

Apostolic Vision - Part 4

by Art Katz

The main purpose of the church is to fulfill God's eternal purposes, and this requires being heavenly and eternally minded, being jealous for the glory of God, and being obedient to God's mandate.

Duration: 1:08:20

Scripture: Romans 11:33 - 12:1, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 2:4-7, Ephesians 3:10-11, Ephesians 3:20 - 4:1

Topics: "Apostolic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the supernatural power of God that is necessary for the proclamation of His word. The speaker believes that this proclamation is not just instruction, but an event that is independent of human understanding. The sermon focuses on the practical application of the lofty themes discussed, specifically the eternal purposes of God. The speaker highlights the role of the church in demonstrating the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers of the air, who represent the selfishness and corruption of the world. The sermon concludes with the speaker emphasizing the importance of obedience to God's ordinances and the need for the church to be fearless and impactful in the world.

Transcript

Well, unless the Lord gives me a last-moment signal, I have something very practical, nitty-gritty, what do they say, where the rubber hits the road, their practical application of all the lofty things spoken, the eternal purposes of God. You say, Katz, that sounds just like a continuation of lofty and ethereal themes. But I feel that that's the Lord's agenda for tonight, because you're now in a place which, because of last night and because of the nights that have preceded it, now the Lord can express and speak into you the eternal purposes of God.

You could not have heard it before, you could not have received it before, you could not have fulfilled it before. It required the kind of consecration that was made last night and now it should be foundational for your whole being and continuation as a body, and the church that does not recognize, understand, receive, and intend to fulfill God's eternal purposes is ipso facto by that one forfeiture no longer the church. That's our whole purpose for being, is to embrace and to fulfill the eternal purposes of God.

And I wouldn't even venture a guess of what percentage of those who are Christian who don't even know that such a purpose even exists, let alone what it is or how it can be fulfilled. So Lord, I'm asking a grace, I'm asking the same kind of grace for speaking and utterance that my brother Paul asked to make the

mysteries known, Lord. For it's a mystery and it's been concealed and is now being revealed.

And I ask my God for that tonight, for this dear people who are now fitted and ready to hear and to receive it. So come and give it, my God, just the expression that pleases you and more than what words can convey, let something go like a shaft into our hearts, something, my God, strike the very bedrock of our being, something sink into the deepest foundations of our corporate life, of our understanding that affects every other consideration, that henceforth, because of tonight, that there'll never be a time or a question or a concern that we do not consider except in the context and in the light of your eternal purposes for the church. Grant us, my God, that eternal mindedness that transfixes, touches and affects everything.

We thank you and give you the praise for the privilege and the high calling of it in Christ Jesus, in thy holy name we pray, God's people sing, Amen. Well, just to see how bright you are, to what book in the New Testament would you turn for some exposition on the eternal purposes of God? What? Ephesians, A for the day. And have you noticed that Ephesians has a character all its own? There's something about Ephesians, the rhetoric, the quality of speech, the loftiness, the phrasings, the concepts that seem so elusive, that strike such remarkable notes that we just tend to gloss over it.

The book that requires the most intensive apprehension in its practical meaning is the book that, unless we God ourselves, would most lend itself to being superficially mistreated. Well, let's, for the want of time, we really should begin at the beginning, but just leap in, maybe into chapter 2, this wonderful language about the God in verse 4, who is rich in mercy for his love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are you saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. We need to pause just there for a moment, and you need to pause every time you come to the phrase, in the ages to come.

This isn't some kind of esoteric reference to a distant thing that fails to have practical meaning for us, it is our practical meaning. Unless we see our present activity in the light of the ages to come, we do not see it. Don't you understand that every issue that is being propounded and worked is not just to be spent upon our own generation, but its ultimate and eternal value is in the ages to come.

This is what marks us as peculiar. There's not another species on earth whose present is so vitally affected by not just something that is distant, but something that is eternal. That this age is a preparation for the ages to come.

That the issues that are being transacted affect the ages to come. And until that comes into our brain box, and into our mindset, we become pitifully fixed in the present moment, and inadequately prepared. We become impoverished.

So I'm just appealing and beseeching that we need to see everything in the context of eternity. And this is not some kind of a hype. This is not giving some kind of lofty embellishment to kind of sugarcoat our present Christianity.

It's the normative intention of God that except we are heavenly and eternally minded, we are no earthly good. That it's only because we are profoundly occupied with the ages to come that we are of significance and relevance in this age. You got that? We lose that significance.

We're just another burp in a heat cup. We're just another thing to be glossed over by the powers of darkness in the world itself. Until we deeply embrace and take into our foundational consciousness that everything is pointed and given for the ages to come.

And I'll tell you what, when that comes into your consciousness, you'll be far better fitted to bear the present sufferings. Because you'll see them in the light of eternity. You'll see the eternal weight of glory that makes your present afflictions both momentary and light.

