

Dvd 27 a Critique of the Prophetic Movement

by Art Katz

Art Katz critiques the prophetic movement by highlighting the dangers of false prophets and the need for true integrity in ministry.

Duration: 1:20:26

Scripture: Jeremiah 23:22

Topics: "False Prophets", "True Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the need for repentance and a deep search for God's truth, highlighting the dangers of false prophets and the importance of standing in the counsel of the Lord. It emphasizes the call to forsake human-centered ways and embrace the weight and glory of God, urging a return to true prophetic and apostolic foundations. The speaker challenges the shallow, predictable nature of modern Christianity and calls for a profound repentance and a genuine seeking of God's presence and truth.

Transcript

So Precious God, what can we add to the prayer that has been prayed? If you'll only fulfill that prayer, you'll not have a whimper of complaint from me. So let it be, Lord, an extraordinary statement, not calculated for our titillation, but for our repentance for a bringing down that you might bring up. Stab us, my God, with truth.

Things as you see and understand them, however much they are at variance with our own perception, we desire yours. So come, Lord, and turn this time into an event of an ultimate kind whose time has come and remarkably in conjunction with the unhappy collapse fall of a notable man, internationally known, Lord, that somehow seems to be more than circumstantial, but appropriate both to the time, the occasion, and the things that you are already putting into my heart. So do we bless you, Lord, Precious God, you're a living God, you're great altogether.

We love you because you are truth. And help us, my God, in our terrible frailty, infirmity, to be worthy of you, my God, and to stand for you, bear your words before men. Help us to your divine integrity, Lord, ours is so much less.

And we bless you and thank you and give you praise for the high standard that you are in yourself and the great provision for us to meet it through the excellent power of your life. Come now and express yourself out of that life and move your ministers to jealousy, not only what they hear, but what they see, the thing in

itself to which they also are called. We thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, okay, thank you. Let me take off my ministerial jacket, which I have received secondhand from a German brother, just my size and appropriate for all occasions.

And you can turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 23, the Lord's condemnation of false prophets, which might well be a condemnation of falsity itself, especially where it's most painful, when it issues out of ministers. So may the Lord give us insight and an understanding that what is touched here is much more than prophets who are in error, but ministers who are in error. So much so that they don't even perceive it.

And it's hard to know where to leap in, but the Lord speaks about a horrible thing in verse 14. They commit adultery and walk in lies. They strengthen also the hands of evildoers that none doth return from his wickedness.

They are all of them unto me as Sodom and the inhabitants therefore as Gomorrah. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, behold, I will feed them with wormwood and make them drink the water of Gaul. For from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you. They make you vain. They speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord.

They say it's still unto them that despise me. The Lord hath said, you shall have peace. And they say unto everyone that walks after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you.

For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath mocked his word and heard it? Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind. You shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return until he hath executed, till he hath performed the thoughts of his heart.

In the latter days you shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

But if they had stood in my counsel and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, that a God afar off can any hide himself in secret places that I should not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? For I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets, that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell, tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that speaks my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words, every one from his neighbor. Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that cause their tongues, that use their tongues and say, he saith.

Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them and cause my people to err by their lies and by their likeness. Yet I sent them not, nor commanded them. And therefore

they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

So this is more than an appraisal of the prophets of old. It is profoundly contemporary, and I think especially for the prophets of our charismatic time and generation, but that we need to understand how the whole of society, the whole of the church is affected by what is fraudulent and casual and light. It brings a profaneness into the whole land.

It cheapens the whole texture of the faith. We're all adversely affected, even if we don't know these men, even if we don't hear them. Somehow the role of the prophet is so central to the sounding of God and his heart that any false expression of that has adverse consequence that can't even be measured.

But how shall I say it? I hope I'm not exaggerating. Is the whole of our contemporary Christianity fraudulent? Is it a whole play-acting? Is it remarkably in error that is so pervasive and perhaps so compelling and attractive and biblical, at least in its vocabulary, that it purports to be true and has been accepted as true? But something is rotten in Denmark, if I can quote Shakespeare, and we need to find the root of that because the stench is rising and the first visible phenomena of God's anger and fury is already being expressed in the public exposure of a man who enjoyed international renown as the prophet of the hour and the oracle of God for the church in this time, who had never impressed me personally, and yet he impressed many. Could it be that the alcoholism and homosexuality with which he's being charged is not the root and cause of God's displeasure and judgment, but is the symptom of a deeper malady, a deeper sinfulness, that will express itself horrendously and externally and shamefully in the moral way, but the root is deeper? The root is the willingness to be introduced as the oracle of the hour and the prophet of the hour and not rise in protest and say, you're saying too much, I'm undeserving of that acknowledgment, and for me to sit on the platform and to hear myself described in that way will do serious damage to the faith because I'm not that.

I have a gift of personal prophecy, perhaps, but to call me the oracle when I do not bring oracular statements is a title and an acknowledgment that I cannot allow to pass freely. For truth and for integrity's sake. So we're not only guilty of what we speak, we're guilty of our silences when we should speak.

So there's something wrong with this pulpit that my Bible keeps sliding. You have a special Teflon coating? Okay. So what do these false prophets say? They always speak so-called positive things.

