

# Vocational Fellowship - Part 5

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and fulfilling God's divine purpose in salvation through vocational fellowship with Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:05:38

**Scripture:** Psalm 2:8, Jeremiah 1:4-5, Jeremiah 17:12, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 1:8

**Topics:** "Fellowship"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being in line with God's purpose. He uses the story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife as an example of how God sovereignly works to restore and forgive His people. The speaker also highlights the need for ministers of God's word to embody the message they preach and to share in the passion of God's heart. He references the prophet Jeremiah as an example of someone who faced numerous challenges and yet remained committed to God's calling. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the grace and faithfulness of God in the face of human weakness and sin.

---

## Transcript

I trust that it will not be a weariness to the friends who were with us earlier, if I go right through those passages of the word which we had as our foundation, but it seems necessary in view of there being quite a number here who have not been earlier, and in any case we must have a good foundation in the word, and I think in bringing these portions together they themselves constitute a vision of divine purpose and thought, so we'll get on with it and turn to our overall fragment in the prophecies of Jeremiah chapter 17 and verse 12 a glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary and then in the letter to the Hebrews chapter 1 verse 8 of the son he saith thy throne O God is forever and ever the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom the

second psalm second psalm and verse 8 ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost heart of the earth for thy possession book of the Acts chapter 1 and verse 8 ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you ye shall be my witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth back to Jeremiah chapter 1 and verse 4 word of the Lord came unto me saying before I formed thee I knew thee before thou camest forth I sanctified thee I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nation then said I ah Lord God behold I cannot speak for I am a child the Lord said unto me say not I am a child for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak be not afraid because of them for I am with thee to deliver thee

saith the Lord then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth the Lord said unto me behold I have put my words in thy mouth see I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow to build and to plant and finally the letter to the Ephesians chapter 1 first part of verse 4 he chose us in him before the foundation of the world verse 9 having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times to sum up all things in Christ things in the heavens things upon the earth in him I say now this afternoon we are going to move from the wider circumference to the more inward application what is before us we believe by the Lord's

appointing is great wonderful truth and reality that the call which has come to us and to the people of God contains a very great purpose it would not be surprising if a failure to know and to apprehend the great purpose of God through salvation resulted in a number of disappointing conditions because as I think we shall see as we go on the real fullness of the meaning of Christ to the believer lies right there in the purpose for which he has brought them into fellowship with himself it does not lie in their just and this is not of course minimizing or undervaluing salvation in its initial and elementary phases but it does not all lie there only potentially and intentionally you as you know perhaps very well perhaps too well can be saved and stay there for the rest of your life rejoicing

in the fact what that means but knowing painfully little of all the great inheritance that is in Christ and that ignorance resulting in such limitation in life is due to this not to ignorance of the way of salvation but to ignorance as to the purpose of salvation and the purpose now as well as in the ages to come so that the emphasis of this time is upon that for which we are saved unto which we have been called in Christ Jesus and although it will be said again and again let us say it here now that purpose is not only to have and not only to be but it is to fulfill a vocation all the having and all the being is unto a great service to the Lord now we spent the whole morning on that and sorry as we may be for those who didn't get it we have to go on we want to get as I have said right on

the inside of this matter this afternoon as the Lord will help us you will have probably been aware that so much of what we read in other places is very much if not all together of a piece with what we read in Jeremiah there you have the throne on high from the beginning a glorious throne thy throne O God is forever and ever and of the sun he said it the throne as something relating to the nations to the uttermost part of the earth Jeremiah was told that he was appointed a prophet to the nations to the nations not only to the nations but to the nations and the fulfillment of his tremendous, tremendous in range and tremendous in cost his tremendous ministry and vocation was only possible with that throne in view as his place of refuge and appeal and resource to the Lord Jesus the father is

heard saying Lord my son this day have I begotten thee ask of me I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession that son later said to the nucleus of the church with the whole church in view ye shall be witnesses unto me unto the uttermost part of the earth in other words you are related to the father's intention to give me the nations for mine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession that's your business that's your commission that's your vocation having made known unto us the mystery the secret of his will to re-gather all things into Christ he's made that known to us why because he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world in piecing it all together it makes one picture and comes right

