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"Lord of All"

by T. Austin-Sparks

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Reading: Acts 10:36,44.

It is that little parenthesis in verse 36 which has been holding my attention today and I believe pressing itself upon me for a brief word this evening. Probably there is no greater parenthesis, or even direct statement, in the whole range of Scripture than that simple, precise statement: "He is Lord of all," and it is important to recognise, to take account of the text. It does not say He will be Lord of all, it says He is Lord of all, and as you will notice it is a parallel statement to that which occurred in the second chapter: "God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Chapter 2 and chapter 10 as most of you know, are companion chapters. The one is the counterpart of the other. One is the Jewish Pentecost and the other is the Gentile Pentecost; two halves of one thing. In the first it is Israel; but Israel only represented a half, a part of God's thought and intention: the Gentiles were included in the Divine thought; so that Pentecost of chapter 2 must necessarily be broadened out to include the Gentiles to make it complete. And in chapter 10 the same instrument, the same messenger, the same spokesman, Peter, is used to complete this Divine act of grace; and by wonderful activities and strategic movements of the Holy Spirit and angels in co-operation, Peter is found at length in the house of Cornelius, the Gentile. And having made a parallel declaration to the one which he made in Jerusalem to the Jews, the same result follows, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles as upon the Jews, and many were turned to the Lord.

Everything Begins with Christ as Lord

So that the commencement of everything in this dispensation, and the foundation of everything for this dispensation, is the Lordship of Jesus Christ, not only the Saviourhood of Jesus Christ, but before that and over that and encircling that, His Lordship. It is a wonderful statement: "He is Lord of all."

To use the very words of Peter in the 2nd chapter: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost". Exalted by the right hand of God. "God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified... He is Lord of all."

Just to gather up a few thoughts as quickly and briefly as possible let us remind ourselves that that statement in the first place represents the act and the mind of God. God's act in relation to His Own mind and eternal intention, was in the setting of His Son Jesus Christ in the place of sovereign Lordship in this universe, and there He is now, and everything that is proceeding in the history of this world is proceeding in relation to that, not in spite of that, not contrary to that, not out of relation to that, but altogether in relation to the fact that He is Lord of all. Although to the human mind, and to all natural appearance there might seem to be one tremendous contradiction to that fact, one great denial of it, and it might be said — Well, if He is Lord of all why are things as they are? Where does His Lordship come in with things taking the course which they are taking; the awful state of this world? To look at it as it is and say, in spite of all this, He is Lord of all — yes, it may seem to be a contradiction, a denial and a mystery, but when you really look into it you find that the course of things is the explanation of His Lordship and not the contradiction of it. You will find that it is because the Lordship has not been recognised, accepted and established that things are as they are, and that the course which things are taking, which is so terrible, is the greatest proof that we could possibly have that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is being resisted and that His opposition to that course is making the very world reel and flounder.

When you look into those spheres, those realms, those lives where He is Lord, recognised, accepted and honoured, you find a change of such conditions, you find an entire revolution of situations, you find there that it is proved up to the hilt that in His Lordship Jesus Christ is capable of doing what no other power or force or combination of forces has ever been able to do, even when it has exhausted all its resources — He can do it. There have been ghastly situations in this world which men by force and by legislation and by every conceivable means at their command have tried to stamp out and they have utterly failed and had to draw back and survey their failure and acknowledge that they have not the key to the situation, they have not the power to deal with that thing, and even though they may, by sheer assertion of force, have managed up to a point to hold the thing in rebellious sway or subjection, they have not got rid of it. It is still there waiting to break out, and every now and again the thing makes its presence manifest, it shows that it is not dead. In such situations again and again that which is here stated: "The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)" has solved the problem, has dealt with the thing, not only to suppress but to rule it out, to quench it; and what armies have failed to do, the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ preached, He being Lord of all, has met that situation and changed the entire face of things.

