

# Holiness or 'Blessing'

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz's sermon highlights the critical need for holiness and a true understanding of God within the Church to avoid complacency and to fulfill its divine purpose.*

**Duration:** 57:27

**Scripture:** Psalm 18:7

**Topics:** "Holiness", "Discernment"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes the critical distinction between holiness and the pursuit of blessings, warning against the dangers of seeking experiences that may dilute the true nature of God. He expresses concern over the church's complacency and the tendency to accept dubious phenomena in the name of blessing, urging believers to seek a genuine relationship with God rather than superficial experiences. Katz calls for a return to the holiness of God, highlighting the need for discernment and a deeper understanding of His nature, which is often lost in the quest for personal benefit. He stresses that true transformation comes from a profound knowledge of God, which requires sacrifice and a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths about oneself and the church. Ultimately, Katz challenges the church to be a true witness to the world, reflecting the holiness of God that can provoke jealousy among those who do not know Him.

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## Transcript

And Mike, from the state of Washington over there, who will be tending a little book table, where you have opportunity to obtain my extraordinary books. You think I'm joking. They are blessed, anointed, rich.

This is the most recent, The Spirit of Truth. It will take indomitable courage to read it from cover to cover. But I assure you, you'll be transformed before you get to the end.

It's for the Church, called to be the ground and pillar of truth, and will break through every pretense calculated. The other is remarkably anointed, four principal messages, not the least of which a message on Elijah, given from a platform in Jerusalem, where I did not want to be the speaker, and was stopped in my entry to the country, to find my name on a blacklist and forbidden to enter. And after a lot of squawking in Hebrew over the telephone, they let me in, and so I realized I had nothing to hide, or to preserve my identity in some secret way for some future use.

And the speaker that they had employed in my refusal to be a speaker, wanting another Jewish speaker, took sick. And so as they came to the end of the conference, they had not yet heard from a Jewish

speaker, and I was asked if I would share for seven minutes, which hardly gives me time to clear my throat. But I agreed, and that morning at 3 a.m., something like this morning, I was wakened by the Lord, and in the bathroom, not to wake my wife, the Lord gave me a message on Elijah.

It's in here, dynamite. Not a message that could be spoken in seven minutes, but by the time I got up to speak, they said, take 15 minutes. And while I was speaking, a note came up to me from the co-author, now passed on to be with the Lord, Jamie Buckingham, of my first book, Ben Israel, saying, take 45 minutes.

I thought, wow, they must recognize the anointing on this message. It was so anointed that when a board of rabbis reviewed the film in New York City after its production, the one thing that offended them and that they required to be omitted was me. That's how anointed it was.

Well, after I finished that message and sat down, feeling myself somehow very strange and loathsome, I realized that the note did not say, take 45 minutes. It said, take 4-5 minutes. So here I am, 20 years later, still suffering from the reproach of being a maverick and doing my own thing.

But as you read the message, you'll realize God was in my misreading that note. Well, I trust he's going to be in what issues from me this morning. I'm very curious to hear it.

It's something welling up in me over the course of these weeks and months, and someone should not have given me a copy last evening of a magazine called On Being, on the article on the inspirational man who has triggered the whole Toronto blessing phenomenon. What's his name? Rodney Howard Brown. And somehow after reading that, although I did not read anything unusually different, it was not even a critique, merely a description.

In fact, some young girl wisely said, a critique is not possible. But I do believe, dear saints, that if we have a jealousy for the church that bears the name of the Holy One of Israel, we ought to be critiquing and not mindlessly nodding in assent, let alone giving ourselves over indiscriminately to phenomena of an extremely dubious kind in the name of blessing. You know there's such a thing as paying too high a price for blessing? And if that price is the denigration of God and His name, that's too high a price.

Find your blessing elsewhere, in fact, preferably in your own prayer closet. You don't have to go as far as Toronto. God is omnipresent.

So do I have your liberty to just follow on and see where the Lord will lead, beginning with where I started this morning in Psalm 18? Today is the 18th, is it not? So I read the Psalm for the day. What? Do I want to come forward? Okay. No, this is right to the edge here.

