

Hearing God's Voice

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the necessity of silence and trust in hearing God's voice, highlighting Jesus' example of moral obedience and the relinquishment of knowledge.

Duration: 1:01:16

Scripture: Exodus 14:14, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 46:10, Matthew 17:5, Matthew 27:46, Matthew 28:20, Mark 9:7

Topics: "God's Voice"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of poetry as a form of communication, particularly in conveying theological concepts. He highlights the brevity and intensity of poetry, which can express profound truths in just a few verses. The speaker then delves into the significance of Jesus' cry on the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' He emphasizes the depth of this moment and the vulnerability of humanity in missing God. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about the speaker's own experience of delivering a message on the Holocaust, highlighting the need for reliance on God's guidance and the potential for our own self-conscious concerns to hinder the will of God.

Transcript

I'm going to give you a special treat, a little quotation from P.T. Forsythe. It was not enough, that we just got our toes dipped in, but I was reading somewhere this afternoon, and there's a passage so remarkable, it may touch our subject, because it has to do with the silence of Jesus, the quiet of his own soul, and the absence in his sonship, in his life, from clamoring to have to know. So I would just say, off the cuff, one of the greatest impediments to hearing the word of God is our own noise, is our own disquiet, our own agitation, our own insecurity.

And so long as that is active, and we are interjecting or making any demand, even unconsciously, it impedes, if it does not altogether dismiss, the still small voice. The sine qua non, you know that Latin phrase? The absolutely essential condition without which the result does not follow. Sine, S-I-N-E, qua, Q-U-A, non, N-O-N.

The absolutely essential condition is the absence of any determination on your part for anything. You'll not hear the voice of God and receive his direction so long as you have already an agenda of your own, a thought of your own. You have got to be completely free of any necessity for your own end.

And I'm not talking about carnal ends, even spiritual ends. So a condition for hearing him is the absence of any clamor, noise, inward exercise of our own souls. That's why I never heard him until I was 35.

I had so many good opinions, and formidable, that until my mouth was shut by the collapse of my categories, I could not hear God. But once I was shut up and had nothing more to say, I began to hear God, even to the point where he called me by name. So, P.T. Forsythe is so remarkable a spirit that he takes up aspects of things like this as I've never heard anyone do.

So I'm just dipping in here. He says it was perhaps part of his work's perfect glory, speaking of Jesus, not to know, to be silent in the agony of knowing only the Father's will and not even the Father's way. His self-emptying meant self-limitation in knowledge as in other things.

Think on that, the limitation on knowledge, that when he emptied himself, he emptied himself not only of knowing, but the principle of knowing, which if you strip that from any modern man today, you have brought him down. Men live by knowing. So when God called Abraham, follow me in the land that I will show you, it was already the issue of the cross, that you're not to move by your knowledge, your predetermined understanding, your own counsel and will.

Follow me and I will show you. So Paul said, I'm determined not to know anything, but Christ and him crucified. For a Jewish man with an intellect like that, it required a determination.

Had he not exercised it, he just would have been an impressive figure, but he would not have been a glorious apostle. He had to restrain his own knowledge because the Greek axiom is know thyself. Man is the measure of all things.

Knowledge is a virtue. Seek knowledge, knowledge of a kind that will advance your purposes. So for Jesus to empty himself, not only from knowledge, but the principle of knowledge as trust is really an emptying.

Because what is college about? What is university about? What is the world instructing us to know in order to make decisions and be rightly determined in the choices that we will succeed? The kingdom of God is the reverse, the antithesis of every principle that the world celebrates as good. It emphasizes knowledge and your confidence and your knowing by which you make determinations, by which your success is obtained. The principle of the kingdom is not knowing, but trusting, and that Jesus himself exemplified this way of the father.

This repudiation of entire knowledge may well have been a vital element in the agony of the great act. It's not cheap not to know. Not to know can be excruciatingly painful because every corpuscle in our humanity wants to know, desires to know, wants to have its security founded on its knowledge.

To give up that dependency, that trust, that elementary consideration that the world applauds is painful. And he's suggesting that it's not the least of the elements that constituted the agony of Jesus following the father in obedience in acts in which he did not know their full meaning, the implication, or the requirement, and that he didn't need to know to render the obedience. That's where the sun is.

