

The Immense Significance of Jesus Christ: Crucified, Risen, and Exalted

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the immense significance of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation, and how it brings about a new creation and makes the enemy serve God's purpose.

Scripture: John 12:32, Romans 6:6, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:10, Philippians 2:9-11, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "New Creation", "The Cross of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the immense significance of Jesus Christ as Crucified, Risen, and Exalted, urging believers to see Him as the focal point of the Bible and their lives. He reflects on the transformation of Saul of Tarsus, who, upon encountering the glorified Christ, realized the depth of his own humanity and the cosmic implications of the Cross. Sparks explains that the Cross represents not only the death of the old humanity but also the birth of a new creation, with the Church called to embody this reality. He stresses that true ministry and the Church's purpose are rooted in the Cross, which serves as the foundation for the Holy Spirit's work. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of the Cross's power and its implications for believers today.

Transcript

Lord, when we say to Thee, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," Thou knowest that the most "wonderful" Thou canst show to us is Thy Son; and so, not things, but Him. Open our eyes that we may see Him this morning. It is to Thee, and not to men, but to Thee that we say, "We would see Jesus"; and O Lord, grant it in Thy mercy that when we leave this place we are able truly to say: "We have seen the Lord." Be it so, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

Now we come to the last of these hours in which we have been occupied with the "Great Transition," having said at the beginning that the whole Bible is occupied with God and humanity. The Old Testament, with an old humanity throughout, showed how utterly unreliable that humanity is, and how it eventually proved a failure as the Old Testament closes. I expect you have noticed that not in the chronological order, but in the spiritual order the Old Testament closes with Malachi, and what a sorry picture in Malachi it is, the closing of the book in failure. The New Testament is occupied wholly with the introduction and development of a New Humanity, brought in with the Lord Jesus Christ; and from that point the whole of the New Testament is occupied with this New Humanity, of which Christ is the Representative of its birth,

its growth, and its eventual and ultimate glorification.

That is the general background of these morning hours this week. And we came two days ago to the all-inclusive vision of the Lord Jesus and began (as we shall never finish though we stayed here all our life) began to see what there is in Jesus Christ, what He has brought in, and what the Apostle Paul saw in the Lord Jesus when, as he put it, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." What an immense revealing that was, which grew and grew all through the life of the apostle. And we said that four things came to the apostle in that vision, that "Heavenly Vision," that inward seeing of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, in Jesus glorified, Paul saw, according to the eternal thoughts of God, the place and the nature and the destiny of humanity, the Humanity after Christ. Then Paul saw the nature and dynamic of a life ministry, of a ministry through this long dispensation between the ascension of the Lord Jesus and His coming again, he saw what the ministry is, the vocation. He saw that when he saw the Lord Jesus. We spent a lot of time on it: not enough. Then Paul saw the nature and the purpose of the Church now, and as he put it, "unto the Age of the ages." These three great things he saw, and then Paul saw a fourth. With this, we are going to be occupied this morning.

Paul Saw Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, Exalted

Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus of Nazareth glorified--"The Man in The Glory." And as he gazed and gazed inwardly upon that Man, seeing that vision, that revelation, he saw these three things that we have mentioned, and then Paul saw the immense significance of Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, and Exalted; and, of course, these are the things which fill all his writings. You will have to approach them with these four things before you. Let me repeat, the immense significance of Jesus Christ: Crucified, Risen, and Exalted.

We are totally incapable of sensing, recognizing, conceiving what happened to this man, Saul of Tarsus, when he saw the Lord Jesus, for he had thought of Jesus the Nazarene as an imposter, a false teacher, a false leader, as One Who was leading people astray; and all the feelings of animosity and hatred and bitterness, of which that great soul was capable, overflowed against this Man--Jesus of Nazareth. He made it his life business, with his tremendous abilities, his natural abilities, and his training, and all his knowledge; he made it his life business to blot out any remnant related to that Man, Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Saul viewed the Cross of Jesus Christ as His deserved crucifixion. He viewed the death of Jesus of Nazareth as death, death as we know it--the end. And that in shame--deserved shame, deserved ignominy, deserved disgrace. And more than that, from his Jewish standpoint, he viewed that Man on that Cross as cursed of God, as cursed of Almighty God! This was his mind about Jesus of Nazareth.

When Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus and he was smitten with the Light, not knowing at that moment Who and what it meant, he said, because of the overpoweringness of it, "Who art Thou, Lord?"--I say we can never enter into the tremendous convulsion that must have taken place in this man Saul when there came back in answer: " 'I am Jesus, I am Jesus,' that One of Whom you have had that mentality; that One, about Whom you have had all those thoughts and feelings. I am He, I am Jesus." I say, we cannot enter into what that man must have felt at that moment, but it was then, and from then on, that he began to see This Man Jesus, Glorified, in the Seat of Power, capable of smiting even such a man as Saul of Tarsus to the ground with one stroke, and prostrating him, leaving him one who has got to be lifted up by men, and by the arm led blind to the place where he was going. In the overwhelmingness of it, he began to see in that One that it was not just a crucifixion, and it was not a death such as he had thought of death;

but that Jesus Christ, Crucified, was all that his life after (that which he learned by revelation and experience throughout his life) and teaching showed him to have seen.

He Died In My Place: He Died For All

And what an "all" Paul saw; it comes out in considerable fulness in his ministry. What Paul saw first of all was that death, that ignominious death, that shameful death, that awful death, was his own death. Paul saw what God thought of him; it was God's attitude toward him. He could say: "That Man on that Cross like that, in all that state of degradation and shame and helpless weakness, despised and rejected, all that--that was me, that was me, that was what God thinks of my humanity. He died for me (but you know that the meaning is 'in my place'). When He died, I died, that was my death, and that was God's conception of me, Saul of Tarsus!!" Oh, what a revolution! He had a great idea of himself and his own abilities; but, look, this is God unveiling Saul of Tarsus, but more than that: "He died in my place." And that was a death, a new idea about death.

Moreover Paul saw, and I am keeping, of course, firstly to his teaching; I am not reading in anything, making up something. You can sit down with it yourself and prove everything that I am saying from the New Testament. He saw not only that that death, that awful death, as a judgment upon a kind of man was his death, but he saw that it was the death of the whole human race in Adam. What does Paul say? "Because we thus judge that One died in the place of all, therefore all died." Coneybeare says, "It was the death of the whole race... 'As in Adam all die.'" This is the new conception to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Our death, the death of the whole race, the humanity to which we belong by nature, the whole--all died. But then Paul came to see this also, that in the death of Jesus it was not death as an end; it was a death that destroyed Death. In a sense, it was a death which was the end of Death. "He tasted death for all men," it is true; but then, "He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

A Cosmic Cross: A Cosmic Death

So, from the death of Death, which Paul saw in the Cross, the death of Death has taken place: Christ is risen, He is alive forevermore. And Paul saw more: he saw that that Cross was, to use the word we have used before, it was a cosmic Death. That is, it reached out beyond the individual and beyond the race to that whole encompassing realm of evil forces which had brought about this condition, making that judgment necessary. And as he went to the Cross, Jesus said, "Now is the prince of this world (cosmos) cast out." And later the apostle said, "He stripped off principalities and powers... made a show of them openly... triumphing over them in His Cross." A cosmic Cross, a cosmic Death, touching the uttermost bounds of the lower heavenlies, destroying him that had the power of death, that is, Satan.

Paul came to see all this when he saw by revelation of God His Son revealed "in him," and so, let us come further over into this matter of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Exaltation of the Lord Jesus. You see,

If the revelation of Jesus Christ comprehends all those three things that we have said, comprehends the destiny of humanity (one side of humanity's destiny is judgment, out of Christ: the other side of humanity is glory, in Christ)--

If in the seeing of Jesus Christ in his heart revealed, Paul saw the nature and the dynamic of all true ministry during this whole dispensation--

If he also saw, began to see, and saw with increasing fulness as he went on, the nature and the vocation of the Church now and in the ages to come--

If he saw all those three mighty things in the Face of Jesus Christ, in the Person of Jesus Christ--that is, in the Presence and Revelation of Jesus Christ--

If he saw all that (and remember, this is the vital thing for this morning), Paul saw that all that human destiny, all that ministry through the centuries, and all that place and vocation of the Church in time and in eternity, Paul saw that it was all centered in the Cross of the Lord Jesus.

