

K-144 Magna Carta of Apostolic Faith

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the critical need for the church to embrace its apostolic and prophetic identity while contending for the integrity of faith in a world at odds with God.

Duration: 1:17:10

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:15, Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:15, Romans 12:1, Hebrews 10:33, James 1:2-3, 1 Peter 4:12-13

Topics: "Apostolic"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing the cosmic drama between darkness and light that the church is involved in. He highlights that in the last days, the powers of darkness will intensify their fury as the age comes to a close. The preacher warns against domesticating and diluting the power and glory of the gospel message. He also discusses the need for an apostolic body that operates in the gifts of the Spirit and relies on prophetic words from God for guidance and direction.

Transcript

I'm going to share something with you that was given in Houston, also about 1.30 to 3 or something like that, that the Lord, I think, is wanting. Maybe He prepared me at that time. I only had a chance to barely touch this with that Houston group, but I think this is the real formative occasion to share this.

I'll just give you the history of it, and then we'll pray. It's unusual for me to be invited to a Baptist church, and that has a whole history of how that took place in Houston. Actually, I was refused as a speaker.

Someone suggested me, but they wouldn't hear of it. But nevertheless, I was available on a Sunday morning coming back from Guatemala, as I'm doing this time also, and the sister whose church it was took me on the free Sunday morning. Nobody else would have me.

I was available free. And we got there in the sanctuary in time for the pastors and elders and so on, the deacons, whatever they're called, to be in prayer for the service. And just one minute before the prep, that time was to be dismissed, the Lord quickened one thought and one word for me, something about the sense of God as He, in fact, is, so absent from the church and even the consciousness of its ministers.

And so I just breathed out that one line of prayer. And when it was over and we stood, they wanted to see who was it who prayed that. It was the man they didn't want.

And I ended up in the Sunday school class of one of the pastors, and subsequently they invited me back for another Sunday morning that brought the church on its face. And when I came back this time, they didn't want me because of the commotion that had been stirred the last. Nevertheless, one of the associate pastors, who is now leaving the Baptist framework to go into home fellowships and really has a precious heart, he had me as his house guest and I shared with his Sunday school class.

He was teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And the church was teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Like a weather marker, something when Baptists are talking about that to legitimize and make acceptable what had all along been offensive and kept at a distance, troubles me.

In fact, when I heard the kind of teaching that is taking place, I said to the brother as we left the church in the afternoon, presentation made by the pastor, would to God that you would leave the subject alone. Would to God that you would keep your conventional and traditional stance of opposition to the things that have always offended you, rather than you should legitimize them and domesticate them and make them acceptable and rob them of their content, their glory and their power. That's what's happening today in the church sense.

So, the Lord wakened me early. Thoughts Upon Rising is the title of my statement. And what the Lord gave me was the divinely intended milieu for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Milieu is a French word that means the environment or the atmosphere appropriate to the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. And then, as I looked it over again, I retitled it, A Summary, The Distinguishing Characteristics of an Apostolic Body. And sometime early this morning, I retitled it yet again.

A Magna Carta of Apostolic Faith. Of apostolicity itself. Anyone who knows me knows that I drool over that word.

The two key words for which you need to salivate or you're already outside the faith and apostate is apostolic and prophetic. I appreciate Jim because he appreciates apostolic. And I'm assuming that he has conveyed something to you that has made this morning, last night and tonight appropriate in the Lord's timing.

These are critical words. If the church loses the distinctive sense of them, it loses the church. We become a purveyor of services.

We provide a commodity that's acceptable, pleasant and blessed. But we lose the genius of the church. The thing that gives it its vibrancy, its power, its significance.

So, we need to guard these words. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. So, it's not just a matter of a word that's relevant to someone who may be in the congregation, who has an apostolic call.

The entire church has an apostolic call. The entire church is called to be an apostolic and prophetic entity in the locality where it is. So, what the Lord is wanting to do this morning is to ring me out before you.

I've been steeped in this for, I don't know, the last quarter of a century. As a Jewish believer, having gone through the evangelical, full gospel, charismatic ranks, and even being a darling to some extent that once had some hope of promise, I learned early that something was wanting. I could not put my finger on it, but I knew that until that thing was found, we have no real witness to the Jewish people.

We cannot move them to jealousy. They're not impressed with our charismatica. In fact, charismatica is the employment, ostensibly, hopefully, it could be something faint and false, that seems to be the gifts of the Spirit in the environment that God did not intend.

Namely, that it should be something to improve our meetings, bring a certain luster, or quicken our denomination that is sagging and needs some hopeful thing that the charismatic gifts are going to bring. That is not God's intention. That's travesty.

That's apostasy. That's why I say, keep your hands off. Don't invoke my God to sanctify or legitimate something that is so wanting as if you can bring a hue.

That's not God. This is holy stuff. The gifts of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit.

It's the Spirit of holiness. It's God. You don't traffic in that.

You don't employ that to save you from triviality. And we need to shriek and howl and blow the whistle. That's our function when that kind of travesty takes place.

For if the church allows it, it's the leaven in the entire lump that will bring a spiraling downward. We need to contend for the faith. We need to be jealous over these critically important words and functions.

So, here's my statement. I'm going to read it. Then I'll go back.

It wouldn't hurt you to take notes. That is to say, not the whole thing. It'll be recorded.

It'll be taped. But maybe a phrase or a word that clicks in your spirit. What is he saying here? This really agitates me.

This digs me. And I want to come back to that point. And I don't know if we'll have an opportunity today or tonight to come back to it.

But this is something that we need to ruminate over. So, a Magna Carta, a statement of the genius of what an apostolic body is that has been lost to our contemporary consciousness because we have as models something far less than other. We think that that which is apostolic is only historic.

It was once upon a time, but it's no more. I can't think of anything more to be desired, to be restored, than that which was at the first. And the age will conclude, as it began, with a church of this kind of glory, this kind of stature, this kind of quality, this kind of witness.

And I believe that you're the candidate so I wouldn't be here and I'd not be speaking it. So, thoughts upon rising. That the consideration of the gifts of the spirit outside the context of an apostolic and eschatological faith.

Don't panic. Sorry about this. There are a few words that you are required to learn.

Eschatological and apocalyptic. Eschatological refers to the things that pertain to the end. And what I'm saying here is that if your faith is not eschatological, it's not faith.

It's not apostolic faith. Apostolic faith, as I hope to persuade you, always looks toward the end. It always is moving toward a conclusion or else you're not moving.

If there's not an end or a consummation of an ultimate kind, of a glorious kind, then your Christianity is condemned to a succession of Sundays. Mere Sundays. Predictable Sundays.

So a church that is a church that has the apostolic faith has also the eschatological faith. If you don't have it, seek it. And you'll know you have it when you begin to salivate.

