

Vocational Fellowship - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The call of God is a call into fellowship with Him in a great power, a vocation call that is more than just a call to be saved, and it involves recovering the stolen inheritance and possessing the inheritance with Christ.

Duration: 55:38

Scripture: Isaiah 54:17, Jeremiah 1:5, Jeremiah 17:12, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that as believers, we do not belong to the world or the circumstances we find ourselves in. We have a deep longing to be in our true position, which is with God. The speaker highlights the cost and conflict of living out our faith, but also emphasizes the need for an adequate background to navigate through these challenges. The central theme is the recovery of God's inheritance through the death of Jesus on the cross, and the speaker references Jeremiah 17:12, Jeremiah 1:5, and Acts 1:8 to support this idea.

Transcript

I am going to repeat the three passages of scripture around which our thoughts were gathered this afternoon. Two of them in the prophecies of Jeremiah. The overall passage in chapter 17 and verse 12.

A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. Then under that, from the first chapter, the end of verse 5, I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. And in the book of the Acts, chapter 1, verse 8, Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.

And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost path of the earth. A prophet unto the nations. Witnesses unto the uttermost path of the earth.

And a glorious set on high from the beginning is the place of our We have already covered a considerable amount of ground, laying down foundations for these meditations. The sum and the substance of it all is that the call of God is a call into fellowship with himself in a great power which has been in his heart from the foundation of the world. That is the meaning of being the Lord.

It is a fellowship call. It is a vocation call. It is therefore something very much more than a call to be saved.

That is only the door into the fellowship and into the vocation. Now this evening we are going without any backward look to go on with that. And once more we are blind.

I want to here mention six parts of that whole matter of fellowship with God in vocation. And of course what I am saying although without quoting the scripture is fully based upon and supported by what the word of God teaches. Firstly then, this world was made for and given by God to his Son as his possession and inheritance.

That lies back of everything in history and in the Bible. It lies back of human life. It lies back of everything that the Bible contains.

God designed this world and created it for his Son and gave it to him as his inheritance. Secondly, the world was stolen from God's Son. Something that runs through the Bible and breaks out from the prophets game and again is that God has been robbed.

God has been robbed. God has had his rights taken from him. God's rights are vested in his Son.

And that taking from God relates to the place of God and his Son in this world. And it is not difficult to see. But on the one side the big issue all along is just that.

God has not got his place or his rights. They have been taken from him. If we could comprehend the whole meaning of one big Bible word and understand it, we should see that it just comes back to this thing.

That word righteous. Whole of the content of the word righteous relates to what is right where God is concerned. Righteousness and unrighteousness bear down upon this one issue.

God having his place and being ceded his rights. His rights in character. His rights in creation.

And his rights in government. Well, they are things said. They are big things.

Cover a lot of ground. But this point is that this world has been stolen from God's Son. True, by man's consent.

However, and why for, that's not our matter at the moment. Simple fact is that it's in wrongful hands. It's in hands to which it does not belong.

You know God has written that truth deep and large in history. I wonder if you have ever yourself wondered about one matter. Do you remember in a vision God came to Abraham to make a covenant with him and said thy seed shall be sovereign in a foreign land 400 years before they were in existence.

They were destined to the Egyptian captivity and bondage. Or it was so foreshown that they would be. I have often asked myself when reading the story of Joseph going into Egypt and then bringing his brethren there and his aged father and the seemingly happy times for the present that was theirs.

Why it was necessary for that to become a prison for them for those 400 years. And as we know an awful prison. We know the bondage of how they cried and groaned by reason of that bondage and their taskmasters.

Why? Well we know that Joseph's brethren were not very good kind of fellows. Poor lot perhaps. Didn't treat him very well.

But 400 years was for their what they were. That they should not have been to be heavy punishment. Why? Undetermined or foreknown.

Long before ever they were the bad men they were before they were men at all. Why must this long terrible period be? Well we may not and I may not understand the whole thing. But I do suggest this.

God has written deep and large on the pages of this world. Is in the hands of a power to which it does not belong. While they were there during that period in Pharaoh's hands they did not belong to Pharaoh.

They did not belong to Egypt. And God's word was my people. Let my people go.

Let my son go. In effect. They don't belong to you.

You have no right over them. They belong to me. Now perhaps we could find a very much better fuller reason for Israel later going into the 70 years captivity in Babylon.

For we might say they deserved that. If only to read these prophecies of Jeremiah. Nevertheless there's another aspect another side to it.

That people remained God's people in Babylon. They did not belong to Nebuchadnezzar. They did not belong to Babylon.

They were God's people in wrongful and false government and control. God has written this in history. There is that which is God's which is under a false wrongful government and control and mastery.