They affirm us and confirm us, and they're pleasant to hear. Even when they make allusions to Israel, it's in a kind of general way that sounds honorific. They pray and acknowledge the peace of Jerusalem, and they want to see the state to survive its present troubles, and they make the kinds of conventional sounds with regard to Israel that in my opinion are intrinsically false, but widely accepted because it confirms the church in a comparable kind of sentimental affinity and endorsement that is improper biblically, prophetically speaking, but is kind and nice and desires something well-meaning.

But the church is called to so much more than that and other than that and is doing Israel actual disservice to affirm it and to encourage it and to think that it's going to pass its present crisis and somehow gradually by a process of amelioration and progressive improvement become the prophetic fulfillment which we all desire to see and will be saved from the necessity of having to pass through apocalyptic fury, devastation, and judgment unto death, that it might be raised up out of the ashes of that death as a resurrected nation because its calling pertains to the glory of God forever, and that can and must only issue out of resurrection through death. So to applaud Israel in her present condition and hope only for improvement is so much more than a well-meaning acknowledgment. It's a statement of ourselves, of the shallowness of

what we are about, and the willingness to agree with generalities of a kind that are so visibly contradicted in Scripture if we would pay attention to it, because we don't have a stomach for calamity, and we shrink from apocalyptic scenarios, and we want to see improvement and progressive amelioration rather than death and radical transformation, not only for Israel but also for ourselves.

So I'm just throwing that in. That's just a little bonus. For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord in verse 18? Who has really stood? The very word who rings powerfully to suggest not many, Lord.

Who has his eye roped to and fro over the face of the church? Who among them, especially who allow themselves to be acknowledged as prophets or apostles, have actually stood in the counsel of the Lord, hath perceived and heard his word? Because his word is something other than our own. It's really nice. It's really, really comforting.

You'll know that it's his word because when it comes, it always requires. It's always a requiring word rather than a comforting and an affirming word, though occasionally the Lord might in his grace bestow that. But who has an ear to hear that kind of thing from God so as himself to speak and to proclaim it? Not many, or God would not be saying who.

Who has stood? We're too fretful. We're too much in movement. There's too much activity.

We can't allow silences and waiting and the kinds of things that would allow us to come in to the place of the counsel of the Lord. We're too distracted. We can't afford early morning devotional times because we have a heavy agenda ahead of us and all kinds of administrative details to consider because we are more CEOs than we are men of God.

The whole nature of the church and its success militates against being still, being in the place of quiet, being able to hear. There's an urgency. There's an agenda.

There's something that needs to be attended. Even if there were time to find the counsel of God by standing still, our disposition is already ruined. The mechanics of our religion have already so affected our disposition that even if we had the leisure and the time, we wouldn't know how to employ it.

Our mind would be racing with what needs to be attended. We couldn't give God the kind of attention that he deserves in order to stand in his counsel and to hear him. Even if by some remarkable grace that were possible, would we have the courage to speak the words that we hear there? Who has mocked this word and heard it? Who has really given heed to his word because his word is always a requiring word, radically requiring, drastically requiring.

In fact, not an exaggeration to say, it's almost always and invariably an invitation to death. So that word came forth in this place last night. You need to get the tape.

There was an appropriate response. There were people actually shaking at the altar as the pastor himself noted, but it almost was interpreted more as an invitation to a deeper level of consecration than it was to an invitation for death. See how we always avoid the totality of God's requirement in an honorific way because a deeper consecration is not a bad thing, but it's not the ultimate thing.

It's an adjusted thing that we can well afford to accommodate because it does not require our death. It only requires our deeper consecration which we're only too glad to make because that ought to ensue in a better quality of ministry and blessedness. So who has really given heed to his word and really heard it so

as to proclaim it with the risk of loss? Because you can't proclaim a word that makes ultimate requirement of people and not pay a price for that.

Someone has got to be offended. Flesh has got to be jarred. People will find a place where they can be where that kind of requirement is not made of them.

So it's hard to believe that both to hear and to speak the word of the Lord does not come at price and cause agitation, unrest, and disjuncture. How many of you pastors want to avoid that? By all means, the last thing you want to consider is that your people should hear a word from God of such a kind that is not all wrapped up in one speaking and that though they may be momentarily challenged, at the end they'll be happy and they'll go home rejoicing and in a happy mood and disposition rather than they should go home in a painful state of confusion or bewilderment of what is God saying and that they should wait and look to the Lord to allow that word to be sifted through their deeps and it's the application to the realities of their life that will not be done in one message. What is it about our time and our generation that everybody has to go home happy? Why can't they go home jarred and agitated and deeply disquieted and compelled to search and what does this mean? This man is speaking in mysteries and it's not all complete in this now generation that has to have it now and immediately.

So if that's what rules you as a minister who wants to make sure that the people go home happy lest they don't come back again, how are you going to be given both the hearing and the speaking the word of God that calls to a totality and makes requirement that cannot be altogether fathomed and understood even in one hearing? So the Lord is not pleased with this deference to man, this accommodating spirit that pervades our modern day Christianity even in its best forms and his fury is going forth. I think we're seeing now the first statement and expression but it will not end there because it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. And don't think that the wicked have horns.

