

K-198 the Anatomy of Sin Part Two

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the anatomy of sin, emphasizing the necessity of understanding it through the lens of Christ's crucifixion and the urgent call for repentance and grace.

Duration: 56:12

Scripture: Matthew 24:14, John 8:32, Romans 1:20, Romans 3:20, Hebrews 9:19, 1 John 1:7, Jude 1:3

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a personal experience of encountering a man with an artificial limb. Despite not speaking the same language, the speaker felt compelled to help the man and was struck by the absence of brutality and horror in his face. This encounter led the speaker to reflect on the importance of contending for the faith and not reducing it to mere rituals or convenience. The speaker emphasizes the need to truly understand the significance of the blood of Jesus and to be genuinely grieved by our sins.

Transcript

It's what you have inflicted upon my people, but as I watched this guy arrive, something larger than myself came over me and I got out of my seat without saying a word and I went to help him, put my hands on that sickening, artificial limb, and he was beckoning me, a non-German speaker, what I should do, and finally, evidently, I got it right, and he achieved his peace. He had me sit down alongside him, he offers me a cigarette, and we tried to carry on a conversation, and I'm looking into this man's face for the telltale evidence of brutality and horror, and could not find it. It was only a man's face, and something came over my heart as an atheist, cats, there but for the grace of God go you.

It's only an accident you're born in Brooklyn, it's only circumstantial that you're born Jewish, had you been born in Germany, you would have been the one putting the bodies into the ovens, and you didn't hear a single protest coming up out of my heart to say, oh not me, oh not me, not a protest at all, I knew it was me. Ten years before the Lord saved me, I was already being instructed, there's no man good, no not one. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

If God marks you, who can stand? Only when we know Jesus Christ do we really know that man is the man of sin, and what sin is, and what it means for man. That's the revelation of faith, and we have to understand this concretely, and not in an abstraction of our own choosing. The worst thing you can perform is to take that revelation and emasculate it, and make it pretty, and give Jesus a nice little loincloth to wear on the cross, as there was the habit of the Gothic and Renaissance artists, that we might forget

that he was stark naked on the cross, and we want to prettify and beautify and take the sting out of his suffering and of his death.

As Goethe, the German poet said, we need to garland the cross with roses, it's too crude, it's too rough, it's too brutal, we've got to soften the blow. And in fact, though we've never heard of Goethe, that's what we have been doing as the contemporary church. Where do we hear of judgment? Where do we understand that that's what was performed in Jesus and on the cross? It was the revelation of God's wrath against his hatred and abhorrence for sin.

We have softened, if you soften that, you soften sin, you soften God, you soften everything, you mute all the categories, you dull the faith, you make it something other than God's intention, and you rob the church of its reality, its power, its message. The human knowledge of sin is enclosed in this knowledge, Christ crucified, and not anywhere else, but strictly and fully in it. It is irrelevant and superfluous to seek for a concept by which to measure sin, to construct such a concept.

Even using the Bible is itself a form of sin and maybe the ultimate form. It is here that we are inescapably accused and irrevocably condemned. There is nothing that we can bring in our own favor, we have to acknowledge that we are wholly unrighteous, we see him in this mirror and we see ourselves as those who commit sin and are sinners.

We are no longer permitted to parley and come to terms with ourselves about ourselves, there can be no pardon obtained by our own devices, whether it's the Jewish mitzvot. You know what mitzvot are? Good deeds. How can you perform a good deed if you yourself are inherently evil? Or maybe a device for Christians today is something of the relationship with Israel and with Jews in which they condescend and not defer to them and tell them that they are better Christians than Christians.

Some symbiotic relationship with Israel by which we find the satisfaction by honoring them and exalting them and confirming them in their own condition as sinners. These are the devices, sample devices, I'm sure there are many, by which we seek to pardon and to justify ourselves who have not been fully pardoned and justified at the cross. If in this judgment there is no grace or more exactly no mercy, then we have no refuge, we have no claim to free grace, otherwise how could it be free? How could it be mercy? We have no means of attaining it, we have no light even to know it, we are in darkness before a wall which can only be pierced from the other side.

