

Apostolic Vision - Part 3

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of conversion and the need for a radical change in our relationship with God, highlighting the error of putting our vow before God's name and the stale church that results from not hearing with the intent of doing.

Duration: 1:03:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:1-5

Topics: "Apostolic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the contrast between the world's mindset of compromise and the absolute nature of God. He believes that to truly meet God, one must leave behind the world's ways and enter into the absolute kingdom of heaven. The speaker expresses a sense of urgency and anticipation, fasting and praying for a transformative transaction that will shake the earth and bring forth eternal celebrations. He references the story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, highlighting the need for individuals to surrender completely to God's will and be willing to be brought down and blinded before they can truly see and understand.

Transcript

I must be serious, I have three full pages here. And tonight, I believe that the Lord's heart is on the subject of conversion. I'm very fond of saying, many saved, but few converted.

And I've come to a realization after two nights that to continue along the lines that we have would be vain unless there has in fact been a radical crossing over to the other side. I can't think of anything more cruel or a greater delusion than to speak about apostolic things when we are spiritually incapacitated or incapable of walking them out because something foundational of our own relationship with God has not yet been effected. The things that are apostolic that pertain to His glory can only find fulfillment in a people who are utterly abandoned to God.

If we're not and we embrace the vocabulary of apostolicity, we engage in the final and last and cruelest of all deceptions. Let's talk about anything else and use any other kind of language, but let's not embrace this language unless we have an intent to fulfill it. So I think that somehow we need to pause in the course of what is being unfolded in these days and raise the question about the truth or the authenticity of our own conversion.

Can you understand, and maybe you'll understand better, that it's possible somehow to be saved and even born again of the Spirit, even be filled with the Spirit, and yet not be converted in the sense of utterness toward God that apostolic reality requires. And seeing that we're doting on Paul in these days, I want to read one of the three accounts of his conversion in Acts chapter 9. Evidently it's of sufficient note to God that in the book of Acts there are three expressions or recordings of that conversion. And maybe it's not untoward to say that the apostolic life that followed was altogether proportionate to the kind of commencement or beginning that it had in its origin.

Or to say it another way, maybe we can't exceed or go beyond what is the point of our beginning. And some of us may need a day of new beginnings or a beginning that has never in fact been made, which if it's not made would condemn us to being fixed at a certain plateau of Christian response beneath what the Lord himself intends. I'm going to ask that we all stand tonight and ask the Lord's blessing.

Before we read these scriptures, I don't know where that came from, but somewhere in the course of the day I just had a sense of us standing to pray. And I just want to invite you to call on the Lord even now. No lengthy prayer from any one saint, but just a terse statement of inviting God to pull out the stops, to ask him for something of an extraordinary kind.

I'm always believing the Lord for something historic, once and for all. And if you feel something like that, an impetus like that in your spirit, just sound out from where you're standing, and then I'll just conclude, and then we'll go into the word for tonight. Hear the things that are unspoken, the cries of our hearts, my God, that yearns for an utterness of reality with you, a distinction of service, my God, in the days that are appointed to us, that will obtain for us, my God, an eternal recompense of joy.

Lord, pull out the stops, take your sword out of your sheath, don't spare us, my God. We thank you for that kind of love. We're not accustomed to it, and we welcome it.

And come, my God, and let your word perform a work tonight for which we shall be eternally grateful. Thank you that we've come to an hour in which you are more earnest than ever we have heard you or known you or understood you. Thank you for that.

Thank you, my God. Bring us in to the spirit and mood of your own heart, Lord. Thank you for hearing us.

Thank you for your great ability to give answer beyond all that we think to ask and to pray. Indeed, make this night historic. Make it pivotal.

Make it something, my God, beyond what we call memorable, a release, a corporate release, a release, my God, for individual souls, a calling, a revealing, a precious work that only you can perform and for which we are helpless and wait and ask that it might please you, my God, so to give it that this all might be down to the eternal praise of your glory. In Jesus' name, in whose name we ask it, amen. So reading from Acts chapter 9, And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest and desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man.

But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.

And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul, of Tarsus, for behold, he prayeth. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting a sand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, for here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. Thank you, precious God, for the light that shone upon an enemy and deeply converted him, my God, from murderer to the chief apostle of the church.

