

# K-053 Come Up and Be There

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of bold declaration of God's truth, especially in the face of secularism and idolatry, and the necessity of knowing God in totality to communicate Him as He is.*

**Duration:** 1:21:24

**Scripture:** Exodus 24:15-18, Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 27:35, Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 3:20

**Topics:** "Rapture"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the power and wealth of the world compared to the power and reality found in the Word of God. He shares a personal experience of a ten-day fast and twenty-four hours of prayer, emphasizing the importance of waiting upon the Lord. The preacher highlights the brevity of God's words in the New Testament, particularly in the crucifixion of Jesus, and emphasizes the inseparability of the man and his message in the Gospel. The sermon also references the story of Moses going up into the mountain of God and the manifestation of God's glory in the cloud.

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## Transcript

Thank you, gracious God, for all of the awesome things that pertain to you, and therefore to us, by your ordination, that it's pleased you by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. And as a preacher, my God, I'm conscious of the foolishness of preaching, that you would express yourself, Lord, through earthen vessels. We'd much rather hear your disembodied voice coming to us directly out of heaven.

It pleases you to speak it through men. So we just bow, my God, to your sovereignty, and you will be delighted for any opportunity to hear your voice in whatever way it shall please you to express it. Because we live, my God, by hearing the words, my God, of your speaking, the voice of your words.

So express yourself, my God, this morning through this inadequate vessel, Lord. As they have prayed for ears to hear, I pray for mouth to speak. Have mercy on us all together, my God, and bring us to a transcendent place because you have spoken and because your servants have heard you and received your word.

We'll thank you and praise you now. Have your way, my God, totally, I pray. Overrule, my God, every limitation of flesh and in man.

May we hear thy voice, Lord, purely. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

I'd just like to begin this morning in Acts, the 17th chapter, in a remarkable confrontation between the Apostle Paul and the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill. I wish that this were my subject alone, but it's only an introduction to what I think is really the Lord's burden. But I've only just now finished four statements from Acts 17, spoken through the adult education program of Cass Lake, Minnesota, on the secular versus the Christian mind.

And I use this text as the springboard to show the collision between two fundamental mindsets, the sacred and the secular, one born and expressed by Paul and the other by the Greek philosophers. They were the finest expression of what could be found in that generation of these two utterly dissimilar and opposed foundational points of view. I want to tell you that nothing has changed in 2,000 years.

It's exactly the same today. We're either Greek or Hebrew. We're either sacred or secular.

And that this text needs really to be combed and sifted and internalized and taken into our spirits to see what happens when these two foundationally opposed views collide. What is so beautiful, and even this morning being expressed in a like way, is that God's man came in a sense unprepared. He was brought to the place of confrontation, not by his own choosing, but by the circumstances ordered of God.

He found himself in Athens, and his spirit was grieved in him as he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogues with the Jews and with the devout persons and in the marketplace with those who met with him daily. And they brought him to Mars Hill to see what this babbling would say.

And there he confronted the cream of the crop, the epitome of Greek civilization, of humanistic society, the Epicureans and the Stoics. It is so classic, it is so timeless, so eternal, that I just want to say those few things just to heighten your appreciation of what is represented in this 17th chapter. Paul, it says in the 22nd verse, stood in the midst of Mars Hill.

That's what I love. It's not some peripheral thing. It's not some man with his hat in his hands asking the permission of society to express a kind of offbeat, peculiar view.

It is the view, it is the sacred view, the divine view, expressed again through a man in the midst of Mars Hill and all that Mars Hill represents as the epitome of civilization. The finest things wrought by man. Man, the measure of all things.

This civilization, looking at this unkempt piece of humanity, Paul, this beggarly Hebrew beneath the contempt and disdain of the Greeks. Oh, I tell you, this is so classic. You need to savor this, roll this over on your tongue to really understand what is represented by Paul at Mars Hill, standing in the midst.

Because if you don't understand it, how then shall you stand in the midst? God has called you to stand in the midst. The church, the beggarly thing, decrepit. Not at all impressive by the world's standards.

Not at all having its esteem founded on power or wealth or the kinds of things that elicit the esteem of men in the world. It's a study in weakness and foolishness. God taking the kind of raw material we are and fashioning out of that a statement to confront the world at Mars Hill.

To stand in the midst and to say the kinds of things that Paul says. I observed in all things you're too superstitious. Whap! If ever there was a calculated insult to intellectuals, it's that.

To accuse an intellectual of being superstitious who prides himself in his reason. But Paul did not weigh his remarks to see if they were tactful, if they would be acceptable, if they would be offensive. He just opened his mouth.

It was something like Jesus on the Mount of Beatitudes gathering his disciples. And he opened his mouth and he taught them. I don't know that there was much or any premeditation at all.

He opened his mouth and the God who is Paul's life expressed himself in the wisdom that has not to do with man's choosing. And it began with an insult that probably violates every principle of how to witness, how to be evangelical and how to avail yourself of a rare opportunity when it is finally afforded. All of these things were tossed into the eternal waste bin.

Paul just opened his mouth and God began where he pleased, where it pleased him. With an insult. And it begins there and it gets worse as it goes on.

By the time Paul is finished in a few telling statements, he has absolutely skewered these men. He has stripped them of their artifices, of their vain imaginings, of all of the things in which they have prided themselves, their philosophy. He has unmasked them in just a few moments, in a few statements.

Men who spend all of their lives in doing nothing else but in hearing and discussing some new thing. What is the purpose of life? Always seeking but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. Paul, bang, lets them have it right in a kisser.

In a moment to end all foolish and vain discussion. That God has made of one blood all men and has established the bounds of their habitation. That they might seek after God if happily they might be found of him.

Period. No ifs, no ands, no buts. No other reference, no other consideration.

Nothing to do with career, nothing to do with fame or wealth or power or success or comfort. That the whole purpose of human being, the whole reason why God has even established nations in the bounds of them, is that men might seek after God if happily they might be found of him. It's so simple, it's staggering.