How do you proceed without knowing? The remarkable tension that the Lord bore, and that we're called also, and that is probably a vital element in the agony of the great act, of the great issue of the cross, it drew on the spiritual resources of his moral personality. There he goes again, P.T. Forsythe. Everything in the last analysis is the issue of what is moral, his moral personality.

It's not just some abstract personality, it's the heart of the man. The moral constitution of the man had to do with the willingness to forebear and to proceed in the absence of knowing. That's a moral decision.

You know, you learn what moral is by the references that are made to it and about it. You don't learn it by going to it head on. Every time I've looked in a dictionary, for whatever source for the word moral, I've never yet come to a definition that is satisfying.

You'll come to it by apprehending it, not by defining it. And so if Jesus is a moral personality, if the genius of Jesus is what he is in his moral personality, then we've got to sense what that means. And he's saying that the willingness to forfeit knowing as a principle of life and trust without knowing is at the heart of the moral personality of Jesus, who is the pattern son.

In its superhuman obedience and trust, his silence may have been due to voluntary ignorance, to nescience, I've never heard a word like this, I guess it's the opposite of omission. Instead of an all-knowingness, it's a non-knowingness by a holy and omnipotent consent. It was perhaps the abyss of his self-emptying.

The willingness to let go of knowing as a basis for his obedience, Forsythe is suggesting, is not just an aspect of his moral personality, but it might be at the very heart of it. Because we need to assess how deep is that human desire and need to know. So that when he emptied himself, he emptied himself even of that aspect, and that it was the triumph of what constituted his humiliation.

His utter exercise of those self-imposed limitations, which made his incarnation, was essential in those things that pertain to redemption. I'm rephrasing here as I'm reading to make it more understandable. It was perhaps his power through positive trust to curb the passion to know.

It was perhaps his power through positive trust to curb the passion to know. His trust in knowing God, knowing the Father, was the power to let go of the need to know in fact. If he knows the knower, he doesn't have to know the particulars.

Isn't there a hymn like that, a church thing about knowing God, knowing the knower? Not needing to know the particulars, but you need to know him who knows. He had such a power of trust in him who knows, the Father who knows, that he as the son did not need to know. He knew the knower.

How do you like to live like that? Are you getting nervous just hearing this? You ought to. It's either a wonderful freedom or a terrible insecurity. Not to know the future, but to know, how does it go? Who holds the future.

And Jesus is the epitome of that kind of son. He did not need to know the particulars. He knew the one who holds the future.

When he said, into thy hands I commit my spirit. That's not just a little frothy statement. It's like when death comes and my consciousness is obliterated and I'm powerless to affect anything, I'm trusting you to then affect my resurrection and whatever else is in your intention in the supreme knowledge that you have as Father.

To you I commit my spirit. He yielded up the ghost. And that's the very point where the Roman centurion said, truly this is the Son of God.

He had never seen a man relinquish his life with so complete a trust as Jesus did in that expression. He gave up the ghost as he already had prayed to the Father, I yield. So there's a confidence and a trust that does not require knowledge.

How would you like to be a candidate for this? As a preacher, not knowing what the next, not only what the next message will be in a series of messages, but what the next sentence will be in a message. Strange, you never get used to it. So it's perhaps his power through positive trust to curb the passion to know, his acquiescence by faith, his consent not explicitly to see how his mortal obedience expiated and redeemed, but his certainty only that it did.

That the Holy Father had need of it for his holiness, for his kingdom, for his sons. Had he seen all, he could have suffered but little, to have known in detail at that hour the whole meaning, power and effect of his sorrow could have been to quench, to quench it in the glory that could really only come with salvation. This is making a demand on you to hear this and understand what Forsythe is saying.

That this is no small issue. That the glory of redemption required the ignorance of Jesus that was willful. He chose not to know even the things that were being affected by his suffering and his death.

And that had he known, it would have removed some of the suffering that comes from a tension of trust and would have robbed the act of redemption of its full glory. That's how I'm reading this. Had he seen all, he could have suffered but little, to have known in detail at that hour the whole meaning and effect of his sorrow would have been to quench it in the glory that could really only come with salvation when he had sounded its darkness and risen on the other side.

You have to have a particular sympathy for Forsythe that is uncommon for Americans because he's poetic and lyrical and intuitive and he's not writing like a disciplined theologian. He's writing like stream of consciousness because he's dealing with mystery and he's just feeling his way through remarkable things about he had sounded its darkness, sounded means plumbing its depths and risen on the other side. The tree of knowledge is not the tree of life.

