

# Men Whose Eyes Have Seen the King - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having an inward vision of the Lord Jesus for spiritual growth, purpose, and unity.*

**Duration:** 57:54

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13

**Topics:** "Seeing Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a clear vision and purpose in life, particularly centered around the Lord Jesus. The vision of Christ's universal majesty and glory becomes the driving force that binds the lives of believers and gives them a sense of purpose. This inward spiritual vision also serves as an incentive for life, especially during times of weariness and disappointment. Additionally, the vision of Christ as the ultimate authority and the one who has triumphed over adversity brings cohesion among believers, uniting them in their pursuit of the same vision. The loss of this vision leads to a loss of purpose, incentive, and unity among believers.

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## Transcript

We read again Peter's words regarding the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus from his second letter chapter 1 verse 16. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty for he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. This voice we ourselves have come out of heaven when we were with him in the holy mount.

We have the word of prophecy made more sure where unto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn the day star arise in your hearts. I would like to link with that his words in his first letter in the first chapter at verse 10 concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them to whom it was revealed not unto themselves but unto you did they minister these things which have now been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven which things angels desire to look into.

I think there is very little need for me to retrace the course that we followed earlier because what we have yet to say so largely embraced what we have said. We concluded our earlier meditation at the point of the issue of the transfiguration. We saw that the word used here by Peter and in other places is a word which links the transfiguration with the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

Rightly translated power and presence, the presence. That word as you see is applied to the transfiguration, the presence of the Lord Jesus in majesty, in power, in glory. That same word is used and in the same way concerning his coming again.

It is called his presencing, his being present and we know that that presencing will indeed be in power, majesty and glory. If these are the accompaniments of the presence of the Lord Jesus as they are clearly seen to be again and again, we shall indicate some of these occasions as we go on. If these be the accompaniments of his presence then the issue not only in transfiguration and what it means and in the advent at the end, but surely in every occasion of his presence.

The presencing of the Lord Jesus carries with it an impact upon the situation, the conditions, the place where he is present. We might indicate even if we enlarge later, there is here on the Mount of Transfiguration an impact. These three who were there in his presence fell on their faces with great fear.

Lord Jesus had to approach and lay his hand on them, say arise, be not afraid. Presence of the Lord Jesus will lay waste all our own strength, all our natural wisdom, all our pride, all our impetuosity. Peter and another evangelist recording it tells us Peter said Lord it's good for us to be here, let us make free tabernacles.

The evangelist says not knowing what he said, here he is in his own impulsiveness again, uprooting himself into this situation, taking the speech into his lips and the situation into his hands, wanting to organize this and to perpetuate it and to make something of it and I will make free tabernacles, I. Peter not knowing what he said, truly perhaps with the best intentions, nevertheless heaven had to rebuke him, put him in his place and this was a devastating experience for those men in themselves. From one standpoint it is a glorious thing to see his majesty, from another standpoint it is always a fearful thing, that is for the flesh, for the natural life, cannot walk into this and take hold of it, to make something of it for our pleasure and satisfaction, has an impact in it, that's the point, it registers. We pray as we are going to and seek as we are going to seek a new vision of the exalted Lord, we must be prepared to be brought very low, to have all our own natural energies wasted, to realize that that majesty demands nothing other than that we shall be on our faces, that's a good place to be when it's before him.

It was a tremendous thing when Stephen saw this Lord in majesty and glory, it carried him through the awful ordeal of martyrdom, of being broken, shattered and slain with all the hatred, the malice that was being poured upon him by those who gnashed their teeth, who ran upon him. It was a glorious emergence for Stephen to see the Lord in glory as he did, but it was a tremendously devastating thing for at least one man there, more than that we could say that it was devastating for that nation, for in what they were doing they were only setting their double seal to what they had done to the very man in the glory. Again, it's impact, what I'm trying to say is not that such and such things characterize a visitation or a vision, but we can never really, really see the Lord and be in the presence of the Lord without knowing it and something happening, it being tremendously effective.

