

Seeing Christ by Revelation (Matthew 16:13-17)

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing Christ by revelation, not just physical sight, and how this experience transforms believers into witnesses and representatives of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 16:13, Luke 24:21, John 14:9, Acts 2:1, Acts 9:3

Topics: "Christology", "Holy Spirit"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches about the mystery of Christ, emphasizing how Jesus is the perfect representation of God, veiled in human form, and how true understanding of His identity comes through divine revelation. The Resurrection and Pentecost marked a turning point in truly 'seeing' Christ, not just physically, but understanding His true nature and significance. The Church was birthed through the revelation of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, empowering believers to witness and represent Him effectively in the world.

Transcript

He (the Lord Jesus) is the sum of all Divine thoughts, and the Incarnation is the supreme expression of this one thought of God, to be truly, adequately, fully, perfectly represented; so that it was possible for the Lord Jesus to say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). There is the mystery of Christ.

What is the mystery of Christ? The mystery of Christ is God veiled in this Representative. Here is God in representation, but how many saw Him? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." But I think that word "seen" means something very much more than just looking upon Him as a man. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And He said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father Who is in heaven" (Matt 16:13-17). That is what it means to see; it is by revelation. It is that which is the mystery. The fact is there, the true representation or representative of God in person, yet unrecognized, unseen.

Now, the Resurrection and Pentecost seem to me to have meant just this one thing, the seeing of Christ. You remember when He was considered dead and buried, even disciples were in black despair and eclipse of faith and hope, and some went on the way to Emmaus very sad indeed; and their words were, "We hoped that it was He Who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). But before the end of that episode

was reached, we are told that He opened their understanding that they might know the Scriptures. Having taken up the Scriptures right from the beginning and spoken to them things concerning Himself, He opened their understanding, and it was just that that was marking His appearances during the forty days after His resurrection. They were in some altogether new way coming to see Him. Oh no, not now physically merely, that He was alive, that He had a body; it was not merely this that was being borne in upon them very powerfully. They were seeing Him - Who He was; the mystery of His Person was breaking down. They were seeing Him, and the day of Pentecost seemed to bring that through to full birth. The forty days were moving up to that day, and then on that day by the coming of the Holy Spirit the thing was consummated, and in the full blaze of Who He was the Church was born. It seems to me that the Church was born - yes, by the Holy Spirit, but by the Holy Spirit's breaking open to men who Jesus was after all. It seems to me that is how every one came into the Church. They saw by an operation of the Holy Spirit Who Jesus was. That is how Paul came in on the Damascus road; he saw who Jesus of Nazareth was. On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up with the Eleven, as under the power of the Holy Spirit they opened their mouths, and the spontaneous declaration was all about Who Jesus was, and they are men in a new revelation.

Oh, I know from our fundamentalist standpoint, this is nothing very much. I do not suppose there is one here who does not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. You all believe that as a bit of your faith; but what is the effect of it? What was the effect of that at the beginning? The witnessing, the representation, is not just attesting historical facts, nor doctrinal facts. When they went out as witnesses unto Him, it wasn't just to say things which, while they were true, were only truths. They went out in the power of having seen, having had their eyes opened to the Lord Jesus. It was as though they had been men moving in the shadows during those years, groping, sometimes feeling an assurance, a certain amount of certainty, but then questionings, uncertainties coming in, shadows all the time. But at last the heavens were rent, the blaze broke through, and they saw. It was in the light of that they were constituted witnesses, representatives. It was in the light of that the Church was born. It was in the light of that the Church went on its way so effectively. The fact was that, wherever they came, it was the impact of God in Christ by their presence. Their presence stirred hell, because hell felt anew - God is here!

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