

Gods Order in Christ - Part 3

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores how Christ and His cross restore order and unity to a disrupted creation.

Duration: 41:09

Scripture: Matthew 27:51, John 17:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 9:12, Revelation 5:9

Topics: "Order In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of unity and harmony in the church and in the world. He highlights that the cross of the Lord Jesus is the key to overcoming divisions and reuniting all things in Christ. The sermon also addresses the influence of evil forces that seek to disrupt and divide humanity. The preacher emphasizes that victory over these forces can only be achieved through understanding and applying the value of the cross and the blood of Jesus.

Transcript

Today we have been giving ourselves to a seeking to see and to grasp something of the significance of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work in relation to the whole created universe. We are really gathered around one thing. It is that he is the key to everything and that only as he comes into his place will the creation, all that is in it, find the explanation and answer to its existence.

That has taken us out along several lines. We have seen that there was a primeval order in the creation of which he was the center and the sphere. An order as the sun eternally appointed the heir of all things.

An order expressive of God who is the God of order. We have seen that all progress, all fruitfulness, all satisfaction, all fullness is a matter of Jesus Christ. And that so far as we are concerned, that is, Christians, all mankind, it is a matter of knowing him, knowing him.

We have dwelt much upon this matter of order as essential to life, essential to progress, essential to the realization of God's end. Order is a key to everything. We went on this afternoon to see something of the disruption of that order, the interference with it, the breaking in upon it, the result disorder and all its painful consequences.

Pain, spiritual pain as well as physical pain. Pain in the creation. The apostle has put it, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain because things are out of order.

We traced the course of that disruption and dislocation beginning apparently somewhere outside of this present world in heaven where there was an uprising of a leader with a great following of angels. Apparently in revolt against God's destined place and purpose for his son as the heir of all things. A bid for that position of equality with God.

The displacing of God's appointed one. That brought a disruption in that realm. The leader and his followers were cast out.

Angels which kept not their first estate. We saw them, or the leader of them, and no doubt with the following, invading this earth. Breaking in as the Bible opens with that story.

And the beautiful order of creation upset. In the first place, the man. The order in the man.

The balance, the symmetry, the beautiful harmony in the man's own life and constitution. Upset. Disorganized.

Immediately to the corporate in the man and his wife so that you can, right there for almost the first mention, detect something that has come into their fellowship. The one blaming the other for what had been done. That momentous ordinance of God.

So much bound up with it in the purpose of God. The marriage relationship. The two as one severed.

And then, of course, the family. The family, with this schism in it, working out to one brother murdering the other. Jesus went right away back to that and said, oh, Satan, he was a murderer from the beginning.

From the family to the race. And that book which records all this brings us to the whole race in confusion in every way. The order universally in the upper realms of this earth.

The lower heavens, what we mean by the cosmos, the earth and its environment, shot through and through with this disruption and this schism and this strain, this conflict, just shattered to pieces. Spiritual progress in the purpose of God arrested. All the beauty of the Lord marred.

Well, that's where we were led this afternoon. This evening we come to the significance of Christ in his cross. In relation to that.

The cross of the Lord Jesus stands right at the very center and heart of that whole cosmic disruption. The cross is the heart of redemption. But redemption relates the whole range of satanic interference with the order of God.

But the cross of redemption, salvation, far, far greater things than dealing with men's sins. They deal with sinfulness, which is much, much more than sins. And sinfulness is traced right to that one, that one who made this assault upon God's appointment and God's economy, God's order, sinfulness.

The cross of the Lord Jesus, I would say, stands preeminently related to that whole realm and range of disruption and disorder. From center to circumference, it relates to that. Cross is no small thing.

It's an immense thing. For as far as this that has happened in the universe reaches, so far the cross reaches. And we must look upon the cross and upon redemption in the light of this once existing divine order, then its up second disruption, and then its recovery and eternal establishment.