Okay. Let's pray, huh? Precious God on high, put a guard on this mouth. Let not a word, a syllable be emitted that does not have its origin in you.

Lord, we don't give a rap to hear a man's opinion, however clever or interesting it might be. We want to hear your heart. What do you have to say, my God, about what is taking place in your Christendom? And why have you appointed this morning for that purpose? So, Lord, we just, our hearts are open.

And take your full liberty. Give us ears to hear, not only your speaking, but even between the lines. And if it's a statement beyond this church, that somehow will go out through the tape of this, or just a word that, by which prophets often begin, hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, then let it

be that.

But do speak. We thank you and give you the praise for our privilege to hear from the living God. In Jesus' holy name.

Amen. Well, I read the Psalm for the day, and I love this Psalm 18. I'm just going to take some portion, because it evokes a sense of God that I think that we desperately need.

The sense of God is all saints. And it's, what is the church without a sense of God and the holiness of God? And if we lose that, what do we have? If we have everything else and lose that, what have we and what are we? And what is our witness? And how shall we ever move Jews to jealousy? So, there's nothing more to be coveted, more to be cherished, more to be preserved, more to be watched over, than the sense of God as he in fact is, and not as we may have thought him to be. This may be a lifelong quest, this pursuit of God, and everything in the world, even in the religious world, conspires against that knowledge.

Even our own religion, even our own enthusiasms, even our own desire for successful meetings, might ironically oppose and be the greatest detriment to the knowledge of God. If you can't understand me, you have no sense of irony or paradox implicit in the faith. I'm very fond of a statement by Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian, that nothing more reveals our pathetic humanity than seeking to serve God or to celebrate God or worship God out of it.

The contradiction is so apparent and so painful. And so it's an injunction to be the people of the resurrection, sons and daughters of God, who have risen above mere human religion, mere human enthusiasm, mere soulish excitement, and to come to the place in the Spirit and to maintain that place that might require, ironically, not more sound and more noise, but more silence. So in Psalm 18, verse 7, Then the earth shook and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because he was angry.

Smoke went up out of his nostrils, and a fire from his mouth devoured. Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down, with thick darkness under his feet.

And he rode upon a cherub and flew, and he sped upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his hiding place, his canopy around him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before him passed his thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire.

The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. And he sent out his arrows and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance enrouted them. Then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

Isn't that yummy? I know it's anthropomorphic, and a skeptic can dismiss God being described with nostrils and smoke and all of that, but I love what is being conjured up. I think that we desperately need it, because God is in danger of being made a commonplace. We're fashioning Him in our own image, and we're not even aware of the unconscious thing that we're doing.

We need to be reminded, or perhaps we have never ever known, the mightiness of God. He's other than what we ourselves are. And maybe I'm speaking ancestrally as a Jew, and something in my gut remembers God's lament with us that you thought I was such a one as you are, that the knowledge of me is taught by the precept of men, was not God's compliment, but His enjoinder.

It was an insult. You have fallen so low that the knowledge of me is taught by the precept of men. How then should it be obtained? Some other way.

Once you have resorted to precept, it's no longer God. It's about God. It's principles, but it's not God Himself.

So, I think it's clear. The fear of God is absent from the Church. There's a rather slack atmosphere, a kind of, I don't know what, a go-along with it, and matter-of-factness, a blase, or is it that Australia? A complacency that we're sensing in your country that has even infected the Church.

You have to contend for the faith, once and for all, earnestly given the saints. And if you think that that means it's doctrines, you have another think coming. The doctrines are kid stuff.

I love the doctrines, but that's not our problem. It's the faith. It's the apprehension of God as He is, that fear and awe, that sense of God that tempers everything.

And if it's not to be found in the Church, what shall we hope for in Australia? And little wonder, then, that these phenomena that come down the pike find such ready acceptance. What a bunch, what a ready-made audience looking for novelty, needing a lift, needing an experience, needing a blessing. Well, sure, your Church has become so predictable.

Your Christian life is hardly more than a succession of predictable Sundays. You do need something. But unhappily, what you're grasping for is not what you really need, and in fact will probably move you further from the obtainment than you might know.

