

# The New Cruse

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The Lord needs a new cruse, a new vessel, to restore and preserve His testimony in the earth, based on a New Testament basis and recognizing the absolute government of the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:19

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "The Lordship of Christ"

---

## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of a 'new cruse' in the context of spiritual renewal and the necessity of having a vessel that is prepared and set apart for God's work. He draws parallels between the waters of Jericho, which lacked salt and thus failed to produce fruit, and the modern church, which often suffers from a lack of clarity and vitality in its spiritual life. The sermon highlights that true life and power come from the glorified Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who must be central to all aspects of salvation, service, and suffering. Sparks calls for a new vessel that embodies the principles of the New Testament, fully yielding to the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to restore the church's testimony in the world. Ultimately, he stresses that this newness may be costly but is essential for the church to fulfill its divine purpose.

---

## Transcript

Reading: 2 Kings 2:19-22; Acts 1, 2; Mark 9:50.

When the above passages are read together it will be seen that they are bound by a common tie; namely, salt, and what it signifies. Throughout the Scriptures salt stands for recovery, preservation, and permanence.

In the first passage mentioned, we have the waters of Jericho lacking in some constituent, which resulted in the miscarriage of the trees; the fruit falling ere it ripened. Nothing reached its intended end; nothing fulfilled its promise. All fell short of its design. Thus the labour proved in vain, and all the toil ended in heart-breaking disappointment. There was the field, there were the trees, there was water, there were labourers, there was much energy, there were good motives. Withal nothing got fully and finally through; it all stopped short somewhere. There was no maturity, satisfaction, and full justification of all the expenditure and effort. Some essential property was absent, and this absence made all else futile as to the ultimate issue. How different from the tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, mentioned in Psalm 1:3!

Now, while it is the "salt" that is the vital and most important thing, it is rather of the cruse that we shall speak for the moment. Acts 2 undoubtedly brings the salt into view, but Acts 1 precedes that. Our attention is first drawn to Elisha's request for a new cruse. (In this passage, the "cruse" probably meant a small pan or dish; the word is related to the "pans" of 2 Chron. 35:13. In other O.T. passages, a flask is probably intended.) Why use a vessel at all? Why not take a handful? And then, why a NEW cruse? Why will not any cruse do? Well, that is just the point. For work like this a vessel must be specially prepared and set apart. What is the nature of the work to be done? What is the condition needing to be dealt with? At rock bottom it is the loss and absence of a distinctive SOMETHING. It is deficiency in respect of a certain distinctiveness. Everything is there but THAT.

The modern spiritual counterpart of this is that things have degenerated into indefiniteness, vagueness, uncertainty, ambiguity, as to real meaning, life, and purpose spiritually. The original meaning of things is no longer there. Things said and done do not mean what they did at first. Terms have come to be applied to, and be used of, that which is not permissible in the realm of their original Divine employment. There is a difference of meaning, and the tragedy is that so many have gone on with the form and fail to see that the power is not there.

If we take the book of Acts as the model, and the epistles as revealing the truth intended by the Lord to be the abiding basis of that which sprang into being in Acts, we cannot fail to be impressed with the presence of a certain something which made everything at that time very much alive and superlative. Whether in respect of what was individual and personal, in salvation, service, and suffering, or of what was corporate, in fellowship and practice, there is only one phrase that expresses the effect of that great something: it is Resurrection Life. There is hardly a chapter in this book but - when you have read it - provokes the spontaneous ejaculation: 'That is life!'

Now, without further delay, what was it that produced this atmosphere and spirit of life? What was it that made everything so wonderful to those concerned? There is only one answer. It was -

THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF.

The Lord Jesus had been glorified, and the Holy Spirit had come as the Spirit of the glorified Lord to glorify Him on the earth (John 16).

Was it the matter of salvation? Well, it was not salvation as such. It was not just BEING SAVED, either from something or unto something, but it was the SAVIOUR. The message of salvation was all focused in who the Lord Jesus was. Look at the preaching. "They ceased not... to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). Find a discourse anywhere in the Acts which 'got through' and you will see that it is - not a treatise on Evangelical Theology - but a presentation of the glorified Lord Jesus. If it was Christ crucified, it was Christ not dead but risen and glorified. Look at the address at Pentecost (Acts 2:32,33,36). See the words to the lame man and the subsequent address in the Temple (ch. 3). Listen to the words addressed to the Council in chapter 4. Whether it be to individuals or to companies, it is always the Lord Jesus who is in full view.

It is the same in the matter of service. In the Acts service is never something appended to salvation as a further consideration. One of the striking omissions in this record is that of exhortations and urgings to propagate the Gospel. Service here is never the result of organization or special pleading and appeals. It is free, spontaneous, eager, 'natural'. It is not of constraint from without. It is not by an appeal to a sense of duty or obligation. It was not something which was special in its connection and time. It was at all times, in

every place, under all circumstances: irrepressible testimony, proclamation, in direct, public manner and in ordinary conversation. "There arose... a great persecution... and they were all scattered abroad... They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching..." (Acts 8:1); "travelled... speaking the word... preaching the Lord Jesus" (11:19,20). What was it that created and produced this? It was the Holy Spirit's glorifying of the Lord Jesus in their hearts! He - the glorified One - was so real to them, and the wonder of who He - "Jesus of Nazareth", the Crucified One - really was, as now revealed and manifested to them and in them, was so great, that even these "new bottles" were finding that unless they let it out this new wine would burst them.