Beyond any more fear of the thing happening again, so far the cross reaches. So far Christ crucified has his significance. Now the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus in the cross follows the whole path that we have noted of this mischief.

Follows that very course. And it's important that you and I should recognize the order of this thing, the sequence of it. The very first realm in which the cross has its application is the realm of the spiritual hierarchy of evil.

It does not begin here. It begins there. The day we are remembering now of our Lord's crucifixion or death, on that day the very heavens were affected.

Darkness was over the face of the earth. There was a great earthquake. The veil of the temple was rinked from top to bottom.

Heaven is involved and is breaking in. There is a tremendous thing happening in that realm. If we read the gospel account, of course, we only have the events, the associated happenings.

There is a man who was given an insight into something more that is not in the gospels and could not at that time be revealed. He tells us that in his cross he stripped off principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross. That's where redemption begins.

The very heavens, by that I take it, the lower heaven, not God's presence, those heavens were defiled by this revolt. And by the cross they were purged. The forces, the disrupting forces of the order of God were met in the spiritual world by God's Son on the cross.

Far too deep and full of matter for us to dwell upon at length, but there is a very real practical value in this. But after all, dear friends, we are not dealing in the first place with circumstances. We are not dealing in the first place with conditions.

We are not dealing in the first place with effects and results. We are dealing with causes. When there is a breaking in, in any realm of those disruptive, schismatic, disordering forces in an individual life or in a community or anywhere, the usual way is to find a scapegoat and blame somebody and to begin to look at one another, to put it down to this and to that and to something else.

And in so doing we are missing the point and missing the way and we'll never clear it up like that. We'll only make it worse. We've got to get behind this.

Something behind it all, or there's someone behind it all. I don't know what you feel about it, but with all the desire that we may have, and it's a very real one, not to become demoniacal minded or conscious or occupied. You just are more and more forced to realize there's a whole system of iniquity and animosity to the things of God at work in this universe.

More and more it seems that these forces are nakedly at work. They come very near. They're like a blanket upon you, especially when there's something of the Lord on hand.

The thing just recurs like the seasons when the Lord is in view for something more. It just happens. It's not coincidence.

It's not just chance. It's not imagination. The thing is far too desperately real, calculated to put you right out of the fight, strategically so.

It's a very, very important moment. We could say much about it, but this is in a realm that is over things, that encompasses things, circumstances, happenings, feelings, and all that. They are secondary.

It's what is around as the source of them. Now, the Lord Jesus in his cross has something to say to that realm. You and I will never know victory over things until we know the value of the cross and the blood of Jesus in that background realm.

Victory has got to be won in that realm or applied in that realm before things will give place. Oh, take that to heart. Take that to heart.

Remember that. We are just being played with, played with by these evil forces, made to do just as they want us to do, because we have either lost or never have had this key to the situation that Calvary touches the cosmic realm of evil. That's where it begins.

The path begins there, the path of redemption. The path of redemption begins there, as the trouble began there. The next thing on the way, as you notice, is man.

This whole thing, great in its range and far-reaching, terrible in its nature, is focused down upon man. He is the next point of assault to disrupt him, divide him, make him in himself incapable of functioning simply because he is divided. You know that it's true.

If you're divided in yourself or amongst yourself, you're just paralyzed. You can't do anything. You can't get anywhere.

It's a fact. The devil knows it if you don't. So, he comes in from the outside and brings this disruption down to man himself.

But man becomes a paralyzed creature simply because he himself is in division. His nature is divided. The order, the beautiful order, balance and symmetry of his own personality is upset.

It's like that. Man was created in an order. I'm not saying the order of spirit and soul and body, but there's an order.

That order obtains in Christ. You have a man in peace, a man in rest, a man in strength, a man who is accounting for something. Upset that man in himself and his own constitution and throw him all out of gear and out of order.

Where does he get? Well, that is what the Bible means by vanity. Vanity! Creation, says Paul, was subjected to vanity. That is, you shall not get through.