This is not some psychological device and gimmick that God is giving us. This is normative apostolicity. Paul could bear the full weight of the church and all of the shipwrecks and stonings and beatings with rods and count it both momentary and light.

Truly, he wasn't psyching himself out. Because he saw everything within the present in the context of the thing that is eternal and pertaining to the ages to come. I plead with you to fight and to contend for this thing.

For everything in the world, the flesh and the devil militates against it. There's nothing that the power of darkness wants more than that you should be fixed in the present moment. And consider everything from the perspective of 60, 70 or 80 years.

It's a distortion. It's not a valid seeing. It's an inadequate perception.

Everything becomes changed when you see it in the context of eternity and in the ages to come. And in that case, then we can well understand why it takes a lifetime to be shaped at the hand of God. Why he's a master craftsman.

Why it is we have not come in one fell swoop to be the overcoming saints and the marvels of spirituality that we thought was going to be conferred with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. My God, it's been a long struggle. And we're still stumbling and fumbling still.

And I'm a little embarrassed even for something of my own lapses last night. But when you see it in the context of eternity, where our character is being fitted for an eternal relationship, an eternal service with God, then it makes a profound sense of what God will do in shaping and molding and forming a people in the light of eternity and the ages to come. For by grace are you saved through faith, though not of yourself.

It's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. And that's another word that needs to come into your evangelical vocabulary, though you'll probably have to do a little battle with a residue of resistance to the word works.

We're going to be judged by our works. The issue of our eternal salvation has been determined. It's the grace that was given.

We're saved eternally. But where we occupy eternity, in what place in eternity, in what proximity to the Lord, and in what place in his purposes, we don't sit on a cloud plucking a harp. There's a ruling and reigning.

There's a millennial kingdom that needs to be established as creation for which our character in this life is preparation. So the issue of our works that pass to fire and are not consumed because they are haywood and stubble, but made of precious stones and gold and silver is critical. And we need to be asking, Lord,

what are our works? And last night said something about the things that you must do.

We are appointed for works, not works that will constitute our salvation, but works that will constitute our eternal reward and our place in the eternal purposes of God. So remember that you being in times past Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision, but that which is called the circumcision of the flesh made by hands, that at times you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Jesus, you notice that I'm just substituting the original Hebrew word, the Mashiach, for the transliteration of the Greek word Christos for Christ, that we need to be reminded Jewishly of who it is and by whose blood we who were far off and without God and without hope in the world have been brought nigh into the commonwealth of Israel.

This is a remarkably important factor for our understanding and our consideration. We're not doing them a favor. They are not Johnny-come-lately's that we by our witness are going to save.

We're grafted into their root. We were totally alienated from their promises and from their covenants. We would be drinking beer out of skulls to this day if God in his mercy did not conscript us and draw us into their covenant.

And I'm not by that saying you're Jewish. God forbid. Or I would be destroying in that one mistake the very genius and the brilliance of what God is about in inducting Gentiles not only into the commonwealth of Israel but being grafted into their tree and their root and into their life and into their covenant that something of the brilliance of the God of reconciliation would make of us too one new man, thus making peace.

Because this is the mystery of the Church, Saints. Our purpose is more than a series of services and preachments. There's a mystery that must be fulfilled by us in these last days with them who are presently so alienated and distant from the God of their fathers and who have been historically in rebellion and God is not loath to say in full candor they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake.

Who needs that kind of enemy? They're intimidating, they're threatening, they're intellectually sharp, they're intimidating in every way and yet except we be reconciled with them, except to be brought back into their own tree by something that issues from us the mystery of God remains unfulfilled and the Lord himself contained in the heavens and not able to come to his creation as King. If you could just catch that last statement. How much is riding on the restoration of Israel through an essentially Gentile church? That the Lord it says in Acts 3.21 is pent up in the heavens waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began.

And we need to again to turn to the prophets, it's time now for all of the purported interest in prophecy there are very few believers turning to the prophets. Maybe if they did those that call themselves prophets now would lose something of their luster. But if you turn to the prophets you'll see that there was one pre-possessing theme namely the restoration of Israel after millennia of alienation and the rejection of their own God and their own covenants back again to him and to the land that he might then again be their king forever even David upon the throne of David from the hill of Zion in Jerusalem.

You know what we've done with these references as a church? We have spiritualized them away. We had so little belief and faith and desire to see such a restoration we were so ourselves full of a kind of a conceit that displaced that people and saw ourselves as their replacement that that today is called replacement

theology that we had no intention or expectation of their return let alone that we should be the agent toward it. And so we took very concrete literal and specific statements in the prophets about their restoration in the last days and have spiritualized them away.

