

# The Cross and the Dynamic of Victory

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the dynamic of victory as presented in the book of Philippians, emphasizing the importance of letting go and surrendering to God's will.*

**Duration:** 46:51

**Scripture:** Job 1:21, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:18, Philippians 1:29, Philippians 2:5-8, Philippians 4:13, James 1:2-4

**Topics:** "The Cross"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the theme of triumph in the history of the church in Philippi. He highlights how the church faced adversity and suffering but emerged victorious. The speaker emphasizes the importance of applying the principle of surrendering to God and being willing to suffer for His sake. He uses the example of a jealous wife who learns to let go and surrender her desires to God. The speaker also references the apostle Paul and how he was able to count all things as loss for the sake of Christ. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's sovereignty and to be willing to surrender and suffer for His glory.

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## Transcript

Now, Lord, we believe that thou dost not leave thy work unfinished, and if there is something yet to be added by thee, we ask thee that it may be in just as much light as at any time during these days. We pray that whatever the length of the message may be, it may all be to our real spiritual good and help. It may not be in a spiritual sense of tailing off and of fading out, of dropping away.

Though many have gone, we do ask thee to keep the level high, and the river of God full of water, and we the trees of God full of sap. So help us in our need this evening, for thy name's sake. Amen.

Well then, we come to the last of this present course of meditations on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, as in some of the letters of the Apostle Paul. And this evening, of course, in the sequence, we reach the letter to the Philippians, and the particular place, meaning, application of the cross as we have it in this letter. And to give it a name or a title or a heading, in this letter we have what I believe is quite true, the cross and the dynamic of victory.

Once more, the phrase, the cross, may not be found here, but reference to it is quite definite. Perhaps the key to the letter might be the words to these Philippians, to you it has been given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his sake. That is an undoubted reference to the place of the

cross.

Or later, the very familiar words, Paul's cry that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable to his death. These and one or two other places imply very clearly, in a very short letter comparatively, that the cross has a very real, a very real place in this letter. You want the references, without our punning and reading them, they are chapter 1, verse 29, chapter 2, verses 5 to 8, chapter 3, verses 3 to 10, and verse 18.

These all bring us to the cross. Now no one who knows this little letter, this little big letter, or this big little letter, will have any doubt that this is a letter of triumph. It is undoubtedly and unmistakably a triumphant letter, right from beginning to end.

The apostle refers to the beginning of things in his relationship with these Philippians, and he refers to the suffering at the beginning. And you remember the story of his coming at length into Europe, Philippi, and what he met almost immediately on arrival, that demon possessed woman, temple woman, and I have often stopped with that, and I stop with it just for a moment on the way, and ask you a question. Why should the devil preach the gospel? This demon possessed, temple woman, cried out before all the people, these men are the servants of the most high God who show unto us the way of salvation.

You couldn't have the gospel preached better than that, could you? Why should demons do that? Oh, the depths. And why should the apostle preach it outright by casting the devil out of her? Well, I leave the question for you to answer. As you know, sometimes Satan sponsors the things of God in order to discredit them.

And there is a lot in that. Well, that, by the way, the result of that incident, as you know, was Paul and Silas crashed and thrown into the inner prison, with their feet made fast, and bleeding, bruised, but not distant selfies, triumphant singing at midnight, and singing to considerable consequence. I like to think that Paul had a voice, that he could sing.

Amongst all the other things that he had, he could sing. I covet that. There was a time when I could sing.

As a boy, I was taken from place to place to sing, before my voice gave out. And this is just a little possible reminiscence, by the way, and it has a lesson in it, I think. And then my voice broke.

And I wanted very much that when my voice came back, my man's voice, it would be a bass voice, a good bass voice. And when it came back, it was a tenor. I made on the masculine last.

And I, foolishly, the tenors will forgive me, in those days I thought tenor voice, well, that's feminine. It's more like a woman's voice. Bass voice.

And here I had a tenor. What did I do? Try to make it into a bass tenor. And spoil the whole thing and couldn't sing bass or tenor.

Well, you can draw a lesson from that, if you like. Very often, interfere with the sovereignty of God and spoil everything. Well, Paul could sing.

And sing to some effect. And see you at midnight. Now, our point is that this is triumph.