No other consideration but this, that the whole purpose of human existence is to find God, to be found of him. Paul cuts through all of the myriad nonsense, all of the subterfuge of motivations and things that men consider in the vanity of their minds and puts his finger on the one thing for which God has established human life and existence and even the earth. When are the Stoics and the Epicureans of our generation going to hear that? They'll hear it in the day when there's a people who will proclaim it because they believe it.

That their proclamation will be in keeping with a demonstration that they are living only for that purpose. For God and to make him known. That's the reason we've not been able to say it.

Because we too are caught up in the subterfuge of all of the other motivations and concerns in which men wallow in the world. And we have not this simplicity of mind and earnestness and single-eyed devotion or awareness or understanding that everything is for God. Everything.

And so he says, while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, that's the idolatry, I also found an altar with this inscription to an unknown God in whom therefore you ignorantly worship. I declare unto you. How can you not help love Paul? Or hate him? There's simply no neutral ground.

Either you're going to be so antagonized by his boldness and his insistence or you're going to love him for exactly that reason. This is such chutzpah. Him, I declare unto you.

Him, who you ignorantly worship, I declare unto you. To the unknown God. You know, it sounds so beatific.

It has such a similitude of spiritual sense to it. It sounds like these are really a people who have a sense of reverence for God but would not presume to know him or to acknowledge him. It's as phony as the day is long.

It's a cop-out. It's a colossal self-deception. And Paul is not going to tolerate it or brook with it for one moment.

Whom you ignorantly worship. And what he's saying in that statement is not only is your worship ignorant, it is willfully ignorant. It's not an ignorance that is circumstantial.

It's not because you cannot know God. It's because you've chosen not to know. Because it's more comfortable to have a God of whom you're ignorant than a God of whom you're knowledgeable.

Because a God who is unknown makes no requirement. But a God who is known says, Thou shalt not. Or follow me.

He's a specific and knowable God with requirement. This is an artifice. It's a deception.

It's a pose. It's a cop-out. And Paul will not tolerate it for a moment.

He's got to unmask it and reveal it. To the unknown God, I'm not impressed with your statues or their inscriptions. Him, I boldly declare unto you.

That's the point at which I believe God wants me to begin with you this morning. The necessity for that bold declaration. But it can only come, not by those who know about God, but those who know God.

You can say, His theology, I set forth unto you. The tenets of His faith, I posit for you. Him, I declare unto you.

I can't think of a more awesome requirement of this hour than making God known to men. Him, I declare unto you. And I want to say that this statement needs first not to come to the secular world, to the Greeks, to the Epicureans and the Stoics, or whatever their counterpart would be today.

It needs first to come to the church itself. There's got to be some kind of apostolic presence, full-orbed like Paul, utterly uncompromising and single-eyed, that will come into the church who is ignorantly worshiping God and declare Him unto them as He really is. Because the God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, neither is served by human hands as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things.

And in the 29th verse, Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and the thought of man. Would to God that I could jab you with those words. In fact, I would go further.

We need to be stabbed, because we ourselves are guilty of exactly that, of forming an image by our thought which we call God. I hope that you're of a maturity sufficient to recognize that merely because men invoke the name of Jesus, that that does not necessarily imply that it's the true Jesus who is being invoked. Jesus rock and roll culture, Jesus t-shirts, it's become such a cheap, glib and easy word that just about anybody can express it in a facile way.

But what a stunning revelation would come to many who think that they are sincere, to recognize that when they invoke the label Jesus, it is not to the awesome person whose name that is, but to a construct of their own mind that serves their own purposes. He's the Jesus who runs their errands. He's the Jesus who finds them a girlfriend or a boyfriend, who brings them bodily health or prosperity or an answer to their distress in business or in finance.

It's a God of their own making, out of the thought of man. So I want to say that the central principle, first and foremost apostolic task, is to demolish the idols. It is to unveil and to unmask every false thing that hides itself in the name of God and that is so prevalently practiced in our modern religion today because we think that by speaking the right word, we're referring to the right reality.

We never will really understand the right reality until it is communicated to us apostolically, which is to say authentically and totally by one who is as full orb'd as Paul in his knowledge of God. The God who gives all things. See, only the Paul of Acts 16 could speak that in Acts 17 because in Acts 16, this same Paul was in a dungeon in Philippi bound in stocks with his back hanging in ribbons, flayed by 39 strokes, having been stripped naked in the marketplace and worked over and beaten within an inch of his life and tossed into this nondescript dungeon in the stink of human excretion and urine with the scurrying of rats and vermin and the moaning of prisoners thousands of miles from his home never knowing if he would ever come out of that dark place again alive.

Who had been obedient to the heavenly vision who saw a Macedonian by night saying come and help us and assuredly he had called them and they set forth with a straight course only to suffer this unspeakable humiliation and brutality because they brought the gospel to Europe because they saw a vision in the night and assuredly gathered that the Lord had called them and now this is the reward. And at midnight when we would have moaned and groaned and wrung our fingers and been full of frightful conjecture about whether we would come out of this alive and how shall we contact the American embassy to let our folks in Rockford know that we're at Philippi and that somehow they can extricate us from this unhappy situation and full of frightfulness and our moanings would join the moanings of the prisoners and where is God who has abandoned us and allowed us to suffer this? It says at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. That's why the same Paul of Acts 16 can in the very next chapter say to the Greeks the God who giveth all things does not abide in temples made with hands.

Until we believe in the God who gives all things we'll not be able to speak to the Greeks or to the secular Greek spirit which is already permeating our sacred institution the church. So long as we think that he only gives the good things and not the unfortunate or the unhappy or the painful or the trying things we cannot speak to the Greeks because we're still sharing to some degree their mindset seeing that he himself needs nothing and gives to all life and breath and all things. You know God in that totality? The God who

gives all things.

I've got to believe that God this morning. Of all of the things that could come to my mind to speak and you don't have to be super spiritual to discern the significance of any occasion standing before God's people let alone to be standing this morning here at this place and at this time not wanting to miss God. Your mind wanting to race with a thousand possibilities of good things to speak but what is the thing the appointed thing and the word that is sent and why doesn't God clearly let you know well in advance of the time? You have to believe that he's the God who gives all things including this morning's speaking.

