

A Call to Apostolicity

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes the essential elements of apostolicity, urging the church to recognize its historical roots, anticipate the end times, and engage in spiritual warfare with authenticity and maturity.

Duration: 1:08:25

Scripture: Romans 13:11

Topics: "Apostolicity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the title and the quintessential elements of apostolicity. He believes that these elements are crucial for comprehending the message that follows. The speaker acknowledges that this statement is significant and unique, and may not be heard from another person. He emphasizes that the apostolic view of reality is always aware of the eternal significance of every moment, as it encapsulates the past, points to the future, and is connected to the fulfillment of God's salvific history. The speaker also highlights the role of the church in continuing the work of those who have sacrificed and died for the completion of God's plan.

Transcript

I feel led to share something that the Lord only rarely on occasion takes out, kind of a Magna Carta of apostolicity. What are the quintessential elements, what are the constituent elements that comprise apostolic reality? If you can't understand the title, how shall you understand what follows? I have it here on free sheets, it deserves an entire seminar, and may the Lord give me grace to condense it in one speaking, but to leave it on file and on record, so that later on when you come of age, you're not there now, you'll be able to appreciate and receive the benefit of a statement that I need to make now, because if I don't make it now, it will not ever be made. You'll not hear it from another man, and I'm not sure that I'll ever be back here, or any place that I'm going in these days.

I have a sense like once and for all, and so Lord, whether or not I will is up to you, but I'd rather believe soberly, wisely, that this is a once and for all occasion that will not be given again. And I see it that way, I ask you to see it that way, and Lord, you know the difficulty of the topic that's before me, it doesn't lend itself to easy statements, it makes demand upon the hearer, and I'm supposing that most of what will be shared will be incomprehensible, and the congregation will look at me blankly, but put it on record Lord, see to the recording of it, so that later on when the time is right, they will have access to a statement that was made in time, and that would not have otherwise opportunity to have been expressed, that will be

invaluable for the ongoing call of the church that bears your name in this city and this nation, for the word apostolic comprehends everything, and it's a word like all the great words now presently suffering not only abuse but threat, that they might become familiar and have casual meaning that misses the meaning. So Lord, show us what comprises this word, what are the quintessential elements that constitute apostolicity, the apostolic reality to which we're called, and if we don't attain, we forfeit the whole identity and calling which is ours, as the church that bears your name in these last days.

We're needing a special grace, and we're asking it Lord, for their sake and for your name's sake, in Jesus name, amen. So one of the first things that will denote a church that can be rightly called apostolic is that it enjoys a radical anticipation of the end. It has an anticipation of the end, which is to say that it's a church that is eschatologically minded.

It knows that it's moving not just to a conclusion but to a consummation of an ultimate kind that had its origins at the commencement of the redemptive, salvific work of God from the beginning. Because it has a mind and a consciousness that we're moving toward an end, it is aware of what was the beginning, and is in connection with that beginning. It sees itself in an unbroken continuum with everything that comprises the true apostolic and prophetic past of the church.

It's not a present now, independent of that past, and it's one that absorbs and takes that past to itself in unbroken communion and continuity, and is looking toward the conclusion. Something that is caught up in that statement about the invisible cloud of witnesses that are overhead and are not complete without us, to whom does that make sense? Who cites that? Who expects that? Who anticipates? Who knows that what they are about in God is of such moment and such consequence like today, right now, that there is in fact an invisible cloud of witnesses overhead in Singapore and overhead in this church. And who are they that comprise it? Those who have suffered, sacrificed, died for the fulfillment, the conclusion, the reality, the consummation of that for which they sacrificed, and are not complete without us.

So they're looking on with more than a casual interest. They're looking on because they realize that we are in unbroken communion with them, and that somehow that we have received the baton and we are bringing it to the place of completion and finish, which if we don't attain it, they are eternally and perpetually disconnected and shorted of the thing for which they sacrificed. See, it's a certain mentality, saints.

It's a certain apprehension of things invisible, eternal, that had an origin and a consummation, and we are in process toward that end and the inheritance of that which preceded us. That's a deep apprehension of spiritual reality, and I'm saying that unless that distinguishes the church, it cannot rightly be called apostolic. Those that are looking down upon us as the invisible cloud of witnesses are more than just observing.

They're actually bringing a quotient and a dimension from the other realm, from the heavenly realm, into our proceeding now, without which we could not continue or have the full-bodied intention of God expressed. You know, when you begin to think like that, it's not long before you'll be saying with Paul, who is sufficient for these things? If what you are about right now is a point of time which God not only knew from the beginning of creation, but was in his thought as works to walk in that were established before the foundations of the earth were laid and need to be consummated and fulfilled this morning through the piece of dust that you are, who has had a lousy night's sleep and is shabby and worn out and at odds with himself physically, and yet that requirement has come. The moment is now.

It's full of eternal portent, there's a good word, P-O-R-T-E-N-T, full of eternal significance, and it has come to rest right now in this moment, and it will not ever be given again. It's once and for all. How do you like to live like that? Not just because it's this morning, but tomorrow will be exactly the same for tomorrow.

