

The Exaltation of God's Son

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and submitting to the exaltation of Christ as the foundation for spiritual life and victory.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 22:1

Topics: "Lordship of Jesus", "Exaltation of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the exaltation of God's Son as the foundation of the spiritual house of God, highlighting that the Church exists to proclaim and rejoice in Christ's supreme authority. He draws parallels between the Old Testament figures, like Solomon, and the New Testament revelation of Jesus, illustrating that true blessing and fullness come when Christ is recognized as Lord in our hearts. The sermon stresses the importance of submitting to Christ's Lordship, which leads to spiritual renewal and victory over the lies of the enemy. Sparks also points out that the exaltation of Jesus as our Kinsman guarantees our own exaltation as sons of God, urging believers to embrace their identity in Christ. Ultimately, he warns that the fullness of sonship is prospective and contingent upon our willingness to endure God's training and discipline.

Transcript

Reading: 1 Chron. 22:1-19; 28:5-7; 29:20, 22-25, Acts 2:30-36; 7:47-49, 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Heb. 3:6; 12:5,9; Eph. 1:20-23.

I have been very much occupied of late with this matter of sonship in the House of God, and am led to the conclusion that something of this is to be the Lord's message at this time. There are many aspects of this spiritual house. How many of them we shall be able to consider must remain to be seen.

It is quite certain that this matter is very relevant to what is happening at this present time on the earth. In particular, there is a very real and living message in it for the Lord's people, and I trust that we shall seek to adjust ourselves to that fact and not regard this as just some further measure of Bible teaching which may be more or less familiar.

Christ Exalted on High - The Keystone of Testimony

We shall begin with what the Scriptures so clearly indicate as the point of commencement of the House of God, namely, the exaltation of the Son to the place of supreme authority and glory. The spiritual house,

(which house are we,) prospectively exists for this very purpose of proclaiming and rejoicing in the fact of the exaltation of God's Son. The passages which we read from the Old Testament, which are prophetic, pointing on to the spiritual house, all bear out this fact and show it in type in a very wonderful and clear way. David's greatest son - for God had given him many sons - was brought out into clear view as the one chosen of God to be exalted to a place of glory and power above that which had been given to any before him; and it is interesting to note that, while Solomon was ordained and chosen of God for that position, he did not come out as distinguished for it until someone else made a bid for that position. You will remember the little incident of Adonijah, who subtly worked to get the throne, to get what God had appointed for Solomon. By that subtle movement to usurp the throne appointed for another, Solomon was distinguished at once, brought out and proclaimed as the one chosen by God. That is only in passing; but it is interesting to notice that it was when God's Son and God's appointment concerning His Son was assailed, and His place sought after in a conspiracy, that the Lord Jesus was marked out, brought out into the light as the One whom God had chosen. That is something which recurs. There it was in the case of Solomon. It was so in the case of the Lord Jesus at the beginning of this dispensation. That will happen again at the end when Antichrist makes his bid for world domination, and then God will bring out His Son as the One chosen and anointed for that position, and all will then be manifestly put in subjection under His feet, as they are now spiritually and potentially.

The house which was brought into being through and by Solomon, came in specifically on the basis of Solomon's exaltation, on the ground that he was the appointed one and that God had summed up all things in him. When Solomon was brought into his place, then the house came into being; and all the things that are said about Solomon are very wonderful things. They all speak of his glory, of his power, of his wealth, God's thought for the one who shall have the throne, and the house becomes the very symbol of the glory of the Lord, the exaltation of the king. The house which is to be built for the Lord is to be exceeding magnificent. That house reflects the king, the one who is the son over the house in type.

We foresee by these Old Testament scriptures just what we have in the New Testament, and so we can come at once to this first and primary thing about the spiritual house of which we are called to be living stones, that our very existence is for the proclamation - in what we are as well as in our testimony - of the exaltation of God's Son.

Now, everything begins there, with the exaltation of Christ, and that firstly in heaven. It was when He was at the right hand of God exalted that the Church had its beginning. Everything came out from that, and in the beginning things in the Church spiritually were very glorious and very wonderful. I have no doubt but that angels took account of what was then going on to the glory and praise of God, and we have also reason to believe that demons were tremendously impressed. Everything took its rise from the exaltation of God's Son, this even "greater than Solomon."

