

Man's Way vs. God's Way (Isaiah 55:8,9)**T. Austin-Sparks:**

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8,9).

There are two kinds of starting points— man and God's. Man usually starts with big frameworks, with a big plant, machinery, publicity, structures, and so on. That is how man usually starts when he is going to do something for God. It is a propensity; it is our way. We may argue that God is worthy of something big. That is man's way. God's way is never like that— it never was. You search in vain to find any instance of God beginning like that. Pentecost came out of the deep and drastic dealings with twelve men. God's starting point is always the intrinsic. Man's beginnings usually end in only a small percentage of lasting value. God's beginnings always end in a very great percentage of lasting value. But God's beginnings seem so small, they appear so little. But so does a seed; it is a small thing, a little thing. Yet look at the potentialities in one seed, in one grain of wheat. It is the intrinsic with God. That is where God begins. That is why everything really of God has a long and hidden history of deep dealings on His part.

The thirty years of our Lord's hidden life has a great bearing on the three and a half. The forty years of Moses away back there in the desert, looking after those sheep of his father-in-law, had a great bearing on the rest of his life. They were not lost, wasted, futile years. And so we could take up one after another— Abraham, David, and others, who had a long deep, secret, hidden history; it was out of that that the effectiveness came. Very often more is done, when God has been at work, in the last few years of a life than in all the years previously. That does not mean that all the previous years have been of no account, having no place. It means that God has been at work to get intrinsic values, and now at last these values are coming out.

God's greatest things are coming out of intrinsic values to make themselves known. Therefore He takes a lot of time and a lot of pains in secret history with that one project. It may be that, though you are thinking the years are going, soon life will be past, all over, and you have missed the way, everything being a problem, an enigma; yet it may be that in a few years an infinitude of spiritual value will come out of the time through which you are going, out of this which you think is lost time. You must adjust yourself to this, that God is not careful at all about our standards of values, either in time or in method or in any other way. What God is careful about is to have the inherent, the potential, the essential, and the intrinsic. Lay that up in your hearts and cherish it and let it be a real governing factor with you. God works for depths. God works for solidity. God works for intensity. Therefore He works through testing, through hiddenness, and with very little appeal to our natural pleasure.