So I'm really concerned for the Church this morning, just for its own sake, let alone that I know that there's no other agency given in the earth by which Jews are to be made jealous. And if we fail in that, we fail in all. And though Paul does not articulate and define what it is that we're to do to make Jews jealous, it's evidently something we've not yet done.

And probably it's not without doing, but more without being, that they should come into our assembly and stop and gasp and throw their hands over their mouths or hold their chest for the sense of God that is present with us who is holy, holy, holy. I don't think there's any more awesome demonstration to an unbelieving Jew than the light that lightens the Gentiles, which is also the glory of the people of Israel. That's why I'm here this morning.

I should have been dead how many years ago? 32 years ago, except that I saw as an atheist, a dark atheist and a vehement enemy of the faith, breathing threatenings and murderings against what I considered to be a deterrent to human progress, the Church. But I saw in the face of an unsuspecting piece of innocence a transparent little American girl on vacation in Switzerland where I was hitchhiking looking for philosophical answers, the light that lightens the Gentiles and the glory of the people of Israel. I don't think that Israel is going to see that glory except in your light.

So, just before we leave this psalm, in verse 25, With the kind, thou dost show thyself kind. With the blameless, thou dost show thyself blameless. With the pure, thou dost show thyself pure.

And with the crooked, thou dost show thyself astute. The margin says, twisted. I think that that's a remarkable statement, that somehow the apprehension of God is very much affected by our seeing, by what we bring to Him.

It's not a matter of God in His, what He is objectively, but how we perceive. And therein lies the problem. We're bringing a distortion out of our own subjectivity, out of our own twist.

We see God out of a prism of our own being. And I'll tell you that the way some people are seeing God is quite cheap, as if He's some kind of a lackey or errand boy or providing the convenience of meetings by which offerings can be taken, that we can leave the nations that we exploit with millions, and that somehow there's not a blush, let alone a twitch of contradiction, because God is somehow compatible with all that and part and parcel of all that. And I'm sure that they're laughing all the way to the bank and thinking that they're doing God and God's people service.

So it requires something from us to perceive God rightly. With the pure, thou dost show thyself pure. If you have any kind of controversy with God this morning, the problem is not He, but yourself.

You're projecting something on Him. You're becoming guilty of Israel's sin. You thought that I was such a one as you are.

The thing that we need is to be transformed in His image and not to project our image upon Him. He is not a convenience. He's God.

He's the Creator. He is the Almighty. I don't have words and adjectives.

I think those words have lost their cogency. We maybe have said them too often, and it's become a catechism or an invocation of a mechanical kind. Unless you know Him in the place that is too deep for words, do you really know Him? Until there's a gasp and a splutter, until you find yourself prostrate and stretch out as dead, do you really know Him? And how many of us will go through an entire Christian lifetime without that knowledge and be perfectly content and think that we're doing God's service and that we know Him and that we can communicate Him? 27, verse 27, For thou dost save and afflicted people, but haughty eyes thou dost abase.

Wow, just a haughty look. God despises haughtiness, human self-exaltation, religious pomp, hotshot-ism, the man of the hour. And when I see those videotapes of those characters, that's what I see, the swagger, the hitching up, the calling some precious little old lady, deary.

Where do you come off with a snotty remark like that when that woman should be respected? She's not your deary. And don't think you're going to blow her down by your breath. It's a carnival, dear saints.

And I don't care what measure of supposed blessing is being obtained, God is being denigrated. Irretrievable loss for the name and the reputation and the honor of God who does not lend Himself to carnivals. We're in the last days.

These are solemn and awesome days. And He's waiting for the fulfillment of mandates and callings that are so monumental it requires a people of apostolic and prophetic stature, not clowns, to perform. He hates haughty eyes.

He hates that pomp of men who can move their little finger and numbers fall in the process. Well, brother, then, if that's not God, by what power are they falling? I'm glad you asked that. You should have asked it long before.

And you need to continue asking it. For thou dost light my lamp, verse 28, the Lord my God illumines my darkness, for by thee I can run upon a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. Well, I just needed to read that just to wash my own soul.

I just feel somehow gritty. And before I can get into anything else, I just need a little washing of the word. But I would direct your attention to Ezekiel chapter 22.