It is not where it ought to be. Not in his hands. It's stolen.

Truly as Pharaoh stole Israel and Israel's rights and properties and liberties. As truly as Nebuchadnezzar stole the wealth of the temple. And to the city the people carried it away.

So in a fuller and deeper and of course a spiritual way which is much much worse than the temple. This world which belongs to God has been stolen from God. It is not in possession of God.

It's stolen. God has been robbed. God's son has been robbed of his inheritance.

Thirdly this world therefore is in the deepest sense a lost world. A lost world. Of course lost firstly to its owner.

Its rightful owner. Lost to the purpose for which it was created. Lost to its own rightful state of peace.

And joy. And satisfaction. Lost to all that.

It is lost to its essential unity. Its integration. Lost to that.

That of course needs no arguing, belaboring. It is lost to its glory. It's a lost world.

All in it by nature are lost. Now of course the Lord Jesus made it his business to lay great emphasis upon that fact by every means. By parable and declaration and by work and passion.

He sought to make this quite clear to all that the inheritance is lost. Yes and that it had been stolen. Remember the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandman who said this is the heir.

The heir to whom the inheritance belongs. This is the heir. Come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours.

Oh what meaning the Lord Jesus had in speaking that parable. We know all his other parables about lost things. We have dwelt mainly upon one side of them.

There is another side you know. Satan. The one best known of the prodigal so called.

Well we've gone round that prodigal looking at him from every standpoint. So perhaps you think there's nothing more to be said. And have you ever thought that he didn't belong to the man to whom he hired himself out.

And he did not belong to that world into which he'd gone. And he did not belong to the circumstances and conditions in which he found himself. There's something in him all the time rising up in revolt.

Saying I don't belong here. This is not what I was made for. My whole being cries out.

I'm in a false position. I'm in a wrong position. Where I ought not to be.

I should not be in this. If the coin or the sheep could speak. Those last things.

They would have said the same thing. I am not where I ought to be. Somewhere else.

This is not what I was intended for. Perhaps. So when the Lord Jesus sums it all up and says the son of man came to seek.

And to save that which was lost. He's touching the ultimate things. The ultimate things.

Not just the things of man's salvation in that elementary sense. But man's salvation in its profoundest, uttermost covering of that which has been lost to God's son. His inheritance.

Well there's nothing perhaps new to you about that. But we're on the way. This world was made for and given by God to his son.

It was stolen from him. By a power that has no real right over it. It is therefore a lost world.

But then. Thoughtfully. God's son came into this world with the supreme object of recovering the inheritance to himself.

Of again retrieving the loss and securing the lost inheritance to himself. As its rightful owner. And the aim is perhaps the simple gospel.

Let us get back of everything and see what it is that lies there at the root of his coming. Leaving everything. Leaving everything.

Being divested of everything in heaven. And coming here. And coming to the day of which we are thinking today.

Even the death of the cross. The thing that lies right at the heart of all that is the recovery of his inheritance. Now let me solemnly and reverently touch a point.

Which goes deeper than anything else in this matter. When the Lord Jesus on the cross cried. Ali.

Ali. Lama Sabatan. He went out into the lost place.

The place of the lost. The place where the scapegoat was loosed and driven to the wilderness. Away from man and God.

He took the place of a lost world. And a lost humanity. He has lost everything.

The desolation of his soul. At that moment he has lost God. Lost heaven.

Yes. Lost. It is a terrible phrase and I hesitate to use it.

It was like a lost soul. Say it with some support that he poured out his soul unto death. What is death? All is gone.

And he went out there to bring back in his own person the lost inheritance of man. He touched to the very depth, to the bottom, our loss. And God's loss.

And his own loss. Oh the wonder of the resurrection. It's essential to the whole.

But you see this world was lost. But even that, dear friends, is not all. That's all true.

That's all true. But there's an extra factor in it all. An extra factor and element in that.

Out there in that darkness and desolation. That wilderness of forsakenness. Things were by no means passive.

Out there he went to meet the one who had robbed him and God of everything. Whom he himself called the prince of this world. Out there as truly and yet more truly and more fully than the combat of the forty days after his baptism.

With the prince of this world. He met the usurper. He met the false prince.

He met the robber. The stealer. And in awful conflict in that darkness he wrestled.

His great wrestle with the powers of darkness. So terrible that the psalmist well describes them, they encompassed me about like bees. They encompassed me about like bees.

He's host of wicked spirits of which Paul speaks. Out there he met that whole kingdom and hierarchy in full force. He plunged in his imperial strength the depths of darkness down.