The drool test is the litmus. If you don't salivate, if your mouth is dry and these are just terms and words and vocabulary, then you're still on the phraseological kick. The only thing is that you've changed your vocabulary.

You've gone from evangelical to an apostolic vocabulary, but you have not yet the reality. In fact, I can't think of anything more to be feared than to have the vocabulary without the corresponding reality. Like I was not the first in my neighborhood to have the body of Christ.

Everybody else had it. Like when I was a kid, this was way before your time, when we listened to the radio and the Lone Ranger or the G-Men or whatever. You can send away for something with a bottle cap or a box top and be the first in your neighborhood to have it.

Like humility. Somebody wants to get me some water, there's a great reward for you. Oh, everybody wants... So what was I saying? To be the first in your neighborhood to get the body of Christ.

Well, it became so current. It was the vogue. It was the fad.

Everybody was saying it. But where was the corresponding reality? I'm the kind of guy who is in agreement with that Argentinian pastor whose name I forgot, who became a world-renowned figure because he declared in his own congregation, which was Pentecostal, a moratorium on the word Lord. He refused to allow his people to speak it until it was in fact so.

And I don't know how long that silence reigned. It went on for months before finally when the reality began to emerge that corresponded to the word, they could then speak it. Listen, saints, you're not going to be an apostolic body if not also prophetic.

And that means to say you need to be jealous over words themselves. We are the guardians of language and of meaning. And we cannot give ourselves to light speaking and frivolity and words that blah, blah, blah.

We need to watch over them with a jealousy and a passion of the sacred and the important words that when we speak them, we speak them with cogency, with meaning, with significance, or we don't speak them. Got the idea? In fact, less speaking altogether wouldn't hurt us. A greater respect for silence.

I'm continually amused or irritated, I don't know which of the words, by saints who just don't know. And they'll be driving you to a meeting. You've just come in off of a plane.

You've been up half the night. You're all whacked out and fagged out and sagged out. And they continually are jabbering in your ear and trying to engage you in conversation.

And you're wanting to hold your peace. Because within an hour, you're going to be on a platform and your words have got to be life or death, not mere instruction. And if you dissipate that energy by words that are just speaking, that when you get up, it'll be a blah.

So that's why I say, someone said to me last night they wanted to take me home. I said, don't, I'm lousy company. Those who have had me as a house guest know, I say very little.

Name, rank, and serial number. Because I'm a man who lives by my mouth. But it's got to count when I open it and I can't afford to dissipate it with trivial and casual things.

I think that would be good for the whole church to have an attitude of that kind. And that we don't have to be entertaining. And that even in silence we can be appreciated.

I appreciate Jim if he's not saying, but he's always saying. But even if he were not saying, there's a timber in the man. There's a quality that resonates God.

And you just appreciate being in that presence. We don't have to prove something, demonstrate something, win something, be engaging. Okay.

I haven't even gotten to my statement. So the consideration of the gifts of the Spirit outside the context of an apostolic and eschatological faith, that is to say, a radical anticipation of the end marks and identifies a body as one to be opposed by the powers of darkness as a threat upon whom its vicious spite is ventilated and which finds itself in disjuncture with the world. This is the kind of thing you write when God wakes you at three in the morning.

It's not a organized and well-structured statement that's full of spasms and spits and spurts and so I have to go over this with you. A body that is eschatologically minded signifies to the powers of darkness that it's a body of whom they need to fear. And upon whom they will ventilate their particular spite.

You will experience a degree of opposition that perhaps has not been your experience till now. Jesus we know and Paul we know but who are you? What little I know about the powers of darkness and by the way it's a very significant area of knowledge. The principalities and the powers of the air are not hobgoblins for Halloween.

They are powerful, tyrannical, invisible, spectral forces that jerk and manipulate nations and the whole earth. If you want a recent example in history of just how real an entity they are, examine Nazi Germany. The land of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Wagner, the geniuses of Germany, the depth of its culture was swept away in less than a decade by the powers of darkness that not only were content to jerk and manipulate the nation but to possess it.

That's the picture of the last days when those powers will be released in full. I can't think of anything more imperative for an apostolic church than an apostolic awareness of the cosmic conflict with these powers that was from the first and concludes the age in a fury of opposition for which we need to come to full stature as a people corporately together as a body. The issue of the body of Christ is not a little flim flam.

We got it and we're the first in the neighborhood to have it. It's a statement of a heavenly kind that is intrinsic to the Godhead himself. A brother who's passed away, a very precious godly man, he said, God himself, he said, is a sweet company.

That the Godhead itself is the genius of the plurality and corporality that should also be revealed in his body. Understand? The body of Christ is not a phrase. It's a painful reality to obtain.

And it's more than just the casual conglomerate of individualities that are willing to share a facility for the enjoyment of a service or a certain satisfaction on a Sunday morning. It's the people who have weathered something, cuffed something out, have learned through terrible disillusionment what the condition of the other brothers and sisters are. And in fact, the worst of it is the revelation of our own condition that would never have been revealed except through brothers and sisters because of the intensity and the frequency of our relationship together.

Mere Sundays can never obtain this. If we're not a community of believers, we're not a body. And if we're not that, we will have no significance at all for Israel in its last day's trial, which I will come to in a moment, which is part of the mandate of an apostolic body.

So, that church that is not trifling in the Holy Spirit, that is consciously chosen to be an expression of that body, that has an eschatological sense of the end and the impending issues and the conflict that mark the end, that require people that have come of age, when you come to that consciousness and willfully have accepted that as what describes you, you know what happens? Your job, your security, your profession, and even your family are no longer the first and foremost objects of your consideration. It's not that you become impervious or indifferent. You just have your priorities established rightly.

Namely, that your very life, physically, biologically, and your salvation was for this purpose, to be consciously a part, integrally, of a body that receives this mandate and this call and sees it as its foremost purpose for being. Got that? So when the powers of darkness see that you see and that you have affirmed this and chosen this, you now are an object to be opposed. And they will ventilate their spite in the way that they have a unique ability to perform, which even itself is an incentive then for our prayer, our intercessions, and provokes even maturity.

It serves the purposes of God, though it's not a light thing. And so a mentality of this kind also puts us in disjuncture with the world. All of a sudden, the world is not some innocuous thing that we can touch or handle in our superior spirituality, but it's a thing to be despised and hated.

You recognize what you should all along have known. It remains at enmity with God the Father. The world as system, I'm not talking about nature.

I'm talking about a system of values, about an unspoken wisdom, about assumptions and premises by which the world lives its life. Even written into the Declaration of Independence, the pursuit of happiness, which we say, oh yeah, of course. Of course what? That's not a biblical premise to pursue happiness.

