

Dvd 08 - Why Could We Not Cast It Out?

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the challenges of spiritual authority in confronting evil, emphasizing the importance of prayer and communion with God.

Duration: 1:05:22

Scripture: Matthew 17:21

Topics: "Prayer And Fasting", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of deep communion with God through prayer as the central act of the soul, highlighting the need for organic fellowship within the church. It delves into the significance of self-denial in prayer and fasting, stressing the necessity for a profound spiritual authority to confront the powers of darkness in the last days, particularly in the context of Israel's final deliverance and resurrection. The message underscores the transformative power of devotion and obedience in shaping believers to be co-workers with God in His redemptive purposes.

Transcript

Jesus. And we see the beauty of their lives, and their character, and their integrity, and we hear them speak their many languages, and see their intensity, and their passion, and their character, and their nature. And our hearts call upon them for the kingdom of God, that they might be an end-time people of God, proclaiming His salvation throughout the earth.

The issue of history. The issue of television. The issue of the church.

I want to start with a thing called Vorspeise. It's a Jewish-German word that means, Speisen is to eat, vor is before. An appetizer, which is this morning's selection from Spurgeon, that Brian also agreed was appropriate, in view of what the Lord has been sharing here.

It's from Psalm 22. All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head. Mockery was a great ingredient in our Lord's woe.

Judas mocked him in the garden, the chief priests and scribes laughed him to scorn, Herod set him at naught, the servants and the soldiers jeered at him, and brutally insulted him. Pilate and his gods ridiculed his royalty, and on the tree, all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at him. Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain, it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the

quick.

Imagine the Savior crucified, wracked with anguish, far beyond all mortal estimation, and then picture the motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip, in bitter contempt of one poor suffering victim. Surely there must have been something more in the crucified one than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honored him with such contempt. Was it not evil, confessing in the very moment of his greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness, which was then reigning on the cross? O Jesus, despised and rejected of men, how couldst thou die for men who treated thee so ill? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree.

We too have despised thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet thou bleedest to heal our wounds and diest to give us life. O that we could set thee on a glorious high throne in all men's hearts! We would ring out thy praises over land and sea, till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject. Isn't that precious? Spurgeon is something else.

Remarkable. Okay. Some of you may be familiar with the text for today, Mark chapter 9, and I'm sure that a number have heard my own presentation from this text, but it's the one that seems to be quickened for me.

May the Lord open new considerations. It's the Mount of Transfiguration followed by the Valley of Despair. Remarkable that the one should be contrasted with the other and the one should precede the other is altogether no accident in the divine wisdom because it's suggestive of our own experience of spiritual highs followed by a challenge of exactly the opposite kind and raises the issue, as it did for them and for us, whether we could bring into the valley to which we must necessarily come for ultimate confrontation and challenge some measure of the reality that the Lord has been gracious to give us on the mountaintop.

Evidently, the disciples failed. They could not carry the image of the transfigured Christ into the crisis brought by the demonic spirit that was harassing that child into the fire. And so I'm offering it not just as an interesting text, but that we need to see it in the eschatological future.

In fact, that's my propensity now all the time. Every episode that I read in the New Testament I see in a last days context. I see as a last days instruction.

And I don't think that that's just my fervent imagination. I think of the wisdom of God every episode through which the Father had Jesus the past had the end in view. So it's imperative for us that we don't just look upon it as an episode of the past, but something that is speaking to us and in a special instruction for whom the ends of the age have come.

So that's the way I'm going to present it to you. I don't want to spend time on the early part of the chapter of the Mount of Transfiguration, although there's much that could be said for that in itself. Maybe especially Peter's remark, let us build the three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah, indicates that Peter himself did not understand the significance of the Lord and put him at a parity of equality with both Moses and Elijah, not recognizing that he's the Lord over all and the summation both of the law and the prophets.

And it also indicates something of the religious nature of man that wants to memorialize the high watermarks, the spiritual highs, and retain them by building something. And that's what we see when we go to Israel, the churches that have been built over the holy places to retain something. But there's a valley that inevitably awaits us and to which they must come down.