Can you see the helplessness of man, the futility of man even to know his own condition? What was the first line that we discussed from Barth? He's crooked, even in understanding his crookedness he's crooked. That's his nature, can I even say it? It's got to come from the other side. We have no light even to know it, we are in darkness.

There can be no question of any thought of redemption which we can manipulate, any capacity for redemption that we can put into effect. To this extent is the knowledge of real sin, sin. When you come to that utter abject sense of total hopelessness, total futility, total helplessness of nothing that you can affect in yourself or by yourself, even of a spiritual kind, even of a revelation of your condition and need, then you have come and are coming to the real knowledge.

But this knowledge of real sin takes place in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, not the purified Jesus but the crucified. Why this knowledge? Because God has judged this man. You want to know God? You've got to know him in his judgments.

You want to see his judgment? Look at the holocaust of the Jew and the holocaust of Jesus. That's God judging. And if you don't see God there, you don't see.

And if you have complaint about seeing God there, it's the testimony that what he says of our condition is true. Why in this knowledge of Christ crucified? Because God has judged this man. Jesus is the statement of God's judgment on Adam and therefore myself as this man in the offering and death of Jesus Christ, his own son, putting him to death and destroying him.

If you think that that's an exaggerated term, take a look at this painting. When it says more than any man, that's not a little Hollywood scenario. That's devastation, complete destitution.

A man destroyed at the cross and before. The beatings, the up all night and the anguish of the cross itself and the forsakenness of God. This, this thing with Jesus with his mouth open, with white lips and the spittle dried up on his chin and eyes rolled back, if pathetic.

No wonder that the two disciples on the road to, where was it, the road to Emmaus were dejected and crestfallen. Their whole hope was utterly destroyed with the one who was destroyed. And Jesus appears to them and their eyes to behold and they cannot recognize him.

And he says to them in his wonderful, rich way. Hey, how come you guys are looking like this? You look kind of disappointed and depressed. Has anything happened? Are you new around here? You've not heard that this, this Christ, this Jesus, a prophet of mighty deed and word, whom we had thought would have restored the glory of Israel has been cruelly slain.

And crucified. They saw him so dead saints that they were robbed of any last hope. This wasn't, as some commentators say, a drugged Christ feigning death that later revived, crucified and destroyed utterly.

And the implementation was the cruelty of Rome and the torment and taunting of his people. But the death was God's. He suffered the wrath of God for sin.

And if you want to know how much God hates sin and how much is an offense against his holiness, see Christ and him crucified. See Israel at Auschwitz and at the one that is yet coming. Because the verdict unmasks this old man showing what every man is before God and therefore what I myself am before him.

You want to know your real condition before God? See Christ crucified. That's what should have come upon you. But I didn't do anything that deserved that.

Because if I had been there at the time of my father's, I would not have slain the prophets. If I was a German, I would not have put the bodies in the ovens. I wouldn't have acted adversely toward Jews.

I, I, I, I, I, I. You don't know as you ought to know. Crisis will reveal it. And when the night of terror came, the ones who made the most defiant and loudest expressions of loyalty to Jesus, Lord, though the whole world deny you, yet will we deny you never.

Until stark terror came at night and they fled. Not, not one, all. And the one who is most devoted, who laid his head on the bosom of Jesus, he fled nakedly.

Are we made of better stuff than they? But are we more virtuous? I myself am that man who was put to death and destroyed, overtaken by the wrath of God, condemned and executed. And that's why the one thing that blessed God's heart when Job, who was so exemplary a servant, can you find such a one as

him? He said, I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes. I've heard by the hearing of my ear, but now my eyes see it and I abhor myself.

He abhorred himself so much that the only right place for a man who sees his despicableness is death. There's not even a right to breathe, to live or to do. And God said, now pray for your comforters because they have not spoken as my servant Job has spoken.

They were full of the most elaborate spiritualizations and explanations that are eloquent and in many ways true, but they had not spoken as my servant Job has spoken. And my anger is kindled against you, you spiritual hotshots, you know-it-all who can speak so eloquently, but you have never spoken as my servant Job has spoken. I abhor myself.