God is always contrasting the righteous with the wicked and the wicked implies for me those who should know better have had opportunity to know better and even in the face of a better knowledge or understanding are still acting grievously and even are opposed to the righteous and called the true prophet false and a danger to the church and causing unrest and disquiet, etc. So we shall know in the latter days and consider perfectly and these latter days are now and may we consider the heart of the Lord in what is being expressed in judgment and what is coming forth out of this piece of dust this morning before you who says I have not sent these prophets yet they ran. I have not spoken to them yet they prophesied.

I don't have a word for this. Presumption doesn't say enough and of course it certainly is presumption to think that you're sent and that the word that you're speaking is God's. It's deception of an ultimate kind by men who don't know him as they ought and have not sought him as they ought and yet they have an inkling, a disposition, a flair, a certain thing and they're ready to go off with that and say thus saith the Lord.

I don't know that I've recovered from that full gospel breakfast where was it in Germany or some place where some Swedish man of the hour wearing his what you may call it shirt Gucci is it whose trademark is quite conspicuous so we can see how well dressed he is because after all his prosperity and his affluence is the statement of his faith and it's he's wearing it so that you can see it and he began by saying this morning the Lord spoke to me and gave me a word for you. I said oh wow I'm leaning forward in my seat. I want to hear every syllable of the word that has come to him for us this morning and as he went on to

speak and to share what was that purported word I slumped back in my seat and have not recovered to this day.

It was no more the word of God than the cow jumping over the moon. It was a piece of fraudulence but the remarkable thing is that I think that the man actually believed that it was the word of God and that it had given to him. After all didn't the thought come into his head as he was shaving? Isn't that God? Because God knows he's going to full gospel breakfast and he'll be the speaker so isn't that stray thought the Lord's thought and isn't it consonant with scripture so it must be his? Do you understand what I'm getting at saints? There's such a shallowness.

There's such a casual air. There's such a lack of the real knowledge of God as God. There's so little time spent in his presence and the knowledge of him for all of our talk about his presence that the first stray thought that comes boom and then we have the audacity, the gumption, the Jews have a word for it, the chutzpah, the unbridled arrogance to say thus saith the Lord.

The Lord spoke to me. The Lord said to me, doesn't he know that when it comes forth it's hardly more than a cliché? It doesn't have enough weight to be sustained in a paper bag. There's no weightiness in that utterance.

There's nothing oracular. There's no freshness. There's nothing that suggests that it has come from the throne of God that it's a now present statement.

It's a cheapie. But you know what? The whole audience drank it up and loved it and applauded it because it made no requirement of them and came with a certain air of titillation. And after all it was expressed by the man of God for the hour who is an overwhelming success because his church has how many? One, two thousand or more? Can you understand? The whole scheme of things stinks.

It's a rotten thought. But it's amazing how it could be sucked up by God's people and there's not one who blinks except cats. And we know that he's queer because you've not kept your heart with all diligence.

You've not guarded your spirit. You've opened it for any intrusion of anything that purports to be spirit that is really soul. So much so that the distinction is blurred and anything that comes that has some appearance of spirituality or whatever with an ability to stir and touch emotion is received of you.

You don't know what price you're paying to be so indiscriminate and so acceptive of anything that comes as being somehow from the Lord because it ostensibly celebrates him and therefore mutes your spirit and dulls it and makes you less capable on the next occasion for being able to discern between soul and spirit until you're finally taken up in the whole soulish enterprise and become a functionary in it yourself. Because of my calling, I'm jealous to keep the integrity of my inner man and of my spirit. But you know what that means? It means sticking out like the proverbial sore thumb while everybody else is celebrating and falling out of their seats or whatever or crying or laughing.

You're sitting there like a dum-dum. You're completely unmoved because it has not touched your spirit. And you're not going to open to something that offers itself as being in the realm of spirit when it's soul.

And therefore you will remain unmoved, looking unspiritual. There's a price to pay for integrity, for guarding your spirit and your heart. And if we're not willing to pay it, we'll be caught up with the whole stream and be less able to discern its character and finally be participant in it.

I have not sent these prophets. Do you love the word sent? You know that it's the root of apostolos. If it's not sent, my dear saints, if it's self-initiated, if a man picks himself up and goes and speaks, my God, the world is full of claptrap and noise and gift of gab and this is the most valuable of all ages.

There's never been such a sea of talking and words and profusion of writings and mailings and we're swimming in it. But where is the man who is sent? And sent with a word that has its auspices from the throne of heaven and is the now present truth as it is in Christ Jesus. God did not send these men, but they ran.

Think of the arrogance of this. God has not sent you. You would think you would come with a certain kind of timidity and dare to express yourself, but they come running because the whole temple of the church is running.

There's a mechanics. There's something that has to go on with a certain velocity and certain speed, certain momentum. I always wonder about these speakers that when they're called on, they run up to the platform and they're right on the spot and happy and buoyant and ready to go.

What's wrong with me? I'm a snail. My heart sinks when I hear I'm being called upon. The last thing is to come up to the holy desk and open your mouth before God's people, let alone his ministers and in his name.

I can't understand how they can run. The very fact that they run is ipso facto evidence that they're not sent. Why can't we wait? Why can't we allow a moment of interlude in between the end of the worship service, so-called, and the commencement of the speaker? No, there can't be a moment silence allowed lest the congregation be distracted or bored.

There's a tempo that is so fixed and you're guilty for it. You've not blown the whistle. You've not called the halt.

