

Fren-04 La Viede La Mort (Life From the Dead)

by Art Katz

God allows suffering to bring us to a place of total dependency on him and to reveal his glory in our lives.

Duration: 56:34

Scripture: Genesis 1:2, Ezekiel 37:1, Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:5, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 1:19

Topics: "Eternal Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones. He emphasizes that the hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel, and he was brought down into the valley to witness the power of God. The speaker challenges the audience to consider their own willingness to be called by God and to be used as instruments of His power. He highlights the importance of the resurrection power of God being demonstrated through a transformed nation, and urges the audience to be active participants in this process.

Transcript

Well, there's an old Jerusalem and a new. There's the former thing and the latter thing. There's the earthly and the heavenly.

And he takes away the first to bring the second. The only problem is how reluctant we are to let go of the first. And we want to celebrate the earthly thing.

Even Jesus himself in his perfected manhood was not the final statement of God. In his perfected manhood was not the final statement of God. Although his disciples would like to have retained him in that form.

He was an impressive and complete man. A model of obedience to the Father. A son.

And yet something further was required. A strange paradox. Even the physical dismantling of that son.

In the very moment, an hour when he had reached his perfected manhood. In that hour he was brought to the cross. And what was left after that was a pathetic wreck.

He was marred more than any man. When his persecutors were finished with him, there was no form that we should desire him. No beauty.

And in that condition he was buried. How many have seen the great Holy Ghost masterpiece at Colmar, France? The Grunewald painting of the crucifixion of Jesus. You don't know this masterpiece? In Colmar.

I saw this painting as an atheist. It was recommended to me by a believer who picked me up as a hitchhiker. Oh, I had seen many depictions of Jesus in a kind of an idealistic fashion.

It bore no meaning nor correspondence to my modern Jewish life. But I went out of my way to see this painting at this man's recommendation. And I stood fixed and astonished at what I saw.

Was I looking at a man or a gargoyle? Gargoyle. It was a caricature of a man. So ugly and so twisted and brutally devastated you wanted to take your eyes away.

This was no sentimental depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus. That has him perched on the cross as some kind of feminine ballet dancer. This is a naked, wrecked and battered, ruined man.

The color of his flesh is gangrenous and green. His face is twisted in the final paroxysms of death with his mouth hanging loose. This perfect man had been allowed by God the Father to be brought to that destitute condition.

It seems like an unspeakable cruelty. It seems to contradict the very character of God. That he would allow this.

For his own son. Having first brought him to a place of perfection. But you walk around on the other side of the painting and you understand the reason.

The other side is the resurrection. Jesus bursting forth out of the grave. In such explosive power.

The Roman God tumbling and falling, their helmets askew. The glorious Son of God. Resurrected and ascended King.

And in every place where he had suffered brutality and the rending of his flesh and wounds. In that very place, the artist, by the inspiration of the Spirit, poured out streams of visible glory. A German theologian has rightly commented.

True faith begins where the atheist thinks it should end. Has our true faith begun? Or are we in some kind of a relationship with an idealized Christ? The former, not the latter. Can we understand why God would so allow his Son to be brutalized? And that somehow the glorification of his Son is in exact proportion to the nature and character of the death which he suffered.

And I'm reading today a book just like that. The brutalization of a man of God and of a servant of God. Not by inadvertent circumstance or accident.

But at the hand of very God himself. A three-year ordeal of unspeakable suffering. A man with an international ministry.

The international coordinator of a universal prayer and intercessory movement. Reduced to such a condition that he was unable to pray for himself. He could pray for the ultimate purposes of God.

And for Israel. For the church. Battle against the principalities and powers.

Impressively. But he was brought to such a reduced place. Where his very sanity was at risk.

He lost his faith completely. He who had believed God for Israel and for the church. Could not believe God for himself.

For the alleviation of his unspeakable sufferings. He was contemplating suicide. If only God would end the suffering by death.

But was there even such a God who could do it? He had lost even this sense of God. His whole ministry had collapsed. His children who had known him as a formidable man of God.

An impressive preacher of righteousness. An international organizer. Was incapable of putting himself in bed.

Or getting out of it. Utterly reduced to a shambles. And for some reason I'm reading this today.

