

Gods Order in Christ - Part 7

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's order in our lives and the consequences of disorder, highlighting the need for a true position in God to overcome the lie and establish a life of truth and reality.

Duration: 57:32

Scripture: John 8:44, 1 John 2:4, Revelation 21:27, Revelation 22:15

Topics: "Order In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the parable of casting something into the waters and the waters being healed. They explain that throughout history, every step forward has only produced new problems. The sermon also mentions the story of Samson and how the safety and duration of a building rest on its pillars. The speaker emphasizes the importance of reality and truth in religion, as pretense and make-believe can lead to disintegration and confusion. The sermon references Proverbs 9:1, which speaks about wisdom building her house with seven pillars.

Transcript

Just the briefest possible word, by way of retrospect to the gatherings and hours which now lie behind us, and the specific matter which the Lord has laid upon us for this time as we believe, we have been seeing that in all the great and many-sided significance of the Lord Jesus Christ, not least by any means is that aspect of his standing vitally related to an eternal heavenly order. That he is the center and the embodiment, the full content of an eternal divine order. He was that in creation, he is that in redemption.

He is shown to be that in the ages to come. Great, wonderful order. And by that we mean orderliness, not just the system.

Marvellous ordered system, where we spend much time on that, showing how he being the expression of God in that respect reveals God as a God of order. Then we went further to spend not a little time seeing that the whole universe as we know it now, which is so far, far removed from the idea of order, is the result of an interference with that order, a breaking in on it to disrupt the order of God, firstly by displacing God's Son from his position in relation to the creation. So we have as the result of that interference, the disruption, dislocation, confusion and chaos in this universe.

It's all evil. And as we said last night, it is something which on the one hand all men are aware of and confronted with. On the other hand, all their efforts from age to age to rectify it, by their councils and

confederations, institutions and every means in every realm, all their efforts break down, are proved hopeless.

There never was a time in the history of this world when men were more conscious of this conflict in the whole system of things, this disruption and disunity. Perhaps there never was a time when men were striving with greater effort and utilizing more resources to try and overcome this. And it defeats them and defies them at every turn and in every effort.

Confusion only grows. Today, men are almost brought to a standstill in their efforts to bring about something like a composure of the world and an order which will bring rest to this troubled earth. No, it cannot be.

Because there is a ruler of this world. Because there is a whole evil system which is determined that God's order shall not be and whose success in defeating God is ever and always along the lines of confusion and disruption. It is not only that they objectively walk as from the outside it has come into the very nature and constitution of men and things.

It's in us. It's in us and it's in all. Well, we have spent a lot of time on that.

Now today we are coming to put our finger upon some of the major causes of this situation with a view to finding out, seeing what is the remedy or what are the remedies in particular. We have seen that the remedy in general is the cross of the Lord Jesus. There is the focal point.

There is the uniting center, Christ crucified. But that encloses quite a lot of things. It is on just very few of those that we are going to spend our time.

But it is very necessary again at the outset that we should have present to mind, have it brought clearly before us as the background that disorder exists and disorder always means weakness and loss and frustration wherever it is found. Not only in the cosmic realm but in the individual life and in the church of God and in the local expressions of the church of God and in homes in every realm where there is disorder. It spells loss.

It spells weakness. It spells frustration. It means arrested progress.

You just cannot go straight on where there is chaos. You just cannot do anything where there is confusion. You are brought to a standstill and the whole prospect is covered with hopelessness until you have got things straightened out.

That is where God began with the chaos at the beginning. In order to move toward his ultimate purpose in his Son he had to deal with the chaos and out of it bring order. That is not only a fact.

In history there is a great truth, spiritual truth for the church. Paul tells us that because of that disturbance and upsetting of the divine order at the beginning God pronounced something upon this whole creation. He pronounced what Paul calls vanity.

Vanity. The creation itself was subjected to vanity. Vanity is written large over the whole creation.

Vanity is not our modern idea. Vanity in the Bible means that all efforts, all inventions, all that is called progress will not cure or remove some fatal lack, deficiency. In the constitution of things.

You are so familiar with one simple historical illustration of that. You remember that a curse was pronounced upon Jericho and the curse worked in this way. That nothing came through to perfection.