You've gone with the rhythm, and it's antithetical to waiting on God. It's antithetical to receiving a word from God that you might be sent. There's something wrong with running, and we need to recognize that.

I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. Audacity. Better if they would have said, this is my opinion.

After some reflection, I'm offering these comments for your consideration, but I don't presume to say that God has given me this statement and that this is a thus saith the Lord. Dear saints, in the day that we allow men to use that kind of vocabulary and punctuate their speakings by freely employing the words of the name of the Lord to sanction it as having been given when it was not given, then the church is at its end. We're at the age of apostasy and fallenness when we allow such license, such unmitigated liberty as for men to take the name of the Lord on their lips so as to authorize, sanctify, validate something that had its issuance only in themselves and never came from God, but freely punctuate their statements by saying, thus saith the Lord, or the Lord said, or the Lord told me.

You sat there like a bunch of dummies and swallowed that, and you don't know what a price you paid for that indulgence and for that condescension. You should have gotten up and shrieked and cried out and blowed the whistle and said, this far, no further, not another word. You're desecrating the faith and the name of God from which we'll not recover if this becomes a practice and a standard that others will equally follow as playing the game.

You'll make of the faith a game, a charade. The church is the pillar of truth, not a piece of flim flam that reflects the low standard of the world only employing another vocabulary. Where's your jealousy? They ran.

They don't know him, but they're quick to employ him in a utilitarian sense as if he's a commodity. Can you believe that? To traffic in God and to use him as an endorsement for something that has its origins out of your own soul and humanity? He's not a commodity. He's the most high.

The church is in lamentable condition since, even in its best forms, because we have tolerated such practices and, in fact, have indulged them ourselves. This first fallen, internationally renowned prophet is only a first statement of God and it'll not end there before he unravels the entire fiasco and fraud and makes it known. We need to understand and examine and be critical of the condition at which we have come, kind of system, the tempo of services and the fear to allow there to be a moment's silence that is not filled by some activity.

Something is already wrong by its very nature that we have come to that kind of condition, that we cannot tolerate silence with the God who says, be still and know that I am God. There's so little occasion to be still. The religion demands activity, momentum.

We're practitioners and we're doing it and think we're doing God a service. God saved us from staggering presumption and arrogance and the heck of it is this. How is it that we did not discern this arrogance and presumption in these internationally renowned oracles and faith for the hour? It's not just they that are the object of God's disfavor, but we who have sat there like dummies and have applauded them and run to hear them so that we can get a personal prophecy and be assured that God knows us because the prophecy indicates details that can only be known to God or to the devil.

We want so much to hear and have our ears tickled and maybe there's an experience of some kind which we desperately need because of the grayness of the church and this terrible predictability that needs to be alleviated by something of a sensational kind that can be experienced. So already the trap is set by the need to have ourselves confirmed before God by some man of the hour who can give us a personal word of prophecy and assure us that God knows us. Oh, thank God.

Thank you, Lord. I didn't know that you knew me until I heard. Whatever happened to being accepted in the Beloved, that does not need this kind of dubious and questionable confirmation that comes from questionable personal prophecy that might well be more clairvoyance than it is the gift of the Spirit.

I'm getting at the root of the matter, you dear saints. This is not a finished message. This is a guy who's gotten up bleary-eyed this morning without sufficient time to prepare and trust in the Lord that I'm full enough just to open my mouth and believe that his heart is finding expression because I don't give a rap about my reputation.

What reputation? Or the esteem or the acceptance of the congregation? Or any such consideration that permits me a vast freedom to be his fool? May you come to that freedom, although the system does not encourage it. So what is the thought of his heart, the intent of his mind? Who has known it, known him, that they can say with confidence, he has sent me? Thus saith the Lord. But if they had stood in my counsel, verse 22, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from the evil way and from the evil of their doings.

Now, don't think that this means to turn them from pornography and vile sensual practices, but the evil means the evil of self-initiated humanisms in whatever form, even that which seems honorific and moral and ethical and religious and even Christian. It's wicked because it does not issue from God, but issues from man. Let the unrighteous man, how does it say in Isaiah, let the wicked man forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

It's not because his thoughts are pornographic. It's unrighteous because they are his thoughts. They're human thoughts, even when they're religious.

That makes them unrighteous because the only righteous thoughts comes from a righteous God. And so these prophets who themselves are exhibiting their own humanity are encouraging their hearers to do likewise, which is evil. So, of course, I'm giving you a prophetic interpretation.

You understand what I'm saying? Which is always more black and white, always more intense, always focused more intensely, because you would never have interpreted the word evil here in the way that I'm suggesting it to you. You don't even see it as evil because you yourself are conducting yourself in quite that way. You don't see that what issues from man isn't in its essence evil.

It's unrighteous, all the more because God says forsake your thoughts. And my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. And you can have my thoughts if you'll only forfeit and put away your own.

But to persist in your thought is wicked. It's evil when you celebrate your thought and have no need for my own. And what is worse, even to interpret that thought as being God's when it had its issuance and its origin in yourself and maybe even from below.

But your condition is so poor that if it comes in spiritual terms or it quotes scripture, that's enough to you to validate it as being God. Spirituality is the last hiding place of self. Had they stood in my counsel and had caused people to hear my words, then they would have turned from the evil way from the evil of their doings.

