

# Fren-13 Apostolic Foundations - Eternity

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the critical importance of understanding and living in light of eternity as foundational to the Christian faith and apostolic life.*

**Duration:** 1:06:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 5:21

**Topics:** "Eternity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of preaching about eternity and the urgency it brings to the church. He refers to the event of Paul at Mars Hill in the book of Acts as an example. The speaker emphasizes the need for believers to have a deep understanding and sense of the imminent judgment of God. He also highlights the problem of seeking worldly admiration and success, rather than focusing on the eternal and heavenly aspects of life.

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## Transcript

How many are here tonight who were not here last night? Can you just raise your hand? All right, thank you. If it's possible for you to get the tape of last night, I think that that might be helpful. I'll be probably making some references to it in tonight's talk.

It's the event of Paul at Mars Hill on Chapter 17 in the Book of Acts. And tonight we have a formidable task. And that is to speak to the subject of eternity.

It's not something that I've chosen because it sounds clever. It's just on the Lord's program for tonight. It's something that mortal lips should not attempt to discuss.

And it's probably a statement of the whole paradox of the Church. Christ in us, the hope of glory. Heavenly things through earthly vessels.

So I'm going to pray for a heavenly assist. My brother Andrew has been traveling all through the day to get here and is tired. I've had a day's rest and preparation before the Lord and I'm still tired.

And maybe that's what it takes. A diminishing of men. We must decrease if he is to increase.

So I'm trusting for that. If you think that the subject is irrelevant, and what has this to do with apostolic foundations, the answer is everything. This is the foundational thing.

Not church government and order. Various other of the practicalities of church life. The foundation of the apostolic view is a true apprehension of the things that are eternal.

Not in anticipation of a future enjoyment, but of a present appropriation. That's what makes us peculiar. We're in time, but we're beyond it.

In the world, but not of it. A heavenly people, who happen also to be Swiss, or Jewish. So I'm going to pray that either the Lord comes down, or we ascend up.

But somewhere somehow in these days, eternity must come into time. The holy into the profane. That's what makes the church a glory.

And a witness unto him. Let's pray for this. Precious God, the living God, that means you're available right now.

And Lord, Andrew and I are so conscious of our need. You've given us a topic so beyond any human ability to convey. We just want to, together, fall into your arms.

In a precious Sabbath relaxation. And let you convey your own thoughts to this people. Not only are you the only one who is qualified, you're the only one who is entitled to speak of so heavenly a thing.

So speak tonight, that we might be permanently made heavenly minded. Which is to say, apostolic. For Jesus' sake we ask it.

In his name we pray. Amen. There are so many scriptures, but just for a place of beginning, 2 Corinthians, the fourth chapter.

And I hope that from tonight on, you'll be continually stumbling into this word. Somehow, though it was there, you had never properly noticed it before. You thought it was just a kind of biblical thing.

A certain nuance of expression. You didn't think that the apostolic writers really meant it. You thought it was just a style or a flourish.

You have no idea how important. To lose the meaning of this word is to lose all. It is to condemn the church to being mundane and ordinary.

Institutional and mechanical. A weariness of the flesh instead of a joy and a power. We are going to have to contend for this word.

I've had personally to contend for it today. Almost to block my door to keep anyone from entering. In all of the normal kinds of interruptions that happen in the world.

Do you want lunch? Do you want dinner? This, that. Eternity needs to be contended for. Because the world is not hospitable to it.

Paul not only found this eternal dimension. He dwelt in it. And did that condemn him to irrelevancy? Out of contact with the reality of the world? On the contrary.

On the contrary, it made him all the more relevant. And it will be the same for us. Well, at the end of the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians, in the 16th verse, Paul talks about not losing heart.

The outer man is decaying, but the inner man is being renewed day by day. For the momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And just ignoring the fifth chapter heading, for we know that if this earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Three successive verses and three references to the word eternal.

Even an eternal weight of glory. This is beyond poetry. This is something that has become so powerfully real to Paul that it affects his present considerations.

This is the man who is beaten with rods and with many strokes. Left for dead. Hungers and buffetings and no certain dwelling place.

Naked. Reviled, persecuted, defamed. Made as the filth of the world.

The offscouring of all things, even unto this day. And this is a very brief statement. Paul does not dwell on his sufferings.

He dismisses them as being momentary and light. Only on the basis of one thing. The ability to glimpse the eternal weight of glory.

This is not a luxury that we can consider having or not having. This is an utter apostolic requirement. For an apostolic determination will bring us to apostolic suffering.

The fact that we have not yet experienced it indicates where we have been till now. Some lesser kind of faith that has not excited the world against us. But an apostolic course will.