So all the pastors saw the Lord glorified and no one will argue as to there being an impact on that occasion. John saw him when he was in Patmos, he saw this Lord glorified and he fell to the ground, see

it's like that. And whatever might be the consequences and effects, we would all say let's have it rather than this impotent, helpless, weak, ineffective thing in which we so often find ourselves.

The issue of the transfiguration, that is of the glorified Lord seen, seen, is always a tremendous thing in its effect. Now here in his letter, Peter is affirming the fact, he's affirming the fact of the transfiguration. He's setting it over against what he calls cunningly devised fables, cleverly concocted reports, over against anything merely fictitious, imaginary, so on.

He says this was a fact, we were with him, we saw, we heard, and he says that this has been abundantly confirmed, we have a more sure word of prophecy, probably referring to what he had said in his first letter that we on the mount of the transfiguration. As Moses and Elijah spoke to him about the Exodus, the cross, about to be accomplished at Jerusalem, there the suffering and the glory met on that mountain. Peter says the prophets were all pointing to that and seeking and searching diligently to know the time, what manner of time would be when they prophesied the suffering, the glory.

He said they, the prophets, searched diligently and then he crowns it all by saying which things angels are desirous of looking into. He said we've got it, we've got it all in fulfillment. We were there on the mount and we have seen it working out ever since.

We are living in the light and the power of that combination of suffering and glory, glory and suffering. It's confirmed prophets, the word of prophecy is confirmed both in the event and in our history ever since the event. It's made more sure.

Probably Peter meant more than that, but he meant that. That's not the whole interpretation, but it is a part. But there it is, what I'm trying to underline is this fact that Peter himself is affirming here.

The thing had happened, but when Peter adds his word about more sure, you notice he carries it beyond the event, that historic event, that occasion on the mount, as something added to this. Something added to the, if we may call it incident, mighty incident. Something more.

It's been made more sure in our case. What is it? Well just this. Just this, which is so true in the other cases.

It was not only something before Peter and James and John. It was something that happened to him and afterward came into him. True there was the event, the happening, in time, at a certain place.

But something with it happened in Peter. This letter of his many years afterward, and you notice in the context, the immediate context, he's speaking of his departure, knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as the Lord hath showed me. I will seek that you have these things after my departure.

He's at the end of his life, the end of his ministry, but something happened that has carried him through. Something has remained, not as a memory of an objective experience, but something happened in him. Dear friends, this is more than a doctrine, more than a theory, more than even something in the Holy Scriptures.

To see the Lord does something in us. Oh I would like to spend all the rest of my time on that, because you know we can get the truth about anything and everything. All the truth that is available about the Lord Jesus himself, his life, his birth, his life, his works, his words, his death, his resurrection, all that there is.

We can have all the truth about the church, the church, and what a lot there is available. Have it all, know it all, nothing fresh to know about it. And any other thing you like to mention in the Scriptures, we can know it all.

And yet the fact can remain that nothing has happened in us as a result. I ask you, what has all your knowledge of the church meant as a happening in you? To do something, to put you in a new place with an entirely new conception, revolutionizing your whole life so that one whole order of things just falls away as empty and another heavenly order comes in. That's how it ought to be.

True, spiritual apprehension ought not to be just something in front of us, it ought to be something in us. It was with Peter. And we can trace this in his life.

We shall indicate other things. Take again his great contemporary Paul. Here is this fact that on the Damascus road, Jesus appeared unto him in glory.

Brightness above the brightness of the sun. It's a tremendous objective something that was before him. It struck him as from the outside.

But as you know, years afterward when he was speaking of it, he said it pleased God to reveal his son in me. Not only to him, it was something in him. And the apostle Paul's whole life and ministry was based upon and sprang out of that double event, to and in.

The majesty of the Lord Jesus. The majesty of the Lord Jesus became an inward thing with him. And therefore a tremendously effective thing.

