

Fren-18 Apostolic Foundations - Preaching

by Art Katz

Apostolic preaching is the authoritative word that establishes, produces change, and is given by God, requiring faith, conviction, and a qualitative elevation of the minister's faith.

Duration: 1:25:39

Scripture: Acts 4:20, 2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Timothy 4:2-3, 2 Timothy 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Preaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on moments of physical weakness and disorientation while preaching the word of God. Despite the risk of failure and humiliation, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching with authority and confidence, knowing that the words spoken are not their own but from God. The speaker shares a personal experience of delivering a powerful message that caused controversy and offense, but also led to a profound encounter with God. The sermon concludes with the reminder that even in moments of discouragement and weariness, the spoken word holds great reverence and power.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. Oh, hallelujah. You better watch me this morning.

I'm too full of sap and juice. So I'm in greater danger of lapsing into myself. You're far safer when I'm tired.

Then we are assured that it's the Lord alone. But my spirit is just flowing over this morning. I'm just rejoicing within.

And was humming this chorus all the way here. Within the veil. I now do come into the holy place.

You know what I love about God? He's not theatrical. He's not interested in performances. Last night was not just a little affectation to be appropriate for an evening service.

And then today we face the cold gray dawn. You know, what was real last night is real yet also today. We're still abiding in that place.

Hallelujah. Well, I have already announced the title of this morning's talk. I got it somewhere between 4.30 and 5 this morning.

On the cold tile floor of the bathroom. Unpretentiously in my underwear. And yet within the veil.

I got it in communion with God in that place. And I think He especially did it for your sake. Because I think you have a certain tendency to be romantic.

And to idealize things. He just wants to persuade you that you can meet Him in the holiest place of all, even in the bathroom. There's a remarkable and holy conjunction between the sublime and heavenly things and that which is earthly.

It's that very thing which makes it glorious. How do I put this on? You want to take your shirt off? So I love this about God. And I hope you appreciate that too.

Romanticism and idealism is the last stubborn holdout of humanism. And for this reason many of us are disillusioned about the Church. It does not measure up to our ideal.

And we become disillusioned. And we withdraw ourselves. God wants us to face it in its utter reality.

In its sublime ordinariness. To embrace it in its present infantile condition. Not to despise that child.

But to pick it up as Simeon did of old as it came into the temple for dedication. And to see in it what he saw in it. My eyes have seen the salvation of the Lord.

He blessed the Lord and he said, my eyes have seen thy salvation. And he saw that in an unpretentious child. Yet ill-formed and immature.

We need to see that also. And to embrace that child in its present condition. So that it might grow in grace.

And come into the maturity of a son. That's not my subject for this morning. My subject this morning is apostolic preaching.

The authoritative word. The word that goes beyond mere instruction. Beyond that which is informational.

The creative word. The word that comes as event. The word that produces change.

That establishes. We need to come to expect such a word. Part of our maturity will be reflected by that anticipation.

The whole respect and reverence for the word of God and the word that is preached and spoken needs to be elevated in the body of Christ. It's remarkable how much I hear spoken against the preached word. Well, that's only preaching.

I sense that the word is being deprecated. It's being devalued and lowered. God says that he has exalted his word above his name.

In the beginning was the word. The spirit of God brooded over the chaos and over the face of the deep that was without form. And God spoke and said, Let there be.

On the Mount of Transfiguration three of the Choices disciples saw Jesus in his transcendent glory together with Moses and Elijah, the prophets and the law. And being the kind of impulsive man that Peter is, let us build for you. It's good for us to be here.

And while he yet spoke, a bright cloud came over them. And the voice of the Father rang out and said, Shut up! This is my beloved son. Hear ye him.

And when they heard that, they fell on their faces and they were sore afraid. But Jesus and the grace of God came and touched them and said, Be not afraid. Rise and be not afraid.

That was more than just a little courtesy. That was the creative word that established the heavens and the earth. Speaking to us, not just a reason for not being afraid, but the very enablement and creative power not to fear.

Because he said so. He spoke a word into our being. A creative word that established an event that affected a change.

