

# The Mighty Presence of God - Part 2 (Cd Quality)

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the indispensable role of Christ in God's purpose and the necessity of His presence for the manifestation of God's glory among His people.*

**Duration:** 17:11

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:21

**Topics:** "Presence of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding God's ways and purposes in our lives. He acknowledges that there are things in us that need to be countered and burned up, but also recognizes that God's grace is at work in us, changing us and increasing our love for Him. The speaker uses the metaphor of furniture being brought into the house of God by an enemy, but God taking action to remove what doesn't belong. He highlights the need for us to align ourselves with God's purpose and be a suitable ground for His full expression. The ultimate goal is for God to be glorified in His people, and this explains why He allows us to go through suffering and discipline.

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## Transcript

He overshadows everything. He stands behind everything that is in the whole of this book, in all its forms of representation. The purpose of God is concerning his Son.

It is Christ who is to satisfy God in this matter of which we are speaking, both to be and to provide for God that in which God can have pleasure to dwell. It is Christ. We must see, of course, that Ezra and Nehemiah with their contemporary prophets and governors are just one, just one.

Special emphasis in Ezra on the temple, special emphasis in Nehemiah on the wall. But they're, the two are one. They're only two parts of one whole, the temple and the wall.

The temple, God sanctuaries. God sanctuaries. It would not be difficult, of course, and certainly wouldn't be unnecessary for anybody knowing the Bible or me to embark upon showing how all temple representations in the Bible, that great central thought everywhere, the temple is in its very constitution a comprehensive representation of Christ.

It is the purpose, however, that must hold us. God being amongst men, God being here, and God finding it possible, may I say, to delight, to enjoy being here. It is Christ, dear friends, and only Christ that has brought God into this world.

It is by his Son that God has drawn near and offered to dwell with men and to make them his temple. It is in Christ. God cannot realize his purpose because, apart from his Son, because the purpose is so inexplicably, inseparably bound up with his Son.

And to identify the purpose is to see Christ as, everywhere, in all things, the answer to this hard quest of God to be amongst men. You will see how much is gathered into that, the whole meaning of the incarnation, the whole nature of Christ and his person, but we leave all that detail. Christ is the purpose of God.

Let us not think of divine purpose in an abstract term. As something, let us see that the purpose is a person. And there's no possibility of realizing the purpose apart from the person.

Therefore, if we are called according to the purpose, it is on the basis of our being called into the fellowship of God's Son. Our realization or fulfillment of God's purpose in this very creation and in our existence demands a vital relationship with the Lord Jesus. That's where it begins.

There's no explanation of existence, the existence of man or of creation, only, in this way, God's determination to have a dwelling and that that determination is realized and fulfilled, firstly, in the person of his Son, and then secondly, in all where his Son is found. You see, the one thing leads to the other. The presence of God and all this wonderful, wonderful thing that God has determined from all eternity depends upon the presence of Christ and depends upon the measure of the presence of Christ.

You will find God in the measure in which Christ is present. Does that sound too simple like a platitude? But oh, what a lot is bound up with that. God is where Christ is and nowhere else.

And God is in the measure, in his measure of presence, in the measure in which his Son is there. You and I want God in our lives, let us be quite clear about this, that God will only commit himself to his Son, not to us. God doesn't commit himself to men.

Jesus never did that. He did not trust himself to men. He knew what was in men.

It says so. It says so. God doesn't commit himself to you and to me.

Men are always trying to take hold of God, get hold of God, and use God. Even in religion, to use God, to manipulate God, to make God fulfill their schemes, desires, and ambitions, and satisfy them in some enterprise, some undertaking, but God doesn't commit himself. He does never do that.

It must be perfectly clear that God only commits himself to his Son, because it is only Christ who satisfies God and provides him with a sanctuary for his presence, his dwelling. And what is true of the foundation is true of the superstructure. The presence of God in power, in activity, depends entirely upon the measure in which Christ is there.

If God is to be really manifested, our one concern is that the greatest possible measure of Christ shall be found in us and where we are. I know that sounds very simple, but it's here you see. The building, the building of this temple and the building of the wall just says that.

Temple is the sanctuary but the wall. What is the wall? It's the definition. It's the distinction.

It's the limit of what that temple represents. It's the boundary of the presence of God. It defines what is within.

It gives distinctiveness as apart from all else that is in the world outside. That wall says within, within my limit, you discover and know what God is like and where God is. Look at that temple.

I am the testament that God is not only present, but God is like that. And there has to be a distinguishing line and mark between what is of God and what is not of God, that is of the world outside, from which all these counter activities are coming to spoil everything. The wall, understand, is that which speaks of a definition.

No one will dispute with me a statement that if there is one thing needed perhaps more than anything else today, his definition, where the Lord's people are concerned. Definition. Distinctiveness.