So even in the last and final act of Jesus there's the choice of trees and choosing not to know in the extremity of what he's even experiencing that has to do with the ultimate purposes of the father is the son who is repudiating Adam by not eating from that tree or looking to knowledge but rather to trust and so this silence was the draining of sorrow's cup. To see all would be to suffer none and to utter suffering is to escape some. To confide it is to ease it.

To die alone is the death in silence. So it's going from knowledge to silence. Jesus, well here's what I said before so long as you're a jangle of making claims or demanding or having your own opinion you can't hear the spiritual voice.

So there's a silence in the final sufferings of Jesus who is not demanding to know is not making any assertions, is not making any claims he's going through his final agony except for a few broken statements father forgive them or the statement to John your mother or I thirst he went to his death in relative quiet. Silence is sorrow's crown of sorrow and can be more pathetic than death and the silence of the gospels reflects the savior's true dying because we're not in other places to say the gospels don't explain they just describe or set forth the narrative. Jesus didn't explain his conduct or his meaning, he just did it.

There's a silence of God even about the great acts of God and the silence reflects the awful silence the hiding of the father and the last word test of holy obedience dying trust it was not the father's anger but his holy love unspeakable by word or look to be uttered only by deed by resurrection quiet is broken not by an explanation but by a deed and the deed is resurrection and quiet but that resurrection speaks volumes that resurrection says that the sacrifice of this son is acceptable to the father it constitutes the redemption of mankind so God doesn't explain by speaking the deed itself is the explanation but the deed itself takes place in silence listen we can afford to hear something like this it won't hurt you Christ's love could only speak silently at last in the act and mystery of dying so God could only answer silently in the mysterious act of raising him from the dead and this was more than comforting him in death it was raising him from death's utmost desolation from death comfortless to deadliest death death's sharpest sting and utmost power deep calling unto deep and the will that died addressed and revoked the will that raised him up again in silent antiphony which is now the standing balance and order of the spiritual world forever. I'm going to go over this this is like reading poetry more than it's reading theology but it's saying much because poetry is the most intensive form of communication. The brevity the terseness of poetry is a remarkable art form so that in two or three verses you can say what would already take pages to describe in prose.

So this man is almost a poet and maybe every good theologian and Christian ought to be. Let me read this last part so that in this act of dying in silence and the father is silent. The father doesn't answer the son when he cries out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me well here's why son because don't you understand there's a requirement.

You've got to experience absolute abandonment so I can't be here now to give you the comfort of presence that you've known eternally silence. He's dying in silence the father is silent but the act of obedience to the father and what is being wrought by it speaks volumes.

The resurrection the event of resurrection in silence is God's way calls it a silent antiphony it's like one silent corresponding to another silence and that this is now the standing balance and order of the spiritual world forever where did he get that thought that what was communicated and demonstrated in the silence of the father and the silence of the son and a son who did not need to know and did not raise his voice inwardly even foreknowing and accepted in silence the work of the father without needing even explanation is not only what took place in that moment but what took place there is a pattern that thereafter shall always prevail and be the condition in the spiritual world forever so that silence needs to be considered anew that if there's a silence required in this great

greatest single ethical act between father and son that constitutes eternal redemption then this writer is saying that that was not just a happenstance but a demonstration of a principle that shall henceforth forever prevail in the world in the spiritual realm that the great acts that will take place thereafter will also be in silence and where there's not silence but noise clamor and contention striving there the spiritual thing is lost it might be the ultimate statement of faith for any of us that our trust is of such a kind that we do not need to know our souls are at rest our spirits are in peace and we can trust God for his outwork with us as Jesus trusted him for the outworking through him in the final acts of redemption and the reason that we're not hearing God and that it's even

raised as a question of how do you do it indicates that we're not on the right ground it's not what we have to do to hear it's what we have to cease from doing in order to hear we have to cease from clamor and contention even of an inward kind that makes a demand of God and he's under obligation to tell me show

me, direct me you know that we're humans all too human we're American all too American we're modern all too modern we have been trained, programmed to know and if one thing we can't stand is not knowing we can't stand the uncertainty we want the security of a clear statement that this is that and God is not giving it except on rare occasions but even when he spoke on the top of the road here Dominion End Time Teaching Center he didn't say do it, he just announced what his desire

