

Los Angeles Conference #2

by T. Austin-Sparks

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of Christ as the Prince of Life and the transformative role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

Duration: 47:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 20:31, Acts 3:15

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ and the importance of recognizing Him as the source of life. The Gospel of John is highlighted as a testament to this central theme of life in Christ. The consequences of rejecting Christ are described as a history of suffering and death, contrasting with the hope and open heaven that believers have through faith in Jesus. The speaker also emphasizes the transformative power of this life in believers, which is stronger than death, hell, and the power of Satan.

Transcript

In the book of the Acts, the book of the Acts, chapter 3, at verse 15, this is a part, only a part of the whole statement, but it contains the phrase that I want for this present time. The whole statement is, Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and killed the Prince of Life, whereof we are witnesses. That phrase and title, the Prince of Life.

This morning we were occupied with the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, as illustrated by our Lord in the wind. The wind bloweth where it listeth, or where it likes, where it chooses, where it wills. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit, the absolute sovereignty of the Spirit, as the basis of a true Christian life, the born again life of the believer. This afternoon we were occupied with the Spirit's criterion, that is, the Holy Spirit has as his one object and test of everything, Christ himself. Making Christ the test of life, of work, of everything.

That is, how much of Christ is found in us, both individually, collectively, and in all the activities of our life. The Holy Spirit's criterion is that, just. How much we meet Christ in one another.

A lot of other things are made Christianity's criterion, but that is the Holy Spirit's criterion, or reduced to that. Now this evening we are going to say a little about another very big matter. That is, the hallmark of

the Holy Spirit's presence and activity.

That which really does evidence the presence, the sovereignty, the work of the Holy Spirit. And that is contained in this phrase, or title, the Prince of Life. Before we come to that, let us just glance back a moment on this matter of the Holy Spirit's objective, that is, Christ.

At one point in our meditation, we showed how the Holy Spirit is against everything that makes Christ smaller than he really is. Put that around the other way, the Holy Spirit's work, business purpose, is to show how great Christ is. How immensely great Christ is.

And dear friends, it will depend entirely upon our apprehension of the greatness of Christ. What kind of Christians we are. Whether we are little ones, small ones, petty ones, trivial ones, unaccountable ones, insignificant ones, or whether we really do signify, count, mean, represent something by our being here in this world.

As Christians, the thing that will determine our value, our accountability, our spiritual significance. No one thinks, after what I was saying this afternoon, that I'm talking about natural importance, human bigness. I'm speaking about spiritual stature, measure, and significance.

The measure of that where we are concerned will be very largely, if not entirely, dependent upon our real spiritual apprehension of the greatness of Christ. Not just our mental view, our studied conclusions, but how great Christ is to us in an inward way by revelation of the Holy Spirit. And this is one thing that we believers, we Christians, ought to be occupied with continually.

Because it is the effect of this that will make us what we are going to be. Occupied with knowing Christ in the full dimensions of the Holy Spirit's revelation. There are many ways in which we may come to that, which I will not mention, but closely in touch with what we have here, this word, is this way of coming to an understanding of how great Christ is.

That is, by a recognition of the titles by which the Holy Spirit speaks of him. I wonder if you have done anything about this. Consider it.

Consider the titles given to us by the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus. I have compiled a list from the New Testament of some 53 different titles of the Lord Jesus. Go back to the Old Testament, to the prophet Isaiah alone, and we will add quite a few more.

Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Priests, these are all titles, distinctive titles. And as you know, there are many others, both in Isaiah and in other parts of the Old Testament. I reckon that when we will finish, we will have about a total of over 80 different titles given to the Lord Jesus in the word of God.

Now it takes a very big person to carry as many names as that. You wouldn't like to have all those names to carry about in life, would you? As many names as that. Why, if you get one or two, if you get three, that is just about all you can put up with.

But here you are. Here is one man, one man, who is so great, so great, that he can stand up to this large, large sum of designations, titles. And remember that they are not just names.

They are not just names. They are definitions. Every one of them is a definition of his character, his work, and his significance in God's universe.

I am not going to run through that list. You see what a realm you are in, of the greatness of Christ. Oh, if I said to you that I could occupy a whole week of meetings with you on each separate title, and more than that, more time than that, on each separate title, you'd want, you see, 80 odd weeks just to cover the ground in a superficial way.

But there is no fathoming of the depth of these titles, these definitions. How great he is. And I repeat, that if by the Holy Spirit you and I could be led to know him in these terms, the terms of these wonderful designations, what a Christ we would be.

But it's all here for us. It's in the Bible, we've got it. It's in a book for us.

And we have got the Holy Spirit to take each one and bring us into the good of what that title means. I trust that though I have to concentrate into a very short time this evening, that you will see something of what I mean. Now here is one of these more than 53 titles of Christ in the New Testament.