Mighty, mighty thing was the Cross to Paul. "May it never be," said he, "that I should boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ... We preach Christ crucified... I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," for all this content is in the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Paul saw that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the climax of humanity. He saw that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the zero hour of the old Adam race, the place at which in the darkness (ah, more than natural darkness) God said: "The door is closed, the door is closed upon a certain kind of humanity. This is zero for that humanity." We take a lifetime to learn that. When the Holy Spirit gets hold of a life, He is always bringing us back to that, that one fact, and putting His finger upon this and that, and something else, and saying in us: "That went out through the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Cross has closed the door on that. If you bring that in, you are countering the work of the Cross."

In the Letter to the Hebrews, as well as in these Corinthian Letters, it is a terrible, terrible thing to go back upon the Cross and crucify afresh the Son of God and stamp upon the Blood of our redemption. Oh, the apostles had a lot to say about that, but that is controversial; however, it is not our subject this morning, but there it is. Brethren, the Cross has said an eternal "No" to the whole kind, type, and way of a certain humanity. The Holy Spirit is trying to teach us that; and if you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, you know quite well what the Holy Spirit will allow and what He will not, or you ought to.

Oh, young Christians especially, but all of us, how important it is for us to know the Holy Spirit in this way. You go to this one, and to that one, going around asking your questions, "Ought I? May I? Should I? Can I?" No need for that at all; and if anybody begins to tell you "you may" or "you may not," they are doing the wrong thing. You ought to know in your own heart by the Holy Spirit, if you are born of the Spirit, you ought to know by the Spirit making you uncomfortable about certain things. Not whispering in your ear in words and saying: "No, you must not do that," but inside. "I'm not so happy about this as I once was; I don't feel so free to do these things as I once did." You know what I mean; the Holy Spirit is only bringing you back to the Cross and saying again: "zero to that, the end of that, that belongs to the old humanity."

Brethren, I must not start with too much detail, but the Cross of the Lord Jesus is a very practical thing. The Cross is not just an historic thing. The Cross is not just something in the Christian creed. The Cross of the Lord Jesus is a devastating thing, a terrific thing, and it takes us a lifetime to learn how much that is true. However, the fact is here from the beginning: it is the zero hour of the Adamic race. And furthermore, the Cross is the registration of the subjection of the prince of this world. "Now the whole world lieth in the wicked one," says the apostle, "the whole world lieth (is in the lap of) the evil one." By nature, we are in that realm, in that kingdom, but the great and mighty work of the Cross is this transition--"hath transferred (or transitioned) us out of the authority of darkness, ...into the kingdom of the Son of His Love." By nature we are within that kingdom of the prince of this world, but at the Cross Jesus said, "Now is the prince of this world cast out." Now what did Christ mean? not the annihilation of the devil. We know that quite well.

Not that he ceased to be a being or to have power, but something better than that. Perhaps you know there is such a thing as victory, and there is something more than victory; there is being a conqueror, and there is being more than conqueror. What do I mean?

Many of you can remember, although in America, perhaps, you did not take much account of it and do not know much about it, but some of us lived through the great Boer Wars in South Africa; and you know how that went on and on, and what devastation and desolation that Boer War saw in South Africa. At last, the British gained the upper hand and captured some of the Boer generals, and among them was General Botha: does that name mean anything to you? He was one of the great generals of the Boer army; and they captured him, and they put him in prison. He was conquered. As Botha watched the British, as he watched their way, their life, and learned the truth about them, he began to change. At last, to make the story short, he became one of Britain's best counsellors and allies. The life of General Botha is a wonderful thing--how highly he was honored and respected. Even into the First World War he came as a helper, a great helper on the side of the British. What had happened? Ah, yes, he was conquered--but there was more than conqueror; the enemy was made an ally.

Oh, you say, "Is Satan for us then?" No, he is not for us. I suppose the analogy breaks down here, but what do we find in the New Testament? "I would have you know, brethren, the things which befell me have fallen out for the furtherance...." And those things which befell were satanic activities, and the Lord has taken hold of Satan's work and made them serve His End. That is more than conqueror!

Perhaps we would rather that the Lord would wipe him out, wipe out his resistance altogether; but it is better that the Lord in His All-Authority in heaven and on earth makes the enemy in the long run serve His Purpose. That is more than conqueror. You and I know that he is an unwilling servant, but you have this all the way through your New Testament, such as: "saints in Cæsar's household..." etc.