Happiness is not the object of pursuit. It's something that comes as a consequence of something else, namely, living rightly related to God. But when you make it the object, it's an idolatrous thing, and a detour, and it'll never end up being gratifying.

That's one of the premises. Oh, I could tell you so many stories, and every one of them had been painfully learned. He's right.

How was I introduced to the whole thing about principalities and powers? By shattering my kneecap in Minnesota, baptizing Lutherans in the YMCA swimming pool, and on my way back to the locker with my bottle in my hand whistling Dixie, there was a puddle on the floor, and the next thing I knew, I was upside down in the middle of the air, holding my Bible in a frozen moment of time, and saying, cats, what are you doing here? And down I came with a thunderous crash, right on my kneecap. But God's man of faith and

power. That night, the thing was swollen like a football.

I was still preaching and speaking. The next day, the brothers wouldn't hear anything about it. They took me to a hospital, Jewish, what do you call the man who works with bones? Orthopedic surgeon.

And he showed me the x-rays. He says, you haven't just fractured. He says, this is smashed.

It needs to be wired. An operation. I said, well, when can you perform it? He said, Thursday.

I think it was Tuesday. I said, no. I have to be in northern Minnesota.

The Lord is giving us a property. He said, the who? The Lord. And as he has his hands on my knee, his eyes begin to roll back.

He says, something's happening in your knee. He said, the pieces are coming into place. If I put your leg in a cast, you'll not need an operation.

You can keep your appointment. And that's what he did. So that night, I had my leg up in a cast.

Well, here's where it gets interesting. The nurse came in with a hypo to assuage my pain. I said, I'm sorry, sis.

I don't need that. She said, but you must have it. I said, no, I don't need it.

I'm only mildly discomfited. She said, no, you must have it. I said, no, I refuse to have it.

I don't want to have my consciousness in any way affected by drugs. I'm strange that way. She stormed out in such a huff and came back two minutes later with a pill.

I said, look, sis, you don't understand. I'm not afraid of hypos. I was in the army.

And we walked down a corridor with guys on both sides with bent needles dripping to puncture us like a pincushion. I'm not afraid of needles, you know. I don't want the drug.

I don't need to be drugged up. I'm not in excruciating pain. But you must.

The last thing I remember, two nurses and two doctors in my doorway jabbering and just aghast. And I realized what was happening. I had unconsciously touched an unspoken premise by which the world lives its life.

It's the wisdom of the world, the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. And I was bucking the system because I could bear a measure of pain by the grace of God that is in me. That was the introduction that there are invisible spiritual forces that are influencing mankind in the wisdom that is unique to themselves that is opposed to God.

And when the church will recognize this and oppose them in those places and a whole congregation lives in independence from that influence, it's amazing what it releases in the whole locality where such a church is. Okay. This is more than the issue of demon deliverance.

In fact, I even suspect that the enemy will allow us to be engaged totally to think that that's the whole issue when there's a much greater cosmic issue in both the recognition and the opposition of the powers of

darkness, not only by what we say but what we are in ourselves in the reality that subscribes to another wisdom, the wisdom of God, the symbol of which is the cross. So, these false values are intrinsic to the world. You should have heard me last night about Lockheed, that corporation that makes F-16s.

I don't know if they'll ever survive my outburst. I think the stock market dipped. So, the whole world lives a lie.

It's in the father of lies. It's a system of false values that needs to be consciously recognized and repudiated by a people who live freely, independent from them, and who are already the harbingers or the statement of a kingdom to come. We represent something in our corporality of another kingdom.

We are the evidence of something. And the very evidence of that, the visibility of that, can set captives free who didn't recognize that they were captives in another system of false values until they see your freedom. It's a kingdom already come, visible in the church, and able, therefore, to emancipate and deliver other of the world's deceived victims.

And if this is not the context for the play of the Holy Spirit with us, then we condemn the gifts of the Spirit to a charismatica played out harmlessly and irrelevantly to the cosmic drama whose conclusion the true church feels as imminent and whose theocratic consummation is anticipated as being at hand. What a statement. Take the rest of the morning just to review that.

Let me just take a shot at it. The church knows it's involved in a cosmic drama, conflict between darkness and light from the beginning, and that these powers in the last days will have but a short time and will ventilate their fury all the more. And that we're moving, therefore, toward a conclusion of the age, which is imminent, which means that it's at hand.

It doesn't require us to be chronological. We don't have to have the actual day, date, month. But we know that something is close.

And that gives to our corporate life a sense of high seriousness, of urgency, that there are things that are being brought to conclusion in which we are the principal agents and actors for God, corporately. That consciousness changes the whole atmosphere of what we are about and changes the Sunday morning service to just not another succession of something, but to some vital thing that God is going to communicate seeing that we're close to the end and must be mediated through what will be spoken. See what I mean? We come with another anticipation.

There's another corporate atmosphere. You will know that you have attained it when the children reflect it, when they themselves sense, though they cannot identify it, that my parents are about something of an utterly serious kind, that this is not Sunday culture for them, and they will reflect that. When we can impress our teenagers, we have apostolically arrived.

So, look to them as the index. Otherwise, we're just playing a verbal game, a phraseological game, with impressive vocabulary, but it has not impressed them. We've not yet hit the authentic existential reality, and they know it.

So, and then there's a theocratic consummation. There's another word for you. Theo is God.

You've got it up here in one of your banners. Here. And kratik is rule.

Demo is Greek for people. The rule of the people. Democracy.

Democratic. Well, I want to say there's a higher, an ultimate form of rule. It's the rule of God.

And it's not some ambivalent thing or ethereal thing. It's an actual thing. The government shall be upon his shoulder, and of the increase of that government, there shall be no end, and of its peace.

Well, first with us, and then with nations, with Israel, and the world. God is coming as king. He's going to be seated on the holy hill of Zion in the throne of David, because he's the descendant of David, and the root and offspring of David.

He's got the credentials and the qualification. And when he is seated with Israel's restoration, that's why the powers of darkness will oppose not only Israel's restoration, but Israel's existence. We're going to watch them ground to powder in our generation, within the next five to ten years, or sooner.

And not one of them will survive, except by the mercy that we extend. Why this relentless hatred? Because the powers of darkness know better than the church that the restoration of Israel, and I'm not talking about the Zionist thing that is now in place since 1948, that is going to be brought down and out. But the true and final restoration that God himself will effect by his own power, after a final sifting of this people in a time of Jacob's trouble, when the redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion, with mourning and sighing fleeing away and everlasting joy on their heads, that the powers of darkness fear more than anything, for he who is king is contained in the heavens in Acts 3.21, waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by all the prophets since the world began.

The Lord's coming is contingent upon and related to that restoration. But, of course, if they are annihilated, then there's nothing to be feared about their being restored, and the king can be postponed and kept in limbo, indefinitely, while the powers of the air continue to jerk and manipulate nations like our own. So the true church that is the Church has this understanding.