So Jesus in verse 14, when he came down, he saw a great multitude and the scribes questioning his disciples and straightaway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed and running to him saluted him. I don't even understand why they were greatly amazed. Was there something yet lingering of the radiance of transfiguration that they saw or just something in his general posture and being? But he asked the scribes, why are you questioning with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit and wheresoever he taketh him, he tears him and he foams and gnashes with his teeth and pines away.

And I spoke to your disciples that they should cast him out and they could not. He answered him and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. This is one of the most remarkable reprimands that ever issued from Jesus.

And you wonder what it is that provoked him, faithless generation, as if he had every reason to expect that they should be able to cast out their demon spirit and their failure betrays a lack of faith and understanding and knowledge of himself and of the Father that is a statement of their generation, faithless. Maybe all the more because the memory of the recent experience of seeing him transfigured with Moses and Elijah should have given an additional ability to meet whatever expression of the powers of darkness was there to confront. And their failure to be able to confront it to the point of deliverance brought him to this vexation.

So bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him and when he saw him, the evil spirit, straightaway the spirit tore him, tore the boy and he fell on the ground and wallowed foaming. And Jesus asked his father, how long is it since this came upon him, unto him? And he said, of a child.

Since his inception, from the very inception of his birth virtually as a child, he has been harassed continually all his life long. Which makes you to raise the question, why would this child be such an object of deadly intent on the part of the evil spirits? What about him, marks him and makes him a special object of this harassment? And not harassment only, but a desire to destroy. And often times it has cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him.

But if you can do anything, have compassion and help us. So I don't think I'm taking undue liberty to suggest that this boy, who has been harassed unto death since inception, is no one else nor other than a picture and statement of Israel. Because the powers of darkness have, from the inception of that nation, been out to destroy.

And because they know better than the church that should that nation survive, succeed, be restored, that that is the very issue of the coming of its king and his kingdom. Which means the end of their false usurping rule. And in the wisdom of the powers of darkness, the way to avoid the threat to their own domination and role in jerking and manipulating men and nations is to destroy the threat that comes to it by Israel.

So I see this thing as being suggested by what the boy represents. And that since his childhood, this enemy is out not just to harass, but to destroy. Little wonder that the disciples could not cast it out.

So Jesus said unto him, if you can believe all things, if you can believe all things are possible to him that believes, and straightaway the father child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. If the child represents Israel, I'm pressed to think of who the father would represent. Maybe even an extension of Israel in the totality of the nation in its infancy or in its adulthood being in a comparable condition.

Because the son is in some measure the product of the father. And lack of belief and relationship made it a candidate for this kind of being a victim of these powers of darkness of a deaf and dumb spirit, which has been Israel's condition. Deaf and dumb.

Deaf to hear the Lord and dumb to speak for him. The very thing to which we're called as a nation, the powers of darkness has stultified and kept more abundant and we've given them opportunities for our sin. Because we opened the way for the harassment of the enemy by a life that is away from God and in sin.

So there's all things that can be said that are symbolized and summarized in the condition both of the father and the son. When Jesus saw in verse 25 that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit. Now, I don't even understand that.

When he saw the people running, maybe they were coming for the attraction or the novelty. They sensed that there was going to be a moment of excitement, some kind of deliverance. They would watch Jesus perform something miraculous.

And before they could reach him, he wanted this transaction to take place. Because he's not in the novelty business and he's not there to amuse or to entertain. There was something at hand here that was grim and of an utterly remarkably insignificant kind.

And he had to attend to it before the crowd came. Different from us, who welcomed the crowds. And so he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him and enter no more into him.

And if with my yellow marking pen I have marked, and enter no more into him. Because the deliverance of the Lord is not partial, temporary, momentary relief. It's enduring, permanent, if not millennial and eternal.

Come no more unto him. This requires a greater measure of authority than a temporary relief or momentary alleviation. This is final.

No come no more. This is the end of your ability and your history in tormenting this people Israel unto death. This is the end of it.

And little wonder that when the power of darkness heard this command and had one last opportunity, it so dealt with this young man as to leave him as good as dead. He came out, but not before he tore him. And expressed his last spite and viciousness even in being required to cease from this harassment.