We'll never be able to communicate God as he is as the awesome God that he is whose presence will make every false thing be revealed except we know him in this kind of totality and I don't believe that we're going to come to that knowledge as in Acts 17 ability on our part without first to some measure passing through our Acts 16. This kind of knowledge is especially enhanced by the fellowship that comes in his suffering. This very past Sunday when we had no message and God just began to express in our own little modest fellowship the hope which we have in God.

It was just a pain of praise to hope in God. An Indian brother visiting got up in the middle of the room and just had to celebrate God because look at the new shoes that God has just given him. Look at the new shoes God has just given me.

My mother wanted to get me a pair of these in Florida when I saw the cost I said nothing doing and a few days later at a conference there was the brother wearing the identical shoes and I said boy that's a beautiful pair. Where did you get those? Oh he said I got them at the thrift shop in... where's a fancy place in Los Angeles? Bel Air or something. He knows where to go to get good cast off things.

\$6.95. The guy came up to my Adam's apple but on the day of my departure he told the woman at whose home he was staying where we went for a final lunch give Art those shoes. So I tried them on expecting to experience the pinch of a man who was like one third less my size and they fit perfectly in my glove. The God who gives all things.

I tell you it beats buying them. You guys don't know what you're missing. And here was this Indian brother celebrating the God who gave him a pair of beautiful boots when his others were just completely worn out.

His wife was pregnant and due any moment and in fact I think at that service the labor began and a couple of our people went home with her to help in the work of midwifery and the next morning or somewhere late that night the baby was born dead. And the brother called and I spoke to him on the phone our brother who was there and I said when this Indian brother will rejoice as much for the dead baby as for the shoes that were given God has a man who can stand on Mars Hill and speak to the secular world about the God who gives all things. Can rejoice in the God who gives all things? Or are you still given somewhat to Greek assumptions as for example that the whole purpose of a life is the pursuit of happiness.

You see how much the secular has come into the sacred. How much our minds have been touched and affected by other considerations that are not holy and yet have such full acceptance in society that it becomes so sacrosanct that they're not even to be challenged but to be questioned. Paul went right into the midst of all of these premises and he let him have it.

This is the purpose of our human existence. This is the God whom you ignorantly worship. I declare unto you.

And before that statement was finished he says and God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men by that one whom he has raised from the dead. What a complete statement. He's not only the God who gives all things he's the God who gives also judgment.

And you Greeks had better know it. That God who was in times past winked is now commanding all men everywhere to repent. It's not a Paul who is selective and who loves to dote on certain attributes of God that are easy and delightful to consider.

The love of God. The kindness of God. The goodness of God.

The givingness of God. But he recognizes that God is of one piece. And you can't sift out and cull the things that you like and dismiss the rest.

And if you don't celebrate and acknowledge and rejoice for the judgment of God as much as the mercy of God he is a God of your own making out of the imaginings of your mind. You've got to have him whole and be able to present him as the God he is who will in the soon coming hour judge all men. And I think the reason that Paul could speak that and speak it with penetration and make it cogent where some trembled and clave unto him and believed is because he's a man who lived as if he believed that there's a God who judges all things.

I'll tell you that our charismatic frivolity and lightheartedness and casual airs would go out with a puff if we believed that there's a God who is brooding over us who sees us and in whose view we're utterly transparent and knows even our thoughts that we'll one day stand before him as judge. There'd be much less hanky-panky in the body of Christ. There would not be ministers running off with their organists and various other liberties that we take if not in our practice at least in our thought.

We think even that our thoughts are our own. How much do we enjoy in the privacy of our own minds because we think that God is not there to observe or to understand even our thoughts. What a final and ultimate expression of our vanity and our presumption our pride our arrogance that we think that our thoughts are even our own to contemplate and to enjoy them as we will.

Though all of our behavior be totally circumspect and beyond any question and altogether up to par in terms of Christian conduct if we have reserved for ourselves but this one area alone where our thoughts are our own for our own contemplation and our own enjoyment however unholy when we stand before the Greeks we'll speak but we'll only babble and no one shall cleave unto us and believe. They shall not be penetrating words they shall not be convicting words because deep in the privacy of our own soul is an area of compromise private and reserved unto ourselves in which we have not admitted to God because we have not the awesome sense of Him as judge. Paul said we shall be judged in our bodies for all that we have done or failed to do.

Everything that I'm saying can really be summed up in a single statement. Probably the most critical deficit to be found in the church today is the absence of the fear of God. And the fear of God is the knowledge of God.

A brother with whom I have traveled recently he said I'm not even happy for what it says in the margin of my Bible where they have a little footnote and in the margin it says that the fear of God is the reverence of God. He said I believe that when God says fear He means fear. It's not ungodly and it's not unlike Him.

Yes, He deserves to be revered but there's a fear of God that is beyond reverence. There needs to be a trembling a sense of the awesomeness of God the utter sovereignty of God the God who is judge. It's not a cowardly fear it's a fear that will enhance God in us.

And for the want of which there is something cheap and easy and compromising that is in the whole fabric of our Christian life and in the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being that keeps us from final confrontation with the secular world in the absoluteness in which Paul brought it two thousand years ago. Are you guys following me? So having said these things I want us to turn to another text in the book of Exodus that was on my heart yesterday and last night and I think the Lord wants it expressed this morning is where is this knowledge to be obtained? Where do we obtain this true knowledge that we can say to men He whom you ignorantly worship in your prosperity message in your so-called faith message we declare unto you that He's not a God who's a gimmick or a device or a lamp to be rubbed who is going to come out at your beckoning to do your service and to provide your carnal and fleshly delight. He's the God who is made of all men one blood and established the bounds of their habitation.

The whole purpose of human existence is that we might be found of Him to serve His purposes to reveal His glory in the earth to see His kingdom come. You've got a God of your own making by the imagining of your thought and I'm learning increasingly that the false thing is not revealed by mere verbal proclamation by the mere statement of the truth. It's the demonstration that unveils the false.

We have got to live as if we believe. We have to be one cloth. It has got to be somehow the Word made flesh in us that will enable us to stand in the midst and boldly declare God as He is.