It senses an end that is imminent, and that we're moving toward a theocratic consummation, and it's at hand. In this context, the operation of the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts is given as an urgent provision to such a people who are a besieged and militant presence in the midst of a sea of hostility against it. I don't experience any hostility.

Well, you're not yet that presence. You become it, and you'll see how you feel to be an island of sanity, truth, and reality, and the whole world and everything that is in it contends against you. And I can say that it's very realistic to anticipate that in the last days, unforeseen things that cannot be calculated are going to come upon us with suddenness where life and death decisions have to be made virtually in a moment.

And unless there is an operation of the Spirit of God through prophecy, through tongues, through interpretation, to guide us, to direct us in what to do in crisis moments, we will be lost. We cannot play this game by the numbers. This is not fill in the space and paint your way through to the Lord's Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.

This is a people through whom the Word of God can come through a prophetic presence whose character is known, whose word is authentic, because he'll say, go ye out against them. The battle is yours, say the Lord, mine and not yours. But do it tomorrow morning when the excitement and the heat of the prophetic word has dissipated in the cold, grey dawn.

There are three uncircumcised armies ready to do you in. And go out against them then on the basis of the prophetic word that came the night before. It's going to be life or death blessed, the accuracy and truth of that word, the dependability of the vessel through whom it's spoken, the clear realization of the character and worth of its members, because we know each other well enough, because we've gone from the mere succession of Sundays to that frequency of relationship that makes church church, because we put away the TV set, because we don't have to be someplace all Saturday night, but with the people of God, and not to miss what God is saying, which many of you did last night, because you had other things.

There's an urgency that revolutionizes everything, changes your priorities, and how you spend your time, and what humiliation you're willing to experience at the hands of your brothers and sisters that is not to be given in any other place. Oh, I've been kicked by Jews. I've been spit at.

I've been mocked. I've been cursed. Nothing, nothing against the heart-rending and real deaths that you experience from God's own people.

The church is the place of suffering saints before it's a glory. Don't be confused about that. Okay.

So, the operation of the gifts is God's nuts-and-bolts provision for a people besieged in the sea of hostility in the last days that need the direction of God that comes explicitly through a prophecy, through a tongue's interpretation, and the operation of faith and other gifts that are critical for our direction, our survival, and our use. We have an end-time task that is urgent, and it invites rejection from the world, a fierce opposition by the powers of darkness, as I've mentioned, who recognize the unmistakable authenticity of a body of that kind as a serious threat to themselves. They'll no longer say, Jesus we know, and Paul we know, and who are you? They'll know you only too well.

So, for myself, I'm not so much concerned for how popular I am or well-received. I would much rather be recognized by to what degree do the powers of darkness know me? To what degree do they fear me? To what degree am I a serious object of their apprehension and concern? That's the index of the truth of your life in God, not your popularity nor your acceptance. But how do the powers of darkness do you? Are you a paperweight? Do they see through your verbiage? They're not impressed with your amens and hallelujahs? Because I believe that there's only one thing that they are required to acknowledge.

That is, authenticity itself. And that's why Jesus they knew and Paul they knew. But they see right through anything else that is only a masquerade, a facsimile of the real thing.

And I praise God for that. So, we have an obligation to be the real thing and it's not cheap. So, it's not accidentally nor unusually true that it follows that such a people live consciously and sacrificially as being also the salvific agents of God toward the people Israel.

It's not an option. Is my sound off here? Am I fading out? Have we got plenty of volume? I don't want them to miss a syllable. This issue of Israel is not for those who have a taste for it.

It's intrinsic to the church's call as church. And I don't know what I'll speak tonight but if I talk about Romans 11 where Paul's apprehension of the mystery of Israel was so explicitly set forth and so remarkably unknown by the church. He shows you the reciprocal relationship between the church and the Jew.

You cannot avoid it. They will never attain to their millennial destiny nor we to ours independent of each other. There's something, there's a rub, there's a grit, there's a requirement that we constitute the one for

the other and we would never have chosen the one for the other.

Gentiles with Jews, historically, they have been at enmity. They're antithetical. I joke about it because my wife is Danish, Gentile, snub-nosed, freckle-faced, light-haired and loves bric-a-brac and porcelain things and shelves and walls to put them.

And I like tents without walls. Such a difficult people as that are our making. They bring a requirement of an ultimate and radical kind that is the making of the church that will recognize this mandate and take it seriously.

They're going to be brought through our midst. There's going to be a dispersal of Jews throughout all nations. He's going to sift them through all nations in the last days.

You can read it in Amos. I will sift you through all nations as one sifts wheat in a sieve and not a kernel so far to the ground. That's why we're in northern Minnesota in the boondocks because we anticipate Jews coming in North America out of Canada, maybe from Siberia, God knows where, to find refuge with us in a community that is food-producing and life-sustaining and able also to communicate to them the meaning of their distress and their predicament, that they might return to Zion as the redeemed of the Lord though they did not leave it in that condition.

This is a whole other subject. I'm just sewing that word to let you know you have a mandate. Have they stumbled that they should fall, Paul says? God forbid you should think that God has finished with them permanently.

They're only temporarily set aside, they're broken out, that you might be grafted in. That salvation may come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy. Have you ever noticed that? There's a purpose for your salvation beyond yourself and it has to do with them that you would not have chosen? To move them to jealousy? Who Paul describes in the same chapter as being the enemies of the gospel? My God, what will it take to move enemies historically to a jealousy for a faith that they have so fervently rejected and look upon as anathema and robbing them of their Jewishness? It's going to take... There's no footnote, there's no asterisk, there's no note in the back of the book.

Hey Paul, you know, don't you number one, two, three, and four? God has a plan for your life? Two? He leaves it to our Holy Ghost imagination but one thing we can assume is going to require a demonstration beyond anything that has yet been given or they would have been moved to jealousy. I was saved solemnly by God, not by any exercise of the church, though I take it back. Here and there, a precious witness picked me up off the side of the road as the hitchhiking atheist Jew thirty-five years ago and pierced my heart asunder by what they expressed and how they looked, the peace that was clear and moved me to an envy because I knew it was not to be obtained at universities or Marxist institutes I had been to those places.

But by and large the church has historically failed but we're coming to the end of the age when we must succeed for the restoration of Israel is the final issue that concludes the age and the church, as I'm saying here, is God's exclusive and ordained salvific agency. So whatever you do, make sure your freezer is full of bagels. That's if we'll have electric power to run the freezer.

You know that we are a testy, T-E-S-T-Y people. We're factious. We're irritating.

We've rubbed the church the wrong way for centuries. Jim knows from church history that the greatest of its apostolic figures have collapsed over the Jew. Luther himself wrote the great textbook The Lives of the Jews that armed the Nazis four centuries later.

