

The People That Do Exploits

by T. Austin-Sparks

The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits, and this is made possible by a personal, inward experience of knowing God through revelation, obedience, and the testing of pain.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Daniel 11:32, John 17:3, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Ephesians 1:17-18, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:10, 2 Timothy 1:7, James 1:12

Topics: "Knowing God", "Divine Strength"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that true strength and the ability to perform great exploits come from knowing God deeply and personally. He contrasts the transient power of worldly empires with the enduring strength of a small group of believers who, despite being overlooked by society, possess a vital relationship with God. This knowledge is not merely intellectual but is birthed through personal revelation, pain, and obedience, allowing believers to access divine power that transcends worldly systems. Sparks urges the congregation to seek a first-hand experience of God that transforms doctrine into living truth, enabling them to stand firm in faith regardless of circumstances. Ultimately, it is this intimate knowledge of God that empowers believers to overcome and achieve great things in His name.

Transcript

"But the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." - Dan. 11:32.

That word "but" marks the climax. It is preceded by visions of the rise and fall of great world powers. Up to this point we see men and their individual influence, armies and their conquests, kings and empires in their far-reaching sway. There is a veritable pageant of the dominions of the world as they proceed and recede. They come in splendour upon the stage, and then pass altogether out of the great world drama. Then finally it reaches this point, and you get a "BUT," and from that onward, the whole scene changes. The outlook is entirely different, the scale of values is revolutionized. From this point it is no longer a question of numbers and wealth or human importance, or any of the things which the world calls great.

There appears now upon the scene a comparatively small company, a group of men and women whom the world will despise and reject, and relegate to the category of the unfit, the inefficient; whom the world will not count among its mighty, its valiant. They will be overlooked when the world is in search of such as it requires to do its big things. On the human side they will be altogether at a discount. There is nothing whatever as a basis upon which they can hope for any success here, nothing whatever which gives them - judged from the human standpoint - any confidence or assurance or hope of success here, and yet, in the

unfolding of things, these are the people which count, and it is before these that all the glory and power and might of the world breaks down. This small, despised company move out with some secret vital mystic force at their centre, and they go forth conquering and to conquer. Before them the great systems of the world give way and go down in defeat. There is a mighty change in the picture, swinging upon one word. How often, in the Divine unfolding of the Scriptures, it is that one little word "but," that changes things. "BUT GOD," and then everything changes. Said Joseph to his brethren, "Ye meant it unto me for evil - but God meant it unto good."

Who are this little company, and what is their secret? "But the people that do know their God..." These are they who know their God, and that is the secret. Would that it were possible for us to have the depth of that declaration, that we could realize all that is summarised in that statement, "Do know their God." There is something infinitely more in knowing the Lord than we have yet recognised. "The people that do know their God" - you want to know what that means. It is a knowledge of God in His power as Sovereign, in His executive authority, in His supremacy. But the knowledge goes deeper than that, it is not merely knowing God as Sovereign, it is knowing God in that way that releases that sovereignty and causes it to function through the people that so know Him. It is knowing God in a vital relationship and union and oneness which makes the exercise and execution of the power possible in this world through such as possess this knowledge. God is on the Throne, and He has all power and all the resources necessary for dealing with the world situation, but He has so chosen and ordained, that the exercise and the demonstration of His fulness of power and might and glory, should be through those who have been brought into a vital union with Him on the basis of a personal knowledge of Him in His fulness.

The New Testament is a marvelous revelation of that victory. After the Cross, all the fulness of the Divine power was released upon the world through those who had been brought into absolute oneness with the Lord by that Cross. That is the peculiar kind of knowledge which means the release of such forces and such powers upon the world situation as are unknown by the great world systems.

First, let us remember that this knowledge of God is by revelation. We can never get this knowledge of God merely by reading, by listening, by attending meetings. As one looks out over gatherings of the Lord's people one wonders just how many of those we see at every meeting and every Conference have got this thing by personal revelation, and how many are only standing in that which they have heard the speakers say. If this thing is not given to you by the Holy Spirit's working it into your very being, and making it a part of you in a personal revelation and an inward birth, then you may hear all the truth possible and it will prove ineffective. How many of you who know this thing as a theory, a teaching, from A to Z, are really the via media of that transcendent power of God for the working of it out?