Maybe let's start first with Jeremiah chapter 15. Yeah, 15. This is on my heart this morning.

I asked my brothers if they could find it. I didn't have it in my concordance. In verse 19 of chapter 15 of Jeremiah, Therefore, thus says the Lord, If you return, then I will restore you.

Before me you will stand. And if you extract the precious from the worthless, you will become my spokesman. I think other versions read, If you remove the sacred from the profane or the vile, then you will become my spokesman.

I think we need to be about this. There needs to be a separation. We need to disengage ourselves from the things that are profane because the whole world is profane.

There's a process of proclamation taking place everywhere. There's something that is cheapening and degrading in television, in language, in street conversation. My own country worse than yours.

But how long before you'll catch up? If the church is not jealous for the sanctity of words and of language, and I'm not even talking about biblical language, I'm talking about language per se. I'm talking about the exquisite privilege of being made in God's image that allows us to speak and to cheapen that, to make our small talk really small, to trivialize our life, to not hold dear the things that sanctify us and make us human in God's image, is to enter the process by which everything is being made profane. Now, you're called to be a nation of priests, and the priest has the obligation even to teach the people and to teach the nation the difference between the things that are holy and the things that are profane.

And how shall we teach what we ourselves don't know and what we ourselves have not extended ourselves to find out and to preserve and to keep alive in our own consciousness and before our own children? Maybe there's no way that we can pursue this and move in this way except we take the TV set out of the house. It's not enough just to shut it off. I used to keep it for the news, but I tell you that the news is becoming as vulgar and obscene as anything else.

And in between, I don't know about your TV in America, there are the advertisements of other programs and a commercial, and by the time you've watched the news, you have become polluted. It's not worth it to find out what's going on in the world if that's the price we have to pay in having our own spirits being made sodden and dulled. And then we try to come into the Scriptures and we find that we're not profiting.

It's dull. And we don't enjoy, we don't have a time of devotion that is a delight. Praying is a kind of a drudgery at best, mechanical requirement.

Our spirits are being made dull. We're being profaned because we have not separated the sacred from the profane. We've not kept it at a distance.

We've forgotten that we have a God who says, don't mix linen and wool. Don't harness an ox and an ass together. Why? Don't they pull? Doesn't it work? Isn't it expedient? Isn't it efficacious? That's not the

question, whether it works.

Sure it's going to work. Linen and wool will probably make a lovely garment. But it's a mixture.

It's an adulteration. And God said, thou shalt not mix. Thou shalt be separate and holy unto me.

There's a lot of mixing going on. And we haven't been careful to separate the precious from the vile. Then you will become my spokesman.

Oh, praise God. When's the last time you've heard one? We hear a lot of preaching, a lot of words, but a spokesman is one who bears the message and the burden of the Lord. I think there's a famine already in the land for the Word of God.

In the midst of a wealth of cassettes and tapes and ministries that are profuse, where are the spokesmen of the Lord? This is their requirement, to separate the cheap, the trivial, the trite, the commonplace from the things that are holy and the things that are sacred, lest the holy thing become swamped and becomes trivialized itself. What hope, dear saints, if God should become trivialized? What hope for anything? What standard for anything? To what shall the world repair if there's no standard in the Church? Ezekiel 22 speaks of that, of Israel's pathetic condition, and I think we ourselves are moving toward it as the Church. Wouldn't it be a remarkable thing that at the end of the age, God has a remorseful Israel and a remorseful Church, both have fallen short of the glory of God, and both require the mercy of God, that He'll comprehend both in His mercy.

He says in chapter 22, verse 26 of Ezekiel, Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the profane. They have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they hide their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

And further, in Ezekiel 44, verse 23, Moreover, they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. Well, we are the royal priesthood, and the priesthood of all believers. There's no room for any of us to be slack.

We all need to be vigilant in our priestly obligation, not only to know ourselves and to separate the profane from the holy, but to communicate and to teach that to men. Can I quote a little bit from a newsletter article that I've written? By the way, if anybody is becoming endeared to me through this morning, strange soul that you might be, and wants to have some continuing contact, we publish this four times a year, and we have a small overseas readership. We would be happy to put you on, if you give us a clearly printed address.