up to this the purpose for which we have been brought into fellowship with God's son it is to repeat the phrase we've used many times a vocational fellowship with God's son now then to come to this matter and

to allow Jeremiah in his experience in his function to interpret for us because it's all one thing whether it's Old Testament or new it's one purpose and it's one way of God Jeremiah can help us a lot as a focus of all that we have said we take out then these verses right at the beginning of his life and what we are in the presence of God acting sovereignly in relation to his purpose what a tremendous thing this book of Jeremiah discloses as to the sovereign activities of God it is God acting in his own right God acting on his own initiative God himself the originator and projector

of everything it is God taking things in hand personally and bringing them out of his own counsels the counsel of his own will and this book of Jeremiah is full of the fact and then of the features of this sovereign movement and action of God in relation to purpose dear friends the language may sound technical even theological if you can get through the language the very word sovereignty is a word that has been taken up and made a basis of tremendous controversy you can get through the words and the phrases to the truth that lies behind you have we have an impregnable rock an unshakable rock of confidence the Lord is many times in the scriptures called the rock and Psalmist found that as a favorite title for the Lord and we need something rock like upon which to stand and to rest and

Jeremiah needed a rock under his feet I don't know how many of you are familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah perhaps you have not studied them very much perhaps you think that they are not particularly interesting or inspiring perhaps a bit depressing but those of you who know know this that if ever a man needed a rock under his feet Jeremiah did all the forces that he encountered that broke upon him Jeremiah would not have survived at all let alone at last triumphed with his ministry but for a rock under his feet and that which was of the nature of a rock was this this it's all in one word repeated how many times underline it in your Bible I I before before thou camest forth I knew thee I formed thee I have made thee a prophet of the nation I have put my word in thy mouth I knew thee

I formed thee I chose thee I appointed thee I equipped thee I put my word in thy mouth I if Jeremiah had started this business he wouldn't have got very far if someone else had put him into it he would have had good reason for a controversy with them and to retire very early in life that he went through and for forty forty-five years of unceasing and ever growing antagonism and hostility suffering few men have known or surpassed he went through and I believe that it was because of this that underneath him and behind him was this which remained I did not put myself into this I did not take this work on this was not my idea for my life I really had nothing to do with it indeed if I could have escaped it I would but I came under a divine compulsion I am where I am I am doing what I am I am

what I am because God said I knew thee formed thee appointed thee sent thee the divine sovereignty in action you say that's all right quite obvious Jeremiah we accept it for him now does the letter to the Ephesians apply Jeremiah to the Apostle Paul or to some special servants of the Lord or is it the message to the church if it is the message to the church as it surely is it almost begins with this he chose us he chose us in him before the foundation of the world I wonder how you define and explain your conversion how do you put it when you refer to your whatever it was coming to the Lord coming to know the Lord I was saved on such and such a day I came to know the Lord at such and such a time I was born again oh we have many ways of putting it I wonder how you put it do you know dear

friends that the true way all these of course are true in their way but the truly adequate way to explain it is this right back from eternity past before this world was a hand reached out to my lifetime and took hold of me and in so doing brought me right into something that was in the mind of God before the world was created that's the meaning of our salvation it is not just something that happens someday in our lifetime

there is concentrated into every true new birth from above all the meaning and intention of God's great purpose concerning his son that he shall give to his son the nations for his inheritance the uttermost part of the earth for his possession that's in our being Christians our being the Lord's it's all there and if all who are born again or saved call it what you may

could only get something something of that into their hearts and into their understanding early on at the beginning don't you think that their spiritual progress would be much more rapid that their measure as Christians would be much more greater much greater there it is saved well saved and saved so long ago and today not much more than when it happened why? for this very reason an insufficient apprehension of the greatness of the purpose bound up with salvation that's it dear our being here this afternoon in this room as born from above children of God has right in it this and no lesser meaning than this that we have been reached unto from eternity to be brought into that fellowship with God's son for the ultimate possession of the nations and the regathering of all things into him now