Triumph right at the beginning of the history of the church in Philippi. And out from that first adversity and suffering and affliction and victory came that church. And that church was very quickly precipitated into the

same kind of antagonism and suffering.

And that persisted through the years until in this last imprisonment, the apostle said to them, in the present tense, it is given to you. Now, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake. And there's more than that in the letter about his suffering.

Because he speaks of now his present imprisonment. Saying that in Rome imprisoned, in the last imprisonment probably, the word has gone through all the Roman gods. The Roman praetorians, through all the Roman gods.

And since in Caesar's household are evidently the slaves in the household of Caesar, the servants were getting converted while this man was suffering in his final imprisonment. Well, for him and for them, it's a letter of triumph, isn't it? Wonderful triumph. And we want to find out what is the secret of this victory.

The dynamic of victory. It is finally declared as to the Lord Jesus, you know, dues into what is in our mechanical arrangement, chapter 2. Lord Jesus has gone down to the death. Obedient unto death.

Yea, the death of the cross. For God has highly exalted him. Given him the name which is about a great name.

Victory. Victory, Paul. Victory, Philippians.

Victory, Christ. That is what is here. But what we are concerned with in this brief space of time is the way of victory and it's a very unnatural way of victory.

A very unnatural. I don't know what you would even remotely, mentally figure, conjure up as a picture. Our victory and the way to victory.

Of course, victory itself implies warfare and conflict. Yes. But in this letter, it's something more than that.

It's something more than that. This victory is not just objective, whether it be the Philippian jail or the Roman prison or the persecutions, one without. The victory is here subjective, inward.

And it's a strange way of victory, you know. Quite unnatural. And it is in the name supremely and pre-eminently presented in the case of the Lord Jesus.

Chapter 2, as you know, from verse 5 onward. The cycle. Equal with God.

Equal with God. By his own right. In his own right.

Equal with God. In glory. As he said through John.

Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. All that. All the content of that.

Empty himself. Found in passion as a man. The form of a bond slave.

Obedient. Unto death. Yea, the death of the cross.

From the highest height to the lowest depths. From the greatest fullness to the most utter emptiness. The cycle of victory.

The cycle of victory. The way of victory. The great wherefore comes in at that deep point.

The death of the cross. An unnatural way, isn't it? Now you notice that this is taken by the apostle to be the history of Philippian believers and of course in our own case. In principle, the apostle takes that up from Christ and passes that over to believers and says let this same mind be in you.

That was in Christ Jesus. By the same process. By the same experience in principle.

With certain differences between Christ and ourselves. Always having to safeguard that. But in principle.

The same cycle. The same history. The same experience for believers.

Let the same mind. The same mindedness. The same mindedness.

That is, have the same disposition. The same disposition. In Scotland we have a way of speaking.

We are asking somebody if they are going to do something. Or want to do something. We say, are you minded to do so? Are you minded? A mindedness.

A disposition. An attitude. Let this same disposition be in you as was in Christ Jesus.

And the result will be the same. In both ways. Down.

Down. Down you go. Until you touch what? Up.

And at the bottom. The terminus is met. In turn round and up.

And up. There is no up until there has been the down. No up until there has been the down.

And this is not something in our history which is done once and for all. It was in the case of the Lord Jesus. And that is one of the differences.

Very often when I want to get in touch with a man if I am going into a store and I go up in the elevator I say to him, well, your life is made up of ups and downs, isn't it? And of course he catches on. But be sure that you finish up and not down. That is the Lord's mind.

It may be through the way down. But through the way down it is the way up. Now I want to make this very brief and get to the real point of this.

Taking this mind, this position of Christ which was put into action, into effect so fully and utterly, what did it amount to? Exactly what happened? Well, the Lord Jesus and this mind that was in Christ Jesus was that of a wonderful capacity which you and I have got to have inculcated in us as the only way to victory. Capacity for letting go. The ability to let go.

We know, and you have heard it probably many times before that this fragment in chapter 2 of this letter about his being equal with God his grave emptying, self-emptying and coming down to the utmost depth is an offset to something. An offset to something. It is the offset to all the work that ever Satan did.

And the motive or the mindedness the disposition of Satan out of which all this age-long mischief and ruin has come was acquisitiveness, possessiveness drawing to self, having and holding for oneself. For the scriptures show us that Satan was cherubim covered evidently in a very high place possibly, if not exactly,

next to the sun very near to the sun but envious of the sun. This is why you see covetousness is idolatry.