It's evil because it's their doings, even when it's a project or a program or something ostensibly to serve the purposes of God in which we liberally use the phrase His Kingdom. If it has its origin in man and from below, it's evil, it's wicked, it's unrighteous. It's theirs, not mine.

And these false prophets who are active out of themselves are modeling something for the church to emulate, which is altogether not God. So can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? You know what the astonishment is? That men can speak and act and do and not think that they are being observed of God, that somehow they can get away with it, that the Lord is not attentive on that day. We're not like Paul, who always lived in the conscious sense of the judge and the day of judgment, and that we shall be held accountable for every idle word that we speak, and that all that we have done in our bodies, both good and bad, will one day come before us when we stand before the judgment of God.

We lack a consciousness of God actually as present and seeing and we say and do, but even the condition of our secret heart when it's silent. You got the picture? What am I, am I commending some kind of legalism and rob you of your charismatic freedom and bring you into some kind of constraint that God is always there seeing and knowing? I'll tell you, dear saints, the greatest malady of the church today is the lack of the fear of God as God. There is no awe, no sense of fear, no deep respect that he's a living God and a seeing and a knowing God, and we can't get away with our little gitchy goo and cutting corners as if

he does not observe it.

The remarkable thing is he lets it go on and he's silent and we assume that either he has condoned it or he's not seen it until the day comes that we find ourselves not only into homosexuality but also into alcoholism. It catches up with us. We're not communicating the sense of God, which is the function, the first primary function of foundational men who are apostles and prophets is not their cleverness to resolve church difficulties and disputes, it's to communicate in themselves the sense of God as he in fact is as God.

They should trail clouds of glory with them, something about themselves, their stateliness, their stature, how they walk, they talk, their eyes, their demeanor, as men who have come out of God's presence, who know him, who have waited upon him, and whose meekness and humility which no man can obtain by any practice is transmuted into them by the intimacy of the fellowship with him in his sufferings. We're seeing shallow pieces of goods of men without histories in God who have no origins in the church and in the body. Johnny come lately's boom and they obtain international renown.

It doesn't take much in the public relations game. It has to be resisted or it has to be resisted. A Jewish man like myself who was better looking earlier, but always vocal and even eloquent, hey a man like that can go far.

If you can promote a nothing who is, what shall I say, lacks any solidity, any tensile strength, any quality of life in history and make of him the oracle of the hour? What can you do with the cats if he will allow you? So Moish Rosen, the head of Jews for Jesus who drafted me out of public school teaching and was my instructor in being a missionary to the Jews prophesied, by the time you're 50 Art, you will be the Jewish Billy Graham. I saw him recently. I said, you know, you missed it.

I'm now 75 and I've yet to become the Jewish Billy Graham. I don't think I ever will. Well he said, it's not that I was wrong in my prophecy.

You could have become it, he said, if you played your cards right. But you fool, you went to Minnesota up into the boondocks where even the travel agents can't find it on the map. And you were there for 30 years in total obscurity and hiddenness in the sub-arctic zone whose temperatures are colder than Alaska because you felt that the spirit of God said to you, end time teaching center, community refuge.

And acted on that still small voice, you intuited such a whisper that if you had chosen not to hear it, the Lord would not have disqualified you and would have allowed you to be the greatest success Jewishly than you have become. What are we hearing? What are we allowing to be heard when it calls us to sacrifice and to suffering, to humiliation, community refuge? Community? Hey, I want to retain the aura of the man of the hour under the anointing of God from the platform, but what is it going to be when I'm living with the same people intensely and intimately, not just on Sunday, but Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday? Aren't there going to be occasions when my clay feet will be revealed? Aren't they going to see the displeasure of my wife and the mistreatment of my children or the celebration of my dogs over that of the body of Christ? It's only a matter of time before you'll be found out, cats, and be humiliated because you cannot retain that aura of the anointed man publicly when you're living with the same people day in and day out in all the vicissitudes of life that are especially demanding in community. But it's the greatest provision that God has ever made for me and saved me from being phony baloney and being a hothouse flower and flitting from one holiday into the other as God's prophet for the hour.

There's a price paid if you're getting any value out of what I'm speaking because what I'm speaking is what I am, and that's what a prophet is called to be. The thing in himself, not a promulgator, a mouthpiece with a gift of gab and a little glitzy aura that captivates the shallow and the carnal who want to emulate and become just like that, but don't want to go to northern Minnesota to obtain it or any other comparable form of self-denial, let alone suffering. And if we're not here that call for ourselves, what then shall we hear for anyone? And what then shall we speak? But what is current, what is in season, what is the contemporary fad that everybody else is speaking and seems to be so widely accepted and popular? I'm against the prophets that use their tongues and say he's saith.

I'm against them that steal my words, every one from his neighbor that have not gotten it directly from me and authentically from the throne, but gotten it secondhand from another who gets it secondhand from that one who gets it secondhand, secondhand, secondhand. It's merchandise. It's no longer the holy word of God.

It's become what is current and popular and in season and will obtain the applause of God's people and their indulgent honorariums to allow a lifestyle that is appropriate and becoming to the man of the hour. What would have been more appropriate would have been voluntary poverty. They steal from each other.

They've never gotten it from me because they're not in the counsel of the Lord. They don't even know how to get into that counsel, even if the time provided, as I've mentioned, their very disposition is not amenable to waiting on the Lord and seeking him and being heard of him. There are sense people.

