

Ger-13 Apostolic Foundations

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the necessity of apostolic foundations and intention for true Christian faith and practice.

Duration: 1:05:55

Scripture: Genesis 11:8, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:37 - 12:3

Topics: "Apostolic Foundations"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the destiny of Israel and the church. He warns that a global persecution is expected, and if the church is not prepared and remains unconsciously anti-Semitic, it will be a scandalous failure. The speaker urges the audience to fix their eyes on Jesus and get rid of any encumbrances that hinder their faith. He highlights the faith of Abraham and the perseverance of those who were persecuted for their faith, emphasizing that their completion and perfection is connected to the faith of believers today. The speaker concludes by questioning whether the audience has an apostolic intention in their faith.

Transcript

We have been speaking on apostolic foundations. True apostolicity. What is this particular thing? How is it to be defined and understood? It's a critical and a key word.

And we have been carefully proceeding for the two occasions to begin to explore it. It deserves our deepest attention. But we began to be aware that what is apostolic is ultimate.

That's the very nature of the thing. It's ultimate in its requirement. It has an ultimate view of God and His purposes.

Ultimate sense of eternity in time. It's passionate about the ultimate issues of God. The day of the Lord and His soon coming wrath, His judgment.

The Lord's own coming. The kinds of things which have become only doctrine or concepts in our time. To which we subscribe as being correct.

But we have lost the power of it. The dynamic of the apostolic perception of these things. Which needs to be reclaimed and to be restored.

Because the church that is no longer apostolic is no longer the church. I realize that I take a risk in making such a statement. Because I believe that you even have a denomination with that word apostolic in this country.

Not in the German though. Everything conspires against us. Every power in hell and in the world is bent against the proclamation of apostolic things.

The restoration of apostolic reality. For that's what it ultimately is. It's not a set of correct concepts.

It's a vital and powerful faith. That if you subscribe to it in truth. It will make you mad.

It's beyond foolishness. It will condemn you to being a stranger, a pilgrim and a sojourner in the earth. Now in this generation.

Not only in the world. But Christendom itself. That's how radical a thing it is.

We came to a point in the last meeting. Where I sensed the futility of going on. My own faith was stretched to breaking.

I found it difficult to believe that such things could be understood by a Swiss audience today. Earnestly believed in. Even desired.

Let alone we should be that church at the end of the age. That should walk again in that authority and power. And I raised a question at the very end of the night.

I believe it was divinely prompted. It wasn't part of my own thought. Do we have an apostolic intention? Because if we don't have that.

If we don't desire the reality of what is apostolic. What is the purpose of the examination of that subject? And this is what I sensed in my spirit. We really do not have that intent.

We don't want as a people to go that far. We have unconsciously at least set limitations. We are willing to be serious and responsible Christians.

Willing to give of ourselves to a degree. But that which is apostolic. Is ultimate.

And requires everything. So that's the title of tonight's final message. Apostolic intention.

Do we have that apostolic intention? Because even in our own conversations across the street. We were touching very interesting points of agreement and disagreement. What do I myself represent to these children? Whom I've known now for ten years.

How am I perceived by them? And the kind of message that I bear. Even with the advantage of our long relationships. Am I a curiosity? A kind of a quaint feature in the body of Christ? Someone whom we can afford to hear from time to time.

But not too frequently. And it's interesting to hear. But it's not intended to be taken totally seriously.

It's really something that will bring us into a greater balance. It's a counterbalancing message. But not something to believe in for itself exclusively and alone.

That would be madness. That would not only unfit us for the world. It would unfit us for Christendom.

And so we have been struggling with this issue. And this morning I shared a word with them that I want to share now with you. And raised the question with you that I'm raising with them.

Is this apostolic and prophetic thing merely an option? Or is it the definitive and normative intent of God for His church in every generation? How do we see our own Christian life? And with whom are we identifying? I want to spend a little time in the book of Hebrews tonight. Beginning with Abraham in chapter 11. The heroes of the faith.

And try to be reminded by that of an unbroken continuum of the faith. That in fact even tonight we are surrounded by the invisible cloud of their witnesses. Do we have the apostolic sense to see that? That they are waiting for something who are not complete and perfect without us.

For which they sacrificed and died. Right here in the Zurich area. Their blood was shed.

And they were drowned in your river. But is that also a mere historical curiosity? That has faded from the consciousness and memory of the church. But is powerfully alive with God.