It just went so far and then stopped and dropped into death. Many years afterward in the days of the prophet, sons of the prophet came to him from Jericho. And they said there are many good things here.

Many things that are pleasant. But there is one thing that is wrong and that spoils everything. The waters, the waters are deficient in some quality so that we do our digging, our planting, our cultivating.

We give our energy and our time to seeking to produce fruit. And things begin to grow and there seems to be a prospect and a promise. And just when it looks as though we can expect the fruit, it all falls off the trees.

Never ripens. It all falls to the ground. There is a fatal deficiency in the waters of Jericho.

Remember how the prophet dealt with it. Bring me a new cruise and put meal therein. Salt therein.

Salt is the great element, isn't it? Put salt therein. He cast it into the waters and the waters were healed. Now there you have a very simple parable of this great truth from the day when God subjected the whole creation to vanity that it just goes so far.

And how true that is, isn't it? For every step forward, and they seem to be very big steps forward, very big steps forward, every step forward in history has only produced new problems of its own. And very often fatal. You have a disease or a malady and someone through research finds what is expected to be a remedy.

Well it does seem to touch that particular trouble but it raises a lot of others. Penicillin is not the remedy for everything. It creates its own problems.

You know what I mean. It doesn't clear up everything. Something else has got to be faced now by the very employment of it.

And what is true in that is true in everything. And we can see it probably in this atomic age more than ever. Progress, advance, invention, development, discovery, yes, but what problems.

What threats, what perils. And men are holding their breath at their own discoveries and inventions. Their hearts are in the grip of a terrible fear because of what they themselves have brought to light.

It's like that. Creation, the whole creation, however far it goes, is caught in a terrible vicious circle. Now this is a fact which of course is clear, demonstrated on every side.

Man is building a mighty tower to reach unto a heaven but he's holding his breath for his tower because the bigger the tower the greater the threat of disaster. He is feverishly harassed into buttressing up his tower with conferences and defense programs and what not. It's like that.

No, we are not moving farther away from fear and dread. The whole creation is subjected to vanity. Well, that's the situation.

But what's the cause? We are not thinking that in a little time and company like this we are going to solve the world's problems. But these things come very near all the time. They are pressing into our lives and

they are pressing into the church of God.

We are confronted continually in the realm of the Christian life in its various aspects, individual and collective. We are confronted with this matter of disorder as the way, the means of frustrating God's purpose. Will you dear friends take this, listen to this, that God can only reach his full end on his own order, by his own order.

He has an order. He has an order for your life, for mine. He has an order for our local companies as expressions of the whole company of the church.

He has an order for the church and that order has to come into our localities and into our local expressions of the church. And the word order or what it stands for in the mind of God governs our progress, governs our fruitfulness, governs the realization of the divine purpose. God is not going to get there willingly.

Neither are we. That's a very important thing and if this conference serves one purpose alone, it should serve that, bringing us face to face with that. If there is frustration, if there is unrest, if there is sinking of heart, if there is a sense of despair or if we find ourselves in weakness, helplessness, we should ask, we should seek, is this because in some particular or particulars the divine order is violated.

Maybe sin in other ways, I know, which has the same effect, but this is one thing that has always been a most fruitful work of the devil, to disrupt the people of God. Their relationships, their fellowship and their harmonious going on together to bring in the discordant note again and spoil the music. We must look then to this matter of order.

Now what we who are concerned with God's purpose have to be sure of is what on the one hand are the grounds of insecurity and on the other hand what are the essentials to strength, to progress and to final triumph. In other words, what was responsible for the disruption which is in the universe with such a sinister, frustrating power everywhere. There are several major things.

We put our finger upon one this morning. We'll just read one or two passages of scripture. Firstly as inclusive, in principle, from the book of Proverbs, chapter 9, verse 1. Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. Now pause for a minute before we read more. You know two things about that.

That pillars are the supports of any building. The safety and the duration of the building rests with its pillars. You will recall to mind the end of the life of the Judge Samson when the Philistines gathered and crowded that mighty hall, filled it to capacity and climbed upon its roof.

And for their holiday they wanted some entertainment. So they called for the blind Samson to be brought that they might make sport of him. And they brought him.