for this property is the rest was drawing out the implication and a God who failed to spell it out in detail had to obey it be still and know that I am God isn't that a remarkable statement that this is the sine qua non this is the essential requirement to know God is to shut up and that he's giving it to you not as an option but as a command be still and you will know God I will reward your obedience when your clamor stops by revealing what about myself you're not obtained by your exertion your self-conscious desire because your motives are impure but if you'll rest and be still you'll know see how topsy-turvy the kingdom of God is and how opposite is the wisdom of the world be still and know so I appreciate these reflections and felt that they were so choice and unusual that however it

would tie in with the request tonight for hearing God that it needed to be expressed the church takes her moral bearings there she discovers God's moral world and authority there in the example of Jesus and that silence was not the least of the components that constituted the suffering of Jesus in his time at the cross okay thank you Lord repeat before safe precious rare saint that he is so what else about hearing God quiet is a very desired we took a walk today Troy and I in the woods and I said I love walking in the woods I like to hear the silence isn't that a strange statement silence is not just the absence of sound it's the absence of contention striving I don't know what to say and it's a condition to be desired in a generation that has the earphones glued to its head day and night

I think the kids go to bed with it and wash and get up and go to school and there's always something stuck in their ear boom boxes and a world that's polluted by noise so to come to a place of quiet without getting edgy about it is a condition to be desired and it has to do with trust that whatever I need to know I don't need to know it as knowledge I need to know it as obedience and the Lord will direct and I don't have to have an inward clamor see there's a silence that is inward that you're not jangled and agitated in insecurity there's an inward peace and an inward quiet and in that place the still small voice of the direction of God can be discerned or sensed when you think of the great episodes of biblical history like Elijah at Carmel confronting the apostate nation with the

sacrifice made by the false prophets and himself how did he get that instruction there's not a word that indicates that God said so how about Abraham when God said Abraham take thy son thy only son whom thou lovest and make of him a sacrifice in the place that I will show you everything about that statement sounds like it's right out of paganism of immolating your own children having them to walk through fire it's the most dread and vile pagan practice is killing your own children to placate a God who's not truly God that command of the father of Moses to Abraham has that same content but he rose up early in the morning cut the wood down his ass and took his son and he went so my question to you is how was Abraham able to discern that this was God though the requirement made of him

contradicts all that one would understand about God and yet if he had not performed that the whole of subsequent redemptive history would have been lost because what he performed was in its essence the same thing that the father performed with his son only his son was not saved by a ram caught in the bush his son became that sacrifice so the obedience of Abraham has implications throughout the whole of redemptive history so how did Abraham know to rise up early that this was God and not an imposter not a

demon not Satan mocking and imitating to destroy the son of promise if it had been Ishmael it wouldn't have been so great an issue but this is the son of promise that came after barrenness when Abraham looking upon his own condition was as good as dead and now God says this son for whom

you've waited and is the progenitor of the whole Hebrew race and the key to everlasting salvation I'm asking you to sacrifice and beggars logic reason have you been stupefied over this have you choked and splintered if you haven't you're missing something in one of the great epical events in Old Testament history so the question remains there's not an indication of any hesitation on Abraham's part like an immediate assurance this is God speaking you want to know how to hear the voice of God it will come to those who will obey him that have not their own agendas will not question and dispute and debate or weigh it up and see if it's convenient or what will the neighbors say or what will my wife say what will Sarah say so long as we have those considerations we're not here so my question is

how is it that Abraham heard how is it that Elijah heard that they should make two sacrifices Abram get thee out of nation kindred fathers house and follow me in the land that I will show you having obeyed that voice with that requirement he was then in a kind of relationship by which he could hear a subsequent requirement what could Abram have said in the morning after the Lord required his son could he have struggled with the same doubt the scriptures are silent but do you think he was just mechanically the Lord said and he did he had three days before he came to the mount that God will show him where the sacrifice was to be performed and what do you think was running through his mind could Abraham have doubted himself did he not go down to Egypt did he not require his wife to be a

concubine did he miss it on other occasions could he be missing it on this occasion and is there ever a requirement of God in which there is not the issue of missing it there is a way in which this kind of certitude can become close to becoming a presumption against God this kind of based on the principles that are true it can border on presumption I am wondering if anguish is a necessary element in the relationship with God in the coming to decision especially in those things which he requires because it wasn't the next day that the thing is performed it's three days later while you're treading through that heat and the thought and the implications now are beginning to set in what if I have missed this what if the enemy who is a mocker and an imitator has so captured the tone of God's