That the Zion is now the church and Jerusalem is a figurative term meaning God's people and I mean that's a lovely way to make preaching points and for secondary purposes okay but don't let the secondary purpose displace the primary. You will find yourself with a totally new Bible when you with an intention read every reference to Israel and the prophets as being literal. It will transform the Word of God for you and as a matter of fact I will tell you now that it itself is the hermeneutical key to all the scriptures.

Hermeneutical means the principle of interpretation. When the church from about the third century and particularly with one of the church fathers by the name of Origen began to develop a method of interpreting scriptures of an allegorical kind that it no longer means what it says but it stands for something of a symbolic or an allegorical kind and led the church into lofty spiritualizations in a way from the literal intent of God. We suffered a damage of such a magnitude that I have not a word to describe and that when we shall return to the literal Word of God likewise something of a magnitude shall be restored to the entire faith and to the church itself which is at the heart of the very mystery of God for having created a church for have they stumbled that they should fall? Is God finished with them? God forbid! But throughout the Middle Ages and that the very name of Christ is so distasteful for Jewish consideration and yet God makes the key to their restoration the church.

But a church of what kind? I can tell you this more than charismatic. We Jews are the toughest critics on the face of the earth and we long before knew the phoniness of your televangelist before you had to be awakened from your sleep by their fall into blatant sin. We just click them on in a moment we see right through the whole posturing.

There's something about us even in our unbelief, even in our darkness that is, what's the word, unerring in discerning what is authentic and what is make-believe. Why does God say that through you they should be moved to jealousy? Because he gives to the church a purpose for its being that is central to its whole existence that cannot be fulfilled except supremely through the grace that is given by the resurrection life of Christ. You turn to the conclusion of that book in the New Testament that most sets forth this mystery which is Romans chapter 11, actually 9 through 11, and Paul concludes his statement with these words, Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, who has been his counselor? Who has given to him and it shall be given again? For of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever.

Amen. Then the very next verse of chapter 12 says, therefore I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. That's the punctuation.

Having set forth this inordinate requirement beyond any religious ability to fulfill, Paul then says make of your bodies a living sacrifice. I beseech you therefore in the light of what I'm setting before you that is not going to find fulfillment until you are extended before God to the uttermost of the kind that many of you last night performed. Resurrection has got to be for us more than just a doctrine to which we give assent.

For of him is this mystery but through him is its fulfillment that it might be to him as glory forever. Now listen church unless your central purpose for being is the glory of God forever, you could forget everything else and make no pretense at even taking it up in your interest. This is the apostolic and the prophetic

motivation.

Only this will see us through every difficulty and every strain and every trial and every backlash and every retaliation that comes to us from the world and its liberal churches and from the aggravated Jewish community itself that does not understand and cannot our intentions for them and see it only as threat. The only thing that will sustain you is the jealousy for the glory of God forever. You want something worthwhile for your life? Embrace the issues of God that have to do with his glory forever.

We're privileged. Al and Paulette and Ing and myself, we are privileged. God has saved us from merchandise and making a living quote and unquote and other the kinds of things by which men would sustain their physical lives.

We have the privilege of being occupied with the issues that pertain to the glory of God forever. But who can proclaim them? Who can communicate them? Who can enlist the interest of God's people who are caught up with the subtleties of the world and the flesh and the devil and bring them out and into these purposes? Who is sufficient for these things? Even the proclamation requires the supernatural power of God. Even this itself must be through him or it will fall dismally to the ground.

I'll tell you that if I know and sense anything about God, this speaking tonight is not intended only as instruction, it is intended as event. And that is altogether independent of your understanding and comprehension. Or it's good for you to understand and subsequently you may, after you hear the tape several times.

But whether you understand or not, the word tonight is going out as event. It's going into your foundation. It is something given by God.

A word that constitutes something that if it were not spoken, there's no way that you could attain to the realization of the eternal purposes of God or be set in motion toward their fulfillment. Something must come down to us from above through the word. It may be for that reason that the Lord did not allow me any preparation today and even to keep me in suspense to a last moment wondering indeed what his burden was and then to feel that yes it is the eternal purpose of God and yet not knowing how to proclaim it.

And even beginning to read a text I see that I'm stopped and I'm going off now from that into things I hadn't thought now yet to be speaking. I'm not saying this to direct your attention to me but to direct your attention to an understanding that you must have. That what we are called to is so transcendent, so supremely beyond any capability of ourselves to fulfill that God is waiting to hear our gasp and our splutter who is sufficient for these things.

That can only be spoken in sincerity by those who take the mandate to them themselves with the intention of fulfilling it. You see the paradox that we're in? There's a requirement of an extraordinary kind and yet it's beyond our fulfillment. And it must be so because everything about this is to his glory forever.

Are you jealous for his glory, saints? I'll tell you to be jealous for his glory will make a fool out of you. You'll do things for his glory that you would never have done for any other motive and for any other reason. You'll be called a jerk, you'll suffer reproach, people will castigate you, but there's something burning in your spirit that's a jealousy for the glory of God.

