

Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Part 7

by T. Austin-Sparks

The costliness of Christ's ministry is a reminder that effective ministry requires fellowship with Christ's suffering and a willingness to pay the price.

Duration: 32:13

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 6:34, John 6:4, John 6:33, 1 Corinthians 11:23

Topics: "Riches Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the significance of the Lord's Table and the act of breaking bread. He references passages from the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John to emphasize the compassion and teaching of Jesus towards the multitude. The speaker highlights the importance of not just receiving the word, but also engaging with it and allowing it to transform our lives. He emphasizes that both the receivers and givers of the word must enter into the suffering and brokenness of Christ in order to effectively minister to others. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for a deep and personal connection with the Lord and His sacrifice.

Transcript

We are going to turn aside from the course which we have been following in the earlier meetings and for the little time this morning be occupied with that which has been engaged in in this little while, the Lord's Table, and I would ask you to turn to one or two passages firstly in the gospel by Mark chapter 6, Mark 6 at verse 34, and he came forth and saw a great multitude and he had compassion on them because they were a sheep not having a shepherd and he began to teach them the gospel by John chapter 6 at verse 4, now the Passover the feast of the Jews was at hand Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him saith unto Philip whence are we to buy bread that these may eat and this he said to prove him for he himself knew what he would do Philip answered him 200 penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them that everyone may take a little.

Verse 33 the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life life unto the world they said therefore unto him Lord evermore give us this bread Jesus said unto them I am the bread of life he that cometh to me shall not hunger he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The first letter to the Corinthians chapter 11 verse 23 I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he break it and said this is my body which is broken for you.

When Philip estimated that 200 penny worth of bread would be the very least to feed the multitude he was putting the price far beyond their human resources to him it represented a very costly undertaking to meet the need of that hungry multitude those scattered and hungry sheep without a shepherd yes but when he had put so large a value and estimate upon what was necessary he was far below the actual cost of what was represented that is the heavenly bread if he had multiplied a thousand times the 200 penny worth he would never have reached the cost and the value of that which was symbolic at that time in the wilderness the bread of heaven that which was in the mind of the Lord he knew what he would do the Lord had in his mind the real meaning of what was taking place and what was in the

mind of the Lord was infinitely more precious than 200 pence multiplied many times this indeed from heaven's standpoint from the Lord's standpoint was costly bread very costly bread beyond the estimate of man when the Lord proceeded to take the loaves break them and give them to the disciples at that time they little realized that they were called into that costliness that they were being brought into actual association with the infinite costliness of the heavenly bread they were being called to minister in fellowship with his sons they little knew it they little recognized it at the moment that he could have applied to this matter what he said in another connection at another time what i do now thou knows not but thou shalt know afterwards he took the loaves and break and what an

infinite fullness is found in that word and break the pity that the revisers have taken from the text and put into the margin was broken for you but as you notice it was there and many authorities recognized that it was there my body which is not only for you but broken for you the infinite cost of that breaking when he called them into partnership with this great breaking and distributing he was really only in a symbolic way calling them into the fellowship of his sufferings which were to become the life of men john gives us the full explanation of the incident in the wilderness the feeding of the multitude jesus explains his act there so what do we have it is in the first place the infinite preciousness and costliness of every fragment of christ that is offered to us every little bit

broken from him so to speak and presented to us contains the great costliness of his redeeming love of his brokenness for our salvation if at any time there is offered to us through a life through a ministry award or in any other way offered to us some small portion of christ as we have taken the fragment this morning each one of us if there is offered to us a fragment of christ in every fragment there is embodied this costliness of our redemption this costliness of the life which he is and gives this costliness us in his brokenness which they're offered to us do not feel dear friends that the ministration of christ to his people needs to be redeemed from the matter of fact matter of course cheapness of the oft repeated hearing of his word receiving that which really does represent him we

have become so accustomed to her hearing going and coming going and coming through the years and hearing and being offered we begin to take it for granted and if we do not do that i think i would find your agreement if i said we don't recognize how infinitely costly every fragment of christ is that is offered to us it's like this you and i need to be delivered from familiarity the weakness of familiarity christ in a sense needs to be redeemed from our lack of appreciation of what any little bit of him really does mean that is the first thing that comes to us out of this record the disciples did not at first realize what it meant the lord jesus put the fragments into their hand gift to us that in afterlife they did you find that they realized that the ministry which was committed to them

was not only a cost the ministry the ministry of infinite importance they entreated besought and prayed that those to whom it was offered should be alive to what was really being presented to them they saw the