What a work, my God, that comes down from heaven in the moment that you appoint, even in all of our opposition. And we pray that tonight speaking, my God, might be for us who have not yet fallen to the earth and who are still proceeding from our seeing and not yet yours, that we will be brought down that we might be brought up, that we might also learn what great things we must suffer for your name's sake, whom you will bring before Gentiles and kings and especially in these last days, the house of Israel. Come and speak to us out of this text, my God.

We thank you and praise you for the privilege of a word about it that might be for us the event of it. In Jesus' holy name, amen. The inception of the apostolic life greatly determines its end, alpha and omega.

And many of us are malfunctioning or not walking in fullness because of inadequate beginnings. And I can go off on a long dissertation on the inadequacy of our contemporary gospel, more a kind of formula for salvation than it is an induction into the most holy faith. And how the pagans in Thessalonica who heard an apostolic proclamation of that gospel were saved from their idols to serve the living God and to wait for his son who comes from heaven and will save them in the day of his wrath.

Evidently they heard a much fuller and powerful presentation of the gospel than most of ourselves. And therefore right from the inception of their conversion a quality of things were released that made that church distinctive. They reflected their beginning and we reflect ours.

But praise God that if our beginnings have been faulty and inadequate there are ways in which God can give us a new beginning. So whatever of it is that is false or inadequate or impoverished will certainly affect all of our subsequent walk. Many saved but few converted.

And I see in this a kind of parallel with Israel in the great crossing over that they were required to make with Joshua there's a Jordan which means actually literally descent into death. That those that had stumbled about in the religious wasteland for 40 years where many cadavers had been left behind who

had not the fullness of heart of a Caleb or who was the other? Joshua. Caleb itself meaning whole hearted.

That only two out of an entire generation had the privilege of being welcomed into the land of promise and participating in the taking of that land. And we stand at a kind of a crossroad akin to that in this New Testament hour it's time to cross over. That sense of crossing has been heavy in my heart in all of the days that I've been here and even the days that have immediately preceded it.

But did you know that not all of the house of Israel crossed? That a portion of the tribes of Gad, Manasseh and Reuben chose to remain on the other side. Because there the ground was lush and the grasses were high and they were cattle breeders and they recognized something of an immediate value they were unwilling for the risk of faith what would be found on the other side and they pleaded with Moses and got what they wanted. And they were allowed to remain on the wrong side of the Jordan and have been subsequently lost to the whole history of Israel ever since.

The only melancholy reminder that we have of the tribe of Gad who lingered on the wrong side are the Gadarenes of the New Testament time who raised pigs and were unwilling even at that time for the deliverer to come because it was expensive for their flesh and would much prefer to sustain their herds than to welcome him who cast them into the sea to perish with demon spirits. So what a commentary on what the consequence is for an unwillingness to cross over for a languishing on the wrong side and I think that the reason is always the same because it is conducive to the flesh because there we will have a security for things that pertain to herds. So there is now as then a necessity for crossing over lest our own carcasses be found on the wrong side or we descend into the melancholy thing that I'm describing as was true for the tribes of Gad and Manasseh that refused to go over and to remain for their cattle's sake.

And we have just reviewed what the land of the Gadarenes became by the time of Jesus centuries later and are lost even now to any kind of historical remembrance let alone value. So the conversion of Paul and our conversion is critical and it begins with the phrase as he journeyed. I think there is more hope for an enemy of God journeying in full sincerity even in his error than there are for those who purport to be the friends of God and have long since ceased journeying and are just kind of treading water or occupying a kind of stale place.

There is more hope to convert an enemy who is in motion however grievous his error and the error is the consequence even of an intensity for God however misunderstood than there are for those who are safely ensconced with their correct credos and doctrines who are not moving at all.