You don't even know how to define it. But you know that somehow that this foolishness is related to that glory and will not be obtained without it. And therefore you'll do it.

This is more than some sentimental appeal that you know we should be doing something for the Jews. Didn't we get from them the Bible? Didn't they give us the prophets? And weren't the apostles Jews? Don't we have an obligation to witness them? Peewee on that stuff. I'm not speaking to you from the level of sentimentality or the level of religious obligation.

A pox on both things. Neither can succeed. And those who are fascinated with Jews now and taken up with some kind of mystique of Israel will be the first to collapse and fall when Jews will profoundly disappoint us in the last days.

Only a people will sustain a motive to be to them what they must whose motive is not the fascination with Israel but the jealousy for the glory of God forever. There's the forever of God. There's throughout all ages.

There's the issue of eternity. And yet it takes place in time. It's got to be fulfilled in the last days and yet the significance and the what is revealed in that fulfillment is of such a kind that it redounds to and reverberates forever.

And we are called to affect that by something in ourselves as the church. Was there ever a call that required the church to be the church as this? No. And would we ever be it without this mandate and requirement? No.

We would have had other criteria for our success and we do. Numbers, programs, do you like the services, do you like the speaker? But this is calculated to bring us up into a transcendent which is to say apostolic place of consideration. That the measure of what we are as church is not our delight in ourselves but whether we can move this obdurate, resistant people to jealousy that they would consider and embrace the gospel that heretofore and up to now they have been the predominant enemies.

Okay, little quiz. Name me some of the Jewish enemies of the gospel who have been so formidable that they have affected modern civilization and all mankind. Not content merely to condemn God's messianic heilsgeschichte, excuse the German phrase, his redemptive purpose, but even to supply one of their own.

Give me the foremost man in modern times who has done that, who is Jewish. Karl Marx. Marxism is a demonic messianic alternative to the messianic program of God.

We Jews are uncanny in our ability to invent our own alternatives. We're at the forefront of everything that is secular, everything that is harebrained, schematic, colossal. We've got that because we're a called and gifted people but it's not being employed for God but for his enemy.

I'll tell you dear saints that when you touch a Jew you're not just merely touching and confronting another ethnic minority, you're fingering the whole nexus of an entire world system that is at enmity with God. Now am I encouraging you to anti-semitism? God forbid. I'm just giving it to you straight.

I want you to know that God has set a stage. God has established a drama of elements that are so phenomenal that what kind of a church can we think ourselves to be if we have not even the awareness of this drama, let alone the determination to fulfill it. And if we do not fulfill our mandate toward that nation, that nation remains alienated from God.

There's no redemption of the people nor the land. There's no city out of which the law can go forth and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. The Lord remains pent up in the heavens.

The world continues to muck and do all of its filth and murder and violence and mayhem because the Lord is not upon his throne and never will occupy it until he is seated upon the throne of David in the holy hill of Zion in the city of Jerusalem in a restored nation that acknowledges him at last as king. And that will not happen without you. What will it take to move that people to jealousy? Whatever it takes it's going to be ultimate.

And it's going to be corporate because it's not a matter of the showing off of individual virtuosos but the church in its full corporate genius and splendor. When my people can glimpse something in you in your totality, the light of God, the reality of God, the truth of God where they can sense there's a love that is unsunged. There's a faith unsunged.

There's a people who live sacrificially for one another and for them. They'll be moved to a jealousy for which God waits. Romans 11 is replete with references to the things that must come to Jews by the church or does not come.

That by your mercy they may obtain mercy. And though I have not time tonight except I keep you up all the night I want to say if you can bear it that the hour is not too distant when Jews will be so harassed and persecuted in every nation over the face of this earth that except that a mercy be extended to them through the church of every locality through which they pass they'll not be one that will survive the ferocity of the last day's diabolical hatred against them. We're going to find Jews straggling right through these lands and you're going to find why it is that the Lord allowed you to build a house with so many thousand square feet of space far more than you should ever rightly need for your own lifestyle.

Every nook and cranny and attic and closet will likely be housing some Jew in flight and in distress and your willingness to do it will be at extreme peril to your own life and that of your children. Oh Art you're off the wall I mean you're so ridiculous you're so way out. That can never happen here this is the land of mom and an apple pie and red white and blue and and the dolphins and the Dallas Cowboys.

Oh well what about the land of Goethe and Schiller and Hegel and Nietzsche and Schopenhauer and Brahms and Beethoven and Wagner and the great giants of culture, music, and philosophy and ethics. If Nazism could come as a demonic phenomenon and be established within a decade and devastate the Western world and and six million of my people with a scientific precision what do you think of what we are not capable. And when it comes saints it's going to come suddenly.

And the issue that was before the church in Germany will be the issue before us. Will the real church please stand up. There'll be a national church that goes along with the national consensus of hatred against the Jew seeing them as a threat to the security and and the banking system and the economy and I don't know what form this grotesque hatred is going to take.