And this is called, Some Cautionary Thoughts on the Present Revival. I felt an obligation, as a prophetic and priestly man, to say something. And here's the something that I say, just in part.

We are not in a position to categorically condemn as deception the ostensible benefits to which many testify. God is always free to bless whom he will bless. I think that may well be happening, that naive souls in simple faith, coming to those places and coming with an expectancy, can be met by God, despite the questionable thing that is taking place.

But I wouldn't say that that blessing that is received confirms or validates the entire thing that's going on, because that's exactly what makes deception a deception, because it's mixed, because it contains

elements that are dubious and suspicious, and at the same time, there seems to be apparent blessing. Who has the acumen and the discernment to see through the dimension of priestly stature, whose discernment has been increased by the exercise thereof? And who can discern that which is good and that which is evil? That which is profane and that which is holy? The mere invocation of the name of the Lord has become a cheapie. Everyone can vocalize that.

Does that sanctify it? Does that make it official? Does that make it God's? That's exactly the thing that is profane, is the employment of the name of God to somehow validate the human and religious thing that we are promoting. I'll tell you, and you can pray for me. As a young Jewish believer, this is now 32 years ago, my most painful entry into the church was to see the glib frequency with which Gentile Christians took the name of the Lord to their lips.

I don't know if you know this. Orthodox Jews, still in darkness, never having had the revelation of the Messiah, will not even spell the word God. It's G-D.

You don't vocalize. You don't take that word so frequently to your lips, or you'll find yourself cheapening it. Lord, until we forget what Lord means.

And I quite appreciate the revival that came to Argentina when a certain pastor, Carlos Ortiz, had a gutful and forbade his congregation to employ the word at all. A moratorium on the word Lord. No speaking until he became Lord, in fact.

Lord of your pocketbook, your attic, your spare room, your car, your bank account, your retirement, your benefits, all those things. Until he's the Lord over all, he's not the Lord over anything. And he wasn't going to allow that word to be bandied about in apparent contradiction with what was the truth of the condition of this congregation.

Oh, praise God for a man like that. I pray that he is yet that man. But I'm a little bit apprehensive seeing that he's gone onto the staff of the Crystal Cathedral in California, and there's a little disquiet in my soul.

Lord, preserve him in his integrity and blamelessness, because you don't automatically maintain that without a daily, moment-by-moment vigilance. So I'm not knocking blessings that some may authentically be receiving, but our point is that if the enemy can succeed in bringing the Church to viewing benefit as the determinant by which something is judged to be of God, we may well have been brought to the very ground of deception itself. Is that all it takes to persuade you that you receive a benefit, or a blessing, or a release from some personality disorder? Is that all it takes? Then Satan is well able to provide that.

There's something more important than benefits. There's something more important than release. It's the holiness of God.

It's his name. It's his honor. It is who he is in himself, and benefit of a dubious kind is too high a price to pay.

If it is going to throw any shadow upon his great name, we will have lost everything in the name of benefit. In fact, even the desire for benefit is itself suspect. I have often been astonished when the appeals for healing come, almost everyone comes out of their seat.

I've never seen such a sick church everywhere. And I think that we will continue to be sick so long as we live egocentric lives, even spiritually speaking. And what will be the first statement and question that you

raise when you leave this room this morning? What did you think of the speaker? Did you like? Did you like? Isn't your like the center of your being? So you've shifted from carnal centrality to spiritual centrality, but you're still the center.

No wonder you're sick. No wonder you need continually to be healed until you make God the center. His glory, his honor, his name, and his eternal purposes.

We will continue to be sick. That's why we're sick. We have a false center, and it is in ourselves, in our church, in our denomination, our, our, our, our, my, my, my, my.

So for myself, I would choose to keep my distance from such phenomena, trusting that whatever I might be missing is not greater than what I am protecting and cherishing, and that the Lord is not offended by a carefulness that would rather err in a jealousy for his holiness than to risk subverting what has already been given as pure and true. Do you know this, dear saints? That there's no such thing as coming out the same. You're either going to suffer loss or obtain gain.