So the spirit cried and rent him sore and came out of him and he was as one dead in as much that many said he is dead. Well, we're beginning to see now this same spirit in the Islamic violence. The decapitation of its victims and the celebration of murder and violence and bloodshed.

There's something so vicious, so vitriolic in its hatred of all that is made in God's image and a hatred all the more deep in that which is of Israel. Because that's the threat to its false continuance and its usurpation of

a governmental role. So the issue now before Jesus is not just the deliverance, but the resurrection of that victim.

And that will be our issue also. That Israel is going to receive the final blow of the powers of darkness that will not be content merely with bringing it down, but bringing the nation unto death. And what will be required in the last days for Israel's restoration is Israel's resurrection.

So if we don't have sufficient authority for deliverance, if we have to play the role of Jesus to the nation now in that condition, if we can't deliver it, shall we be able to resurrect it? A stage is set here where the disciples though they had been previously successful in casting out demon spirits when he sent them out by twos without script or without provision, remember that? They came back and they boasted. Even the evil spirits are submitted unto us. But why then could they not cast out this spirit? So when he was coming to the house, the disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

So we have to dwell on the conclusion of this episode. You were successful before, but this kind is an ultimate kind. It's the powers of darkness in their last paroxysm of hatred and vitriolic bitterness against the people of God, even in their apostasy, who will not be satisfied with anything less but their destruction.

And this is going to make an exceptional requirement of you that your previous experience with demonic spirits did not. This kind, this ultimate kind, will not come out except by fasting and prayer. And then he leaves it.

So it's left to us to understand what is meant by that. And that's where I want to spend the balance of our time. What kind of fasting and prayer is alone the provision to deal with these powers, not only that they should no more come in again unto Israel, but to raise Israel in its last experience of being victimized by those powers, even unto death, because they said that this young man is dead.

Whether he was actually dead or as good as dead is not really the matter. It required as much the authority of God and power to raise him, whether it was the one condition or the other, bring him unto me. Only Jesus in his authority, in his communion with the Father, could meet these foul spirits in their last act of throwing the victim into convulsions unto death because Jesus was not intimidated, terrified, or enervated by that demonstration.

So the way I see it, that this is the last day's head-on collision with the powers of darkness in their most terrifying form. And it's an issue of which reality will prevail in that final confrontation. If we have only a formula in the name of Jesus, I command you, and it's just a phrase, it'll bounce off and have no effect.

And those powers can say at that moment what they've been saying consistently and historically. To the traditional church, Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you? The fact that you can intone this phrase doesn't give you the authority. What we see in Paul and Jesus we don't see in you.

And though you can say the formula, it has no effect upon us. We're not constrained to let the victim go. We have to see this as a showdown between conflicting realities and to ask which reality has the uttermost authority and power.

Who really has all the marbles here? Because the powers of darkness are visible and their power is evident. There's the victim foaming at the mouth, thrown down as good as dead. And against that we have to bring the authority of an invisible God.

Though we have glimpsed him recently on the mountaintop in this transfiguration, have we retained that vision? Is it real for us? And does it come out at the resonance of our speaking when we address those spirits? Or has it trailed off as it often does? Our high moments subside and the truth of what we are, which is much less, is not sufficient to meet the evident truth of the powers of darkness. What reality is the greater? The reality of a God who is invisible as against the reality of the false deity who is apparent and real and whose victim is before us. And is expressing himself in his vilest condition, which is sufficient to terrify and intimidate even the disciples.

They could not cast him out. So if the issue is the reality of God who is invisible and has got to be inward and authentically resident in us so that our command to the powers of darkness reflect that authority and command them to heed it as if it had come expressly from the Lord himself. And that this kind will come out only by fasting and prayer because it's only through fasting and prayer that the reality of the invisible God is wrought in us.

But what kind of prayer can perform that? Not the prayer of petition, but the prayer of communion. The kind that Jesus expressed in his daily times before the Father, before the day began, as I shared yesterday. It's not applying the Father with petitions for the day that is about to break.

It's a time spent in communion with the Father. And in that communion, something is imparted to the Son of the Father that is carried into the world in that day as authority. And the same dynamic by which Jesus met the powers of darkness and healed and delivered in his earthly ministry is the same for us.