The Essential Counterpart of the Heavenly Exaltation

But for us, while that remains true, and has many blessings associated with it, to have practical beginnings the exaltation of the Lord Jesus has to be an inward thing, and the beginning of everything for us necessitates there being a counterpart of that Son's exaltation in heaven in our hearts; that what God means by His having glorified His Son is a thing of spiritual reality within us. He comes to absolute enthronement with all things in subjection to Him. You notice how the account of Solomon's enthronement concludes. "And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king" (1 Chron. 29:24). He was doubly enthroned - "They made Solomon

king the second time." Now you have your ground, if there is one, for a "second blessing"! You talk about second blessings. Here you are, this is what it is, the second thing. What God has done in heaven is done in our hearts. We have reason to rejoice and feel greatly blessed that God has raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. Tremendous things are bound up with that for us. But the "second blessing" is that this becomes something of reality in us, and that what is true in heaven as to all things put under his feet, submitting themselves to Him, is true within the kingdom of our lives. That is the way of the fullness of the blessing.

All things, as I have said, spring from that, begin there. Life itself begins in reality when Jesus is absolute Lord within. We do not come into the fullness of blessing when Jesus is not more than Saviour. The fullness of the blessing is known when He is Lord and has everything within us under His feet, submitting to Him. It is the way of blessing. You see, all the blessing that God meant for man, the fullness that was to be man's inheritance, was lost because Satan, seeking to usurp the place of God's Son as Lord, by his propaganda worked subtly and made man believe that he would lose everything by remaining in subjection to God. 'Why not be as God yourself?' said he. In other words, Why have a life limited by being subject to God and dependent upon Him! Along that line, man lost all the fullness, and now all the fullness comes back by being absolutely subject to God's Son, and submitting to Him in all things. That was the great lie of Satan, and this is why Satan does not like Jesus Christ being Lord, and why he so strongly contends against any ministry that has in view that object, of bringing the Lord Jesus into His rightful place as supreme Lord in God's house. It is because by that his lie is exposed and the work which he achieved through his lie undone.

The whole question is that of the universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, and it is that which is coming out today as never before in the history of this world as the supreme issue. Who is going to be Lord in God's universe? Who is going to have world dominion? The enemy is still seeking to reach that end through man along the line of the lie, and we have never before known of his method being so tremendously, so universally and so insidiously employed - the lie! So much so, that for months past, this world has rocked on this question. Who can be trusted? Who can be believed? Who is speaking the truth? What man can you have confidence in? There has spread over the earth such an atmosphere of discrediting by lies that men almost look at those of their own household and wonder whether they can be trusted. That is a terrible reality in many lands. They dare not open their lips within the most limited circle, because truth faileth, trustworthiness has been smitten almost to the ground. The lie, the propaganda of lies: and all, mark you, with this one end in view, namely, to get a grip on the dominion of this world. That is Satan's work behind what we see going on, and when Jesus Christ comes into His place as absolute Lord in you and in me, something results which declares that Satan has been defeated; the lie is exposed. The truth is that subjection to Jesus Christ is not a miserable life as a vassal. It is a life of triumph, a life of victory, a life of glory, a life of fullness. It is the blinding work of the enemy with men, to make them think that to belong to the Lord, to have the Lord in their lives, means they are going to lose all that is worthwhile, and be shut down, and all the time be poor cringing creatures, hardly able to lift their heads up, going about as beggars. That is Satan's lie. The Old Testament brings it out here so clearly that, where all things were subject to, submitting themselves to, God's appointed king, it was a time of fullness such as the people had never known: and so it is when Jesus is Lord within as in heaven.

In those days, following that great day of Pentecost, the Church knew something of liberation, enlargement, enrichment, glory, power and fullness, and it all sprang from the fact that Jesus was Lord. They lived upon that ground and in the appreciation of that great fact. Life commenced there, testimony

commenced there and commences there, and all our service for the Lord should spring out of this. There is no true service which does not spring out from this fact of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You see, every revival or great spiritual renewal has been by the Lord coming back into His place. Go again over the Old Testament, and you have instance after instance when the Lord was brought back into His place - it was a wonderful time. Think, for instance, of the days of Hezekiah, of Josiah, when the Lord was given His place anew in a wonderful way. They came back to re-enthroned the Lord as Lord in their midst in an utter and full way, and they were great days. If you pass your eye over history, you see that all real spiritual awakenings - call them revivals or renewals - have circled round this one thing, that the Lord was brought back into His place. He was given His place as absolute Lord, and people went down before Him. That was the secret of it, and it is like that.

