

# 'That They May Be in Us'

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of abiding in God, living in His will, and avoiding division and separation, as exemplified by Jesus' life and experience.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 16:22-23, Matthew 27:46, John 17:21, John 18:11

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "Abiding in God"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the profound connection between believers and God, as illustrated in Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17:21. He reflects on Jesus' life, showing how He consistently sought the Father's will, even in moments of great need and temptation. The sermon highlights the significance of Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross, which symbolizes the separation caused by sin and the restoration of relationship through His resurrection. Sparks urges believers to live not just alongside God but fully within Him, guided by the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, he calls for a life that seeks God's desires above all else, emphasizing the importance of abiding in God.

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## Transcript

Will you please open your Bible to the New Testament. Firstly, in the Gospel by John, chapter seventeen and verse twenty-one. You know that this chapter contains the prayer of the Lord Jesus just before going to the Cross. In that prayer we have those words of verse twenty-one, Jesus says to His Father, "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (ASV).

I want you to particularly notice how the Lord put this matter in the last clause that is so important, "That they also may be in Us." Now I want you to turn to the Gospel by Matthew, in chapter twenty-seven, at verse forty-six. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is to say, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" These are practically the last words of our Lord on the Cross. All that remained for Him to do was to commit His Spirit to His Father. Really His last words were, "My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" This is the last phase of the death of Jesus Christ and it marks a very great change in His spiritual life and experience. Jesus had lived all His life in the Father. He said to His disciples, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father?" His whole life in everything was lived in the Father. We have many instances of how He refused to move out from the Father.

In the little town of Cana in Galilee, you will remember that He performed His first miracle. It is the miracle of turning the water into wine at the marriage feast. Some way through the feast all the wine that had been

provided came to an end. Thus wine was the very important thing in the feast, and there was a serious situation. The mother of Jesus was sitting beside Him at the table and she just turned to Him and she said, "They have no wine!" She, of course, believed that He could do something about it and she presented this situation to her Son. In effect, she said, "You will have to do something about it. This whole marriage feast is going to break down. Everybody is going to be in trouble." Now really He must do something about it.

You notice what the Lord Jesus said. He turned to His mother and He said, "Woman, what do I have to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." There are two things there, a seeming necessity is not the grounds on which Jesus works. Just because it is something that seems to be needy, He does not do that. He is waiting for something. He says, "My hour is not yet come. I cannot do this now. I understand how serious the situation is, but I cannot do it now. I may have perfect sympathy for these people, but I just cannot do anything!"

Why could He not do anything at the moment? He was abiding in the Father, He was not living in the circumstances. In His Spirit He was saying, "Father, do You want this done? These people are in difficulty; My dear mother says I ought to do something. But Father, I cannot do anything unless You tell Me to." He was living in the Father. And as He waited for the Father, it seems that the Father says, "Yes, all right, go on." And then He said, "Fill the waterpots with water." That is the first illustration of how Jesus lived in the Father.

There was another time when there was a feast in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples were not in Jerusalem at the time. His brothers after the flesh were with Him. You know it is said, that they did not believe on Him. They said to Him, "You go up to the feast, we are going up, you see everybody goes up to this feast. It is a thing that everybody does. If You do not go up to the feast, people will not understand You, they will criticize You, You will lose influence with them. If You want to be popular, You had better do what everybody else is doing. We are going up to the feast." And now they said to Jesus, "You go up to the feast."

What did Jesus do? Did He move in a way that would make Him popular? Did He do things just because everybody else is doing them? Did He do it because it is the custom to do that? No, He turned to His brothers after the flesh and He said, "You go up to the feast; I go not up to the feast." And then His brothers went. And after they had gone, Jesus went to the feast.

Now this is a very strange way to go on. Did He not want to be in the company of His brothers? So He told a kind of untruth? "I do not go up, you go up." Did He play a trick on them? Why did He say that? He was abiding in the Father. He was waiting for the Father's word to go up. He will never do anything because it was the popular thing. He would never do it because all the religious people were doing it. He did not do it because it was the custom to do it. He did not do it because He wanted to stand well with the people. The one thing that governs His life was, "Did the Father want Him to do that?" So after His brothers were gone up, He said, "Father, do You want Me to go up?" And evidently the Father said, "Yes, go up." Then went Jesus up. Not before that. He would never do anything until the Father said so.

There was a time when Jesus spoke to His disciples about His coming death at Jerusalem. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, and said, "This shall never come to Thee." The Lord Jesus turned to Peter, and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of man" (Matt. 16:22,23). If My Father says, I am to go up to Jerusalem and be crucified, that is the last word. I will never do anything to save Myself.

