

The Cross and Eternal Glory - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the understanding of what we have come into when we have come into Christ, and what it is we are really in as believers, highlighting the mystery of God's will and the rift in the glory.

Duration: 36:06

Scripture: Genesis 1:1

Topics: "Eternal Glory"

Description

The video is a sermon on the preaching of the word of God and the importance of listening to God's message in the Bible. The speaker emphasizes the need to understand the Bible as a whole and to ask what God's message is to each individual. The key phrase of the sermon is that the whole creation waits for believers in Christ to come to glory. The speaker acknowledges the diverse spiritual experiences of the audience and aims to include everyone in the message.

Transcript

Before we come to our message this evening, I want to say one or two preliminary things. I am quite alive to the fact that even in a small company like this, a very wide range of spiritual experience and history is covered. On the one hand, there are quite a number who only recently have come to the Lord, and who have not, as yet, a very full knowledge of the Lord's themes, or perhaps even of the Bible itself.

And from that early point right onward, at various, we might almost say, numerous stages of the Christian life, this company is found to a fairly mature and rich knowledge of the things of God. That all constitutes, of course, some difficulty for a speaker, and necessity of trusting the Lord very really, shall be left out. But let me just say this word or two of a general character to indicate exactly what it is we have as our object at this time.

I think I could cover it all by putting it this way. It is an understanding of what we have come into when we have come into Christ, or when we have become Christians. What we have come into.

And for those who are well in, what it is we are really in. We shall never come to the point where we do not need to have that kept before us. Exactly what it is we are in.

Now the beginners may have very little knowledge of what they have come into, but I think some people who are very far on sometimes don't know exactly what they are in. What it is all about. And it will always

be helpful if we can have it shown to us, at any point, what we are in.

Now as to our method, we want, on the one hand, to be helpful in the matter of knowing the Bible. It is the most important thing that we know the Bible. We shall never know it fully, however long we live, but to have a knowledge of it and an ever-growing knowledge of it is the most important thing for Christians.

And so we do proceed along this line with the idea of helping everyone to know what is in the Bible and what it is all about. A very big undertaking. On the other hand, it is not just to know the Bible, which we all need to know better.

It is that we shall get the message for our own lives. The Bible shall speak to us, personally, in a spiritual way that it reaches further down than our heads and really gets into our lives, interpreting God's ways with us, God's dealings with us, with a view to bringing us where God wants us to be. But then you will not be able to grasp all that is set forward.

I am quite sure that already you feel helpless in the presence of what is in front of you, and I also feel helpless about it. But what we shall aim at, mainly, and shall be satisfied with, very largely, is if we get an overall impression, an overall impression of what God is after. Not necessarily being able to understand or explain everything, but getting an impression.

If we can only go away from these gatherings really impressed with what God is after. That will justify our being here. Now having said that, just a word about what is in front of you.

It is possible that you will not even be able to read it in every point from where you are. Let me say this, that it is not my thought or intention to work through that outline point by point, detail by detail. It is put there as something comprehensive in which we shall work to get its message.

Now that outline or diagram covers the whole Bible. Indeed, it goes outside of the Bible before and after. But it does cover the whole ground of what is actually in the Bible and intimated by the Bible.

And you will see at once that the Bible is broken up or divided into quite clearly defined sections. I am saying all this for people who are at the beginning of Bible knowledge. Don't be appalled.

This is to help you and just put into your hand a key. You will be able to see now that is not just a book which is a mass of details, all sorts of things. I don't know what it all means.

There are very clearly defined lines in the whole Bible. It has quite distinct sections and it moves from one section to another carrying in every section one message. So, it is to help you to get some general grasp of the Bible and to put a key into your hand which will open the Bible if you will use it and then to really let the Lord speak to your heart through it.

I am more concerned that as you take up your Bible in any part or as a whole, you listen. You listen to God speaking by his word and always asking the question, what does that say to me? Not only what does that say, but what does that say to me? What is God's message to me in this part and in that part? Well, that is enough, I think, by way of introduction. Now, as we said this afternoon, the key phrase which stands over these meditations, and let me put in a parenthesis here, I am not taking it for granted that we are going to occupy the whole conference with this.

I don't think we are. So far as I am concerned, I don't expect that. But for the time being, and perhaps at times, we shall be moving in this realm.

The key phrase for this aspect of the conference, however, is in the first letter of Peter, chapter 5 and verse 10. The God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion forever and ever.

