

# Reality Through the Cross

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The cross is the central reality in God's universe, and it is the ultimate test of everything, the measure of reality, and the key to everything.*

**Duration:** 44:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:7, Matthew 13:24-30, Matthew 23:13-15, Luke 16:13, John 3:1-10, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "The Cross"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of reality in the kingdom of God. He explains that simply preaching the word or having knowledge of the Bible is not enough. Jesus desired a seamless connection between truth and life, doctrine and character. The speaker highlights the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares as examples of this principle. He concludes by stating that as we continue to walk with God, our concern for reality should deepen.

---

## Transcript

I have often said to friends, when we get to glory, at last, we shall look at one another and just say, well, we are here. We never or often thought it would not be. We wonder, but at last, here we are.

Now, our being here this evening in this place is a very small representation of that great truth and reality. It's been battle all the way. We were ready and started out early yesterday morning.

Frustration found us at six o'clock, or half past six in the evening, back again in our home after being in airport and other places all day long. When we got away this morning, and just as we were going through to the plane, the loudspeaker called, will Mr. Austin Park please call at the TWA desk to be the representative? And I said, hello, what's this one? Well, we got away, and as our brothers will tell you, we took the wrong turning this evening on our way from Washington and went, I suppose, 20 miles out of our way. And I said, here's another one.

But here we are. And that's how it will be. It has often been many frustrations, many problems, many difficulties along the way, and sometimes, shall we ever get there? That is, to glory.

But we shall. It was early this morning, reading the word before setting out again, and I get this, Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all. And that came, as you see, right in the midst of all this yesterday and today.

And we just had to lay hold of that. He is Lord of all. Now that's by way of introduction, and we spend no more time on personal matters.

And for this little while, you will not expect too much, I'm sure, for my time, my time, as London time, is 20 minutes to one in the morning. Well, the Lord will help us. Now, I do not think that I shall get really into that which is on my heart for ministry this week, just now.

But I think I can move toward it in this way, by reminding you that there is one fear that ought to be characteristic of every true Christian. I know there's much that forbids fear, tells us to fear not. Very much about that, and that's a kind of fear that we must not indulge in.

But there is one fear that ought to characterize every true Christian child of God. And that is the fear of unreality. The fear of having divine truth without divine power.

Of having divine light without divine character. Of having knowledge of things without the formation of Christ in our lives. That is, having a great deal of teaching without it becoming effective in our lives.

That is what I mean by unreality. A vast amount of that teaching, truth, mental knowledge, given to us in a spoken ministry and in book form, and yet no corresponding measure of life, power, and Christ-likeness. The reality, that is the ultimate test of everything that we have or think that we have.

That's the test. The test will never be how much we know of what is in the Bible, how much truth we have received. The test will be ever and always, what does that amount in our case, in a practical way.

Now that is the burden with which I have come here. I don't know whether the devil has been trying to play upon my fear and my reservation. For in a very real sense, I have not wanted to come to Wabana this year.

In another sense, yes. But in a very real sense, I'm afraid. Afraid of more talking, more addresses, more unfolding of biblical content, truth.

I've been doing it, you see, for so many years. Sixty years I've been preaching, and I at this time have to look out and say, what has it amounted to? What does it amount to? I know not all without blessing, hope, usefulness to the Lord, but seeing the mountains of teaching over these years, dare I add to that? Have I the assurance that if I go and do more, it's going to lead somewhere? That's my fear, my question. So I want right at the beginning, I don't know what has been said to you already last night and today, but this is what I want to say as I come amongst you, that we must have this fear this week, a right kind of fear, I believe a divine fear, that we do not fill our notebooks or our minds with more teaching, truth, substance, but that every time as far as there is something that can really affect us or result in something with us, so far as we are concerned, we are going to apply our hearts, that day by day and when the days are past, we are different people.

That's the only justification of our coming here, we are different people. We certainly are not the same in spiritual life at the end as when we came. Now it does not require a very large or deep knowledge of the Lord Jesus, his life, his movement amongst people, his teaching, it does not require profound knowledge to recognize that this was a characteristic of himself.