It was not spoken to inform. Be not afraid. We need increasingly to expect this kind of apostolic and prophetic speaking.

Men who bring us words not just to strengthen our understanding, but actually establish our foundations. I hope that you will not think that this is a boasting. But I have to draw on what little modest experience I have.

Because I am seeing in my own experience, this is becoming increasingly real. So about a year ago, we came to Tiberias, to Galilee in Israel. We have been there many times before.

They had a kind of a shabby, charismatic Saturday night turnout. A bunch of transients that moved in and out. No real stability.

People just coming for some hopeful fellowship. And we came without any intention. We were just simply there by the providence of God.

But some earnest men who lived in that area had an anticipation for our coming. He said, we sense that God wants to do something through you. I didn't sense anything.

I was tired. So they called a special meeting. And the disillusioned came.

The dejected. The hopeless. Those who had been waiting for something to be formed in Galilee and had just about given up hope.

And I spent the day with Gary, my traveling companion, in fasting and in prayer. And we came that night with two or three Bibles and spoke. The Lord gave the theme, The Body of Christ.

Do you know what happened? The Body of Christ was birthed in Galilee by the Word which came. They were not instructed about the Body of Christ. That may have come incidentally.

But the Word established the events. I invite you to go and to feel and to taste and to see. There is an established expression of the Body of Christ in that place now.

About a week ago, I spent an evening with five of its elders. Who recited to me the blessings that have come to them through persecution and harassment. I'll tell you how real that entity is.

The powers of hell have raised up against it. The windows of its meeting place have been smashed. The building has been burned.

The mayor has invited them to leave town. But they're not leaving. Something has been planted.

Something has been established. By the Word that has come. Paul says in Thessalonians, again in the second chapter.

In the twelfth and thirteenth verses. After exhorting the saints to walk in the manner worthy of the God who called them to his kingdom and his glory. And then he says, for this reason we also constantly thank God.

Constantly thank God. Indicates a consistency. Of something that was not fitful in jerks and spurts.

But was consistent from him. That when you receive from us the Word of God's message. You accepted it not as the Word of men.

But for what it really is. The Word of God. Which also performs its work in you who believe.

Not just believe abstractly. But who believe that. That the Word that has come to them through a man.

Is not the Word of men. But they believe what it was for what it really is. The Word of God.

And because they believed that. It performed a work in them. That's how God changes us from glory to glory.

By the Word that performs a work. That's why my spirit is rejoicing today. A work has been performed in you.

Which even exceeds what you can understand or say at the moment. Because the Word that has come to you is not the Word of men. But the Word of God.

Do you want to hear something interesting? There is nothing that is able to put men more in fury and agitation against me. Than the fact that I insist on this fact. You are very hard as a man.

Go slowly. We know very well that you tend to exaggerate. You like to use picturesque phrases.

When you say that it's the Word of God. Come on, it sounds too much like you. It's your personality.

It's your New York Jewish accent. How could it really be God's Word? If it was God's Word, it would sound differently. It would sound like, thus saith the Lord.

Do you see what you are losing because you are romantic? Because you idealize things. Because you project your image and refuse to receive the image that is God's. From the preaching point of view, last night was not a delight.

That's been true on several occasions in these days. It had not to do with my enjoyment. Or even my selection.

I had only one thing before me. To be obedient to speak the Word that is given. Which alone performs a work in them that hear that.

If you choose not to believe that, it becomes for you another kind of word. One that you like or you don't like. Interesting or not interesting.

You lose the entire value. The work is not performed in you. Do you understand what is in God's heart now? To elevate the whole expectancy of the Church in terms of the Word that comes to them.

Instead of coming to the place of the congregation with a weary kind of resignation, instead of being a rather lazy assembly that comes because it is necessary for the worship, yet another worship, they come in anticipation of a creative event because of a word that will be proclaimed. And it is by such continual speakings that we can go from glory to glory. How else shall we go from where we presently are to where God bids us apostolically to be except by the Word which is sent by the Word which is spoken.

And we ministers are guilty. Do you know why you do not expect to hear that kind of word? Because we have not the faith to believe that we are speaking it. There needs to be an elevation, not only for the congregation, but the ministers as well.

