

# Fren-14 Fondements Apostoliques - Église Dans Les Dessesins De Dieu

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz's sermon calls for a profound understanding of the church's purpose and the necessity of apostolic revelation to fulfill God's eternal plan.*

**Duration:** 1:08:54

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:40, Jeremiah 5:31, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 3:2-4, Ephesians 3:9, Ephesians 3:11

**Topics:** "Apostolic"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing his own concerns and anxieties about preaching to an audience. He emphasizes the need for God's guidance and grace in order to effectively communicate the mysteries of Christ and the purpose of the church. The speaker highlights the primary purpose of the church, which is to be a beautiful bride for Christ. He emphasizes the importance of understanding and fulfilling this purpose, rather than simply seeking personal benefit or satisfaction. The sermon also touches on the idea that the modern church can sometimes become a collection of individuals rather than a unified body.

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## Transcript

I'm experiencing a remarkable sense of liberty this morning. All the more remarkable in that I don't really know where I'm going. No message as such.

Just a radical leaping in. An abandonment to the book of Ephesians. And there's a reason why it must be this way.

The Lord has an intention with us beyond instruction. And something must come to us by the Spirit as revelation. Given on the spot by the Lord Himself.

That's the way Paul speaks even of himself in his own ministry in the third chapter of Ephesians. He talks about the stewardship of God's grace in verse 2, which was given to me for you. That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery.

And then he speaks in the fourth verse about his insight which he received into the mystery of Christ. This whole thing is bathed in mystery. In the ninth verse he speaks of it again.

Of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God. That is now to be made known. By revelation through the Spirit.

By the grace of God. And we need something of that operation today. There's something so holy and so sacred about these mysteries.

That man is not allowed to pry into them. They will not submit themselves to an intellectual examination. It is something which is hidden in God.

Until the hour that He is prepared to reveal it. And it is revealed to a certain class of men only. Holy apostles and prophets.

That they by the grace which is given. Might bring to light the unfathomable riches of Christ. Paul speaks about the grace that was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

We've already repeated the word given several times. The grace that is given. The stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you.

Everything here is opposed to human pride and arrogance. Everything is totally subject to that which is given. And that is exactly my condition this morning.

I can plead with God. I can stamp my feet petulantly. Lord, don't you know that I have responsibilities? Lord, don't you know that I have responsibilities? I must stand before an audience of your people.

Some have come from quite a distance to attend these sessions. And our own people whom we've brought. Don't you realize that I can be embarrassed if I have nothing clear to say? You must give me this in advance.

I must know what I am to speak. Silence. We have come full circle after 2,000 years.

And if we're going to understand the mysteries of Christ, the mystery of the church, that is the apostolic glory, it's going to be by the grace which is given. Even now, that I might preach to you by the grace which is given to me who is a steward of these mysteries, the unfathomable riches of Christ. This is an historical moment in this room this morning.

It has waited on this hour for the coming forth of men like myself and the coming forth of the maturity of the body for the conditions again to meet by which the mystery can be revealed which until now has been hidden in God. So I'm going to pray for a grace to be given. I'd rather choke and splutter and go silent for the rest of our time than I should seek by some kind of operation of mind or Jewish intelligence to present something credible to you.

God is after something more than information or instruction. The revealing of a mystery. And I pray that you have an appropriate spirit and disposition of heart for the unfolding of such things.

If God will give us the grace we will be most privileged and most responsible to whom much is given much shall be required. Let's pray for this. Great grace we pray, Lord upon us all close us in with yourself and establish even the atmosphere of this hour.

Give us a true expectancy of faith. May our eyes be turned upward. May we see the things that are invisible and eternal.

May you be pleased to reveal this morning in the measure that it shall please you that which till now has been hidden that we might see and fulfill the purposes in our seeing to the glory of your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

This grace is given to His Holy Prophets and Apostles. We have not even been fitted by our religious experience to expect them. We think of them only as something past in the historic church.

That has been our conventional evangelical teaching. The Apostles and the Prophets are a past phenomenon. They have laid their foundations and now we can go on independent of them.

But I don't believe that. The Scripture says till we all come the unity of the faith and the fullness and the stature of Jesus Christ unto a perfect man. And He gave for that coming Apostles and Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers.

For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministries for the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come until we have all come we shall always then be in need of Apostles and Prophets. For the perfecting of the saints even comes before the work of the ministry There is already something that needs to be restored in the divine order in which it is given. For the want of apostolic insistence by men of that authority we have already erred against God by elevating the work of the ministry above the perfecting of the saints.