What is God's provision for bearing the things that must come? Looking upon the things that are eternal. The things that are not seen, the things that are invisible. Seeing the eternal weight of glory.

The issue of seeing is all. And I know it's going to be a long discussion. But I know it's going to take a conscious and concerted effort to bring us to this kind of seeing.

Everything presently conspires against it. The world wants to fill our eyes with all of its voluptuous images. Everything is clamoring for the attention of our senses.

We are continually bidden to look down upon things. It takes an apostolic determination to break that. To close out the things that are visible.

To focus upon and dwell upon the things that are invisible and eternal. It will produce a remarkable thing in you. A growing indifference to the things that are of the world.

But this is a faith, a mode of life that must be contended for. We need to adjust our whole mindset and attitude. It's not that we have not believed in eternity.

But it's that we have agreed with the world that it does not become relevant until after this life. It becomes applicable when this life has ended. So long as you have that attitude, you'll not be found disagreeable nor controversial.

If you can relegate eternity to some future consideration, that has no present application, you're safe. But God has called us to an apostolic task. To bring eternity into time.

The book of Revelation begins by John speaking of the things which shall shortly come to pass. There's a certain immediacy and urgency in this kind of apostolic writing. And yet it's 2,000 years later and it has not happened.

Or was he deceived in error? Not at all. He was writing and speaking from a mindset that God intends characteristically to be true of saints in every generation. We need to develop a sense for the things which are at hand.

The things that are imminent and about to break into time. The appearing of the Lord. The apocalyptic conclusion of the ages.

The issue is not the issue of chronology. The issue is the issue of expectation. Of apostolic mindset.

Perspective of seeing. The end result of which will be whether we have a casual attitude. Come to our meetings with a kind of an air of indifference.

Or whether our meetings will be characterized by a spirit of urgency. I'm counseling believers to steep themselves in the apostolic scriptures. We need to move and to live and have our being as it were in them.

Because in them are the things which are timeless and eternal. That spirit of urgency and utter reality and consequence. This has got to be the normative atmosphere in which we live our lives.

Do we inhabit that world? The world that is presented to us in the scriptures. Is that our real world? Or is that just the world into which we slip for our Bible studies? Or our sermonizings? I'll tell you what will happen if you make this your effectual world. You will become strange.

Somewhat peculiar to those who are outside of you. You are not excited by the things that excite them. You somehow are continually looking upward.

You see things that don't occupy their attention. Even those who call themselves Christians and are sincere. You become increasingly strange and a stranger.

A pilgrim and a sojourner in the world. Looking for a city not made with hands. This is not biblical poetry.

This is the normative intention of God for all true saints. This is foundational to the faith. That we see ourselves as pilgrims.

We're looking for something that is not yet in view. But our very anticipation and looking will bring it. We are expecting apocalyptic ends.

And Paul says, seeing these things, what manner of men ought we to be? Looking for and hastening the day of His appearing. I feel so inadequate in speaking this. I'm sure the people who have been traveling with me are weary of hearing me say it.

It must be declared to every Christian audience that the day of the Lord's appearing is not a fixed chronological event. It does not take place of itself irrespective of our condition. It is our very condition that brings Him.

We can hasten the day of the Lord's appearing by being what manner of men we ought to be. Seeking for and hastening the day of His appearing. I'm not speaking about some trifling point tonight.

This is not some esoteric subject. This is utter reality. The issue of eternity is the issue of His coming.

And the issue of His coming by so much as one day sooner because of our apostolic preparedness because of the expectancy that characterizes us means that many fewer rapes, violence, bloodshed, destruction in the earth is coming to judge the earth. And this is what I spoke last night. Paul speaking to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill making no apology, not at all embarrassed to step from philosophy to theology in the same breath.

For him it was not a matter of going from the secular to the sacred. It's all sacred. All eternal.

All heavenly. All real. God has appointed a day in which He will judge all nations by Him whom He has raised from the dead.

A day of judgment. God as judge. And therefore though He has winked in times past, He now commands all men everywhere to repent.

No apologies for introducing the subject of judgment. Or of Jesus or of the resurrection. It was as natural to Paul as breathing.

It didn't require elaborate introduction. These are not just religious thoughts. They are the very foundations of all reality.

Paul dwelt in this eternal dimension. And brought it to bear upon all of his earthly considerations. Because eternity is the issue of heaven or hell.

And we are going to be remarkably ill-equipped to speak of either. Unless the consciousness of eternity affects every waking hour. It's remarkable, but if you squint your eyes just a little, you sense the massive deception in which the whole world is lying.

I see it especially in my own Jewish people. Brilliantly intellectual. Remarkable in their careers and their professions.