That is to say, apostolic view of reality is always sensing the utter significance of what it is about in every moment of time. There's nothing casual, there's nothing light, everything is altogether significant because it encapsulates the past and it points to the future and it has everything to do with the consummation of the whole salvific history of God, his name, his honor, and his glory. And it's got to come out of you at a time when you're not at your best, when you're feeling especially weak and fuzzy and out of it.

That's when he makes the greatest requirement. This is a lifestyle, this is a mode of being, this is a certain kind of consciousness that the world would condemn and maybe even take those people who subscribe to it and put them in mental institutions as being out of touch with reality because they have such a heightened sense that the moment that they are about is of ultimate and eternal significance. And yet the remarkable thing is that that is definitive reality and definitive sanity.

And the other thing that thinks that this is just a transient moment, one like another, one Sunday like another, that is irregular, that is insane, that is unhealthy, that is unapostolic, which is to say unreal, because the synonym for the word apostolic is authentic or authenticity, what is ultimately real issues from God as God himself sees it, knows it, and performs it. Authenticity is the name of the game, not play acting, not a facsimile thereof. And the greatest danger right now is over the two great words, apostolic and prophetic, for there are men who are very adept at creating the facsimile thereof and enjoying widest acceptance because they're not the real thing.

Because the distinguished mark of prophet and apostle is that they are the thing in themselves. It's not that they've learned to acquire an appropriate and new vocabulary. They are the thing through and through.

It's the word made flesh. It's truth personified. It's not an affectation or a religious show.

And that kind of reality is not produced in a moment. It's the work of a lifetime when a man is subjected because he has that call which he has not appointed for himself from the God who has given it and therefore is required to pass through experiences of a formative kind that have at its heart the cross, having to do with radical separation, the dealings of God in order to attain this kind of mode and framework of understanding and live and move and have his being in it consistently. So a church, imagine a church of this kind, because it has this foundation.

The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, not some glib men who have plagiarized Paul and are able to apply it to present church conditions as problem solvers and are called apostolic or are franchising whole geographical territories and appointing certain ones to preside as being the apostolic representative of their ministry. And how was the ministry occasioned? Some false prophet prophesied that he who was once a professor in the seminary is now an apostle. And so the assumption is founded on a false prophecy and they validate one another.

I don't want to say more than that. I'm already getting a little heavy, but I just want to identify for you the kind of critical hour that we're in because the enemy knows more than we how the issue of what is authentically apostolic and prophetic is the issue. And anything that can be done to dissipate, change, alter, warp that understanding and offer some facsimile thereof that is not the thing in itself authentically,

the powers of darkness will promote.

So I'm pleading with you to be jealous over the two great words and to know that they're not easily understood, let alone demonstrated, and yet it's your call. If you're not that, what are you? If God is giving you an elaborate foundation that can only come exclusively with those who are apostles and prophets, what then are you expected to be? Why would he give that investment, that extravagance of men who have been nurtured and formed at the cross in privacy and hiddenness, unless he intended for you to be raised on that foundation and that the superstructure of what you are as church is exactly in keeping with that foundation in character and kind. And that will glorify him forever and fulfill his eternal purposes and the mysteries for which we are called to be the fulfillment.

So I'm just, I could have begun anywhere, I'm beginning with that. A church that is apostolic has a radical apprehension of the end and an anticipation of it. It's consciously moving toward that.

Therefore, its church services are not a mere succession of Sundays. They are a preparation for that end consciously and willfully. And the pastors and leaders and teachers are not afraid to make requirement of their congregations.

And they'll be specific and pointed and they'll name names and they'll identify things and call for an obedience and the discipline because we're moving towards something of great magnitude that requires maturity. And we want to get away from that man-pleasing Christianity that speaks in generalities to people who are lost in the multitude of the congregation and can hide. So the powers of darkness seeing a congregation with this kind of intention, even before it even comes into that reality, will oppose it.

They'll be marked in the consideration of the powers of the air as a dangerous entity who before that time, they could safely ignore. And they could say, Jesus, we know, and Paul, we know, but who are you? The Church of Singapore, who? One thing about the powers of darkness, and by the way, are you aware of the powers of darkness? Or are they some kind of mystical ephemeral realm that is lost somewhere in the world of spirit and has not any substantive reality, let alone the most formidable reality against which we're called to contend? For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but the principalities and powers of the air, the world's rulers of this darkness, you dear saints. We're having a field day with Singapore because they've not been recognized because there's not a church yet that has the keenness of discernment to recognize their presence and to see their wiles and their manipulations and to blow the whistle on their fraudulence and save those that are captive by them to be brought to a freedom.

It recognizes there's a spiritual battle and a struggle on, and it's over the issue of what, in fact, is reality? What, in fact, are true values? For what should men live? What is the purpose for our being? To be consumers? To have a position in the economy that produces the goods that others might consume them and we ourselves? And that our whole life is given to having and spending, laying waste our powers and little we find in nature that is ours? An A for the day of anyone here who can recognize the poet from whom I've just quoted. You're not too conversant with poetry. That's your problem.

You're not poetic enough. You're too matter-of-fact. You're too mechanical.

You're too legal. You're too statistical. You're the kind of thing that the system wants that will be efficient because the reason for being in this system is efficacy to produce goods and distribute them and see to a certain prosperity and because it has no concern for that which is ultimate or eternal and doesn't realize that this lifetime is a preparation for that same.