Jesus said you shall be witnesses unto me. Not do witnessing for me. The being precedes the doing.

But as those of us who have sought to walk in the snow to be is infinitely more difficult than to do. And so this is an hour of restoration. God is bringing us back to his original vision and purpose that which was given at the first.

And it is a difficult time of adjustment from things conventional and institutional to things apostolic. We know how powerful things become by virtue of time and tradition. We need again to see the restoration of apostolic and prophetic men who come to us in the authority of God to restore the vision which has been lost and to build according to the pattern that is given on the mount for the tabernacle of God the house of God For Paul concludes this third chapter with this very pungent scripture To him be glory in the church By Christ Jesus Throughout all ages World without end Amen We need to apologize before God.

That we have dismissed such words as a kind of biblical poetry So therefore the first thing that needs to be restored is a profound appreciation for the glory of God This is altogether contrary to the utilitarian spirit of our age What is the criteria by which we have measured successful church in our own generation? Were the meetings good? Did you like it? How did you like the preacher? Are you being fed? How was the worship? The attendance? The budget? These are all pitiful and earthly criteria There is only one apostolic criterion And it needs to be jealously and burningly held And to him be glory in the church Not just in our own generation but world without end Throughout all ages We need to lift our seeing and see the church as something more than an agency for our purposes It's true that we receive benefit by our participation But that is not its first purpose Until we see the first purpose and give ourselves to that purpose we ourselves will lose the benefit What is the first purpose?

For which he gave himself for the church and washes it with the water of the word that it might be a beautiful bride adorned for the bridegroom Unto him Unto him Unto him I'll keep repeating that until the wall falls down Because everything that is in the spirit of this world is unto us Unto us Unto us Remember what Peter said on the Mount of Transfiguration? Beholding Jesus in his glory In his transcendent glory

with Moses and Elijah the Lord and the prophets It slipped out of his mouth without even thinking An involuntary reflex action A universal statement of the church in its carnality It is good for us to be here He has at the center of all of his consideration It is good for us Unto him Us, him Something needs to be turned There needs to be a massive wrenching and turning on a human being There needs to be an apostolic pivot It is our foremost task in this generation To move the church from its deep-seated egocentrism Our programs our purposes our benefits It's good for us To one single maniacal thing A single-eyed absoluteness Whatever the sacrifice or the cost To our traditions to our practices Unto him Unto him Unto him Unto him Be glory in the church Not just in our generation But world without end Throughout all ages I just want very simply to announce That we are called to be part of an eternal masterpiece in God Do you understand how jealous God is over this?

Why it is he would not allow us to come with our briefcase full of messages Why it requires an unfolding by the spirit of grace and of revelation Because if it's to be a glory unto him It must be a glory by him and through him if it is to be unto him It's the grace which it is given This is not good news for our French Swiss and Jewish pride Paul says in the 8th verse of chapter 3 To me the very least of all saints This grace was given To preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God We need to raise the question If this great apostle was totally dependent on the grace that was given To preach the unfathomable riches of Christ By what means shall we fulfill them Grace Therefore I love the apostolic scriptures Those that believed were together And great grace was upon them all And great grace was upon them all And great grace Task number one is to break the power of the deep egocentrism of the church Task number two To break the more powerful deep-seated individualism of the saints To break the more powerful deep-seated individualism of the saints Those that believed were together Is more than a statement of sitting alongside each other in pews As God looks upon the modern church today With all of its charismatic hale-fellow well-met back-slapping and bear hugs Brother Brother Brother Do you know what he sees?

A conglomerate of individuals Not an organic tempered body But not an organic body that has been astonished to be together Paul depended on a grace to simply announce the riches And we depend on the same way of this grace to accomplish it But it's a grace that is given to us all And not individually I know that we prefer to be in our own garret or attic without concordance searching out the riches of Christ Great grace was upon them all It's through the church that God wants to make manifest His wisdom to the principalities and powers Not some kind of institutional religious arrangement of individuals in a conglomerate But the church as an apostolic organism established by God by His Spirit Men who are in authentic relationship with each other Another quality of life and attitude and perspective Whose very presence is a statement against the principalities and the powers How interesting that Paul should begin this chapter by introducing himself as the prisoner of Christ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ The very least of all saints Oh, you said Come on, Paul Don't kid us You're the formidable You're the apostle Forget this false modesty It's not false, people He saw himself and deeply believed himself to be the least of all saints This is a remarkable phenomenon of which the world knows nothing That as you are granted the stewardship of the mistress and to you much grace is given that you might see and that you are given much grace so that you can see You see not only the unspeakable riches of Christ You see also by that same light your own terrible inadequacy God is waiting for prisoners in this generation bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ How interesting that Paul always puts this credential before the fact that he's an apostle This is an apostolic requirement This is not for amateurs bond slaves Not just servants as we understand the word modernly speaking who work for some rich employer from 9 to 5 and then borrow his car and go out for a smoke behind the building We need to come more deeply into a biblical and