Well, in Exodus 24 a certain invitation given to Moses by God to come up to the top of Mount Sinai that is just haunting my spirit. Will you understand me this morning if I say that Moses is a picture the quintessential apostle the foundational man the master builder bringing the law laying the foundations bringing the people out of bondage establishing the things that pertain to the new land and to the new life. Paul was an apostle and this is a word that I hold with such reverence that is so sacred and so holy that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

It's a foundation which is sorely lacking in our own generation and God is in process now of restoring it. It's not just men who understand the principles of God but men who have such a knowledge of God in His presence in His dealings that what they communicate are not just the precepts and the principles but very God Himself. That's the foundation of the church.

And I'm reminded this morning as I was sitting here in this front row of a scripture that I had not spoken in I don't know how long and I wouldn't even know where to find it I know it's in the Bible where God upbraids Israel with these words the knowledge of me He said is taught by the precepts of men and our condition has so sunken and is so low that we have come to the place where we would say well what's wrong with that? How else is the knowledge of God to be communicated except by the precepts of men? And yet God singles this thing out as a statement of the lowest state to which Israel had fallen that now the way in which God is communicated is by the precepts of men. That must raise the question well if God is distressed with that and if that's a statement of a low condition by what other means then is He to be communicated and to be known? And that's what I believe is expressed here in Exodus 24 it's something that precedes the giving of the law something that must come at the beginning of an entire journey that brings us into another land. It's God saying in the twelfth verse to Moses come up unto me on the mount and be there and I will give you the tablets of the law and the commandments which I have written for their

instruction.

Let me read that in the King James And the Lord said unto Moses come up to me into the mount and be there and I will give thee tables of stone and the law and commandments which I have written that thou mayest teach them. The issue of teaching the issue of ministry the issue of service has not to do with your virtuosity with your ability with your cleverness with your knowledge with your Bible school background your past experience or any single thing else. That thou mayest teach them is altogether related to one thing only that you have come up unto the mount to God and be there.

Now Lord help me because I'm over my head. This is transcendent stuff and it is not to be communicated by words. It's got to be engraved that God has got just by his spirit now even between the lines to a sense to communicate to us what this invitation means.

Come up unto me and be there. And I want to say that I think I can safely say for myself and for all of us in this room who I would say without offending God may perhaps represents among the finest and the best of the expression of the body of Christ to be found in the earth. And yet how many of us know what it means to be there.

Or to be just to take the one word and to lavish attention on it. And you shall be witnesses unto me not do witnessing for me. Everything rests on the be what you are.

Come up to me and be there. Not partially not in a gesture not in a portion but in the totality of all that you are body, soul, mind and spirit. To meet with me who is the total God and the consuming fire.

Total God and total man being there. Not because you're going to receive from me the tablets of the law. It's not that I'm an instrumentality for some other end.

I want you to be there for myself alone. You're so cotton-picking utilitarian. You see me only as an agent or as an instrument to other ends.

You learn of me because you want a ministry or enjoy the worship or the fellowship but you don't know what it means to enjoy me and to be with me for my own sake and to be there. No strings attached. No other consideration.

No thought for what the consequence will be as a result of being in my presence. It's not what end it's going to serve beyond itself but to be there for itself alone. Come up and be there.

And I'll tell you that takes some coming up. You just try it and you'll see every force on this earth nipping at your heels and tugging at your trousers and pulling at your clothing or digging at your appetite or pulling your eyeballs down or filling the orbs of your senses with every kind of natural sensate weighted earthly thing that says, stay down there and you can still serve God. You don't have to go up.

Going up defies gravity. It's an exertion. You have to pass through prickly things and stumble and choke and splutter and find your way up in a darkness on a mount for 40 days and 40 nights.

And you neither ate nor drank. It's an ascending up. And there are very few of us who have yet even so much as to commence the journey because we have been so spoiled.

Bible schools and courses in discipleship that in three months will fit us for ministry. But God would not allow this apostle, this foundational man, this giant of this stature to begin to bring the law down and to

communicate it to Israel and to lead them into a land in which the law could be fulfilled except he first came up to the lawgiver himself. Because I'll tell you what, you'll be bringing another tablet.

It'll not be stone. It'll be plastic. It'll be the same words but it will not have the heft and the weight and the power and the cogency and the penetration and the meaning and the result except you have received those words at his hand on that mount and in no other place.

This is an apostolic requirement for an apostolic people and only that people will be brought to another mount to confront the secular spirit of this age and him whom you ignorantly worship I declare unto you because I know him not by the precepts of men and not by principles but by presence. I have been up to the mount of God. I'm not speaking out of my experience.

I'm speaking out of my desperate need and that's why I cried when I began with you this morning because the foolishness of what I'm about struck my soul. This needs to be spoken by a man who's been up to that mount and has been fused with God who is a consuming fire in the heat of it. But I guess there are so few around who have had that experience that God has got to employ me to speak not out of my experience but out of my need which is comparable to your own.

If we have any kind of apostolic intention if we desire one day to be on a Mars hill if we know that our life is pointed for that ultimate confrontation and showdown to unmask the foolishness and the deceit of the world in all of its pretense and cop out phony culture and pseudo civilization it can only be done by those who can boldly declare God whom you ignorantly worship because they know him not by precept but by presence. Come up unto me not for what you're going to get you American utilitarian people who always see things pragmatically in terms of what the benefit is going to be and what the result will be and the advantage gained by doing or going and you don't know what it means to come to pure actuality of God alone for his own sake. And I want to tell you that that's the whole apostolic message.

That's the church. It's a people who are freed from utilitarianism who are freed from secondary pursuits who are freed from the delights of the flesh and the lusts of this and of that because they understand that they understand that they understand that they know that they know He's not a means to some other end He is the end. And I'll tell you except we know the end our means are going to be tainted and discolored.

We'll stoop and condescend to the techniques and the methodologies of the world because our means apostolically speaking must be consonant with our end. We must know our end. God for his own sake.

I remember how staggered I was I don't know how many years ago when someone said to me I heard someone make the remark he said Artie said all that the gospel is is simply to teach men how to live. And all of a sudden I suddenly crashed on my consciousness like that knockout punch wow I keeled over like one dead. I thought that the gospel was something to titillate my intellectual ability and give me something to ponder and to speculate and to make fanciful conjectures about and even artfully to broadcast and to proclaim.