A whole qualitative elevation of our faith and a kind of insane jealousy that we will not speak anything other than the Word that is given. And if the Lord had not met me 4.30 this morning on the floor of the bathroom within the veil, I would now presently be silent. There has got to be for us a motivation more than our reputation as speakers.

Or the fear of men whom we are concerned not to offend or disappoint. Perhaps there could not be a healthier tonic for the Church itself than to introduce them to silence. And to announce to their astonishment that I have not a word to speak from God.

And that I am not going to fill the silence with some merely good thing. You see the kind of jealousy to which we must return. If we are to have what Paul speaks of in Thessalonians, it's the Word that is given.

And where is it given? In the place of communion. There I will meet with you and give you all in commandment to the sons of Israel. I am glad that the Lord uses the word commandment rather than suggestion.

This is why we are so infantile. Nothing is required of us but to bring our bodies to the Sunday service. Put a few francs in the collection place.

Sing a few choruses. There is no requirement, no authority expressed toward us, no demand made. The sermon is a performance.

It's part of the requirement of the church hour. It's a sermonizing rather than an event. But I'll tell you what, we pay a heavy price for that.

It's not simply that we are not receiving the creative word that changes. But something negative is happening. A dulling of our spirits.

A dulling of our discernments. A creating in our hearts of an atmosphere of sleep in our congregations. The alternative to an authoritative word is painful.

Perhaps you have the faith to believe that the word you are hearing from me today is a word that is given. And you believed it last night also. But have you come to the place of faith where you can believe it for the word that you speak? You have been too long passive.

There has been too much of a professionalism about the preachers and the laymen. But how about the word that we speak even in conversation? Or as we exhort one another daily? Or speak the truth in love? Is it mere human opinion that is being expressed? Or God's very word? We need to call a moratorium on all casual speaking. And wait upon God for a renewing of our reverence for the spoken word.

Not just from platforms and from pulpits. But even in our conversation. And even what we speak into the world.

I've seen judgment come on the basis of words that I've spoken. It wasn't that I said, Thus saith the Lord, such and such shall happen to you if you will not. But I spoke to them a word from God.

They chose not to receive it as God's word. They discounted it as being merely a word of a man's own opinion. And that church is no more.

That man is no more. I mean literally. I'm beginning to sense the awesome fear of a word that comes from God to men and is not received as such.

Now is your faith ready for this? Do you know what God is actually after? An entire apostolic prophetic body that shall command the elements. Just like Elijah. It shall not rain nor dew according to my word.

Imagine a mere man commanding the elements with the authority of God himself. This is not a privilege that's to be allowed to a man who still is jerked by his own Jewish subjectivity. I'll tell you that when God will allow such speaking through a mortal mouth, such a man has been adequately dealt with at the hand of God.

And you cannot tell where the man ends and where God begins. His thought is God's thought. And his word is God's word.

God is wanting such a people on the earth. How many times have people spoken to me with a prophetic word about my own calling? Yes, and you shall be a threshing machine with fine teeth. And you shall thresh the hills and cut them down to chaff.

And I swelled with the importance of my calling. And it's true that God has made me such a mouth. But what they didn't tell me is this.

You know who's going to get threshed first? You know why I have such a high reverence for the spoken word? I've paid my dues for it. I gave a message how many years ago at the Full Gospel International Conference in Washington, D.C.? A young believer, just barely beyond the giving of my own testimony, fasting and waiting on God two days for one message. I've since fasted and waited on God five days for one message.

But what a message! When it came, it was devastation. Two thousand people went berserk. And the world has yet really to hear of it.

But they will. But on that occasion earlier in Washington, D.C., in the simplicity and naivety that I had as a young believer, I just spoke the word that God gave. They thought I was going to give a Jewish testimony.

How cute! Isn't that novel? How interesting! How safe! But the Lord gave a message on eunuch for Christ's sake. And I myself was too young to realize how radical a word it was. The sword of the Lord went into the bosom of about 5,000 people.

And laid them bare in two different audiences. One ready to hang on my neck with gratitude for the word that had come. That was very life.