of course we must ever keep in view the relative factor in this all that cannot in the very nature of it quite obviously all that cannot be gathered into any one individual or into any number of individuals as separate individuals and entities we are a part of a great whole it is the church that is the elect the chosen vessel for that purpose but having said that we can go on now you see there are a number of things a large number of things and great things that go with that to which we have no right to which we can make no claim only as we get right into line with God's purpose concerning his son in fullness and stay there now what do we mean? well look again at Jeremiah as instancing this when God becomes possessed of a vessel an instrument for this purpose of his heart this counsel of

his will this secret of this translated this mystery among the nations when God gets hold of a people in line with that to that vessel and instrument he commits himself that's the next thing God acts and then getting the response to his sovereign action he commits himself to that vessel to that instrument and Jeremiah is a wonderful example of an instrument or a vessel to which God committed himself go away and read through again sure you'll want to but you'll have to read through again and see how many times it looked as though Jeremiah was finished by the designs and the cruelty the hostility and the wickedness of men finished by the weariness the awful weariness of his own hard way finished by the drooping of his own soul I said I will know not finish go through again and again for

reasons within himself and outside of himself looks as though Jeremiah is finished at last you reach that terrible time when the behemoth wrath fury against him has taken him and dropped him down into a deep dark muddy pit in which he sinks up to his arms to be left starved and dark finished well he's finished now who can survive all this the accumulation of things and this but he survived he survived came up out of the pit and went on for quite a long time when he's worth and even when his prophecies being fulfilled they came and destroyed came up out of the pit and went on for quite a long time when he's worth and even when his prophecies being fulfilled they came and destroyed Jerusalem carried away all who had opposed the very very king himself who was doing it all Marked out Jeremiah

to be saved set him free told him he could go where he liked God in committing himself to this vessel saw to it that he continued as long as he wanted him to continue let all the forces men and devils and all the human weaknesses and readiness to give up seem to say it's impossible to go on you'll never get through when God commits himself there is continuance until God says I'm finished that's what it means oh it's a tremendous thing dear friends to be right in line with God's purpose God will commit himself to that and there will be continuance until God writes the day I'll finish on that story that's the sovereign continuance of

God well you have that so much in the bible many ways of course that is the explanation of that symbol in the life of Moses the bush that did not burn and was

not consumed the medium of his call and commission to Moses if ever a man found within himself and in those about him reason to again and again give it all up say I just can't go on anymore indeed he did cry outside sometimes oh Lord I cannot bear this people but he did until God buried him till God fixed the day where he's going he went through all the weariness and all the winter and all the trouble because God was in the bush had committed himself the unquenchable fire until God's work is done well I dare not pick up the bible along that line that you can see there it is and what am I saying I'm saying to you that if you if you come right into line with God's purpose wholly committed to God's purpose concerning his son and keep that you'll go through you may have all that Jeremiah had

if not literally spiritually you'll go through it's a wonderful wonderful story of the continuance the continuance of a vessel to which God has committed himself get out of line with God's full purpose on to some subsidiary line some bypass some other track some alternative and this will not obtain it will not obtain here is God's sovereignty then seen in Jeremiah in the matter of his continuance and in the matter of many particular deliverances many particular deliverances again and again God stepped right into the critical moment and cut short the course that was threatening the life of this man and then when all was done the final vindication Jeremiah much has been made and it's a gloomy side side that none of us like to contemplate much has been made the fact that Jeremiah was called

to a ministry that was never going to succeed call the people of God back to him and it was destined to failure in a sense they never did they never did come back in a sense it looked as though he was giving his whole life to a lost cause oh well for the time being that is how it appears perhaps that is how it is but don't forget the return of the remnant from the judgment in captivity was definitely put on record written in the Chronicles of the history of Israel written most probably by a man who was in it Ezra wrote the Chronicles the books of the Chronicles Ezra the scribe it was put there right at the beginning of the Chronicles of Israel that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled the Lord stirred up the spirit Osiris pagan king great good noble but