The one thing that he hated with all the beautiful things that he said, the kind things, the gracious things he said and did, he said some terrible words of wrath, anger came out of his mouth, like fiery sword. Some of

his enunciations are really terrible, really terrible. It was this element about him, it was about his forerunner John the Baptist.

John the Baptist said some pretty terrible things, but you get the literal meaning and statement of what he said. He turned to these people who had come out from Jerusalem, see him, hear him, he said, you generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath that comes? You get the picture? There is a bush fire, it is spreading, and as it spreads the vipers leap out and make for the river to escape the flames. John says that is what some of you people are doing, coming down here to the river where I am baptizing, you are a generation of vipers just seeking to escape the wrath that comes.

That is a pretty terrible thing to say to people, but the Lord Jesus said equally strong things, dehypocrite, dehypocrite. You whited sepulcher and much more like that. Fierce words.

All because his soul was consumed with this passion for reality. One thing he could not tolerate was hypocrisy, falsehood, unreality, pretence, make believe, play acting, no reality. Not even a Nicodemus, great teacher in Israel, so what upholder of the best traditions.

He is not going to escape, he will be told very frankly that it counts for nothing in the kingdom of God, if, this is the effect of the Lord's word, if there is not reality and what Christ meant by reality is the heavenliness of nature. Not even the best nature amongst men, but another by another birth. Well, I need say a little more.

It is perfectly clear that the one thing that Jesus was set upon with all his heart was that there should be no gap whatever between truth as truth, teaching as teaching, doctrine as doctrine, Bible knowledge as Bible knowledge, and life as heavenly character, and Christ likeness. No gap between the two. One may be very good, but if it stops short of this, it counts for nothing after all.

Lord Jesus was so definitely set upon this reality and he is now, and I want you to remember and to note that both the Bible in its teaching and history as it unfolds and is moving now so swiftly toward its consummation, both the scriptures and history and especially the end of this dispensation are marked by this, that as we go on with God, if we are, let me put it this way, if we are going on with God, and as we go on with God, we shall have a deepening, deepening concern about reality. That is, that the very essence of things will become more and more our concern. You see, the parables of the Lord Jesus were on that line.

What about the wheat and the so-called tares? Well, the suggestion of it was, let's pluck up the tares. The Lord said, in so doing, you may destroy the wheat as well. Let a process ensue.

Give it time and sure, sure as can be in time, that process of intensification will reveal without any doubt of possibility of making a mistake, what is what and which is which. And other parables were on the same principle. You see the sower itself, such a simple parable, it seems, but what is it? One sowing, two sowing, three sowing, four sowing, failure, failure.

Next, reality in two degrees, sixty, less or more. Measure of reality, the issue is this, in the end after all the giving of the word, all the broadcasting of the truth, all the preaching of the gospel, in the end, what is the criteria? Not how much has been given, or how much has been in a general way received, but how much of the real thing comes out at last, at last, what you got. Now, of course, I spend much time on the word, showing that, both in the teaching of the Lord himself and later New Testament, but history is bearing this

out, that it was a true law, a true principle.

And who is so blind today amongst Christians as to fail to see this process of intensification going on? It's spreading, it's spreading, it has tested everything in China to the last degree. What is going to be found after all the years of missionary enterprise, expense and cost and what not, what is going to be found in the end? That is the thing that stands eternally. It's spreading all over the world, isn't it? Oh, ask some of these dear Christians in Africa, in Egypt today, in Israel today.

It's coming on, you know, it's coming on here. Sovereignty of God is going to press it over more and more to this issue. After all that I have given to the nations of this world, after all that has come to people from heaven during these centuries, what will there be that is essential reality? Am I wrong? Isn't it obvious? It's patient, that's what's happening.