And I just want to share a few of his statements. It may give us some insight as to why God would allow such a process. He was a leading charismatic figure.

A man of such impressive faith. Until these devastations came into his own life. And he came to realize that he had put too much of a premium on his own faith.

And he came to realize that he had put too much of a premium on his own faith. And I believe that this highlights all of our faith schools. Our charismatic schools in Christianity today.

All we need to do is hold God to his promises. Give him his own words. Believe for health.

Believe for prosperity. Believe for happiness. Of course Paul himself suffered.

But that's because he did not have an adequate knowledge. If he had the knowledge that we now enjoy. And the kind of faith which is its expression.

There's no need for such suffering. Jesus did it all. And we now enjoy the benefit and the full prosperity.

It's called the faith message. And he says, I see that we have come to have faith in our own faith. Rather than faith in God.

And you know what the definitive faith in God is? Which perhaps most of us have yet to experience and to know. It's the faith of the God who raises the dead. Who makes those things to be which are not.

And this is the experience through which God has brought this man. When he had no faith of his own. When he was incapable of praying for himself.

When he had not even the faith to receive the prayer of others. When he was dead to hope. In a moment.

By the power of God. Where drugs had failed and counsel had failed and prayer had failed. God raised him up.

And he perceives God now in a totally new way. I can't wait for the sequel to this book. To see what the outworking of this new quality of relationship with the God who raised him from the dead will be.

He learned that Jesus is both the author and the finisher of our faith. I'm believing by faith right now for the Lord to put the right words in my mouth. I'll grope and choke and stumble and feel for them.

It's something in my spirit. Stirred by this book. And the message that I myself am bearing about the death and resurrection of Israel.

That I'm desiring to see expressed. This man in the extremity of his condition. Argued with God.

Blamed God. Rebelled against God. Almost cursed God.

Capacity. So where is God? And how does he honor his servants? To allow him to suffer this degrading and humiliating condition. The epitome of weakness even before his own wife and children.

Where is God? And something rose of a rebellion against a God who would allow such devastation. Do you know what I want to say children? I believe that that rebellion was always there. Even when he was a successful international director.

Even when he was blessed of God. Anointed of God. Used of God.

That rebellion was always there. That confidence in his own faith was always there. That necessity to demonstrate and to do things for God and to perform works by which his identity and self-respect would be established.

Was always there. We can't even imagine how deep these currents are. Or we talk about grace.

But we are a works and merit oriented people. The deepest substratum of our life is not on the rock of Christ. And a total and radical dependency upon him.

But on the necessity to earn something. To demonstrate something. To perform something.

Not something carnal. Something religious. Something spiritual.

Something that serves the purposes of God. But which we ourselves are doing. That not only commends us to men.

But commends us to God. We speak the language of grace. But we live the Old Testament reality of works.

And want to be established and to succeed and to be recognized on the basis of our own merit. And this before a God who will not share his glory with any flesh. It raises a very great question.

How far will God go to destroy that false foundation? What will he do to bring down the earthly that he might raise up the heavenly? What will he allow to be sown in corruption that it might be raised in glory? If he went that far with Jesus. If he went that far with this man. How far will he go with us? How far will he go with Israel? Were you here when I spoke about the valley of dry bones? Ezekiel chapter 37.

Did you understand that word? Where I made it clear that I believe that God is going to bring present Israel down into a state of death. Don't think that I'm enjoying the contemplation of that. I just came from Bergen-Belsen in Germany and saw the concentration camp where Anne Frank died.

We're talking about another generation of Anne Franks. A precious people who so touch our hearts. So impressive in so many ways.

Wouldn't it be painful if it was necessary that somehow that people in that condition of impressiveness would have to come down into a grave? To be reduced to the ultimate death to which this man himself was brought? That God could raise up something of a qualitatively other kind. Of a resurrection kind. Of a glorious kind.

Not only will this be painful for us to contemplate and to observe but we might have to be silent throughout the whole process of it. Like Jesus when he learned of the sickness of his friend Lazarus he remained two days longer where he was. Please answer the phone.

Every impulse that is in us will want to ease, is that a French word? alleviate the pain of Israel in its final extremity. Maybe it will be something like what Jesus heard when he was on the cross. Come down and we will believe you.