So Lord I ask your blessing tonight. As we have prayed through this day. To present this view.

Takes an unusual power from God. For we know that all hell resists and opposes it. That is not at all disturbed by our charismatic preferences.

But is terrified of this. Lest this be revived. And characterize again the church of the end.

As it did the church of the glorious beginning. Grant us grace tonight Lord. Great grace.

To present this view. And require from us. A response.

In keeping with the character of your speaking. We ask an event in God. For this nations sake.

For a dying world. For Jesus sake. In my name we pray.

Amen. Chapter 11 in verse 08. By faith Abraham when he was called.

Obedied by going out. To a place which he was to receive for an inheritance. And he went out not knowing.

I hope I am not going to be carried away by my own desire. Already it deserves such a comment. Already with the explosive introduction.

We are brought into a whole perception of apostolic faith. That commences with a call. By an invisible God.

To another land. That requires a radical separation. A total separation.

Not just from the evil of the Ur of the Chaldeans. Not just from this violent Babylonian culture. But even the things that are good.

That we would endorse. Nation, kindred and father's house. That's the very point of apostolic beginning.

And few there be that have made it. Who recognize that Abraham's call is our call. If indeed we have apostolic intent.

In a land that he will show us. That we go forth not knowing. What a calculated attack on the German mentality.

I should say the Jewish mentality. It's the same thing. It's a mentality that needs to know.

Must have assurance and security and confidence. Determines its conduct and its response. On the basis of its analytical and rational evaluation.

That will never do. Apostolically. You must leave your Swiss-German-Jewish identity in the Ur of the Chaldeans.

And go forth not knowing. Suffering all of the insecurity that that implies. Because God has called.

And what are we to say? The fact that we can even consider other options. Couldn't I be a lesser saint? Isn't it enough to be charismatic? Or Pentecostal? God is God. And he says he would have us to be separate.

Get thee out. Is the very first principle of apostolic reality. Don't even touch the unclean thing.

And I will receive you. And be a father unto you. And you shall be my sons and my daughters.

How we need the experience of the fatherhood of God. If we are to walk so radically. In the face of such human insecurity.

I wish I had the luxury not even to have to leave this point under discussion. That we could stay with this one point the rest of the night. It deserves that investment.

But that itself is a commentary. That it would strike us as some new thing. As some kind of radical innovation.

Some deep principle. That they were considering for a first time. When it should have been normative to our faith from the beginning.

I tell you that if there is anything that sounds radical. The fault lies not with God or with his word. It's a statement of the measure to which we have drifted from the normative faith.

That we consider it with trembling making such a requirement. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise. As in a foreign land.

Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob. The fellow heirs of the same promise. Those who are not yet born.

The patriarchs of the faith. Are joined with Abraham in already this essential walk. But are we joined? Because the character of it is to live as an alien.

Even in the land of promise. Even in Christendom. There is a certain sense of strangeness about yourself.

There is an ultimacy about your life in God. That discomforts others who are sincere Christians. And makes you to feel a sense of being strange and different than others.

He was looking for the city whose foundation and builder is God. And that was the vision and sight of every apostolic saint from the beginning. All who died in faith in verse 13.

Who had never received the promises. Seeing them from a distance. And having confessed that they were strangers and exiles.

And having confessed that they were strangers and without citizenship on this earth. To have an apostolic intention. Means to condemn yourself to being strange.

Not just in the world, I say again. But even in the land of promise. Even in the realms of Christendom.

To find strangers in exile. Alone. Those who say such things.

That they are seeking another country. Something has got to rise to the level of consciousness. The level of explicit choice.

As expressed in a confession. A choice. To be a pilgrim, a stranger and an exile in the earth.

This is so outside of our experience. So contrary to everything that is human and warm. We want so desperately to be approved of men.

We need their affirmation and their love. Even as Christians. But to stand outside of that.

To be marked as strange. Because you are going another measure further than most. A final and an ultimate measure.

An apostolic measure. That opens the whole prospect of a new power and a new authority to serve. These are they that turn the world upside down.

That makes the powers of darkness to tremble. Because they know what is in our hearts. And how far we have resolved to go with God.

They are not impressed with our vocabulary. Our amens, our hallelujahs. Even our activities.

They look for this. What is the intent of the hut? How far is it willing to go with God? Jesus it knows. And Paul it knows.