ignorant of God Risa said I have surname thee although thou hast not known me one day felt himself strangely moved within to think about these people that he got in his dominion these Hebrews and to look into their history and their case not to just let this thing drag on but to see if something shouldn't be done about it this came on him this came on him he could get away from it perhaps it became almost an obsession day and night this man was disturbing his rest and engaging his attention and causing him to look into it the spirit of God was doing what taking up the ministry of Jeremiah and making Osiris fulfill it vindicating Jeremiah want to know what lies behind that remnant coming back and rebuilding of the house and of the wall and all those final activities of recovery the answer

is Jeremiah Jeremiah isn't this sovereignty Jeremiah wasn't on the scene here on earth to see it I don't know whether he was watching it all from heaven whether or not he would know all about it but his labor was not in vain in the door God was committed to him and there was an ultimate vindication of Jeremiah well there may be a good deal of adversity may be a lot of time taken may be much suffering and cost but a vessel that is right in line with God's purpose concerning his son will stand vindicated at last at last vindicated God Almighty has committed himself to that and will see to it isn't that a rock to stand upon it is isn't it the sovereignty of God committed well what is the essential basis of this whole thing this position see it's just this fellowship with God in a purpose

much larger than just a personal ministry or a personal bit of work for God it is to see everything in the light of the whole and to be committed as Jeremiah was without consideration of what is personal committed to what God wants to what is nearest to the heart of God it is fellowship with God in that which he has projected and is pursuing and is set upon realizing fellowship with God well silly little Christian interest how foolish and paltry so much you look at people strutting about calling themselves by important names and well I better stop playing at churches and chapels and also silly get some conception of the greatness of what God is after all that is so small and little our bit is only at most a fragment get right into the whole thing right into the whole thing firstly

fellowship with the purpose of God and then fellowship with the burden and suffering of God the sufferings of Jeremiah seemed to be very personal very much because of himself when they were the sufferings of God it was like that with the prophets wasn't it with the prophets they had been baptized into the passion of God concerning his great purpose in the nation and oh how they were baptized into that passion so many of their experiences the happenings in their lives were just sovereignly brought about cold and tragedies if you like brought about in order to be vivid oh such vivid illustrations of what God was suffering a week or so ago we spent an evening here on the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas bargained with the high priests the life of the Lord Jesus and we allow that to

take us back to the Old Testament where in three places thirty pieces of silver are mentioned one of them the prophecies of Hosea let me recount this in order to make this point particularly Hosea a young man married a young beautiful woman they set up home they lived together happily and in fellowship he went about his work and she kept the home but after a time she tired of that life and tired of him for some reason perhaps we said she got tired of his ministry didn't like the kind of ministry it wasn't very popular didn't bring many friends indeed it alienated quite a lot of people over some reason or reason she tired of him and in so doing became open to other approaches to which she succumbed other lovers came her way she yielded and left the home and left Hosea and went how long she

was away we don't know but long enough to have her whole life wrecked and ruined leaving this broken hearted man behind alone one day he went out sad heavy at heart perhaps for some business he took with him a bag some meal in it he went through the city he had to pass the place where slaves were bought and sold and a sale of slaves was going on he heard the noise and the bidding and the asking and he looked up and he saw someone being offered for sale a woman something about her made him look again and as he looked it was his former wife emaciated almost out of recognition shame degradation was it revulsion that welled up in his soul no no the old love the old love came up overcame everything and he asked what price you asking for they said thirty pieces of silver he looked in his wallet

and only had fifteen he gave them the fifteen he said here's fifteen worth of meal will that do to make up the thirty pieces of silver they said alright accept that he took her home restored her to her old place of honour and respect and love and cherished her again why must that come into a prophet's life sovereignty of God you say cruel ah bitter ah but you see a vessel committed to the purpose of God has got to enter into the very heart feelings of God because the prophet had to become the embodiment of his message and the message of the prophet was this Israel whom I betrothed unto me I remember thee the kindness of thy youth the love of thine espousal when thou wentest after me Israel betrothed to the Lord married to the Lord his spouse had forsaken him had gone after other lovers