From atomic physics to computers. Sociologists, historians, businessmen, financiers. But they are completely mindless with regard to eternity.

It is a category that has no weight for them. It is a vapor, an idle thing. They are a statement of utter and ultimate deception.

On Mars Hill, Paul told the philosophers what the purpose of human existence is. God has made of one blood all manner of men. And he's established the bounds of their habitations.

Nations and governments and all of these complexities of economy and life. In order that they might seek after him if happily they might be found of him. How embarrassing.

How simplistic. How intellectually dull. Is that it? That's the whole purpose of our human existence? Surely that's all right for our Sunday consideration.

Paul says, no, it's God's intention for all our consideration. It is the very purpose of all our being. The issue that in this lifetime we are to establish that relationship with him that will affect all eternity.

Why don't we speak with that same simplicity? That same urgency. That same absoluteness. Because we do not believe it as absolutely as he.

And we do not live as if we believe it. We are simply not that occupied with the things that are eternal. And therefore unable to persuade men.

We need to press mankind to come to terms with eternity. With the eternal. The least of things that they'll say to us is we're dogmatic.

Narrow minded. Bigoted. Intolerant.

So narrow. And that will be enough to intimidate many of us to silence. For what is more embarrassing and more intimidating to a modern Christian than to be considered narrow? Dogmatic.

It did not intimidate Paul. Eternity is not a narrow concept. Eternity is not a narrow concept.

It is as infinite and as timeless as hell. We had a little amusing incident when we had to change planes at Zurich to fly to Geneva. When we got onto that little bus that takes you out to the airplane I forgot what chorus it was but someone started.

What was that chorus we sang? Walking in the light. What a mighty God we serve. We just began to sing and to chant and clap hands on the bus.

We began to sing a little chorus. Walking in the light of God. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. I just saw the expressions on the face of these very polite and sophisticated Swiss. They're exquisitely knotted cravats and vested suits umbrella on the arm looking at these peculiar Americans. What do you say in French? Gauche? A bad taste.

That sort of thing ought to be reserved for within the walls of the church. How do you dare disturb our serenity by this kind of simple ballad? They need to be more disturbed. By a people who cannot contain themselves.

Who are beyond the issue of taste and politeness and good manner. Who burn with the reality of eternity. And will take every opportunity to express the things that are divine.

And bring them into the secular. This business of politeness and good taste is devilish. We need to see it as Paul would see it.

We had some discussions in America on what they call chemical dependency. It's a euphemism for drug addiction. Isn't that just like the world to find a nice sounding word to disguise the horror of something and to make its effect less? So a band of us from our community attended the public discussion.

Very polite, very rational, very secular. What kind of program shall be established for those poor victims of drugs? The criminals now are victims and the drug addicts are victims. We've become so psychological and sociological. Whatever happened to sin? And two or three of our people had been through drugs and were miraculously delivered.

Out of prison and out of psychiatric wards. And they gave their testimony in the course of that evening. And people so much as said, well that's nice for you.

Let's now go back to our discussion. And something was beginning to well up in my spirit. And at the end of the night I had to speak it.

And I told them that if they're unwilling to recognize what is the unseen but true foundation of all reality. Namely the realm of the spirit world. Demonism and Satanism.

If they will not recognize this I think that they're only dealing with a sociological phenomenon. And they seek in vain. That they themselves are escapists.

Unwilling to face true reality. And are guilty of the very same propensity by which the young people are taking drugs. It was a remarkable experience for us.

Because at the very mention of God. Spirit world. Demons.

And introducing this entire dimension. The whole room seemed to shatter in reaction. And stiffen.

And recoil. So much as to say, how dare you. What bad taste.

To bring your Sunday Christian concepts into a secular discussion. So unaccustomed were they to any such penetration. We have been guilty of keeping the issues of eternity to ourselves.

Do we offer our views as an opinion or a conviction? Do we see them as absolute life and death verities? This is the very height of offense to a world that is relativistic and pluralistic. They don't want to be told that there is anything absolute. An absolute eternal alternative.

But they need to be told. Not by people who bring the correct doctrine. But who come with a burning conviction.

Do we really believe that God has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness? Our apostolic task is to bring an unwanted and unwelcomed message to an indifferent world. But it's a message that we can only bring into the same proportion as we can demonstrate it. It's not enough to be correct.

We have to come to them, as it were, from the eternal place. You say, but brother, how can that be? I'm not yet dead, so I can't occupy eternity. Well, it's really interesting if you read the scriptures in which the references are made.

You can take down these scripture references. I don't have time to deal with them tonight, but read them at your leisure. Romans 5.21. Paul talks about reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.