But the church of Zurich, who? Something happens. A threshold is crossed. A new prospect for life and being and service is opened.

But with it also a new kind of opposition. A new kind of struggle. In the night hours.

With powers of darkness. Who had not had to torment you before. You have made yourself a candidate.

Because you are furiously and fiercely opposed. Into the realm in which you have come. There is a power and a God available to you.

That terrifies their interests. But it does not come cheaply. It is available only for one class of believers.

The Abrahamic class. The patriarchal class. Of which the Anabaptists in Switzerland were part.

Who had the vision of the same faith. The same walk. The same absoluteness before God.

The same utterance toward God. That automatically made them an enemy of society. And even of the reformed church.

Who could not tolerate for them to live. Because they represented a threatening alternative. Of another quality of life and power.

That instantly revealed the fraud of state church religion. Saints of whom the world was not worthy. Do we consciously choose to join them? I don't care what our religious origins were.

This is a matter of hearing a call. Being separate. And coming out.

And following him. Not knowing. Condemning yourself to be an exile, a stranger, a pilgrim, an alien in the earth.

It can happen tonight. That by an act of our own choosing. We can be inserted into the unbroken continuum of the faith.

The apostolic, the ultimate faith. From its beginning. And to its soon conclusion.

That we desire to go that far. Some people look at me as if I'm one who has made that commitment. And look at me with admiration.

As if I have some special grace for that. Not knowing that my struggle is exactly as your own. And I shared with these children today.

How I had a conversation in Minnesota with my wife and with Gary. And I was so disgusted with her. She married a teacher but she got a preacher.

And a kind that will embarrass a wife. And bring humiliation. And she wasn't quite sure whether she really wants that kind of Christianity.

Can't she be, she asked, a normal Christian. Like everybody else. Why must she, because of her husband, be required to this kind of ultimacy and radicalness of faith.

And I got so impatient of hearing that from her. And so disgusted I got up from the table and I walked away. I was afraid of what I would say.

And finally our time with her was finished. And Gary and I went on in the car. And I'll never forget it.

I was full of indignation. Anger, impatience. I said this is it.

I've had it. I just can't go on with this. This is too much.

To have patience for such a woman. And such a demand and such a trial. And I know that God wants to use it.

I'm being refined and sifted and perfected by it. But I don't want it. It's enough for me already.

Can't I be a lesser kind of saint? That doesn't have to be brought to such a perfection. And the moment I said that, I realized I was saying exactly the same thing. And therefore I suspect we have all been saying the same thing.

We don't want to go that far. We don't want to bear that requirement. That suffering.

Can't we be normal Christians? And yes you can. It's a question of choosing to hear the call of God. And being placed in that unbroken continuum of faith.

Of those who in every generation have been exiles, sojourners and pilgrims in the earth. Who had an opportunity to return. But they desired a better country.

I haven't been one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared a city for them.

Not just an ultimate place of communion with God. The new Jerusalem which comes down from above. The Mount Zion of God.

But he has prepared a place for them. And a grace for them. And an enablement for them.

Who choose to go that far. Who is sufficient for these things. If apostolic seeing is anything, it is seeing as God sees.

He is not limited by the concept of past, present, future. Nothing has changed. The issues are eternally the same.

And he sees things in a flow and in a continuum. That's what we read at the end of this chapter. That God has provided something better for us, so that they, apart from us, should not be made perfect.

Who is the they? Those who were stoned, who were sawn in two, who were tried, who were put to death with the sword, who went about in sheepskins, who were hid in caves and in holes of the rock. That where they began yet waits for completion. Through us who are in continuity with them.

That they should not be made perfect without us. What a remarkable incentive. For those of us who would not welcome such a walk just for ourselves alone.

Even Elijah had to cry out in his moments of despair and disillusionment, this is enough for me already, am I better than my fathers? There are powers that want to discourage us from this walk. To get us to satisfy ourselves with some lesser thing. But to know that they, without us, are not made perfect.

Brings us into an obligation and an incentive that is beyond us. That it is not just the issue of our faith for ourselves. But also for them.

Whose blood has been shed here on these shores. This is apostolic seeing. To see this unbroken continuum moving toward a conclusion.

With us. If we walk in the same quality of faith. Have the same ultimate intention with God.

That will require of us to be exiles and strangers and pilgrims in the land. That's why chapter 12 begins with the word therefore. Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses.