And another number equally as great, ready to murder me. I was so astonished by the effect. I knew that something very deep had happened.

Because the full gospel officials behind me didn't know what to do. They had to call for their emergency panic measure. They had to call for their emergency panic measure.

We all stood up and sang the Lord's Prayer. And the meeting was dismissed. It was the final day of the conference.

And that night all of the speakers and their wives were invited to the penthouse apartment of the president of the organization. And that was the night that I learned what it meant to be a stranger and a pilgrim and a sojourner in the earth. When we came to the buffet table, men turned their shoulder.

I felt like scum. Like the off-scouring of the world. The least of all men.

Who had brought such a terrible word of offense. And caused this painful controversy. And had gone beyond the testimony that had been expected.

But the moment that I had finished speaking that message that night. And this has happened several times. Exactly the same way.

A man came up to me. Telling me he's a prophet sent of God. A Jewish prophet.

An officer in the full gospel. Who told me I had missed the mind of the Lord. That I had missed the mind of the Lord.

That I had done grievous damage to God's people. And I needed immediately to go back to the microphone. And recant the message before the people.

You know how I felt when I heard that? If I had a choice, I would have preferred to have been physically stabbed. If I had a choice, I would have preferred to have been physically stabbed. Than to receive the stabbing accusation that came into my heart.

Because the first thought that came to me was. Could it be true? Could I have missed the mind of the Lord? Even after waiting and fasting? And how then about the past? And other things that I've spoken. Could I equally have missed them then? And what assurance will I have for the future? It was a devastating accusation.

And the Lord was not there to say, don't worry about it. You're my faithful servant. You have immediately spoken my words.

You know what I heard? Nothing. And I went into exile for that one message. I actually left the country.

Went to my wife's country, Denmark. Where I couldn't understand a word of this. Taken by the hand by my children who interpreted for me as if I were an imbecile.

A wilderness experience for a man who is jealous of the words and their meaning. Refusing all invitations to speak. Never again wanting to come up to the platform.

And the devil was having a ball with me. Whoever said that you were a preacher. You never should have gone beyond your testimony.

You should have remained a high school teacher. Whoever said you were cold. Look at all the damage you've done.

And you thought you had the mind of the Lord. Presumptions, egotistical. Yeah, that's right.

For six months I groaned in that condition. I burned with the unspeakable shame that this man might be right. And he was calling me long distance to remind me to repent.

That I should publish a statement in Voice magazine. Repenting of my mistakes. Special cablegrams on Jewish feast days.

It was trial by fire. In the silence of God. Six months.

In the sixth month I was invited to speak. And I had a release from the Lord. I went for a series of messages in an island in Denmark.

And while I was preparing myself. I was reading from Watchman Nee's trilogy on the spiritual man. And to my utter astonishment there was a reference to the eunuch for Christ's sake.

And he invoked the very same scriptures that I had used that night. And then he said, if you miss this by the spirit. And consider this carnally.

There will be a very great offense. And when I read that. A great release came.

A lifting of the burden. A deep vindication from God. That I had indeed spoken.

I've taken a lot of time this morning to describe this episode. For only one reason. That if the word of God is going to be restored to its exalted state.

As a word that is given to us as event. And not only in the expectancy of those who hear it. But the conviction of men called to speak it.

We need to be reminded that the price will not be cheap. There's a cost for this kind of word. And periodically God will require it.

Just to remind us of how holy a thing it is. To speak the word of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood this.

He says, the word which came from heaven in Jesus Christ. Desires to return again in the form of human speech. God himself desires to be present in this word.

God himself desires to speak his word in the church. I would add also in the world. Because God has opened doors for us increasingly in these days.

The chief justice of the supreme court in an African nation. The head of the department of justice. It was a supernatural opening.

We didn't walk in with our hat in our hands. We walked in with boldness and with authority. To tell this woman that righteousness exalts a nation.

And that there is a causal connection between poverty and drought in Africa and unrighteousness in government. And to say to her, where were you when the law was passed that confiscated all private

property? Don't you understand that that is robbery as much when it is performed by a nation as by individuals? We took every risk of being thrown into a jail and rotting as white men daring to bring such charge to a black government. Do you know what this woman did? She took prolific notes.