Is that the idea? No one has told it. No one has shown it because to persuade the world that this life presently is transient and preparatory for that which is eternal and abiding requires people who come down from that place who are in the world but not of it and exude eternity and not just possess it as a category. They're timeless and they're eternal in the reality of what they are in themselves and therefore they can move through the world and through society and culture and it's water off the duck's back.

They never are jerked or manipulated or self-conscious or fearful or intimidated or threatened by any such thing. Once you are in the realm of eternity and eternal value that which is in time comes into its proper focus whereas the enemy wants to exaggerate its importance and by that make you captive. A church that is the church sees these things and is so effectually delivered from them that it lives in a kind of remarkable and transcendent freedom that the very observation of such a church makes those that are captive aware for the first time that they are captive.

That they are the products of a time and age and they're being jerked and manipulated and their life is being stripped from them for merchandise. In fact we know in the book of Revelation that the souls of men will be made merchandise. So we need a presence in the earth of those that are really free from the influence of these powers and are marching by another beat and have a sense of those things that are invisible and eternal and know the eternal weight of glory that makes the present affliction both momentary and light and in fact they can expect present affliction because they are that kind of saint.

If they were just ordinary pure occupiers faithful to attend services through a dollar collection plate they'll never be bothered by the powers of darkness but once they imbibe and catch vision and have a sense of these things that are eternal and recognize the conflict with the invisible realm of principalities and powers over domination of the earth and who it is that's going to call the shots and define what is reality when the powers recognize such a one they will begin to oppose them and so they'll experience afflictions and the remarkable thing is that God allows it. He did not save Paul from the consequence of being Pauline from the consequence of of being an apostle and inviting the devastation of the powers that opposed him. Men vowing that they would neither eat nor drink until he was dead because he was not fit to live.

What about Paul that was so onerous another good word o-n-e-r-o-u-s I'm doing wonders for his vocabulary that men would vow that Paul was not fit to live. Isn't it remarkable the man who shows forth more powerfully than any the genius of God because what is an apostle but the expression of what is intrinsic to God himself who is the high priest and the apostle of our confession. Paul is only the continuation of Jesus Christ.

I say only everything that he says and does is what the Lord himself would have performed and expressed had he continued in his own body because when Paul says for me to live as Christ he's not just making a liberal statement of a poetic kind he's describing the definitive truth of his life. So don't you applaud him for being a Jewish celebrity and that his attributes and the things that distinguish him are his intellect or his courage. No that was all dung.

His rabbinical inheritance was all dung that he might win Christ and know him in the powers resurrection and that's why he's so much the perpetuation of Christ and living in the power that raised Jesus from the dead. That's why he said I've labored more diligently than you all.

So Paul is more than just an object of our curiosity he is the emblem he's the personification of the very thing to which we're called and the heck of it is we don't even have Pauline intention we don't even have apostolic intention we're content to be charismatic which isn't bad but it falls short of the glory at its best it's

only a transitional thing but it does accentuate the issue of the holy spirit baptism of the spirit gifts of the spirit which in the charismatic context falls short and that's why it has run out and has lost its currency God never intended gifts of the spirit as a mere adornment he intended it as nuts and bolts provision for an authentic church fighting for its life against the powers that contend against it and are the key to the salvation both of Israel and its

own generation gifts of the spirit are a life and death provision for an earnest people who are on the firing line being opposed by the powers of darkness unto death when we make of those gifts a kind of denominational distinction an option of you could or you couldn't it's not all that important we're already out of the picture so a church of this kind will be distinguished by its acknowledgement and awareness of the struggle by its necessity to be profoundly established in the realm of spirit and can trust the expressions of spirit as not just something to liven services but a life and death provision of God for wisdom for situations that cannot be anticipated and for which all previous experience does not fit us see i'm saying so much how can you hear this how can you receive this what

am i saying we can anticipate in the last days radical requirements life and death situations that will affect many that we had not been that we could not have anticipated nor prepared for and for which any previous experience will not now help us so unless we're hearing right now from the spirit of God this is the way walkie in it take this direction do this do that anticipate this we will have lost the moment the gifts of the spirit prophecy tongues interpretation are critical life serving enablements from God and we have trafficked in that whole dimension and made it a kind of charismatic adornment to improve our meetings if in fact it is even that much today it has fallen into such disuse and such a lack of esteem even by those who call themselves Pentecostal but when we begin when we

begin to become apostolically minded and see ourselves involved in a remarkable continuum of an unbroken kind moving toward a consummation and conclusion that the powers of darkness dread and are fighting furiously to retain their usurping influence in the earth will need every gift of God and will need to hear prophecy from those vessels whose character we know and when whom we can have confidence that they're not speaking out of the flesh that they could be heard or be admired that is to say that we have come into a configuration of relationship by which we know one another's character and we're not strangers lost in the obscurity of the congregation of hundreds but there's face-to-face relationship there's things that are tested because if we're going to receive the call of the Holy