It's already seething, it's already palpitating, it's already something on the stove ready to billow over. All you need to do is receive the mailings from the Jewish Defamation League or Anti-Defamation League and other organizations. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

The panic that is coming to the Jewish community in the world and in this country. Never a time there have been more incidents on college campuses. Jewish synagogues being defaced with graffiti and and

tombstones being knocked over and a greater and greater boldness by skinheads and racists and the Nazi ilk.

That's how it started with Hitler as a cellar basement phenomenon with the perverts and the castoffs and the scum of society and that's how it will also begin with us. And the German church has to decide whether it would stand with the nation now Nazi and its vile anti-Jewish hatred or be the Church of Jesus Christ and make itself candidates for the same suffering as the Jews in their midst. We might well be faced with that same question and I'm telling you now well in advance as you might be prepared for it that it should not come upon you suddenly.

Why do you think we're in Minnesota? Because we like rural rustic retreat? We're there for that explicit reason. Because God 17 years ago the moment I set foot on the property said end time teaching center community refuge. And only more recently has he made explicit who the refuge is for.

And I'll tell you that it is hardly a place that I stop now that is not going to be some underground way in that whole network of things by which God is going to move Jews out of their great urban centers and down through a process of sifting them in wilderness remote places and out through Mexico and the Sierra Madre mountains and a seaport back to Israel that the redeemed of the Lord might return to Zion and mourning and sighing flee away for their last days extremity will be to them a mourning and sighing and not all of them will survive it. There's a drama ahead saints and I was not at liberty to share it with you. It would have been water off the duck's back except for last night.

Last night was a decisive crossing over. Last night was a saying to the Lord yes. Last night means an opening now of the things for which you're called and determined as a church.

End time teaching center community refuge. There'll be no refuge for my people in their knocked about distraught condition and the sudden uprooting that will come to them in great fear and flight except by a people who can bear the impact, the onslaught of such a people in that condition and that means that we must be a community, embrace ourselves to receive the weight of that spiritually, physically, emotionally and I can show you a text and several texts that shows that this is not some kind of makeshift provision of God to just get them through. This is his explicit strategy not only for the sifting of them but for the sifting of us.

Will the true church please stand up. Will the church that can extend mercy and will extend it at the risk of their life please stand up. Where is the church that does not count its life as dear unto itself that long ago has said, Lord what would you have for me to do? That's the church that will reveal Israel's God to Israel in its hour of final extremity because God said I will meet with them in the wilderness of the nations face to face and there I will plead with them and there I will bring them under the rod of my authority and into the bond of my covenant.

They'll return as the redeemed of the Lord but they did not commence their spiritual journey in that condition. They found the Lord in the course of their flight. By some kind of the revelation of the face of the Lord in the midst of their extremity, I will meet with you face.

We Jews are very trying and that's in our best condition. What will we be in that ultimate condition of our duress will be a real test to your sanctification and the truth of your spirituality. And that's what God intends that it should be.

And couldn't you see the mystery that Paul had a gasp, he couldn't even find words to express all the depths of the richness both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. Why did he break out in that euphoric language that high praise that cannot even be contained by words because he saw something more than Israel's restoration. What he saw was the church's transfiguration by virtue of the process of being to Israel what alone the church must be.

It's the real church that will stand up and only the real church. And I'll tell you what, the church that can be to Israel, the face of God in its extremity and the mercy of God in its need is the same church that could confound the principalities and powers of the air to battle against the heavenlies and be the apostolic verity of God in the earth in these last days. But you cannot be the one without the other.

Let's just, because of time, just leap into chapter 3 of Ephesians now that I've mentioned the principalities and powers. Chapter 3, verse 6, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power, unto me who am less than the least of all saints. There's that remarkable Paul.

This is in self-effacing false modesty. This is the same man who says follow me as I follow Christ. An apostle by the will of God.

And now he says I'm less than the least of all saints. Is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ? And now we come to the punchline. And to make all men see.

This is tonight's purpose. What is the fellowship of the mystery? Do you love the word? Does a little saliva, a little moisture begin to form? Do you begin to lick your chops? The mystery. This is not the word as the world uses it.

This is mystery. The resonance of things hidden that are appointed in a certain moment of time. Something to be revealed, something to be appropriated, something to be fulfilled that has to do with the glory of God forever.

The fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now unto the principality and powers and heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Patently impossible to preach this. It beggars every skill or ability that men might have to exposit the word.

This statement is so compacted, so intense, it is so full of unspeakable meaning that it would take nights to open, to explore, to understand. Unless there's a transmission, a revelation of the mystery we will not receive it. And isn't that the same word that Paul uses for the mystery of Israel? I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, Paul speaking about the Jew in the church, lest you become wise in your own conceit.