And to speak with her again. And to pray for her and for her whole household. Because the word that came to her was not opinion.

It was the word of God. It was a visitation. It did not come as suggestion.

But as authority. And it needs increasingly to be so. It needs to begin first in our assemblies.

God desires to be present in His word. To proclaim it in His church. And also through the church to the world.

We need to repent of the casual way that we have been speaking to Him. The shallow misuse and abuse of the word of God. Playing with the scriptures as if it is God's provision for us to form a sermon.

Paul says to Timothy, Preach the word. He did not say, Sermonize. Be instant in season and out of season.

2 Timothy chapter 4. Preach the word. And insist on doing it. On every occasion.

Favorable or not. Convince. Repeat.

Exhort. With all patience and instruction. Because this is our mandate.

This should be the essential substance of all our preaching. The purpose of preaching is not to construct pretty sermons. And to enjoy the word of God as if we are spiritual sensualists.

The word of God is given for a practical purpose. To reprove. To rebuke.

To exhort. But how many of our congregations can accept this? They are coming for something else on Sunday. They want to be comforted.

They want to hear a calming word. After all they have had a heavy week. Can you see that the whole construct of our church.

This whole mentality. This whole man serving ethos is wrong. I charge thee before God, Paul says.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall judge the quick and the dead and the appearing in his kingdom. Preach the word.

Don't construct. Don't construct pretty sermons. That are doctrinally sound.

That will bring a syrupy and soothing effect to the audience. That makes you a performer. A paid performer.

If we are going to have an apostolic word. A creative word. That works a work in them that hear it.

It's going to come by men who are not ruled by the fear of man. But by the fear of God. Who will wait for his word.

Who will not find it in their concordances. But on their faces on the bathroom floors. Or wherever it is God will bid them come in communion.

Within the veil. In the holiest place of all. Between the cherubim and above the ark and the place of mercy.

From between and above. The tensions and the contradictions and the opposite tugs and pulls. The realities of our life.

The real things. There I will meet with you. A real God for real purpose with real men.

And I will speak to you. About all that I will give you. In commandments.

For the sons of Israel. That's why Paul had to say to his people. Pray for me.

That utterance might be given. That I might speak as I ought to speak. The mysteries of Christ.

If Paul had to plead for such prayer for himself. The man who had an encyclopedic knowledge of apostolic things. One of the great students of the rabbi Gamaliel.

But would not so much as dream to fashion his own words. Pray for me that utterance might be given. What shall we say? Jesus said the words that I speak are not my words.

But the words which my father gives me. Let me ask you a question this morning. How assured are you in your place in Christ? How secure are you in him? That you have nothing to prove and nothing to demonstrate.

Your identity is so established in God. You are so accepted in the beloved. That you don't have to prove anything through your ministry or through your speech.

You don't have to exhibit your intelligence. Your scholarship. Your spirituality.

Your experience. You wait for the word that is given. If Jesus would not so much as speak his own words.

The words that I speak are not my words. But the words which my father gives me. What shall we presume to speak? I'll tell you it's humiliating to wait for that which is given.

Especially when one is clever in himself. And even has a flair with words. And could cut quite an impressive figure.

But to be utterly dependent upon God. For that which is given. Is a humiliation.

For proud men. And when it comes. Will you necessarily enjoy it? Is it going to exhibit you in an advantageous way? I'm really embarrassed by what I've spoken in these days.

With the exception of a few sessions. I have not been ecstatic for anything that I've spoken. In the sense that I have enjoyed it.

That it has given me the opportunity really to exhibit myself. But I am fully confident. That from the beginning of these days.

Till this very concluding session. The words that I have spoken. Are not my words.

But the words that are given. There have been occasions in these days. When I didn't think I would have the physical strength.

To go from the front seat to the platform. I was in the strangest kind of disorientation. Had the faintest intimation of what the Lord's theme was.

And had to come risking every failure. Not only in your sight. Those of you who have come from a distance to be at this seminar.

And paid good money to be here. But our American group. And my own students.

And precious souls who are related to me. God knows how to set the stage. For an utterly humiliating collapse.