And what's his name? The golden orator John Chrysostom was a notorious anti-Semite because these Jews kept bugging them. You think you know the Bible? You don't even speak Hebrew. It's not your book.

It's ours. And you guys are just you've taken a criminal who was executed and you made him the Messiah? You're all wet. Yes, we're temporarily in exile but we're coming back and we're going to rule the world.

We're the head, not the tail. I want to say that in the time of Jacob's trouble that is about to break and must break, must come when Jews will be suddenly uprooted and have nothing but the shirt on their backs this is where Jesus says what did you do to the least of these my brethren? They're going to become the least. Steven Spielberg is going to become the least.

What's his name? Levin of Time Water Corporation is going to become the least. All of these great banking houses will be the least. They'll be despicable.

They'll be despised. There'll be no beauty that any would desire them. They will be the offscouring of the world.

They will be on the road to Calvary rejected and despised of men. Who will take them in? When to take them in is to share their peril. Is to put you in a place of jeopardy.

To mark you as a Jew lover at a time when they are universally hated. It'll really test the church. I often say will the real church please stand up? They will be measured by their response to the Jew.

And I'll tell you the kind of crazy people you'll have to be if you're apostolically minded. That even if it costs you something, if it's greatly sacrificial, or even risks your life and that of your children, you count it all privilege. Because you anticipate the reward of the crown of glory that will be yours eternally.

And you know that in this sacrifice you're releasing and participating in that which will bring the King his reign, his rule, and his glory to all nations. You know that this is the last episode and it's worth everything. And the degree of your sacrifice will even earn for you a place in the economy of that kingdom to come.

Of the ruling of five cities or ten. That will determine your own eternal destiny. So I'm saying much more than should even be said in so short a time.

But to let you know that the issue of the Jew in the last days is not some sentimental trifle for those of us who think that they're cute. When they come to us they're not going to be cute at all. And unless that we are filled with the love of God that is unconditional, they will rub us the wrong way and bring forth a response of anger or irritation that will lose the historic moment and the whole thing for which it's calculated to reveal the face of God to them in the midst of their distress.

I will meet with you in the wilderness, it says in Ezekiel 20, from verse 33 on, face to face. And there you will come into the bond of my covenant and under the rod of my authority. What happens in that wilderness? How do they meet the Lord face to face in his love that can never be offended against? No matter how abrasive we Jews are, can you imagine what condition we'll be in? Having lost everything

overnight and then fight again in Christian America? And if something's wrong with Christianity, we believed the Holocaust was the truth and now it's happening again in a worse Holocaust? They're not going to come to you in a best but a worse condition.

And what condition are you in now to receive them? When even Christians now will rub you the wrong way and irritate you and hurt your feelings and you huff and puff. So there's that sanctifying work that needs to take place, that we need to welcome the judgments of God that Jim so beautifully expressed. So the church that I'm describing of an apostolic kind lives consciously and sacrificially as being the salvific agents of God toward the people of Israel who soon restoration out of a final sifting and chastening in the time of Jacob's trouble concludes the age itself.

It recognizes the radical demand, the ultimacy of such a task and mandate which it has consciously and willfully adopted as central to its whole purpose for being. It's not a sideline. It's central to our whole purpose for being.

And that then opens the door to welcome the deep chastening, sanctifying work of God that must come to us first to fit us for that relationship and that obligation. And it needs therefore the strategic direction of God obtained uniquely through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. So, such a body has a corporate prayer life and worship that reflects and expresses the truth of its reality and the quality of its prayer, the depth of its prayer is measured by the truth of its relationship.

Prayer is not a technique for such a people or a methodology. We're not going to take cities by turning up the amplifiers or shouting, except it's a real shout of joy that comes out of a conscious, realized joy of the redemptive work of God to which we have opened ourselves together. Understand? Our prayer, I often say this, cannot exceed the quality of our relationships.

Weak relationships, superficial relationships, our prayer is polite, it's religious, but they yawn at us, the powers of darkness when we speak it. Prayer is an index and a measure of other issues of a greater concern that we have not seen as high priority. And we think, therefore, that prayer is some kind of verbalization, something that we can learn or become eloquent at.

The truth of it is the truth of the corporate reality that has been obtained by the body that prays corporately. For the real prayer is corporate prayer. They're going to battle against the powers of darkness that have victimized your locality and are threatening the very existence of Jews.

Has got to be a prayer with gut in it and that we will not be ashamed to pray before each other, though we can't do it politely. We'll find ourselves on the floor, we'll find ourselves beating at the air, we'll find ourselves in every posture, but we'll not at all be embarrassed because we've long gone beyond the point of embarrassment or self-consciousness because we have a life that's been lived together, as we, in fact, are. And we've tripped away the facade.

We're in an earnest battle. We're militant company. Got the idea? Prayer is not a technique, not a methodology.

It's the expression of a deeper reality of the truth of our relationship together. Jim probably knows this legend about the monk who came and brought the gospel to Scotland. His name was Columbo.

And he lived, he was with a band of men, a collegium, like the ancient Hebrew prophets. They were in a community, a prophetic community, that needs to sustain and be in sympathy and relationship with men of

that kind. And they lived for two years in an island off the coast of Scotland that was then a pagan center of hostility, violence, even today, violence in Scotland yet lingers.

And at a certain time when God released them to come, they came ashore and they met the double-walled barricades raised by this picked people, P-I-C-T, these pagans who drunk beer out of skulls. And Columbo, according to the legend, stood before the gate and he made the sign of the cross. And the gate opened by itself.

And when the king saw this demonstration of power in conjunction with that sign, he was converted on the spot and opened his entire nation to the gospel. The thing is, was this a little genuflection? Is this a little courtesy that somehow God acknowledged? Or was it a deeper statement of the vertical member of the cross, of the truth, the authenticity of an earnest relationship with God and the horizontal member of the authentic and earnest relationship with God's people? And the two things are co-joined. I have been driven vertically to God by the issues of my relationship with God's people.

Driven. In the old days before community, in the context of a Pentecostal congregation, if communion came once a month, it was enough. To hold that little plastic cup in one hand and the little wafer in the other and wait for the signal and we all take it together who are not together was somehow for me an internal agony, an anguish of soul.

It was a contradiction of the word communion. With a whole body of 300 strangers, what communion? But when we came into community, it wasn't enough once a month or even once a week. We came to a time of daily communion and we were too poor for wine.

We used water and God turned it to wine for all effects and purposes because within two weeks of community, being a nice guy was not enough. We ran out of nice guy-ism. We needed the life, the vitality, the reality, the power of God that is renewed and strengthened by the eating and drinking of His body and His blood.