And what was true in the matters of salvation and service, was also the secret of their ability to suffer. There is no doubt that it cost dearly in those days to take sides with 'The Nazarene' - this as amongst men; but to take sides with "The Son of God" was something which provoked Hell. Put together, there is not a little in the record which indicates this suffering; but it was accepted in a spirit of "rejoicing" (Acts 5:41). It all seemed in the spirit of Hebrews 10:34: "Took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions", or: "Received the word in much affliction, with joy" (1 Thess. 1:6). This cannot be attributed to optimism, sanguineness, or merely human good temper. It was not a 'make-the-best-of-it' resolve. It was the reality of the Lord Jesus as Sovereign and reigning.

As it was in these matters which came so directly home to the individual, and which were always individual tests, so it was in the matters which were more of a corporate nature. A 'BAPTISMAL SERVICE' in the Acts was a wonderful time, always accompanied by great rejoicing and a living witness of the Holy Spirit. There was nothing formal about it. It was not just a bit of 'Church' order or teaching. It was not just a command obeyed, or something just for personal blessing. It certainly was not a matter of compulsion, persuasion, or argument. It took place as in full view of the Lord Jesus, as the One who died in the stead of all; whose death was the death of all; and in whose resurrection "they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but UNTO HIM who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor 2:15).

It was UNTO HIM. It was a testimony to a living reality, and a mighty spiritual fact, namely, that the one supreme object of life and all living was the Lord Jesus. All other objects, interests, concerns and visions had gone in their union with Him in His death, and all and only that which was of Him had come for them in union with His resurrection. This matter was lifted out of the realm of ordinances (such as the Jewish) and into the realm of testimonies. Jewish ordinances were looking on to something to come, and they never made anything complete (Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1). These TESTIMONIES looked back to something consummated, into which there was experimental entry.

Just the same atmosphere of glory surrounded the 'LORD'S TABLE' - the "breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42,46). There was nothing of 'Church' duty or rule or regulation in this. This was not something apart and separate from the other life of the Church. This was not a 'service', as something by itself. At the beginning it suffered nothing by frequency - though, alas, it all too soon dropped from this plane. It was the centre and spring of all else. Worship, praise, prayer, the ministry of the Word spontaneously sprang out of this. It was living, and fraught with "great joy" (Acts 8:8; 15:3). It was to those who thus gathered and worshipped that "the Lord added... day by day those that were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

What, again, was the secret? It was the appreciation of the Lord Jesus. That table gathered all other testimonies into itself and became an all-inclusive testimony. There was the Offering wholly given to God without a reservation, and the will of God utterly done. There was union with that offered One in His death, burial, and resurrection. There was the one life shared by all, as represented in the Blood. There was the

one loaf, which is the one Body, the corporate oneness of all believers. There was the "one hope" (Eph. 4:4), "that blessed hope" (Tit. 2:13), His coming again - 'till He come'. So, then, ought not there to be a wonderful attestation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all? Yes, it was a time of great glorying in the Lord - the Lord was there!

## THE LORD'S PRESENT NEED

Each of the matters mentioned really needs a book to itself, but we merely touch them to lead on to our further point and object. Referring back to what we said in connection with the waters of Jericho, is it not true that in all these matters at the present day, in a very widespread way, the constituent of wonder and glory and life - that spontaneity and overflow in all matters which relate to the Lord Jesus - is lacking? What is needed? Our conviction is that, whatever may or may not be recognised as needed by that which ostensibly stands to represent God in the world today, His own need in the earth is that which will lift all the phases and aspects of the Church's life and work into the realm where this glorying in and glorifying of the Lord Jesus is the dominant characteristic; where formalism yields to life; where all is aglow with His wonderfulness; where His train FILLS the temple; where 'ordinances' are living testimonies; and where all is vital, dynamic and effectual.

No one will disagree with this, but they may with the next. What is necessary to the Lord to bring this about? It is a new cruse, a new vessel. There is so much mixture in the constitution of the vessels today. The world has got in, on the one hand, and the natural man has so much taken hold, on the other. Tradition, formalism, ecclesiasticism and 'mechanicalism' are like chains and fetters upon the Lord. Moreover, as we have already said, things are given different meanings today from what they had at first under the sanction of the Holy Spirit.

A new cruse is needed, and it must be that which has been made like unto the Lord's vessel at the first. It must be:

- (1) That which stands upon an absolutely New Testament basis.
- (2) That which marks the point where God has a clear way because the Cross has brought to zero all the personal interests and resources and confidence of such as form that vessel.
- (3) That which recognises, yields fully to, and glories in, the absolute government of the Holy Spirit in every detail of life and service.
- (4) That which recognises the utter Lordship of the Lord Jesus.
- (5) That which sees in Him all the fullness of wisdom, power, knowledge, grace and everything needed, and draws only upon Him.
- (6) That which is completely selfless and has only one object in view, and that passionately the glory of the Lord Jesus.

We leave till later the matter of securing the vessel, but here emphasize the necessity for it. When the Lord gets it - and He is getting it - He will make it the instrument for the restoration and preservation of His testimony in the earth. This newness may be costly, but then, special usefulness to the Lord is always costly.

No, this is not an appeal for a new sect! It is an appeal for a people embodying the principle and power of "newness of life".

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-new-cruse/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**