And there he stood in his blindness, everybody making their sport of him. He said to the lad who brought him in, just lead me to the pillows upon which the house rests. And he prayed to the Lord, just this once Lord, just this once, vindicate.

And he took hold on the two pillars and bowed himself with all his might. And the house fell. And greater were the number of the slain in the day of his death than all his life.

Matter of the tremendous importance of pillars in a building. That's just by the way. The other thing, if you know so well, is that wisdom is always connected with building in the Bible.

Solomon was the man of proverbial wisdom. He who built the great temple, it was by that God given wisdom that he built something that was the wonder and marvel of all who saw it. The apostle Paul speaks of himself as a wise master builder.

According to the wisdom given, he laid a foundation. A wise master builder. And so we could go on.

Wisdom associated with building. Wisdom hath builded her house. She hath hewn out her seven pillars.

This divine house which Paul speaks, the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, has a seven-fold support. This house of God, this marvelous house of God, his church rests upon seven pillars. Take them away, and the house falls.

The creation was built upon these pillars. When they were interfered with, the creation collapsed and disintegrated. Seven, of course, is a symbolic number.

That which is spiritually complete. We leave those details. I'm not thinking that we'll be able to speak of the seven pillars.

But we can, I think, speak of two or three of them today. And undoubtedly, the first of these pillars is the pillar of truth. Pillar of truth.

Now we can go over and read one or two other passages. Take the gospel by John. The gospel by John, chapter 8, verse 44.

For ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

In John's first letter, chapter 2, verse 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. The book of the Revelation, chapter 21, verse 27. There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination, and a lie.

John, chapter 22, verse 15. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie. Sooner or later, dear friends, everything will stand or fall according to whether it rests upon truth.

Perhaps there was never a truer thing said, a thing more true in its history. Anything and everything false has its own doom within its own self. God has given a very large place to this matter.

He himself is the God of truth. Declaration is, in him is no lie. In him is no lie.

Word of God is a mighty revelation of the fact that God is intensely jealous over truth, burningly jealous for truth. Psalmist cries, thou desirest truth in the inward. He holds a lie in abomination.

We have seen he consigns all liars to the lake of fire. He excludes from the new Jerusalem every one that loveth and maketh a lie. All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth.

That is expressive of the burning hatred of God for what is not true, and of his love for the truth. Jesus Christ himself called himself the truth. I am the truth.

He is called the faithful and true witness. The Holy Spirit is called by him the spirit of truth. When he, the spirit of truth, is come.

And the church, the fourth of these great magnitudes, is the pillar and ground of the truth. On the other hand, as we have seen, Satan is called the liar and the father of lies. Now this whole beautiful creation, its whole structure collapsed when the lie entered in.

The lie disintegrated everything. And that lie runs through the constitution of this world order as it is. It's in man.

Man is a lie. He is not what God meant him to be or made him to be. He is a contradiction, a denial.

That is not the truth. When you look at man, as God meant and means man to be, and he knows quite well that there is something in his very constitution that is not true. In the world itself, the whole world system, there is this lie.

It's in commerce. How rare, downright transparent honesty is in business and in commerce. What a problem that is for anybody who really wants to be straight and honest.

Difficult to get on in this world if you're going to be like that. In society, quite a lot of falsehood there is. Make-believe, pretense, acting, exaggeration, imitation.

All these things are forms or expressions of something false. They call it make-up. It's really make-believe.

It's not true. It's not true. Pretending to be something that is not true.

Society is like that. The world is like that. Mixture.

Oh, how artificial and false it all is. It's only the Christians who really sense that, I suppose. We, when we were in the world, had some sense of how artificial and unreal it all is.

Keeping up, keeping up a show, keeping up a pretense, keeping up a make-believe, making an impression without the substance behind. It's unreal. That's the world.

Like that. There's a lie at the heart of the whole world system. Ah, yes, but in religion it can be like that.

Pretense, make-believe, show, making an impression without reality behind. The Lord Jesus, the truth, the fiery, scorching truth looked upon. The leaders of religion in his day, scribes and Pharisees, and he said, hypocrites, play-actors, pretending what is not true.