Communion was not a life piece of religious fluff. It was a vital provision from God for people who were living vitally. We need to come back to that.

Prayer and worship reflects and expresses that truth, that reality, the corporate expression of the head himself who was a sweet company. It has moved out of being a casual conglomerate of saints whose essential focus is still upon themselves and whose spiritual egocentricity has never been broken. You know how you can tell that it still exists? When they leave after service, they say, how did you like the service? How did you like the speaker? How do you like you? How do you like that you are the measure of all things? That's humanism.

Man is the measure of all things. You've just now taken that same egocentrism and put it into a spiritual context. Now you're measuring the service, the speaker, your enjoyment.

What will break the power of this deadly, cancerous egocentrism that we involuntarily bring even into the Church itself? It's having an object of our salvation beyond ourselves, namely the Jew. It's God's provision for us. Israel is our provision, even in their apostasy.

So we're being brought into a conscious and integral, many-membered corporate life in the body as being the first and foremost purpose for its being. We'll never come to this reality somehow of itself. There's got to be a conscious willingness to make time for it, to see it as first priority, and to know that you're going to

suffer the humiliation in the experiencing of it.

It'll be a painful thing before it's a glory. You're not going to be able to come against the powers of darkness corporately until you're corporate. And to come to that corporateness may take months, years, depending on how much time you're willing to give it and how much humiliation you're willing to experience.

You'll be found out. The illustration I often give in our community is one morning I was going to the daily prayer meeting, having a little tiff with my Gentile wife just before leaving the house. And she's not one who is timid to hold it privately.

She shouts from the rooftops. And she cried out with a loud roar, Go and tell them what a great saint you are! Wham! And the door slammed. So I came like a snail to the prayer meeting hoping that it had not been heard.

But invariably it is. And there you are with your face sticking out. And you're one thing at the pulpit under the anointing of God.

But on Monday morning you're just Joe Doakes whose wife has barked at you. So if we're going to have that corporate life we have to be willing for those humiliations. And to come to a place of health that can only come in a body that will understand you, receive you in that condition and help you with the counsel and prayer that is needed.

I often say that the body of Christ is not only God's provision for the sheep but for the shepherds also. So these ministers who are secretive and have a mystique where they appear as the man of faith and power then disappear. Forget it.

They've got to tough it out with God's people. One of the greatest compliments that we ever received at Ben Israel a Jewish brother came out of community to visit us for two weeks and at the end of the two weeks he said if I didn't know who the elders were I would have been hard pressed to identify them. We didn't have a sign in the office Prophet, Apostle, Elder that except that authority was required it wasn't expressed.

Except for the want of that we were brothers with brothers and suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. That's from Shakespeare. Now if you can tell me from which play of Shakespeare then I'll acknowledge that you're really a significant congregation.

Okay. So it's the first and foremost purpose for all beings and if we don't make time for it and everything that's legitimate cries out against it the phone rings the children are crying this demand and that demand it takes a certain ruthlessness against the flesh if the body is going to be the body. And its intercessions therefore are a travail of the spirit and the statement of the truth of its life together.

If you don't know the book Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer I commend it as the classic descriptive of true community. Out of his experience in the Nazi time in flight from detection they had to have an underground seminary and there these lupins who are ordinarily quite privatistic were compelled to live together and out of that came this gorgeous book very thin profound and one of its great statements was that anyone who comes to community with the design for it brings the seeds of destruction with him.

You don't come with a ground plan you simply come and you tough it out together in the working out of the relationship and in prayer and confrontation and as some people know who lived with us in that time there are some times you go to a meeting where you stop breathing you know you're not going to come out alive the tension is so great and the predicament so irresolvable that there's no way that you're going to come out alive but you go to the meeting because where shall you flee?

He has the words of eternal life and the remarkable thing is two hours later you don't walk out you float out something has happened something of a transcendent kind has broken something of the revelation of God has come because you were willing to bear the suffering of not being able to breathe in that suffocating tension to which you were brought by the intensity of relationships of misunderstanding and all of the necessary things that make the church the church and a church like that can prevail in the spirit in those days when I went out on a trip and some seven weeks two weeks two months overseas there was not a day that was not fasted and prayed for by one member of the community or another and what a difference that makes in the power of the word as it goes out sometimes under

difficult circumstances we need to come to that again so how shall we wrestle against the principalities and powers of darkness Paul says we wrestle not against flesh and blood so two things here one is we a we that can wrestle that is to say a real corporate reality and that one that wrestles that is willing for that eyeball to eyeball fingertip to fingertip grit of real combat this is not polite this is not a fastidious game at the ping pong table where you shake your opponent's hand afterwards this is struggle and it's got to be corporately performed so there's a we that waits for where it cannot be obtained at all wrestling is ultimate confrontation ultimate combat and it measures not only your strength it measures your grit it measures your determination it measures your will what

you are in the depths of the inner man that has been forged by God in the reality of the church so we recognize authority we don't for example take our vacation when we feel like it because you might have left at a critical time when your presence was most significant you don't make decisions unilaterally as if that's your purview as if that's your right well, I have a right to take my vacation when I want oh really? yes, if the church is a casual conglomerate of individualities you can but if it's a militant body besieged in a sea of hostility and is vitally working out these mandates and desperate requirements you can't pick up and go at will you mean I've got to submit my decision to some authority? yes and if it's of the Lord He'll witness it are you willing to take that risk? are you

willing to be countermanded? you're so sure that it's the Lord when your self-interest is at stake how can you be sure? your very heart will deceive you and you'll say yes, God has told me well, if that's true submit it to the authority but who's the authority? is it some man who has a credential because he's gone through an ecclesiastical process that says that he's the authority? or is the one whom we recognize or ones whom we recognize that have been produced and graduated by God who have the anointing and whose authority is intrinsic and wait and we can recognize them and come to them when I had to go to East Germany after the first couple of times I had to be interviewed by the Lutheran hierarchy before they would release me to come into Lutheran churches who are you? are you a

maverick? what are your credentials? what seminary have you graduated? who has officiated? who has stamped you as acceptable? where's your diploma? your ordination?