So there is something in my spirit that rises up in the words that we read and as he journeyed you wonder if there would have been a conversion if Saul would have been content to rest on his knees and to be satisfied with the conventional categories of orthodox Judaism that satisfied many of his own contemporaries but as he journeyed suddenly there came a light and I'm wondering if that's a condition for that light for us as well that when the Lord sees the Lord sees a questing there's more prospect of being arrested by the light of God than if we're merely treading water and satisfied with the spiritual status quo of our lives but until that light shines until something comes down upon us from above we're fixed in the place that we are everything is from the great sovereign hand of God

whose eye roves to and fro over the face of the earth seeking that one whose heart is perfect toward him and if that were not so I would not be speaking to you now I would not be in the faith I would be a dead man long before but even as an atheist and as an enemy of God and pouring out threatenings and

murderings against the church 30 years ago in the same kind of vehemence and opposition of a Saul I was arrested and probably for the same kinds of reasons that even in my error and even in my opposition to the church and to the faith and unable even to passively mouth the name of Jesus except as a blasphemy and a curse God yet saw a heart that was desiring a truth that was willing to be on the way journeying and I think that that is a disposition that is characteristic of saints even

after the encounter the initial encounter with God and I love the way that the Lord encounters Saul after he had fallen to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me and I think that if we're examining the anatomy of conversion and what it is that needs to be radically turned it's this fatal error which if it's allowed its final expression will result in the persecution of God and the church and the error is this it's putting our vow before God's name why persecutest thou before me why do you celebrate and put your self interest however religious and sanctified you think it is before me and here's where I just have to trust the Holy Ghost to take that simple thing that lies too deep for words and show us what the crux of the matter is we are not

converted until his me is before our thou that's the fatal mishap that's the error of our whole way and the tragedy is we can go an entire lifetime with our thou preceding his me there's something that needs to be wrenched and radically altered radically corrected the one thing before the other his me before our thou and if that does not take place be assured in one form or the other we're persecuting God we're opposing God while we purport even to be laboring and serving in his interest isn't that exactly the picture of Saul this was not some calculated atheist indifferent to God this was a man zealous for God but the error that led to the persecution of God's own people and God himself in his people was a religious man in error because his thou however well meaning was yet before God's

me how does it stand with you tonight if that kind of fatal and basic error is possible for a man of religious zeal with every right intention so much to serve God as to seek out opportunity to round up these heretics and bring them back to Jerusalem how much then also are we capable of exactly that same and fatal error why do you put your thou before my me it's the nub of the matter so long as we have made ourselves central and prior before him and that I think is characteristic essentially of the church today even in its best charismatic form it is still our thou it is still how are we affected and our interest and did we enjoy and do we like that stubborn egocentric thing that can only be dislodged by profound conversion for that in fact what conversion is we can be saved we can be

filled with the spirit and yet this central thing can remain unattended until there's a light that shines down upon us from heaven and brings us down into the earth so have we not even in these nights fitted his word into our already existing categories by which we affirm ourselves by the very things given by God to unseat and even to devastate us I'm glad that this is going on tape I'll say that again how many of us in the hearing of the word of these very nights have taken that word in through the prism of our own subjectivity and fitted it in to the already existing construct of our life our categories and finding a way in which the word would be amenable to our view of ourselves and our spirituality and our call in a word what we're doing even unconsciously is elevating ourselves

above the word and determining how it's to be fitted in comfortably in a way in which it can be related to our already existing categories that we approve instead of allowing the word to devastate and to demolish our categories we stand or sit above it as arbiters over it and fit it in so that it neatly can be taken in and even celebrated and acknowledged as the word of God and applaud the speaker for having brought it can you see why we need to be converted the depth of this egocentrism is unspeakably deep and not

anywhere more so than in the religious and the spiritual realm what greater affront to God what greater expression of putting our thou before his me than the way in which we even hear and receive the word and it's entirely an unconscious process and we've been doing it for 20

years and therefore not receiving the value and the intent of God who gave it I have to say that last night I left depressed I left dejected my spirit had sunk, I was slumping I felt a tremendous exhaustion, a tiredness not only of body but of soul like somehow that's what had happened last night the word was good, the word was precious in God's intention but somehow the time it had become transmuted to the hearer and the way in which the hearer had received it and even responded or did not respond was already showing that our thou was before his me that's why the Lord is saying tonight halt, I'll go no further, I'm not going to share the holy things of the apostolic faith to a people who are going to take it and internalize it and mediate it and fit it into their already existing