Later on, near the end, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea." Now it was in Judea that they were going to arrest Him and crucify Him. Thomas said, 'No, let us not go to Judea, Lord, in Judea the other day they were going to stone You, will You go back there?' Jesus said, 'What My Father says, I must do. I know that it is going to mean the Cross, but I must abide in My Father.'

Satan was always trying to separate Jesus from His Father, trying to get Him to act without His Father. Those three temptations in the wilderness were just a determination to try and get in between Jesus and His Father. All through His life, Satan was trying to separate Jesus from His Father. When He was hanging on the Cross, in that terrible suffering, Satan came along in some evil men and said, "Come down from the Cross, and we will believe." Now Jesus could have come down. He had said a little while before, that "if I were to ask My Father, He would send Me twelve legions of angels."

Well, you will remember what one angel could do. One angel went out in the Old Testament and killed a whole army of men. If one angel could do that, what could twelve legions of angels do. Jesus had only to ask His Father for the legions of angels, and they would have brought Him down from the Cross. No, He let the angels stay where they were. He had said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). Right to the end, Satan tried to get in between Him and His Father, but Jesus knew the very great importance of abiding in God.

And now, here at the end the situation has changed. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Jesus is out of God. Jesus is separated from God. There is a great distance between Him and God. That had never happened before. Not for one moment in His life had He had such an experience. God is now far away. There is a great divide between the Father and the Son. Not only is Jesus separated from the Father, He is knowing of the terrible desolation that that means. There is a terrible, terrible thing bound up in that word, "forsaken," forsaken by God. There is nothing more terrible than that. It is the most awful desolation of soul. Not only distance and desolation, but darkness.

That word "why" is a word which means, 'I do not understand. I am altogether in the dark. This is something that I cannot understand.' "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then, further, He was in absolute weakness. The Apostle Paul says, "He was crucified through weakness." It was spiritual weakness as well as physical weakness. When they mocked Him, and said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." There was a lot of truth in that. "No," He could not save Himself. He had not the power to save Himself. He was in complete weakness, without any strength for saving Himself.

Perhaps the worst feature of all is the sense of God's anger. 'God is no more pleased with Me. God is angry. All this says that God is angry. I am suffering the wrath of God.' Can you imagine what that meant to this One Who had lived all His life in the Father? Well, why was all this happening?

You know that one of the titles of Jesus is the last Adam. We have got to go right back to the first Adam to explain all of this. All this that Jesus was experiencing on the Cross was what the first Adam had brought upon the human race. It began in heaven; Satan rebelled against God. Before he rebelled against God, he lived in God. When he rebelled, he was cast out of God. Not only from the presence of God, but from his life in God. From that moment, Satan was outside of God, there came about a great distance between God and Satan. Satan became the prince of darkness. He was thrown out into the darkness, and he went out under the wrath of God.

Now Satan came to Adam, at that time Adam had his life in God; he was dwelling in God. He lived in God. He had everything in God. And then, through Satan's temptation, Adam did exactly the same thing that

Satan had done. He disobeyed God. He rebelled against God. You notice what happened, he was separated, thrust out from God. He was separated from God. He no longer had his life in God. He went out into desolation. The earth was cursed because of him. All the bad things and evil things began to grow in the earth. What had once been a beautiful garden has now become a wilderness. Adam went out into the darkness.

After that, Adam did not understand God. He had not the knowledge of God; and then he was in perfect weakness, entirely incapable of saving himself. He was under the wrath of God, and as the father of the human race, he brought the whole race into that position. Every member of Adam's race is in that position by nature. There is no member of the human race who naturally knows what it is to live in God. Everyone knows that they are far away from God, and God is far away from them. And everybody who truly knows that condition, knows that they are in desolation.

The cry of the human heart is, 'Oh that I knew where to find God! I am out here away from God. I am as though I were in the wilderness. I am in the dark. I do not understand God at all. All these problems of life, I have no explanations for them. Why is this and why is that? I am in the dark about it all. And I have such a feeling that God is against me.' That is what the human race is because of Adam's rebellion. Man and the world are out of God.

Now we come to the real meaning of the Cross. Jesus as the last Adam takes the place of the first Adam. He takes on Himself all the conditions that Adam brought on the race. He goes out from the presence of God. He goes out from the place of life, out of the place of the Light into the dark. The place where Adam was and where we are. All that is gathered into this word, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The answer is this: in order to open the way back into God.