They need to feel something of the presence of God. And if it's not forthcoming in the devotional time, how long will that devotion be maintained? Will that God test us and withhold the sense of his presence to see if we will be faithful and abiding to seek him early, daily, and not just for the utility that I need a message for tonight, but because he's God and deserves this devotion in himself. And if we don't recognize that and our unwillingness to give ourselves to that and are only willing to come in hope of getting something that can serve our purposes, we're in the spirit of the world, the utilitarian spirit of Singapore, and not in the kingdom of God at all, because you'll know when you'll have God's word.

It's like a fire. It's like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. People were shaking last night, but our prayer this morning was, through the night hours and even today, that word that went forth that was your word will continue as a hammer upon the rock, because you have no idea how hard the hearts of God's people are, how calcified, how hardened that word has got to beat and beat, be called, be brought again to their recall and have its work until there's a breaking.

If it's easy to be received and only brings us a few chuckles and an enjoyable moment and is biblically valid and doctrinally sound and we go home no different than when we came, that's a nice message, but it's not the word of God that breaks. That's a fire. It's something that we've obtained.

We know which way the wind is blowing and what's appropriate to speak that will be found acceptable. I'm against them, verse 32, that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them. Well, one way you can know that they're false is the rush to tell them and publish it and then in hardback and becomes a bestseller.

When you get to Yugoslavia, they're even printing it off the Xerox machine and stapling it together and telling you that this is the best thing that has ever come since the Bible. If it was that holy, that sacred, that much of vision, that much of a visit into the ethereal and heavenly realms, keep it to yourself. You don't

publish it because it's by nature sensational and will guarantee sales and celebrate you as a man of uncommon vision and even the sent one to be the commander in chief of the body of Christ and to hear Paul's apology in your visit that he had made grievous mistakes in the course of his apostolic career, which of course you will not make when you return and take the place that God has appointed for you as commander in chief.

Our Christian bestsellers do condemn us. Better to be obscure and hidden and unknown. Better to keep the deep revelations of God that were personal to yourself and only such time as the Spirit of God would give you liberty to express it, but never to become a bestseller.

They publish it, the Lord says, their so-called dreams and cause my people to err by their lies and by their likeness. Well, you dear saints, I can't do anything more for you, but if I could inoculate you with what is in my own spirit to despise likeness. You know what? Every time I've gone out of my way to hear these great figures, the one abiding impression that I get every time is the likeness of the proceeding.

It's jocular, it's informal, it's humorous, it's cute. Yes, there's a word given that's only a little homily to get to the real thing, which is the gift of prophecy of a personal kind. The word is only a little thing just to get that out of the way.

It's not the word of God. It's only a little biblical homily, and the whole atmosphere is light. Well, I'm not a Hebrew scholar, but the word for glory in Hebrew, kavod, is the same word for weight, and the word for light is the same word for curse, and we need to despise likeness.

It's unbecoming to the church. It's contradictory to the whole tenor of faith, and those that have gone before us, and the thing to which we're pointing to, the consummation of the ages, is full of weight, full of significance, full of exclamation of the apostle Paul, oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, who has been his counselor, men who have seen and understood the mysteries of God and have been its stewards. Weight is intrinsic to the faith, and when the church is characterized by its likeness rather than by its weight and by its glory, we're already in the place of apostasy, because likeness is to be enjoyed, and weight brings responsibility, contemplation, the implications, the call, the sacrifice, the prospect of suffering, because glory never comes except to first be preceded by suffering.

We prefer likeness. It makes no requirement, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their likeness, yet I sent them not nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, and that's why we're fixed. That's why we don't go on from faith to faith and glory to glory.

That's why immaturity is the abiding characteristic of the congregations of God's people. We don't see growth, maturity. The likeness itself militates against that, because I did not send them nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all.

It's not profitable. They have perverted, in verse 36, the words of the living God of the Lord of hosts, our God. They have perverted, even in the name of the Lord, to debase the Word of God, to diminish the sense of God, and the end thereof is the trivialization of the faith itself.

The church becomes predictable. The faith is a Sunday addendum. The Christianity is a culture, and not the apostolic presence, whose very presence turns the world upside down, brings into question those spurious values to which all mankind subscribe, that are lies.

God is being trivialized in his faith by the most notable of ministers, and we share in that culpability, for we have endorsed them, we have sent for them, we have given them our platforms, we get excited when they come, and we arrange the biggest extravaganzas. Somehow we don't even take note that they don't really bring a substantial and oracular word, but vagaries and high-sounding prophecies of this nation relating to that nation that cannot be confirmed, but has an aura of suggestion of something, which is good enough for us. One of these men, little tails out of school, whom I recently went to visit and to hear, and one message was enough, but I also had occasion to hear the traveling companion, an African with a real hyped-up presentation of a kind of rah-rah kind that you would expect at a football rally, but he's a doctor, and so I couldn't wait fast enough to get in and say, where did you get your doctorate? I knew where, at a diploma mill.

A \$500 check and an essay will do it, because all of your previous service will be counted as filling the requirement of study that you need not perform, because your service serves that end. So now you're a doctor. Well, I have enough academic background to esteem significant titles when they are earned, and doctors indeed do deserve our respect, if not our reverence, if they are doctors in the faith and have studied and broken their heads and agonized and wrestled with original languages and come up with holy ghost-directed insight and revelation of value to the church, the great theologians like Carl Barth, whom I admire greatly.