He doesn't mean at some future time. He means now. He who hath the Son hath life.

Eternal life. Now. The wages of sin is death.

Romans 6.23. But the free gift of God is eternal life. Now. Galatians 6.8. He who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

He who sows to the Spirit shall reap eternal life. Not just for the future, but now. Paul says to Timothy, fight the good fight of faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. It's evident he's not speaking of some future thing. It's evident he's not speaking of some future thing.

Now. 1 Timothy 6.12. Hebrews 5.9. Having been made perfect, he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation. That somehow there's a response to righteousness.

There's a response to obedience. It's a salvation that has not to do with our eternal state. But a source of salvation now.

Something given by his life. A particular kind of wisdom. An authority.

He's the source of eternal life to all those who obey him. It says that Jesus by the eternal Spirit offered himself as a living sacrifice. He didn't go to the cross in a human way as a political martyr.

He offered himself by the eternal Spirit. The Spirit which is available to us. The source of his life which is both eternal and abundant.

This is the record that God has given unto us eternal life. Not will give, has given. And this life is in his son.

He who hath the son hath life. Maybe we can paraphrase it to say he who the son has, has his life. Eternity is not just endless time.

It is beyond time. It's that place of timelessness where a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. If you had the apostolic sight to see it now we are candidates tonight to be in an eternal moment.

A certain kind of an event that God can give that transcends time. It's a particular quality of life. Jesus said, I give unto my sheep eternal life.

And when many were turning from him he said to his disciples, will you also depart from me? And they said, where shall we go? He said, you have presently and now the words of eternity. I want to encourage your faith to eternity now. The bringing into our speaking now.

Into our conduct now. Into our mindset and perception now. The things that are eternal.

You have the words of eternal life. Not the words about eternity. But the words from eternity.

Eternity needs to be brought into time. And there's only one agency by which that can happen. It's the church.

The believing church. The apostolic church. That has its being and moves and lives in the eternal dimension now.

Who abide in him, the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity. Whosoever believes in him shall have eternal life. Not just future.

But now. It's a very peculiar state of being. It's something like coming out of your seat to stand before an audience like tonight.

Knowing that God has appointed a subject. That cannot be addressed in any kind of academic or scholastic or mechanical way. It's knowing that it's a call for something which is beyond that which is human.

It's believing into him to have eternal life now. To be in that dimension that is concurrent with time. It's a dimension that needs to be contended for.

If you will enter into life. Contend for the faith that was once given to the saints. It's more than just an injunction to embrace their doctrines.

It's an invitation to come into a certain dimension of being. It's not going to make you ethereal and irrelevant. You're not going to become dreamy and visionary.

For if eternity is anything. It is the very essence of that which is real. And it makes that which is visible and temporal to become less substantial to you.

A certain rich young ruler came to Jesus and wanted to know how he could obtain eternal life. Jesus said, keep the commandments. And I think by that he didn't mean that your reward will be eternal life.

But that the very keeping of the commandments and that very obedience unto righteousness the eternal life of Jesus Christ life is given. If thou wilt be perfect, Jesus said. If thou wilt enter into the kingdom.

Are all responses to the man who said how may I obtain eternal life? It's the issue of perfection in God. It's the issue of a kingdom come now in the earth as it is in heaven. It's the issue of obeying the commandments.

Satan has been enjoying a holiday over the church for centuries. He's allowed us to fall into a sleep by which we have dismissed or delegated eternity for some future time. And it has robbed the church of its urgency.

Of its expectancy. We need to taste the power now of the ages to come. Are we able to tell men that God has appointed a day in which he will judge all nations? It's the day of the Lord.

A fearful day. Who has the sense of this imminent judgment which is at the door? Who can speak it without fear of man? Only that one who fears God. And senses him already as present.

As the God who is judge. Our problem is that we secretly covet the world's admiration. We want to succeed on the world's terms.

If not academically, theologically. We find ways to be polite. And to address our Christian convictions in ways in which the world can receive them.

We have lost the apostolic view. We need to confront the world in its entire framework of thought. The whole of non-Christian thought is a lie.

For it has not reckoned on eternity. It has not brought the invisible thing into its consideration. Therefore, all of its other considerations are askew or awry.

The world needs to be confronted with the things that are eternal. Confrontationally in love. As Paul himself confronted the Greeks.

But there is no assurance if you go up that kind of mountain that you will come down. You are striking at the very heart of the world and its lies. Men might stop their ears and rush upon you and gnash upon you with their teeth.

Are we anxious to preach Christ and Him crucified? Christ risen. And soon coming King and Judge. We cannot divide these things.