If you allow yourself and submit yourself to come into an environment of a certain kind and even to receive the blessings and the laying on of hands, I want to be very careful who lays hands on me because with every laying on of hands is a transmission of the condition of that one who is extending his hands. It's amazing what people will open themselves for. And some of these characters have said, we know that this is a mixed bag, but we're so desperate for something to happen that even if Satan is getting in on the act and even if flesh is exhibiting itself, at least something is happening.

My God, they've never read Psalm 18 or any of the texts that I'm quoting today. You know what I'm saying here? We need to be jealous to God what has already been given. I want to ask you, dear saints, do you have a residue of God? Do you have a precious accumulation of something that has been worked in your inner being, in its depths, in communion with God over the course of your spiritual history? Do you have a history? How shall you be an overcomer? But by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony and love not your life unto the death.

Do you have a testimony? Do you know God in the kind of knowledge that has to do with his sufferings? The kind of knowledge that comes through trials, through stretchings, through breakings, and through dealings, which many would shut ourselves off from because they're painful. I cherish all the residue of the knowledge of God that has come that way. And you know how I test whether something is of God or not? I still my soul, because they want you to be engaged by your soul.

The noise, the amplifiers, the music, the motion, the activity, everybody moving and getting into the act, and you're like a lump, a painful disjuncture. You're out of it. And it's not pleasant to be out of it when everything is tugging at you to be one of the boys and to go along.

But there I'm standing like a lump, not measuring by my soul. I've shut that off. In fact, can you even distinguish between your soul and your spirit? Or is it one big blur? And I wait to see if my spirit is hospitable to what is being mediated so that I know it is compatible with my already existing knowledge of God.

And if it is not compatible, they can stand on their heads, they can run all over the platform, they can climb the flagpoles, which they do, and every other kind of madness, and I am completely imperturbable and unmoved. I will not give myself to it at all. I need to guard my sanctity.

I need to guard my integrity in God, or else you this morning would be getting something less than other than what you're receiving. And so all Australia in our weeks of travel, and the Philippines, and Japan, and New Zealand, and every other place where we go, you would be getting something much less than other if I allowed myself to be sucked in and influenced and taken up and affected by the current trends. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are all the issues of life.

You say, Brother, the way you talk and carry on, is there time enough for that kind of Christian living? You make it sound like a full-time occupation. I only have time Sunday for an hour or two, and I might even come to a midweek service. But the way you're talking to maintain your spirit and guard yourself and grow in the nurture and the faith and all these obligations, you make it sound like that's the whole purpose of our being.

Exactly. Exactly. What did you think this was, a Sunday supplement? Hey, we're coming to the end of the age.

God has great purposes to consummate through the Church that knows him and will do great exploits out of that knowledge, and that knowledge only. And it's not cheap things. It's dear, but it's precious.

Paul says, Oh, that I might know him in the fellowship of his sufferings. There's a knowledge of God there that is so exquisite, and it's not to be obtained in any other place. Come on, you sissies, are you willing to suffer a little? Or have you been inducted into the mindset of the world, the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, protecting your life, your privacy, guarding yourself lest there be any threat, any injury, any pain? No wonder the Church is hardly more than a conglomerate of individualities living their privatistic lifestyles.

Where is the Church of the apostolic kind where those who believe were together and with power, great grace was upon them all, and with power gave the apostles testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? There's going to have to be some snap, pop, and break between yourself and your Australian culture and mindset and the English overtones that have come in that put up your brick walls and the sanctity of your separation and privatistic life contrary to the ethos and the character and the genius of true Church. True Church is a suffering before it's a glory just by what we are ourselves together and the intensity of that life. And until we'll go that way, we're not moving anybody to jealousy, certainly not Jews.

Well, they say, well, Art, you know, don't be so critical. Don't think that this is a carnival and these guys are clowns, though they look and act like it. And men are in a stupor who are ministers of the Word of God and stand there and splutter and repeat themselves insanely and then collapse.

And that's God honoring? And then they make statements like, I've seen more blessing now under this blessing than ever was obtained through the preaching of the Word. I'll tell you, dear saints, I may not be much, but I am jealous for the Word. And when I see a phenomenon touted as revival by which the Word of God is conspicuously absent and denigrated as not being the source of God's greatest blessing, but that experience has replaced it, my alarm goes up instantly, and so ought also yours.