You may understand it all by mental apprehension, know the terms and the verses, and use them - but what about the dynamic of this thing? What does our personal presence in a situation mean? Does it mean that there is the going out of a power which cannot be accounted for on any human basis whatever, but which is a greater force than the forces that are represented by world organizations, world methods, world resources? It is a most important question. Is this thing alive, or have we merely got a little more mental apprehension of it through conferences? Do we know God in this thing by reason of a personal inward revelation on the subject. Paul makes a point of this. "It pleased the Lord to reveal His Son in me" "By revelation, not from man." 'I went not up to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles, I went into Arabia, and this thing was wrought out in me.'

Some of us remember well the day of our pressing through fully to experience, when the thing about which we had been talking for so long suddenly, by a marvellous act of the Spirit, became life in us, and we were able to say "This is THAT"! "This is that which was spoken by the prophet." There was a transition from known truth to living truth; from known doctrine to present experience; and the ringing declaration went forth - "This is THAT"!

We have all got to know that transition. We have the doctrine, and now the thing has to be quickened; made life in us, until we independently stand in the power of it. How much do you depend upon conferences and teachers to keep you going? Must you attend meetings just because you feel that the last lot you got has been used up and you must get a fresh supply? Or have you been emancipated from all human props and put into a place of glorious independence, because you KNOW YOUR GOD? It doesn't matter if you are plunged into the middle of the Sahara, you know your God and can stand independently of all natural helps - this thing has become YOU! That is the kind of knowledge that means power. That is the kind of experience which overcomes the world. That is the kind of thing that makes all the other systems go down, and you rise triumphantly above them. That was the secret of the apostolic church. Let kings do what they like, let the people rage - it goes on, and it is the Roman Empire that goes to pieces before this thing, and not this thing that goes down before the Roman Empire. It is an independent personal knowledge of God, resultant from an inward birth, that lives. Not only an objective truth, but a subjective power, and it is a great day when the slightest fragment of known truth becomes a vital personal experience in its working ability. That is what we want. First-hand knowledge, not second-hand truth. May God work this into our very beings until it becomes us. Take it in fragments if you like, and ask the Lord to work it out in you and make it live in you.

Secondly, it comes by the way of pain. You get a thing revealed to you as truth, perhaps something about the Cross of Christ, or victory over Satan, and you think you know it, and you say, This is beautiful! And you begin to talk about it, and it is not very long before something happens - your circumstances are touched. Now you go down with this truth, down into the vortex of awful agony, right down to the gates of hell, your being is upheaved right from the very bottom, and all the time there is the question - "Will that truth hold good?" Is it going to work? And when you have got down as far as you can go, the flesh elements and the self elements have been dealt with, and you grimly hold on to the Lord in this matter of victory - then it comes out, you have tested it right to the very bottom of your being - that thing has become you, and then you can go to others in their grim conflict and their darkness, and say. "I know - I know this thing, and I know God is faithful, I know the victory." You have got a mighty emphasis on your knowledge, it is a thing about which you have no doubt, because you have gone down into the depths with it, and proved it down there, and by the very pain the thing has been proved. It is the people who know their God like that, who count. There is a power which is greater than all the other powers of the universe, and that power is to be mediated through you, but only as you know God on the basis of a personal experience through pain and suffering.

Then this knowledge of God only comes by implicit and unreserved obedience. "If any man willeth to do... he shall know," and you never advance in your personal knowledge of God beyond the point of your will. If there is something upon which the Holy Spirit ever so gently puts His finger, and that thing at once starts debating in your consciousness, a quarrel as to whether it is right or wrong, - beyond the point of your dealing with that thing, you do not develop one fraction of an inch in your knowledge of God. Your knowledge of God depends utterly and absolutely upon your attention and obedience to every phase and every little bit of Divine revelation. You cannot know God beyond the point of your obedience to what you

already know of Him. He will give you no further revelation of Himself beyond that point where you obey what you know. There are a good many Christians today who have stopped growing - who are where they were ten years ago, they are not moving on, the Divine revelation is not growing. If the truth were known, there is something upon which the Lord put His finger, and they did not attend to it. If we are going to know the Lord in this way, we must attend in a practical way to every bit of revelation and see that it is fully obeyed. If we want to know the fulness of an ever-growing power, it will only be as we respond to every dear command of His, answer every bit of revelation, and make it live, and this will give us a wonderful spiritual and moral ascendancy - when everything else is going wrong, then will be the strategic opportunity, and it is in strategic opportunities that we are found out.

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