You see, the Cross was the registration of this subjection to Jesus Christ of the prince of this world. The Cross was the sentence of death upon the world itself, (I am keeping to Paul again), the sentence of death upon this world which lies under a curse. Jesus Himself as He came to the Cross knelt in prayer and lifted His heart to His Father in the presence of some of His disciples and said, "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world, I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil one." The world is banned, the world system, the world spirit, the world influence is banned by the Cross. There is no such thing as a worldly Christian. And if you are worldly, you are contradicting your Christian life. However, here it is, the Cross pronounced the death sentence upon this world.

That is the negative side, but the Cross as Paul saw it in Jesus Christ was the D-Day of the New Creation. "D-Day" --what is that? Deliverance Day! Peter must walk in here and say to us:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath begotten us again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God.

The D-Day--a New hope for a New Creation: a creation that breaks into New Life, New hope through the Cross in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Ministry By The Spirit On The Ground Of The Cross

Now surely all that does give us a much larger conception of the Cross. And I am not going to be able to cover all the ground of these three things, so I will mix up the next two, the ministry and the Church; mark you, issuing from the Cross, inherent in the Cross. No Church without the Cross. No ministry without the Cross. So hence, the Cross is the ground upon which the Holy Spirit encamps for ministry. Therefore, you can understand why it is that there has been such an assault made upon the Cross, to get it out of the preaching, to put other complexions upon it that are not true of it.

If you in the power of the Holy Spirit live the life of the Cross, and minister Christ crucified, the Holy Spirit comes on that! He comes on that! You want to know where the Holy Spirit encamps, where He takes up His position for co-operation?--He takes it up always on the Cross, and you will never come through to a genuine, true knowledge of the fulness of the Holy Spirit unless the Cross is the foundation. The Cross is the only safety, the only safety, in the midst of many things that are false and counter things. And what I want to know about everything is what place the Cross has there, not as a teaching, a theory, a doctrine, and something in the Bible, but where is the Cross in the life there?! That is the Holy Spirit's camping ground, Christ crucified, as preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, "Here is the wisdom of God" (the wisest thing from heaven) and "the power of God" (the most powerful thing from heaven): "Christ Crucified." I repeat, the message of the Cross is not just a doctrine, a teaching; it is the message of human life. Before we can teach the Cross, we must know it and experience it. It must have done something in us, and a drastic thing in us. The preacher, the minister, the ministry, must be a crucified minister or vessel. And it must be quite clear that it is not a doctrine of the Cross that is being given, but that the person who is giving it is a crucified person. That searches a lot, does it not?

Oh, let us be careful about our talk on the Cross. Oh, be careful how you speak about the Cross. Many people come to me and say: "I came to the teaching of the Cross so long ago. I came to the message of the Cross." Brethren, you see it has become some "thing." How much better if you could say: "The Cross, by the Holy Spirit, did something in me that made it far more than a doctrine, a theory, something to talk about." There is an old saying, an old adage, "You talk so loud that I can't hear what you say": yes, there is something in that adage, but I want to see what you are saying.

Here it is, ministry has got to be a ministry by the Spirit on the ground of the Cross. What will the Holy Spirit allow in ministry? What will He allow in ministry, and what will He disallow in ministry? You learn a lot about that as you go on. In the old days when I was very much in the preaching realm, before a big crisis of the Cross, I worked hard to get good sermons; and I collected everything to make up a sermon, a quotation from this and a quotation from that, this poet and that poet. Later one day I was preaching, and in the midst of my sermon I made a quotation from a certain poet to make a point; and at that point, the bottom fell out of my sermon. Everything went, and I had to struggle to get to the end. I went home and got with the Lord on that, and when I looked up that poet (a very famous poet) the Lord said to me: "Do you know that poet is a modernist, a liberal theologian, that he does not believe in the great truths of Christ's personality and atonement--and you drew him in this morning as your ally to make your sermon a success?!" I learned a lesson that day, a life-lesson. And if really we are under the Cross, dear friends, we will know what the Spirit will allow and what He will not allow. We find that the Cross means that, the bottom does fall out of everything in that realm. Am I being too detailed? Oh, no, not for ministry, and I have defined what ministry is (not only pulpit ministry, platform ministry) but the function of the Christian--to minister Christ. That is the ministry, giving Christ, and this ministry must come out of the Cross because there it begins. Paul's ministry began there. The Cross must be the source of all true Holy Spirit ministry.