It is satanic. Covetous. Envious.

Possessive. Acquisitive. To have what God has not intended that which was reserved for the sun.

Well, he made his bid for equality equality with God in the place of the sun and for history. All history. You know dear friends, our spiritual history looked at from one standpoint in the scripture our spiritual history is the undoing of the work of the devil.

You know that? Unbelief was the downfall of Adam and therefore faith is the undoing of the work of the devil there. That's why it's so important. And all things like that.

Now here, to undo that possessiveness that acquisitiveness that unlawful ambition to undo it in principle there had to be somebody who voluntarily emptied himself of his own rights and of all that those rights were and contained to undo this awful thing not in himself for that was never true of Jesus but to undo it in mankind. And by his cross he destroyed the works of the devil the son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil and the first and most awful work of the devil was this aspiration to have, to acquire. You know, Cain is said by the scriptures, in the scriptures to be of that evil one.

Because, says the writer, he was of that evil one the name Cain means acquisitive acquisitive of the evil one. This is where all our ambitions to be something, to have to possess to hold, to keep power power supremacy domination where it all comes from from the evil one.

And the undoing of it all as a principle and with all its consequences especially in Christ, the mind that was in Christ Jesus and then that transferred to the Philippians and I think the Philippians were a beautiful example of this, you know although there was a necessity for saying it to them which necessity we need not dwell upon because it's here in the letter nevertheless, they were a beautiful example of this letting go giving releasing One of the things the apostle says about their generosity their thought for him their care for him they were the first to think of this man's situation he might be perhaps going without food he might be short of clothing he might be living in penury without the necessities or even some luxury in his prison they are thinking of him doing all they can

to minister to him how grateful he is in this letter for that, read it again the outgoing the letting go without thinking of what it cost them the mind that was in Christ Jesus now, whatever the method however it was done, the principle this is the thing we want to get and go away with dear friends the cross here is the symbol of victory don't forget it make any doubt about it, have any doubt about it it's the symbol of victory but but the principle of the cross in this letter is the power the ability to let go to let go to God to relax your grip your hold let it go right through biblical history you will see that victory marvelous victory came when that was the issue even sometimes sometimes when it was something God given and God asked for it back it wasn't always something bad that you

got to give up or something questionable you let go no, something God given Isis was ever anything more God given than Isis miracle of God was Isis what a gift supernatural gift impossible perhaps I think we can say certainly impossible of repetition take down thy son thy own son whom thou dost given by God miraculously supernaturally in answer to long prayer many many heart groans the despair of the situation the hopelessness then given handed up hand him up offer him well what about it was that cross victory in thy seed in Isaac shall thy seed be called in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed this is the

mighty mighty victory of being able to let go of course I could dwell upon this and apply it in many many ways some of us you know whom God we feel undoubtedly gave

ministry called us to the ministry gave us a ministry we have been brought to the place where we had to hand back our ministry hand it back say Lord all right if you don't want this to go on here it is you gave you can take and for the time being feel the desolation of that loss I think I can say I think I can say it hasn't been lost there's been something more afterwards something more a lot of history in what I'm saying God gave and Job I'm only quoting Job aren't I the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away and triumph blessed be the name of the Lord I don't know that we've all got there but I have got there absolutely when some of these things happen and I spontaneously say blessed be the name of the Lord now there's agony and anguish at least for the time being but there is spiritual

enlargement and spiritual gain God is no man's debtor well that's the principle here in Philippians and do you notice how the apostle takes it up in his own case he doesn't say in as many words that this mind that was in Christ Jesus is in me and I followed it out but in what he says he exemplifies it he tells us of all the things that were gained to him all the advantages of birth inheritance upbringing education success climbing to the top of the tree in his prophetic as a rabbi and all that that meant of influence and opportunity and power and possession what a fullness this man had naturally before his conversion and then he says in this letter the things which were gained to me these have I counted lost of Christ hold on hold on will you tell me that Paul's letting go has been lost

to him to God to the church what we should have lost to all these centuries that Paul had held on to all those advantages things that he said were gained were gained if he'd held on he let go but now do you notice what he says after all that I count them lost refuge that's the value of them as I see it now you'll see in a moment why I see it now rather just refuge but he said brethren brethren I count not myself to have attained neither am I already at this time the end of my life full life all the age all the age because that belongs to twenty centuries ago Paul was a young man according to standard today I'm a long way ahead of Paul's years but for him a long full life the end of it all I count not myself to have attained neither am I already complete but this one thing I do forgetting