And even if there are not the outward persecutions in our part of the world, the Western Hemisphere, that there are in the East, my mail, dear friends, brings continually letters from everywhere. People, dear people of God say, I never in my life knew so much pressure as I'm knowing today. Spiritual pressure, spiritual trials.

Sometimes I just do not know where I am, which way to turn or to look. Conflict is so intense. Well, some of you here perhaps know something about that.

It is increasingly difficult to go on in the utter way with God. The enemy is going to stop that if he can, by any means. And so, we here who will be receiving from one another much I trust from the Lord, that must not be the end of it.

We've heard it, we know it, but let us step back and say, but do I? Do I? Now dear friends, I am not standing before you to preach. That's not the idea. I want to say to you, that after these many years of seeking to walk with the Lord and know the Lord, and to serve the Lord, minister to the Lord and to his people, with a very wide and I think deep experience spiritually, I say to you that the year between now and when we were here before has been the most terrible year in my life from a spiritual standpoint.

The conflict, the pressure, the intense determination of the devil that if it is possible, he'll get us out before we reach the end. Does that sound too serious? Heavy? No, I want to say to you that you are bound sooner or later to come up against this issue. Has all that I have heard and received and know become life to me? My very life? A part of my being? Or is it fear? Just pure fear.

That's the thing which must come. And the fear of it being otherwise must be with us. I expect somebody will say to me afterwards, well you have put a heavy load on, you have got heaviness on the whole thing.

No, no, this has got to be a time of fortification, of knowing the Lord in an inward way, of an increase of Christ to go through triumphantly to the end and stand at last. Having stood and risked, stand at last, triumphant on the field. Now that just brings me to the point where I can only indicate what it is that I feel Lord is going to have me say to you this week.

All that I have been saying and the much more that I could say on this matter of reality is focused, in the word of God is focused and concentrated and summed up in one thing. Apart from the person of the Lord Jesus, take that for granted, that after the recognition of the place, the immense place of the Lord Jesus, the next thing in the Bible which is central, which is supreme, which is all governing and which is persistent, is the cross of the Lord Jesus. He is the supreme reality but after himself the predominant

reality of the Bible is the cross.

Yes, no one can truly contemplate the cross of our Lord Jesus without being overwhelmed with the sense of what a real thing was. There is no fiction about that, no imagination about that, no pretense about that. Terribly, terribly real was that cross to him, to his first disciple and the cross is not only a reality in history, the New Testament makes it perfectly clear that the cross is as real in experience for the child of God as ever it was in history.

Today just as real in the spiritual experience and history of the child of God as it was when it was enacted those centuries ago at that spot called Calvary, why it is so real is for us to see in the little time we shall have this week. But I want to draw your attention to this, focus it upon this as the central reality in God's universe, in creation, in human history. The cross, as the Apostle Paul calls it, the cross of our Lord Jesus.

In every book of the New Testament the cross is either explicit or implicit. That is it is either definitely referred to, mentioned, brought clearly into view or it is implied. It is in the very heart of things as you read through your New Testament.

In the Gospels, the four Gospels, they vary in their content. What one writer leaves out another puts in. Find only a little of John in the others.

They all have their own different points of teaching, work of the Lord, but they are on common ground over this one thing. Not one of them fails to head everything up to the cross. They crown all they have said.

John says that what he had written was a mere modicum of what he could have written. He said if everything was to be put down the world wouldn't contain the books. Well, was he exaggerating? Well we've learned through two thousand years the world is full of the books and they are still pouring out whatever it was.

The lesser or the greater measure, not one of them fails to make this perfectly clear, but the cross is the crown. The cross is the great and consummate point of everything which gives meaning to everything else, both the person, the work and the teaching. The cross it is that gives power to everything else.

Yes, they're on common ground there. Whatever they've had to say they all find themselves being led up to that one thing, the end. But in the Gospels it is the historic something enacted in history.

At a certain time, in a certain place, because of certain things took place in history. It had to be like that. When you move over from the Gospels to the book of the Acts you find that out of the history has come a gospel, a preaching.