And the dust and ashes is the statement of going six feet under. Listen, saints, the only church that will be able to be for the Jew and to do for the Jew in the way that we shall be radically required is that one that's raised from the dead, that have gone six feet under and is the church of the resurrected. Only that church.

Who say, for me to live as Christ. How can they say it? Because they have no other life. There was no other life worth retaining.

It was shot through, it stinks, it's corrupted, self-seeking by its very nature. The only life that is safe is the one that is raised from the dead, which is his life. And that saint who will only satisfy themselves with the doctrine of resurrection and persist in living as a Christian out of their own life and energy and ability, mocks God, blasphemes God, traduces God, makes the cross of no effect, and rejects the great gift of life that was raised from the dead through his suffering.

How dare we presume to think that mere tacit agreement only with the doctrine is pleasing in God's sight when we have not appropriated the life and are well content to go on out of our own natural religious ability to serve and be for God what we think must be impressive in this sight. The only place for us is as dead men. And that's my only distinction for the body of Christ, is my willingness, desire to come out of that place only.

The wrath of God has condemned and executed in Christ all men because that's their fit verdict. It's the judgment we deserve. We have no rights, we're entitled to nothing.

Anything that comes is purest grace. As the verdict of God has this complete and comprehensive content, including ourselves and our activity and being, and excluding any conceivable possibility of self-excuse and self-justification, in this verdict that came upon Christ, we learn what God knows about us. Boy, oh boy.

When we see what God allowed to come upon Jesus, we learn what God knows about us. He didn't have to tell us in detail. There's the statement for it hanging on the cross.

Whatever view you may have had, whatever soliloquy you indulge, whatever you self-conversation you gave yourself, here's the truth of your condition. As men, in this verdict, we learn what God knows about us and therefore how it really is with us. It is only at the cross of Christ that the justified man measures the significance of human sin.

Only at the cross. There is no other valid measure because how could the crooked man measure what's crooked? The gospel is God's condemnation of man, of all men and every man. You want to know what

the key is to racial equality and racial harmony? It's the recognition both of the white man and the black man and the indigenous man and the colonial man that we are all sinners and judged to death.

There's not a virtue in one of us. When you think you have the right to the land because you were there first? And what did you do with it when you had it? Before the white man came, you didn't wait for him to introduce slavery, you invented it yourself. Try and tell the American Indian that the coming of the white man and what was imposed in the infliction of that white civilization is already God's judgment for sin that existed before the white man came.

Enough of this nonsense about a higher spirituality. As if they are some native, what do they call it, the myth of the... The noble savage. The noble savage.

Rousseau. It's a French speaking man of course who invented that. Rousseau of the Enlightenment.

The noble savage. Some intrinsic virtue. He must have had some Jewish blood.

Because this is the essence of the humanistic presumption about man. Innately good. It's only what was imposed upon him in the environment and what came that corrupted and ruined.

The corruption is innate. This is man and Jesus Christ at the cross, him crucified, is the truth of it as God reveals it. And the failure to recognize that and to take that into our deepest consideration sets us on a course of sin as individuals and as a nation and makes our holocaust inevitable.

The holocaust, if God would give the grace to see and understand, is nothing other than the outworking of our continuing rejection of the revelation that came to us in our own capital city and the suffering of God's own son even at our own provocation and hands. We continue to choose Barabbas until the day that we explicitly choose him. The gospel is the revelation of this judge, the event in which he comes forth and pronounces his sentence and against which there can be no appeal.

When Paul said at Mars Hill, as we discussed a week or so ago, God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men by that man whom he has raised from the dead. Jesus is the flawless judge because he has been judged. He's free from any modifying consideration that would keep the truth and equity of God's justice to come to nations.

And no man will stand before him as individuals and as nations with excuse. One sight of him in his impeccable purity with the wounds of the judgment which he bore will rob us of any self-justifying statement. But did you know that I bought Israel bonds and that I made many trips and I did this and did that? The words will choke up in our mouths.