The two great things that pertain to the calling of the church, especially the church of the last days, is called by Paul mystery. And that word is as alien to us as eternity, as the ages to come, as heaven. And yet these words are so vital, so central to our believing and our acting in this life, that for them to be without cogent meaning is to rob us as the church.

I invite you to open yourself for the revelation of the mystery of God, hidden until now. And what is it? That God has created all things through Christ Jesus in order that. Well, let us take pause.

Whatever the rest that it is that follows, let's gird ourselves to hear what it's going to be. What is God saying? That the whole of creation that has laid the basis for human society and civilization, and all of its complexity and riches to sustain and support life, is really for one principal purpose. In order that what? That now, through the church, hold it, what? Everything in creation for the church? Something by the church, through the church, for the church? Is that not important in God's sight? Well, if it is, Lord, forgive us for failing to give to the church the same respect and apprehension and consideration that you yourself give it, and for which you gave even your very life.

Listen, saints, we have not adequately perceived the mystery of the church. The body of which he is the head. And the strange paradox is that the church that will embrace something as distant, as ethereal, and as cosmic as a demonstration to the invisible spirit realm of whatever the manifold wisdom of God is, is the church most profoundly relevant and powerful now and presently in the earth.

You have an obligation. It's incumbent upon you to search God and ask, Lord, what is this wisdom? By what means is this demonstration to be made? It makes no sense to me. I've been so habituated to practical payoffs, to things that are expedient and are pragmatic, that something invested for something gained.

But this, that you did not think it extravagant to create all things, the whole cosmos, the galaxies, the earth, its orbit, its ability to have vegetation to sustain life, in order that upon it should be an entity called the church, in order that it might perform something that only it can perform as the church, and it cannot be performed by solo virtuosos, but by the church in its entirety and totality, once and for all. Or it cannot make that demonstration, for a part of that wisdom is a church that can be one, is a church that is whole, is a church that is in union with each other, in unfeigned love and real agreement, and not some charismatic slipshod political ecumenical unity that is a pox and a counterfeit against the real thing. And what are you slouches willing to do to obtain that? Hey, that means my privacy is going to be invaded.

I'm not going to be able to put my feet up on the coffee table, because it's likely that saints will again be going from house to house daily breaking bread. This unity is not some kind of high brother to a little backslap and a full gospel bear hug. This is going to be real agreement, but not first without working through disagreement, through tensions, through differences, and all the kinds of things that make us up in our motley and divergent composition.

That's what makes the church the church. That's the genius of the church. That's why it's this eternal masterpiece.

That's why Paul concludes Ephesians chapter 3 with saying, unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, world without end, throughout all ages. Amen. Oh you dear saints, break up the fallow ground, divest yourself of your little earthly concepts of the church as some institution constituted for your benefit, that panders to you by providing services and giving your kids Sunday school and outings.

The church is the eternal glory of God, or it's not the church. And such a glory as not only in this age, but in all the ages to come. Therefore, what is God wanting? What is the wisdom that is to be demonstrated, that is uniquely his wisdom, that is altogether opposite to and antithetical to the wisdom of this present world and its entire value system.

And what he's wanting is not that you should mentally be able to express verbally that wisdom, but to demonstrate it in the actuality of your personal and corporate life. And the church that can do that will move Jews to jealousy. You see why Paul prayed? Pray for me, for grace, that I might have utterance and speak boldly what I ought to speak.

If the Apostle Paul required prayer for the mere communication of the mystery, what shall we require in the last days to fulfill it? Can you see why this could not have been spoken before last night? It would have been for you an amusement. Tonight it is a mandate that can only be fulfilled on the ground to which you came last night. Total abandonment to God.

And that total abandonment is the wisdom of God. It's what Jesus demonstrated on the cross. Because the wisdom of this world says, you sap, take care of number one.

You've only got this one life. Your marriage isn't working out too well. Well, don't you have a right to have some satisfaction? You're still young and attractive.

Get rid of the bum. And try, try again. Everybody's doing it.

God's wisdom says, suffer the bum. In fact, he's a bum for your sake. He's ornery and calculated to try you and to test the depth, the sincerity, and the authenticity of your supposed spirituality.

For there's not a factor, there's not a constituent element in your life, your marriage, your fellowship, your relationship, your work, that is not the grist of God for the shaping of a church that will demonstrate his wisdom, contrary to the wisdom of this present world, that says, take care of number one. Nobody else will, but a church that will put the purposes of God before its own self-interest is already that demonstration. Oh, dear saints.

Oh, dear saints. The church was birthed out of a cosmic conflict between two value systems. A pathetic, indigent, preaching character by the name of Jesus, the Christ, and the powers of darkness, fulminating and foaming through the political and religious forces available to it that bespoke the wisdom of men, meeting head-on and the one yielding to the full impact and force of the other, whose wisdom says, say, uncle, when torment and pressure and physical oppression and suffering comes upon you.