Spirit separate out unto me this one and that from the congregation that I want to send to Malaysia or wheresoever and lay hands on them that they might be sent forth by the Holy Ghost I want to know whose hands are being laid on me what were they doing with those hands the night before the day of my being sent were they twiddling the dial of a of a tv or even giving themselves to worse practices because when you lay hands on someone whatever is in you and composite in you is made manifest into that vessel and yet Paul and Barnabas can receive that prayer in Acts 13 and God says and so they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost went God equates the prayer fasting and laying on of the hands of men and women as being equal to ascending of the Holy Ghost it waited for that meant anti-archal

congregation to come to a maturity and a quality of life and relationship that was so authentic and true that a piece of it could be separated and sent out into the world and sent out by the blessing of those from that sending base by the laying on of their hands that did not confer evil or questionable things but things that were holy and righteous because they lived in a relationship intensive enough and intimate enough to know whose hands were being laid on our modern Christianity has moved away from that model and now

we have mega churches where you don't know who the guy is behind you alongside you and you take communion what you hold a plastic cup and a little piece of waffle and a certain instruction you'll eat and drink when he eats and drinks and the guy is complete stranger to

you how is that communion well once a month is sufficient for that until you come into the configuration of God's intention of earnest saints relating together as the community of God's people once a month will not be enough I was sick and tired of my Pentecostal once a month communions I gulped it down it had no effect whatsoever even made me feel uncomfortable but when the Lord called us into community and life together in a rugged environment in northern Minnesota in hardship where where the saints become trying and the best of the charismatic darlings show another face when they're living together intensely day after day and week after week they become unraveled and it's amazing what they're capable of and how disappointing and disillusioning and that you yourself are the most shocked

by the revelation of the truth of yourself that you had not seen until you were brought into that intensity of relationship and I'll tell you what and you're going to be kind and nice and patient and forbearing and loving maybe the first week depending how nice a guy you are you're pretty nice guys but by the second week you have run out of human well-meaning intention and magnanimity and you need God so when you come to that communion table you're not just sucking up a little grape juice and a piece of flat bread you're taking the substance and spirit of the living God who has imputed himself into those elements as a covenantal meal for the inner man that we can show forth to one another real patience real love real forbearance we need the provision of God which has been reduced to a

triviality because our Christian life has become equally trivial you start getting serious with God about your apostolic calling and the necessity to live together with one another in more than just Sunday services and you'll be rushing to the communion table and you'll be leaving for something more than an emblem by the way I take communion every morning by myself because I'm up early and have a time of devotion with the most high or you wouldn't be getting very much now because what a man expresses publicly is what he in fact is privately before God you're receiving the benefit of all of my unknown and unrecorded daily times with the Lord that are not distinguished by great senses of his presence but by faithful attention to the book of Psalms the book of Proverbs other scriptures to

which I'll be directed the remarkable writings of Oswald Chambers of Spurgeon morning and evening outstanding devotional material and waiting on the Lord and praying as the Spirit inspires and then I conclude by taking my own communion I carry a little sack with me with with matzo with unleavened bread and a little flask of wine and if we don't have wine we'll take water but every morning I need the fresh impartation of the most high I need to be strengthened in the inner man and I have a faith to believe that what I am taking is more than just what it is as natural elements and certainly much more than symbols as your faith is so be it unto you and all of that begins by just recognizing that there's an end toward which we're moving and everything needs to be a contribution toward that

end and that that opens you to the attack of the opposing powers of darkness who ventilate their spite upon us and brings us to a place where we are in a felt disjuncture with the world wow that is a mouthful when you begin on a course of conduct and mentality like that how long will you be one of the boys how long will you be good fun and acceptable and and a nice guy and a christian too you will find yourself in a conscious and growing disjuncture with the world you're no longer as comfortable in it in fact now you're beginning to see through it and those things that purport to be ostensibly good are for you more apparently evil than evil itself you have discerned you have developed discernment because it's easy to discern what

is evil but to recognize that good that often motivates us

out of sentiment because it's nice and acceptable and makes people feel good is likely more inherently evil than evil itself if it keeps us away from the obedience to god in truth you're able to see through what purports to be good and recognize that in what the world endorses as good and the church also sanctifies and condones is the most vicious evil of all if it satisfies us with some superficiality by which we get by and lose our apostolic significance you know you go on like that you'll feel like a stranger and a pilgrim and a sojourner in the world it's a strange it's strange to feel strange and there's something in us that is human that wants acceptance wants a nice pat on the back that we're one of the boys we are christians but you're acceptable also we don't want to come to a

place where we're so abnormal in our attitudes and our perceptions and our eyes are filled with things eternal and we're not motivated and moved by the kinds of things for which others are laboring diligently that we will be looked upon as strange one of our jewish brothers whom we brought to community his mother not only had him to meet with rabbis but with psychiatrists because he had lost his jewish distinctive he was no longer concerned with his success and she was sure that he was mentally deranged how could he you know how could it be a nice jewish boy and not be concerned with his success because he was taken up now with a whole other realm of concern that was transcendent and eternal that in his jewish mother's eyes was an alarm he had changed so that he had to be sent to a

psychiatrist the man was out of his mind he was walking by another beat he had another set of values but what he represented was definitively real and her alarm was predicated on what is essentially false and i'm asking you you want to be apostolic it's not a cutesy little game that you play by taking on a nice vocabulary you will be at odds with the world you will be in disjunction it will not mean to you what it means to others you'll feel uncomfortable and you'll make others uncomfortable just by what you are in yourself who want you to confirm them in their relationship with the world but your very indifference to their values and success makes them to be threatened and therefore the way for them to solve the dilemma is to get rid of you one way or the other and the whole history of