He brought his trophy up sadly. The proud usurper. He wrested the inheritance from the false prince.

He fought this whole battle out. In that dark moment on the cross. Oh what a lot can be crowded in to a few moments.

An eternity can. So it was. You see the cross.

The cross was a far far bigger thing than a crucifix. Than a crucifixion. It is cosmic.

It encompasses the whole range of heaven and earth. But that was all focused on that spot in that moment. He fought it through.

His spiritual combat with the prince of this world and his people. And he triumphed by his cross. He stripped off, made a show of them openly.

Triumphing over them in his cross. That's number five. Number six.

As the victor prince. He returned from the fight. Brought back by the power and coming back.

He calls his fellow heirs to the vocation. Of possessing the inheritance with him. Taking the inheritance which he has secured in himself.

He calls the fellow heirs. And you know that's the scripture. Heirs of God.

And joint heirs with Jesus Christ. He calls them to this great vocation. And conflict of the inheritance.

That is the meaning of the Christian life. Of being a Christian. Called into the fellowship of his son.

Called as fellow heirs with him. To share the inheritance with him. But called into the vocation of taking the inheritance.

And fighting its battle. And it is unto all the nations. To the uttermost part of the earth.

The vocation of every Christian. Listen. The vocation of every Christian.

That includes you. Individually. And me.

Is to have our feet down. On some patch of this earth. In the name of the Lord Jesus.

And that other one with all his powers will try to shift you. Move you. To force you out.

Drive you out. To make it impossible for you to stay. But that name is sufficient.

That name is enough. He has won. Not in our victory.

But in his. The methods of those evil forces are too many to count and enumerate and mention. But I put my finger upon one very favorite one.

Which no doubt is a very live issue with you and with me. The live issue. And that is as the accuser of the broken.

And if he cannot get us broken on the matter of Christ's redemptive work. For our ultimate salvation. He will seek to cripple and paralyze us.

On the ground of our unworthiness. To be the Lord's at all and the Lord's servant. You know it's the Lord's servants who know most about the work of the accuser.

Because it's the vocation that he's up. Because it's the vocation that he's up. And this is an issue which is alive right to the end.

Dear friends. You may think that you have got past the letter to the Romans. And you may have got into the letter to the Ephesians.

God help you. God help you. You love testimony of one who is not a novice and a beginner in these things.

By any means. It is that I need the letter to the Romans more today. Than ever in all my Christian life.

A great justification by faith. Or let me put it in another way. Righteousness of God.

You see. That is not only a salvation truth. That's a battle truth.

That's a warrior truth. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. And every tongue that rises against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. It's all true. So what does it apply? Men forge their weapons against the people of God.

And they succeed. Men raise their tongues of accusation against the people of God. And they succeed.

Is it true? Apply it to the forces of evil. Back of everything. And it's true.

Fine. And their righteousness is of me. And that bluntens every weapon of the accuser.

Their righteousness. The opposition of the enemy is along this line. To make you surrender to the idea of your non-acceptance by the Lord.

Your rejection by the Lord. Your being set aside by the Lord because, because look at you what you are. It's a terrible battle.

But their righteousness is of me. It's the letter to the Romans. We need it in the battle.

We need it to begin and we need it at the end. We're in this battle. We are called into it for the inheritance.

Inheritance is not salvation. We do nothing to earn salvation. Inheritance is far, far more than that.

He calls us into this vocation of taking, taking his right spot. And I repeat, where you are, in your home, in your business, in your place of spiritual service, in any part of this world, as in fellowship with Jesus Christ, you're in fellowship with this great vocation. Hold that place for him in his name.

And not to move until the Lord says. The Lord does move us and tells us to move sometimes. But we must have the Lord's will or the enemy will make a great mess of us.

Now, there are three things, of course, in this sixth point. The rightful and victorious prince of this world calls us, as fellow heirs, into the vocation and conflict of recovering the inheritance. That means that in the very call into fellowship with God's Son, there is inherent conflict.

You never realize that conflict until you take sides with Jesus Christ. It's then that it wakes up. You find yourself almost immediately in some atmosphere that is charged with antagonism, without speaking or doing anything.

You've got to get up and preach. It's there. It's there.

You're aware of it. As you go on with the Lord and the more you go on with the Lord, the more this very atmosphere of antagonism grows upon you. It's not a very comforting gospel, this, for you, I know.

But you know it's true. And the more you count for the inheritance, or the more anything counts for the inheritance, the more violent I can mention here, and it will be for your prayer. I had a long letter during this week from a dear aged sister, whose name is known to many of you, whose writings perhaps to more.