mindsets by which they somehow even find a way to exalt themselves when the word was intended to devastate themselves in effect we set ourselves above his word determining to what degree we allow it credence and acceptance what measure we intend practically and we determine by what measure we intend practically to implement it do you realize that that's going on? this is a holy God and he's pouring his heart out to us and we are there consciously or unconsciously calculating to what degree we are really going to realistically receive such a word with the intent of doing it and I think that in this one thing I have described the melees of the church of why it is that it's so stale why it is that it's not going from faith to faith and glory to glory why it is that our services are

punctuated by sermons rather than the word of God that by its very nature requires response and change and demand we're not hearing with the intent of doing we're hearing with the intent of approving if it's biblical if we enjoyed it can you see that we bring a whole kind of mindset that stymies the very preciousness of the word and the intent of God if we will not be changed by the word by what else shall we be changed but are we receiving it in an open and naked way and letting it have its full work are we willing to say Lord let it be unto me according to thy word I don't know what the consequence will be it may mean the eradication of my home and my lifestyle my whole mode of being that I have labored so long to obtain and has nothing intrinsically wrong with it in itself but I don't

know what that's going to mean but until you have come to the place where your heart is continually saying in the hearing of the word let it be unto me according to thy word it no longer becomes the word of God it can no longer function and perform the work of God by the word it becomes a sermon that we approve or dismiss what did it take for Mary to say let it be unto me according to thy word it meant receiving a pregnancy that could not be explained to a pious and orthodox generation totally prepared to stone to death on the doorstep of her father that woman who had an inexplicable pregnancy and to this day the Talmud and the writings of the Rabbis make a shaded reference to Mary's pregnancy as having come from a Roman soldier for how else shall inexplicable pregnancies be understood

and when Mary said let it be unto me according to thy word she meant I will receive the full consequence of receiving this word even if it shall mean my death in disgrace although I am a virgin of Israel I'll tell you when God will find a heart like that there's no limit to the extent of the work that can find its inception and when I think of the potential in this room for the works of God in the last days not only in this community but beyond it in a world that is rocked and racked by violence and filth and muck and perversion and corruption of every kind waiting for men that will come to it sent by God I sense the frustration of God who cannot even perform that until there's a people who receive his word in that same virginal disposition of

spirit willing for its full consequence

whatever that consequence might be let it be unto me according to thy word and you'll save yourself a lot of unnecessary aggravation wondering what the outworking of that word will be in its particular application if you have reconciled yourself with the fact that it will inevitably lead me to the place of death and once you've made that reckoning what difference by what form it comes stoning at the doorstep of your father's house or disgrace or the rejection of men or the hostility or the misunderstanding or the catcalls or the shrieks or the reproaches and all of the kinds of things moral, physical hazards of all kinds God is yet waiting and has never had any other inception for his works than one who will say let it be unto me according to thy word and what was Saul's answer when he

was confronted by the Jesus who who said Saul you've celebrated and elevated your vow before my me came that one great apostolic statement that underlay the whole of the great career that would follow Lord what would you have for me to do I want to say that every invoking of the word Lord for which we have been guilty without also following that with the balance of Paul's statement is a playing with a holy thing and even taking the name of the Lord in vain I want to ask you dear ones when was the moment that you transacted with God something of the utterness with which Paul commenced his apostolic walk with one question that subsumes and includes every and all other questions Lord what would you have for me to do no ifs no ands, no buts no stipulations, no conditions no guarantees no

requests even for illumination or for understanding or for explanation if the Lord is Lord we have but one posture only to be down on the earth before him with this cry resonating throughout the whole balance of our natural lives Lord what would you have for me to do we say it once but we live forever in the echo of that question or we do not live apostolically at all and that is not the least of the reasons why we're hearing tonight what we're hearing because I didn't come with a briefcase well I did and there are many choice things in it but I'm not at liberty to cite or to employ any one of them however much I would be delighted in the promulgation of the precious holy seed that God has given me but my every speaking my every service like yours needs to be conducted in the resonance of

one question only one Lord Lord what would you have for me to do and how many apostolic careers are in abeyance tonight how many prophets are there in this room how many evangelists and teachers and pastors how many women of prevail and intercession how many callings in God hanging and waiting for the one question for which God is yet waits to hear that has never been sounded in his hearing with every stop removed and with all qualifications forsaken it's the statement of utter apostolic abandon and until the Lord hears it he's not going to tell you what you have to do but that there are things to do is beyond question but they can only be performed in the power given to those to whom it can be entrusted the spirit given without measure as to sons who have no purpose for themselves and no

