

# Apostolic Foundations - Part 7

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz discusses the significance of understanding the spiritual realm and the role of the church in spiritual warfare against principalities and powers.*

**Duration:** 58:23

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 2:7-8, Ephesians 3:8-11

**Topics:** "Apostolic"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the spiritual realm and the role of the church in fulfilling God's purpose. He highlights the need for grace to preach and reveal the unsearchable riches of Christ. The speaker also discusses the influence of demonic powers in society, using the example of Nazi Germany. He concludes by urging the church to stand against the lies and destruction caused by these powers and to take responsibility for their nation.

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## Transcript

We'll say enough to make substantial inroads and lay a kind of foundation. It's a subject that our age does not prepare us to receive, because our age is scientific and rational, and in fact this subject has been an embarrassment for theologians since the enlightenment of the 18th century, and they have tried to dismiss it as being somehow a kind of relic of Paul's Judaic origins that he sort of brought with him into the kingdom. Mythological concepts, when he refers to the principalities and the powers of the air, of a whole invisible spirit realm that underlies or broods over the whole of the world and its reality, permeates and profoundly affects it.

This has been dismissed from modern consideration, but it would be tragic if that remained so, because the church that condemns itself to ignorance about the principalities and powers, likewise condemns itself to futility. Its activity will be just a boxing at the air. It will be a missing of the thing to which we are called eternally and in time, because we're told again and again that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, the rulers of this world's darkness, in Ephesians 6, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

And so I want to pray for the grace of God and assistance in bringing this forth and in our healing and our taking hold of this, however much it is not amenable to the temper of our own age. The same German theologians who dismissed it as kind of an anachronism, a kind of hangover from Paul's earlier past, came to another opinion after the advent of Nazism. They had a first-hand opportunity to witness the reality of

the invisible spirit realm when it manifested itself politically, socially and militarily in one of the greatest nations on the earth to the point where it threatened the whole of known civilization.

We saw a preview of the possibilities that will come when naive nations and sleeping churches open for the penetration of these spirits right through their institutions and into their vital and actual life. So precious God, Lord, I ask gracious assistance, Lord. The spirit of enablement and illumination, discernment, understanding, my God, take the veil from our minds, Lord, and break in with the thing, my God, that is central to your whole atoning sacrifice at the cross, the defeat that was inflicted upon these ancestral enemies that made of them an open spoil, that you disarm them, my God, and have left for the church the concluding and final work that every false usurper and presumer, every deceptive spirit, everything that presumes to have authority and to inflict itself and to affect the conduct of many nations, that these authorities will come under the feet of Jesus, that he might be all in all over his entire creation through the church.

Lord, open our understanding that we might gird our loins and be fitted for our participation in this grand and eternal vision. I will thank you and praise you for our privilege, my God, to consider this and to be fitted for it. In Jesus' holy name, amen.

Okay. Well, not unusual that on the occasions that I am led of the Lord to speak to this, something is almost invariably wrong. I'm feeling especially weak or overcome, or all of the sound equipment goes out and lots of strange things happen when you begin to probe and directly confront the powers of the air.

So I'm feeling especially weak tonight, but that can be very propitious in that the Lord has greater opportunity for his strength to be made manifest. So if you see me flagging or losing my train of thought or in any way seeming to be a bit debilitated, pray. Pray, we're in this together, and you can believe that a subject like this is going to be resisted because the enemy wants to remain unknown.

He wants to remain mythological. And isn't it ironic the kinds of things that are current right now in our society and our culture, at the same time that the scientific and rational temper of our age is against that which is supernatural or invisible or spirit realm. On the other hand, our films and our culture increasingly celebrate hokey, spiritist things like E.T., extraterrestrial beings, poltergeists and weird movies and sound effects and penetrations from outer space and things like that, that the whole world seems to run after and seems to delight in.

But to suggest that this may be actually a reality that is affecting society and nations and the world, men resist and will call you fanatical even to consider. So we really need to be instructed and recognize that if we see our activity as horizontal, lateral, earthly, we're against this or against that, and do not recognize that the this or that is only the physical expression of that which has its animation and source from a heavenly place, we're missing the whole issue. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and the powers of the air, the rulers of this world's darkness in heavenly places.