the true apostolic church that unbroken continuum is the history of persecution unto death not by the world but by religious bodies that cannot stand the apostolic reality because it blows the whistle on its fraudulence and shows it to be synthetic and false and only superficially religious and the way to get rid of that threat is to get rid of them so the hutterites and the the mennonites and all of these uh radical wings of the reformation their whole history is filled with violence with rejection with persecution being cast out and moved to other countries because they their presence could not be tolerated by religious bodies who wanted to enjoy a status quo and did not make any requirement of its believers and uh and whose religious leaders were flunkies and public officials who

baptized them in a and gave them certificates of citizenship but here were earnest believers they were called in german die stille im lande the quiet ones in the earth no noise nothing conspicuous but the quality of their life look how they love one another no man thought that the thing which he had was his own they had all things common those that believed were together in a real togetherness that was more than sitting alongside each other in pews and and retreating back to their privacy when the service is over they remained they were in community they had a lifestyle there was a mode of being that was heavenly and those that are in the earth religiously cannot abide the presence of those people and the only answer is to get them out or to burn them at the stake or to take the young

girls and tie them back to back and dump them into the rivers that flow through the city zurich and expunge their presence because their presence blows the whistle on the fraudulence of the religious profession that calls itself christian you know what i believe we're going to see the reiteration of that in again in the last days are you prepared for martyrdom why me if that's your attitude you're not prepared but to count it privilege and you don't have to go out and look for it it will be the logic of a truly believing life as for me i'm not expecting to die in bed in fact this may well be my last trip going to malaysia and indonesia where a jewish christian and american head would be a trophy and if not there then somewhere else but the logic of a life truly lived in god invites

martyrdom and it's not some masochistic thing over which we become maudlin m-a-u-d-l-i-n which is falsely sentimental the remarkable thing is that should that be the conclusion of our life the logic of a life rightly lived we count it privilege we obtain a crown which will be able to lay at the feet of the lord an eternal honor because we're living in the realm of what is eternal and the momentary suffering that by which our death has come as martyrs is counted privilege and not fate the true church is a martyr church not that we will necessarily have to suffer such an abrupt extinction but we're living in a particular way martyrdom is a lifestyle by which your life is not your own isn't that what it says in revelation they overcame him by the blood of the lamb the word of their testimony

and they did not love their lives unto the death that's definitive christianity you dear saints how close are you to today how are you how close are you willing to come and be fitted to stand in that dimension in the last days and not be among those who dwell in the earth they'll either be the heavenly minded or the earth dwellers and the earth dwellers will not be able to stand the prophets few though that they be whose words torment them and when these prophets are killed they give each other gifts because they're rid of the nuisance of such men whose indictment they could not bear there's two classes of people at the end of the age earth dwellers and the heavenly minded paul had his citizenship in heaven what does that mean that's just not where he was registered it's where his thought

had its origin his purpose his understanding his inspiration his values he his life was essentially lived from that place and from that center well art such a heavily minded man has got to be irrelevant in the earth that's how much you know the fact of the matter is because he's heavenly minded he will be the more relevant in the earth who is it that gives the church counsel on how to take communion how to deal with this with the erring sinner how to restore such a one back to the faith what to do with the widows what to do what to exhort slaves paul is full of practical immediate counsel all the more because he has his citizenship in heaven and i have to say in all love you guys are not sufficiently heavenly minded the earth is too much with you and i've never seen an environment in my

travels all over the world less conducive to heaven than singapore this is a tidy little society that you have here it's nice i mean the housing the the sections even the great apartment buildings the shopping sections the apartment department stores the traffic the cars is there so much as one bruised battered rusty vessel a vehicle in the whole of singapore is every vehicle flashy and new and shining and resplendent my god is this make-believe is this for real is there any tragedy around here is everything comfortable and cozy and nice and this is either the best of all worlds or the most deceptive so brother what's the alternative get your eyeballs into the apostolic scriptures be imbued with that reality that is timeless and be suffused with it so that when you look out on singapore

it has lost its its glow and its radiance it doesn't seduce you you can take it leave it you can walk through it as one untouched because your eyes your being your thought your your whole purpose for being is caught

up and identified and fortified by what is in the holy writ of the things that are yet to come the things that were you're connected with that past and you're aiming for that future and that consummation and conclusion and because you are you're out from this world and you'll look at and and people will know it and no one will be more offended than other christians who think you're going too far now and you're too radical now and you're not the fun that you used to be you're so serious now and occupied with something that can't quite be expressed or defined but it robs you

from being one of the boys one of the nice guys that used to be counted on as fun and you're willing to pay that price such a people who are not who are in disjunction with the world and at enmity with the world that is at enmity with god who know who see its systems as false and whose values are discerned and are consciously repudiated therefore become a statement of the kingdom to come because to the degree that they have broken free from the influence of the world and are marching to another beat and have another anticipation another set of values and reason for being they are already exhibiting that kingdom which is to come the church is more than the place for a succession of services it already begins to show forth the configuration of a heavenly kingdom they have a kingdom