There is something in humanity that will not allow God to have his ultimate measure. Something that rises up out of our flesh that takes issue with suffering. That cannot agree with the necessity for it.

That wants to alleviate it and cut it short. Come down. That wants to come to bring Jesus to the bed of his friend to raise him up that he need not suffer a sickness unto death.

But Jesus waited where he was. Sufficient for his friend to die. Without explanation for his dying.

Of the absence of that one who had saved others but had not come to save him. Have you ever had occasion to cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Will you allow God to bring you to such a place of extremity? Where you cannot even understand the reason for it? You have suffered it long enough? How long, Lord? Till you begin to ask, What kind of a God are you? Until you begin to ask, Are you God at all? Even the death of your own faith? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Until the place where he is no longer your God. And maybe never was a God.

So low will God bring one. That he might raise him up. To something eternally more glorious.

Now listen to this, saints. Our willingness to suffer such trials or to see Israel suffer them is altogether proportionate to one thing only. Or we will not be able to bear it.

We will not outfight in God's faith. We will cast the faith away. We will call it a deception that should never have been believed.

Unless we understand this one thing. How far God will go for his glory. Forever.

It's the issue of whether we will be charismatic or apostolic. Whether we want a Christianity that we can enjoy. That gives us benefit.

And brings its measure of blessing. Or we want a Christianity that will eternally glorify God. And know that we know that we know that there is a suffering that precedes a glory.

So I am bearing a very painful message in these days. And I have never experienced more backlash or reproach. And when my brothers picked me up in Germany when I arrived a week or two ago, my first question was, have you heard any report about me? My question to them.

No, they had not. Oh, I said, it's only a matter of time. Before you'll be hearing the rumors, Katz is turning the church in Germany against Israel.

He's preaching a message without hope. It really is the issue of hope. But not the hope that comes from Israel's ability to save itself.

However impressive a people they are. It's the same hope that came to this man when all hope was gone. When he was incapable of any faith of his own.

The same hope that came to Abraham when he was almost a hundred years old and his body was withered and dried up and God's promise had not yet been fulfilled. And there was no natural, earthly way that it could be fulfilled through Abraham. No matter how well-meaning his intentions.

When every basis for human hope was gone, Abraham hoped against hope and believed God who spoke a word. And God counted that for righteousness. And performed it.

Not out of Abraham's capability but out of God's own. Because Abraham did not waver in unbelief. He believed the word of God giving glory to God.

What's the difference between a charismatic and an apostolic congregation? For the one, the word glory is ambiguous and has no clear meaning. For the other, it's an intensely significant word for which they are jealous for fulfillment. And are willing for whatever the sacrifice to obtain it.

What God is going to be doing to Israel and is already doing to Israel in these days is a test for us. Our faith. Our understanding about God.

What He would allow these people to return to the land after 2,000 years. He would allow them to establish their new cities. To restore the Hebrew language.

To build an impressive nationhood. Only to bring that into the place of death. Where they themselves cry out, we are without hope, we are cut off, we are as dry bones.

How can we understand such a God? To allow something to be brought to such a place of impressiveness. Within the very grasp of succeeding. In only 40 years.

And then allow a series of devastations to come. The Palestinian crisis, the Intifada. Economic problems and inflation.

The influx of hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants. To bring the economy to the very verge of breaking. Arab nations armed and waiting to push them into the sea.

And even their greatest threat from Iraq only momentarily deterred. Their extremity increases. Their dilemma intensifies.

And you can call me a false prophet. In this case, would to God that I were. If this extremity does not end in death.

But the death of a very special kind. A death to human hope. Zionist hope.

Jewish hope. To show the world what a distinctive Jewish nation would be. On the basis of its own ability.

Which would have impressed men. But not blessed men. The issue is not the impressiveness of the nation.

The issue of the glory of God is the glory of God that is revealed through them. Who will raise them from their death. To an utterly different quality of life altogether.

A newness of life. People will clutch at their skirts because they know they know God. They will be called by a new name.

They will go through the depths of breaking and remorse and contrition and repentance as no nation has ever known. God will release them for their apostolate in the world as Paul himself was the forerunner in his own generation. It will no longer be Israeli chutzpah.

It will be the saintliness and the godliness and the character of God. The statement of his own life. Infused in an entire nation.