Isn't that what the gospel is? Wonderful set of principles and illuminations and insights and something to occupy our attention rather than the world and its nonsense. But to teach men how to live that the whole apostolic purpose is to teach men how to live rightly which requires a knowledge of God at its center that it's a life that is free from manipulation from seeking from subterfuge of other purposes and other ends that it has something to do with a quality of relationship that is so altogether transcendent so deep, so authentic, so real that if we know what it means to come up to God and be there what shall it mean when

we come to each other and be there? We have not yet even begun to scratch that toward each other to come unto each other and be there. We're operating like ships passing in the night we're surface to surface rather than deep speaking unto deep.

It's rare to have a relationship even in the body of Christ and be there. That even while we're speaking to our brother and sister our mind is already contemplating tomorrow or yesterday's failure or some other future thing we don't know what it means to be totally present with each other or with God. And all that I'm saying is that that's the way to live.

To be totally present is the way to live. It's to understand that this moment is eternal. It's a once and for all.

It's from the God who gives all things. We're not going to have this again. We need to celebrate this.

We need to come with such avid hearts and spirits with the senses that God has given us and minds and keenness and spirit and sharp and discerning to appropriate and to be apprehended by all that God wants to invest and give in this moment as the God who gives all things. I tell you, we came into our services on a Sunday with that attitude. The very roof would be lifted from the building and heaven would be opened over us.

We wouldn't be coming to services. We would be coming to divine events. And we wouldn't leave there either.

We would be taking it into our schools and offices and factories on Monday and bring the transcendence of God into the secular place. We would bring the holy into the profane and eternal into time because we have been there. I hope I'm not making sense.

I hope that this is a mystery. I hope that you're befuddled. I hope that your mind is not quite grasping this but something strange is happening in your spirit.

Guys, the faith is the call to transcendence. And don't ask me to define it. But my spirit knows it and is yearning for this very thing.

And I accept that we shall have it. You know what we'll be? We'll be a bunch of slick professionals. We'll be as good with our Christian vocabulary as the world is with its secular counterpart.

It'll be plastic hitting plastic and random is nothing. But there needs to be an apostolic presence that is authentic, that knows God for the awesome thing that He is in His totality because we have been there. Come up unto me is the beginning of the great journey and must proceed even the giving of the law that thou mayest receive the law and the commandments which I've written that thou mayest teach them.

You can forget about any kind of teaching, any kind of ministry, any kind of communication except you first have come up unto me and be there. Don't you realize that your preoccupation with your ministry and your future service to God can be as egotistical and as egocentric as with materialism? You've just substituted a spiritual concern for a carnal but it's still centered in self. My ministry, my calling and so what will you communicate through it if you do not reach something more transcendent than that? It'll be tintured by your egocentrism and the Greeks will scoff at you and deride you and there will be no one cleaving unto you and believing.

And I've repeated that several times now and I've not read the entire text in Acts 17. Read it at your own leisure. It says when they would not hear further so Paul came out of their midst some said we'll hear again of this matter others said what will this babbling say? but some cleave unto Paul and believed.

Some said we'll hear again of this matter others said what will this babbling say? but some cleave unto Paul and believed. Because you cannot separate the man from his message. This gospel is not some set of abstract concepts that can be disseminated cleverly by any kind of an instrument.

There's something about the nature of it that is deeply personal, deeply incarnate must be expressed through men in whom the word has become flesh. They cleave unto Paul and believed. That's why the same Paul can say imitate me as I imitate Christ.

So Moses rose up in verse 13 and his minister Joshua Moses went up into the mountain of God. Verse 15 Moses went up into the mount and a cloud covered the mount and the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel and Moses went into the midst of the cloud and gave himself up into the mount and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights. You can see why preaching is necessary because God is so sparse with his words gives us only the thinnest outline just the faintest intimation of an awesome event.

I still stagger at the brevity of God in the New Testament and they crucified him. You would think what an opportunity now for God to let loose with such verbiage, with such powerful description in words but he takes the holiest events and he compresses them to just a few words which if you don't come to him in the right spirit to those words you'll miss the whole awesome event and they crucified him. Something has got to be transacted between you who are reading and pondering those words and the spirit of God who gave them in the moment now in the eternal now.

You've got to sense the holiness the awesomeness, the fear, the cross the whole thing that is being waited and performed in that moment and they crucified him. I'm just reading a book in which the author who is a scientist concludes that the whole of creation and the whole of man that is made in God's image was established for this one purpose the single redemptive act of God of Jesus crucified on the cross in the body of a man. A sacrifice you would not but a body hast thou fashioned for me.

There's something about the necessity for the humanness of Jesus, the transaction that must take place in the body. He talks even about crucifixion as the only kind of execution that could have fitted in the purposes of God because anything else had it been a beheading or a shooting or a drowning or a hanging would not have given the one who is the eternal atonement the opportunity to lay down his life and to yield up his spirit at the moment of his choosing. No man takes my life.

I lay it down. It is finished. Not because men have determined it but because God.

He didn't die because of the cross but on the cross. But the cross itself as the mode of death coming in the historical juncture of time at the very hour at the eve of Passover when the lambs were being slain for the observation of Passover all predetermined in the counsel of God before the foundations of the earth were laid for Jesus was given as a sacrifice before the foundations of the earth were laid. That the earth therefore, the world, man history, time, Israel, sacrifice atonement was all determined by God in one appointed time and moment.

I'm just trying to lay hold of such a sense of the sovereignty of God. Though it says that he was taken by wicked hands and slain but in the same verse it says the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. Yes, you're responsible.

Your wicked hands have taken him and slain him but you're only serving a purpose that was established even before the foundations of the earth were laid. So mighty and awesome is God that he can orchestrate the free will of men in the fulfillment of his eternal counsel. Do you know God that way? It's awesome.

It's staggering. The utter sovereignty of God. How come then when something goes wrong with us we think it's a circumstance or it's an accident or we're late or we get flustered or frantic or pushed out of shape and do not believe that somehow the same God who is sovereign in all things working even through our stupidities and failures is filling a consummation of his own will for which we should be in a rest and a peace rather than in a frustration.