And those who are found in that book are heroes of the cross. Note the place that they give to the cross and how they hold everything to that center. The day of Pentecost, Peter has come to see now what he didn't see at the time that he denied his Lord, comes to see now.

And now he is telling the people very frankly and very strongly that the cross is the key to everything that's happening, whom ye crucify, God raised. Out of that everything proceeds and the whole book of the Acts is based upon the cross. The heralds of the cross are going forth to the ends of the earth.

You move on to the letters, called the Epistles, you will find as I have said the cross is either explicit or implicit in every one. That is what we are going to see, I trust, as far as we can get. But in every one of

these some particular aspect and application of the cross is brought to life and applied.

It's the cross being applied on this situation, on that situation. Because of this and because of that every letter has in it in some way the law, the principle of the cross to touch a particular need or condition or state and situation. They are the many-sided cross running right through all these letters.

This surely is enough to impress us. There's something here we've got to know and understand more than we do about this, about this, what we call the cross, the message of the cross. I told you last year how tired I am that people write, people speak, they seem to think that I'm a kind of either a crank or an expert on this matter of what they call the message of the cross.

Oh no, the Lord save us from the message of the cross as that. And show us the tremendous, the eternal significance of this central thing in Christianity, not only as basic to becoming a Christian, the cross as a cross where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away. That's good.

Never get away from that blessedness. But dear friends, that's not all that the cross has got to say. It is going to follow us through, follow us through all our years if we are going to move with God.

And at the end, at the end we shall not have got away from the cross. We will need it as much at the end as at any time beginning or subsequently. I think what I'll call to you, American audience, may sound strange but you perhaps know the phrase what I call the Victorian, the Victorian era.

Well, if you don't know about the phrase, you'll find it in your hymn books. The Victorians I think had a more ready apprehension of the place of the cross for the end of the Christian life. They may have been a bit morbid, I think they were a bit.

For so many of those hymns, you know, you take up Moody and Tanky's hymn book, you know, how many hymns you will find closing with the last gasp of breath when I pass, you know. Sounds a bit morbid, doesn't it? I did hear, I think it was Miss Carmichael of Donovo convey anything to you? I think it was she who said she was a child and taken to church and so weary with the church service and not least with the preacher that she opened her hymn book and made a study of all the people were going to say when they died. A collection of all their last words in the hymn, when the last breath comes.

Well, that may be a bit morbid, depressing. We don't sing those hymns so much today, do sing some of them. But I think those people had a more ready apprehension of the place of the deliverance, the victory, the triumph of the cross at the end.

And perhaps it's common. We put so much emphasis upon the beginning of the Christian life and the place of the cross there. Oh, give lift.

Thank God. Thank God for it. Never lose our appreciation of that.

But we are going to need all that mighty work of the cross more and more as we go on with God. And at the end, we are going to need to know the reality of what Christ has done by his cross and what that cross stands for, for us, for time and our eternal destiny. Well, that's my introduction.

But I do feel that I want, I want right at this point to come in on this. Dear friends, get adjusted in mind and heart over this week if you've not already done so. You may have already had the appeal, I don't know.

But get adjusted to this. I am not here just to get my notebook full of what the preachers are saying, either to have it myself or to use it for some other people. I'm not here to accumulate fresh thoughts of truth.

I am here to come under the hand of God that he may effect in me what yet remains to be effected and can be at this time. Would you adjust to this? Say to the Lord, at the close of this day and every day and morning, Lord now, not just teaching today, but power, power, effecting something. If it's going to be the word like a sharp two-edged sword piercing to dividing asunder, all right Lord, better that than that I should be whole in unreality.

Would you do that? Lord help me. I trust that although what I have said may seem to make the cross rather terrible, rather dreadful, I trust we shall see the other side and be really with the apostle. God forbid that I should glory, glory save in the cross of our Lord.

May the glory of the cross come to us as well as it's challenge in a new way.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0070.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/reality-through-the-cross/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**