orientation a kingdom consciousness kingdom expectation which celebrates the king they're not satisfied with benevolent political rule through men they're looking for a kingdom whose authority is god's and righteousness shall dwell in the earth because they love righteousness this distinguishes them and it's a word that you can hardly even define in fact all of the great words are beyond definition you can't run to the dictionary i'm sure you'll get something but these are the words that need to be intuited and appropriated and you know you have them as i so often say when the juice runs in your mouth when it's sounded you love righteousness do you love truth you understand the glory of god forever these are things that don't lend themselves to mechanical understanding but rather to

appropriation to absorption to taking it into your being you love righteousness and there's an integrity that is more than just a self-conscious keeping of your nose clean you don't become a little stuffed shirt who's afraid to say this or do that you you live in a wonderful freedom because you're freed from the level of rules and regulations that govern the insecure and are afraid of missing it and you're living in a transcendent wonderful freedom that is predicated upon righteousness that is intuited taken in you sense it you know it that what is right in speaking and attitude and thought that conduct and you love the god of righteousness whose righteousness will pervade the earth and therefore anything that is unrighteous that is manipulative that is discriminatory that is self-seeking

makes you to wince you're chafed by the unrighteousness that is implicit and inherent in the world and will not subscribe to it in the slightest even to for your own advantage to get a diploma or finish school or be honored or have a title when it becomes an issue of integrity before god you'd rather lose the benefit of the material thing that in any way you should compromise your integrity in the sense of righteousness in order to obtain something for which you lust because you resist those earthly lusts not because they're necessarily sinister but because the origin is out of the earth and not from above anything that calls for your emotion your participation your involvement that can be reduced to earthly lust is not because it's grotesque or necessarily profane vulgar obscene or

pornographic but because it's earthly the only desire that is not lust is that which issues from above the identification of things that the lord would have you to desire because you're free to receive and move by that having broken the power of earthly lust and seduction titles success you don't automatically go to college or university to obtain a career you consult the lord first what would you have for me to do it could

be you don't intend that i should have a title a career maybe what i need is the kind of character training that comes by taking up the public garbage and if that's your intention for me that's what i will do because your government my government must be upon your shoulder for of the increase in the piece of it is without end i will not assume anything that you're

required to come behind to condone and to authorize as if of course everybody knows you have to make a living everybody knows you have a profession everybody knows you have to go to education to get it no not everybody knows the lord is not lord until he has been consulted until he's heard because we don't come before him with any predetermination of our own as to what we think appropriate for ourselves we allow him to give us the disposition of his heart and will that might confound every thought that we thought that was appropriate to ourselves that he would necessarily endorse and unless we come to him like that and desired the revelation of his will even if it cheats us of our own ambition and embrace that will and delight ourselves to do it how is he lord and if he's not lord then

what are we doing playing a game and saying lord lord when he in fact is not and we're arbitrarily and independently making our own choices our own decisions plotting our own course our own life our own future and then come on sunday and and sing his praises lord lord that's where the powers you have can look down and say jesus we don't pour we know but who are you we see right through you we know what is the truth of your life and if you are not true on the issue of his lordship you're not true in anything you've made the word lord a kind of beep and a verbalization it's lost its meaning and if it's lost its meaning there where is their meaning anywhere i'm still on page one so we know that we're involved in a great moral cosmic drama whose conclusion is felt as imminent what does that

mean i double m i n e m t it means it's at hand the kingdom of heaven is at hand the conclusion of the age is at hand the judge is at the door we're moving toward that conclusion and it's not in the in the far distant future it's about to be realized it's now there's a certain immediacy and expectation which paul inculcated in the churches that were raised by him who expected the lord's coming and that he would save them from the day of his wrath they lived in the sense of the imminent expectation of the lord's coming who brings with him rewards to distribute to each person according to their works we have lost that sense you dear saints and when we say come lord jesus we don't really mean it we don't really expect it and we don't really desire it after all our careers are not yet

completed our purposes and our ambitions are not yet fulfilled so take it easy lord don't rush there's no jealousy for his coming and his kingdom we're losing that component which distinguished the church in the paul's time though it was 2 000 years further away from it than we and they lived in that expectation which is to say it brings a dynamic a sense of urgency and importance because you're expecting the lord who will come in as judge not to have that expectation is to lose that urgency to lose the fear to lose the awe and to settle down into a kind of one day like another one sunday like another hoping that this sunday in spiritual roulette will hear a word that will really give us a momentary flush of excitement but we're not moving toward a conclusion which we feel is imminent and

at the door all of this constitutes apostolic authenticity and constitutes a serious threat to the powers of darkness who hold the whole whole world in check living in bondage to fear and to the and to present earthly lusts we'll know that we have attained this when we can persuade our own children when our own children are persuaded that what we as adults are about is ultimately real and earnest and sees the degree of our sacrifice in the attainment of it how shall they withhold themselves when our children have drifted away and are drawn off to the world and its amusements and its technology and its computer

manipulations and all the games and things that excite them something is amiss in denmark we have not attained a reality that we would be expressing not consciously in order to win