I'm speaking out of a very recent personal experience when we drove to Minneapolis from our fellowship in northern Minnesota with these students who have come to us from foreign countries and my daughter is driving just got her driver's license and she said she knew the way and I foolishly trusted her and even dozed off in that confidence to wake up thinking we should have arrived by now and where are we and she's still driving somewhere into the night and turning off on a route 18 which is not the 18 that we should have turned off 45 minutes before and we're late we had a dinner prepared for us by a Jewish believer a woman who had to leave to go to school that night and I wanted to meet these students and we're going to miss this now and oh the whole thing is a mess and I got on the

phone and got directions and I took over and irritation and mumbling and finally got us to the appointed place but late and just in time to see this woman who had to leave and we ate and there's a pool in her condominium and the fellas wanted to go swimming and we went much off schedule only to find that when we first came there were a number of guys frolicking but the time we actually got in the pool they had left and there was only another couple there and in one or two words of conversation hearing their peculiar accent I realized that they were Russian and suspected also that they were Jewish which indeed was the case and when our conversation ended this Russian Jewish woman said to me God must have sent you when am I going to believe the God who gives all things and will even use a

teenage daughter in her presumption and her lostness to bring us to the appointed place in his time we need to know this God his flawless sovereignty because I tell you you're going to find yourself choking and spluttering in disappointment when you think he should have done this or said that but you're experiencing a peculiar failure and an absence of words and an absence of knowing what you're doing and what you're about when you should have thought that you would have been clearest and sharpest because the moment is so supremely important and find out later that it's exactly that that God wanted not your competency but your weakness that the God whom you ignorantly worship I declare unto you and I tell you you'll not know that God by precept you'll know him by the experience of failure

and of frustration of finding and thinking that you were late only to find that you were eternally on time come up unto me well we need to burrow in to these very few words that Moses went up Jewish men were required to go up to Jerusalem three times in the year for the great feasts anyone who has been to Israel know that you go up to Jerusalem even to this day God has established his Zion on a holy hill and it's not in a valley or in a place of convenience it's a place of human inconvenience to go up every ascent to God

is up as against everything that wants to tug and to pull us down and I said to young people last night I said it to you previously and probably every time that I've come here I say it to you again contend for the faith that was once given to the saints don't accept any

kind of sappy substitute any kind of toned down charismatic equivalence but the faith once given to the saints the apostolic faith the true faith in the knowledge of God that can only be obtained by contending which is a going up you're going to have to fight against this sensate world that every day wants to impose its weightiness upon you look at its credentials look at its power look at its wealth and all you have is this book in which you have steeped your face and drunk from its spirit and established the reality of it as your reality the predicate and the foundation of your life did I tell you about the 10 day fast that we had up in our fellowship and 24 hours of prayer around the clock because here I was preaching that the church was established in waiting upon the Lord in 10 days

that we need to continue in that same spirit of waiting and some new convert comes up to me after the message and said Artie said in all your travels have you found a church today that has waited 10 days on the Lord what a staggering question from the mouth of a babe and before I could dwell on that and I knew already that I had never found such a one I've been in many lustrous fellowships the finest but to wait together 10 days on the Lord who can afford it it's too inconvenient too costly it requires a suspension of all of our activity a moratorium on all of our interests it means a financial loss and various other risks and failures I came to New York City to be the director of a mission to the Jews a young believer this was many years ago and my first thought was we need to call a

moratorium on all of our activity cease our program because what have Jewish missions been to this date a sound and a fury signifying nothing vain a rare a peripheral Jew would stagger in a collection for the old and the lonely who sit in for whatever warmth and benefit they receive but the mainstream of Jewry untouched by missions New York City two and a half million Jews the greater and more effectual Jerusalem than Jerusalem itself and how do we proceed how do we get past those door guards how to be so near and yet so far how do we break through this wall that stands between us and them of Jewish institutions and holding us at arm's length how do you reach those with whom you're so near and I said to this little band of workers I said let's call a moratorium let's wait on God for some

divine thing that has got to come down to us from above because past techniques and methods have been patent failure and the man who was right under me in authority said stop the program and the chill came into my soul what was wrong with me to think that we could ever stop the program you're right it must go on and it did and we never did wait and we never did find our breakthrough so when I spoke about waiting on the Lord this guy said have you found the fellowship the Lord said hey buddy how about yours and I came home like a mouse and said in little whisper tones to the fellowship you know that one day we ought to wait on the Lord ten days oh they agreed it was a terrific idea and one day the Lord will give us the opportunity it will be when the ministry is not busy when the kids

are not at school and this is not happening and we waited you know the time never came we just realized that the kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force and we elders just asserted we're beginning Monday a ten day period of waiting on the Lord we're taking the phone off the hook we're ceasing everything no letters no communication we're going to meet and we're going to be praying around the clock and fasting for ten days and we did and the fire of God did not fall which I had hoped for because if we were waiting for some spectacular response from God it's not waiting it's still utilitarian seeking we didn't it's still not a coming up to him and being there for his own sake and somewhere about the seventh

day of that fast I remember myself on the floor about three four or

five in the morning we had three hour shifts through the day and night and we found ourselves in combination with different ones of the fellowship in some hour of day and night in the course of those ten days in prayer have you ever gotten to that place where you're beyond your own ability to pray beyond your own cleverness your own spirituality your own eloquence and all you can do drained of strength and utterly weak in the seventh day of the fast in some ungodly hour three four in the morning stretched on your face as grown you know what I recognized at that moment that I needed to recognize so desperately and need to be reminded again and again he's the creator and I'm the creature I have no strength for myself no thought for myself no cleverness no ability I don't know how to do the