life unto themselves but live by one question only and this indeed is living Lord what would you have for me to do anything less than that is deprivation anything less than that is contraction and and inadequate life it's being seized with fears and doubts and vacillations and all the kinds of things that cripple and stymie and knot us up there's a release when we have finally come to that place where with full integrity we say and put before God that thing for which he waits that he cannot command or compel and must be freely and utterly and totally given and he's not Lord until it has been given what would you have for me to do and I think that the answer is always the same though the forms of the fulfillment of it may vary I will show him how great things he must suffer for my namesake

no wonder we don't ask the question how wisely we intuit what the necessary answer must be but I'll tell you dear saints if you don't know it that for every suffering that comes as the consequence of obedience to the Lord is glory unspeakable is reward eternal is joy even in the now in the midst of the suffering and the pain and the distress and the misunderstandings of men and the reproach and all that follows and obedience to a God who would have us to do you need to ask yourself has there ever been a point in the whole of my Christian life where I have asked God Lord what would you have for me to do with the full intention not just of giving answer to something that would be spoken in that moment but living in the light of that question ever thereafter there will be no apostolic church

until that question is both asked and consistently maintained well Art you don't understand I'm a professional I'm a doctor I'm not some off the wall Jesus freak like Saul he didn't have much to lose you have to realize I have responsibility Saul was the prized student of the rabbi Gamaliel if there's any man who committed religious suicide by the raising of that question and forfeited an entire career that would have won him a celebration to this day in Jewish orthodoxy it was Saul but he forfeited all that and counted it as done as we know by raising the only question the right question that any creature can raise before its creator what would you have for me to do whatever the consequence whatever the loss your Lord and if you're not the Lord of that question then anything that I would

presume to speak in that name is a mock and a travesty and a religious exercise at best and falls short and must of the glory of God and the ironic thing is and mark my words that if you continue in that in the last days you'll find yourself not among the persecuted but the persecutors as the centrifugal thing continues to work and radically brings us into the one orbit or the other into that which is apostolic or into that which is apostate for the love of many shall grow cold and the last days are marked by the great apostasy and the falling away of many who could not bring themselves to follow the Lord whithersoever he would lead them and found themselves in the vortex of a religious kind less than that which is apostolic and being offended by those who are and finally ironically

opposing and persecuting them such is the end of those whose thou is yet before his me mustn't we ask with Saul who art thou Lord and receive the answer I am Jesus whom thou persecutest Lord give me grace I don't know how to say this I've been trying to say it for two nights who art thou Lord that even the revelation of the Lord as Lord so much waits on our pulling out the stops that he's not going to squander and give us such treasure of the revelation of the knowledge of himself in truth until he sees a people in truth who are willing to serve him in truth so we're laboring under truncated and inadequate understandings of God and if we really recognize that it's crippling our spiritual life we can't rise above this inadequate version of a Jesus whom we have internalized for our own

purpose and we need to say really truly who art thou Lord I've been guilty of mouthing that word glibly and in a facile way but I have to acknowledge in the light that is shining down on me from above tonight I really don't know as I ought to know who art thou and the answer is I am I am that I am that I am I will be who I will be I am Jesus I'm not your buddy boy I'm not the one to help you in the way and patch up your marriage I do all those things I'm above your need I am Jesus and unless that revelation comes and comes with our faces on the ground what kind of apostolic service can we perform for it cannot exceed and must reflect whatever our knowledge of God in truth is and that's why we ourselves are the victims of inadequate ministries that's why we have been invited to accept the

Lord and to recite a prayer and praise God for the measure that he honors even that call but look how stultified our lives have been and banging about and divorced and remarried and all of the kinds of things

that are the consequence of not having had a true beginning from the first we never knew him as we ought and yet we're singing his praises or think we are and the powers of darkness brooding over Truckee relishing the continuation of just such a kind of thing that causes them no perturbation at all there's nothing here that alarms them go ahead continue your round of services continue your programs and in no way jeopardizes or threatens the kingdom of my darkness because you cannot rise above and you cannot exceed your inadequate knowledge of God and even your use of his name is a