The cross, the cross, and the eternal glory. We have already seen today that this word and theme, glory, is something which governs the whole of history from God's standpoint. It governs the whole Bible and is the object which God has from eternity past had in view for his creation and which he is going to realize ultimately.

It is glory. But it is glory in Christ Jesus, unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, so that Christ Jesus is the sphere of God's eternal glory. That is, the eternal glory unto which you and I and all believers are called by his grace is bound up with and inseparable from Christ Jesus.

There is going to be no glory that is not in Christ Jesus. All the glory is going to be in him. And there is no hope of glory apart from him.

It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And there is no prospect of glory apart from Christ. So that we are by the word introduced in the very first place to Christ in pre-creation glory.

And you know the passage or the passages which indicate that. There are of course quite a number of them which we will not turn to. But here are these two in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel, recording that incomparable prayer of our Lord.

John 17, verse 5. And thou, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. The glory which I had with thee before the world was. Verse 24.

Father, those whom thou hast given me, I will that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. For thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. Christ in pre-creation glory.

We can't describe it. We don't know anything more about it than these statements, suggestions, hints, allusions. But sufficient that the word of God tells us quite explicitly and definitely that Christ was there before the world was, with the Father, in glory, or sharing the divine glory.

A glorious being before the world was. Timeless glory. The eternal glory.

That's the first statement. I say we, it's no use trying to dwell upon it, stay with it. We are told very little, more than the fact.

But that's where we begin. But there is a parallel truth revealed, which is a very wonderful one. And it goes back apparently to exactly the same period, if we may talk of eternity as a period.

And that is this next one, what we have called, or what the word of God here calls, the mystery of his will. It's in the letter to the Ephesians, chapter one, having made known unto us the mystery of his will. What is the mystery of his will? Verse twelve completes the statement, to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory.

And get two things. Christ in eternal glory, before the foundation of the world. In that same timeless time, God deciding to have a people willing, willing that he shall have a people.

I do not mean being willing, but willing it. You like determining it. To have an elect people corresponding to the glory of Christ.

That is called the mystery of his will. And you know that that word mystery does not mean what we commonly in our everyday language mean by it. When we speak of a thing being a mystery, well we mean something altogether remote from our comprehension or understanding.

Something that is very hidden and secret and involved. But in the Bible, in the New Testament, the word does not mean that. It means a secret which was at one time a secret, but which has now become divulged, revealed.

Something made known. It was something once in the heart of God, but now it has come out from the heart of God. It was a mystery, that is, it was a secret, but now it is out.

It is a revealed secret. That is how the word is used here. And the revealed secret of his will, that we should be unto the praise of his glory.

Corresponding to what was true of Christ so far as his being a partaker of heavenly glory was concerned, shall be true of this elect people. And this word glory, if you will look, has a large place in this letter to the Ephesians. We are not going to turn to each passage I mention it.

You just make a note of it and see the place that glory has in this very short letter of Paul's. Eight times the word glory is used in this small letter, so far as extent is concerned. And then one wonderful usage of the word in a different form about the church, that he should present the church to himself a glorious church.

Glory, glorious. And you know that the letter all relates to and has to deal with this elect people called the church. That's the second part of the statement which we are not going to stay with any further.

But we get those two aspects in the before times eternal, before the foundation of the world personally. Christ in the glory, glorious. And then God's determining, willing that there shall be a people corresponding to Christ in that glory.

That was all true before this word was. And all settled. There and then.

Then we go and take up that word will, the mystery of his will. We are putting that word will in capitals and in quotes. The will is now moving out into creative action.

All we need to say about it is when we take up our Bibles and begin the history of things in creation. All we need to say is this, what's the point in it all? What's the point in it all? What's the meaning behind it all? What's it really all about? It's not just a statement of certain things. In the beginning God created the heavens, the earth, and then proceeded with everything else.

All very interesting, very wonderful. But what's it all about? It's the will in action. What that will means.

What? To have this something that corresponds to the eternal glory. So that God proceeded with every detail with one object that it should all answer to. All into line with the glory of Christ before the foundation of the world.

The very universe exists by the power of God as governed by this will. The mystery of his will. The secret of his will.

That we are whole unto his eternal glory. If you like, with all the wrestling and juggling that has been done with that word eternal, I do believe that it means something more than age. And for me, if God is eternal, and Christ is eternal, and life is eternal, that doesn't belong just to an age.

So that glory is not just of an age. It is timeless. The glory is as timeless as God.

As Christ. And therefore as timeless as the will of God. We are brought into being according to the will that we should be eventually glorified together with him.