And so the flesh begins to itch and to activate itself. Why don't you preach this art? How about that good sermon that you used last month? They'll love it. It will be a great success.

Everybody will be happy. Nothing doing. Rather collapse.

And utter disappointment. And the disillusionment of many. Then we should be satisfied with a merely good thing.

This is an apostolic jealousy. For a word that is given. In communion with God.

And in no other place. There I will meet with you. And where did Moses even receive this instruction? On top of the mount of God.

Where he spent forty days and nights never eating meat. Where he spent forty days and nights never eating meat. To come up into the presence of God.

That he might receive the tablets of the law. And right from the very first invitation. We see the whole genius of God with men.

Come up unto me. And be there. And I will give you.

The stone tablets with the law and the commandments which I have written. That thou mayest teach them. Don't think you're just going to come up there and just grab it from me and go.

I know your craven religious ambition. To establish your preaching reputation. And to have a subject matter to use.

But I'm a holy God. And you're not going to just be preaching some abstract thing from my law. The first requirement ever and always is this.

Come up unto me. Not for what you're going to receive from me. But to me.

For my own sake. And be there. Body, soul and spirit.

In totality. All that you are with all that I am. And then I will give you.

The tablets of the law that you may teach. This is still the requirement of God. And yet we're at liberty to rape his book.

To violate it. To extrapolate scriptures and to make our sermons and to do our things. And what a price we have paid.

For our submission and authority systems. And our other little fashions and fads and games that we have charismatically played. But God is calling us to a higher thing in these days.

The restoration of apostolic reality and glory. For men who do not take their liberty in the scriptures. But receive from him the explicit word.

That is given in only one place. In his presence. Come up unto me.

And be there. Because this is itself the apostolic message. What the world is dying for is not information about God.

But men who will communicate very God himself. This is as I said last night. The only thing that will save us from becoming mere technicians.

And the victims of yet another religious phraseology. Come up unto me. Be there.

Because this is what the world needs. The knowledge of me. That will be exuded by men who speak to them out of my presence.

Because the world does not know how to live. That is why after its drugs, after its eroticism, after its sensualities. They do not know what it means to be there.

They need apostles who will teach them how to live. How to be there totally. With each other.

To enjoy the depths of fellowship of men with men. Because they have as the foundation the fellowship of men with God. They have come up.

It is not an easy coming. No going up ever is. And yet it is the place of communion.

Just to turn you in conclusion to 2 Corinthians. End of the second chapter. It is a verse that I have been repeating over and over again in these days.

It is the end of the 16th verse. Who is sufficient for these things? In the Amplified it says. Who is able for such a ministry as this? And then he answers it.

For we are not like so many hucksters. Making a trade of peddling God's word. Short measuring and adulterating the divine message.

But as men of sincerity and the purest motive. Commissioned and sent by God. We speak his message in Christ the Messiah.

In the very sight and presence of God. This is the Amplified. Hallelujah.

But as men of purest faith. Making a trade of peddling God's word. Short measuring and adulterating the divine message.

But as men of sincerity and the purest motive. Commissioned and sent by God. We speak his message in Christ the Messiah.

In the very sight and presence of God. But as men of sincerity and the purest motive. We are not like so many hucksters.

Making a trade of peddling God's word. Short measuring and adulterating the divine message. But as men of sincerity and the purest motive.

Commissioned and sent by God. We speak his message in Christ the Messiah. In the very sight and presence of God.

But as men of sincerity and the purest motive. We speak his message in Christ the Messiah. In the very sight and presence of God.

So that they can slap us on the back and say, well done, I like that. We speak it in the very sight and presence of God. But it is from God and before God and in Christ that we speak.

What an apostolic consciousness. Of the sacrament of the spoken word. Proclaim not only before men and to men.

Proclaim not only before men and to men. But in the very sight and presence of God. I am conscious of that this morning.

Paul says that we shall be held accountable. For everything that we have done in our bodies, both good and bad. In an earlier generation than ours.

Men used to speak of the pulpit as the holy desk. That was before the charismatic personalities. Full of jokes and cute quips and warming the audience up to themselves.