apostolic seeing Paul was a slave He had no rights of his own He had no life of his own He could not in himself determine his coming in nor his going out He could do nothing and speak nothing other than that which was given him All of his attainment His brilliant Jewish theological background All of his brilliant Jewish theological background All of that was to be counted as done He had no certain dwelling place He says, we apostles are counted as last We are the offscouring of the earth Poor but making many rich Unknown yet known How many of us have a taste for this kind of identification We itch to be known Our religious reputation Our distinctive scholarship What we have published What we have spoken This church is waiting for a certain kind of man Whose life is not his own Who lives only for one purpose The glory of God You say, brother why is that so important?

Because the true church is built on that foundation The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets Ever and always Not just what they preach what they teach what they reveal But what they are in themselves as men What is an apostolic church? It is exactly what Paul is in himself Writ large Made manifest corporately in a total body The same passion The same boldness The same authority The same relevance with Jews in synagogues or Greeks on Mars hills The same appropriation of the things that are invisible and eternal The same indifference to the world and to its rewards The willingness to suffer for Christ's sake And the recognition that there is a suffering that precedes the glory That's why Paul could say imitate me I'm the model Follow me as I follow Christ Do you want to know what God wants in his true church?

If it is to be his presence in the earth Look at me Many times he speaks of himself as blameless And he exhorts the new believers in Thessalonica To walk worthy of the manner to which they were called To the glory and the kingdom That's why our walk has been so defective We grimly seek to resist sin and temptation If we do it's more because of the fear of being found out before men than offending God What a pitiful and wretched way to live No wonder so many of our people are unhappy Just wanting to make it get by They have not understood the standard To walk worthy of the manner to which they were called To the glory and the kingdom I know that you're waiting when this session is finished to get to a dictionary And you'll seek there to find a definition for the word glory Let me save you the effort You'll not find it And yet it's imperative that we do Not by referring to the world's definitions But by seeking that revelation that must come It's a grace which is given It lies beyond words But when it comes into your soul You're made a fool for Christ's sake You'll love the church You'll suffer for the church You'll be patient with the church You'll come again and again and again You'll suffer its carnality and its immaturities Because you know that it must be a glory unto him We need to pray for the restoration of these words Or we have nothing We have technique We have methodology We have nomenclature We have forms The glory of God is all And if we have not a sense of it We have nothing What is this principal mystery that God is now wanting revealed?

It is said in verse 9 of chapter 3 to highlight the dispensation of the ministry The word dispensation does not fit as it is in French It would be better to say the application or the accomplishment of the ministry The dispensation is not the fulfillment of something that we spiritually enjoy. It is given to us now to be fulfilled, which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church, to the rulers and the authorities in heavenly places. Now this is too much to hear in a single statement.

This has been our mistake and the large reason for our missing the glory of what is spoken here. We are not just reading an ordinary literature. It is even distinguished from other epistles in the Holy Scripture.

This is something that lies too deep for words. Human vocabulary cannot contain it. There is something here that is burgeoning and palpitating, waiting to break out of the confinement of language.

This is beyond minds. It is something which needs to be intuited, apprehended, or yet better, we need to be apprehended by it. It needs to capture us and take hold of us in such a way that we are ruined for anything less.

We can never again go back to programs, to institutional religious requirements, to meeting the needs of the people. We are ruined once and for all because something is being brought to light, that God has created all things. Let that much sink in.

It will boggle your mind. It will shatter your every category. You'll want to dismiss this.

You'll accuse Paul of exaggeration. You'll say, no, it cannot be. It's among the purposes.

But it's not the single purpose for which God has created all things. Is it? Do we dare believe this? This is what God's Word says through this holy apostle that God has created all things. The whole of this planet Earth, the nations and their boundaries, the resources of this Earth, the atmosphere that makes human life possible, the whole interplanetary galactic structure of the universe.

He has created all these things in order that through the church, we don't have to hear anything more. It's enough reason right there to fall out of our seats, to prostrate ourselves as dead before God. This is too staggering.

Does he behold the church in that kind of importance? Is it that exclusive to him, to the exclusion of all other things, that are only supportive and secondary, which the church has disdained, the world has disdained and ignored, and shuttled off into the corner as some kind of harmless Sunday phenomenon? Can he mean that? All of this for the church? Yes. And we are the last to see it. We have been so quick to accept the world's definition of our church.

