

Ye Are Come to Zion - Part 8

by T. Austin-Sparks

The Lord is deeply concerned with Zion's internal spiritual state, her righteousness, and her influence in the world, and will not rest until she is restored to her former glory.

Duration: 44:37

Scripture: Isaiah 53:12, Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah 62:1-4, Isaiah 62:6-7, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Zion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the burden and concerns of the Lord. The Lord's style of watchfulness and vigilance is highlighted, as He desires a vessel on earth that represents Him faithfully. The speaker urges listeners to be informed and intelligent about God's intentions and to constantly pray and intercede for His purposes. The message calls for a deep sense of jealousy and alertness to protect and preserve the testimony of the Lord, rather than allowing criticism or anything that could harm it.

Transcript

We are come to Zion. We take one more look into the rich, full content of that statement. And we shall, this evening, sign this for the present final message concerning Zion, the prophecies of Isaiah, chapter sixty-two, the first seven verses.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory. Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate. But thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Judah.

For the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee. And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem. They shall never hold their peace, day nor night. Ye that are the Lord's remembrances, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make

Jerusalem a praise in thee.

The Lord's Government concerning Zion. At this point it is not necessary for me to repeat what has been said again and again regarding the spiritual counterpart of the Zion of the Old Testament. That is, that heavenly people of God called into fellowship with his Son to be the vessel of the fulfillment of his supreme.

When he said, ye are come to Zion, it is only a manner of speaking. Literally and actually the statement would be, ye are Zion, ye are Zion. Zion is now present.

In all the spiritual meanings of the old symbolisms. That is all I am going to say as to what Zion means and stands for. We come immediately to this portion of Isaiah's prophecies which brings clearly, strongly into view the Lord's own government concerning Zion.

There is a change here from the earlier chapters of these prophecies. In the earlier chapters we have that with which the prophet was charged as the message of the Lord. Repeatedly back there the prophet said, the Lord spake to me, the Lord said unto me.

And then what the Lord said unto him became his burden. That word is used in those earlier chapters, the burden, the burden. The burden concerning this and that.

Look at the margin, it says the oracle or the word of the oracle. It was what the Lord told the prophet to say. But here there is a change.

It is what the Lord himself is represented as saying directly and personally. Who is this? For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace. Who is the I? It is none other than the Messiah himself.

The chapter breaks is a little misleading. You notice chapter 61 is the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. Who is it speaking? We know quite well prophetically it is the Messiah speaking.

The Christ, the Lord Jesus who said in the days of his place that those very words related to him were fulfilled in him by him. It is he who is speaking. The same I is in chapter 2 as in chapter 1. The statement that he makes here is that he will not hold his peace nor take rest until, until.

And that is a long way ahead. And certainly outstripping the life of the prophet Isaiah. Here is someone who is committing himself to an extended intercession.

Who is this someone making this intercession for Zion? It is the one who speaks or of whom is spoken in the 53rd chapter, the 12th verse. He shall make intercession for the transgressors. And here is his intercession.

The same one, the Lord Jesus who is directly here represented as saying that Zion is his personal garden. It is true that this garden is transmitted through either the lips or the pen of the prophet. But the prophet takes a secondary place here to the Lord himself.

He does come into fellowship with the Lord in this matter. And of course that is an important part of our message. But the point, the main point is this, that this is the Lord's own personal concern.

It is not something which is detached from the Lord and just given out as something for someone else to take up and make their business alone. It has to become theirs. But it is important to realize that the Lord himself is involved in this, committed to this.

This is his primary matter. Burden of the Lord. What is his burden? What is the Lord concerned with and about? What is it that draws the Lord out in this way? You ask the question, what really is the Lord after? What is it that concerns the Lord? What is really on the heart of the Lord? That's important for us to know.

What is the thing that is nearest to his heart? We must know that. We must be in the knowledge of that, in touch with that, in association with that. What is it? The answer is Zion.

Zion. What about Zion? Well, the rest of the paragraph tells us what about Zion. And in a few brief words on each clause, let us look at it.

What about Zion? For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace? And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness. Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness. The Lord always begins there.

It's important, most important to know where the Lord always begins. We have a way of beginning a little further on. The Lord always begins with the inward condition of his people.

Everything is contingent upon that, everything that follows. We can't get anywhere until we face that. The inward condition of the people with whom he is concerned.

Her righteousness. Her inward state. Until that inward state goes forth as brightness.

And as a lamp that bonnets. You must remember that it has been darkness. The darkness of the seventy years exile, captivity, darkness has been over Zion.