voice that I am completely deceived and I will be destroying the very son of promise in what I think to be an act of obedience so we have to consider these are excruciating things and we don't feel something of the moral pang of it we're not really understanding what is being called for and that when he raised his hand with the knife the angel arrested him and God says now by this I know that you fear God it's as if God himself had to wait for the free voluntary act of Abraham to consummate that sacrifice and not just play at it yes he knew there's a resurrection but still would you know that if you have to bring your own knife into the heart of your own child at that point your doctrines, your theology your correctness begins to quiver and tremble and it's an excruciating moment but the

father of faith had to pass through and God was waiting to see if he would the God who foreknows everything had to wait on the actuality of Abraham's own obedience that's one of the great episodes in the whole of Old Testament scripture and we need really to ponder what that means because in some measure if we're going to follow the same God of Abraham as sons of Abraham we're going to face excruciating requirements of decision before this life is out the weight of deciding rightly am I hearing God is enormous when it's beyond the issue of your own life it would have been easier for Abraham to have been made the sacrifice no sweat when it comes to his son that's God reaching for the very deeps of the

man that we can miss it is exactly what constitutes the anguish that however mature we

are however great a history with God however consistent the line of obedience is this very next instance might be an instance in which being a piece of dust and frail and susceptible to deception and even the secrets of our own heart we could miss it that tension is ever always present or else it would be a snap we have a total assurance no sweat step one step two but there's that we can miss it even in our best intentions is always the threat that makes that tension an anguish the thing that is most apprehensive is about ourselves not in our carnality in our spirituality if we go back to the subject of silence this very anxiety which is valid and we all know in our own experience is exactly the thing that keeps us from the knowledge of the will of God that this is the noise this is the

clamor this is the jangling and the inner man that keeps us from that quiet by which we still know that I'm God we're not being still because we're apprehensive about our own prospect for failure so maybe complete faith is a faith that believes that you yourself will not misguide you will not fail because actually you're crucified and dead and buried you're not even a factor that the man that you are is Christ resurrected and he doesn't make mistakes he was always perfect in his revisions I'm talking off the top of my head but I'm listening to what I'm saying that the real answer for anxiety is death that so long as there's another man however well meaning however spiritual however dedicated there will be the doubts because that man is not to be trusted at his best and so what is God's

answer that that man has to perish he's got to vacate he's got to give up the ghost that the only life is the resurrected and ascended one who as ever and always obedient to the father and cannot miss now is that just being fancy schmancy is that just being hypothetical or playing loose with the principles of God or is this really the only safety and the danger of deciding rightly for God so what's the answer for a predicament that comes not because you're carnal but becomes because you're spiritual because you are concerned not to miss God because you are weighing up what the consequences of failed obedience might mean or premature act before the time or acting out of your well meaning intention and missing the time of God or the detail of God this is a remarkable tension so what's the

answer when you doubt your own self and your own hearing remember what we said about the mount of transfiguration they were in the cloud of glory that came down and the father's voice said this is my beloved son hear ye him, talk about the subject and when the cloud lifted they saw no man but Jesus himself alone and I quoted a writer who said they did not even see their own seeing that they themselves were taken out of the picture that the cloud of glory, the voice of the father dismissed anything that even comes from them so men will not even see their own seeing can men not even hear their own hearing can men not even obey their own obeying can you come to a place where you as a subjective factor are removed through the presence of the glory of God and the voice of the father so that

there's a pure seeing, a pure hearing, a pure obedience talking aloud, we're thinking our way through something can we come to a place where the human factor at its best and most spiritual is itself removed and if we're not for that there can never be a safety in any decision because our best well-meaning intentions can pollute and corrupt us if what I'm playing with here in thought that the only safety is in crucifixion that the well-meaning man has got to die is the last obstruction to the pure hearing and obedience to God that Jesus could render that obedience at the cross in quiet without knowing because he was already crucified before he was crucified he was already the crucified son his own consciousness of his own sonship and whether he's missing it or with it has already been

brought to death and therefore he can be quiet and just act out the thing that the father is wanting this anguish is a suffering in fact it may be the most intense form of suffering it's a moral suffering and it could be that it's just not something that accompanies having to make decisions before God but that it's a required ingredient and a condition in making decisions and that the life with God requires this kind of an anguish intention and that somehow it works something in the believer and that the issue for God is not only the act of obedience but the willingness to bear the anguish that precedes and even follows the act because often you are not vindicated by the act the act doesn't necessarily bring the confirmation that there was you have to wait and maybe eternity will show