That's a suffering. For them, the title is appropriate, and they themselves don't celebrate it. But the Johnny-come-lately, the cheapie who wants a little punctuation at the end of his name because it'll mean more invitations, because this is a doctor.

Can you understand this, saints? To take a man like that with you in your ministry and not understand that it's essentially fraudulent and to sig him on God's people, to fill up the empty space that you don't have to do all the speaking, what does that signify in the character and the integrity of the man who takes such a one as to travel with him and to speak? I'm speaking symbolically. You have to understand what these things represent, lest we ourselves be enticed and induced and seduced and ourselves covet such titles and such honors and such recognition and make that a cheapie, because the end thereof is everlasting reproach. In verse 40, I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten.

Go ahead and have your day in the sun and be celebrated as God's man of the hour in a title totally undeserved and a banquet in it and take all of the honor and all of the honorariums that go with it, but the day will come when you'll have to stand before me. What you'll receive from me then will be everlasting reproach and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten. Where is your sense of eternal judgment? Where is your fear of having to carry into eternity the lack of integrity with which you allowed yourself to conduct yourself in this life? Why didn't you consider what comes after? Why don't you understand that this life is preparatory for that which follows that is eternal? Why haven't you taken eternity into your consideration? You might then have hesitated and not been so quick to run and to speak that which God had not given.

Your failure is the failure to understand eternity and the eternal God and eternal judgment and eternal reproach, or you would not have acted so lightly. In doing so, you're robbing the church of the sense of significance of the things that are eternal so that they too will have a certain liberty to conduct themselves in a way less than they ought, because we're not aware of eternal consequence, which is not to understand God as God, for our every failure comes back to that lack, that our every error is we don't

know God as we ought. We're perpetuating that kind of shallow conception and not encouraging God's people to seek him and be fond of him and to know him as he in fact is.

We need to ask and examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith. What faith are we in? The shabby counterfeit of present decisional Christianity? Have we come through the narrow gate? Have we come with trembling? Does trembling characterize our present relationship with God and before his people? Are we sons and daughters of the resurrection who live out of resurrection faith and life, or merely subscribe to the doctrine as being correct and think we're doing God's service? We're living out of ourselves and by ourselves out of our own unaided humanity and doing an impressive job of it, having no need for resurrection life because we have reduced the church to such predictable proportions that it doesn't need the vastness of God's spirit and power. We can quite perform it ourselves, reducing the great issue of death and resurrection merely to a doctrine to approve, when it's a death to be obtained because the call of God is beyond our ability.

Do you know that? With man it is impossible, and if it's possible for you, you're promulgating another faith. It's not the faith of Paul. It's not the faith of the prophets.

It's not the faith of the psalmists. It's some cheap contemporary equivalent thereof, but it is not the faith that honors the God of glory, the creator of heaven and earth, the consummate God, the high priest of our profession, the soon coming king. If you can do it, you're in error.

We're called to that which is beyond ourselves. We're called to ultimacy, and until we shall find it and obtain it, how shall we move Jews to jealousy? Of what shall they be jealous if we're only replicating what they themselves can perform in their own synagogues without the Holy Spirit? They've got to see something larger than life, something transcendent, something that issues from heaven that cannot be understood as coming from man. That means the death to all that is human, all that's religious, and the coming alive, and the purposes of God by the fulfillment of that which he gives, who raises the dead.

I'm trusting for that this morning, and even praying, excuse my little Jewish naivety, that I would not only be an expositor, but a demonstration of the very life to which you yourself are called, and that you're hearing a sent word from a sent man that requires. Lord, join me in prayer. Lord, your forgiveness, we pray, because we're sensing even when we're right, we're wrong, and then the things that we have most celebrated are the reasons for our deepest repentance.

The fact that we have celebrated them is itself an indictment. We have not understood, Lord. We don't know you as we ought, and we're promulgating something of a God of another kind, augmented by our sound systems, the technology of our age, to create feelings, emotions, sensation.

We're lazy. We're too busy to seek you. Our schedule will not allow, and even if it did, we would have no disposition.

We wouldn't know what to do if we stopped running. We don't know what it means to stand still and know that I am God, that I am that I am. It's a gift that I will confer to you if you will only be still, but the nature of the whole religious system militates against that stillness.

It calls for running. So my God, do we have the courage to bring that system to an end? The very fact that it is system is itself a condemnation, and that the only difference is that someone does a little better than the other guy, but it's the same predictable thing. We have lost the spontaneity of God and the sense of

God and the originality of God who is a creator still.

We mimic and imitate one another in our worship songs and services and speakings. We're a culture, Lord, and not the vast and profound thing that is life-saving, that needs to break into the world of falsity and lies that purports to be true to which men give their energy and time and have no sense of what is eternal or what will be judged because we ourselves have not conveyed it, because we ourselves do not adequately know it, and we ourselves are not living in the consciousness of it and serving out of that. Lord, forgive us.

My God, forgive us. Forgive our professionalism. Forgive our secret desire to be called doctor, to be honored, to be acknowledged, to succeed on the basis of standards that are contemporary, that we've lost that sense and connection with what is ancient, which what was original, what came before, the holy men of old.