History's Witness

It is not for us tonight to stay to go over history and show how again and again that has proved true. We have said that there have been terrible things which no one could deal with in their root, but which have gone when Christ has come in. You think of some of those awful things in heathendom where little children, babes, being offered to idols have been on certain religious festivals placed in the red hot outstretched hands of mighty images, with their furnaces kindled inside, and the fire and smoke belching from nostrils, mouth, eyes, and then from a mother a babe is torn and placed in those red hot hands, and to drown the screams and shrieks of the tortured infant, men with their tom-toms made the most infernal noise. Armies tried to deal with that, legislation tried to deal with that, and found — as has always been proved — that these heathen superstitions are so deeply rooted that the heathen are prepared to fight for them and to lay down their lives, and although you

may impose upon them some law, some restriction, you have not got to the heart of things. But such things are almost a thing of the past. The armies have not solved it, legislation has not solved it, the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) has solved it, and those things are rarely heard of because of the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ. And I could give you a good many more illustrations of this thing.

We are making a declaration which has behind it a tremendous amount of evidence. "He is Lord of all." There is nothing too great for His Lordship. God has appointed Him and placed Him Lord of all, and that is a fact which has got to be reckoned with. Where His Lordship has been disowned and thrust away, there you have the most ghastly conditions in this world. Is not God demonstrating that before our eyes? Oh, if you have eyes to see, if you have intelligence to take in the situation, if you have true information and get behind the lies that are broadcast, you have evidence which is undeniable that in those parts of the world where Jesus Christ is ousted deliberately you have the most ghastly state of things conceivable; and how men can want and press propaganda to bring those conditions into this country is inconceivable, but there they are. We could stay, if it were wise and necessary to talk about it, and I would not be talking to you for ten minutes about conditions in Russia now but that you would be shuddering. What is it? It is God's proof, that to reject the Lordship of His Son and to throw it out is the most disastrous thing that ever comes to mankind. And therefore, it is the greatest proof that the recognition and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord means to change the whole situation and to bring about an entirely different order of things. So it is; God is going to have His end.

Oh, let there be done all that man can do — they have tried it before! Their story now is the story of a nation or an empire that has been glorious and waned and gone to pieces, and you go round the world now looking at the relics of the empires which set themselves against the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to blot out that Name. God will have His end! This strong affirmation is necessary because we are not going to be able to reject the Lord Jesus with impunity. We may get through this life having rejected Him and come to no apparently disastrous end, but that is not the end. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We shall have to face God's eternal determination concerning His Son there at His throne. What God says by His Spirit and has recorded is, "He is Lord." Nothing can alter that, we have to face that. But that is the hard side. I do trust that pressing it that way is not necessary, and yet we always have to remember that we can never get away from God's facts, and to try to reject them, ignore them, set them aside only means that we come under those activities of Divine sovereignty sooner or later again, and have to reckon with them; and all the time we are doing this we are losing what God intended for us in making His Son both Lord and Christ.

The Universal Need

But recognising the side of the severity of this thing, there is the other side. Not only is this God's appointment and determination, this is our need, our greatest need, that He, the Lord Jesus Christ shall be Lord of all. It is our need. It is the world's need. The world's greatest need today is the enthroning of the Lord Jesus. Of course, we can say that in a kind of general way and it makes no difference what we say in a little corner of the globe like this. You may say it where you like, you may proclaim it on housetops, but it does not make much difference. But all the same, it is true. The world's need is Jesus Christ as Lord, and God is heading up everything to that. Oh yes, He is heading it up. The world never was in such a state as it is now. We all recognise the seriousness of the outlook today. Did you ever know of the very institutions of this world whose whole business and ambition, is to have money to handle, to deal with, and to possess; did you ever know of such institutions dreading the thought of having any money, so that bankers today do not want money.

They do not want your money, they do not know what to do with it; they will not accept the responsibility for handling it. That is an awful outlook, but it is only one phase of the situation today.

With this seething turmoil beneath the surface, we seem to be on the edge of a terrific volcano which may break at any moment and involve all the nations again in a most terrible upheaval; and the awful blindness and awful insensibility of so many is amazing. So recently the cry was "the war to end war," and today there is a headlong rush to something worse than anything that ever has been, and the last was the worst that ever was. There it is, and this is the state, and God is allowing this course to be followed. He is permitting this to head everything up — to what? To the acknowledgment of His Son as Lord, the bringing in of the kingdom of His Son, and not until the Lord Jesus reigns will there be a change. Here, again, the very world conditions show the greatest need that He should be Lord of all.