Zion has been in eclipse. A dark, dark day because of the spiritual condition of the Lord's people. Remember an incident in the life of Abram.

That day when the Lord gave him the vision of the extrication and the emancipation of the nation from Egypt after four hundred years. When the Lord gave Abram that vision, you remember there descended upon him a horror of great darkness. And then in the midst of the darkness a lamp appeared.

A burning lamp appeared in the midst of the darkness. The thing is repeated here. What was true with regard to Egypt and the dark years in Egypt.

In Egypt's captivity and the lamp of hope. The lamp of deliverance. The lamp of redemption is repeated here as the Babylon.

The darkness that had overtaken the people. Symbolic of their spiritual state. And then the lamp of recovery, of redemption.

What is it? It's the lamp of their recovered righteousness. That's the hope. See there is no hope at all.

No future, no prospect. Only in so far as the internal spiritual state is as the Lord would have it. There is no deliverance.

No salvation. There is no testament. There is nothing.

All that follows is in abeyance until the Lord has a people corresponding to his mind. What Zion really means spiritually. So let us take note of that.

So that's the Lord's verdict. The Lord's verdict. We could spend all our time on that.

I properly believe, dear friends, we are very, very much concerned about the work of the Lord. Very much concerned about effectiveness in such right matters. Power.

Testimony. All those things. Yes, we are greatly concerned about that.

But do we realize that it all just hangs upon spiritual provision? If the internal state is not right, then nothing is right. And nothing can be. And weakness, defectiveness, ineffectiveness, all that sort of thing is traceable to something wrong inside.

Something wrong inside. Something that does not answer to the nature of God, for he is a righteous God. Saying that, and it has to be said, because unpleasant as it is, we have to be very faithful about this.

All hopes for Zion begin with Zion's internal condition spiritually. So righteousness stands at the head of the whole list. Until her righteousness.

Until. But the Redeemer has come, says the Lord thy Redeemer. That's the great phrase of Isaiah in this.

The Lord thy Redeemer. And do we not somehow here detect an illusion? You remember in the little book of Ruth, the whole question of the redemption, the redemption of the inheritance was in the balancing. Whether Boaz would take the responsibility of redeeming the inheritance.

Of acting as the redeeming kinsman. The word that Naomi said to Ruth was this. Sit still my daughter, for he will not rest until the matter is settled.

He will not rest until the matter is settled. The redeeming kinsman will not rest. I will take no rest until he is the redeeming kinsman.

To see to this matter of righteousness. He's committed to it. And he'll see it through.

Until her righteousness goes forth as the righteousness. And as a lamp that shone. Ah yes, and then, this goes so closely with it.

And her salvation as a lamp that shone. Her salvation goes forth as a lamp that shone. The salvation linked with the righteousness is this salvation.

Well it's simply this. What the Lord has done for Zion. What the Lord has done for her.

Her salvation. Zion needed the Lord to do something for her salvation. Now this prophet of all prophets.

The Christ is saying that he will not be silent. He will take no rest until it is manifest to all what the Lord has done for his people. Her salvation.

The Lord has saved Zion from her terrible state. From this darkness of her own sickness. For the word salvation there could be translated health.

And what it means is until it is perfectly clear that health has returned to Zion. She's in good health. That's salvation.

Salvation is good health. Good health. And that seems to signify that some awful disease.

Some awful malady had overtaken Israel. She was suffering from the invasion of some foreign element into her system. To produce this state of it.

And the healer had returned to Zion. And he is saying I will not rest until this healing. This good health goes forth as a lamp that burns.

You see what the Lord is concerned about? What he's after? To have a people in spiritual good health. Whole and sound. And vigorous.

Free from these maladies. That put her out of condition. And then and the nations shall see thy righteousness.

And all kings thy glory. What does that mean? I will not be silent. I will take no rest until Zion's influence and testimony is re-established in the world.

That she has recovered her position and her influence and her testimony is recognized and felt in the nations. The Lord's burden is to have a people whose influence and whose testimony is felt. Really felt in the world.

Something that the world feels about it. It is no unfair criticism to say that very largely that is not true of what is called the church and Christianity. It is not regarded as something really to be reckoned with and taken account of all too easily.

It can be despised. It can be considered as something that really doesn't matter, doesn't count at all. There's no real challenge about it.

Isn't that true? Speaking quite generally of Christianity in this world. The world doesn't feel that there's much to bother about over this thing. The Lord is concerned and terribly concerned that it should not be like that.