Now as for the Church, its nature and its purpose, now and forever, what has God in mind from eternity about this elect vessel? What is it? What does the Church exist for in the Divine counsels? Only to be itself the vessel, the embodiment, of all this meaning of the Cross. As with the ministry and ministers, so with the Church, it must be a crucified Church to preach a crucified Christ and to bring by the Holy Spirit all God's knowledge to men. The Church is a crucified Church. Ah, you look at the beginning and see, way at the beginning of these morning meditations, and see the devastation that took place at the Cross--not only in those of the world but with the disciples. We saw how their own humanity was devastated at the Cross. Scattered and desolated, they are men who have got nothing left when they come to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Church begins. He gathers the scattered fragments, and here and there He is putting the vessel together again, but on Other ground. Why did He tarry forty days? Why?--to make sure that they were on New ground, that they had really grasped the significance of the Resurrection as a New ground. And why did He lead them out as far as Bethany and went from them in full view into glory?--to let them know that the Church is on New ground and on Heavenly ground now, on Heavenly ground, and that the headquarters of the Church is not at Jerusalem; it is in Heaven! All is to be governed from Heaven now, because of this Man Who is Exalted. He is the Head, He is the government, but it is Heavenly.

Am I using language that you do not understand or is it too familiar to you? Christ is installed in Heaven as the Representative of this New Humanity, and the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven is to govern everything, deal with everything, work in everything and in everyone--firstly, on the relegation to judgment of the old humanity and its development; and, secondly, the initiation and the development of this Other Humanity. That is what the Holy Spirit is here for.

The writer of the Hebrew letter makes it very simple about father and children and sons, for it says: "My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord." The chastening of the Lord--as a father chastens his son. Well, what about you fathers who have sons, what are you doing with them? Now you may not put it in this way, but this is how the New Testament puts it in meaning: "I am going to make a Man of you. I am out to make a Man of you. Sometimes you may not feel very happy about what I am doing, the way I am doing it, but I am going to make a Man of you." Paul says to these people: "Quit you like men." It is a Man, a Manhood, that the Holy Spirit has come to develop, a kind of Man coming "to full stature of Manhood in Christ." These are Paul's actual words (and this applies to the sisters as much as to the brothers). One Man in Christ, all One Man in Christ. I am sorry the translators have not given us the full translation where it says: "all one in Christ Jesus," but it is "all One Man." It is masculine. "All One Man in Christ Jesus," and the work of the Holy Spirit is to make a Man of us. Oh, yes, but a man according to that Man. Is this according to that Humanity? Everything according to that Humanity. That is why Jesus was here for those three and a half years. A Man amongst men, but different from all others. Everything "conformed to the image of His Son."

The Crucified Church, A Vessel, An Instrument: In Touch With The Throne

Brethren, I am going to close soon, but I want to get very near to the position of the Church, now and in the ages to come; and because this is a very large matter, I am going to focus on one thing to try and help you. We are going to focus upon the matter of prayer. I am convinced that in all the recovery that has to be made, the recovery of prayer, in the way in which I am going to speak of it now, is very, very important.

Have you ever seen, dear friends, what the position of the Church is, if it is in its right position and rightly constituted? Now I am not talking about the Church universal, it applies there, but let us come to a local

church. Where is Christ?--"He is seated at the right hand of God." What does that right hand mean?--The place of power, The place of authority, The place of government. The Right Hand --He is there as "Head of the Church which is His Body." He has been vested, invested, with all authority in Heaven and in earth! Have you sometimes questioned that? Have you questioned Christ's authority here in this world when you see things going as they are going? Have you wondered about that?--all authority in Heaven and on earth? Now, dear friends, if you have a nucleus of the Church in any one place--a nucleus in any one place--rightly constituted on the basis of the Cross and the Resurrection and the Exaltation of Jesus the Lord, you are united with that Throne; and if you get to prayer on that basis, as such an instrument, you are going to touch things in the heavenlies and on the earth. Have we not lost something?

I think I have told you before of a personal experience on my first visit to the United States in 1925. I was just learning then, just learning the great principles of the Church, the Cross and the Church; and I had come to speak at a church convention in Boston. I went into my hotel, into my room, and as I got in there an awful sense of conflict and darkness and evil came over me. This was so terrible, and I had to go almost immediately to minister. I said: "I'm no good, I can't go and minister like this, something's got to happen." It was really awful. Abraham knew what he called "a horror of great darkness." That is what it was for me. And I began to use what means I knew of fighting the enemy, such as using "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" against the enemy and pleading the blood, but nothing happened. Nothing happened. I walked up and down in that room trying to fight this spiritual battle and never getting through. I cried to the Lord: "Lord, what does this mean? What are You saying? Have I got out of Your will? Ought I not to be here? What is it, Lord?" Then it came to me so clearly: "Just stand into the prayer for you of the Lord's people." Now that is very simple, but I stood there in my room and said: "I stand by faith into the value of the prayer of the Church on my behalf, in the Name of the Lord Jesus." And just like that the whole thing went! We went through!