But he did not rail against them. He did not respond in kind, but in the forgiveness of God, in the meekness of God, he patiently bore his sufferings, and in so doing, inflicted an incisive defeat on the principality and the powers of the air, robbing them and defusing them and disarming them, but not altogether devastating them. That's left for you by exactly the same demonstration against them at the end as he performed in the beginning.

A people who will bear the full brunt and impact of the savagery of the powers of darkness who have but a short time, and show forth in that the meekness and patience and forbearance of God, the magnanimity of God in suffering. Had some dumb centurion standing at the cross who had seen any number of men crying out and spitting out their vexation and their curses at those who were tormenting him, saw this man die in another way. For crisis reveals, and absolute crisis reveals absolutely.

And this dumb gentile centurion, who didn't know beans about the heilsgeschichte of God and the whole redemptive wisdom of God, said truly this is the Son of God, and was saved. But it's not going to be a gentile standing at the cross of the suffering of the body of the Christ in the last days, but the Jewish community. And they're going to see a demonstration that that gentile saw thousands of years before

through the corporate body.

Because what we are will be revealed in extremity. And that's why God is speaking now to prepare us and to fit us for the thing for which he has created all things, in order that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated finally and at last to the principalities and the powers of the air. Who are they and what is their wisdom? The world is shot through with it.

Selfishness, ambition, power, intimidation, threat, jealousy, passion. It's running the show. It's jerked mankind for millennia and robbed men of their life and crunched them and discarded them on the eternal garbage heap.

But God is waiting for a demonstration of another kind. That can only be made by one agency. How did I come into this perception? By baptizing a number of Lutherans in a YMCA pool and slipping on a puddle of water on my way to the locker and finding myself heads over shoulders up in the air in a frozen moment of time holding my Bible in the air and saying to myself, cats, what are you doing here? And then coming with a crash right down on my left knee.

Three-point landing. Boom! And being God's man of faith and power, limping the next day or two and preaching with my foot now, my knee swelling like a football. And finally being persuaded by the brethren, taken to a hospital and a Jewish orthopedic surgeon looking at the x-rays and showing me and saying, he says, Mr. Katz, your knee is not just fractured, it is smashed.

You need an operation. He said, this knee needs to be wired. I said, well, okay, when can you perform it? Well, not until Thursday.

I forgot what day it was. I said, no, but I've got an appointment Tuesday. The Lord is giving us a property.

He said, the who? That man has since read Ben Israel and pray for him. I've forgotten his name. Walter Indyk.

I believe he's in California now somewhere. And as he had his hands on my knee, I felt the pieces coming into place. Something was happening.

And his eyes grew wide. He said, your knee is coming together. He said, if I put it in a cast now, you'll let me in an operation.

Do it. There I was, one night in the hospital with my leg elevated in a cast and in came the nurse with a hypo. And I said, thank you, but no thank you.

Oh, you think I'm a coward. Listen, I've been so punctured in the army that I've gone through like a trough with men on both sides with needles poised and I came out like a pincushion. What's one needle to me? I said, no, I do not need to be sedated.

Oh, was she offended and bent out of shape like she'd never heard such a thing. What? And she left in a huff and came back with pills. I said, dear lady, you don't understand.

You don't understand. I do not need narcotics. I can bear this.

This is not some insufferable agony. This is only a mild affliction. And she just shouted a bit.

And the last thing I remember, two nurses and two doctors in the door of my room and just foaming at the mouth. And I realized what I had done. I had unconsciously touched an unspoken premise by which the world lives its life according to the wisdom of the powers of darkness, the avoidance of pain at any cost and the pursuit of pleasure.

You once touched these unspoken premises. Why are they unspoken? Because the whole world condescends to them as if there's a self-evident logic that needs no explanation or no examination. They are the wisdom of this world and they make no reference to eternity.

And those who subscribe to that wisdom live their lives out futilely unto eternal death. God is wanting to set the captives free. And I'll tell you this, saints, wherever there's a congregation that can demonstrate in its own actuality a freedom from the influence of the powers of the air and its wisdom, the community in which that fellowship is, is set free.

Something goes snap, crackle and pop. Something is loosed. The powers of darkness that have brooded over its victims from time immemorial are required to disperse at the very presence of a people who are free from the influence of the powers and cannot be jerked nor manipulated by fear or intimidation or threat or what will tomorrow bring or how about the stock market and what about the economy as if their sustenance comes from below rather than from above.

You were bored? That's why you were bored. Because you did not know and you did not consciously embrace the eternal purposes of God in Christ Jesus. Required of the true apostolic church in every locality where it is.

Well, you say, we don't have that many Jews around. I don't care numerically how many are there now. The day will come when you'll find them in your attics and basements.