I said I don't have one but I said on the other hand and I went on to relate to them what Ben Israel was what the relationships were the demanding and how with Northern Minnesota other bodies and

fellowships and elders we were related we were not some autonomous self-will thing doing our little thing in the woods we were in a way very authentically joined and submitted you know what they said to me? we've never heard of anything like this since Paul what you have eclipses anything that we understand as office go, feel free to minister to our churches this is the reality to which we must come but it will be painful before it's obtained so and then as I mentioned the final index that we have come to this kind of reality is the recognition of our own children that what we are about is urgent

and that they even want to join us in our endeavor so such a body has an apostolic Weltanschauung this is a German word a view of the faith a cosmic appreciation of the issues and considers everything in the light of eternity so much so as to take its strippings with joy I want to end with that we'll look in Hebrews chapter 10 because I can tell you you're going to be stripped you invite stripping you invite the work of powers of darkness that want to goad you provoke you test you and this was not an uncommon occurrence where the apostolic church in its inception and will be more our experience as well it has already been my experience that the Lord brought Ben Israel to an end after its first ten years and then we were three years off the property and then the Lord brought me back after

three years and then there was some guy in the neighborhood who was living in a shack with two dogs and a pig whose wife had divorced him he couldn't even make his child the welfare payments I had mercy on the guy I was warned watch out, this guy's a character well, he was a nebuchel a Jewish term someone that needs to be taken in I took him in fed him provided for his welfare payments and he was some kind of an overseer of the property put some tar on the roofs that the building should not collapse in the absence of people well, he was with me for a year and a half we accumulated at that time seven horses and very exquisite and important harnesses and equipment for agriculture through horse-drawn use and I tell you that's not just a hobby we may not have diesel fuel and it may be a

necessity to return to something of that kind and we scrounged it and paid for it and got it all together well, this guy got a bug up is what you would call it and he was becoming difficult and feeling the victim and he was being taken advantage of I was away on a trip with another brother and he called me he's ready to leave what should I take, he said I said to the brother what should he take? oh, let him take whatever he thinks is right I said, well, take whatever you think is right the guy came with two dogs and a pig and a shirt so he'll take this I came back to find we were entirely stripped not only were the horses gone but the rope in the barn that existed 20 years before he ever came was gone and the oak boards upon which the horses urinated they were taken also there wasn't a

screwdriver a pair of pliers a nail, a hammer stripped and you know what I found out? some brothers in the neighborhood helped him and thought they were doing God a service and something began to rise up involuntarily and the Lord said that's a no-no you're not at liberty to experience resentment at being stripped you need to take it joyfully and in Hebrews 10 Paul says in verse 32 recall the former days in which after you were illuminated so you're being illuminated this morning don't think that this morning is not going to cost you something you endured a great struggle with sufferings you'll be tested in the very thing to which I'm going to ask you to give assent and not mere acknowledgement you're going to stand for something you're going to welcome apostolic reality whatever the cost

this is not coming without an invitation I'm not performing something here this morning this is a divine transaction or I wouldn't have been up at 3 o'clock in the morning and be all fagged out and worn before you there'll be a great struggle when the powers of darkness recognize your seriousness and partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches I mean verse 33 of chapter 10 of Hebrews and tribulations

and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated for you had compassion on me in my chains and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven you know I think only preachers and teachers sometimes experience a wave of unbelief like we we hit a scripture like this and something

tells us there's no way that your hearers can understand this there's no way that this can be for them viable because our life presently is so out of the context of those to whom these scriptures were addressed that for us at best it's a subject for bible study there's no real cogency because we're not in that condition where the word would come to us as vitally as it came to them but listen to this saints this is either madness or it's uttermost sanity and I wrote on the top of my page early this morning what is the predicate of our reality what is the foundation of what we consider real are we willing to steep ourselves in these scriptures as being the norm and the heart of all our seeing or are they only for us an overlay a bible study a nice thing to contemplate but the real thing is

an opposition with it and that's where we have our life and being in other words to be an apostolic body you're going to have to immerse yourself in the word of God in the grit of it as constituting your actual reality so that in a verse like this you had compassion on me in my chains and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods how come because you knew really knew deep down in your gut because you're immersed in these realities of an apostolic kind that are eschatological that go into the millennium and into eternity that you have there a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven heaven is not some phantasmal and airy ethereal thing that has no cogency eternity is not a word it's a vital reality not waiting for you to die to enter it you're in it now like for

example now this morning you guys can pray for me and call someone put me in a white jacket and cart me away but I actually believe last night and this morning and tonight and on every occasion that life and death is at stake when I open my mouth that eternity is at stake oh, don't get carried away it's only a meeting well, when you see it apostolically it's not just a meeting there are issues being arbitrated there are decisions being made there are transactions being desired that will affect both time and eternity and an apostle and a prophet and a church of that kind always sees the moment as being of eternal consequence that's why Paul cried out continually who is sufficient for these things if it's only a service we are sufficient but if it's an eternal moment that will not be given

again and you've not spoken this before and this is not a sermon and reading is supposed to be death and how are they going to understand this gobbled stuff that came at three o'clock in the morning and yet you know that you've got to because eternity is at stake it's a whole other mindset it's a whole deepening of all the issues of life it changes the way you view things and value things that's apostolic seeing that's immersing yourself in the reality and when you do so the powers of darkness take note and they'll test you in it and that very testing is a put up or shut up whether this is just a verbalization for us or the actuality of our life and we're willing to be stripped and when it comes we accept it joyfully not with chagrin with pursing our lips I guess I had to or those Jews

that come I guess I got to it's my obligation you joyfully accept you joyfully receive because you see that present thing in the context always of that which is eternal that's a remarkable seeing and that's normative seeing for a church that is really the church eternity is not some category that can wait until we die it's the present reality that needs to be brought into time Paul did he said I'm paraphrasing now I do not deliberate I don't ponder those things that are seen but those things that are unseen that are invisible that are eternal he said I see apostolically the eternal weight of glory I see what the reward is that is to come after and that

reward makes my present afflictions both momentary and light was he psyching himself out? is God doing a number on us? that would be a

contradiction of the integrity of God himself but this is the normative posture that God intends for church as church it always sees the present in the context of that which is eternal for Paul that which was invisible and eternal was more real than that which is visible and passing away try that sometime when you're going down the freeway and see the new car lots and the merchandise I've never seen more restaurants in my life than in Fort Worth, Dallas my God it would take a lifetime just to go from the one to the other but the appeals to the flesh to gratification to sensual living is everywhere about you the touch, feel, see Paul says I do not see I turn my eyes away from I don't contemplate I don't immerse myself in this year's road book catalog or the Sunday paper and the merchandise