Now that is not the end of the story. I wrote back to my brothers in London, and I told them of my experience. One brother answered and said: "Will you please let us know exactly the time that that happened, making allowance for a difference of five hours between London and Boston; will you give us the very hour when that happened?" So I wrote and told them just when it had happened. He wrote back and said: "In that very hour, we were met for prayer, we felt that you were having a great battle, and we felt that we had to take up that battle for you and pray it through, and we did."

Now do you see what I mean? Forgive the personal reference, but see the principle; now three thousand miles away--five hours difference in world time, but at that very moment the Church prays, far away something happens: the enemy in the heavenlies is touched--Authority in Heaven, and the situation on earth is touched--Authority on earth, the Church in touch with the Throne! Do you not think we want something like that now? Are there not forces of evil in the heavenlies that need to come under the impact of that "All Authority in Heaven?" Are there not situations, even in the Church of the churches, where that "Authority in the earth" needs to be brought in to change them? And the Church is the vessel of that, the instrument of that! Oh, for local companies on that ground, the Power of the Cross and the Authority of the Risen and Exalted Lord! That is a great need. Ask the Lord about that when you get back where you are. Oh, be careful about a "technique" which is called "prayer warfare" and attacking the devil direct. Be careful, he will make a mess of you, he will wait his time. Get hidden in the Cross. Remember that this is not your strength, your wisdom: it is a crucified vessel that is going to do this.

But oh, the Lord does need a recovery of that kind of vocation, and it is not going to stop here. I have said the vocation of the Church in the ages to come--oh, it may not be then against the devil, but I quoted a

scripture the other day and told you, I do not understand what it means: "Know you not," said Paul to the Corinthians, "we shall judge angels?" We shall judge angels? That does not mean that angels are doing wrong and are going to be brought into judgement by us in eternity: it means government, telling them what to do, what is required of them. Oh, it means, I do not know what all it means, but it says, "We shall judge angels." It is the Church that is going to be the administrative instrument of Christ through the ages to come:--and the Church has got to learn administration now.

We are in a school of learning, a wonderful school, learning to fulfill such a vast vocation in the ages to come... in the ages to come. This school is for that. And if we are really through the Cross, under the Holy Spirit, under the Anointing Spirit, and if we are all "baptized in One Spirit into One Body," if that is true, (perhaps we have got to get clearer as to what that baptism is and what that Anointing is and what that Body is) if that is true, then we are now under the Holy Spirit's tuition, which is a practical tuition, and not a theoretical one, under His tuition in order that we shall graduate when the Lord comes--graduate into that vocation with which we have been called, unto which we have been appointed from eternity in the counsels of God: to be His governing vessel through the ages to come.

Too wonderful to grasp! Is it beyond you? It is beyond me. But this is what Paul teaches, and it is to begin with us now. "And now," says he, "unto the principalities in the heavenlies may be made known the manifold wisdom of God in the Church." It is a wonderful vocation. Yet how far we fall short.

Now this morning that is enough I am sure for you to lay hold of and wrestle with. Much more could be said, but that is quite enough for now. Be quiet about it, think about it, meditate upon it. All this, dear friends, that I have tried to say to you, that the Lord has tried to show you, does issue from an experimental knowledge of the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It does. And you have seen now what that Cross means on both its sides. May it not be a subject, a doctrine, a teaching, a theory, but the mighty reality that it is in every realm. May we pray...

We are very conscious, Lord, that when we touch realms like this, there is much that tries to battle and stifle and make it difficult both to speak and to hear. So that now at the end of this course, or this time, we must appeal to Thee as on the Throne to exercise Thyself in Thy Authority, Thy Power, to make these things realities, living realities in us. Not the subject of the convocation in 1968, not the theme that certain people followed in their ministry; but, O God, save us and bring us into the good of what Thou dost say. Make it live, make it a power in us. May it register in earth and in Heaven. In the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

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