But whether you do or you don't, your effectual prayer, your intercession for the bringing of this remnant back to God resisted with such uncommon power and savagery by the powers of darkness is a critical key to their return. I'll tell you, prayer is going to have to become something more than a religious exercise. Were you satisfied with your prayer tonight here in this room for this service and before this service? Your silent and respectable religious prayer? God bless you.

I mean, thank you for coming out. But you're still so far removed from the gut-wrenching prayer and foaming and gushing and prostrating yourself before God without any sense of embarrassment before people whom you know so well that you don't give a rap and no one is even conscious of each other. Until you come to that, there'll be no fulfillment of this mystery.

And you'll never come to that except for this mystery. And you'll only come to it as community. You'll only come to it as a body.

You'll only come to it as a people who are authentically joined, who have broken through transcendentally into a real expression of the body of Christ and not a conglomerate of individualities. Art is one word you left out, but it's implicit in all you're saying. And it is the cross, absolutely.

There'll be no attainment of this, the reality of this, except by the coming to that. And that's why the powers of darkness dread it. For it was at the cross that their initial defeat was inflicted.

And wherever the reality of the cross is again exhibited, whether in the true groaning prayer of a people who supplicate at the sacrifice of their gut, or a man who'll preach and pull out the stops and fall off the platform foaming at the mouth, or wherever a sacrifice is made that is authentic sacrifice, there the cross is again revealed. And the power that contradicted and defeated the principalities and the powers and will again in the end. That cross needs to be restored, saints.

And it's not some novelty. It was always central to the faith. And needs again to be made consciously so.

Art, how are we going to achieve what you're describing and maintain our lifestyle? Forget it. Forget it. I haven't even picked up a fishing rod this year.

Last year I went once. May well be the last time I'll ever go, I don't know. There's just no time for it.

That somehow we can't have all this and heaven too. That we can lead, quote, a balanced life and attend services and yet plenty of room and time for the things that we enjoy. Listen, saints, there's a war on.

There's a last day struggle of an ethical kind. There's a conflict of kingdoms. There's a cosmic drama moving toward its conclusion, waiting for a church of an earnest and apostolic kind that will say to its lifestyle, be gone.

There's an eternity at stake here. There's something that pertains not only to this age but all the ages to come. I cannot play at this.

This requires my uttermost. And I cannot attain it without my brothers and sisters who are equally intent and of equal sincerity and determination. The two great last days mysteries, principalities and the powers, and the demonstration that is to be made through one entity only, the church.

Why? God didn't tell me. It's not self-explanatory. Somehow it delights Him.

Somehow it gratifies Him. He thinks it was worthwhile. There's something in His heart that will be eternally rejoiced because the powers have been defeated by a people whom He has taken off the dunghill.

Those egocentric Jewish outcasts with their blatant atheisms and those dumb, dumb Gentiles and those self-seeking materialistic people and He made of such a people one new man, one new creature in a true and authentic union and relationship. The church? And they have forsaken all things in order to make this demonstration of a cosmic and eternal kind? That will be to the eternal praise of His glory for His sake. I am now watching my speeding saints and trying to cleave to 55 miles an hour.

I'm stopping painstakingly though every corpuscle in my body cries out at the waste and the insignificance of it when I have such a lovely momentum already going and there's not a car visible for miles around yet I'm stopping at the lonely full stop sign because the Lord has said in His word obey the ordinances of man for the Lord's sake. And it's killing me for the Lord's sake. He wants a demonstration made in a point of time that will be to the eternal praise of His glory.

It will free mankind. It will loose the fetters of captive nations. It will release the power of the gospel of communities that are so locked up in their fear and intimidation by the presence of a people in their midst who are not afraid.

Who are pilgrim strangers and sojourners in the earth who are looking for a city whose founder and builder and maker is God who move by another wisdom who look upon suffering as intrinsic to the faith and bear

it gladly and even the spoiling of their goods with rejoicing knowing they have in heaven a far more enduring object. That's the church things. That's your call.

It's your eternal purpose. Have you embraced it? Can you say yes to the Lord? Whatever it takes. My God, this is why I was saved.

It's not some addendum to my life. It's not the Sunday supplement to my professional and business life. It's the purpose of my being.

It's the profession that was the addendum. That was only the secondary thing to keep body and soul together. But this is my primary purpose for being with all the saints.

I want to pray in this locality for one such presence of an apostolic kind that makes the principalities and powers of the air to recoil and to split by a people who live manifestly and visibly by another wisdom that stop at the stop signs that obey the speed limits that do all things for the Lord's sake that welcome the invasion and the intrusion of saints and let their privacy go and their lifestyle with it in order to come to that place where through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities and powers. Through the church Israel might be moved to jealousy and receive that mercy by which they are restored again to their God that releases them from heaven to be king over a creation that is agonizing and steeped in its sin and death. The church the church unto him be glory forever world without end throughout all ages by the church that has embraced the eternal purposes of God as the foremost reason for its being.

Let's pray for that here.

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