whether you were right in what you performed or not and that something is rendered in the anguish that may be more important to God in the shaping of our moral personality than the decision itself we haven't factored in what's at stake here in the dynamic of what God is fitting and forming for eternity that is not going to be stamped off the production line in some kind of assurance of faith that knows that it knows and in that knowing, though it's correct, it's wrong that no previous experience in knowing the voice of God and even being vindicated in your obedience is any assurance for the next time the anguish is fresh as if you have had no previous experience, no history this situation now is utterly and altogether new and unique and your past I seem to be contradicting myself because

I'm talking about the necessity for history, but the anguish is as if you have had no past experience and now this is coming to you fresh in a virginal way and makes a requirement to the uttermost it would be wonderful if you could say, well I'm experienced at this this is old hat, the Lord showed me and I was that took place, that took place, now I can handle this but this when it comes is as if nothing had ever come before but is your faith a faith in faith or is your faith a faith in God we can have a faith in faith that is not a faith in a person and a trust that allows us to be silent and quiet in the inner man that's a faith that Jesus not knowing and forsaking knowing trusts the Father into his hands he commits himself without having to know so his trust is a sublime and ultimate

faith in the Father, it's not a faith in faith about the Father, it's the faith in the Father and the proof of it is the quiet so have we a faith of that kind and will God call us to decisions beyond our faith of the King Jehoshaphat when three uncircumcised armies are at the border of Israel ready to extinguish the nation and he calls a fast and the people congregate before him with their wives and their children I mean everything is at stake and in that waiting on the Lord a word comes to the prophet Jehoshaphat the battle is not yours saith the Lord but mine but go ye out against them tomorrow you'll have all night to dwell on this and so when the great dawn comes and you can visualize those three armies you're pitifully outnumbered, there's no way you're going to come out of this

alive was that the word of the Lord? wasn't that a man whose flesh and blood we know? isn't he subject to error? maybe he's just trying to give us a pep talk and psych us up psychologically but when we get out there we're going to be clobbered but the King calls for, he said who are the sweet singers of Israel and the people indicated they knew them and he put them at the forefront of the army and they went out in obedience singing the praises of God when the enemy heard them they were confounded and they destroyed each other so here's another go out against them tomorrow stew in your juice anguish through the night hours because your women and your children are at stake, what does that mean? if these armies defeat you there's no one to defend the women and the children when these

invaders come they will be the object of rape and molestation and vile abuse and misuse of a kind that would make you cringe and die a thousand deaths over that you missed the Lord, that you failed to defend

your own families your own wives and daughters are now the victim of what you thought the Lord had said isn't that remarkable that the stakes are so great and it's all predicated on one man speaking who is named Jehazio but when they heard his prophecy they went down on their faces they knew that that voice and that speaking coming from a human being and a human voice was God, it wasn't a pep talk it was the word of the Lord, the battle is mine, not yours go ye out against them it's a command, and you know we read that as if we're reading a bible study material and we haven't

vicariously identified with Israel and wet our pants in contemplating what this will mean if we miss God this is a precarious life this is not something by the numbers God forbid that we should reduce it to that and we've got to know that we are vulnerable and that we are our own worst enemy not at our carnal indifference but at our spiritual best we can miss it, and that tension of that possibility is ever and always before us so that when I gave the message on the holocaust at that theater in Kansas City in 1974 before 2000 people after 5 days of fasting for one message, and spoke that message in fast, on a yellow legal pad that the Lord never augmented it was the dullest monotone speaking I have ever performed and there was a deadly silence when I finished like, you have missed it cats

there's not a ripple of effect no one is responding, it went over like a loud thud you've been waiting for years for an opportunity to express your burden on the holocaust and it is a terrible collapse so much for your fasting because your fasting cannot twist God's arm to come up with the goods when you think he won't and on top of that, in that deadly silence two guys are coming up the center of the theater and beckoning me to come over to the apron of the stage and one I knew was Ern Baxter's young man and he said, Artie said, this man with me is a Jewish prophet sent of God, he has a word for you from the Lord, I said, yes thus saith the Lord, you have missed the mind of God grievously, and done untold damage to the body of Christ you need to go to the microphone now and recant your

