

The Wonderful Balance in the Life of the Lord

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of balance in the life of Christ and the need for the Church to express what Christ is, which is a balance of strength, love, truth, and life.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Conformity to Christ", "Balance in Life"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the perfect balance of mind, heart, and will in the life of Jesus, contrasting it with the natural tendencies of people who often lean towards one aspect over the others. He explains that while individuals may be dominated by intellect, emotion, or will, Christ exemplifies a harmonious integration of all three, which is essential for a Spirit-led life. The sermon calls for believers to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to achieve this balance, which is crucial for the health of the Church and its ability to reflect Christ's nature. Sparks highlights the need for the Church to embody Christ's balance, avoiding extremes that can lead to dysfunction and disunity. Ultimately, he encourages a continual pursuit of conformity to Christ's image, recognizing that true change comes from divine intervention.

Transcript

How poised He was, how balanced! Take the matter of mind, heart and will, and you find in His case those three were perfectly balanced. We are very different naturally.

I suppose people as a whole can be divided up into three classes. Firstly, those who are more in the realm of their head than anywhere else. They are all head in one way or another. If they are not intellectual, they are of another kind of mentality - introspective, analyzing, going round things in the mind; all thinking, all puzzling, all reasoning, all working in that realm: that is the chief characteristic. You can see it almost in their faces. It is this trying to get through with the head that more or less characterizes people of a certain class.

Then you have another class, all heart, all feeling, all emotion. They simply live in their feelings, perhaps different forms, but still feelings. They are governed by their feelings, and just how things affect them in the realm of their emotional life. They are either up or they are down, you can never be sure, but you do know that whether they are up or down, it is their feelings that are ruling. If only they would think a little more and not move so much on impulse, they would be more balanced.

The third class - people governed by will, people of a drive, forceful, assertive. The will is unreasoning sometimes. They do not stop to think. They get a drive on but do not think of the damage they are doing to themselves or other people. Their will overrides feeling, very good sometimes to do that, but to be all will, all of that kind of strength, determination, grip, and force, oh, it is overbearing and does a lot of harm.

People are more or less divided into those classes naturally, but you cannot find anything like that with the Lord Jesus on earth. You can find will coming in at times very strong, and sometimes heart, and sometimes mind. Yes, mind could come in, and who could stand up against Him in that realm? Some of His answers silenced, paralyzed, those who were cleverest. Look at some of the answers He gives, some of the ways He deals with a problem. They think they have Him this time, there is no way out. A simple statement - and the whole thing collapses; they have not got Him at all!

But the point is this: while these things are there, they are balanced; there is never strength of will to the hurt of sensibility; there is never strength of emotion to the damage of rightful severity. He does not allow His heart to run away with His sense of judgment. He is perfectly balanced; and that is one of our needs. But that is why the Holy Spirit has come, and this is one of the things that has to take place in a Holy Spirit-ruled life. It has to become a balanced life, to be saved from being lopsided.

Anything over-weighted makes going very uneven. Draw a figure of a circle and divide it into three segments: "mind", "heart", "will". Then put a bump on "will" a little bigger than heart or mind and make your circle into a wheel, and see how evenly you go along, the unevenness of an unbalanced life. It makes going difficult, hard, and uncomfortable.

Take the even poise of our Lord's walk here on earth. Now what we need is that the Spirit of Christ should come in and bring about an adjustment to Him, reconstitute us so that we go along more evenly, not one day on the heights, the next day in the depths, variable, changeable, because our soul-life is so unbalanced. We have a long way to go in this, but conformity to His image moans that, amongst many other things, the bringing of a poise into life and saving us from these terrible effects of straining, of living in one realm of our souls more than another. We do need that. We sometimes sing, "And let our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace." I tell you, I covet that, that ordered life inwardly.

This is why the Word of God so often emphasizes that everything in the Church must be according to Christ. He personally is the new Man; the Church, His Body, is the "one new man". Now here in the Church the Holy Spirit wants to constitute corporately according to Christ, and if the old man comes into the Church with his state of unbalance, and some people or individuals in the Church move along one line and others along another line of natural life, mind, heart, or will, any particular old creation line, they destroy the Church; that is, they nullify its very conception.

In the Church all is to speak of Christ, and therefore in the Church what Christ is has steadily to grow and take ascendancy over all else; and that is why there must be in the Church utter subjection to Christ's Headship. Just as we live from our heads, and our character and nature and actions and speech are all controlled by the head, so the nature of the Church is taken from the nature of Christ; and what the Lord is seeking to get is a Church which does express what Christ is, this balance. Yes, His strength, but also His love; His truth and light, yes; but equally His life. Oh, we can have such a preponderance of light and truth, all head and little heart.

I have known, on the other hand, companies where all is heart, the people falling on one another's necks with effusive terms of so-called love, and yet they are not growing, not coming to a place of responsibility.

It sounds and looks like love, but underneath there is something lacking. They need instruction; they need edifying.

When the Body is fitly framed and compacted, balanced, brought into proper articulation and harmony, taking its nature and its character from Christ, and therefore governed by what He is as the new creation Man, then you are getting what God is after; and you can have that in a local company and in local companies which thereby become not places that stand for some extraordinary truth, something different from all other teachings, and all the time trying to get hold of something that is extraordinary and remote from common recognition. No, you simply get there an embodiment and an expression of Christ; and that is all that God wants, and all we ought to want. People meeting us as companies as well as individuals will be meeting something that touches them. They will say, If only there were more of this, the world would be a different place; and yet this is something so outside the realm of human possibility that only God could do this - this is God! It requires Almighty God, and yet here it is; it touches us - we see that this is what is needed!

Oh, the tragedy in this connection in these days! You hear it on the wireless almost any day; you find the literature of our day just crowded with it, the recognition of the fact that if only things were on the line of Christ, if only Christ's teaching were put into practice, if only Christ and what He was really were here and expressed, how different the world would be! There is plenty of recognition and acknowledgment of that; but on the other side, men at once begin to say, Well, let us get busy on this; we will do this and that to bring it about. They do not recognize that this is a miracle from heaven and that it has to come in by a birth, a reconstituting, a new creation fiat. That is where the gap is, and the tragedy; and men fall between the two.

But we know better: there He is, and there His Spirit is to do it. It seems to take a long time. A little bit of conformity to His image seems to occupy almost a lifetime. But nevertheless He is doing something; it does make a difference to have Christ; there are many changes because Christ has come in, we do know that. There are going to be greater changes yet. After all, whatever we may say about the poverty of things in the Church, the world would be a poor place if the people of God were taken out of it; and it will be, when they have gone. There is something here that is not of the world, and the world needs it.

The Lord help us to see Christ and get continually to Him for this conformity to His image - this taking of the Spirit of Christ, this inward reconstituting after the Son of Man, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

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