That has been brought to a newness of life. By the God who raises the dead. It will be God's final demonstration of who he is before all nations.

He gave opportunity 2,000 years ago in the witness of his own death and resurrection. And before his final judgment comes upon the nations. He will give one last demonstration of that same power.

Through a nation visibly transfigured before the face of all nations. Because of you. Aha.

You thought you would only be spectators? Not so. You are the very agent that affects that resurrection. Look it up yourself at your own convenience.

Ezekiel 37. It's not just God and the dry bones. It's God and the son of man and the dry bones.

The prophet. Whom God commands to prophesy to those bones that they might live. Has that ever intrigued you? It seems an unnecessary instrumentality.

Surely the God who brooded over the chaos in Genesis 1 and spoke and said let there be. Can speak over the chaos of Israel and let them be. So who is this other fellow? Who is brought down by the spirit of God into the valley of dry bones.

The hand of the Lord was upon him it says in 37 verse 1. Ever experienced that? Ever like to experience it? That's what this man has experienced. The hand of the Lord came upon him. He was brought down.

Into the valley of dry bones. And moved all around and about. God rubbed his face into the very grit of it.

Who wants to go down into such a place? A valley is always depressing. And depressing hardly describes the condition to which this man was brought. Suicidal in his depression.

And somehow that was the necessary beginning for the son of man of chapter 37. And having experienced those dry bones the Lord says to him. Can these bones live son of man? Doesn't it sound like a teasing and a provocative God? Teasing.

Almost murderous. Malicious. Almost cruel.

To raise such a question. So much as to say, you think you're a prophet? You think you're a man of faith? Can your faith believe that these bones can live? You charismatic hot shot. You with your faith prosperity teaching.

You might believe for a Cadillac. But that's kid stuff. Can you believe that these bones can live? And you know what the impressive prophet said? Lord thou knowest.

He couldn't bring himself to say yes. Because he had not the faith to believe it. It was beyond his faith.

And yet he was going to be required to speak from the place of faith. Or his word was worthless. It was his word that would have to bring Israel from its grave.

Prophecy is not wishful thinking. It's the ultimate word of God. It's the creative word.

It becomes event. It's ultimate faith. Beyond the prophet's capacity.

And not just the faith only, but a love that needs to go with it. We know that. It's the faith that works by love.

Without the love, it's not a faith that works. I don't care how much you can believe. If you have not a substantial love corresponding to the faith, it will not work.

And who will have such a love for Israel at that time? Even now it's getting tougher and tougher. They are disappointing us. And acting in ways that we could never have imagined.

Such a stubborn nation. So difficult to bring them to the conference table. Seeming so unwilling to negotiate.

Just to make a transaction for some land and that they can have peace and give the Arabs a chance. Or find ways to extricate themselves by wile and cunning. Even we who had been sympathetic to them are growing more and more exasperated.

Do you realize that a prophetic scenario is being fulfilled? There will be a day when all nations will come against Jerusalem to destroy it. There will be a day when Israel will be hated among all nations. Both the Israel that is within the land and the Israel that is outside of it.

Haven't you heard about skinheads? Neo-Nazism? We saw one come from France to a conference in East Germany. Who believed that Hitler will live again. Remarkable that in their perverse way they have a greater sense of resurrection than we.

God is allowing something in the earth saints. An increasing bitterness and hatred against the Jew. It will be global and no nation will be excluded.

How will you be in that day? When there is no longer any natural reason left to have any esteem or affection for that people. For God is calling us to be that son of man company. That prophetic people who will speak that one word.

As with one mouth and one agreement. Not some ecumenical agreement. Not some little cheap political and religious contrivance.

But the authenticity of an apostolic people who are bonded with God and with each other. Who share his heart and his desire. Though all the world oppose it.

I just have to close and finish. Here is the point. If Israel is to be raised from the dead.

Which is an issue much greater than Israel itself. For her restoration is the issue of the Lord's very coming. And the establishing of his Davidic kingdom.

Through this people. Out of their own land and out of their own capital city Jerusalem. It will be health for the nations.

When the law goes forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. But only in that Jerusalem whose people have been raised from the dead. By your word.

By your prophetic obedience. By the quality of your faith and your love. That is staggering in its requirement.