piece of nomenclature and a formality or a shallowness that does not invoke much only that one who is deeply converted only that one who has gone down on his face and has to be raised up from it as blind and who can see no man and be led away as a child is the one who has the potential to threaten the kingdom of darkness and how many of us want to be led away by the hand great Saul the prized student of the rabbi Gamaliel who could quote you yards of scripture with rabbinical interpretation utterly blinded utterly devastated we need to come to a place where we see no man even our own man even our own seeing and that's why Paul could say follow me as I follow Christ without an iota of egotism of audacity and it's you who think that he's egotistical because you project upon him the ego in

which you still are not having come down on your face upon the ground and been blinded by the light of God to see no man you project to him what your own man is and assume that he must mean by that some kind of egoistic statements because you cannot understand the man who sees no man and in which the element of ego is not a factor it does not have to be recognized he can be the spice he can be cast out he can be the off scouring of the world and without so much as blinking at it for he sees no man the light that has come down has blinded him once and for all to that last crippling seeing even of ourselves that makes us spiritually self conscious and therefore compromised and he trembling and astonishing in astonishment asked Lord what will that have me to do I'm a little suspicious even

to give an invitation tonight and say now you need to say Lord what would you have for me to do and of course you'll say it but you'll leave unchanged because it needs to be said with astonishment and with trembling God forbid we should make of this the last and the worst and the cruelest of all deceptions in an alter call that we can glibly fulfill aren't we doing that already with our so called repentances and confessions and other kinds of things that are just a little too easy for us to pronounce you'll know it's authentic when you die a thousand deaths in the making of it beware of anything that's facile, that's easy, that's glib however correct because what is the cruelest delusion of all and to find ourselves a lie in the thing that's correct it's with astonishment and trembling

that we need to say Lord what would you have for me to do and you can know that if you'll say that tonight the God who inspired this word is the God who will also hear your word and take you at it and your life will be changed from this night and from that speaking things will be released that have been held in abeyance waiting for that pronouncement that must come from you but must rightly come if it's to be true and not just a religious reflex with astonishment and with trembling this is the point of crossing and many of us have said Lord what would you have for me to do but only in a particular moment of distress and need but who of us have asked it foundationally in a once and for all way in utter abandonment of something not ever again to be taken back once you say this these words

are irretrievable saints something has been registered and recorded in the annals of heaven and it's been heard in the hearing of witnesses and before the principalities and the powers of air it's a once and for all, it's an utterness that nothing in this world has prepared us to perform this is the world of relativism this is the world of easy come and easy go this is the world of maybe I guess and I suppose this is a world that

shuns and despises the absoluteness of God and therefore cannot meet him on that ground therefore to meet him on this ground and that absoluteness of that statement with all the stops pulled out is once and for all to be brought out from that world of compromise and be brought in to the absolute kingdom of heaven there's a reason why I'm fasting today as well as

praying because I know that there's something of a transaction that can be performed tonight with astonishment and with trembling that will shake the earth that will release in the earth such things that will take eternity of eternities to celebrate and this is the kind of thing that is beyond any man to perform it must be given from God but it must be heard by men who are willing to go down, you'll never come up again in the same way so to live a whole entire life continually in the reiteration of that question is conversion what's your condition tonight? what's your status? are you saved? or are you converted? the moment that God hears it, who has waited so long he answers, arise and go and it will be told you what you must do but before it's told you before there's explanation before

there's any assurance arise and go and that rising is in the strength of the power of the resurrection life itself that coming up from that death into which you have gone like one struck dead from that light is not you pulling yourself together it's the new force of the life of the Lord himself for the arising and the going is a call to things beyond any capability in yourself to perform and to do it's pure resurrection requirement that's what makes apostolic doing a glory and that's why Paul himself the chief of all apostles was the one who most frequently punctuated his prayers with the cry Lord who is sufficient for these things and I know that I'm looking out on a congregation of very sufficient human beings, very skilled, very capable well ordered lives who would make a show of

things very impressively but God is calling you dear saints to a dimension of service beyond any capacity in yourself to perform and yet it says arise and go because when he says arise it's not just an invitation it is an impartation of a life waiting for that one who has forfeited any life in himself or any possibility of serving God on the basis of his own ability oh I've seen grown men tremble and weep when they've heard this astonishing word and we're just sailing along marvelously serving God with such adroitness and ability and heard a word like this and it was like a sword through their hearts that brought them down as dead men trembling on the ground and later have to be lifted up virtually and sat back in a chair with an astonishment with hands clapped over their mouths and say