been raped and ruined in the market the price the price of a harlot and God comes out to an Israel like that with a new embrace bring that Israel back into love as before to restore and honour as before to pass it

over in great forgiveness as though it had never been that's the grace of God and the messenger had to embody that message in his own experience now that is a very vivid instance but it's sufficient to carry this point I'm sure ours is not a work in a ministry that is something objective we are not just tape recorders to reproduce something mechanically the thing has to be wrought into us and come right out of the brokenness of our own soul to share the passion of God's heart Jeremiah are you going to turn your back on that say no that's not for me but dear friends if only we

could get a glimpse I feel of what that grace will result in for here in this letter to the Ephesians you know that we should be to the glory of his grace the glory of his grace what that grace will issue in glory probably more than compensate for all the cost I've only got half way through my message for this afternoon it's so full this matter being in fellowship with God this last emphasis is upon the constituting of a vessel note the constituting of a vessel Jeremiah might well have complained along one line perhaps you have I have along this line I was never made for this no I was never made for this my whole constitution and make up is such that well another kind is necessary for this job for this work have you ever said that well I've quarreled with the Lord on that many times Lord

you've got the wrong man you've got the wrong kind another type that you need for this job I'm out of my place I can do a lot of things very much better naturally than I can do this job Lord you've made a mistake Jeremiah might well have said that and might have said it not only about his constitution but about much in his early history he pointed out you see he was a member of a priesthood that had been entirely set aside his ancestor the high priest Abiathar Abiathar had been caught in complicity with the conspiracy of Adonijah to take the throne from Solomon and when Solomon was established on the throne he banished Abiathar the high priest to Annapolis miles miles from Jerusalem it was a priesthood banished under a ban had never been restored Jeremiah belonged to that ancestry and to

that order banished he might have quarreled with God over that the advantages of birth of ancestry of heredity so on all against him now if you really wanted the right kind of man Lord you ought to have got somebody who had better standing than I have and yet in the sovereignty of God this was the man that was chosen and it says definitely I formed thee I formed thee mystery God's ways but it becomes quite clear as you go on through his life that difficult as it was for him naturally he is the man he is the man God can write in this man his own heart God can come through this man as he might not come through be able to come through many others the point is the man was constituted not as he thought he ought to be but as God chose that he should be and being constituted by God he fulfilled

his ministry because God was behind it God was in it dear friends if you and I are really in line with God and in the hands of God with everything against us in ourselves and outside of ourselves as we think it as we interpret it the thing is done sovereignly the thing is done spontaneously we put it this way if you and I were to assume a position to assume it to take it on ourselves and to do it out from ourselves by our own make up and our own natural equipment if we get into a position that God has not himself sovereignly put us into the whole thing becomes artificial unreal and the evidence to all is God's not in that God didn't do that that didn't come from God that's the man himself that's the man he's taken that position he's trying to do that Lord is not supporting him taken to

everybody and we are in that for which God has called us and himself in all the mystery of it constituted us the thing is in the right sense quite natural it just does go on just does happen you don't have to put on anything make believe anything you don't have to adopt a special kind of voice or dress or anything else it just spontaneously flows perfectly natural it just happens you are in a right sense yourself not aping

someone else God made you for that he knew what he was doing you need not worry just get on with it with him I wonder if that helps you as you know there's a lot of unnecessary trouble to ourselves and to other people by our getting into something for which the Lord has neither called us nor fitted us not according to our ideas of fitness but his own Moses he said when

Moses argued I cannot speak I am not eloquent who made man's tongue did you make your tongue or did I Jeremiah I am a child who cannot speak say not I am a child I shall go to all that I say say all that I tell you to say as you're looking at the clock how it turns if the point is if we are with God God takes the responsibility to see us through and I bid you as I have to break off and not continue to finish this I bid you to go to this book again and see if you can mark these evidences of God sovereignly at work there are many of them but particularly note the tremendous value resources that there are available when we really are wholly in line with God's purpose all the resources the resources so hopelessly inexhaustible we leave it shall we for the time

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1099.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/vocational-fellowship-part-5/>

# *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)**