Well, Art, they're doing a lot more preaching now. I'm sure they are, because they're sensitive to the criticism that has come. But what kind of preaching is it? The most commonplace blah that any stoop can put together out of a few scriptures and call that a message.

Even the prophets that are being celebrated are not speaking prophetically. And we don't even know enough to require that. If they can tell us a few personal things about ourselves, that's all we want.

We need to be confirmed that God knows us. And look, this prophet was able to say something about us. Where's the prophetic Word? Where is the oracles of God? Where is the waiting thing that we need to hear for the church in the last days in all of the precarious things that are going on? That's the prophetic Word.

Where is it? The Word has been rudely shelved and has declined. And if something is just even biblical, that's enough for us. Well, if this is not the lying signs and wonders that we have been warned would characterize the last days, when those lying signs and wonders do come, how will they be substantially different in form and appearance from what is now presently taking place? And how will we then exercise discernment that we're now incapable of exercising? The church needs to be stirred up saints.

We need to be called to a maturity. These are the last days. And if this is not that of which we have been warned, when that comes, that is the lying signs and wonders, will we recognize it? Because it will be a wonder.

There will be miracles. There will be demonstration. There will be benefit.

But they will be lying signs and wonders. And if we're only concerned with the benefit and not all that much with the source, will we discern it? I know that there's a gift of discernment, but I know that there's also an exercise of discernment that is corporate, that somehow is the reflection of the stature and quality and the maturity of the corporate people of God together. Are you able to discern not only the things that are evil but the things that are good? I want to tell you that it's the things that are good that are most likely to trap us.

It's good to go here, and it's good to do this, and it's good to take care of that need. It's good that will be our undoing, because evil will be so blatant and evident. But it's the good thing that will be the most difficult to discern unless your discernment has been strengthened by the exercise thereof.

Is good good enough? Unless we have a priestly jealousy for that which is perfect, good is going to do us in. So has God changed, who is the same yesterday and forever, who said that his priests must mount a ramp and not go up by steps? Do you know that? That's in Exodus 20, verse 26. He did not allow his priests to step up to the place of ministry by steps, but only by a ramp.

You say, that's a peculiar requirement. How come? Because in lifting your leg to go from one step to another, there might be a slight possibility of revealing your flesh. And the ramp was the more secure provision that no flesh be revealed in God's presence.

If that's not the God who is God now, then shoot me and get me out of my mystery. But it's the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is only we who have changed.

On man's flesh, he says, of the holy anointing oil, it shall not be poured, neither shall you make any other like it. Be careful not to counterfeit this. Don't fabricate.

Don't turn up your amplifiers. Don't psych up. Don't hype.

Don't create an atmosphere, an environment. Don't make any other like it. Wait for the holy anointing oil, for God will anoint what he appoints and not what we establish for our own satisfaction or enjoyment or the assurance of a good service.

Oh, be jealous for the holy thing, the holy anointing oil. It makes all the difference. It's life-giving.

Let's not make any other like it. And upon man's flesh, it shall not be poured. You know that in the Welsh revival, they wouldn't even allow musical instruments? Have you read Watchmenny's book, *The Latent Power of the Soul*? Find a copy and study it.

He talks about the laughing phenomenon in the 1920s, and he warns about the use of musical instruments and its soulful power to bring deception. And that was before the advent of amplifiers and our musical technology, that today. You don't only hear, you feel it.

And in the same issue where I read the article about the leader of this revival was an article on something now called *The Rave*, which was taking place in Great Britain when I was there and is now finding its way to Australia. Christian dancing of a rock kind, but the lyrics are Christian. There's one movement in England, a house church movement, that beat sticks on the floor and create a kind of an atmosphere, and they say that that is communicating Jesus.

I'm afraid we've crossed the point of no return already, and maybe what God is wanting, and I'm happy for the gray heads in this room, is for us to pray for the condition of the church, the lamentable condition of the church, that it is even open and susceptible for the kinds of things that are now taking place. Talk about dancing about a golden calf. A whole generation being raised up that has never known the holiness of God.