And not just great in number. But great in greatness. Great in sacrifice.

Great in apostolic character. Great in purity of faith and of heart. Great witnesses.

Since we have such a great cloud. We have it. Therefore, it brings a special requirement.

Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily besets us. Doesn't tell us what that sin is. But be assured we have it.

Though it may be different for each of us. But I have never heard anyone until tonight talk about the encumbrance. I want to talk to you about the encumbrance.

That weight of things. That worldly involvement. That laziness of spirit.

That surrender to domestic things. That surrender to worldly things. That is every bit as much an obstacle as sin.

It's an encumbrance. A weight. That comes from our ambition.

Our vanity. Our fear. Our involvements in nation, kindred and father's house.

God says, lay it aside. Therefore. If not for your own sake.

For their sake. Who would before you. Of whom the world was not worthy.

Who were cut in two and sawn asunder. Burned at the stake. Who hid in dens and rocks and holes and caves.

Who are waiting. Even in this room tonight. An invisible cloud that is great.

Whose sacrifice will not be perfected. Without us. Who freely and willfully choose to identify with them.

And complete what they began. By exactly the same kind of intention. Which will likely mean for us what it meant for them.

Opposition. Reproach. Persecution.

Being driven out. Exiled. Something we could hardly imagine in our present mode of life.

It raises a question. Am I being melodramatic tonight? Am I raising some kind of idealistic alternative? For the few. Those who have an affinity for that kind of spiritual heroism.

To whom is the book of Hebrews being addressed? To some minority within the church. Or to the remnant of God. God's holy remnant.

The church within the church. The true people of God in every generation. And especially the last.

The thing that encourages me to believe that God is not speaking about some rare and special minority. But is addressing the church, the true church. And that this is the normative and definitive faith for the church in every age.

Is the way the chapter goes on. But you have come, it says in verse 22, to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God. I'm fully confident it's the same city for which Abraham was seeking.

Whose architect and builder and maker is God. Once you seek that city. You'll never be satisfied with Zurich.

The heavenly Jerusalem. And to myriads of angels and to the general assembly and church of the firstborn. The general assembly.

The church of the firstborn. Who are enrolled in heaven. To the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

Verse 23. I don't know what it is about that that so offends men. Even ministers.

I was reminded today as I was sharing with them about an episode I had in London. Just being obedient and speaking a word that God gave me at a Pentecostal church. And such a cry of God came out of that congregation in an utterance in tongue by the spirit.

Almost shrieking to arrest the attention of the people who were hearing. But resisting. And when we left that church at the end that night.

The pastor was at the door saying goodbye to people. But when I came up to him he broke out in a rage toward me. He said, do you believe that we have to be perfect? And I was stupefied.

I didn't even use the word in my message. And yet in his own understanding somehow there was a link of connection. And indeed there is.

To the spirits of just men made perfect. Do we have that apostolic intention? Or are you more American than you know? And want to get by? This is the real national slogan of my country. That's what my students used to ask me at the beginning of every school year.

Mr. Katz, what is the minimum amount that we need to do in order to get by? They might make nice conventional Christians. Occupying pews and even putting their dollar in the collection plate. They might even go out on an outreach.

But they will not in any way threaten the powers that brood over our lands. There is a God who wants us to be made perfect. So that they apart from us should not be made perfect.

That's a painful making. A painful sanctifying process. That is part of the pilgrim walk.

And will make one a stranger and an exile if they choose it. And will make us cry out who is sufficient for these things. But when have we asked that last? Really asked it.

Had to ask it. What is there in our normative Christian experience that brings us to such a place that we have to cry out who is sufficient? The truth of the matter is that for our present Christianity we are quite sufficient. But just make one decision.

For an apostolic intention. Of an ultimate quality of faith. That can confront the Greek spirit of this world on Mars Hill.

And tell them that God commands all men now everywhere to repent. For God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men. And that one whom he has raised from the dead.

Try speaking that. At Mars Hill today. The issue of judgment.

The wrath of the Lamb to come. That God requires repentance. Commands it.

And you'll never feel more foolish. More inadequate. More powerless.

But it's to these things that we're called. But who is sufficient for these things? Is the question that we will ask with Paul. When we have committed ourselves to repentance.

When we have committed ourselves to be the people who will represent God on that hill. I don't want to discourage you. I want to encourage you.