I know it's temptation I know it's power I restrain myself and I see therefore all the more by that sacrifice of eyes that want to be voluptuously gratified the thing that is invisible and eternal and I see it so vividly that it makes my present apostolic suffering both momentary and light apostolic suffering is the consequence of apostolic living it's the consequence of apostolic consecration it'll be your experience also eternity has got to become vivid for you that when your stripping comes you accept it joyfully because you know it would not have come except by the sovereignty of God and you know that for every nut and bolt and piss-stained board that has been taken away you have a greater recompense which is in heaven that will come after these all died not having received the

promise but were assured of it that it would come after but they live now and in such a living in such a freedom in such a power in such a significance because they were assured of that which would come that is eternal that's apostolic faith it transfigures everything and that's my final statement of what it is to which you've been called in these last days it's a lifestyle it strives for the eternal reward and crown it does not consider martyrdom a dread thing martyrdom is not for those chance few to whom too bad lo and behold they had to suffer that it's the normative call for every saint oh I can tell you stories oh wish I had more time of how God after 14 months of sabbatical silence would not allow me to preach until I received an invitation to speak on the mystery of Israel and the

church that that was so holy in God's sight it had to be preceded by 14 months of silence and when the invitation came to speak on the mystery of the church and Israel in the last days I fasted and prayed 10 days in advance and when I started in Sacramento with an audience like this that had paid to come with their tape recorders poised to catch every jewel knowing I could inflict both harm or good how would I present this mystery not having spoken in 14 months and a prophetic man who is not orderly and has it all systematically tied together and has to gush and pour out of his pores and so I opened up somehow with what kind of a church is it that could conceivably move Israel to jealousy that they would forsake their ages old enmity against the gospel and to receive it by the

demonstration that comes from the church what demonstration and I never answered that I went on for 6 messages I went to bed Saturday night Sunday morning was the last 7th word not knowing what that 7th word is as I went to bed last night not knowing what this morning's word is I don't even yet know what tonight's word is and at 3 o'clock in the morning I don't know why the Lord chooses that I was waken with one word martyrdom do you know what I preached that Sunday that final word the church that will move Israel to jealousy is a martyr church and it's not the issue of whether our life will actually be required but that we have transacted we have an understanding of martyrdom as being the normative call and whether our bodies are taken violently or house weather is indifferent that's an

irrelevancy that's the Lord's business but we have lived as if we have already given it we live as if our life is not our own martyrdom is not a way to die it's a way to live and what is required in the final moment is the statement of all the moments that have preceded it martyrdom is a lifestyle and it's a normative lifestyle for a church that can rightly call itself apostolic and by that move Jews to jealousy and confront the powers of the air significantly because it knows that martyrdom obtains a crown I can't think of anything more shameful than to come before the Lord bareheaded have nothing to lay at His feet that our works have not passed through the fire that our life has been lived so insignificantly and beneath the glory of God that we made it into heaven we served out of hell

but we're in heaven in some recess in some dark corner in the basement or around the throne with significant call and obligation in the theocratic rule of God all of that is determined by this life and how we live it reward is a remarkable incentive and it needs to come into our consciousness it's a lifestyle the outworking of a mindset it has the resonance of a decision as having been already made and consistently maintained and is in a conscious continuum with the apostolic past that has preceded it am I glad this is on tape did you get that last part? it's lived with a conscious awareness that it is in an unbroken continuum with the apostolic past and all that has preceded it I took Swiss Christians in Zurich on a tour of the places of suffering and martyrdom of the Anabaptist saints

of the 16th century who were persecuted by state church people where they were burned at the stake where teenage girls were bound back to back and thrown into the river Limmat where they had their meetings in the woods where the bounty hunters would get something for everyone that was apprehended and where the children were slipped through crevices in the rocks when the bounty hunters came and that night I said to these Swiss saints whom I had known for years they always loved me until that night I said are you willing having seen what you have seen I had to show them their historic past it had been lost to them historically the tower in Basel Switzerland where the Anabaptists had been chained and rotted away for 20 and 25 years and other places where I have myself been and looked where

they lay with a hole that they could defecate there was no room you could stretch your hands out and touch both walls at the same time and they were in that hole for 25 years looking out through the cracks at the beautiful Swiss countryside that appealed for them to go out and enjoy that freedom if only they would forsake their insistence on an adult baptism and communion being served without priests and other distinctives of separation from the world and its religious system they could have enjoyed that liberty they rotted away they died they were burned at the stake they were expelled they were pushed out they were tormented they were harried and I said to these Swiss Christians that night are you willing to consciously see yourself in an unbroken continuum with those who came before

you you know what I prayed somewhere between 3 and 5.30 this morning you'll have to excuse me that not only would God stir intercessors in behalf of this service because unless someone is somewhere travelling for this morning and the word of it and the significance of it it'll only be a passing novelty and I said Lord also so much as this shall please you can we enjoy the benefit of an invisible cloud of witnesses overhead of whom the world is not worthy who have preceded us and who are looking upon us not with casual interest but who are not complete nor made perfect without us those whom I have known who have passed on from this life who have always taken an interest in what the Lord has His call and work would this morning be brooding over us and bringing some dimension from the other

side that would bring us through into a place of a remarkable kind that changes everything are you living in that consciousness? is that too fanciful? is that too imaginary? are you willing to announce that yes I see

myself in conscious identification with the whole apostolic succession that has preceded me of whom the world was not worthy you know what that triggers you know what that announces to the positive awareness well then you're making yourself a candidate for what they suffered and you're likely to suffer what they suffered if you see yourself in that continuum there's something that has to be willful and conscious if we're going to come through in the dimension that for which God is waiting of a church of this kind of the last days so you have need of endurance in verse 36 so

that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise for yet a little while and He who is coming will come see this eschatological genius the coming of the Lord the great event His kingdom He will come He will not tarry now the just shall live by this apostolic faith but if anyone draws back my soul has no pleasure in Him yet a little while hang in there endure He who is coming will come and will not tarry it's that confidence it's that anticipation of that event of that conclusion of that climax that consummation that enables you to bear all of the present things you have not that consciousness we're a succession of Sundays so these all died in faith in verse 13 of chapter 11 not having received the promises you imagine such quality of life and service without receiving

the payoff but having seen them afar off were assured of them embraced them and confessed that they were strange and pilgrims on the earth for those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland and truly if they had called to mind the country from which they had come out there is a coming out they would not have had opportunity to return but now they desire a better and a heavenly country therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a city for them the first time I ever preached this confession confess yourself as strangers pilgrims and sojourners a brother had just come from the immigration naturalization office and had his passport he threw it down on the ground he said I declare I am a pilgrim a stranger and a sojourner in the earth it was a

real transaction he confessed it and God says those who confess such things for them I have prepared a city for them I have a grace for them I have a dimension of reality and power and authority that will distinguish them in this life and earn for them an eternal reward when I hear their confession to take seriously what I have spoken this morning saints is to require and make necessary the fact that you are a stranger a pilgrim a sojourner you are not going to be a nice guy you are going to lose your charm you will not be one of the boys you will stand out conspicuously that somehow even when you are silent those who were endeared to you before recognize that something has been transacted a quotient of something that has changed you and makes you somehow to be feared or resented or an

object of irritation you are not one of the boys anymore you have entered another realm an apostolic realm that has a history and a glorious conclusion and you have willfully chosen it are you willing? huh? you who want to be one of the boys you want to sit you want to stand out to be conspicuous you want a nice kind of Christianity that you can perform acceptably

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