It comes in exact proportion, we have it no more, no less than we have the quality of communion available to us in prayer that is prayer. So that P.T. Forsyth in an article on prayer called *The Soul of Prayer* actually a book, writes, do not cease to pray. The chief failure of prayer is its cessation.

Which is to say, we end when we should begin. We think that prayer is the issue of putting before God petitions which are valid, which he hears, which he answers. He does not despise them.

But it's not the whole of prayer. It's even only perhaps the smallest part because he already knows our needs before we ask. The issue of prayer is not the issue of petition.

The issue of prayer is communion. And very few of us have ever come to that transcendent ground because as he says, we cease when we should begin. Because we've grown up in New Zealand.

We've grown up in America. We've grown up in a western environment that is utilitarian and that is willing to invest so much in order to obtain so much. But prayer and communion is not commerce.

It's not giving God time in order to obtain benefit. It's giving God devotion independent of anything that would be returned to us as value because he's deserving in himself of that kind of adoration, worship, and communion in his presence. Even when the presence is not felt and especially when the presence is not felt, are we tested in whether we will continue when our flesh tells us to cease because there's no apparent benefit in remaining in that posture.

Following me? It's a real test of sainthood. It's a real test of sonship that defies the flesh and self-evident logic like, well, isn't this foolish to be up at this hour when I need my rest and what is being gained by it? I'm just feeling the cold chill of the draft on the floor and there's the warm bed beckoning me back and my prayers feel like lead. They're not even going through the ceiling.

So what's the point of it? In fact, the enemy, the flesh, the world of flesh and the devil will conspire to discourage you from continuing in devotional prayer or prayer as devotion, especially if you're schooled in the logic of the world which is utilitarian and you want to see a benefit for your investment. As I say, if that's your mentality, it's not devotion, it's commerce. It's exchange, it's trade.

You see what I mean? And if you continue at that level, you'll never be able to meet the powers of darkness. You'll never have an authority to cast them out because this kind, this ultimate kind cometh not out but by the authority of God himself. And that authority is imparted with the sense of God that one obtains in communion with God even when his presence is not felt and even when you think that your prayers are leaden and of no avail.

So, if this is the issue of Israel's final deliverance, isn't it a remarkable thing to consider that the key to Israel's final deliverance is not the church's heroism but the church's devotion? That's why the issue of adoration is so great. That kindles us to seek him for his own sake without any thought of a benefit that would accrue to us by being in the place of devotion. Especially in our economy and the use of time, everything militates against giving him that sacrificial time at the commencement of the day as the best and first part of it before we turn to any other consideration.

In the same way that I shared this morning, I cannot conceive of a day that begins for me except in prayer, in devotion, as inadequate, pitiful as it is, and in the cup and the bread, the Lord's table. I can't turn to earthly food or have strength for anything until there's first the ingestion, the taking in of the Lord. So communion is an equal kind of process.

Something is coming in, not by eating and drinking, but just by waiting and being in the presence of the Lord and extending to him a heartfelt devotion that is free from any self-interest. So it's remarkable that the whole issue of Israel's deliverance, if I'm not taking too much liberty, is the church's spiritual condition, her devotional life, and not her heroism. It's not some great act that is going to deliver Israel, but some great authority imputed to the church, not as a formula, but as the cumulative thing that is acquired by the frequency and the truth of our devotional time with God.

Fall in bed? So if you'll not do it for your sake and for his sake, do it for Israel's sake. But then of course we've put strings attached and it's no longer devotion. So let me read some of the highlights of Forsyth's insight into prayer.

The chief failure of prayer is its cessation. And cutting it short and ending it when it should begin, our importunity is part of God's answer, because his purpose in this communion of prayer is driving us further in on himself. It's to bring us into a communion with himself.

He uses the image of a carpenter who glues together two boards, keeping them tightly clamped until the cement sets and the outward pressure is no more needed than he unscrews. So with the calamities, depressions, and disappointments that crush us into close contact with God, the pressure on us is kept up till the soul's union with God is set. You know, you have to find an idiom, you have to find a use of language and an illustration, because this is outside our common experience.