We're not in the conscious continuum with those who suffered and bled and died for your name and for your honor. We don't have a sufficient anticipation of the eschatological climax of the age and the glory of your kingdom and your coming or realize that it's Hebraic, that it waits for a greater David who alone can occupy that throne from the holy hill of Zion, out of which shall go forth the law of the Lord to all nations. Lord, forgive us.

We've even traduced and deprecated the word kingdom and made it a little cheap as if it's some kind of interior, personal, subjective thing rather than the awesome theocratic rule of God over his own creation through a restored Israel. Lord, we're shallow. Mercy upon us, my God, for what we have endorsed, what we have favored, what we have encouraged, what we have emulated, what have been the models of our time.

Give us a day of new beginnings, Lord. We're willing to forfeit our best success if it has any auspices and origin out of ourselves and not from you. Help us to despise what is light and to have a heart only for that which bears the weight and the glory of God, which comes at price.

And we thank you and praise you that you've given us an occasion like this that could have been a cutesy occasion, a little rah-rah time, a little good feeling, a little cheap equivalent of what is prophetic if one will play the game. But you slipped one in on us and sent us the real thing. My God, we bless you for a love that will not let us go, will not allow us to play games, will not allow us to make a sham of the faith and turn a holy calling into a career or a profession.

Forgive us, my God, to any degree to which that has come into our being. May we spit it out, may we vomit it up, may we be as dead men that don't know how to walk and have to go back to square one, begin all over to learn what it means to be the servants of the Most High, who can find your counsel in the holy place, in the secret place, hear it and speak it without fear, who don't have to send their people home happy, who can send them home agitated, restless, disquieted, and trust you through the night hours to perform that interior work where the word breaks as the hammer upon the rock and the word is fire in the bones, and it will have a result of a kind that cannot be measured. My God, help us to forsake the idols of this age, the cheapy stereotypes, the easy, glib, facile, shallow thing that pervades your church that is in many ways less than the world's profundity.

The world is more serious in its academic endeavors than we are in the faith. So we bless you, Lord. Give us by your mercy a spirit of repentance and breaking, not a deeper consecration that we can perform, but

a bringing down into the dust of death that only you can perform, for the one who slays makes alive.

Thank you for the word that cuts and heals. Thank you for the word that kills and makes alive. We receive it, my God, as purest mercy.

Give us the grace also to speak it on the occasions that you will require. We thank you for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to which we yield ourselves anew, repentantly. In Jesus' name, amen.

Just wait there. Don't be quick to run. What's next on the program? Wait there.

Let that word sink in, because it may well be that the first moments after such a statement is when the real depth of the transaction has its inroad. Let's not be quick. If we ministers cannot stand silence and have to have the next act, what shall we expect of our people? Wait there.

Let that word sink in. Contemplate it. Let it find lodging.

Let it do its work. Open yourself to its penetration into your deeps. Lord, even when I'm right, I'm wrong.

Even my best intentions are corrupt. I'm assuming that, even if I don't have the evidence for it, and I don't subjectively experience conviction, I'm choosing to believe that even when I'm right, I'm wrong. There's something in me as man that I'm acknowledging, which is the deepest kind of repentance that doesn't wait for confirmation, that David would have been capable to write Psalm 51 even if he had never gone to bed with Bathsheba or killed her husband.

He would know that he would know that God wants truth in the hidden parts, and that the only place is the place of repentance before him, and you don't have to wait for confirming acts to persuade you that you're guilty and capable and needing that kind of depth of repentance. The very nature of ourselves, the air that we breathe, commands it. Now you're free to break the silence.

Do you want to pray out of your seat? I'll tell you what. Whatever you'll pray now will be heard of God. Whatever you'll say now will be heard and received, especially if it comes with a spirit of repentance.

Even if you yourself are not personally culpable, you never ran after the man of faith and power, but you were part of the generation that did. In some way, consciously or unconsciously, you have lent yourself to the fraudulence of the time, and you need to identify with the church. Even in that condition, though you were personally not involved, there's every reason to let God know that we're ashamed.

We ask you forgiveness. We identify with the church. Forgive us, Lord, whether we consciously or unconsciously gave ourselves in any part to that thing which is today so unapostolic, so unprophetic, so lacking in the timbre and quality of the book of Psalms, so lacking in the true sense of yourself and the awe and fear, so pervaded by the likeness everywhere.

We're guilty. We've all given ourselves. If we have not stood up and shouted and cried out and blown the whistle and called halt, we're guilty.

Forgive us in Jesus' name. Let God hear that. Say something aloud.

Let the powers of the air tremble that prevail over this Babylonian Singapore. Let them know something is breaking, something is taking place of an earnest and real kind that threatens their unchallenged supremacy over this city-state. Turn this into an event of a cosmic kind that this city-state Singapore can

be the Antiochal sending base into the world of true prophetic men who are sent.

It waits on your cry. Let it come up to the heavens and jar the powers that be that said Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who the heck are you? What, you're going to take cities? Ha, ha, ha. You scare us not a bit because we do not see the end of the sea, the apostolic depth.

We don't see the prophetic quality. We see play acting, charade, fraudulence, performance, manipulation. Come, saints, ministers of God, bear great responsibility.

Let God hear your voice, hear your cry. Turn the morning into an event that will have lasting consequence and save you from eternal embarrassment, if not shame.

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