Something needs to be restored children. The holiness of God's own word. Which he has exalted above his name.

In the beginning was the word. And in chapter 3 of this 2nd Corinthians. Paul says such is the reliance and confidence that we have through Christ.

Not that we are fit in the 4th and 5th verses. To be sufficient in ourselves. To form judgments or to claim and account anything that is coming from us.

But our power and ability and sufficiency are from God. Such is the reliance and confidence that we have through Christ. Not that we are fit in the 4th and 5th verses.

To form judgments or to claim anything that is coming from us. But our power and ability are from God. You preachers who are here this morning.

Any of you who have never had the opportunity to speak or to teach. Is there for us a greater delight? Than to have this reliance and confidence toward God. Not something that is based on our own ability.

As though it was anything coming from us. But our power and ability and sufficiency are from God. For of him and through him and to him are all things.

To whom be glory forever. I got to bed after midnight last night. And was wakened again at 4.30. And have not slept since.

And have been going on day and night for weeks. And months. And trip after trip in the same way.

And I'm saying these things to you. And I'm saying these things for one reason. To God be the glory.

To God be the glory. You know what I can say with Paul? I have a reliance and a confidence through Christ. Because I know that I am not fit or qualified in myself.

What a piece of foolishness I am in myself. What an embarrassment of weakness. Have no theological qualification.

But God permits me to come into the house of African ministers. And to write a penetrating word to an American consulate official. And speak to ministers and leaders of the African government.

Speak to pastors and church leaders all over the world. Because the power and the ability and the sufficiency are from God. What God appoints, God anoints.

If you are speaking His word. You do not have to buttress it with your own natural personality. It does not require your charm to make it succeed.

He gives the spirit without measure. To those who bear His word. God is not only speaking something this morning.

He is demonstrating it. That your faith might rise. To a new apostolic place.

That you might be permanently ruined. To never go back to anything less. To a trafficking in the word of God.

But that you should insist on His word. And His word only. From this time forth.

He is quite able to give it. If we will come up unto Him. And be there.

For it is He who has qualified us. And made us fit to be worthy. And sufficient as ministers of the new covenant.

And then he says in the twelfth verse. Since we have such glorious hope. Such joyful and confident expectation.

We speak very freely and openly. And fearlessly. What is the title of this morning's talk? Apostolic Preaching.

The authoritative word. All that I shall give in commandment for the sons of Israel. everything that I would give you as an order for the children of Israel." And Paul says, because we have such hope, such joyful and confident expectation that the word that we're speaking is not our own word but His.

And Paul says, because we have such hope that the word that we're speaking is not our own word but His. We speak very freely and openly and fearlessly and boldly. Exhort and rebuke.

Preach the word. Fearlessly and boldly. As God's very word.

And then chapter four begins. And then chapter four begins like this. Therefore, since we hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of God, Therefore, since we hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of

God, am I conscious of that mercy in these days, am I conscious of that mercy in these days, purest mercy, that has brought us from session to session, from message to message, from very sentence to sentence, from thought to thought, such mercy that flows out from the throne of grace to those who speak to men from out of the presence of God within the veil.

We do not get discouraged. We do not get spiritless and despondent with fear. We do not become faint with weariness and exhaustion.

We have renounced disgraceful ways and secret thoughts that men can hide through shame and dealing craftily and with cunning. that men can hide through shame and dealing craftily and with cunning. And so we commend ourselves in the sight and presence of God.

And so we commend ourselves in the sight and presence of God. to every man's conscience, blameless before God and before men. He says in Acts 20, You know, I did not withhold from you any good thing.

He says, Paul says in Acts 20, You know, I did not withhold from you any good thing. I proclaimed to you the whole counsel of God, both in public places and from house to house. I spoke of the things pertaining to the kingdom.

I did not ask you whether you liked it or you did not like it. I did not wait for you to tell me that you were... What's the word about coming under conviction? Not conviction, but condemnation. I did not wait for you to tell me that you were... I was not impressed when you said, Well, that's not loving.

You should talk like that. You should talk like that. I proclaimed to you the entire counsel of God.