The writer of God's plan of redemption. One who has meant much for the Lord and the inheritance through a long life. Now lying in a nursing home after a very bad accident, from which it is doubtful, very much alone, and in her letter she said, I am the target of the assault of the evil powers in a way which I've never known.

Pray for me. Ask your friends to pray for me. There's one who has meant much to the Lord in the matter of the inheritance.

You would say, well, at times she had the waters of quietness. The Lord gave her a calm evening. But dear friends, that's no isolated case.

Everywhere, those who really represent something is intent to do that. God only knows what their dear servant of His, in China, now in his seventh year, what he knows of the awful conflict. He doesn't know, unfortunately, of the tremendous values of his ministry.

How he's kept us going here for months with his ministry, his demands that can hardly be met through that book or those books which he knew. But we know. We know.

You saw the correspondence about that book. Hear the report. You get tremendously that it's doing this in many parts of the world.

You would understand then, realise that there's something in this, not for naught. It's like this. If you don't count much for the Lord, you won't know much about that.

And there are many, many Christians who are turning Christianity into a mere picnic. A good time, let's say, I want to know what the intrinsic value, the ultimate value is going to be. What the Prince of this world, so-called, thinks about it, may be very clear.

That the call to fellowship with God's Son in this great vocation has inherently in it. Second thing is that our business is to get for Christ the token out of the nation. The token out of them.

We are not at all told or taught in the word of God that in the first the world will be one for Christ. But we are told that the first thing, notice that's how it's put. God first looked to take out of the nation the people of God's name.

Take out of the nation the token of the nation. This is where you are in your business, in the place where your feet are put down. Stand there if by any means there shall be taken a token of the inheritance in view of the great day.

Yes, common language, parlance, speaks about soul winning and so on. But that's what it is. See something bigger even than getting people saved and brought to Christ.

That's important. Sustained and dates back to a dateless time called the beginning. Reaches through the ages on to the ages of the age.

One thing into that human, in the first, it's a token. Not a token but it's a token. Lies along that line.

Possession of the nation is asked of me and I will give the uttermost. It is to be fully fulfilled. Can you shuffle a few minutes longer? Because I want to come to Jeremiah.

The cost of all this is great. As many of you well know. The conflict is fear.

The demands upon us sometimes seem to be immense. The interests are so vital. So vital.

That something is absolutely necessary. We must have an adequate for getting through. I have not exaggerated.

Believe me if you don't know what I'm talking about. Believe me some do. The involvements in this great business are very, very great and very serious and very exact.

Upon the sense it is adequate to meet it all and go through. Oh, read again Jeremiah. You have the patience to read right through this.

Hear this man's groans and cries and sighs. Hear him saying woe is me, my mother. He called the weeping prophet.

I think wrongly so. The man who was right up against this terrible business. Terrible business.

At last they dropped him into a deep, dark mire. Left him as not a kindly Ethiopian. Hearing of his flight gone to take root and bring up Jeremiah at the pit.

As Dr. Meyer says about it, there was the extra touch of kindness and understanding even with the Ethiopian when he took a lot of old rags round the road to go under. No unnecessarily. To go through.

Go through all that. Dear friends, to go through it all. And if you feel sometimes it's a hard way and an impossible way to get through.

You need something and you need what Jeremiah had and what did he have. A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of ours. Break that up.

Break it up. A glorious throne. There is a seat of government set on high.

Above all this. All this. Above all this.

Not yesterday or today but from eternity. From the beginning. Thrones have been there from the beginning.

Some eternal throne set on high from the beginning is ours. What picture does that bring up to your eyes? You see the fugitive. You see the one being pursued by the avenger of blood.

Running and rushing for his very life. For the city of refuge. The place of sanctuary.

The glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our refuge. Our sanctuary. Our security.

Our safety. Our victory. And when you come to think about it.

Not only Jeremiah but Isaiah. Fulfilled his ministry on the strength of that in the year that Isaiah died I saw the Lord. High and lifted up and sitting upon a throne.

And Isaiah had to go through that. Ezekiel. I was right by the river Kibar and I saw visions of God.

Heavens were open. Above the permanent throne. And above it upon the lightened festival.

What is the word that covers the book of Daniel? And Daniel knew something about this. Conflict and conflict. The heavens do not know the best.

And the same secret was that which carried Paul through all his suffering and trouble. He had seen the Lord Jesus. High and lifted up in glory.

So only as we do see God raised him from the dead. Set him at his own right hand far above all rule and authority. Principality and power and every name that was made.

Highly exalted and given the name which is above everything. Only so shall we get through. But so shall we get through.

We see him there. Know that he is there. Keep our eyes on him there.

Glorious on high. From of old our Lord.

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