What is true in history, true in the wider way, is true in the individual life. So much of our trouble, our declension, our spiritual weakness and failure, is because He is not Lord. We are thankful to know Him as Saviour, we believe that He is in heaven glorified, but there is a good deal of controversy within us on points. It all amounts to this one issue, namely, the utterness of His Lordship within, and, when those matters and controversies are settled, we find a new uprising of life. You can always have a little revival in your own heart on any one point where the Lord has a controversy with you. Test it. It may be only one point, but you know that one thing is holding you up. You have to get clear on that one thing, and when at last you go down with that thing under the Lord and put it under His feet, you have a little revival in your own heart and you come out with new life, new testimony, new release. Spread that over all things, and the kingdom has come. It is just like that.

The Cross and the Lordship of Christ

Well, this, His spiritual house, has been brought into being for no other purpose or no greater purpose than that - just to stand entirely in the enjoyment of the proclamation of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. When you come to think of it, is not that the primary and deepest meaning and purpose of the Cross? The Cross may do many things, touch many questions and many issues, but when you get down to the meaning of the Cross at its deepest, it relates to the deposing of other gods. That was the great issue in the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua, you remember. In reviewing the whole situation, Joshua has all Israel before him, and he begins with the history of Israel right back in the time of Abraham's father. 'Abraham's father lived in Ur of the Chaldees and served other gods. Then Abraham came out from the serving of his father's gods and crossed over the river and came into the land. After this your fathers came into Egypt and there they worshipped the gods of the Egyptians; but at length they also came out over the river to serve the Lord.' The whole issue was other gods and the river between the other gods and the Lord every time. Now then, what about you? says Joshua. Are you going to allow the river really to stand effectively for what it means? Are you going to allow that river really to stand between you and the other gods which you worshipped and served in Egypt? "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What about you? So the river was always related to other gods. The Cross, in its deepest meaning, touches other gods, other lords, other objects of worship receiving the good of our lives, and deposes them all, and brings the Lord into His place, so that we say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." That is the meaning of the Cross. It touches everything that stands in the way of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. It gets right down there.

The Lord Jesus Exalted as our Kinsman

But then there is this other or further very blessed fact about the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. He is exalted as our Kinsman. The exaltation of Christ is the exaltation of our Brother. That comes out, you see, in the record. David said, "Of all my sons, (for Jehovah hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel" (1 Chron. 28:5). Then later, when speaking of Solomon's enthronement, the record says, "And all the sons of David bowed down and did obeisance to Solomon and submitted themselves unto him." A great thing - his brethren all looking up to him as on the throne and acknowledging him as king. That is a permanent factor in all the types about the exaltation of the Lord Jesus.

In the book of Samuel, again, you have that time when Absalom had usurped the throne and brought a great deal of misery and suffering upon the people to whom he had promised so much; and then Absalom was slain and the people were stranded. For some time everything was in a state of suspense, until there arose a questioning among the people, and someone said, "Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" That became a rumour, and it got out over to where David was. David heard what was being said, and he took hold of it and sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar for the people, expressing himself thus: I am your flesh and your bone; ye are my brethren: why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? His appeal for his place was on the basis of his kinship and they brought him back on the basis of that appeal.

Now, what is the meaning and value of that? Well, God has exalted our Brother, God has exalted our Kinsman, and that Kinsman is God's Son, and He, as the Apostle puts it, is going to bring many sons to glory because He is the first-born among many brethren. The exaltation of our Kinsman means that the family is coming to exaltation. His enthronement is the earnest of ours; and, beloved, we are never sure of coming to our exaltation, our fullness, until we recognize the Lord Jesus in His place as our Kinsman-representative. It is an exalted family, it is a household, you see; God's house for the Son, and then sons. But the Son must have His place before the sons can have theirs; but, having His place, the sons have theirs guaranteed to them. Our Kinsman is exalted, and that says a great deal; because He is not exalted just as a despot, just as an officially appointed monarch whether we like it or not - God has chosen Him, selected Him, put Him in that position: now then, Bow the knee! Oh no; He is our Brother, our Kinsman, and there is such a tie, such a link, such a oneness of life, that He cannot be there apart from us. There is an inward spiritual oneness with Him in His exaltation which spells something very big.