They are indivisible. A seamless garment. Can you understand better why Paul said I am determined not to know anything but Christ and Him crucified? It takes a determination.

Everything in the world, in the flesh and the devil conspires against it. It wants to diminish this truth. It wants to put it in just the category of that which is religious.

The doctrines that Christians choose to believe. We are enjoined to preach this gospel to every creature. Go ye into all the world and preach this gospel.

God has appointed a day in which He will judge all nations. By that one whom He has raised from the dead. I am just noticing how it is expressed in Acts 17.31. He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to the world by raising him from the dead.

I thought to myself as I read this earlier today how has He furnished proof to all men? These pagan Greeks were nowhere near Jerusalem and the events that had to do with the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. How has He furnished proof to all men? By setting a pole before them. Who not only proclaims the doctrine of resurrection and judgment but is a demonstration of the resurrection life.

A taste of the power of the ages to come. The issue of resurrection is already the issue of eternity. It is the life to come.

And when a man stands before unbelieving Greeks and speaks to them penetratingly out of that life God has furnished proof to those men. There is something wanting in us. It is an entry into the eternal dimension through the reality of resurrection life given to them who obey Him.

It is not enough to approve the doctrine. We need to live and move and have our being in Him. Or our words about an imminent judgment are without value.

There can be no full preaching or speaking of the resurrection. Or of eternal judgment unless the entire framework of our life and our challenge is changed. Do we really want to see all men everywhere to repent? Because as they see the eternity that is already in us they will be eternally condemned except that they receive Him in whose name we come.

We are moving to a final and ultimate confrontation with the philosophical spirit of the modern world. It is not a place for politeness or relevance. Something raw, something timeless and something eternal must be presented to men.

It is the very essence of that which is apostolic. A church that has laid hold of that which is eternal. Not just waiting some future state but already appropriating and bringing it into their present consideration.

The issue of resurrection in us is the issue of eternity for them. God is wanting in an apostolic mindset. These are the foundations of the church.

Not the issues of mechanics or church government. However important that might be in itself. A church without the eternal dimension however correct it may be in every other form is not an apostolic church.

This is a position beyond correct doctrine. Something must come again into the atmosphere of God's corporate people. A sense of urgency that we cannot ourselves calculate or establish.

A sense of imminence things that shall shortly come to pass. The eternal sense of things. The eternal stakes of heaven or hell by a people who know them who already sense the eternal weight of glory which is so presently real to them now that the rejection that comes to them the abuse that comes to them the reproach that comes to them the persecution that comes to them for the bearing of an unwelcome word that the world does not want to hear is for them only a momentary and a light affliction.

Seeing that which is invisible the eternal weight of glory. Look up see apostolically. God is wanting to restore at the very foundation of the church the eternal view.

I want to pray for that tonight. There is a mystery in these speakings. This is not instructional.

This is not a matter of teachings. It's a word whose time has come. The very speaking of which brings it.

Something which needs profoundly to be restored. To save us from being fixed in time. Fixed in our culture.

Fixed in our secular categories. To break through into another dimension where reality truly is. Eternity.

Now. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I call upon you in Jesus' name.

And I ask your mercy. Look upon us, Lord. You know us, everyone.

We are utterly transparent in your sight. You know how much our mindset and our thoughts have been affected by the world. Something has been stolen from us.

Or we have never known it. I ask you to lift the veil tonight. And to usher in a dimension of your glory.

To birth it into our very beings. That it might well up unto consciousness. And save us from the fears and the intimidations of this present world.

That will change all our seeing. As we anticipate that which is soon to come. Let it come now.

A sense of that which is eternal. Beyond time. Glorious.

A whole mode and dimension of being. As relevant now as it was 2,000 years ago. And it will be throughout all time.

World without end. Throughout all ages. Eternity.

Lord, breathe the spirit of your eternal the essence of your eternal spirit into us. May our eyes blink as it comes in. May we emit a slight gasp as this intangible thing comes into our consciousness.

May it grow and abound. May it become passionate and burning. So that everything else is eclipsed.

Our fears, our concerns, our anxieties. They are momentary and light. As we see what is invisible.

And therefore eternally true. The greater weight of glory. My God, change us.

And lay this foundation in our corporate spirit and life. That we might be an apostolic presence in the earth.  
Beyond time and culture.

And therefore a challenge. To those who are blind. And indifferent.

And who would otherwise perish. Eternally. Give us such a sense of heaven.

That we can burn for the fear of hell. And persuade men. Before the soon coming day.

Of his appearing. And the day of judgment. Which shall shortly come to pass.

May we live as if we believe it. In Jesus name. And God's people said.

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