The answer to the critics who say that Saul of Tarsus was in a frenzy, and therefore was overtaken by a terrible hysteria. And he began to see things and believed that they were real. That's the explanation, the psychological explanation of the conversion of Paul.

The answer, the answer is his life of endurance and suffering and service and love and his death for his testament. Don't go that way, like that, on a dream, on an imagination, on a hysteria, than to say that a very small proportion of what Paul had to meet during the thirty years of his ministry would knock hysteria out of most men. No.

Something happened inside. The vision did something in him as well as was something to him. And so we could go on with the other people like John who saw the Lord in his glory.

But that's enough. The thing happened to him, but it happened in him. It was an event too, but it was also an abiding process for right on through their lives this was the thing which was growing.

It was growing, this wonderful greatness of the Lord Jesus. They didn't get it all at once even in the wonderful event, but through their lives it was growing. It was the one mighty thing that was happening.

Jesus in all the greatness of his glorified person and position was dominating their whole horizon, the whole course of their life. Now that brings us to the principle of all this which opens up a very large field which we can move or could move for a very long time. The principle is the principle of true spiritual inward vision.

Not visionariness, but inward vision which is specific, which is definite. Visionariness can be very abstract, but what we mean by vision, spiritual vision is very concrete, it's very specific. It is a person who is in view,

and this person is no abstraction, nothing unreal, imaginary, mighty person.

See the Lord Jesus. I pause, I hesitate to just go on with words, because dear friends they can after all be but words. Let us weigh this whole matter.

You and I and the Lord's people, as we said earlier, need something very mighty to carry us through to the end. In our various places, various situations, various experiences, scatter and try and press, things are becoming very grim, are they not? I don't want to make anybody feel bad if you don't feel bad about things, but most of us are aware that we are in a most terrific spiritual conflict, and that the Christian life is not getting easier. Forgive me if I say a wrong thing, but I think many of you understand.

It is becoming exceedingly difficult to just hold on and keep on, and especially to be triumphant, how it was when Peter wrote his letter. Now, we want more than words, more than visionariness, to get us through. You know dear friends, our Christian life ought to be based upon something like this, our having seen the Lord.

We will only go through if that is true, by the operation and activity of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. We must have an inward vision of the Exalted Lord for all endurance and for all service that is essential. Life that has to go on without that is just a drag, it's an existence.

Work, service, without that inward vision has nothing in it to lift us, carry us on for everything. It is indispensable. Life and work and endurance, we have this inward vision of the Lord.

Lord in majesty and glory, kept fresh, kept clear, constantly revived. With such a vision, all the essentials of effectiveness are bound up. Now look, first of all, what we need, what all Christians need, what the church as a whole needs, and what every part of it needs, is a mighty governing sense of purpose, don't we? A sense of purpose.

There is something for which to live and something for which to work and something for which to endure and to honor. A real master purpose in our existence and in everything to do with it. Well, if you look into this matter, you will find that in the New Testament, these men and the church were brought into this master purpose.

We are so familiar with the very word that it has lost its music. Now here is the eternal purpose, called according to his purpose. They were governed by this objective, this goal, this something toward which they were being moved, drawn, constrained, urged and held.

Which again and again, when they were cast down, when it seemed that everything was hopeless, revived in them and revived them and brought them up again. A sense, not a mentality, not a theory, not an idea, but what Paul calls the power that worketh in us. According to the power that worketh in us.

The word worketh there, as you know, is energizing. Power that energizes in us. What was it? Look again and you will see, had to do with that great, great end which God had fixed concerning his son, the Lord Jesus, in universal majesty and glory and fullness.

They had seen something of that in him. It had become the great purpose which bound their lives and drew them out with a sense of something. Life is not empty, meaningless, some great end.

We see what it is. It is concerning the Lord Jesus. We must have that sense of purpose or we shall not get very far.

Not only was it a purpose, but this inward spiritual vision gave the incentive to life. Not only was it a purpose, but this inward spiritual vision gave the incentive to life. Days and years of wearing out, wearing down, weariness and disappointment and over many things disillusionment and heartbreak.