I proclaimed to you the entire counsel of God. And I am free from the blood of every man. Because what I spoke, I spoke from God, and I spoke it in the very sight and the presence of God.

Oh, for such apostolic men again. And they are positionally sitting in this audience today. Men who will speak the creative word into the very foundations of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Words that are given in commandment, out of the presence of God, by men who will come up unto Him and be there. Are you determining something in your heart? That this word today can be an event for you. Because it comes to you as more than a word of instruction.

It comes to you as call and challenge. As invitation to come up unto Me. Up from the fear of men.

Up from the concern for your petty reputations. Up from the emphasis of the traditions of men for scholarship and the kinds of things that they want to hear that impress them. Come up unto Me.

I pray that that is coming to you as a personal word. An apostolic invitation from God. To be the minister of His word.

Both in the Church of Jesus Christ and to the world. He'll thresh you. He'll deal with you severely.

He'll bring you to a place where you recognize in your deepest and most being a reverence for the word that is given. He'll bring you to a place where you recognize in your deepest and most being a reverence for the sacred side of the word of God. But oh, when it is spoken.

In the moment in which it is given of God. It is very life for the dead. Let's pray before the God of the word.

Thank you precious God. For leading us this morning through this statement. Which you have given.

To restore us. To the exaltation of the word. To the holy sacrament of preaching.

Of the word that is spoken. Through the mortal lips of ordinary men. In communion with you.

We realize this morning as we have perhaps never before realized. There shall be no restoration. No glorious church.

No kingdom come. No fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God through the church. Except there first be this restored to the church.

The word of God. Lord do it. Through us whom you have called to be your spokesman.

Lift the faith of your church. Lift its expectancy. That they might come with an expectation.

That the word that they are hearing. Is not the word of men. But to receive it for what it truly is.

The word of God. Which performs a work. A necessary work.

A work of eternal consequence. In them who believe that. If you are a minister of the word of God this morning I ask you to stand.

Your call to preach and to teach. Your call to proclaim and exclaim. Your call to be a mouthpiece for God.

In this generation. You may not yet presently be functioning in it. But you're called.

I want to pray a blessing. Oh you say ah that's cute. That's a nice little flourish for the end of a seminar.

Can't hurt anything. Sounds good. Oh you foolish children.

If I pronounce a blessing on you. You shall be blessed. For my word is an authoritative word.

It's not a well meaning intention. It's not a hopeful guess. It is a benediction.

It is a good speaking. That performs something. It's a blessing that is real.

Felt. Honored from heaven. Are you prepared to receive it? Has your faith risen to believe it? Do you want it? As a messenger of God.

Who will speak his words. And no other. It will cost you.

You'll lose your popularity. You will offend men. But you will please God.

Precious Jesus. Head over the church. The apostle and the high priest of our confession.

If I have spoken your word this morning. By your gracious spirit. Through the mercy that is given.

From within the holiest place. Then I ask you to honor these words. Which I shall now speak to this people.

As a creative word. A fact, an event. That which shall establish.

Seal and bring forth. True speakings. Out of their mouths.

To the establishing. Of your holy purposes. In the earth.

Through the church. Not only for this age. But for ages to come.

In your holy name Jesus. I bless every single man and woman standing to their feet now. I pray holy seal upon their lives.

I pray an impartation into their very spirit. Of a divine jealousy. For the purity of the holy word that is given.

I pray an increase of faith. The very faith of God. That they might believe despite every appearance to the contrary.

In their own weakness and ineptitude and lack of qualification. That the word that they will speak. Is God's very word.

That they need not be embarrassed for it. Nor ashamed to proclaim that. But they can speak it boldly.

Fearlessly. Openly. That it might perform a work.

In them who believe that. For faith comes from hearing. And hearing by the word.

Of God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Let that seep into your spirit. Let it be formed there. Never to depart away.

Hold fast the confession of your faith. Rise to the apostolic invitation of God. And shake the earth again.

Hallelujah. Let's praise God. From within the veil.

Not from your memory of past speakings in the spirit. Fresh from the throne. From the place of mercy.

From communion in his presence. Let it rise up from your voice. Praise to the God of glory.

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