message have you ever been stabbed in the heart and not just stabbed, but that the handle is twisted, because he could have been exactly right, and you never know that however well meaning however you fasted, however you prayed that you have missed it, and that he's right my face is sticking out the dead silence seems to confirm that he's right and before I knew what to say or do pow, people were falling out of their seats, delayed action bomb crying out for mercy, people were crying for repentance maybe their silence was a stunned silence, that they had heard the word of the Lord and it took that amount of time to register because I have never seen again in 41 years, another such episode of the depth of repentance that took place in that theater that day, it went on through the afternoon

foot washing and miracles, it was a remarkable Holy Ghost episode, but until that break came, that prophetic man could be right and you have to bear the possibility that he's right, you've got to bear the pain of the dagger coming in and its candle being twisted, or you're not going to be called to bring oracular messages at historic moments in God, if you're not willing for the pain of the prospect that however well meaning and prepared, you can be wrong, we're not getting oracular statements because there are not enough men who are willing to suffer the prospect of being wrong at critical moments and have reduced the faith to some kind of good formula that we can get by and that God is with us and we know and we're always right, but what do you do when you're the sole message bearer so

on another occasion in California I brought a message on worship that I believe God had given me on my knees but the woman who was the pastor and directed the worship from the platform with her telephone stopped me in the middle of the message never allowed me to finish and people were crying out, let him finish I never did finish, and later on in conversation in the back room she and her colleague said, why

didn't you submit that message for our confirmation before you spoke it I said, I've never submitted a message for confirmation, if you have not a sufficient confidence that I'm a message bearer of the Lord don't invite me to speak, but if you do, trust that that's the word I said, you don't submit the message you submit the man I can think of other instances, well I can tell you in

Melody Land in California in Disneyland, again, I gave a message and I was taken aside afterwards and rebuked by the pastor and his colleagues one of whom was found to be one of the greatest phonies ever perpetrated on the charismatic world Michael, Michael, why do you love me and the statement was what you're saying is over the heads of the congregation actually it had to do with being ethical, moral accountable, something like that and that it should have been submitted to these leaders before I spoke it, it never occurred to me to submit a message, we can submit decisions in community and we will not act without unanimity but in message giving, you're on the spot you're the man called to speak as an honor court and so it's your baby we're going to be brought to places where we have not

been given for our past experience will not at that time guide us we need an inward sense of God and we need so to be dealt with ourselves that we in our best well-meaning intention are not an impediment to the will of God even by our own self-conscious concern is it me, is it God, is it me, is it God and the only answer to that I'm suggesting is take out the me, that me has got to be brought out of the picture through death, so that whatever then issues has got to be God, you have no will for yourself you have no thought for yourself, you have no intention even in serving God and that of course is a remarkable place at the cross and maybe what he's saying about the quiet of Jesus as I've suggested is that he was already at that cross before he performed the cross he was already a

crucified son he was from the time he left heaven to come to the earth he had already submitted himself in utterness unto a death of which the cross was only a final expression and therefore he could be quiet even in those final acts that constituted the redemption he didn't need to know, he didn't need to hear he could commit his spirit to the father even of what would follow his death and maybe that's what we need to see and that's the pattern, he's the answer this is sonship, the sublime confidence in the father by which you yourself are no longer a factor and you've come to a quiet, which is the quiet of death death to that thing that cannot be silenced except at the cross because it's not your blatant carnality that is making the noise, it's your spirituality it's your concern, it's

your genuine concern is this God, am I missing him anguish is a suffering and suffering is death three days in the grave bears a correspondence to three days before reaching the mount and I've never said that before, I've never thought that before and that's why I love these interactive sessions something is breaking from your remark that I'm putting out as a consideration, that he was experiencing a death his anguish was a death and he didn't see the mount until the three days were completed because he was seeing now by the eye of a pure spirit his own humanity, his own uncertainty his own fatherliness had been brought to a death so that he could believe in a resurrection from the dead in other words, that faith requires a death to all that's religious and all that's human and so that