And talk about God prolifically, loosely, and glibly, and easily, but which God? I'm wondering even if these central personalities have covenanted with someone other than God and don't even know it themselves. And in some Faustian way, are receiving a power to affect bodies and lives that they thought is coming from God, but their own knowledge of God is so sparse and so utterly questionable that it may well be that they've been covenanting with some other thing that parades as light and that responded to their cry for something to happen, and they think that they're communicating with God. You know what, I'll end with this.

My heart goes out to you. You have to hear me. It was not too long ago, in a church much like this, that in a moment of time, the thought came to me, you don't have to be a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness or subscribe to some sect or some cult to be deceived.

You can subscribe to correct Christian orthodoxy and be as effectually deceived in the correctness of that creedal statement as if you were embracing false doctrine. And in fact, that kind of deception is the most devious and most powerful of all because you think yourself correct. There's a need to know God's saints, desperate need to know God, and he's waiting to be sought, and he distinguishes that people, that generation that will ascend the holy hill of Zion in Psalm 24 with clean hands and a pure heart, who have not given their soul to vanity by running to Toronto, as those who will ascend the holy hill and throw the bolt that opens the gate that the king of glory might come in.

And he says, this is the generation of them that seek thee, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob. You don't have to go to Toronto to seek him. Right here where you are.

Make room, be ruthless against yourself in finding time, in sending the kids out, in getting those clamoring legitimate things that are cloying at you always away. Lock yourself in a room, throw the key away, do something, but seek God and be found of him. That's his promise.

If you will seek for me with all your heart and all your soul, you shall be found of me. And when you obtain that knowledge, maintain it or you'll lose it. So let's pray for the church.

In this critical hour, deception is rampant. My Jewish people are perishing. Where is that witness that moves them to jealousy? They are everywhere about us totally unimpressed.

With our best charismatic demonstration, untouched, they need to come into a place that is holy, holy, holy, that knows God as he is and not as men think him to be and can make him known. So Lord Jesus, precious God, holy one, our hearts go out to you, Lord. We apologize for the way in which you have been slurred, for the blasphemy that takes place everywhere.

Not by the worldlings, but by your supposed ministers. The use of you, the exploitation, the employment of your name to sanctify cheap carnival things. Lord, forgive us that we have been saps, that we have gone along with it, that we have paid for it, that we have underwritten it and have not been jealous for your name and your honor for your person.

Because we have to say that we ourselves don't know you as we ought. We have not been diligent to know you and to seek you and to retain that knowledge and to be jealous over it and to be willing like Paul to know you in the fellowship of your sufferings. We have preferred guarded private lives.

And though we have sung the brave choruses, the real testimony of our heart is this far and no further. We don't want to go all the way. That's fanatical and upsetting and threatening.

We want a measured Christian life, singing the choruses bravely, but having no intention of doing it. And Lord, we ask your forgiveness. It's not true.

It's a posture. It's an appearance of something that is not. And we enjoy that appearance, and we even have persuaded ourselves that it's true of us.

Lord, help us. Help us in your mercy and your great love for the church that was birthed out of your bleeding side. Wash us with the water of your word.

Grant us, my God, the gift of repentance. And if we don't need it for ourselves, may we repent for the church in our identification with it. Come, Lord, stir our hearts, and don't let us get away.

Hold us accountable for what we are hearing this morning. And may we be of that generation that seeks you, that seeks your face, O God of Jacob, is our prayer in Yeshua's holy name. Well, do you need an invitation of some kind? Anybody? Stand to sit, to come forward, to do something? Is there a response that ought to be made? Praying out of your seat aloud? How embarrassing.

Now everyone will know that you identify yourself with this word and see yourself in that need. Humility is the key to the kingdom. Is there anyone who loves God more than their own self-esteem, who would pray aloud this morning, where you sit, in something being prompted in your heart by the Spirit? It'll set you free, out of your own mouth.

It'll break bondages. It'll loose you from constraints. It'll put you on the path to holiness.

Break out of that passivity, that safety of anonymity in the pew, and say something before God in the hearing of the saints, and it'll be a day of new beginnings for you. Anybody? Go ahead.

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