We will be bereft of any excuse just by looking at the judge. And Paul pleaded with these Athenians that God has winked in times past, but he now commands all men everywhere to repent. So, the one who is justified by faith, who receives the sentence of this judge, trusting that it is valid and right, who subjects himself to it in obedience, will live.

Of course, the penalty of sin is death. He who receives this, subjects himself to it, is obedient to it. I always wonder about the phrase obedience to the gospel.

Like, what do you have to do? It's an obedience that takes to itself the truth of what the cross means, sees itself indicted and judged, and agrees with it. That man will live and will partake of that redemption. The

fact that we see so little evidence of that redemption may well be the testimony that we have not done this.

We have not really agreed. The fact that we wince when the subject of judgment comes up, if we think it an impolite subject, it's painful to consider, is the indication that we have never really received it for ourselves in the fullness and depth and intent that God requires. Or we would be seeing differently about everything, and we would be differently.

The wrath of God compounded, because the mercy of God has been made available to men at unspeakable cost, and is still willfully refused. How much greater the judgment when it comes, as it mounts, and it has its inexorable toll, and the day of its requirement, the day of God's wrath, the day of the Lord that will come. So let's take a deep breath, pray for ourselves, pray for the church for its shallowness, and what that shallowness requires, makes necessary, how the absence of the joy of our salvation, that can only come by the receiving of this horror, seeks to fulfill itself in ways that scandalizes the church, rather than glorifies the Lord.

There's a vacuum, there's an emptiness, there's a grayness, there's a want of life and vitality, because we have not obtained it at the place of God's intention. And we're seeking to, at a secondary level, meet the symptoms of it, but we've not identified the root. The cross needs to be restored, saints.

The gospel needs to be proclaimed in all nations. And when this gospel shall be proclaimed to all nations, then shall the end come, for men will be without excuse. Thank you, Lord, precious God.

Oh, I've never heard you talk as you're talking now. I've never heard you more earnest, more serious, more uncompromising with your saints, more crude, if I could put it that way, more direct, more unsparing. We can only surmise that it's because the time is shorter than we know.

The stakes are greater than we know. Multitudes, multitudes, my God, are candidates for hell and are totally oblivious that they are in any way at fault with you. Willing to take the risk, so utterly assured of their rectitude, because after all, they're nice guys.

Even as nice or nicer than us who believe. Lord, Lord, Lord, we don't know how to pray. Mercy, precious God, we pray.

Bring us to such an appropriation of the truth as you have made it known in Christ and him crucified. In the revelation of God, both in judgment and in mercy, my God, that we might be filled with the life of that God and speak for you as you in words that men cannot gainsay. Let them put their fingers in their ears and rush upon us with their teeth.

They cannot gainsay what is true and must hear before such judgment falls without remedy eternally. Oh, bring these things to the church, Lord, that it might be the church. And these chosen ones whom you've put around these tables, my God, whom you've called from one end of the earth to the other in these days and put before us these things.

What unspeakable privilege. You've given us much and much is required and can only be fulfilled by that same life that issued out of that death. Forgive us if we have not trusted it.

Forgive us if we have sought somehow to perform for you on some other basis of our own naked shambles of humanity, our own ability and intelligence and self-will. Oh, my God, bring us into that death by which your life alone is our life. Bless your church for whom you have already made every provision.

Grant us the faith of God to appropriate, to walk in it. We bless you. We bless you for the mercy that saves us from a day of wrath for which our shrieks would have gone up with us without remedy.

If we have not had effectual reunion at the cross, it's an imaginary God with imaginary claims, always much less than God's own claims, which is total. You follow that? That's why we like false gods. They do not require of us the totality that the true God does.

And in that you have a definition of what idolatry is, even in the supposed name of Jesus. Mama mia. Wow.

Where are the prophetic men of God who can nail this for the church right into their teeth in the midst of their so-called celebrations and show them you can blather all you want. You're not talking about the God who is God. Calbot sees that and he was an offense to his own generation.

And he sounded that. How can it be otherwise than that a doctrine of sin, which precedes Christology or precedes Christ and is independent of it, should consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly move in the direction of this idol in this claim. What he's saying is, how can there be any valid understanding of God that does not is not first a valid understanding of sin before Christology or independent of Christology? Christology is the study of Christ or the issue, the Christ event itself.