tremendous issues bound up with every little bit of christ that they had to offer this is a word for us to realize that we take the loaf and break a small fragment in that fragment in a symbolic way is represented all that the lord jesus had to give by his death and of course that follows this the fellowship of his suffering is inseparable from any kind of ministration of christ to you this may not carry a very strong appeal because you do know something of it i wish i could say this to a great number of those who have ambition to be preachers ambition to get into what is called the

ministry ministry who think of it as something to gratify their own ambition in life they go out display themselves take hold of it for themselves make it serve their own glory a reputation for themselves the fact the fact is if what we have read means this that the fellowship of christ's suffering cannot be separated from any ministry of christ any true ministry of christ that ministry must be born out of a real fellowship with the lord in his suffering the brokenness must be transmitted from him to all who would serve him this again was something that these disciples came to know afterward that day that day outside the multitude to the distribution through their hand how little they understood what they were doing or what the lord was doing what the lord meant by this how little but

they were baptized into his sufferings later and out of that baptism of his passion which they shared came their ministry and it was therefore ministry impregnated with the very passion travail of his soul it became for them a soul matter not a professional thing which they were paid to carry out not even a duty something which run their souls in many a Gethsemane way where they had before god to say not my will but thine at very great cost now this of course has two sides i'm not speaking to a lot of preachers those who would call themselves ministers although it is such a mistake to put certain people into that category and leave the rest out we are all ministers of christ in some way it works both ways to us as those who are every one of us called upon to give something of christ to

this world of need and to his scattered and hungry sheep to give something in some way by life by word by act to give but if it is going to be effective it will be just exactly as his giving of himself was effective on the same principle it costs it just costs anything that is of any value costs if we want our lives to be channels and vehicles for the transmission of something of christ to others let it be understood that such ministration of christ necessitates our fellowship with him in his suffering and will explain why the lord brings us into that fellowship why the suffering why the trial the adversities the affliction of so many kinds why we should have something of christ to carries the real value of our lord well we could say very much about why much ministry does not go very far

does not come for very much those in it are not prepared to pay the price well it works that way so far as our calling to minister christ to others is concerned it will inevitably come out of experiences of suffering and affliction if it is going to be as effective as his has been on the other hand the other way dear friends is not this a call to us for a new evaluation of everything and anything that really is christ if the lord really does give a word which is the content of himself carries himself in it it really behoves us to recognize that this is not something which we can regard lightly there is here the potential of his own infinite suffering a new appreciation of any ministry that is a ministry we say easy come easy go that ought never to be true of our relationship to the lord

either as from him to others or as from him to ourselves the receivers must enter into his suffering as much as the giver if there is to be paid this is but a brief word but it's just an emphasis upon this one thing he took he break he gave the brokenness to them gave up his own brokenness that they might minister him in all the virtue of his sacrifice to others it's a word of comfort because it explains very much it explains

very much it explains why the lord brings us into that fellowship of his passion his sorrow his suffering his disappointment his reproach his despising his rejection his loneliness everything that went to make up his brokenness he brings us into it in some way or other if we are going really to serve him it requires broken ministers to minister a broken Christ and if

we are really to come into the good of every bit of Christ that comes our way presented to us we shall only do it along the path the pathway of his suffering there has to be something that happens between our hearing between it being offered to us and it becoming a return movement to his satisfaction something has to happen we take our food and presently our food becomes our action but something's happened between something's happened between that food that we took at our meal is going through a breaking up and a breaking down process you don't know what's going on or you do sometimes know what's going on in your bodies when you've had a meal some don't but some do that there's a mighty struggle going on that all being broken torn to pieces changed and transmuted something's going on

between the taking in and then the giving out in energy before what we receive of Christ and what we have to give can be very defective there's something to get to go on in us real battle within over this thing a real conflict over that word a real challenge set up in us transmuting energy from the thing received the thing turned to vital energy but is that true always of the congregation congregation comes together and the word is preached the sermon is given the hymn is sung and up and out until the next time I'm afraid that is true very largely and very often not for me to judge of course but having some long experience of that sort of thing one has oh often had to ask the question what was the good of that pouring out what has resulted from it that giving which was costly giving and

one has so often to say well it was just taken perhaps forgotten and another time and yet another and no battle over it no exercise over it no costliness in experience related to it you and I are really going to be built up with the increase of Christ it will be just in this way he took the load and break it and break it that is he took himself and was broken broken oh the anguish suffering the sorrow the travail of that breaking that we might come into the good of it and might have the good of it for others the Lord make this not only a word perhaps of correction perhaps of enlightenment but a word of comfort well that's what we need as he takes us through trial adversity and suffering various kinds one this way and another that way and we feel that it is a breaking process we realize

that it is in order that we shall have something really vital to give for the bread which comes down from heaven is for the information no for the life

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