That there should be in this world that people whose influence is such that the world has to take account of that. The world has to say that amounts to something. That means something.

We are not here in this world as something that doesn't make any difference. Oh, the Lord wants that. And the nation shall see thy righteousness.

And all kings like the Lord. They'll have to admit and acknowledge that this people have something that is different. Mightily different.

And is potable. Mightily potable. Go on.

Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name. A new name. A new name.

What is a name? Name implies a reputation. What you are called. What people call you.

Which usually is their way of describing you. The name of Israel had become something without honour. The nations could call Israel names which were not very complimentary.

And the Lord is here saying now, No silence for me. No rest for me. Until your reputation in the world is recovered.

Is redeemed. Until you are called by another name. A new name.

The whole thing is changed. People are saying something different about you. It's the name which the Lord shall name.

By which the Lord shall call you. What was the name? By which they were going to be known. Some have thought that what immediately follows you shall be called Hepzibah Bula was the answer to that.

But it isn't. That's something more. We'll see about that in a minute.

That's a part of the fuller description of Zion. What was the name by which they were going to be called? The answer is found quite definitely in Scripture. They shall be called by the name of the Lord.

They shall be called the people of God. That's the name to have. Called the people of God.

These are God's people. Something when the world begins to say that about Christians isn't it? Individually and collectively these are God's people. Associating these people with God.

Not too much of that is there today. And that's the name. The Lord is saying what I am concerned with, deeply and terribly concerned with and committed to is that my people shall be called the people of God.

Recognized as the people of God. That they may truly and rightly be associated with God and God with them. That his name may rightly rest upon them.

Called by his name the Lord's people. The people of God. Yes that is the thing which the Lord says he will have.

He will not rest until he has rest. Further, thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. And a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

What does that mean? Of course there is much here in the figure of real interest and value. We're staying to study it and consider it. Draw it out.

But we are condensing as far as possible every sentence into one implication. And that just means this. Something that is of tremendous value to the Lord.

A royal diadem in the hand of God. Get the picture? Something valuable. Something precious.

Something that the Lord admires. Something that the Lord delights to have. Something upon which he dwells with admiration.

I will not hold my peace. I will not rest until there is something in the earth like that of people like that. Precious to God.

Valuable to the Lord. Appreciated by him. He looks at it with pleasure and delight.

Oh, that's grand. A royal diadem in the hand of thy God. A crown of beauty.

That's all. Go on. Thou shalt no more be turned forsaken.

Neither shall thy land any more be turned desolate. Thou shalt be called Hepzibah and thy land Beulah. What is Hepzibah? Well, it's just the following out of what has just been said.

Hepzibah is my delight is in her. My delight is in her. Was this too much to expect? Is this too high a standard? What is the hope of there ever being anything like this? Justice that he said I won't rest until I've got it? Until? I'm going to pursue this thing until it's a realized reality.

And if the Lord is set upon that, bent upon that, committed to that, then it can be. The Lord never commits himself to anything that is impossible of realization. That's our hope.

Very well then. Very well. The Lord is really after something like that.

Get into line with it. Something that is a delight to the Lord. And thy land Beulah.

Notice what follows is really an explanation of that. Thy land shall be married. Literally the words here mean taken over.

I don't know whether you always think of marriage like that. Someone being taken over. But it's exactly what we mean.

Now you must leave the marriage out of it or I shall be in trouble. But it's exactly what we mean when something has fallen on evil days, is not doing very well. Some business perhaps.

Some property. It's fallen into depreciation. It's all under arrest.

Thing is not in a good state. It's not productive. It's under bad management.

Or no management at all. And then we say it's been taken over. It's been taken over.

Perhaps by another firm. Or by another company or manager. And the whole thing by being taken over is changed.

It becomes fruitful where it was unfruitful. Prosperous where it was not prosperous. The whole conception is changed because it's taken over.

Thy land shall be taken over. That's beautiful. Marriage.

New idea of marriage, isn't it? Taken over for the satisfaction of the Lord. To be brought up to the Lord's standard. Taken over.

That's fine. That is what the Lord is set upon. Just to take us over and to change the whole prospect and outlook and situation by attaching us to himself.

Thy land shall be married. Beulah. Now pass on.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jehovah's Witnesses. They shall never hold their peace day nor night. I have set watchmen upon thy walls.

What does that mean? What are the watchmen there for? They are there in vigilant jealousy for the safeguarding of this thing from any encroachment or breaking in of foreign elements, evil elements. The watchmen vigilant and vigilant because they are so jealous for this thing that it shall not in any way be interfered with. Oh dear friends, this is a challenge to us.