That there is one who is sufficient for these things. He's the high priest and the apostle of our confession. He's the one who has gone before us.

And was tempted and tried in exactly the same way. He ran the same race. With no additional enablement than what is available also to us.

That's why it says in Hebrews 12. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. Who also had to endure the cross.

And despise the shame. Why should we set our eyes upon him? Because by the same grace that was available to him. There was a grace available to us.

To run the race set before us. And to finish the course. Dear children.

Gary and I are just beginning a three month journey. But I tremble to think that from here there's another meeting Friday night. And then Saturday we have to go to Lausanne.

And what are we going to speak from two o'clock till nine o'clock? In a movement that does not have the vision of God's destiny for Israel. And when we return on Sunday and go directly to Zurich. And begin a seminar on the principalities and the powers of the air.

How do we pursue that? And when we leave Switzerland and go to Israel. And the extraordinary demands that are going to meet us there. Where we have not been for five years.

And already I'm learning that there are pockets of resistance to our coming. What shall we do there? Where the issues are life and death. And eternity hangs in the balance.

On every occasion. Even tonight. We're going too far.

This is just a nice meeting in the suburb of Zurich. This isn't a life and death situation. Eternity is not at stake tonight.

Do you see how you do not see apostolically? That's the very substance of apostolic seeing. That the issue of eternity is always before us. That there's no such thing as something small.

Or ordinary. This night is not going to be given again. I'm not going to be invited back again at Lausanne to speak on the subject of Israel and the church.

The destiny of Israel is at stake. The Jews of this nation. Or those who will come to them in flight.

If there should be a global persecution which I expect. And if the church is not prepared for it. And is still unconsciously anti-Semitic.

And does not even know its true heart towards the Jews. It's going to be a scandalous failure. In purposes of God that are monumental.

Who is sufficient for these things? Fix your eyes on Jesus. The author and the finisher of our faith. Get rid of the encumbrances.

Throw off the heavy things. Your retirement. Or even your vacation.

Or your savings. The various things that continue to weigh upon our spirits. Which are every bit as much an obstruction as the sin which easily besets us.

God has called us to run a race. And finish a course. I had to pray today that we're called to be soldiers.

That there's a war on. That we cannot afford the luxury of a civilian mindset. That we're people under orders.

There's a final battle going on. How many of us have that understanding? So who is God addressing here? Is this for the few? Or that which really in fact constitutes the church? Consider him who endured such hostility by sinners against himself. That you might not grow weary and lose heart.

Verses 3. We need to consider him who is the high priest and the apostle of our confession. We who have a heavenly calling. Called to be made perfect.

Through suffering. And to finish a course. That none of us can complete by ourselves.

That compels and requires us to come into a deeper state. A deeper quality of life and integration with each other. A humiliating dependency upon each other.

That is intrinsic to church. No, built in. Something happens when you make this apostolic intention.

Everything qualitatively shifts and changes. Even the subject of church itself. It is no longer an option or a luxury.

Of where we choose to attend. We need deeply to be part with a people who have the same intention. Who will exhort us daily while it is yet today.

Who will speak the truth in love. Who confront us with our sins. We need each other.

If we would be made perfect. In the general assembly, the church of the living God. God has made every provision.

Only one thing is required from us. The intention. How far do we choose to go.

Because it says in Hebrews 10, 14. And I'll try to conclude with this. For by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

I have never before considered that. Or spoken that. But it speaks to me tonight in a new and deep way.

He has already perfected us. He has already provided every sanctifying power. By one offering.

Himself. Shame on us if we live beneath the value of that sacrifice. It's more than just being saved from our sins.

It is the total enablement of God. For our full sanctification. And for our apostolic walk.

That we might be made perfect. And finish the course that has been set before us. What a great offering. What a suffering provided it. What a gratitude it should stir in our hearts. For so great an offering. God has begun something by it. That he intends should be finished. He's going to have a holy city. A new Jerusalem. A Zion of God. A holy city.

A perfected people. In apostolic power. Apostolic authority. Apostolic character. Apostolic purity. Who can warn men knowing the terror of God.

And that the day of the Lord is at hand. We can command men everywhere to repent. This is the faith. To which God calls us. Do we choose to identify with it? To be part with this holy remnant. In an unbroken continuum of the faith.

With those of whom the world was not worthy. Who are not yet perfect without us. This is the course that's set before us.