It is not difficult to lose incentive to ask is it worth it? Is it all justified? Are we not spending our strength and all? We need incentive. And again, look, it was this apprehension of Christ as having gone that way, weariness and devastation and triumph and being glorified and being there in the glory which gave them the incentive. It imparted an incentive to life, a motive, a power.

Further in this vision there is that effect of cohesion. A vision is a very cohesive thing. That is drawing people together, holding them together, making them a together people going on together.

They have one vision. A great illustration of this is Nehemiah and the people of his time. They have one vision.

Look at all the variety of people and variety of gifts and qualifications. Every kind of artisan profession mentioned. Every sphere of life.

They are one people, a solid whole. Simply because they have got one vision. One vision, that wall and rebuilding of the city dominated everyone's heart and everyone's mind and brought them together in a wonderful unity.

It is the only way of having unity. No other way but really to see the Lord Jesus and have him in view as overall, above all, as on the throne. Bring us together.

And I have said that what we all need is the power to endure. And it is just there as we have seen. Peter introduces the transfiguration, speaks about the trial of your faith.

The trial of your faith being much more precious than gold which perishes. Manifold temptations. He brings in the vision as the power of enduring and going through.

Told that Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. This is the power. Now you can see this from the opposite and contrary standpoint.

See the effects of loss of one vision, of a vision. Soon as the Lord's people lose the vision of the Lord, the Lord himself, however many other visions they may have, soon as they lose the vision of the Lord himself as Lord over all, as on the throne, what happens? They lose their sense of purpose. They lose their awareness of a real objective in their existence.

Isn't that true? It is true. They then have to have substitutes for that vision to keep them going. They make other things their objective.

These things wear out and disappoint. The loss of vision always results in a loss of an incentive. Real incentive for life.

And it is true about this matter of cohesion, coordination. Lose vision, result is always disintegration, division, separation, confusion, confusion and the loss of strength and stability. It is like that dear friends.

We do not speak this as theory or technique. It is very true. Some of us do know.

That is why we speak like this and are speaking like this just now. We do know that when a people, when a people have rarely been gripped by the vision of the throne, the majesty of the Lord Jesus, the authority of Christ, there is a wonderful, wonderful sense of purpose comes on that people. And a wonderful incentive and a wonderful unity they are of one people.

It is the throne that has done it and their apprehension of that throne. But when things take the place of the Lord, anything you like to mention, then the falling apart begins. Sooner or later the disintegration sets in.

The confusion, the loss of heart, incentive and purpose. All I am saying is this dear friends, that a real inward seeing of the Lord Jesus as in the place of authority and government and majesty is the answer to every need of ours personally and collectively. It was of old.

It is now. Do you notice how this transfiguration was the confirmation and compliment of all the teaching? If you look again in Matthew, the record of the transfiguration in Matthew 17, these chapter divisions rob us of so much, spoil so much for us. We have to have them, I suppose, for some purpose or other, for reference.

I do suggest to you that you make very little of chapter divisions as we have been. The writers never did that. Just go right on.

Now in chapter 16 of Matthew everybody knows Matthew 16 and what it contains. What have we? Well, we have the four major things of the Christian faith and the Christian life. First of all, the person of the Lord Jesus into the parts of Caesarea, Philippi.

Jesus said, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Said unto them, Who say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon, Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. I think that there it might be said Peter didn't know what he was talking about again. It was a tremendous utterance.

Thou art the Messiah. Thou art the Messiah. Both Christ the Messiah means the anointed one and as such the Son of the living God.

The basic fact of Christianity, the person of the Lord Jesus. You know, for a man like Peter, a Jew, versed and read and saturated in the Old Testament and Jewish history, to say that meant far more than we are aware of. The tremendous things bound up with that word Messiah.

Messiah. There were three great conceptions of the Messiah in Israel. First you have in the first part of the prophecies of Isaiah, the Son of David.