Dear friends, you and I must recognize that we are in that position by nature. By nature we have no life in God. We are separated from God. We have no ability to save ourselves. We have no power to understand Divine things, and we are children of wrath, but the Lord Jesus took all that on Himself.

And now we turn from chapter twenty-seven, to chapter twenty-eight, of the Gospel by Matthew. Chapter twenty-eight is the resurrection. Chapter twenty-seven is a closed chapter; it is a closed history. In resurrection there is a return into God. Everything in the resurrection of Jesus, says, He is back in the Father. That awful story is finished. He is no longer separated from His Father. He is back in the bosom of the Father. And if in the Cross, He represented you and me and all the race, then in resurrection, He represents us all who are believers in Him. It is a new position, but what I want to emphasize is this one little word. It is not only that He has brought us near to God; it is not only that He has joined us with God in an outer way. The great thing is He has brought us into God. Our position now is supposed to be in God. That is why we read that little fragment from John seventeen, "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (ASV).

You see, our life as the Lord's born again children is supposed to be a life in God, not just walking alongside of God, but living in God. God is our sphere of life. All that is of God is the realm in which we live. I want to get this over, so be very patient with me, because there is a lot that is hanging upon this. I suppose there is a baptistry here somewhere. When you were baptized, you did not come along and just sit down by the water, perhaps get as near to the water as you could, or perhaps just put your hand in the water. You did not say, I have come to the water of baptism; you got into the water. When you were baptized, the water was all around you, and over you. A Christian life is not just coming to live alongside of

God; a Christian is called to live right in God.

Now, the next thing is that the Holy Spirit is given unto them. Why was the Holy Spirit given? Why have you got the Holy Spirit? Why is He in us? Just to teach us what it means to live in God. That is, to make us understand what is in God, and what is not in God. If the Holy Spirit is in us, and if we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and we speak in a certain way that is not right, the Holy Spirit will say, "That is not the Lord speaking, that is you." If we behave ourselves in a certain way that is not right, the Holy Spirit will say, "That is not the Father, that is you. That is outside the Father." So, the Holy Spirit has come to teach us and make us know what is in God, and what is not in God.

If we live in ourselves, we shall not live in God. Jesus says, "Abide in Me, as I abide in the Father." You abide in Me, by that He means you get everything from Me, as I get everything from the Father.

Now did you notice what the great work of the devil is? It is first of all, to come between God and man. Everything in our life, which is not of God, is of the devil. The great work of the devil, first in heaven, then on earth, was to bring division. Every division, which touches the things of God, is of the devil. It is not God. No division amongst the Lord's people is of God, that is the work of the devil. And it is because those concerned have been living in some other place than in God. Perhaps, they have been living in themselves and what they want, and what they think. Or, they may have been touching the world, there is nothing like the world to divide the Lord's people. Or, it may be they have been living in someone else, you know it is possible for us to live in a man. Be careful about living in a man. If you do that, that man is going to let you down. There will be division sooner or later. Do not make any man, no matter how wonderful he is, how great a preacher or a teacher he is, do not make him your life. If you do, you may find yourself out of the Lord. The result is division. That is always what the enemy is after. So abide in God, do what the Lord Jesus always did. 'Father, do you want this? Father, is this what You desire? Father, is this Your way? There are strong arguments that I should do this and that I should do that. At the other side of it, it looks as though that is the thing I ought to do, but, Father, that is not good enough. By nature I am a child of darkness. Father, do you want this, and do you want this now?' We must get it from the Lord, and like the Lord Jesus, we may have to wait for the Lord to speak.

Now, He had gone to the Cross, in order to destroy all that which has come between God and us. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a great return movement into God. You will have to read your New Testament in the light of this. Just take up the Book of Acts, see how it works there. Peter, you know had some difficulties. He thought it was wrong to go and have a meal with Gentiles, he called them unclean things. He had a difficulty about it. He said, "Not so, Lord, not in that way. I have never done anything like that before!" Peter was then abiding in his religious tradition. The Holy Spirit says, "Look here, Peter, I know you are religious, but do you want tradition or God?" Peter came to see the point and to abide in God. He had to do what he never had done before. That opens up a lot, does it not?

I have tried to lay the most important law of spiritual life. I just beseech you, seek to have your life in God, not in things, not in people, not in places, not in circumstances, not in arguments, not in human intelligence, but in God. God's thoughts are different from ours. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). We have been brought by resurrection into a return INTO God.

May we learn all that this means, and it is going to be a life-long education. May the Lord help us.

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