But we ourselves need that, the unsaved man and woman needs that. If you are unsaved you need the Lord Jesus to be Lord in and of your life. You need Him to be Saviour to save you, but oh, what you need above and beyond that is that He shall be Lord. That He shall be in charge, that He shall be in control, that He shall govern, that He should bring in His reign of peace and of power and of glory into your life. You need that He shall be Lord of all. And we who do know Him as Saviour, we who are His, we need to know Him as we have never known Him as Lord of all. What is the need of the believer, the greatest need of the believer? It is that the Lord Jesus should really ascend the throne and take the government and bring everything within the compass of our lives under His sway, under His government, under His direction, to bring our thoughts and our imagination, our reasons, under His sovereign sway. To bring our desires, and affections under His government; to bring our wills, our choosings, our determinations, our selections, all under His dominion; to bring us altogether into subjection to His reign of holiness of life, of victory, of joy, of peace.

Yes, the believer who is saved needs Him to be Lord of all, and I do believe that the trouble with so many of us who know the Lord but who are limited in our lives, limited in our usefulness, our service, limited in our joy, I do believe that the solution to the whole thing is a fresh expression of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ in our hearts. If these chapters here, Acts 2 and 10 speak of anything at all, they do declare what a state of life is where He is Lord of all. Read them again. After all, the incoming of the Holy Spirit there, when the Holy Spirit came on those two occasions and took possession, it was only that heavenly fact, that Christ was Lord, having its counterpart by the Holy Spirit in those who believed. That is the meaning of the Holy Spirit filling the life. A life filled with the Holy Spirit is, in other words, a life filled with the lordship and sovereignty of Jesus Christ. You find a wonderful state of things here in these accounts when that takes place. You see the change in the men who are most in evidence. You remember them, the eleven disciples; you remember the story of the gospels, their constant failure, the long story of breaking down almost at every point. Oh, but what men they were afterwards, what a change. Defeated before — now in victory. Unreliable before, now as bold as lions, courageous, and you can count on them to go to death. Full of profession before, but when put to the test unable to stand up to their profession. One saying, "I will follow Thee to death," and in a few hours denying with oaths and curses that he knew Christ; but that man now in face of every opposition going right on to his death at last in the interests of his Lord.

What has happened to these men? Jesus Christ has been exalted to lordship, and the Holy Spirit has brought the meaning of that, the power, the good of all that into the lives of these men, and so His Lordship is not only something in heaven, it is something in them. That is our need. What do you need? What do I need? We need something far more spontaneous than we have. More spontaneous in testimony, in heart outflow. So much of what we have got in Christianity is doctrine, teaching,

truth, things we believe and cherish about the Lord Jesus, for which we would lay down our lives, but there is that lack, limitation in the spontaneous heart-overflow. But I see the cure; the remedy is that He should be as never before, Lord of all. That is all, but it is a big "all," it is our need!

And so we might go on for a long time speaking round this great and wonderful reality, but oh, beloved friends, what I urged upon you, as I am urging upon myself, is that in the case of those who are unsaved, and in the case of those who are saved, this one great need, this one great solution to all our problems, this one great answer to all our requirements, this one great provision for the full realisation of all God's purpose, it is the starting point of everything, that is, that we should receive, acknowledge, enthrone and surrender to the Lord Jesus as Lord of all. Not Lord of half or three-quarters or even nine-tenths, but Lord of ALL. Lord within. Lord without, Lord of our personal lives, Lord in our homes in so far as it rests with us to make Him Lord; Lord in our businesses, Lord in all our relationships and in all our interests. He is going to be that in this universe one day. May we not be those who are abandoned from that sphere into the outer darkness because we rejected Him, but be there in the fullness of joy and glory of it, because here in the day which was appointed for our acceptance of it, we made Him Lord of all. "The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)."