God is setting a stage of a mountain that requires three days to attain in order to serve the purpose of effecting a death in Abraham by which he can believe for resurrection so he didn't start out with that belief because scripture doesn't tell us, we're just surmising but anguish is suffering, suffering is death and the anguish produced the death that enabled him to believe that there'd be a resurrection and therefore resulted in the act that had to be arrested by the angel himself I've never considered but I'm putting it out for your consideration that anguish is more than just a disturbing emotion anguish is maybe the most

excruciating expression of moral death moral suffering that culminates in a death that brings the old man into the grave that that doubting thing needs to die and

anguish will bring him to that death so no word of comfort coming from me or counsel from the saints but that the death, there's a three days though it may be three months but it will be affected by the bearing of the suffering, of the tension that we face in ultimate obedience to God I've never thought that, I've never heard that but I'm liking what I'm considering that nothing less than a death will affect a silence Jesus' silence was already the work of the cross before he himself performed the cross and that the cross is our answer and that the anguish is bringing us to that death it will affect the death it's something not unlike having a vision before the time to fulfill it what purpose does it serve? why don't you just give the vision the day before you act it because there's

something that takes place in holding a vision and not being able to perform it there's an inward something that has to do with ambition with self, with vanity with a desire to see fulfillment that has got to be brought to a death so there's a purpose in holding things in tension there's a purpose in the anguish of soul and you know what our problem is? we're unwilling even to begin faintly to have to bear it we don't want to be faced with predicaments or calls of a kind that would bring us to a place of anguish and so we see to the safety of our lives and keep God at a distance and we want a safe, predictable Christianity that does not make this kind of requirement of us we're unwilling for the suffering of anguish anguish is a word for moral suffering of an excruciating kind that only

can be precipitated in a crisis that comes by an obedience called for by God of an ultimate kind I'm defining it right on the spot what is anguish? what kind of suffering? it's an ultimate excruciating suffering of a death that comes by God moral anguish is a spiritual phenomenon where God provides both the crisis allows the anguish and brings through the anguish the final death of self and its spirituality by which we can have a pure quiet confidence in God for the other factor is removed by the death anxiety is soulish human concern but anguish is a spiritual phenomenon that is created by a crisis given by God and mandate or vision calling for an obedience of an ultimate kind in which one can be wrong the willingness to bear that anguish is a suffering suffering is another name for

death and that death is the death to that last vestige of spiritual self-consciousness by which we are not sure is it God or is it me the me is brought to death through the anguish and then you have a pure quiet in which you know that you know not by the particular knowledge but by the union with the God who is knowledge and that you can act the reason that all this is a new ground for us is because we have never been brought to such ground until now but that we will be brought is for me an evidence for which God is calling for this discussion this would have been totally academic in our more harmless forms of Christianity if we were not on a divine course toward ultimate kinds of obedience in the last days where this anguish would be a factor and so what is a son or a daughter one

willing to bear the anguish of suffering unto death which brings the extinction of those last subtle vestiges of self in their best form that keeps us from the certitude in God he brings the crisis by the mandate and the vision and allows for the suffering of anguish that takes three days to do its full work that by the time you go up to that mount with that son with the knife in one hand and the fire in the other you are ready to render an obedience without question because you have a faith now beyond your own faith that you did not have three days before that there will be a resurrection even up to death something like that so Lord the question my God is how far are we willing to go for you and with you are we willing to hear such searing requirements my God that instantly provoke this

anguish or are we guarding ourselves to keep ourselves exactly from the threat of it we don't want to be brought to visions and mandates that make such requirements we want to play it safe and playing it safe we will never be instruments of your use in the unfolding and the fulfillment of your last days purposes especially as it pertains to Israel in their time of final extremity and trial so Lord thank you that you have recorded this tonight because I don't think we can get it in one hearing in one sitting but that we can have opportunity to hear this maybe somebody will even transcribe the gist of this but we can review it my God and receive its benefit may you tonight receive from the saints whom you have gathered a transaction, a covenantal agreement that we are willing we are willing

for this kind of suffering that is beyond physical this is ultimate moral excruciating suffering and it comes with the call so Lord let there be a yes sounded out of the hearts of those that are here and be released then to give them that vision, that mandate, that call for which you have waited as for the sons of Abraham who will rise up early in the morning and settle their heirs and cut their wood and take their son and do it thank you Lord, gracious God for the cross and the remarkable deliverance of a total kind that only it can perform we welcome it my God because we are rattled by that stubborn tenacity of self even of the spiritual kind that makes the noise and clamor by which we cannot hear you with comfort come Lord quiet our souls by laying the axe to our own anxieties of

whether we are right or wrong or have we heard or have we not heard and we thank you and praise you for so great a provision

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