It's even common. It's contrary to our humanity, the flesh, to come into this bonding and this union with the Lord in a time in which nothing seems to be happening. No apparent thing is taking place.

We're even disappointed by our own quality of prayer, and yet in that, and the enemy will discourage us by that, something is being bonded and formed with each application, each occasion of communion. Jesus had that daily. His authority was not magical.

He obtained the authority from the Father in communion with the Father in his early morning times of prayer, and then expressed it in power and deliverance and those things that came before him in the course of that day. And that is exactly the means by which authority is available to us. And we see precious little of that kind of authority in the church.

And we think that by raising our voice or slamming our fist, I don't know, whatever way, a false depiction of authority that is more human than it is spiritual, men will think to impress us. And if we can't impress men, are we going to impress the powers of the earth? The powers of the air will only be impressed by one thing, the character of God, the reality of God. It's the only thing that makes them to tremble.

And they know to what degree it is resident in us or not. Jesus they know and Paul they know, but who are you? I have no obligation to concede to you or your demand that I let the victim go because you're just mouthing a little vain formula. You have not the resonance of God and his authority that compels me to respect it and to act.

So the pressure on us is kept up till the soul's union with God is set. I don't know that it's ever set but that that union is deepened. In God's eyes, the great object of prayer is the opening or restoring of free communion with himself in a kingdom of Christ, a life communion which may even amid our duty and service become as unconscious as the beating of our heart.

We think the object of prayer is to make known our petitions that we might receive his answer. The object of prayer in God's sight is altogether other. The object of prayer in God's sight is our communion with him, a life communion until it becomes as natural as breathing that not to have an early morning time and to continue the day in the spirit of that communion even while you are at work and in your activity is to become as natural and as normal as breathing.

So was it for Jesus and so can it be also for us. And if it's not, I would despair that we could be the instrument of God's use in Israel's final deliverance or resurrection because he stretched forth his arm to this boy that was as good as dead and he raised him up. The power and the authority of God was manifest in Jesus to deliver and to raise in proportion as it had been formed in him through communion with his father in his own earthly human life.

And that is exactly the issue for us. And it's the issue for which everything in the world of flesh and the devil will discourage us. So here I am 41 years in the Lord but I would say it's only the last 7, 8, 10 years maybe that this whole issue of communion has become dear to me.

I was never instructed as a young believer about communion. I never heard anybody refer to it. I was never encouraged to have a time of communion.

I had never heard the word really expressed. People went about their business, punctuated the day maybe or the evening with prayers as the situation arose that required the Lord's help. But I never heard that there's a practice appropriate to saints and to sons by which their day begins before they ever leave their house and go out into the world and go about their business.

And it's a time with the Lord heart to heart and can be aided by spending time in Scripture, prayer, Spurgeon, chambers. There are 4 or 5 devotional readings that I have every morning that remarkably facilitate this time of communion, quicken things. And it's remarkable how often they interrelate one with the other or as even this morning's selection from Spurgeon is so much the echo of yesterday evening's consideration.

So that one thing aids and facilitates another and deepens the place of adoration with the Lord. And affects your prayer and the things which you bring before Him. And your prayers are often sometimes strange, sometimes insane, sometimes grandiose, large.

It's amazing what I hear myself saying to the Lord in those early morning times that if you heard Him in the clear daylight of day you would almost be embarrassed. But the Lord is not offended. And something remains.

There's a residue. Something is affected. Something has commenced the day that will affect the day.

And in the last analysis there's a cumulative residue that comes from that communion that builds itself as authority in God that will be resonant in our voice, in our posture, in our decorum, in the way in which we bear ourselves. And in that final confrontation with darkness, it will be the issue of what is our knowledge of God? What is our reality? Is it the world that has really influenced and shaped it? Or is it the times with the invisible God and the reality of His word as it becomes the foremost foundation of our life and being? Because it will be tested when the powers of darkness make their last demonstration and what we have will either stand or fall in proportion to its actual strength as reality. What is reality? And how much are we jealous for the issue of reality? And what and who determines what reality is and how it is to be defined? Because believers in Russia were put in straitjackets and brought to mental institutions and given shock treatments for just this their yielding to the reality of an invisible God and determining their steps and their choices and their conduct with regard to Him as being the formative, formidable influence and seat of all life and being and truth which is completely in opposition to the system that was based on an atheistic ideology.