Lord's work I don't know how to proceed to establish the kingdom we need to be prostrate before him and to find in communion with God to whom we come without strings attached what his good pleasure and will is before we receive the tablets of the law to go and to teach them to be in that holy presence for his own sake is the first profound apostolic requirement for we have nothing to communicate and nothing to teach it says Moses was the meekest of all men on the face of the earth where do you think he got that it was in the consuming fire in the presence of God I don't have a word for it I don't even know how to describe it or hardly to imagine it but whatever is in us that is cocksure flamboyant heady human, what we're going to do for God our bumptiousness our presumption somehow when

we come into that holy presence that's what's consumed the air goes out of us, we're deflated our humanity everything that is contrary to God we see the God who is the consuming fire and something comes into us which constitutes meekness because the same Moses coming down with the tablets of the law came down to find all Israel whoring and dancing around the golden calf naked and he dashed the tablets to pieces and commanded that that golden calf be ground to powder and tossed into the drink and he made them lap it up like dogs drink your idolatry and you don't even read so much as a single complaint who are you and by what authority do you require this how dare you they just they went down and they did what Moses said because he came to them out of the presence and the authority of the

God of the mount it's an awesome authority and it is altogether in proportion to an awesome meekness I hope you're understanding this because it will save you from end time deception of men who say that they are apostles but are not the fact that they say it should already put you on alert you'll know them by their meekness bold and yet in the boldness and in the authority is a meekness that trembles before God that has a deep inward awareness and suspicion of anything that is human in themselves that only comes out of knowledge of God not by precepts but by presence come up unto me and be there and he went up into the cloud it's not a cloud of marshmallows and cotton it's not some ethereal thing with the angels with harps it's a foreboding and fearful cloud of smoke of the presence of

the glory of God which is a consuming fire have you ever been in smoke I praise God I've had one experience but Lord please don't ever repeat it it is a most remarkable phenomenon I praise God that I had it once and I want to communicate it to you that you can understand what Moses dwelt in for six days before he was summoned into the presence of God on the seventh he was in the thick cloud and I want to tell you it is completely disorienting we had a fire in a building on our property we had electric baseboard heaters and someone had pushed cushions up against them and three or four in the morning these things erupted and the fire leaped up out of those cushions and took hold of that cedar wood and within a matter of minutes you could hear that crackling and smoke and I was waking and I

got the family out just in time that thing was going up like a tinder box and my wife said please go in and get my purse it's right on the kitchen counter I said sure dear I knew that house like the palm of my hand and the counter was like just three or four feet from the door I went in through the door and I went very low the place was so thick with smoke and I was suddenly and totally and absolutely lost I was so lost I could not only not find the kitchen counter I couldn't find the door through which I had just a moment before entered I was completely disoriented I couldn't tell you my left hand from my right such a strange sensation came over me of a complete human disorientation in a place where I should have had all familiarity and knowledge I think that what I'm communicating to

you is sufficient for you to understand what Moses was in for six days and why he was required to be there for that length of time for six is the eternal number of man this is the Moses who slew an Egyptian this is the Moses who took things into his own hands this is the Moses who was a prince in Egypt and trained in Egyptian wisdom and artifice and knowledge this is a Moses who presumed to think he knew something about God who had called him and met him at the burning bush who had some knowledge of God that exceeded that of any of his contemporaries and yet so much like our own knowledge by the precepts of men from the cassettes of men from the writings of men there's a place for that but it's not a substitute for this knowledge that can only come in the holy presence of God to which we

are only summoned on a seventh day after we have for six days dwelt in the cloud of smoke everything that is human and humanly obtained humanly contrived humanly formed even though it be religious even though it be correct has got to be taken from us in that terrible disorientation how many of us would be willing to go up to that kind of amount because everything in us that is human wants to cleave to the knowledge that we have about God about principles about precepts that we can speak from and share from and witness from but to be totally emptied to come to a total disorientation even in our religious spiritual knowledge and to receive it anew in the presence of God from him who is authenticity itself is the apostolic requirement Paul when he was converted he said he did not go to flesh

and blood he did not learn from flesh and blood, he might have but he was 13 years in a wilderness same place where Elijah learned his knowledge of God that in a moment of confrontation he can stand before the dread Ahab and say as the Lord my God lives before whom I stand that absolute knowledge of that God was not gleaned from men it came in fire in dealings, in trial in everything that has to do with the devastation of our humanity even at its best which is to say when it is religious this is frightening and perhaps it's not for everybody but it's for those who are called to bring the law of God to men to bring the way of his commandments to bring the things that are holy down from the mount into the place where men are to come into the other mounts where secular men are lost in their

own phony cop-out wisdom and to say to them the God whom you ignorantly worship I declare unto you so I know that there is a requirement that God is summoning men up to this mount it's not a literal mount but the configuration of it is given here once and for all forty is the number of trial it's not a picnic, you don't go up with your basket it's not a scenic thing it's clouded in smoke he went up into the cloud and he abode in that cloud for six days on the seventh day God called him out of the midst of the cloud the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel who were observing from below what must it have been to Moses who was in it I'll tell you if that will not make you meek nothing else will if you come down

and still are a hot shot and have your own plans and schemes and what you're going to do with the Joe Jones Evangelistic Association you have not been in that fire you have not been in that presence you have

not been in that six days of emptying the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai my prayer this morning in that little prayer chapel on the other side of this building was Lord, this is Saturday the Jewish Sabbath but whether it is this day or any day I just ask that the speaking this morning will not be out of any fretfulness out of any anxiety out of any human concern but out of your rest isn't it remarkable that this tumultuous end of the age this climactic, this collision between kingdoms that the actors in it who serve God in the midst of all of that fury will be acting out of

the rest of God they'll not be frantic but in the rest where his glory dwells in that seventh day because they're free from anxiety, from fretfulness about themselves, they're not touched with their own insecurity they have been emptied in six days in the cloud would you like to come up there? is God calling you? see it doesn't even begin with our own presumption that I would like, is God calling you to come up? it has to be at his invitation there's no place here for human presumption at all and yet there can be a call that can be refused an unwillingness to go up it's too demanding Moses left behind the twelve tribes of Israel his brother Aaron and not just the physical people, but even the burden pertaining to them every human and earthly thing remains below as he ascends up come up

unto me and be there not with your mind racing about how you're going to take these people through a wilderness and what are you going to do if this happens or if that happens or this conjecture or that but come up unto me and be there after that I will give you the tablets of the law the commandments that I have written that then thou mayest teach them you'll have patience out of your meekness for this difficult people again and again and again they'll vex you and stretch you out unbearably but you're out of that meekness you'll have an authority that can command an authority that can face the Greeks and stand in the midst and unveil their false pretenses the God whom they ignorantly worship whom they choose to remain ignorant of that they might go on with their own philandering and