them but all the more powerfully because it's unconscious because it's unintended it just comes out we're about something so earnest and so real that even our children are persuaded not only then to attend but to participate so we can always measure the degree to which we are moving toward this reality to the degree to which our own children have been drawn to share with us in the attainment thereof if they are drawn off by the world then what we are about is not as compelling to them as it is to us and that should be an important index for our consideration and a kind of a reality check oh there's so much here corporate prayer worship is not a technique a methodology it's it itself is the statement of the truth of those from whom it emanates our real intercession prayer and worship is

not something that we add on it's the expression of what we are and i'll show you how foolish we were in our own history as community our worship exceeded the truth and the reality of our life together we had gifted musicians and we could get lost in an aura of what's the word euphoria that music itself by its nature can generate so you know what we did we covenanted with god and said lord don't allow our worship to exceed the truth of our life let it be in constant tandem and be the expression of the measure of reality that we have with each other and with you right after that if you come into one of our meetings you put your fingers in your ears you never heard anything more discordant than off key and voices and because that's where we were and so we mustn't allow the worship to

deceive us that we ourselves can produce out of our own musicality to give us a euphoric sense of a spirituality that we have not yet attained better to be the reflection of the truth because when when worship issues out of that truth it's worship indeed and is more than just affecting the atmosphere of the meeting and the lord waits for it to be blessed by it and our praise our prayer is exactly the counterpart of our worship true intercession and true prayer will be the reflection of the truth of our life together and not just a mechanical obligation or religious obligation and we're going to need true prayer there's saints because we're in a battle we're in something really earnest now and we need to pray because among the other obligations that we have of which we are conscious

even though they be few in number is to move the Jew to in the locality where we are where there are two synagogues in Singapore none of which have any cognizance of the existence of the church in that city so long as it leaves them alone not once have they been challenged by the sense that there's a presence here issuing from gentiles of a kind that stirs us in a remarkable way because what they exhibit is what we Jews ordinarily ought to be expressing but don't but they are seen to be in a more authentic covenant relationship with the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob than we so Paul answers the question in Romans is God finished with the Jew the Roman church thought so they had every right to think so they crucified their own savior they stoned their own prophets Paul said God forbid you

should think that they have only momentarily stumbled and fall but through their fall salvation has come to the gentiles and leave it to Paul not to end there but to say so as to move them to jealousy listen you dear Chinese and other saints there's a purpose for your salvation beyond yourself and if that were not so you would have brought the disposition of egocentrism out from the world and into the church now it's your meetings your faith your enjoyment your spirituality me me me my is it's just changed its content it went from carnality to spirituality but it is still powerfully egocentric and the only thing that can break that is the recognition that the purpose for your salvation is beyond yourself and for another and and it's another whom you never would have chosen or considered

it's the Jew what have we to do with them that strange people God says they have stumbled and fall fallen so that salvation should come to the gentiles so as to move them to jealousy and I want to say you will never be the apostolic entity in this city and in this nation and be a sending place into the world until you take that mandate to your heart seriously it's not to be measured by the number of Jews available to you but by your consciousness of this mandate and calling that God in his wisdom has ordained for the church and once you take it to heart it's amazing the things that will follow there will be contact there will be confrontation there will be challenge Jews will be aware of your presence will want your your prayer will want something from you all the more as they move

increasingly into an age of threat and peril as anti-semitism is sweeping the globe and they want something more and they'll need something more than just your evangelical superficial affinity the issue of the Jew is the issue of the church and it's an issue that hasn't even begun to we have not even begun to consider and why should you as gentiles consider the Jew and what is more anomalous I can't even spell that then that a gentile Christian who is Asian and Chinese or Indian or Malaysian should be occupied with the subject of the Jew as if this is not just another ethnic minority who also needs the gospel but as the foremost consideration of God as the chosen people who have a yet unfulfilled destiny and will be brought to it through the salvific role to which the church is called

thank you lord I got that out I'm not expecting them to understand it but it's on record and they will be brought to that understanding because it will transfigure them it's God's blessing for you to be taken up with a people other than yourself whom you would not have chosen and have them as the object of your deepest concern because being a people who know that we're moving toward an end and to a conclusion and consummation know they are at the heart of that Israel's destiny her fulfillment her restoration her return to God is the issue of Zion is the issue of the theocratic rule of God that must come forth from the holy hill the word of the lord must come forth out of Jerusalem and the law of the lord out of Zion or it'll not come forth at all and it waits on their return to God and to

the land not the present state which is a step toward that which must fail before the other succeeds but that must come into your consciousness because it will do you a world of good it'll enlarge your whole understanding of the mystery to which you are called expressly to fulfill that is beyond any capacity that you have however well-meaning however intelligent however sincere that is to say you can only fulfill it on the basis of the everlasting life on the basis of the supernatural resurrection life and power of God that raised Jesus from the dead that is to say you'll have no effect upon the Jew and therefore what shall you have for the Greek unless you affect the Jew out of the power of his risen and ascended life you've got to be vessels for the incarnation you've got to have this

treasure in your earthen vessel and live from that treasure which the schools in Singapore have not instructed you to do they want you to live out of yourself out of your own brightness out of your own capacity your own intelligence your own humanity you'll never succeed with the Jew or the eternal purposes of God for them through you on that basis we're called to be sons and daughters of the resurrection more than just those who subscribe to the correct doctrine but are living eminently out of that power how else can we be such a church well have I said enough I have to cut this short in righteousness and I've hardly gotten into page two about the issue of the cross the risen and ascended Christ life which has consciously and willfully been sought and recognized as primary and central

well you know what the catch is about that you can't have that life and live out of it and abide in it so long as you're retaining your own natural life one thing one thing or the other has to go you can't speak two

languages through the same mouth you can't speak in other tongues if you'll not let go of your known language something has to go good though it is in order to obtain the heavenly alternative you're going to have to pull the plug on your natural life that is to say not live from your confidence in it and trust that he's in you to willing to do of his good pleasure and that if you'll be willing to die to your own self-sufficiency and trust him for the enlargement and power of his risen life you'll experience it in fact you're hearing from God from me right now on that basis few