A pleasant little religious and cultural entity that exists as a supplement and support to the important purposes of the world. Something that provides pleasant and complementary services. Some religious instruction and some moral value.

And produces a more responsible people that will make more adequate employees. And so long as you accept that definition, and timidly confine yourself to it, and the limitations that the world has established as a Sunday phenomenon, and that same false lying spirit that was expressed by the Greek philosophers in their tribute to the unknown God, that pseudo-spirituality that throws God a bone, that needs to be repudiated, and repented of. And we need to see the church as God himself.

All of our seeing needs to be brought into conjunction with his. For this is in a word, it is to see exactly as God sees. It is to accept God's statement as being true, however much it boggles our minds, and disturbs our categories.

It was said of Israel of old, that the prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests bore rule through them, a whole religious system predicated upon a lie. And the people loved to have it so. Do you know what we need to acknowledge? That deep in our cowardly hearts, we prefer Sunday Christianity, and harmless mid-week Bible studies, to apostolic involvement and commitment, which will assuredly bring upon our heads apostolic persecution.

There's much to be repented for. For we have all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God. Do you know what Paul says in the 11th verse? This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Oh hallelujah for apostles. Hallelujah for their seeing. For the grace of the revelation which is given them.

To preach this and to bring this to light. And to let us know that we are called to the eternal purpose of God. Not to be deferred for the time of eternity, but to be brought now into our present consideration.

Eternity must be brought into time. It's not just the luxury of an intellectual contemplation of the future. But if our present life is to mean something, in this age, we must deeply embrace and take into ourselves what is the eternal purpose of God for the Church.

I'm not satisfied that we have even yet begun to scratch this and to communicate it. And yet I'm completely conscious that you are an appreciative and sensitive Christian audience that you are hearing. But I'll tell you how insanely jealous I am about this.

But I will not be persuaded that you have really understood that this mystery has been brought to light in your deepest consciousness until I see you prostrate on your face before God to recognize that this is the purpose of your salvation. It was not to save you from your sins and to make you a nicer person and to improve your marriage. These things are true.

They are not the first things. We need to reverse our priorities. We need to be saved from ourselves.

Our fears, our timidities, our apprehensions. The low level of our Christian living and perception. The struggle against sin, trying not to fall.

And God has given us the very means that we might see that the eyes of our understanding might be opened that we might know what is the hope of His calling the riches of His glory of His inheritance in the saints to grasp the eternal purpose and to recognize that we are called for it changes everything. This will be the end of all foolish and silly controversy. Do I need to speak with tongues? Or do I have other gifts? This whole little silly controversy about the charismatic gifts, the spirit.

Which we could think important that we could consider important or not. Or maybe they need it but I don't need it. Yes, that's true.

So long as your life is set into another context. It's the mere issue of attending services or other religious requirements which is easy for you to perform out of your own natural ability. The issue of the spirit of God is an idle discussion.

But once you glimpse and grasp the eternal purposes there's a deep cry that comes out of your bowels. It's the apostolic cry which was ever upon the lips of Paul. Who is sufficient for these things? If you are living in a Christianity for which you are sufficient I want to tell you this morning you are outside the faith.

The apostolic faith that needs to be contended for once given to the saints. God has called us to the impossible. To that which is beyond us.

That through him and to him and unto him might be all things to whom be glory forever. We are so fixed in time. We are so narrow in our considerations that a career in religion is almost a corollary of a secular career.

We have lost the whole apostolic sense of things. Of a church world without end throughout all ages. That he's called us to be seated with him in heavenly places.

Far above all rule and authority. Power and dominion. Every name but his name.

Not only in this age but also in the ages to come. Second chapter he repeats it again. He made us alive together with Christ.

He raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places. In order that whenever you see those words in order that take a deep breath. Stand up on your tiptoes to hear what follows.

For this is the purpose of it all. For which reason he has seated us with him in heavenly places. Above all rule and authority and power.

In order that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Now listen children. This has nothing at all to do with any benefit that comes to us.

It has not even to do with any purpose of God in the earth. It has not even to do with his rule and authority in this kingdom in the earth. All of which is sublimely important.

But now listen deeply. This goes beyond the purpose of God in the earth. And beyond the purposes of God in the earth.

As desperate as the fulfillment of those purposes are. None of them will be fulfilled. Either his kingdom in the earth or his purposes in the earth.

Except that we grasp the purpose of God that go beyond this age and are into the ages to come. I don't know how to explain this mystery. I just know it in my spirit.