So that they were looked upon as insane and needed the treatment of the people who are mentally ill. I don't think we're too far at the end of the age from it becoming a showdown of that kind that the true believers will be strangers and pilgrims and sojourners in the earth. They will be strange, they will be mocked because they march by another beat that others do not hear.

They are submitted to another discipline. Their life and their decision and their conduct is predicated and devoted to an invisible and unseen God and His values and His wisdom is different than other than that which is in the world. They're mocked and the powers of darkness know them.

We're not going to obtain this in a final moment if it is not the result of all the moments that have preceded this final confrontation which will come to us perhaps not so much individually as corporately whether we can be the church that is so in Christ and so imbued with Him and so dwelling continually in His reality that even as we walk in the world the world does not distract from it or take from it. It is inward and essential and is the foundation of our life and being. It is our essential truth.

It is the reality upon which all things are predicated. That will not be obtained in a moment. That will be the result of all the moments that have preceded the final showdown and confrontation.

And Israel's deliverance waits on it. Imagine the eternal embarrassment that God who has been preparing us and giving us every opportunity for this devotion finds that in that last moment we fail. We cannot pass this test.

We're mocked by the powers of darkness who are not impressed with our little slogan in the name of Jesus because though we recite the name we are not in fact sufficiently in the name to require their letting the victim go. So His purpose in prayer is obtaining a deeper and closer place with Himself and His purposes. If prayer is God's great gift it is one inseparable from the giver.

Isn't that an interesting statement? God's gift is itself prayer and the giver is in the gift so that in prayer as communion you're receiving not only the gift of prayer, you're receiving the giver of the gift. You're receiving Him. It's Christ being formed in us as I said last night either by obedience or by communion both.

So that when the final confrontation comes, something very formidable of God is to be expressed to the powers of darkness which they're compelled to recognize though outwardly we're weak frail, inept we're the offscouring of the world. We have no outward credential but the inward reality is the thing that will move against the powers of darkness and for God and that inward thing is the statement of a lifetime of devotion or the lack of it. Prayer is the highest use to which speech can be put.

It is the highest meaning that can be put into words. Indeed it breaks through language and escapes into action. And this is the action the deliverance.

I command you to cease against Him and no more to come into Him. It's a word but what a word. It's a word resonant with the authority of God who is the creator and who created those false spirits to begin with who lost their first calling and became usurpers in their rebellion but they know who the creator is and are under obligation to regard Him when He speaks in His authoritative word.

Whether it comes out of the mouth of the Son of God Jesus or it comes out of the mouth of the sons of God formed in His image through a life of devotional relationship and obedience. Israel is the outcome. Isn't it remarkable? We're on a collision course.

There's a drama. There's a redemptive saga that God and His genius has conceived and put all His eggs in one basket that the whole issue of Israel's final restoration out of its final predicament and extremity unto death is to come not directly by His hand but by that which is shaped in His image through its own voluntary obedience and communion. It's not something that can be compelled.

It's something freely given or not at all. And He's trusting that we are going to come to that place by that means so as to affect Israel's restoration which is the issue of His coming and of His kingdom because He will not come till they shall say blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. He comes when they are restored to Zion so that He can occupy the throne at Zion of David and rule over the restored nation and through the restored nation to all nations.

The stakes are indescribably great and as great as they are, they hinge on not the issue of heroism but the issue of devotion.