to me but Art I have been encouraged to perform on the basis of my PhD and my expertise and I've been solicited to serve and to do things on that level and I've been succeeding marvelously but tonight something has come clear beyond any capacity in myself and there's no arising and going except in the power of that indestructible life that raised Jesus from the dead and will raise us also who are willing to be struck dead brought down into that earth and entirely blinded to the things that we thought that we understood and even celebrated however correct and that must wait like Saul for someone to lay hands upon us to confer our seeing and our understanding as it is mediated through a member of the body of Christ isn't it how classic this conversion is, it's every element so formed in

heaven it's wisdom so eternal that this great Saul this giant in himself so reduced by the light that had fallen from heaven, greater than the sun of the noonday sun, taken as a child by the hand in total helplessness and dependency and laying as one dead neither eating nor drinking and blind for three days and nights reviewing his whole total charismatic understanding, all of the principles of the faith, all of his New Testament understanding, I can just see the Lord just bringing it totally into death, for if he's going to be God's gift to the church it must be by an understanding that is conferred by God and is received by the

laying on of the hands of the simplest of the saints and an Ananias whom if Paul were in any other condition he would have scorned but in the total dependency to

which God brought him he was grateful that there was an obedient servant, however great his fear of Saul who obeyed God and came and laid his hands on Saul that he might see that God had to teach this apostle, the chief apostle to the church the genius and the mystery of the body of Christ from the very inception of his whole apostolic walk which many of us yet have not understood and not seen because it must be conferred by revelation to those who are otherwise blind to it, however much we mouth the particulars of the body of Christ as if it's a new fad and a new vogue and a new vocabulary with which we can play and express ourselves if it has not come to us by revelation it has not come to us and maybe that's why we're in the condition that we are, it's only a vocabulary it awaits the

receiving of something in utter humility that can only come to us through the body or we have it not at all this arising go saints that will come for some of you tonight need not mean that any factor of your life is in any way otherwise changed you'll still go to work tomorrow you'll still come home to your same house tonight, nothing of your circumstances will in any way be visibly altered and yet at the same time profoundly everything is altered this arising go sets in motion the whole heavenly dynamic by which one day that to which you will return will not always be there so it's not for you to posture and for you to deliberate what you need to do now having made this response, having made it, the arising and going having been set by God, it will have its own logic and its own

unfolding it shall be told thee what thou must do, just like Abraham, get thee out into a land that I will show you, there's always a future dimension that requires this trembling cleaving to the God who calls to show us what the next day and even the next moment's requirement is that's not the way in which we have been groomed by our universities to live, we want to know, we want to have assurance, we want to have a firm grasp on what we're doing and why we're doing it and what will be the consequence of our doing but God says I will show you what you must do and I'll tell you for men who bear the kind of word that the Lord is pleased to give me, it's I will show you in the very next sentence it's the very next word I don't know what follows, where do I go from here Lord and your notes

are not going to be your dependency there's a cleaving to what is given from that God who has called us and calls us into such an utterness of dependency upon him that violates every strength and confidence in which the world would have us established it's a pilgrim way and you'll never get used to it and last night's success and the slaps on the back which by the way did not come and the applause of the saints does not fit you for tonight tonight is altogether new altogether something else, last night does not fit you prepare you or guarantee you anything and the consequences are even greater life and death is at stake, eternity is in the balance and who's sufficient for this kind of speaking, but once you arise and go, it shall be told thee, it shall be but you need to live with the

uncertainty of it as Abraham did and every true saint who has responded to such a call, because there are things that you must do, you must do there are things that you must do, that no one else can, no one else is intended to do, it's explicit it's appointed, there's a must that is for you and God is bound up for the revelation and the releasing of it until he has heard with trembling and astonishment, Lord what would you have for me to do it shall be told thee when you'll tell me that I'm willing that I'm putting your me before my thou once and for all and for evermore now your purpose and calling can be revealed now it can be released not what you thought it to be but what the Lord has intended the thing, the destiny appointed what thou must do, now the apostolic fulfillment, the