The Prince of Life. The Prince of Life. Perhaps I'd better stop at once for a little technical adjustment.

That word Prince is likely to mislead us. If we think of it as we should naturally do, as referring to some princeliness, some high estate, some honorable position as we speak of a prince. But that is not, while it is true of course of him, that is not the word that is really here.

The same word as is translated Prince here is translated in other ways in the New Testament. In the letter to the Hebrews for instance. To make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

That word author is the same word as the word prince here. The author and finisher of faith. Author again is the same word.

But in the original language the best translation of the word would be pioneer. You can see that author fits into that. Just as in another place it is translated captain.

The captain of our salvation. It's the same word again. Captain, author, pioneer.

The pioneer of life. What a meaning that gives doesn't it to this statement. This statement of Peter.

For these Jewish rulers as he is hurling at them the great devastating charge of their crime. He killed the pioneer of life. You see what you do if you kill the pioneer.

The pioneer. If there is only one pioneer. Kill him.

See what you do. Oh how rich that very word is. The pioneer of life.

Now then let's broaden out a bit. Here is a word. A word of immense dimension.

This one word embraces, gathers into itself all the meaning of Christianity. It sums up everything that Christianity, New Testament Christianity I mean, true Christianity really means. This word life.

This is the eternal issue. Make no mistake about it. This thing here called life is the eternal issue.

It is the issue in creation. It is as clear as anything can be. When God created the world and then man upon it.

He intended through testing and probation that the man that he had created should become the recipient of and participator in something called life. Which is more than animal life which he had. More than soul life which he breathed into him.

Whether it's symbolism or not it doesn't matter to me at any rate. It doesn't matter. The principle is the thing.

That tree of life placed at the heart of the garden represents this great thing. That there is something there for which God had created man. That he should have that on conditions of obedience and faith.

Have that. What that tree represented. It is called the tree of life.

Now all the other trees were alive. They were all alive. And all the animals were alive.

All the birds and all the creeping things and all the fishes were alive. And Adam was alive but not alive with that life. No logic.

No logic whatever or reason for putting that thing there apart from them, outside of them as something distinctive and something definite. If they've already got what it signifies. No they haven't.

They haven't. And the very act of God after their disobedience through unbelief enforces this truth. He turned them out and put an angel, a cherubim God around the tree of life.

Who said no, not now. Never now. Never now.

On this ground. For this kind of man. Never.

It was my intention. The day, the day when thou eatest thereof as to another tree. In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt sentence was passed.

And man fell into spiritual death. That day. And all his children from them to us and all others today and all that may yet be are dead to God.

In that sense, never having had that life by nature. That's the issue of a creation. That is the issue bound up with the incarnation of the Son of God.

Why did he come? Why did the Son of God divest himself of all his heavenly glory and come in man form? Take up this issue. This issue. I am come that they might have life.

He said it. That they might have life. Implying, implicitly, they haven't got it.

Without my coming they would never have it. I am come that they might have life. The issue of the very incarnation.

And of course the issue of redemption. Is this. Life.

This particular. The issue of the advent of the Holy Spirit is this. One issue.

He is called the Spirit of Life. Romans 8.2. The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ. He is the Spirit of Life.

You mark wherever you meet the Holy Spirit. In Old or New Testament you are coming on the issue of life. Right on the issue of life.

In symbol or type or figure or statement. It's this issue of life. So the word carries with it.

In itself. The very greatness of Christ. If this is the eternal issue.

In creation. In incarnation. In redemption.

In the Holy Spirit and all His work. The issue is life. And that life.

Is in Christ. Surely. And unknown in Christ.

What a significance. Is given to Christ. How great He is.

Reaching back. To eternity. Coming through all time.

Carrying this issue from reaching. Right into eternity to be. On one thing.

The pioneer. Of life. The pioneer of life.

It is this. Dear friends. This particular thing.

That makes Christ. Unique. Unique.

In Him. Was life. And again the implication is in no one else.

Only in Him. In Him was life. In Him was life.

You know that John wrote twenty chapters. Twenty chapters of the gospel. And summed up the whole of his twenty chapters in one word.

One conclusive statement. These things are written. That you may know that Jesus is the Son of God.

And that believing. You may have life in Him. Thank you John.

Now we know what you went after all the way through. All that you have written through that gospel has been concentrated upon one thing. Life.

And that's borne out as you read isn't it? Chapter by chapter. The issue is life. Then John wrote six.

Six chapters of letters as we happen to divide it up. And you know that those letters of John have just bear right down upon this. He that hath the Son hath the life.

He that hath not the Son hath not the life. Cannot see the life. It's all about life.

The issue is life. Centered in Christ. And it is so clear by that because you don't do that sort of thing.