Perhaps I can illustrate it best by reminding you of Mordecai. You remember Haman again, in the train of these many usurpers, and Haman's devilish device to destroy all the Jews. Mordecai is in the place of rejection, ruled out. Then, by one of those marvellous acts of Divine sovereignty which make even a sleepless night of the most tremendous value in history, the king could not sleep one night. Would that all our sleepless nights were as profitable to the Lord as his was! He commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king; and he read something about Mordecai. Someone had lifted up his hand against the throne and a certain man, a Jew, had brought the thing to light and saved the king's life. Then the king said, "What honour and dignity hath been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the story develops and it comes to the point where Haman goes home one day to his wife and all his friends and tells them of what had happened. He, who thought the king was going to honour him, has been made to honour Mordecai, and as he tells them this, the discerning answer made to Haman was this: "If Mordecai before whom thou hast begun to fall be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." If he is of the seed of the Jews, you cannot prevail, your days are numbered! There is something about that, you see. It is this kinship with the Jews on the part of the exalted one which secures both their deliverance and the enemy's undoing.

Oh yes, this kinship with the Exalted One means for us deliverance and the overthrow of the enemy. There is a very great deal bound up with the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and Satan knows it. He knows that his days are numbered when Christ is exalted in any life. When we come to that exaltation-union with the Lord Jesus in our own hearts, Satan is in despair. It is like that.

The Need for Diligence and Discipline in the Light of a Day to Come

Well now, we must stop somewhere, and I think we might just stay here by pointing out that this house, with all the significance of sonship, the Son and the sons in God's House, has a present spiritual meaning. It is something which has to be realised in a spiritual way now. It indeed is the great spiritual matter for all the children of God. If we ask, What is the issue in this dispensation where God and His people are concerned, the answer surely is this, that there shall be a house, a spiritual house, which stands in the good of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. That is the issue, and that is to be a spiritual thing now.

But I also want you to remember that, so far as manifestation is concerned, this lies in the future; and upon that hangs this wonderful and terrible little word 'if.' "Christ as a son, over God's house; whose house are we, IF..." Hebrews 12 which treats of God's dealings with us as with sons, has a big "if" there also. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." It is rather a strange way of putting things. It almost looks as though you are not a son if you do not endure chastening. Well, that is what it means. The "if" is in view of the fact that you and I have not yet come to the fullness of sonship. It will be the fullness of sonship in manifestation which brings in the House of God in all its glory. It is something future, it is prospective. If... if...

You notice, in that connection, how Israel in the wilderness is so often called up as a warning. They did not become, in God's intended sense, His house. They have perished in the wilderness. They did not suffer chastening. They would not let God deal with them as with sons along the line of child-training. They did not come to their adoption as sons. They fell short of the glory of the inheritance of the full purpose of God; and that is brought over to Corinthians and to Hebrews as the warning. We are His house if... if... if...

Now, what is the significance of this? Oh, it is this, that what God's Son is in glory, He becomes in us now progressively; that Christ is being more and more enlarged in us as the Son over God's house. I think it is so patent, as hardly to need pointing out, that the course of our spiritual experience under the hand of God is always with this one thing in view. All our difficulties with the Lord, all our bad times, are on the principle of submission to the Lord, with a view to the Lord having His place. Is it not like that? The Lord is finding us out by child-training. Take up the child and put the child under training, and you will discover what is in the child, whether the child is going to be compliant or not, whether the child is going on with you or not. Put the child under discipline, and you will find out all the revolt that is in the child's nature. That is how the Lord is dealing with us.

This word "chastening" is unfortunate, because it is confused in our minds with punishing. It means nothing of the kind. God is not punishing His children at all. The true meaning is child-training, and Satan always turns God's dealings with us into punishment in our minds. It is not that. What He is working at with us is to bring us to the place where He is utterly Lord and can do as He likes with us, and we have no question at all. None of us has reached that point yet, but that is what the Lord is doing, and there is a big "if," you see. We can say we are not going to have any more of this discipline, we are not going on with it. Well the throne is in view, not only for Him but for us. The Lord has a great purpose for His sons in union with the Son as joint-heirs and as fellow-rulers in His universe. It all springs out of the fact that Jesus

Christ is Lord in heaven and in us, and then that this Lordship is wrought into us in a perfect way. All our training is in that direction. So it is prospective, it is future, and the "if" is there. We are God's house if... May the Lord so triumph in us that the "if" greatly loses weight and power and place, and eventually ceases to be at all, and we are His house.

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