And that heavenly place does not mean the place where God himself abides, but a lower stratum. Remember Paul talked about being lifted up into the third heaven. See, there's a whole framework of understanding that has been lost to us, that has been lost to modern consideration, in which Paul was so familiar and so conversant that when he just made but a mere allusion to these things, his audience immediately understood.

They were much more imbued, much more taken up with the reality of the invisible spirit realm. So, in a certain sense, I've disarmed myself tonight by not bringing copious outlines and things to quote, but one little book. And so I'm just trusting the Lord to assemble and give you a sense of what needs to be understood.

First of all, what are these principalities and powers of the air? What is the source of their origin? If they are evil, if they are malevolent, if their purposes are against God, how did they have their existence to begin with? And the answer is that they were created by God as supportive structures, as a governmental hierarchy to assist in establishing in the earth order and to providing a certain structure for human existence by which men could be found of God or be found of Him. Government is such a structure. Economics, culture, the elements themselves, weather, the seasons.

And that's why as men drifted away from God and toward idolatry and a fascination with this lesser order, they began worshiping it directly as God. And they became the gods of this world and became ruined, so to speak, in that exaltation of thinking themselves to be greater than God and not sufficient to occupy the place that was prescribed for them as supportive, they usurped and went beyond and sought not just to win the attention of men or the fear or the acknowledgement, but their loyalty, their allegiance, and ultimately their worship. These false gods, these spirit-fallen angels yet have their habitation in the heavenlies.

And though they were disarmed at the cross by Jesus Christ in His atonement when He was the butt of their entire vehemence and power for destruction, because they have a certain value standard, there's a clash of cosmic systems, there's two value systems in contention, that of God's, the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of this world. And to see a reference in Ephesians, the third chapter, to the wisdom of God, and we'll come back to this at another time, but just to whet your appetite and begin to put something in your spirit, Paul talks in that third chapter about the eighth verse of the grace that was given to him to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now I'm gasping for air even as I'm just simply reading the scripture. It's an enormous exertion just to talk tonight and even to read the scripture. It's as if every hellish thing is pulling against this to nullify and to reduce the effectiveness of this presentation.

We'll come back to this another time, but only to say this, that in these few terse statements of Paul which has somehow slipped by the consciousness of the church, he makes clear that the issue of the principalities and the powers of the air are so important to God that it's beyond the things that pertain to us, but in the wisdom of God it was so important that he created all things in order that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities and the powers of the air as an eternal testimony and a triumph of another kind of wisdom. There are two kinds of wisdom in contention and the one kind which has principally jerked and manipulated mankind since the advent of this fall and these fallen angels and these usurpers is a wisdom predicated on lust, ambition, power, intimidation, threat, bluff, fear. That the whole world has been in bondage to the fear of death until one came who met death at the hands of the powers and triumphed over it in resurrection and made therefore by that one act an open spoil of the enemy and disarmed him.

That is to say, Jesus took the principal weapon away from the devil and from his horde of angelic demon beings by receiving, experiencing to himself everything that they could ventilate against him in their viciousness and vileness and celebration of violence and demonstration of power that makes men ordinarily cower and cry out and compromise and surrender. Jesus suffered it all in the wisdom of God in patience and forgiveness of his enemies and uncomplaining resignation to the necessity to suffer unto death and then triumphed over death by his glorious resurrection. Now we're going to come back to that because that is a preview of things to come.

If God has created all things and ordered that through the church a certain eternal demonstration is to be made to the powers. What is that demonstration? What is the manifold wisdom of God? It's the wisdom or the values which the Lord himself demonstrated in his own suffering and death at the cross. Meekness, patience, self-sacrifice, forgiveness, humility.

What were the powers? What was the wisdom of the powers that came against him? Hellish force, brutality, violence, destruction that ordinarily makes men to cower and to fear in intimidation and threat for their very life. Little wonder that the overcoming church is one that loves not its life unto death. So what I want you to understand, what God wants us to understand is that the church is set in the context of an enormous cosmic struggle that has had its inception at the beginning of days and will have its conclusion in the perusia or the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Now this is mind-boggling because we need to consider the eternal purpose of God. And our culture is so pragmatic. We see only the narrow and the immediate thing before our faces.