Oh how things have got mixed up. How much more has come in than what is of Christ, what is of God. How confused the situation is.

But that wall says so far as God is concerned there's to be none of that. No confusion, no uncertainty, no indefiniteness, no indistinctness. It's going to be all clear cut, clearly defined.

It's going to be God and only God, and everything that is not God is excluded. That is Christ in extension. That is what God is after.

He must have it like that. In principle we know how true it is. Get a mixed up state and how much of the Lord do you find there? Get a confused condition, get the world seeping in, and how much of the Lord do you meet? Get what is of man and the Lord is limited.

Christ was not like that. He never was. See, Christ is a sanctuary not made with hands.

That is not of this creation, to use biblical language. Not of this creation, not made with hands. That is the deepest mystery, meaning of his birth, his birth.

Not of blood, not of blood, a mixture of floods, not of the will of flesh, nor the will of man, but of God. Only of God. His birth was an act of God.

He is different. No wonder there has been such an assault upon the virgin birth. Cut that, undercut that, and you undermine this whole purpose of God to have everything according to Christ.

He is not made with hands. He is not of this creation. He is not of man at all.

He is of God. This wall says so clearly, Christ is different. Christ is other.

Christ is not of this world and his kingdom is not of this world. He is a part, in a word, wholly of God. And so it must be, if God is to have his end, and in fullness there must be this constant work of putting outside the wall what is not of God.

Notice this book has a lot to do with that. Putting it out. There was a time when an enemy on the inside brought furniture into the house of God, but Nehemiah took action and he pitched that furniture out, if the metaphor is not contradictory, lock, stock and barrel.

Out. None of this in here doesn't belong, doesn't belong. So I expect he pitched it over the wall.

But anyway, metaphorically that's what it is. It doesn't belong. And Christ constantly says it doesn't belong, doesn't belong, and all that does not belong has got to go out.

The wall says that. Discriminating definition is the testimony of that wall, wholly of God. Now I'll stop there for the moment, leave you with that.

It is not a small thing, dear friends, to be called by the grace of God into this great purpose, to give to him in our own lives and in our life together as his people, and in this world, the answer to the eternal desire of his heart. Is it a small thing? Is it a small thing? If we count it a small thing, if that does not make an appeal to us, if that does not really come to us with strength, if we do not sense the importance and greatness of that, we can let it go as something said in a meeting, a subject spoken of in a conference. If it does not really register with us as something above all other things, the very explanation of this creation and of our being at all, both in creation and in redemption, the explanation of Christ coming, of Christ living, of Christ dying and rising and going back to heaven in a heavenly session of priestly intercession and everything else, one answer, the one explanation is that in you and in me and in us together, God shall dwell and make his presence known.

If that does not appeal to you, then I can only say that you are a very selfish person, because the very essence of selfishness is not to let the chief one have all that he desires and not to be concerned about it. It must be we've got other interests. Oh no, it's no small thing to be called according to his purpose, to be called to answer to the deepest and ever abiding desire of the heart of God, and therefore God takes infinite pains to make the place of his habitation suitable for the manifestation of his glory.

That is the aim. He's coming to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at in all them that believe. What an aim! What an aim! You ever thought about that? To be glorified in his saints, in his saints, to be marveled at, that all heavenly intelligences look on these saints of pastor's life.

Isn't it marvelous? And you know, angels and archangels do know something about marvelous things. They're not unfamiliar with marvelous things. They have marveled at the creation of the sons of God, shouted for joy at the creation.

They marveled. They marveled in the birth of Christ. They sang for joy and glory to God in the heights.

They're acquainted with marvelous things, but now it says he shall come to be marveled at. Who's going to do the marveling? Who's going to do the marveling? Well, it must be unto these principalities and powers in the heavens that his wonderful grace is displayed in the saints and the angels, I can say it. The marvel of all marvels.

He should be glorified in people like that. What a marvelous thing grace is. That is the aim.

He's working toward that, but that explains his pains. Why he doesn't let go altogether and comes back again to recover. Why he disciplines.

Why he allows us to go through deep and difficult ways to, on the one side, counter this that would counter him, and on the other side to bring him back which provides him with a suitable ground for his full expression. You and I know something about that. Discipline and suffering, but we really understand and interpret God's ways with us.

We can see on the one side there was much that had to be counted, had to be broken, had to be burned up in the fire, and we say amen. Quite right too. But on the other side, we cannot say too much about this.

Indeed, we can't say anything very much about it at all. Nevertheless, we know that grace is doing something. We are being changed.

We have more love for God than we once had, and more of the love of God in us than we once had, and changes are taking place. We cannot speak much about that because it's all too slow and too little. Nevertheless, he's doing it, and the end is to marvel that.

Christ is marvelous, but not just apart from his saints. Marvelous in all them that believe. May we have grace to see him on the ground for his purpose.

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