Christians know anything about this but the moment you start to take seriously the intention of God that you should be an apostolic entity in the earth in the last days you are of necessity brought to the issue of the risen and ascended life of Christ that is only available on the basis of death resurrection must be proceeded by a death to the very thing that the world has encouraged you to develop your own natural ability propensity talent and to cast yourself and trust on that that you're Christians who speak the right vocabulary but the life out of which you live is not his but your own his great works will never be allowed to be attained on that basis think on it believe for it desire it and be willing to forfeit your confidence and trust in that which is natural try it as a teacher

as I did who had five classes a day in an interracial community of black militant radicalism that hated whitey and I had these students in my class because I taught a compulsory subject history and all they were waiting for is the first opportunity to rise up out of their back seats and to do whitey in because they had no intention of succeeding they were failed from the beginning and they wanted to ventilate their racial enmity and hatred as the man who symbolizes the institution that they despise so the only way to prevent that is to maintain control by the exercise in the exertion of your own natural ability and power but I wasn't getting anywhere my intention was more than just conducting a class or giving students grades my intention was to touch them for eternity I had more access

to them than parents if they had parents or pastors if they were church attending and if something didn't happen in my classroom a secular classroom they were doomed who's sufficient for those things I was exhausted after the second and third period you could pick me up with a blotter and so I said lord I was a young believer lord I don't have it I can't and my colleagues are telling me to take it easy and conserve my energy or else I'll be victim but I know that I've got to pull out all the stops and trust you because I read in the bible that there's a resurrection from the dead and that because you live we will live also so I'm gonna not conserve my energy I'm gonna pull out the stops I'm gonna exhaust myself with these students and I did by the second third class I was reeling my

tongue was cleaving to the roof of my mouth my head my mind I couldn't think my eyes were squinting and shutting and I was just beginning to see these bullies coming up out of the back seat finding their opportunity in my weakness because the resurrection will not come till the real death not an approximate death not the vocabulary of death to self while self is very much alive and even strengthened by the deceptive vocabulary there's a death we need to taste and not fear and submit ourselves unto the end of ourselves because in that moment just as I was fading there was no basis for hope in man in that moment something began to rise up in my legs and up into my cavity in my chest and my head my eyes blinked wide my tongue was loosed and I began to speak with an authority and a

penetration that kept those guys in their seats and subsequently filled the entire youth section of our Pentecostal assembly by conversion in a secular classroom in the power of God in the wisdom of God that issues with his life when we will pull out the plug of our own confidence and dependency upon ourselves and trust him so let me pray for such a church here Lord what a high calling we have in Christ Jesus and

how pathetically have we fallen short of it and have learned to play church and conduct it admirably and impressively but we're falling short of the apostolic glory the powers of the air are not threatened they're yawning at us and so we're asking my God for a day of new beginnings for apostolic intention which we know will not be cheap which will cost us something and we're

willing for the cost anything that will save us from eternal embarrassment and shame that we have lived entire Christian lives beneath the glory of God we've not affected our society we've not impressed the Jews we've not missed moved them to a jealousy we're hardly even conscious of their existence in our community and our one Sunday is like the other and we're still rooted in our own selfishness seeking our own thing our own pleasure our own satisfaction our own enjoyment only now it's not just carnal now it's spiritual but it's still egocentric ourselves break that power Lord loose us from that wrong center and give us a center which is your glory your honor your eternal purposes by which we cannot conceivably fulfill however well-meaning but only on the power of your life for those

things that are of you must be fulfilled through you that to you might be the glory of God forever and if we are not a church who has at its deepest center this one thing the glory of God forever how then are we the church that is deserving of your name Lord give us even now a repentance a broken heartedness for our shallowness that we had to wait for you to send a Jewish character to berate us like this before we're conscious of these things that we should have long before understood give us my God a spirit of breaking show us how essentially selfish we are and that how modest our intentions toward you are yes we were serious and sincere but not in the way that would threaten our status quo but in a way that would become comfortable and compatible with our own self-interest and yet be

Christians save us from that hypocrisy that play acting that duplicity that falling short communicate to us the high calling of God in Christ Jesus that can only be fulfilled through Christ Jesus risen and ascended who is the life of our life the thought of our thought the speaking of our speaking the love of our love the power of our power that we might say with Paul for us to live as Christ come my God do something even today in transaction by a people who have a whole fresh and new intention of themselves with you and know that it will cost something and are willing and counted all privilege for we ask that in Jesus holy name and God's people said

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