You don't write all that and say all these things. If everybody has got this life after all. It so evidently means that.

Well Jesus is unique in this. He's different from all other beings. Created beings.

He is different. As different as that tree of life was from all the other trees. And the difference.

The difference. The uniqueness of Christ is in this. That He has in Him a life.

That no other species of creation possesses. It's a difference in Him. Because it's a different kind of life from all others.

Now this is the very heart. The very heart of the meaning of His being the Son of God. The Son of God.

In the spiritual and the divine realm it follows the line. The parallel of the natural. Sonship.

Sonship. What is sonship after all? It's not just a title is it? It's not just an association? Sonship. In its very essence is this.

The life of a father dwells in the son. The life. How do I know that I'm the son of my father? And the remarkable thing is, I don't know how true it is with you.

Perhaps you never thought about it. It may not bear out in your case. But I know it does in mine.

And I suppose I'm pretty well as old as anybody here. This is the remarkable thing to me. The older I get the more I see my father in me.

I'm coming up against my father more and more the longer I live. As I remember him. As I now could understand him.

As I couldn't as a child or even as a youth. Took him for granted. He was objective.

But now my word, this father of mine is coming out all the time. No one can raise any question as to whether I'm the son of my father. Why? Why? Because I'm called by the same name.

Not at all. You're not a son of God because you call yourself a Christian. You bear a certain name.

No, none of that. The thing that makes for his sonship is this. That the very life of his father God is resident within him.

Has been passed into him. Has become the basic factor and reality and power in his being. His father's life is in him.

And that dear friends goes right to the heart of this matter of a new family. The new family which God is making which is to occupy his realm for eternity. When all others have been dismissed from his sphere.

All others have been dismissed. Have gone. A family and a family only will remain.

And that family will be in terms of sonship in this sense. That they possess this unique life of Jesus Christ. As his own transmission by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of life to them. Jesus was different. Not in outward appearance perhaps altogether.

For those who looked on. Who were just spectators. Did not note the difference amongst them.

His visage is mild more than any man's. When we see him there's no beauty that we should desire in him. And so on.

Not in the outward appearance. Although I even think that Pilate registered something about him. However, it is in this secret possession.

That he is different from all others. And he was different. He was different.

There was something there. That was not true of any other person. Of all the millions on the earth.

When he was here. It's unique. Quite different.

Now he says he is the pioneer. What is the pioneer? Well pioneer again carries with it no significance. If there's no one else coming up.

The very meaning of the word pioneer. Means that he is the trail maker and breaker for others. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews of course puts it.

In bringing many sons to glory. To make the pioneer. To make the pioneer.

If this is true. You and I. You and I. Come to be possessors of that unique. That life which is.

Different. Different. In its very essence.

Then you and I dear friends. In the deepest reality of our being are different. Are different.

Now that's a statement. A statement of fact. But what does it amount to? And I do want to be helpful.

Not stating facts of doctrine. But really helpful. What does it amount to? What does it amount to? The most blessed thing.

Of which you and I can conceive. It not only amounts to our being in the family. A divine family.

Of the eternal family. The answer to God's everlasting desire. It means this.

That there is something. By the Holy Spirit. Himself.

As present. As the spirit of life. Deposited.

In a born from above. Child of God. A something deposited.

Which is a mighty power and energy. To which you and I will owe everything. Oh yes.

Oh yes. We were speaking this afternoon of the negative side. What the Holy Spirit does.

In order. To get us. Oh yes.

Oh yes. We were speaking this afternoon of the negative side. What the Holy Spirit does.

In order. To get us. To get us.

To the place of his absolute sovereignty. That is he breaks us. He empties us.

He brings us to total exhaustion. Where our own natural resources are concerned. He just smashes us to pieces.

And brings us to zero. In order. To bring us into the glorious sovereignty.

Fullness of Jesus Christ. That is the negative side. But look here.

When the Holy Spirit is doing that work. He is never, never doing it with a negative object. And the positive thing that the Holy Spirit is doing is this.

Just to make us know the mighty, mighty and persistent reality of resurrection. Of resurrection. Death worketh in us.

It is true by the spirit's operation. But life also. The reality of resurrection.

Oh, I do feel that this is something, if you forget everything else, we must lay hold of a new difference. I don't know how many of you here, perhaps some, not all, but others will follow in the way. If this is not too disconcerting for them.

Some of you know quite well what it is to be brought down very, very low indeed. Low in your spiritual life. Low in your physical life.

Low in your faith. To the place where everything seems now gone and finished and hopeless. Everything.

Everything. That more or less may have been tasted by some of you. And don't forget, I'm sorry, I don't want to be depressing.