So frankly we have to say that it is beyond our ability. And just as this brother has learned we will have to learn. Not even our faith will save us.

But the faith of the son of God himself. Our little sentimental affection for Israel. It will go up like a puff in an hour of extremity.

But the unconditional love of God. That cannot be disappointed. That will suffice.

You know what I think? This man is a pioneer for many of us. There are others who will follow. Others who will be brought to an end of their faith.

Their concept of God. Their doing for God. There will be a death before there will be a resurrection.

For us who will be the prophetic people of God of the last days. For it is only that faith that will believe for Israel's resurrection. It will be beyond ourselves.

And so I have to ask you what I'm asking congregations everywhere. Which God was not polite enough to ask this man. He simply did it to him.

But how many of you would welcome this dealing? Welcome these trials. Welcome these devastations. Where you will wonder whether what you ever believed was true.

Whether you even have faith to believe in God. Whether there is even a God. Until he demonstrates his power.

In raising you from that grave. For the death and resurrection of Israel must be preceded by the death and resurrection of the church. Our charismatic death.

Which we enjoyed. Which was blessed. So was Jesus in his manhood.

A lamb in the first year without spot and without blemish. And God allowed that perfect son of man to be devastated at the cross. Out of the necessity for a greater glory.

Will we follow him in that way? I'm impressed with this book. That God would go so far with a man. It makes me to ask, what is the magnitude of his calling? That God did not think it too extravagant to bring him into such a suffering.

What is the extent of your calling? Or more correctly, how far are you willing to be called? What is the extent of your intention with this God? Who will go this far? In the revelation of his glory. Forever. I'm going

to give you an opportunity to be in that son of man company.

To be brought from where you are. In the place to which we need to come. Beyond our faith, beyond our ability, beyond our intentions.

Beyond our affection for Israel. That we might become so fused with God. That our word is his word through us.

To the raising of them from the dead. To the blessedness of all nations. And the glory of his name forever.

How do you like this gospel? Let's bow before the God of it. And give him an answer. Lord, my own heart aches to have to speak like this to such an audience.

Look how precious they are. How impressive. What a fine quality of Christian.

I mean, how many others would come out on a Monday night? I mean, this is real dedication. And real quality in God. And yet.

Must you take away the first to bring the second? Must the lesser be brought into the grave to bring forth the greater? Must the earthly go before the heavenly? Then we do not go kicking and shrieking and screaming. We go willingly. For what is our life? But for your glory.

And so I ask you to transact tonight. With these precious saints. In something that is voluntary and free.

And you will not require this of everyone. Only those who are intensely jealous for your glory. And are willing for the destruction of their own temple.

That the more glorious and eternal latter house be formed. Willing for the destruction of their own charismatic faith. Sufficient for their need.

For the obtaining of the prophetic faith. The faith of God himself. Needed for his need.

How many will invite the process? It's called the cross. And we've heard very little about it in this generation. Jesus bore his voluntarily.

And so also must we. So who is there who will? Who will say yes to the Lord? Whatever the process. However painful.

However profound the emptying. However extensive the devastation of our categories. We're willing.

Bring us down. That you might be raised up. And your faith and your love for this nation.

Be expressed through us. When there's no possibility in ourselves at all. To the saving of that nation.

And the glorifying of your name. Who will say yes to that? Who will transact with God tonight? And welcome this? This is even beyond making a decision. This is beyond going forward.

This is beyond commitment and consecration. It's the deepest of the deep. Needed from a few.

In these last days. Let the Lord know. By standing, by kneeling.

By going down on your face. By saying yes Lord. Transact with God.

For his name and for his glory. We who are called to this final hour. By the God of the uttermost.

Let more take place in this moment. To affect the destiny of Israel. That has been worked in dozens of conferences.

And negotiations. And plantings of trees. And all of the nice things that we like to do.

For Israel. And yet preserve our own life. Lord put a seal on this night.

A strange night. A strange work. Let it be eternal in its consequence.

As you hear the yes and the amen and the cry of hearts. Bring down that you might raise up. Our ministries.

Our faith. Our categories. That we might truly know you.

As the God who raises the dead. Himself. And serve you in the power of your own life.

Settle it tonight.

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