We're concerned for tomorrow. But few of us have a vision, an apostolic sense of the whole context in which God has set the church and its drama and its struggle. There's an eternal purpose.

And the heck of it is, if I can use that language, if we lose or do not obtain the sense of the eternal purpose which God has called the church, by the same, very same measure, we are rendering ourselves null and void equally for the immediate purpose. Because you cannot separate the things that are immediate and eternal in God. Paul was a man who always saw the things that were eternal.

And it didn't render him incompetent or obsolete or irrelevant. But because he saw the things that were eternal and invisible, he was all the more a man for all seasons because he saw the connection with the thing which is immediate and at hand in terms of the ultimate and the eternal purpose of God. And so also must we see it or we shall not be able to fulfill the role that God has destined for the church.

Are you with me so far? Okay. I'm not trying to be fancy. I've already been exhorted the night before I began to watch the four syllable words.

So I'm being as simple and as clear and as concise as I can because this is nuts and bolts. This is utter practicality. These are foundational truths which has been lost to the church and is now being revealed.

And Paul thanked God for the grace that had come to him to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make known the things that are hidden and now being revealed. And it raises the question if it takes a grace to preach and to reveal and to make something known of this magnitude, what shall it take to fulfill it in fact through the church. And this is the eternal purpose of God.

You say, Art, well if this is an invisible realm of angelic demon beings, a fallen stratum of spirits that are occupying a governmental place because God's gifts and callings are without repentance. And instead of

acting in the way that would correspond to God's purposes, they're acting against God and trying to alienate men from God and to permeate institutions and to draw the loyalty of men to it and their first priority to it so that men think that their sustenance comes from the state or from the corporation or from the business rather than recognizing that their sustenance comes from God through the structures that God has provided in the earth. And I can give you illustrations of how the Lord has begun to reveal to me the enormous power that goes beyond the intention of God in these structures.

Medicine, for example, did I share with you how when I had that busted kneecap in a hospital here in Golden Valley, is it? How I refused to take medication? And how miraculously, while this Jewish orthopedic surgeon had his hand on my knee and I was telling him something about myself and he said, well, this needs to be wired up. He said, this isn't just fractured, it's smashed. I said, okay, well, when can you do it? He said, Thursday.

It was like Tuesday night. I said, no, I said Thursday. I've got to be up in northern Minnesota.

The Lord is giving us a property. He said, the who? And right in that condition with my big swollen football knee with his hand on it, I was telling him as a Jewish man with credentials that he could recognize, Berkeley graduate, that I had a rendezvous with the Lord who gives. And as his hand was on my knee, all of a sudden his eyes grew larger saucers and he blinked at it.

He said, something's happening. He said, the pieces are falling into place. I can feel it.

I said, praise God. If we get to know each other well enough by the end of these 12 weeks, I'll tell you what I was doing with a busted kneecap. I was baptizing Lutherans in a swimming pool, the YMCA.

Don't tell me the enemy wasn't mad. On my way to the locker, my feet shot out from under me on a wet patch of tile floor. And in a frozen moment of time, I found myself up in the air with my Bible in my hand, looking down and thinking to myself, cats, what are you doing? You don't have accidents.

And the next thing I know, pow! I came down on my knee. And when two days before I saw a doctor, man, God's man of faith and power, until finally it was so swollen that this man said, you must have come down with such exact precision to have done that kind of damage. Well, there it was coming to, he said, if we can put it in the cast now, you'll not need an operation.

And that's what he did. I had to spend the night in the hospital. And here's the point.

After they got me in bed, in came a nurse or two nurses with a hypodermic. I said, well, what's that for? Oh, she said, that's for your pain. I said, I don't have any.

She said, but you must have. I said, no. I said, of course, there's some slight discomfort, but nothing for which I need to be anesthetized.

And I just refused to take it. And she actually discolored in her face. No, it was like the bluish indignation.

And she came back with another nurse, and they pleaded with me and I refused. So they came back with pills. I refused to take that.