the things which lie behind I press toward the mark of the on high calling of God in Christ now that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings you notice the cross notice the cross resurrection fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death the climax of the risen life is the cross the climax of the risen life is the cross because all our knowing of the power of his resurrection will only lead us further and further into the meaning of the cross unto what? being made conformable unto his death to attain unto the resurrection from among the dead something something far greater than that initial experience of union with Christ in resurrection but it's done you see the way of victory is ever and always the growing capacity to

let go to the Lord while we hold on stand our ground claim our right keep things in our hands we're in defeat there are a thousand ways in which this can be applied but dear friends in many many ways the Lord waits for this principle to be applied or to work out a wife is jealous of her husband and she prays and prays and prays and the Lord never answers never answers she wants to hold him keep him to herself just have him in her possession her prayers are not answered nothing happens till one day the Lord says let him go let go if you will let go I'll take hold and it's when we learn I said it may be the other way round I only take that not because all women are jealous in that way but men can be just the thing you know jealous of their wives of their children not going to let go or

something anything I've mentioned ministry no matter what it is if you and I hold this to ourselves even though it may be something not wrong not evil in itself not sin in itself but we've got hold of this and we've got hold of our own positions and our own rights and we are not going to let go now you know that was the reason for the defeat of the Corinthian church the awful defeat of Corinth spiritually was they would not let go their love for power their love for worldly wisdom their love for emotional gratification drawing all these things even spiritual things to themselves and it was not until they were broken on that and you have the brokenness of the second letter of the Corinthian where they are indeed broken that their victory came well you've got this you want victory it may be

you see that there is some kind of controversy over letting go to the Lord taking your hands off oh it's a great lesson that we have to learn in the Christian life to keep our hands off of the arks of people always trying to with our own hands direct people's lives cause them to take the course that we think they ought to take impose our minds and judgments and wills upon them many years ago the Lord said take your hands off and I'll do it take your hands off oh how we love, don't we to put our hands on people's power inborn, inbred love of power of letting go even good things to the Lord if he requires now you see here syllabi, verbs, something evidently whilst there I, this piece you earlier and seem to see to be of the same mind one with another to be a woman, women remember Captain

Wallace quoting there, misquoted it he said I beseech odious and soon-touching to be of the same mind odious and soon-touching well it may be but evidently there was something there between these two they were standing for their own one was not giving way to the other not saying I'm at fault pride, pride making them hold their ground their own ground perhaps one was in the right but that one was not going to let go of her right and that's why the apostle said let this mind he had right unquestionably his right in his own right yours may not be your right after all but whether they be you let go you let go you surrender you put this in the Lord's hands and take your hands off you be willing to suffer the loss of all this for his sake and while that is the cross it's victory whereupon God

has hired you well now it shows that Mark is calling your attention then to this how was it that the apostle Paul was able to do this suffer the loss of all this count all the things which were gained as mere wrecks how could he do it you see it was just a captivation of Jesus Christ and that's a great cause to look for me to live this I have no other object or motive in living but Christ look at the large place that Christ has in this land and for me to live is Christ and I can do all things through him, Christ he was captivated by Christ and that captivation by Christ Christ that he had seen come to know so infinitely infinitely greater than beyond all these at one time position in the world possessions these are nothing when you see the Lord Jesus and there is no other way of victory

but seeing the Lord Jesus but it's only crucified people who truly see the Lord Jesus know that is that closing the conference on depression?

I didn't mean that I meant victory see the way of victory yes, the cross is not just losing everything and having a miserable life first of all it's gain out of loss it's life out of death it's much out of little that's the cross we pray our Lord do write into our hearts all that it has been thy desire for us really know in these days and cover it there protect it there and give us grace to respond in obedience to every challenge every call and do make us people so self-empty of pride and personal interest and all that so empty and so taken up with thyself Lord Jesus so enamored of thee so captivated by thee that nothing is too much to let go for thee may this be the dynamic the captivation of the Lord Jesus at every cost and now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are all things unto him be the glory in the church by Christ

Jesus unto all ages forever and ever Amen

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