Next, the rift in the glory. If you want to follow what I have said, you can do so. Especially on that last matter about creation and glory.

There is much scripture to point to it. Would you like to have just one well-known passage? But here it is. Here is a light thrown very clearly upon that very matter of the creative work according to the will.

It is in the well-known 8th chapter of the letter to the Romans. Verses 20-22. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Got it? For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Well, it was brought into being for glory. The rift came, of which we are going to speak in a moment.

And because of the rift in the glory, it was subjected to vanity. Put under the reign of vanity. Vanity simply meaning inability to realize its destiny.

Put under the reign of vanity. Until God should get what he is after in a people called the children of God. The sons of God.

And when he gets that, when he has got the people for which the creation was made. Not the other way around. That way.

The creation was made for the people. When he has got the people for the glory, then the creation shall be delivered from its bondage and come into the glory of the people. So the whole creation is bound up with this purpose concerning a people.

Does it sound a little too much to say that you and I, such ordinary people as we are, such poor creatures as we are in ourselves. Yes, we might well apologize for our very existence, we are such poor stuff. Nevertheless, in Christ the whole creation waits for us.

That's what is said here. The whole creation waits for us. I don't mean just for us here.

Be careful how you broadcast that, will you? But for us and for such as we in Christ, the whole creation waits until we come to glory. And waits for its glory. Until then.

But it's coming to glory, this scripture says, when we come to glory. Tremendous thing we've come into. Do you ever think of the Christian life being like that? When you walked out of the Wembley Stadium, did you think that's what you were walking out into? When you received Christ as your Saviour and Lord, is

that what you saw? No, of course not.

None of us did. We're all only learning about this, but I'm trying to tell you we have come into something tremendous. In Christ we have been called unto His eternal glory for which the whole creation waits.

And when we come to that glory, the creation will leap out of its bondage, out of its corruption, for corruption is the opposite of glory, into glory. Incorruptible glory. What a tremendous thing we've come into.

What a great thing it is to be a Christian. The rift, the shadow, the dark chapter, we know the rift. In two aspects, we are taught by the scripture that this rift in the glory began in heaven.

We're told of one who had a very exalted place and a very glorious place in heaven. He may have been second to Christ for all we know. He may have been partaking of, sharing in the glory of Christ that he has described in very, very glowing and glorious terms.

Lucifer, son of the morning. But somehow, here again, something that is not a disclosed mystery, it remains a mystery how in such a realm evil could enter into the heart of a created being. But somehow it seems he came to this point where he was not content to receive glory from another second hand.

He must have the place of that other and be the glory himself. Have it as his own, independently, separately, and not derived glory. Not derived glory.

He aspired to have the place at God's side in equality with God. We need not dwell upon that, it's so well known, unless for you who do not know the scriptures. There it is, this is what they tell us about the beginning of this rift.

The result, he was cast out of the glory. Cast out of the glory. O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou fallen? I saw, said Jesus, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Cast out. But not before he had influenced a large number of angelic beings. Drawn them into his conspiracy.

Into his net. Inoculated them with his own unlawful ambition. And so we are told in one scripture, the angels which kept not their first estate are reserved in chains unto everlasting fire.

It's a hint, a terrible hint, of this rift in the glory. We mention it and leave it. But it was not the end.

The other aspect of the rift as we know from the scriptures. How not content with drawing angelic beings, he determined to draw God's creation of humanity away on the seam line. And so we have the seam in the garland.

The temptation, the victory, the surrender of man, and the rift in the glory. God had pronounced upon his creation, it is very good. It corresponded to God's mind, it must have been very glorious.

We have hints of death, hints of it in creation. But there is nothing in the present creation that really corresponds to what it must have been like before any sin blighted it. Or death had power over it.

The whole thing is now captured by this enemy of God. And he with his legions, his legions. The apostle Paul in this letter to the Ephesians tells us that they are innumerable.

Countless, he says, hosts of wicked spirits. How great must have been the end tale of Satan's action in heaven. Now he sets out upon this great campaign in human history to draw away from God.

Man yields and the glory is broken. The glory of the creation and the glory of man such as it was then. All we do is to state what the Bible tells us as facts.

We note some of the elements of that rift. That is necessary because of what we are getting after. We are getting at, we can't understand all this meaning of Christ and the cross and redemption and new creation and all these things until we get to understand exactly the nature of that rift from the inside.

Well, first of all, it was not only an act. It was a spirit. A spirit.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1056.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-cross-and-eternal-glory-part-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