Then they came back with a doctor, then two doctors, and I'll never forget the sight. Looking in the doorway, they were all talking to themselves in the doorway and stroking their hair and didn't know what to do with themselves. And I said, why all of this consternation? Why are they freaking out over the simple

refusal to take their medication? And then I realized what it was.

I was striking at an unspoken supposition of their profession that has to do with an axiom about the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. That is the unspoken tenor of our whole civilization. And to find a man who is not intimidated by pain and does not cower for discomfort and needs somehow to be dulled or numbed by drugs to avoid pain flew in the face of the whole unspoken supposition of their institution which the powers of the air have played upon to establish exactly that that mankind could be in bondage to the fear of pain and subscribe to drugs rather than to God.

We need to see beyond the seeming appearance of things that seem innocuous and harmless in their first and physical and visible configuration but behind them and through them something is pulsating. Some power is working not just to avail ourselves of a service like education or medicine or business or economics or culture but something that is wanting to compel us and to have us to relate to it in a way that is inordinate and displaces and usurps God and the whole world is in bondage to such systems. Because there is only one agency that God has intended and given the power and the ability to discern what is happening in the earth to see by the spirit what underlies reality and history and the rise of Nazism and the rock culture and drugs and sex and ideologies and student rebellions and violence and not only to discern it but to act against it in that knowledge and in the structure of the church in its corporateness and in its power to take authority and to further disarm and to nullify the principality and the power right over the locality where that praying and interceding church is and for the want of that discernment and for the want of that intercession we are batting at the air.

Men are still in bondage they are not even in a position to hear the gospel message or to respond they are still enslaved to these elementary powers and we have not taken authority sufficient to release them and to move the orbit of these powers over us so that men might be freed for the consideration of the things that pertain to eternity.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood but my God we are called to wrestle we not individual virtuosos not the single great man of faith and power how can I say this respectfully the most respectful thing I can say about individual ministries of faith and power is that they are a secondary second class interim provision by the grace of God while he is waiting for the church to go up and to assume its proper role that's the best I can say you get me in another mood I can say things that are not quite as nice and in fact when I see these ministries continuing in such a way as to keep the attention of God's people toward themselves and therefore God's people in passivity and immaturity I'm almost persuaded that the principalities and the powers of the air are not just acting through secular

institutions of medicine and culture and government but religion itself as a matter of fact it was that very combination of the powers of the air acting through the religious establishment and through the political establishment that eventuated in the crucifixion of Jesus his death just to read you in 1 Corinthians how effectual these powers are we're not just talking about some slight what shall I say influence that somehow they mediate a certain vibration into society they are powerful to jerk and to manipulate both men and nations and even to have brought about the destruction they thought of the Son of God in 1 Corinthians 2 verse 6 yet among the mature we do impart wisdom although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away interesting

observation in fact now that your eye is being opened I hope you'll be alert to every such reference in Colossians, in Ephesians, in Corinthians in places where in Jude where allusions are made to the spirit

realm right away your antenna will be up to pick it up and to recognize what was the apostolic mentality of the first church that clearly recognized where the issues lay and these rulers of this age are doomed to pass away not of old age not of themselves the last thing they want to do is to relinquish power and influence because they are petty usurping gods with a small g who want to continue and increasingly to obtain the loyalty and the devotion and the worship of men Heil Hitler! you can't listen to one of those tapes of the Nazi time or see an ancient Nazi propaganda film and see

hundreds of thousands shooting their arms out in one moment with such a cry and say that that can be explained sociologically or politically it's a spirit phenomenon that had captivated an entire nation celebrated for its intellectuality and for the depth of its culture and for its philosophical mindedness the land of Luther and the land of theology what hope then for us Johnny come lately Americans whose civilization is only skin deep when these powers get set to rip and roar and tear and take sway through entire institutions not just to influence them but to dominate them so as to have the whole allegiance of men to themselves there's a war on we wrestle not against flesh and blood but we had better wrestle and it's got to be we this is going to take a church of a very certain kind