eternally significant purpose for our being, that is the antidote to boredom and the high seriousness of the faith that persuades even our own children you know what my measure of having come to apostolic verity is, that we're able even to persuade our own children of the truth and the seriousness of what we are about they have an uncommon facility, what's the word, a way of sensing just how serious is it of what my parents are about together with other adults how much does it make a requirement of me how much is it just something to which they can subscribe being adult and liking that kind of thing we know, we will know that we have arrived at apostolic truth and reality corporately when we will have persuaded our own children and the fact that we haven't has had a toll beyond anything

that we can conceive our satisfaction our willingness to abide in something less than the apostolic intention of God, because we have been unwilling to cross over because we have languished and have loved the wrong side, because it's grasses are flourishing and will feed our flesh, has cost the kingdom of God incalculably and even in virtually our every home until we have come to this hasn't our best religious efforts been a persecuting of the saints a lulling them into a lesser place even in the name of that which is apostolic and prophetic Jesus said to Saul in that you have persecuted the church, you have persecuted me and we are guilty of persecuting the church, if we are mediating out to the church something less than that which is heavenly, it's a depriving of the saints it's an

encouraging of them to equate doctrinal correctness and the verbalizing of truth as being the truth itself, fancying that we ourselves are there while all the while we have not ourselves entered the land of promise for the taking of cities being still on the wilderness side we have persecuted the church, we have shortchanged it, and we have liberally crushed what we're doing with the words apostolic and prophetic but we have condemned our hearers to languishing on the wrong side and without even the awareness of that condition and so Saul arose from the earth and when his eyes were opened he saw no man, never again to see man let alone to fear man but to come into that key to apostolic boldness and uncompromising audacity that has no regard for man but God himself alone, for it sees not

even itself everything is henceforth for their sake and for the Lord's sake, you can find that in Paul's writings, you never once hear any reference to for my sake there is no my, it's their sake and the Lord's sake and what kind of a church would we have today if men of this kind were our ministers and until we have such men we're suffering a kind of a deprivation that is tantamount to a persecution and those who have been its ministers need to recognize that and fall before the Lord, so the one who persecuted the body not recognizing its head receives his sight, receives apostolic seeing by the laying on of the hands of its simplest member being instructed from the first the chief apostle of his own dependency upon the body and what the genius of that organism is, that alone is a glory

to God and except that we lay blind, neither eating or drinking for three days, how shall we see and are condemned to employ the language of the body of Christ but live effectually independent of it while all the while lauding and thinking that we're doing God's service and immediately there rose, there fell from his eyes as it had been scales I trust that's happening tonight and straight away he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the son of God and straight away equally he opened himself for the opposition and persecution of men who have a particular vitriolic hatred for that which is apostolically authentic and cannot abide its presence away with such a fellow from the earth, for it's not fit that he should live and they cried out and cast off their clothes and threw dust into

the air what is there about a converted man that makes the powers of darkness so to fulminate and foam in rage that men are beside themselves with a fury who are activated by that spirit and cannot abide that

such a man live such a man such a heavenly man such a servant to the church for their sake and for the Lord's sake such a selflessness that labors day and night and brings the whole counsel of God without fear of whether it will be understood accepted or rejected or will cause offense or what the consequence is for himself because he's living in the resonance of one great statement continually Lord what would you have for me to do let's bow before Paul's God tonight who is the I am and the Jesus still many called few are chosen he tells us many saved few converted conversion is to

the uttermost it's an utterness to a God by the spirit that the world cannot abide and will forever oppose unto death but the works that such a man must do are unto eternity and so in the name of Jesus as the minister of this word tonight I call upon you to respond with fear and trembling with astonishment to the God whose light has shined round about you and bring down to the earth every lesser thing however correct however applauded by men however much it delights your own soul as even brought measure of blessing to others that he might raise you up for the works that you must do when you arise and go in the power of the life given you who has gone down into the death of everything less let him hear from you in that place one statement only Lord what would you have for me to do I think

the Lord has been quite literal he means the real coming down don't deceive yourself that you're making a private transaction while being seated or while being silent that the Lord understands and is accepting it's just that kind of a thing that has kept us from apostolic truth, reality, authority and power no private transactions on your terms one transaction only on his terms with an utterness that requires even your body coming down and these explicit words spoken Lord what would you have for me to do

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