Yes, it's all like that everywhere and everything. And that, that is the cause of the disintegration, of the confusion and disruption of everything. That's the first cause.

And nothing can stand, nothing can stand and abide which is not true. Sooner or later it's going to be found out by that very thing there. It will collapse.

It will go to pieces. It has the very seeds of its disruption in itself if it is not absolutely true. So here is this revealed fact.

God's building, God's building has in the very first place the pillar of truth erected. I am the truth, I will build my church. Those things go together.

Now, with that as the whole background, dear friends, it's touching and it's got to be applied and we've to apply it. Our position, our position must be true. Our personal position must be a true one.

We'll never, never stand, never go through unless our position is a true one. If there can be any doubt, any question, any uncertainty, any contradiction in our position, we're not safe. We're not safe.

The Lord, in his gracious sovereignty, which often seems so hard and so unkind, has allowed to come into the order of things, such things as storms and blizzards and hurricanes. And when they pass, you see their effect. There are many, many things laid flat on the earth.

Trees lying there, uprooted. There are things that stood and gone through and are going to face the next one, the stronger for this. And it's a parable again.

You and I, individually and collectively, in our local companies and the church as a whole, God knows how true it is today, are allowed to pass into terrible, shaking storms. Storms that threaten our existence, our continuance. And when they've passed, there are those who haven't stood up to it, who've been carried uprooted by the trial, the testing, the storm, the duress.

You go to some of those trees and say, you see, the reason for this is you were too superficial. It wasn't reality in your position, in your position. Your position was not true.

Therefore, the Lord has brought to light a false position. He does that, dear friends. I say it's hard, it's very hard.

No one likes that kind of experience. No company likes that. But in his gracious sovereignty, it's necessary.

It's necessary. He must have what he does have. Truth.

Truth. Something that proves the truth of God in its very being. That God is unmovable, unshakable.

God endures forever. And something of that has got to be produced in everything that is of God. And in the final issue, the company that will be there around the throne will be the company that have come up out of much tribulation, washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne, that eternal everlasting throne. Into them has been wrought something of the steadfastness. Trying to do that.

Trying to do that. But here do believe me that we'll not stand unless our position is true. We have to look into our position from time to time.

Indeed, the Lord forces us to it. We have to say now, is my position as I am, where I am, a true one? A right one? Is it of God? Or are there other elements in this? Search our hearts over this. Find out why we are where we are.

Why we believe what we say we believe. What lies behind it? Our position must be a true one. Our life must be a true life.

Not carried on by emotion, by other people, by system and order around us, even church order. But we stand on the ground of a life with God of our own. A life with God of our own does not depend for its continuance and its strength upon anything outside.

It's between us and God. That's the only true and safe position. Our testimony must be true.

Not just true in the Bible. Not true as in the company of people who believe it and hold it and teach it. And in every part true of us, if the testimony is the power of His resurrection, that has got to be true in us, in you, in me.

You and I have got to embody the power of His resurrection in our life, day by day. If the testimony is the unity of the saints in Christ, it's got to be in us. It's got to be that testimony.

Our testimony has got to be like that. True. Real.

I speak with solemnity and I would not resort to likeness, but I read a little while ago of a good man who had had a very wonderful conversion. A very wonderful conversion. Come right out, as we say, of the blue into something very wonderful and very real.

And he had had it printed that he could distribute it to everybody. His testimony. The years had gone on.

He tried to keep up this thing of the past, but it had lost its reality. His life was no longer aglow with that testimony. Indeed, there was a good deal more that spoiled the testimony.

But he tried to keep it up, living on the past. After some years, a Christian man called on him, or came into the home, and began to speak about the Lord. And he asked this good man in the house whether he knew the Lord.

Oh, yes, I know the Lord. Wife, go up and get my testimony. It's up in the attic.

And up she went, and a lot of noise, and turning over up there for a long time. Then she came slowly down and she said, Daddy, the rats have eaten your testimony. It's got to be real, up to date.

Not of the past. Not something on paper. But right here, now, today, our testimony has got to be real, in the truth.

Our fellowship must be true. That little word you know, it's a very searching word of the Apostle, in unfeigned love of the presence. In unfeigned love.