namely an apostolic kind a church whose eye is open to recognize the struggles and that has such an intimacy with God and such a sense of discernment by the spirit in the purity of their own life and walk in relationship with each other that they can discern the character of the powers that prevail even over their own neighborhoods and can come against it as I'm going to show you in the weeks to come the very presence of such a church just the presence of the authenticity of such a church is sufficient to dislodge and to move away and to make back off the powers that have prevailed over those communities Jesus I know and Paul I know and East Emmanuel too because wherever these powers see the authenticity of Christ they're required to shrink and to recoil away they cannot stand

authenticity in worship, in prayer in the preached word in the demonstration of the cross but where the religion is feigned where the faith is feigned where the affection is only carnal and shallow and skin deep and only a kind of casual how you're doing brother they're not in any way intimidated or threatened or required in any way to be dislodged we're in a race with time to get it together before these powers captivate the very earth because they have a fury knowing that their time is short so they're doomed to pass away in exact proportion as the church comes in to its intended apostolic configuration and that's why they resist such a church that's why we're going to experience persecution and the very absence of persecution was already a statement of the degree to which we were

outside the faith and the remarkable thing is as I hope to show you in weeks to come that the very persecution which the quality of our life and faith invokes in them gives opportunity for a response from us which is the very demonstration of the wisdom of God for which reason he has created all things we don't gripe, we don't moan we don't bite our fingers we don't say why us we're obedient to the heavenly vision how come? we rejoice in our sufferings we praise God that we were found worthy to share in his sufferings and when the power see a people who can rejoice in their sufferings and give praise in their afflictions they're finished blows them out altogether they're gone they can't stand that kind of demonstration so to move from charismatic praise that is to say the precious

choruses to sing that we sing when we've had a good meal we're comfortable, well fed and in the company of the saints to the quality of praise that will come at midnight in the midst of affliction or persecution and suffering that is the consequence of our testimony and the authenticity of true church in our presence when that praise goes forth we will have concluded what Jesus has begun at the cross what

he disarmed we shall permanently render null and void so that his kingdom shall come and all authority shall be under his feet so the rulers are doomed to pass away but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom in verse 7 of God which God decreed before the ages for our glorification which none of the rulers of this age understood for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of

Glory here's one of my famous dum-da-dum-dums they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory he's speaking about the rulers of this age he's not talking about Pontius Pilate or the Sanhedrin or the hierarchy of the priesthood these were the human agents willing agents but the inspiration the power the vehemence the violence came from that stratum above the earth in the heavenly place the rulers of this world's darkness who sought to destroy the Son of God and the only wisdom they know threat, fear, intimidation power, violence, death but if they knew that that was going to work they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory but they didn't know they're arrogant and contentious and they're usurpers but they're dumb because they just cannot recognize the wisdom of humility they cannot

recognize forgiveness they cannot recognize the virtue of meek submission to the sovereignty of God the Father even when it requires unexplicable suffering that they can't understand that wisdom they don't understand and because they didn't understand that they missed it and suffered the profound defeat which disarmed them but did not remove them so here's another that means they're still active they're without teeth but the world doesn't know that and no one has called their bluff because they can shriek and make noises and inculcate fear and play upon mankind even as they work through the Jewish religious element and through the Roman political element to work the destruction of Jesus at the cross so too are they working through agencies today for example like the mafia so when the Lord

gave me the privilege of coming to that city in Sicily Catania which is the headquarters of the mafia where I had been 40 years before as a Jewish high school dropout and merchant seamen looking for adventure I'll tell you about that sometime bunking with two guys from the south whose fathers were Ku Klux Klan who had never seen a Jew talk about going from a high school in Brooklyn to the real world and to be caught up with the pimps the racketeers and the prostitutes as a kid just turned 17 and come back 40 years later at the age of 57 and preach in that same city for 10 days to the most marvelous fellowship one of the greats on the face of the earth unsung, unheld, and unknown and to meet not only to preach every night but to meet for 3 or 4 successive mornings with young men and women

being groomed for leadership 6 o'clock in the morning and speak to them on one subject the principalities and the powers of the air 10 days in one city 10 consecutive days at least you guys have a week to recover from Wednesday to Wednesday and I couldn't remember when I've ever been in one place that long and the pastor said Artie said, one more day I said, but I've given you everything I'd have another message he said, Art, one more day meet with the elders I said, ok and about, I don't know what time early in the morning of that day the Lord waked me I instantly reached for a piece of paper in my pen and the Lord gave me a list of about 7 express and explicit points of application of the messages which they've been hearing in those days and so I met with the elders that night jovial,