It's imposed. You cannot, like that, get anywhere, get to your end. Redemption by the cross of the Lord Jesus is intended, dear friends, to come to us individually to recover and restore a harmony in ourselves.

Maybe a long process, but we do know that there is a beginning made when the new birth takes place. When we come to the cross of the Lord Jesus, as to our condition, our need, as to ourselves, and that cross becomes effective just at the beginning of the Christian life. It's the testimony of all who have come that way, that there's a wonderful sense of peace comes into the heart.

Peace is only another word for harmony, you know. It's not just that everything is quieted down. Oh, no.

It's that now you've got in line, true line, with the purpose for which you were made. You're on the path now. You've been all over the place, but now your feet are in the way.

Something of the peace of the end comes into the beginning. And I have many conflicts presently, but the beginning is like that. It is even with a little child.

It's wonderful. A child doesn't understand all your theology and doctrine of atonement and justification and all that. A little child can know what it means to receive Jesus into the heart.

And when that is done with a little child, you at once see something. Something's happened. It's not imagination.

There's a joy that comes in. It's the beginning of a life readjusted, re-harmonized, the conflict gone out, so far as the person is concerned. It's like that in new birth.

It's the beginning of the new creation, which in its completion will be a beautiful reproduction of a lost harmonious order. It begins with us. Christian life from that beginning, from that starting point, is just the school in which we learn the way of harmony, the way of life.

What is it? It's everything centered in and governed by the Lord Jesus. You see, here we have these statements. So familiar with them that they've almost lost their real meaning to us.

In Him all things hold together. He is the integrating center of this universe. He brings the broken parts together, forms again.

He takes hold of the chords which are all out of tune and tunes them again to a harmony. In Him all things consist when Jesus has His place. Things begin to be like that, a reconciling.

I say the Christian life is the school of learning to let Jesus have His place. And when Jesus has His place, you know as well as I do, that so far as our inner life is concerned, things are far more restful, more sure, and suddenly more fruitful. It's just that, but that's a tremendous thing because we say Jesus having His place, that sounds so elementary, but you see how comprehensive it is? He is the center of a harmonized universe.

He has His place. He begins to harmonize the inner life. And the more place He has, the more unified we are, the more at peace we are.

We know quite well how true it is in the opposite. That when He's not getting His place in His way, everything, everything is unrestrained. It's like that.

It's very true. His place. His place in every department of our lives.

From the individual and His significance, there's the unifying of the heart. The unifying of the heart. One heart.

One heart. Not a divided heart. The unifying of the heart.

It's a deep work. It's a great work. Perhaps it's a long work, but that's the business of life.

The unifying in Christ of everything. That is, Christ becoming the single factor who makes of everything a single factor for me to live is Christ. A single factor unifying the whole life.

Satan is not going to leave that alone. He's going by every possible means to assail it, if he can, to interfere with it. But here it is, you see, that he just cannot, he cannot destroy Christ.

He has been destroyed by Christ. And the work of the cross of our Lord Jesus is the ground upon which we stand and must stand against all that interfering work of the evil forces to bring us again into inward confusion and uncertainty. Try it all the time.

Stand your ground on the cross. Stand your ground under the blood when he tries to rob you of that quiet assurance that all is well because of what he has done in his cross. You move into the corporate life from the personal.

This is the pathway of the evil forces and this is the pathway of the cross. Yes, in, as we were saying this afternoon, this most sacred relationship which was the ordinance of God at the beginning, husband and wife, is it necessary for me to say to young people who are contemplating that union, be sure that it's in Christ. Be sure that it is in Christ to begin with.

No guarantee or even hope for all that it means in the purpose of God unless it's in Christ. And there are tremendous things bound up with that relationship in Christ. But if it has taken place, this is one of the sacred things that the evil forces and the evil one will never cease to assail.

You perhaps have not realized the tremendous damage that the devil can do when he can separate two in that relationship, come between them. It's a focal point of his constant attack to divide there. That relationship is a real battleground through life.