It's so easy for us to pretend in this matter, and to be sentimental, or to use sentimental language about one another. Our dear sister, our dear brother. Is it true? Is it true? Unfeigned love of the presence.

Fellowship must be true. Our positions with one another must be true. They must rest upon the truth.

Not the strength of our own convictions, which may be falling, but the strength of what is actually true. Prove your convictions. We can have tremendous convictions, you know, and be quite sure that we are absolutely right in our judgments, and our conclusions, and our positions, in this matter and that matter, with this one and that.

So positive, and yet it may be utterly false. Utterly false. It's just possible like that.

I could give you some illustrations of that very thing, but it's not necessary, perhaps, and wouldn't help. But, dear friends, our ears have got to test what they hear. So easily we hear things said about people, about places, individuals and companies, and we take it at once, and are affected by it.

And we are put on an utterly false position with the Lord. The Lord's not with us in that. Sooner or later there's going to be an exposure of the falsehood in that, and we are going to be ashamed.

Our ears must test what we hear, coming from whatever source it may. We may think the most reliable and trustworthy. Nevertheless, let us pause and wonder if that really is true.

We must make sure, because this thing is going to affect and influence us, make a difference in our attitudes and in our conduct. Let's be quite sure about it. All the God's people would do that.

And do what it is said. Jesus never judged after the hearing of his ears. Our eyes must verify what we see.

We can be so misled by taking things as they appear. I'm going to borrow something here, and my brother there won't mind if I illustrate what I mean. Because I know that other people might not.

We are at prayer. We are at prayer. I happen to open my eyes, and I see my brother, with his eyes open, looking at the one who is praying.

And looking intently. Almost it would appear critically. Now, I could, if I didn't know, and you would, not knowing, say, why isn't that brother entering into the prayer? Why hasn't he his eyes closed? Why is he weighing every word like that? Seemingly so critical.

See how you could misjudge a brother if you didn't know that he was deaf and was reading. Entering into the prayer by following the very movements of the lips, and the only way in which he could enter into the prayer. You see the possibility of a terrible misunderstanding? Judging after the sight of the eyes? No, fondue.

We must verify what we see. Did it really mean that? Is that the truth about it, or did it only appear like that? We are constantly misjudging one another in that way. Putting a motive or a reason to somebody's behavior that was never meant at all is not true.

And how everything is spoiled, and the building is either broken up or arrested. We must be on the ground of the truth. In every way our homes must be on a true basis.

Our business, as far as we have any power for whatever, must be true. True business. I had a friend who was the head of a business, and he put up on his desk these words, God first, and all the travelers came into his office.

Again and again the traveler made some suggestion of how he could get business and do business, but it wasn't quite straight. It just had something in it that was not quite square and clear. And he said always to the traveler, you see there, if you have anything to propose that is out of harmony with it, our business ceases at this point.

Now I know what that's going to do for business, but you can't build even a business for permanence and the blessing of God, which is important, on a false foundation. It's something that is not true. And when we have said all, dear friends, our spirit must be true.

Our spirit must be true. It is, after all, a matter of what the eyes of flame see, isn't it? His eyes were as a flame of fire. He came to the church.

The eyes of flame were looking things through and through, and lighting upon the false, the untrue, the inconsistent, the contradictory, and challenging the whole existence of that church on the basis of faith. Of the truth. The truth.

Now truth can be a very beautiful thing. It is a beautiful thing. But truth can be a very terrible thing.

In this house which he is building, and in which you and I are fellow builders, there can be no painted pillars, no imitation marble. It's got to be true. Right true.

But wherever you probe it, and however deeply you get into it, you'll find it's the same. It's the same. It stands up to the test.

See, the issue, the issue is whether it will stand for eternity, whether it will go on to the end, whether it will fulfill God's purpose in its existence. That's the test of everything, isn't it? Who wants it to be otherwise? However, much of passing, of transient glory might come to us by compromise, by mixture, by misrepresentation, by pretense, by a show, by anything that impresses the natural man. It isn't worth it if God doesn't put his seal upon it.

The seal of life. How good, we've had it quoted this morning, how good a thing it is to see brethren dwelling together in unity. There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore, something genuine.

The Lord established us in the truth, the truth in us.

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