Oh dear friends, this is a challenge to us. You see, if the Lord's burden is to become our burden, if we are to be drawn into his concern, if we are really to be with him in this matter, all these things have got to become our concern as they are his, every one of them. And we've got to get to this position where there's a jealous vigilance against the encroachment and the breaking in of any disruptive element.

Oh, if I underline any part of this message more than another, I would then. Instead of being vigilant and jealous watchmen upon the walls, we are so often those who let the thing in. Criticisms, criticisms and all that kind of thing.

Instead of being like these watchmen at the first sign, the first sign of anything that is going to hurt this testimony, we are for it. Now look here, none of that. Hands off, lips off.

Instead of that, we so often just let it in. Almost become a party to it. Oh, that this jealousy of the Lord for his Zion testimony might so enter into our bones that we are like jealous watchmen, poised and alert to detect anything that is going to injure that testimony and to smite it forthwith.

That is a very important issue from this conference. That ought to come to us as a real message from the Lord. I have said, watchmen, are you a watchman set by the Lord upon the walls of Zion, day and night, alert, poised, not going to allow anything that will damage this vessel of the Lord, this testimony of the Lord, this that is so precious to the Lord.

Oh God, make us faithful watchmen, vigilant watchmen, jealous watchmen. Ye that are the Lord's remembrance, take no rest and give him no rest till he establish, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The Lord's remembrance, what is that? You've got to know, first of all, what the Lord wants before you can remind him of it.

You've got to be informed. You've got to be intelligent. You've got to know.

Before you can bring anything to the Lord and say, now Lord, now Lord, remember, you've got to know what to remind him of and then take no rest, give him no rest. This is God's intentions, God's purposes, God's thoughts, known by us and made a matter of constant prayer. Constant prayer.

Constant intercession. It's keeping things right up to date. Now Lord, you have said that this is what you want.

This is, you have said, this is what you're going to have. You have made this promise. You have committed yourself to this.

Now Lord, Lord, you allow me to hold you to it. The Lord wants people like that. Now, I've given you the message, but summing it all up, it amounts to this difference.

That the Lord wants a people who share with him this tremendous concern for a vessel in this earth which rightly represents him. That is a real testimony in itself to the Lord. Though I do long for that day when this thing would be the real burden of intercession.

We have our prayer meetings and thank God for them and there is much prayer and we praise him for praying people. But our prayer gatherings, no doubt, those of you who don't meet here now but meet in other places, you have a lot of matters put before you for prayer. Some body or some people, some specific needs, temporarily or spiritually, here, there, some place, some piece of work.

It's right to pray about them. We must. But oh, we long to hear the people of God sometimes and over and about these details going right out in a passion of concern for a vessel of testimony in this earth.

A people for God's glory. A violent lamp that burns. Doesn't matter so much as that matters about our personal connections.

They may be important. Connections with pieces of work and people here and there. We won't neglect them.

We'll pray for them. All these things and places and persons. Yes, pray for them.

But oh, when you've done that and included that, God give us a vision that is larger than the fragments and the parts. This whole great thing of God outside of our particular interests and connections and institutions. God having something in the earth.

Here are people with answers to his heart. Having a people in right condition, in good health. Concerning which people the world is having to say that are people of God.

They've got something. They count for something. Will you take that as the message of this conference ultimately? Ask the Lord to lay his burden upon your heart.

Show you that this is his concern. It is the Lord speaking, you see. Yet the Lord is not going to do it independently of his people, of his servants and their intercession.

When the Lord begins and says, I will not be silent. I will not rest. He ends by saying, ye.

It begins with him, it ends with us. In that sense. I will not, ye, do not give him rest.

I will not rest, don't you rest. I will not be silent, don't you be silent. It's impressive, isn't it? How the Lord takes the initiative.

The Lord commits himself to this. Before he's through, he brings us in and says, ye, ye. The Lord lays his own burden really upon our heart.

Do try to remember this word, will you, in its part. But every fragment of it is really important. Spiritual reputation.

Spiritual influence and testimony. Spiritual preciousness and value to the Lord. Spiritual honor and glory and fruitfulness because taken over by the Lord.

Jealous, so jealous. Watchmanship, to safeguard the Lord's interests and that which is precious to him. To be vigilant and to bear this burden in constant intercession, giving him no rest.

The Lord says of himself, I will not until, and then he says, do not you until. Elohim.

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