their own fornications even while they're seeking the knowledge to which they never come and you can tell them that God has winked in times past but he commands men now everywhere to repent, it's not an option and the very word command will resonate with your voice some will scoff, some will say well here again this matter, they never will but not any one of them who has heard you who has met you that day will ever stand before God with excuse to have one encounter with Paul is to be rendered without excuse for eternity you've not just heard the words, you've met the man you've sensed the God, you've seen his authority and the foolishness of the Hebrew servant is a picture of the church not out of ourselves but because ourselves have been emptied in six days but out of the presence that

has come the fusing with the God who is the consuming fire, who calls us up into his presence on the seventh is the apostolic requirement I just see the universal human condition in being the instrument of God to that crucifixion but something that is continually performed again and again and again by generations even to this moment that are still choosing Barabbas still guilty of the same presumption still saying come down from the cross and we'll believe you because they don't want to believe in one that whose glory is somehow associated with his suffering come down and join us in our kind of religion in something that is less demanding and we'll believe that and we'll join that the spirit of that is in the church today so the issues are the same and it needs to be faced in the church

before we come to the Mars Hill of the world by those who have come up who know this God and can declare him boldly I want to pray that blessing and ask God through the speaking this morning it's a call to some here to that coming up it's not a geographical place to be found right in your situation right in your middle class the context of your life God can call you up you can find yourself in a cloud of disorientation in

which everything which you had confidence even religiously speaking crumbles and falls apart or your marriage or your ministry or your profession a human emptying that there might be a divine filling it grieved God that the knowledge of him was taught by the precepts of men that was his statement of the low condition to which Israel had fallen how then does he observe us

that we didn't even so much as suspect that there was any other way to know God except by precept so precious God we are every one of us guilty precious God of presumption of our own thoughts the vanity of our own mind of fashioning God in our own image and labeling that God Jesus tintured by our self interest and the purposes that would be obtained by that God for us we acknowledge my God that the greatest need for this hour is the knowledge of God that restores the fear of God and we can say with that same pole knowing the terror of God I persuade men and our persuasion Lord has been weak rather than persuade we have enticed we have appealed to their voluptuous hearts that if they accept Jesus they could have this benefit and that we have not communicated your fear we have not warned

them of your judgment because we ourselves lack the sense of it my God I ask your mercy for us all today we need desperately to come into a thick cloud by which all of this mishmash and mixture of things true and false and tainted and distorted will be emptied out and that we might receive afresh in your own presence the sense of yourself for your own sake God for his own sake himself my God may this speaking today be an invitation to as many as will come up unto me and be there whatever the cost, whatever the requirement whatever needs to be left below whatever distraction needs to be thrown off like a dead weight or responsibility may be those who hear this call and say to you yes I come and let me not come into your holy presence until everything that is offensive in your sight, my

presumption my pride, my human conjecture, my egocentrism that is reflected even in my service for you is emptied my God in the thick smoke of your glory Lord I pray for an apostolic presence in this city I pray for a true apostolic witness for apostolic boldness and apostolic authority and apostolic knowledge of God that is not intimidated by Greeks that stands in the midst without fear without deviation to boldly proclaim God as he is to those who prefer to know him ignorantly and practice their idolatries even in their Sunday religion my God may he be raised up out of the midst of this people whom you have called to hear these words today may he be brought to the church before it is brought to Mars Hill the knowledge of you my God, the fear of you the awesome sense of your sovereignty,

the God who does all things well, the God who gives all things seeing that he does not dwell in temples made with hands, may you bring my God the all things into the life of those who are coming up to this mount that are painful and trying as well as pleasant that they might rejoice as much for the loss of a baby as for the receiving of the things that are good a total acknowledgement of your sovereignty as the God who gives all things I just want to ask you as we conclude this morning as the minister of this word who among you is choosing to go up and come up to this God and be there and are willing for what going up means and what six days in the cloud means, for what emptying means for the true knowledge of God that comes only in that presence and though that that is the end in itself

and you're not to look beyond it to realize also it is the preliminary to coming down from that mount to serve God in the midst of rebellious people to those who eat and drink and rise up to play not only to resist their mirth and their carnality but to rebuke them and to grind it up and to command them to drink it in the authority that is only that which belongs to the meek this is not an easy school, it's a call is anyone here in this room this morning hearing that call for themselves and will indicate with their hand up to God, I hear it my God and I'm coming whatever is required, I want to go up I'm going up right in my circumstances I

invite you to bring the trial, the dealing the emptying that will divest me of the most subtle taint of self that I might in a seventh day abide in

your presence and learn of you there and be there I want to be to men totally what I must first be to you I'm superficial, I'm partial my mind races with other things even while I'm talking to friends still thinking of the things that pertain to me I don't know how to be there but I want to learn it in your presence that I might teach men how to live totally both with God and with man thank you Lord, see these hands precious God make your record of this in heaven seal it and bring into these lives all that has been referred to this day that you might have an apostolic people who know you who fear you who love you and who serve you in that knowledge in Jesus name we pray just to share this with you because it came to me yesterday in a home where I was staying it's a quotation from St.

Augustine out of his book of confessions in which he writes imagine a man in whom the tumult of the flesh goes silent in whom the images of earth, of water of air, of the skies cease to resound of course he's writing in a pre-industrial age what shall we say about cities TV, noise, bedlam and all the confusion of our age let alone that the earth and water and air and sky cease to resound his soul turns quiet and self-reflecting no longer it transcends itself dreams and visions end so too does all speech and every gesture everything in fact which comes only to pass away and after they have said this think of them falling silent turning to listen to the one who created them and imagine him speaking himself and not through the medium of all those things speaking himself so that we could hear his word not in the language of the flesh not through the speech of an angel not by way of a rattling cloud or mysterious parable but himself think of this encounter seizing, absorbing, drawing witness into the depths of joy eternal life would be of a kind with this moment of understanding imagine a man in whom the tumult of the flesh goes silent this is what God is after by summoning us to that moment bless you

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