their own life, but in the life of the community of which they're a part.

Sweet reasonableness, openness to instruction, to counsel, preparedness to learn. That's the spirit of Jesus Christ who said, I am meek and lowly in heart. Take my yoke upon you and learn and learn.

I hope you see more than I am able to say. Here is the fact of this great disruption. Here is the real nature of it.

Moving out of God. We ought to check up. One does not want to make the Christian life difficult, over difficult.

But we ought, dear friends, to be more prepared, ready to check up on this. Did I say that in the spirit or did I say that in the flesh? Did I do that in the spirit or did I do it in the flesh? You see the marks of real spiritual measure when you find a person like that. You've had them, I have.

People have said something. And I knew when they said it and the way in which they said it, that they were saying it in the flesh. And they'd come back a little while afterward and said, what I said, I said in the flesh.

Please, please forgive me. I was not in the spirit when I said that. Oh, you see, it makes a lot of difference, doesn't it? A lot of difference.

There's a way for the Lord when it's like that. We shall get somewhere when it's like that. But it does mean meekness, it means humility, it means grace.

To abide in Christ. Abide in Christ. Now somewhere I must close this part.

Perhaps you already know the very simple thing. That in the New Testament, the word salvation is really the word health or soundness. When the Lord Jesus said to the poor man in his helplessness, couldst thou be made whole.

That word whole is exactly the same word as you will find elsewhere translated salvation. Being saved is being made whole. It has this idea behind it of disorder in the body.

Now salvation is putting right spiritual disorder and making us whole. Making us whole. Making us complete.

Making us sound. It's a health matter. That is salvation.

We mustn't stay with that. Let me close with this. Pain.

Pain. All pain is because of disorder. Pain is nature shouting there's something wrong.

It's true in the physical. Now you may kill pain. You may kill pain.

Lots of things provided for killing pain. Well, I'm afraid I'm one who says thank the Lord for that. Nevertheless, no sensible person knows that the killing of pain is getting rid of the trouble.

No, you may kill the pain and silence the cry. And the trouble that is really there work itself out in your death. Killing of the pain doesn't mean that you heal the disorder.

The world is trying to silence this cry of pain. To numb this ache. Kill it.

To go on as though there was nothing wrong but it's there. What is true in the physical is true in the spiritual. Pain in our spiritual life.

Pain in our corporate life. Pain in our corporate life. Is the cry that something's wrong.

There's disorder somewhere. Things are not as the Lord intended them to be. There's a dislocation in the joints.

There's a fracture in the fellowship. There's a disease of sin in the body. Something's wrong if there's pain.

Dear friends, we can't just take something to numb the pain and silence the cry. And go on as though it were all right. No, the thing will work itself out.

And God knows. And God knows. We've got to stop.

What is it? Where is the disorder? Where are things wrong? What is it that is against God's mind until we can get our hand upon that? There's no hope for clearing up the situation at all. That's the need. What is it? Disorder is a spiritual disease.

Well, I must stay there, I think. Come back again later on. But have we said enough on the one side to show how God is committed to an order? In man, in man's relationships, in his church.

We've got to come to that later. God is committed to it. He will not move apart from it.

He must have it. The cry of all the prophets, if rightly understood and interpreted, was the cry for recovery of a lost order. That lost order, that disruption, is due to one thing in the main.

That is, man's life in God or man's life out of God. For us, it's a matter of how much our life is in God. We have some life in God.

We have some life in God, but we have some life in ourselves. We have some life in men, in other people. On one side, we do seek a life with God by prayer and study of his word.

When we get into the world amongst men of another mind who despise Christians, we adjust ourselves to them. We hide it. Like the chameleon, we take their color, the color of our environment.

The color of our environment. Oh, to abide in the one environment. Whether in meeting or a secret place or in the one, to abide in the Lord.

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