There's so much for the Lord in it. If it has been in any way interfered with, I know I'm only speaking to some, perhaps the majority, if it has been interfered with, how are you going to put it right? Not by mere human attempts. You've got to get back into Christ.

It's only getting back onto the ground of Christ that will put that right. You may be a man pulling in one direction, a woman pulling in another. No real togetherness.

One has one mind and one has another. One will and another. One interest and another.

One like and another. You know it's weakening. You know it's frustrating.

You know it's desolating. It's only when the two get onto the ground of Christ, crucified, that that thing can be dealt with and put right. Everyone has got to let go their natural ground and take the ground of Christ crucified as to themselves.

But dear friends, the word of God makes it perfectly clear to us that in the beginning, that ordinance of God, that relationship, was after all a representation of something far greater. This, in its testimony, is a church matter. I speak of Christ and the church, said the apostle, in speaking of that relationship.

The real principle is the principle of corporate life anywhere, anyhow, in Christ. Maybe the two, the three, the local company, the larger company of the Lord's people. The principle is one principle.

The enemy will stand at nothing to get in between, to divide. And the only but the sure means of preserving that unity is the cross of the Lord Jesus at work in an inward way in us all. Tremendous thing that.

But it will do it. If only that cross becomes really a subjective reality in all concern, that's the end of all divisions. It's the pathway.

And we can easily see without dwelling upon it, and we can easily see without dwelling upon it, this extends beyond the individual, beyond the two, the three, beyond the little group and company, to the church universal. We can see that eventually it will reach the whole inhabited world when Christ has his place. All the great multitude out of every diversity of nationality and tongue and clime and kindred will be on the ground of the Lamb slain, the cross of the Lord Jesus, a perfect harmony.

We said this morning, singing one song in harmony. In harmony. The high notes and the low notes and all the notes between, ascribing worth to the Lamb, glorious chorus.

Redemption follows that the cross of the Lord Jesus relates to that one thing, an end where all is reunited in Christ. We placed John 17 as the foundation of this season, this morning. You know the great, perhaps the highest note of that chapter is in a little clause, that they may be perfected into one.

Perfected into one. The end of his prayer, the end of his travail, the end of his redeeming work, perfected into one. Then the great arch adversary of the divine order can do no more.

His work is finished. His power is destroyed. The cross stands victorious over this long history of disruption.

I see no hope for unity anywhere other than in the cross of the Lord Jesus. Christ crucified, put in his place. Put in his place.

And although the battle goes on, the enemy is always trying to make a show of disruption and disorder, and give a sense of it, if the cross has really done a work in human hearts as a basic something that would triumph over all that. It's an amazing, glorious thing. Yes, and all this activity, and all this work in circumstances that seems to contradict any unity at all, all this striving of the evil forces to make an impression in the show.

Yet, where the cross has really been planted in human lives as something that survives all that, and comes out on the other side of the biggest storm, the most disruptive assault of the enemy, there's survival, because that cross is victory. Not going to be, it is. He has done it by his cross.

You will see, not only as a foundation fact upon which to rest, but as a progressive testimony where the enemy has less and less occasion, opportunity, ground for his work. More and more, the cross of the Lord Jesus has to express its meaning in our hearts and between us. It's a case of a growing place of redemption by the cross in us.

Time will come when that redemption will be perfected. It will be complete. The glory of the Lord following the line of restored order will fill everything.

That is all for today. It's a big all, dear friends. It's a great cross.

It's a great cross needed to do that work. We all know. But he is sufficient.

And he has already given us tokens. Tokens that we know in our own hearts that this is true. That this is true.

The evidences are about us and within us that where he, the Lord Jesus, is concerned, the main significance of his person and his work is in relation to this eternal heavenly order which God is going to have, which is the battle occasion of all the ages and in which you and I are. The Lord give us grace to stand our ground on the cross.

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