And I'm praying that the spirit of it might be exuded upon you. It's beyond knowledge. It's got to come directly into your understanding that except that we see when the eye of our understanding is opened by the grace that is given the eternal purpose of God and the purposes that go beyond this age and for the ages to come we will not be of any value in this age.

That's the long and the short of it. Either we are going to apprehend and be apprehended by the transcendent and the eternal purposes of God that even go beyond his interest in the earth and beyond his benefits to us. His purposes in the earth will not be fulfilled.

For God is indivisible. We cannot take this part and separate that part. The garment that covered Jesus was without seam.

It cannot be parted. Either we take the Lamb of God entire, roast with fire, the legs and the appurtenances thereof. Or we have him not at all.

Or we'll have something else. We'll call it Christian. And we'll employ biblical vocabulary.

And we'll have impressive programs. And activities. And people will be happy.

And people will have a pleasant religion. But they will not be unto him. Glory in the church.

And there will not be unto him the glory in the church for all generations. For all centuries. Let's read that again.

In order that in the ages to come, in verse 7 of chapter 2, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. It's not a purpose that has to do with us. It's a purpose that has to do with him.

Unto him. I don't know why he wants to do it. I don't have to know.

He doesn't have to explain it to me. But he wants an eternal satisfaction. An eternal gratification.

He wants to show something to the principalities and powers that have opposed him time without end. The surpassing riches of his grace toward us. In kindness.

He's going to say, look at this Jew. Arrogant, sensualist. Dark in his mind.

An enemy of God. Look at this one. He was a murderer and a persecutor.

I made him the chief apostle of the church. Look at these people. They were nothing in the world.

They were torn, they were broken, they were scarred and disfigured. They lived in the spirit of the world, in anger and vexation and competition and striving. But look at the grace of my kindness toward them.

What it has performed. Look at these Jews and Gentiles together. Who were historically at each other's throats.

Full of fear and apprehension toward each other. They were afraid of God. I've not just brought them together in a little kind of shallow ecumenicity.

I've made of them one new man. Look at these blacks and whites. A whole continent was threatened with fire and blood.

And I've made of them one new man. Have you ever seen anything more glorious than my church? Look at the beauty of it. The truth of it.

The purity of it. The authenticity of it. It's a heavenly phenomenon.

It's above culture, language and time. It dwells in the eternal. Look at its authority and its power.

The nations are compelled to acknowledge it. It is a standard in the earth. And I'm going to exhibit it throughout all the ages and the ages to come to show my surpassing richness.

God has purposes for us that go beyond us. We must see them. Something must be revealed by a grace which is given that changes everything that breaks our fetters that looses us from our petty considerations our small religious ambitions and gives us the motivation the strength, the passion to go on in the fulfillment of this.

And I know that there are ministers in this room who are often discouraged even as I myself am and say, what's the point? It's so futile. We see no consequence of our speaking. All things remain as they were.

But I pick up the book and I catch the sense of God's purpose and I know he's going to fulfill it because he has said it and I'm encouraged and I can go on. We need the vision of God for the purpose of God if we are to fulfill it unto glory and for this reason God is now revealing bringing to light that which has been hidden in God and is now being revealed through the Church the Apostolic Church the true Church the eternal purposes of God will be fulfilled. When this takes hold of us we will not need charismatic song leaders.

If you know what I mean a certain kind of praise needs to be given or it needs to be simulated or effected we cannot contain ourselves. Something is welling up that I need to break forth in such an acknowledgement to God for the high calling which is ours in Christ Jesus worth every sacrifice unto Him the glory in the Church. Let's bow before Him this morning and thank Him that He has elected us that He has called us to the eternal purposes of God in the Church What is our exalted individualism now? Those little petty distinctions by which we celebrated ourselves our petty insecurities our jealousies and striving it falls away like the dead skin from a snake and we see our Christian brothers and sisters in a new light for we are not complete without them till we all come now it is no more a matter of obligation of doing the right thing because we are Christians but of doing the right thing it flows we find ourselves capable of a transcendent generosity and the ability to give and to sacrifice that we might be one we are listed above the petty temper of the world for we have apprehended and be apprehended by the eternal purpose of God not just in this age but the ages to come Let's pray Thank you Lord You just speak out of your heart where you are sitting There is no time for long religious utterances It is not the time now for long religious proclamations but it is now the time for short affirmations of gratitude for the privilege of our high calling in Christ deep gasps and cries of repentance for the pettiness of this seeing our church our denomination our program breathe in the glory of God and be ruined by it eternally

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