Sicilian, Italian spirit-filled believers mmm, mamma mia the cream of the crop and I watched their swarthy complexion turn pale when I read to them point number one, what God wants you to do now that you understand what is the issue of the struggle confront the mafia this mafia that has produced an entire great nation the Renaissance masterpiece of the world Italy is now a second place nation good for pizzas and for flashy sports cars and a Gina Lola Brigida or something like that why? because despite its population its geography and its resources it has been compromised by the mafia it has no ethic it has no

integrity it could be jerked and pulled by strings out of fear and no organ of government is able to meet that threat because it rules by threat and has even compromised government

itself no one can stand against it because everyone in the last analysis is afraid to die it waits for people who can stand before the mafia and say we're calling your bluff God did not establish this earth this is the Lord's and he's not going to allow men to be intimidated and threatened and whole nations compromised because of a bluff of the fear of death and violence that you're exerting and you couldn't even pull a trigger against us except that we're giving you from above isn't that what Jesus said to Pontius Pilate you could do nothing against me except it were given from above how about a church who could talk like that how about a church that can believe like that and to go from the pew to the place of confrontation at the direction of the spirit of God and be absolutely fearless

without whimpering without the lip quivering and say you could do nothing we're coming against you we're revealing your bluff you're animated by powers of the air whether you know it or not we're coming against them in the name of Jesus we're going to put this nation on alert that they're defeated powers and that you guys are not going to further rule over this locality just as we're going to pray tonight please remind me for those television programs and those seminars we're going to come against it in the name of Jesus corporately and together with authority and disembowel that filthy thing before it gets off the ground we're going to begin to walk in the understanding that God has given us and exercise our corporate authority and not just be hapless victims of whatever the enemy wants

to work in our culture and life and the same thing for our punk rock culture and every other kind of degrading thing that is bringing the whole moral quality of civilization into the dust and defaming and destroying the image of God and man and supposing they pull the trigger and God allows them and yet to rejoice Mahat... what's his name?

Gandhi without even the knowledge of these things obtained independence from the colonial rule of Great Britain by opposing force with passive resignation without realizing it he touched a principle of the cross he confounded the wisdom of the rulers of this world and what did they finally do? they had to give up, their power was broken they could not rule a nation that was not terrified and could not be straightjacketed by their threat or intimidation and left the church has a role one of the last messages if I can remain biographical that I gave in East Germany again talking to elders on a final night upstairs in my room with a flow pen on the back of an envelope looking to God and writing down things that he was impressing on my heart because my spirit had been grieved in those weeks

in East Germany every time I came to another city a train station, a factory those filthy, vile propaganda signs 45 years of Soviet-German friendship I thought, what a filthy lie why I've seen those Russian soldiers walking through these East German towns the Germans won't even give them the time of day they still remember the raping and the looting in 1945 what friendship? that's a lie but it's a communist lie it's an ideological lie it's a necessary lie for the establishment and the reinforcement of their system and then in the home where I'm staying the brother who works in an auto factory he says, Artie said, if you knew he said, we are a schizophrenic nation he says, half of us are alcoholics I thought to myself, sure it's a nation that can't live with a lie God has not made men to

live with lies something breaks I mean, we get ulcers our varicose veins we freak out our chemistry our physiology was made to live in truth and righteousness and peace and when we are continually faced with a lie that we swallow it down it's got to take its invincible toll and we got to drown out the erosion of our

integrity the image of God as being modern man I came down to those elders that night with this envelope and I watched men go pale and said to them, by the authority of God I said, you guys have a responsibility to go to the local communist authorities in your city and to tell them that though they may not realize it they are destroying their nation they may succeed in their political and economic five year plans and goals but they are destroying the integrity of this people