I'm astonished that God believes for this and that He's going to obtain it though everything contends against it including our own sluggishness our own carnality, our own indifference, our own laziness our own desire to remain in bed our own lack of faith to believe that anything of substance is being affected by being up early before day and being in the Lord's presence that is not even felt especially if we're sensual

and need feeling to confirm that what we are about is valid but can we have a faith to believe that it's valid in the absence of feeling because our final test will be just like Jesus in which the sense of God's presence will be totally absent at the moment of its greatest need in the moment of greatest extremity when Jesus is stretched out to death and all of the pangs of

crucifixion when He could not desire anything more but the solace of the presence of the Father which He had known in all eternity in His prehistory, in that great critical moment it's not to be had but He's not to be deterred from drinking the cup through to the dregs because of the absence His obedience is not predicated on the feeling of God's presence and so must our obedience not be predicated upon feeling so if we're cultivating soulfulness, sensuality if we need confirmation through feelings, we will fail in that day and that's why when I attended a certain conference on prophecy years ago I've not been invited back since a certain band of men came to teach us how to invoke God's presence through worship that if we sang such and such choruses God was under obligation to come down

and be present and felt because we had invoked it through our worship I was driven to fury and got up and I said you guys would do better to teach us how to be obedient to God in the absence of any felt presence rather than to teach us a technique and a method by which we can invoke and compel God to come down for our satisfaction so we're being tested and tried and perfected and God in his remarkable grace and love is wise to withhold the sense of his presence just to see if we will be discouraged and give up and go back to bed or turn our time to something more profitable it's loving not to give us a condescending presence but to test us if we will persist in prayer for persistent importune prayer is the prayer that obtains even in the absence of anything sensed, felt or received that's

sonship that's maturity and that will be the issue that makes or breaks whether Israel will be delivered through us or not at all the same thing is true in the valley of dry bones the Lord himself does not address the bones but he commands a son of man to prophesy over those bones and if that son of man cannot summon the faith of God and the prophetic authority of God beyond his own and have the love of God by which faith works those bones remain dead so wherever we look in the prophetic scriptures and Paul sums it up in Romans that by your mercy they may obtain mercy the church is the agent the church is the salvific factor of God for Israel's deliverance but the question is a church of what kind not as it is presently constituted alack and alas but as he desires it to be in the

formation of its maturity as sons through devotion through obedience coming to that place of authority by which its word is as authoritative as God's to make those bones to live if it lacks the note of God's authority if it's only wishful thinking if it's only I guess I got to because I'm commanded those bones remain bones and do not become the exceedingly great army that serves the purposes of God and his kingdom and the whole issue is speaking and commanding but they're speaking and speaking there's words and words there's authority and authority so the spirit must come to the aid of our infirmity and become the possession of our central soul the reality of our inmost personality in organic contact with his you like that word organic that this man can choose a word like that in 1904

1908 he has such a sense that there's a dimension beyond what is mechanically religious or correct it's organic there's got to be organic communion and if we don't have it with God will we have it with each other what will be the quality of our own relationship as the fellowship of the church if we have not an organic communion with him how will we be unable to come to a quality of relationship with each other that is transcendent and bears the character of the kingdom and is more than just the kind of societies that men can raise up as moose and elk and lotarians and all the rest that often times embarrasses us and is

more impressive than our fellowship our fellowship is bankrupt and mechanical and merely polite at best if it is not animated by the life of God which we have first

obtained in our own communion with him and then comes into communion with each other that's why Jesus and old Paul I know but I don't see that reality in you as the church and therefore I'm not under obligation to heed you you can shout all you want turn up the amplifiers go in the blue in the face I'm not moved but the moment I hear the unmistakable accent of God the authority that is only his that is resident in your voice and your corporate being I have no alternative I'm as much under obligation to heed that as I am as if the Lord himself had spoken it for it is the Lord himself formed in his body the word has become a deed an occasion so there's a deeper movement of speech a more inward mystery where the word gathers to power and condenses to action the word becomes flesh the act of

conquering kingdom of God the word conquering here is very appropriate to routing the demon powers that have made of that boy a pitiful object like a rag doll in the mouth of a mad dog just being tossed to and fro and laid down as dead the enemy is commanded to let go but he'll not let go without one last expression of vitriolic hatred and spite that leaves the victim as dead and say ok yeah you commanded me out but look what I've left you let's see what you do with that now the only thing now is stretch forth your arm and raise it up resurrected because Israel must be resurrected if it is to be the blessing to all the families of the earth not just restored but resurrected unto a newness of life by a power greater than what would have been necessary to deliver it understand what I'm