It's tremendously demanding. I don't even know how we will finish the fragment that Gary and I have now. The three month fragment.

I'm exhausted just contemplating it. Switzerland and Israel and Egypt and Africa and Zimbabwe and Italy and Sicily and Switzerland again. I don't think it's going to end.

Until the day of the Lord's appearing. What is apostolic is ultimate. It's the ultimate requirement of God. For which he has already made one offering. To which he has already made one offering. To those who will run the race.

And finish the course. He's the Alpha and the Omega. He will conclude what he has begun. And conclude it in glory. There's only one thing that we can provide. Only the intention. To be part in this. This is where we should have begun, not ended. What is our intention? How far are we willing to go? Do we have this divine intention? Choose to see ourselves as part with them.

Willing for the identification as stranger, exile, pilgrim. We cannot rise above our intention. We cannot live above our intention.

And if we have not this intention, we will have something less. We will cheat this nation of the witness that God desires should come to it. That is apostolic.

The thing in itself. The very power of God. Through selfless men and women. Of whom the world is not worthy. So we have prayed today. Lord, just do not speak. But require. Transact. Let your word become an event.

Let something be inscribed in heaven. Of a people who are willing. To go out. When called. Not knowing. Let's bow before God.

And give him an answer. A real answer. An earnest answer.

An apostolically sincere answer. That is an end to play acting and performing. And getting by.

And giving an appearance of something. It's an ultimate intention. To go all the way.

On the basis of that offering. That has already sanctified us. For those who seek that city.

God has prepared for them a place. And you can enter it tonight. Merely by confessing.

Those who say such things. That they are pilgrims and strangers and sojourners. Is the point of entry.

They make it clear. They're seeking a country of their own. They desire a better country.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. He has prepared a place for them. Thank you precious God.

May we have an apostolic ear to hear. What the Spirit is saying to the church. That we have been called tonight.

As effectually as the call that came to Abraham. At the hour of the call is. It is a call of radical separation.

Of a going out. A not knowing. It invites being made strange.

To becoming an exile. And a stranger. Not just in the world.

But in Christendom. It's ultimate. In the name of Jesus.

The author and the finisher of our faith. Whose minister I have been for this word. This apostolic call.

I invite you to give him answer. They who say such things. Declare.

They are looking for another country. Another city. Whose builder and maker is God.

We need to bring something to the level of consciousness. A level of choice. A level of confession.

They who say such things. God invites you to say it. Even tonight.

Once and for all. For Jesus sake. We give you opportunity now.

I just want you to know that four and a half centuries ago. In Zolikon. Just a stone's throw from here.

An apostolic movement was begun. With no more than what has happened tonight. Someone said to me who had made a choice like this at another time.

I saw them the next day. They said nothing has changed. But everything has changed.

I am just seeing differently. Everything has changed. But nothing has changed.

You have crossed the threshold. For those of you who could not bring yourself to do it. The spirit will strive with you through the night hours.

I would encourage you not to linger long. If you will not do it for your own sake. Do it for their sake.

Whose witnesses are invisibly around us tonight. And if you will not do it for their sake. Do it for his sake.

Who made an offering once and for all. That we might be sanctified. And that his creation will be redeemed.

Through the true church of God. Now it says let us go outside to him. Outside the camp.

Bearing his reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city. But we are seeking a city to come.

I believe that Jesus is still outside the camp. He is not where the popular Christianity is. That does not require much of its members.

But a succession of services. He is outside. In the place of reproach.

Waiting for as many as will go out to him. Nothing has changed. So Lord we thank you.

What a call you gave us tonight. What a privileged walk. So beyond any ability of our own to fulfill.

But you have prepared a place. For those who seek that country. You are not ashamed to be called their God.

And I pray your blessing on every child of God in this room. Who has said yes to you tonight. With no more than what was said yes four and a half centuries ago.

Grant them every grace. To bear your reproach. Outside the camp.

Who will no longer be one of the boys. And even without their saying anything to anyone. Something has happened.

Something is exuded through them. That will make their former friends to recoil. And make them to feel strange.

Because they have joined those who are exiles. Pilgrims in the earth. Will not be satisfied with anything other.

And the heavenly city of God. Seal your work tonight. And let it be full of consequences.

In time and eternity. Because you have transacted with men. By the word which you sent.

For Jesus sake. In thy holy name we pray. Amen.

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