The seed and the Son of David. You remember Isaiah's prophecies about the sheep of David. That was the first conception of the coming Messiah, anointed one, who should take over the throne of David.

All that that meant. In the second half of Isaiah, the Messiah is the suffering servant of Jehovah. King, Redeemer, Redeemer King.

Isaiah 53 stands right at the heart of that conception of the Messiah. The throne, the redemption, how is it going to work out? In the third, conception of the coming Messiah, which you have in the book of Daniel. This is very wonderful if you like to look at it, Daniel chapter 7. Verse 9, I beheld till thrones were placed, one that was the ancient of days did sit.

His raiment was white as snow, hair of his head like unto wool. His throne was fiery flames and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him.

Thousands, thousands ministered unto him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set.

The books were opened. Verse 13, I saw in the night visions and beheld there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man. And he came even to the ancient of days and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations and the languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away. And his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

That was their coming Messiah. King, Savior, reigning Lord forever and ever and universal Son. When Peter said thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

All that, all that was present in the declaration. Hence Jesus said flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you. My Father knows the meaning of the Christhood, the Messiahship, the Sonship.

And it's all that. Now dear friends, I have mentioned that, included that, only with a view to trying to revive this conception of the greatness of our Lord Jesus. That's all.

To help toward the vision, I would, that as we speak of it, read of it, you should see. Your Lord Jesus is no little defeated Lord. Defeated at the hands of the great enemy.

Only as we have such a conception and apprehension of his person, shall we get through in triumph. That's the first thing. The second thing is the church, the person.

And the person always does lead to the church in divine sequence. I say unto thee, thou art Peter, upon this rock I will build my church. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against me.

Why? Well for that very reason. It's his church. Church of this one.

This one to whom the kingdom is given. And the throne before whom all nations shall bow. Church is the embodiment of the vision of the exalted Lord.

That will make it a great church, a powerful church, if that is true. If this one, if this one of the Transfiguration Mount, if this one of Stephen's vision, of Paul's vision, if this one by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven is embodied in the church, what a church. What a church.

Is that the church with which we are familiar? Have we really understood that that is what is meant by the very term church? The embodiment of himself as Lord over all. Second great intimation is the church. The third, of course, as you see in the sixteenth chapter, is the cross.

From that time Jesus began to show unto his disciples how that he must go up to Jerusalem. Son of man be delivered to the hands of wicked men. The cross.

Third great thing in the Christian faith. His wonderful cross. I like that thought, that idea a certain brother has expressed when he has spoken of reigning and ruling by his cross.

No doubt that that's right. What looked humanly so much to the contrary, defeat and failure, loss and despair and weakness and helplessness and all that, has proved in history to be the most potent force in this universe. The soul before his conversion looked upon the cross as the very symbol of ignominy, of shame, something despicable.

They hated it. Afterward he said, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. From the shame to the glory, transfiguration transfigures the cross.

In other words, a vision of the glorified Lord will transfigure our sufferings, will altogether transform our afflictions. We see what that cross meant really in the mind. The fourth thing is the coming of the Lord.

Here it is again in this sixteenth chapter. Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels. Then shall he render unto every man according to his deed.

Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father. That's the fourth great thing in our faith, constitutes us Christians. The coming again of the Lord.

Now, my point is this, that the transfiguration was the crown and confirmation and complement of all those four things. The crown of the person, Peter had said, Thou art the Christ. The mount of transfiguration bore good evidence to that fact as he saw him transfigured.

The Lord had said to him, I will build my church. The mount of transfiguration gave good hope for that church if he, that one, was going to build it. If the Lord was speaking about the cross, the mount of transfiguration would give an altogether new and different interpretation to the cross.

If he has spoken of his coming again in the glory of the Father, the mount of transfiguration explains that, demonstrates that. You see, to see the Lord in that way, glorified, is the confirmation of our whole faith. The establishment of our whole position and the assurance of our final triumph with him.

The Lord give us a new vision of himself, his power, his majesty and his presence.

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