saying it's resurrection that Israel needs in order to come into the fulfillment of God's intention for the nation but the agent by which it is brought to resurrection is the church of this kind which the disciples for all of their privilege for being on the mount of transfiguration for having walked with Jesus for three and a half years and seen his miracles and have been in intimate touch with him lacked the necessary authority that would have effectively cast out that demon so if they failed with the privilege of that earthly intimacy how shall we succeed who have only the invisible except we are made partakers of the divine nature through communion and through obedience man rises to be a co-worker with God in the highest sense for it is only action not dream or rapture that we enter

communion with an active being above all with the eternal act of God and Christ that upholds the world as such communion prayer is no mere rapport no mere contact it is the central act of the soul organic with Christ's do you like this language? are you understanding this language? do you agree with this language? this is elaborate this is not just posy, this is not just man playing with eloquence this is deepest content and meaning deserving it to be read again communion prayer is no mere rapport no mere contact it is the central act of the soul can you say that? can I say that? that my early morning communion is the central act of my soul, not my conduct through the day, not my ministry not my speaking not my other prayer but this formidable first activity of the day in communion is the

central act of my soul until we can say that, believe that, desire that and make it as a sacrifice to obtain that we will not be in this place that's why I apologize for those who have heard me speak from this text before but I'm adding dimensions that I have never before expressed in the familiar text I myself am seeing through my own progressive growth what he is meaning when he says this kind this ultimate kind cometh not out except by prayer and fasting or fasting and prayer both of which are acts of self-denial this kind of devotional prayer is as much an act of self-denial of sleep as fasting is a denial of food and there's something in the wisdom of God that affects issues in the heavenlies by the act of denial because the powers of the air predicate their entire system not on

denial but on gratification on lust, on greed on ambition, on satisfaction on all that is carnal God's wisdom exactly the opposite relinquishing, yielding, letting go forsaking.

It is that which brings it into tune with the whole universe as God's act it is part and function of the creative, preservative and consumatory energy of the world that's just a little fragment on prayer, the soul of prayer, isn't that an interesting title the soul of prayer today's books would say the mechanics of prayer or the technique of prayer or the method of prayer Forsyth says the soul of prayer gets to the essence gets to the heart of the issue of the matter well gee it's only 10 o'clock where do we go from here Lord except to begin to put into practice something along the lines of what you're speaking let's take a little season here, a little few minutes to pray for prayer pray that it becomes the soul of the matter the foremost object of our concern and that we raise our

prayers with a note of apology for neglect and that Lord we have been affected by the spirit of the world the spirit of utility that we're willing to invest if there's a visible return but communion is exactly the opposite it does not seek for a benefit, it's giving you what is your due because you're God and because we are creation so forgive us my God if our prayers ceased when they should have begun and for being slothful like these disciples in the garden that while you agonized in prayer unto sweating drops of blood they slept so precious God forgive us neglect a wrong sense of value and give us a grace Lord to desire to seek you in that early morning time and to bear the foolishness of it which the enemy will try to persuade us makes that activity vain in which we will nevertheless

persist whether or not we sense your presence and acceptance of our devotion because you're deserving Lord give us hearts that come to you out of adoration as we increase in the knowledge of you and of your way the mystery of it and the privilege of our participation and even now my God we want to give you a first down payment of what we hope to structure into our daily life as the central act of our souls for your sake and for Israel's sake and for the kingdom that comes with their restoration in Jesus name okay speak to the Lord out of your heart about prayer as communion and transact with him and covenant with him agree with him about it asking all grace and he'll heed you thank you Lord we acknowledge that even our fellowship has suffered for the want of this

devotion because we have not had this organic communion with you our own communion with each other has been extremely shallow and not at all as impressive as the world's fraternities and is an embarrassment my God because you called it to be the expression of your kingdom and that we have lived so long with this shallow kind of fellowship that is only merely humanly cordial that we think it normative we have not been jealous for the reality of the kingdom in our fellowship Lord we have not esteemed that fellowship we have not been able to be to each other in an organic way what we ought to be supportive and encouraging a blessing, an exchange, a sharing of deepest heart and soul because we have not first come to you in that way so forgive us my God for the one neglect us for the other and

help both my God to be restored we pray that the church may be the church the Zion of God out of which your deliverance comes

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