because men cannot live continually with a lie and only the church can recognize that only the church can stand for truth because the church is the ground and the pillar of truth and I don't care I said, I'm not saying you should tell them that so you'll have an opportunity to witness whether you do have or you don't have is secondary and I don't even care if they heed what you say the likelihood is that they will not but you cannot remain the church of Jesus Christ in this city and in this nation and this hour and be silent in the face of the official lie you have got to stand for what is made in the image of God now I don't think that they ever went because if they had what would be the likelihood they might end up in jail they might throw the keys away they might never be seen again

but that's for the fear of those things the church and certainly nations have been paralyzed till now the enemy has ruled by fear in the Philippi jail Paul and Silas having had their backs shredded with 39 strokes having been publicly humiliated and beaten and put in bonds and thrown into a lower dungeon and it says at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God they didn't think that what had come upon them was inadvertent or accidental or that God was somehow asleep to have allowed them to suffer that though they thought to be faithful to the heavenly vision obedient they received their suffering with joy as the very statement of their obedience and their very praise at midnight in the darkest, most discouraging hour thousands of miles from their home in Palestine in Europe

for the first time in pagan territory in a dungeon where they would likely rot without anyone even knowing of their fate they sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them and suddenly there was a great earthquake and the doors burst open and everyone's bands were loosed because God inhabits the praises of his people and where the spirit of God is there is liberty and if we have to suffer going to jail let alone loss of reputation or loss of life it is for this that we were called there's got to be a statement somewhere in the earth of a people who are not afraid of a people who have a faith that God is so sovereign that whatever is the consequence the Lord has established it and that they will rejoice in that circumstance and he'll be present with them in it I didn't notice what

time I began so I don't think that there's another incentive more powerful to be true church than to recognize the eternal purpose of God through the church toward the principalities and powers of the earth I may not say it again and I'll just throw it out now and it'll fall on deaf ears for most of you but just file it back there that the same maturity to which we come in our combat against the powers in the same things that are required by us to come to the stature to wrestle, to discern and to act by that same process God is preparing in us the ability to rule and reign with him and one day to occupy the very heavenly stratum which shall be vacated when there shall be a war in heaven and Michael with all his angels shall fight and Satan and his host shall be cast out who's going to

fill that vacuum? who's going to occupy those governmental positions? but a people who have been groomed to rule and reign with Christ who are not opposed to his purposes but are one with them benevolent rather than malevolent working with God in his sovereign and redemptive purposes for all creation this is a tremendous mystery it's the whole view and we need to glimpse it or else our life does not make as great a sense or else it gives us a sense that church is but mere succession of Sundays or

else we don't understand why it is that we're suffering this strain in marriage or this particular difficulty in the fellowship or this problem at work or this physical ordeal that has come upon us unless we understand that through these means God is shaping the character and the life to stand

against these powers in the wisdom of God and one day to supplant them and to rule and reign with him from that very place I would like you, if you feel disposed to buy a little paperback it's very little known and I think it's one of the tremendous statements called Christ and the Powers published by Herald Press which is a Mennonite publishing house it's the first time that this was put in English written by a Dutch theologian who has his head screwed on right called Christ and the Powers by Hendrik Berkoff B-E-R-K-H-O-F Christ and the Powers Herald Press here he writes the powers are no longer instruments linkages between God's love as revealed in Christ and the visible world of creation in fact they have become gods behaving as though they were the ultimate ground of being and

demanding from men an appropriate worship this is the demonic reversal which has taken place on the invisible side of creation no longer do the powers bind men and God together they separate them they stand as a roadblock between the creator and his creation when you think of the arrogance of Hitler and the declaration of the new order and the thousand year reign adopting the whole apocalyptic language of the Bible and transmuting it in secular and political terms you have a picture of the arrogance and the presumption and the usurpation of this whole realm of demon spirits acting in society as if they were the ultimate ground of being what God intended as had to have a certain defined and prescribed purpose they exceed this is their arrogance and have gone beyond God calls for government