Really, I don't want to be depressing. But I'm on the positive side, you know, when I'm saying it. That is what the Holy Spirit will do if he gets sovereignty.

He'll upset you. He'll break you. He'll end you.

He'll upend you. Oh, yes. You won't know whether you're this way up or that.

You just come there to complete bewilderment and despair of everything in yourself. The Holy Spirit really gets sovereignty. For one reason, and it's a positive reason.

To make you know the reality of the power of this life that he has deposited in you. That it is stronger than death. That it is stronger than hell.

That it is stronger than all the power of Satan. That it is mightier than all the strength of human nature. And all the weakness of humans.

Something that comes up again. And it comes up again. And still again it comes up when you thought it was gone forever.

Disappeared for eternity. And on it goes again. For the next cycle.

This is true. This is true. It's true to New Testament.

If you look, the Holy Spirit was working on this life. It's true to spiritual experience when the Holy Spirit gets hold. Is that something? Oh, thank God for it.

It was deposited in us when we first received the Spirit as the Spirit of life by faith in Jesus Christ. And were born anew. It was deposited a hundred times, a thousand times for some of us since then.

Our survival, our very survival has been on this basis that there is something at work in us. That is mightier than all these forces. That are seeking our undoing and our destruction.

And survives. And comes up. And rises again.

And takes us on further. Until we have the next bout. Then it happens again.

It's there. It's like, I dare not perhaps use illustrations, but you know, you're familiar in this country more than perhaps in any part of the world. What you call pricks, injections, shots.

What is it? Well, something put in. And it works. And it may work for years.

And the presence of that within, silently, you're not conscious of it at all, but it's there working silently and secretly. The presence of that is setting up a mighty resistance to something that otherwise would invade and mean a fatal issue. It's there within.

Secretly at work. There are many diseases and maladies that are warded off in later life because of this something earlier put there. We are saved, but we don't carry the consciousness of this thing all the way through life, but it's there.

We owe a tremendous amount to it. Now that's in the physical realm and it's a poor illustration, but it is an illustration of this. The Holy Spirit brings this life in.

Deposits this life. This divine life. And secretly, oft times so unconsciously, so unconsciously that life is there working as a mighty divine force.

For our redemption. For our deliverance. For our persistence.

For our survival. For our spiritual progress going on. Stamina.

And for victory upon victory in the Christian life when the battle rages and it's an issue of life and death again in some way or other. This stands in good stead. This divine life.

Because of what? There is one who has pioneered this way. He has pioneered it. Oh, you in this country know something of pioneer work over here in the West.

You're living in the good, aren't you, of the pioneers who came away right across. Plowed the way. Cut the way.

Met the difficulties, the obstacles. Cut down the forests. Gave your way for this good and pleasant country.

But what they had to meet, you know. Pioneering. They met the cost of it.

They took all the involvements in it. They shouldered all the responsibilities. They endured all the hardships.

To give you this life. He's the pioneer of something more than Californian benefits. Pioneer of life.

He came. He took on him all that was involved in this matter of death and darkness and evil. God knows, as we were saying this afternoon, and God only knows how deep that iniquity is in us.

How terrible a thing has happened to humanity through Adam. Oh, how terrible. How terrible is the thing that has taken place in us, in us.

But he took the whole thing, the sum of it, the whole of it on himself. And through it, through death, through blood, through agony, through darkness, through God's rejection, the final stage pioneered through this issue of life. He came out victorious on the other side of the bloody ordeal.

He said, I'm the first one. You can be the second and the third and the fourth. And unto a great multitude which no man can.

Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of possessing this same life. That is our prospect. That is what he's brought to us.

But my point that I want mostly to emphasize is the reality of the indwelling spirit of life. Oh, lay hold on that. Lay hold on him.

Lay hold on life, as Paul said to Timothy. Lay hold. Refuse.

Refuse death. Refuse the old argument, because of this or that or anything in this universe that would spell despair. But for the fact, the pioneer has got through to the other side for us with life like the torch in his hand, offered to us.

You can see in the light of what I've been saying, just if you'd like to glance aside, at the terrible, terrible thing that Israel did when they killed the Prince of Life. Two thousand years of misery. Hopelessness.

Despair. Of a wailing wall in Jerusalem where they go continually day and night and bewail their awful lot. Again and again through these two thousand years, the awful consequences of their deed are allowed to break up and show.

In the Holocaust. In the awful pogroms. You killed the Prince of Life and it's been hell for you.

And death for you. It's true, isn't it? History declares what an awful thing it is to reject the Prince, the pioneer of life. You never get through if you do that.

But, thank God, we have been given faith in the Lord Jesus and that awful doom is not ours. Today we live with an open heaven. An open heaven right through the pioneer went through for us.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0406.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/los-angeles-conference-2/>

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