God calls for the state but not the state that should entertain and take to itself the loyalties of men let alone that it should be worshipped yes God has given culture maybe even sports and athletics but not to the point where men should go horse freaking out over a ball game and being occupied in their hearts and minds and spirits that if their team loses they're downcast and depressed for days on end something's gone wrong there's something in there that's beyond the intention of God for recreation, for civilization, for sanity for order there's a power that's working through it to win the loyalty and the allegiance of men to itself as if it was itself a God today in every realm he writes these powers separate men from God the state, politics, class social struggle, national interest

public opinion, accepted morality the ideas even of decency, humanity, democracy or the avoidance of suffering and the pursuit of pleasure or I've got it coming or whatever other of the rationalities and the assumptions by which men live are infected and shaped and influenced by these powers and they give direction to thousands of lives, millions they let us believe that we have found the meaning of existence whereas they really estrange us from true meaning they come to men as something ultimate when God only intended something limited they come to men as something absolute when God intended only something as relative and we need to open our eye of discernment to see where these powers are presently working I've seen it in education I can hardly bring myself to attend a graduation

ceremony when I hear the falsity of it, the lies of it that they have prepared this graduating class for the realities of life and I know that it's a bunch of anxious gibberish and that these kids were just time servers and they were graduated even as semi-literates that haven't even competence in their own language and that they're speaking this conventional wisdom and people are nodding and going through the system and it's a self-perpetuating kind of thing to which we subscribe because it keeps the kids off the streets and allows society to go on and even to go into the system further by which you obtain a diploma and enter the profession and have to take all kinds of courses that somehow don't even seem to be related because it's

the requirement you begin to get the sense that there's

a system here beyond what is really legitimately required to make you competent in the thing for which you believe God has called you and that you've got to take this and take that and subscribe to this and fulfill that requirement there's a system, there's something that has become an end in itself and a purpose unto itself that needs to be perpetuated and which men worship is out of whack, it has not been recognized, discerned or brought into its right place because the church has not seen it and has not acted in its authority and the whole of human life therefore has been corrupted and deranged and our kids are the victims we need to recognize the structures that God has intended and to bring them into the limit of his intention and to break the power of these this demon realm that has

usurped and gone beyond and to remind them they're a defeated foe and a disarmed foe and that they have no right to influence because we know what happened at the cross and we're standing on the basis of that knowledge and in fact more than that we ourselves are living in the same reality of that cross Jesus I know and Paul I know and East Emmanuel too and where so ever any expression of the corporative body of Christ walks and lives in that reality and that understanding we have a charge ahead of us that again is more than just mere services but it's God's eternal purpose for the church for which reason he has created all things may God give us a respect and a love for the church for which God gave his life as well as creation that we do not continue to treat it as a shabby secondary

after work kind of thing or Sunday supplement but the first reason for our life and for our being that he might have his glory and honor and peace and sanity and righteousness shall prevail in this earth when all kingdoms that have been usurping shall come under his authority and he alone shall rule and reign let's pray for this thank you precious God Lord put that into our hearts tonight that against all of these vile forces you have put all your eggs in one basket the church but a church of what kind a church that wrestles a church a church who knows that its weapons are spiritual and employs them a church that is church not just an aggregate of isolated individualities doing their own things and in fact under the powers being jerked and manipulated by fear and intimidation and threat

but a church that is without fear a church that is abiding in an authentic faith an authentic love a church in a word that is authentic that can battle and Lord to the measure that is in us now we want to battle we want to agree together right now for this filthy thing that is coming right into our city this vile occultic thing that is going to be on TV and commends itself to men as wisdom as a shortcut as a help it will teach you how to think you'll avoid tension it's a snare and in the name of Jesus we agree together in one heart and in one soul and one spirit we come against this Maharishi Yogi we bind the powers of the air we speak the word of confusion they shall be tongue tied and mumble and stumble over their mouths they shall not find their tongues they shall produce nonsense it

shall not be credible it shall not be articulate it shall not be commendable it shall be powerless and weak and insipid and confusing and people wonder why they ever came we call it null and void we refuse to tolerate it in this community we raise the name of Jesus against it and the power is blood and the victory at the cross against the devil thank you Lord and we pray my God the spirit of conviction to come into the hearts and lives of those who turn on those TV sets who attend those meetings to be reminded is that

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