There's no valid knowledge of God independent of Christ. That that took a big dogmatic. That's what he's saying.

He's totally Christ centered. Christ is the issue of God. Christ is the revelation of God.

Christ is the revelation of sin as being exceedingly sinful. Christ is the revelation of God and judgment in what was visited upon that son to omit him is to omit God and every consideration about God and leave you in a deceived condition of your own deceived impression of your own condition. What does that say for Judaism that has rejected that revelation? What does it say for nominal Christianity that ostensibly acknowledges it, but in truth has departed from it? Who are embarrassed by the cross, are embarrassed by the wrath of God, embarrassed by the blood, embarrassed by judgment and want to affect man's self-esteem independently of Christ and him crucified.

What standard can there be other than a normative concept constructed either from philosophical or biblical materials? Oh, I love this man. He's giving no mercy. Apart from Christ, what standard can there be other than a concept? We Jews are so thrilled to tell the world that we've given the world the concept of monotheism.

In the day that God becomes a concept, as we say in Yiddish, oy vey, to reduce God to a concept is to blaspheme God. And there's no alternative to render God a concept if you have forsaken the revelation of God in Christ. That saves us from concept.

What is a concept anyway? Come on, you guys. It's a human construct. It's what man conceives.

And how can the piece of creation conceive him who has created it? It's an oxymoron. It's a contradiction in terms. It cannot be that the lower thing can rightly describe the greater.

What an affront, what an arrogance even to presume to do so as a concept of an impersonal force in the universe, a higher power, as many rabbis like to speak, and who are offended by our referring to a Lord

who's personal, intimate, and known. This is the same man who says the very tolerance of the synagogue on the same corner with the church is itself an affront to God and a disservice to the Jews. Because it leads them to assume that they have a validity comparable to our own as if there are respective truths and respective gods of equal value.

The fact that it exists like that is a judgment of God, a statement of our failure that needs to be laid at the door of the church. The existence of the synagogue and the mosque and all of the other corollaries of a relativistic age is the statement of the church's failure to stand for the absolute apostolic truth of God in Christ, him crucified. That's why Paul says, I'm determined not to know anything but Christ and him crucified.

He had the same heart as Karl Barth and it's the heart that we must have. A concept, is it not inevitable that the concept used in this process should be the very idol? Do you call him Jesus or the God of Israel or however you want to call him? That's the very idol and you're the maker of it. It's your concept, but this falls to pieces when our eyes are lifted toward God and his perfection by which alone we are really measured.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his brutally battered face, marred more than any man. Not in this purified cosmetic pseudo depiction. Look into the face of that one who was marred more than any man.

Look into the brutalized Christ. That he had no form that we should desire him is not the statement of his life before the cross, but at the cross. He was rendered despicable.

He was a battered piece of humanity. He was mangled. The whole fury of hell fell upon him as the wrath of God.

But only that scene will save you from an idol. Even an idealized Jesus who somehow becomes the patsy who does our bidding and performs for our services and does this for us and that for us. In the house of God without the fear of God.

This falls to pieces when we lift our eyes toward God, Christ crucified and his perfection by which we are really measured. Where then is our righteousness, wisdom, virtue and purity? Our wickedness and folly and impotence are mercilessly exposed. Then that's when you beat your chest and say, woe is me, I'm undone.

Who am I to speak for God, to be for God, to do for God? That I am, I'm nothing. I have no virtue. I have no quality.

I'm a piece of dust. Except his grace be imparted. I have nothing to say.

You think of the ambition of men today, religiously. Hence, the terror ascribed by scripture, even to holy men in the presence of God who went down like dead. As I had my experience up there at the corner of the property of Mom Broder's house, preparing a message on mercy for the final convocation with John Smith some years ago.

And God lifted the veil. And down I went. I've gone down since over the years, but this was a going down that two hours later, I was still down.

There wasn't a Kleenex left. There wasn't the handkerchief that was not saturated with tears. I was a sobbing, convulsive mess that when that woman came in with her friend two hours later to wonder why I was still there.

I had not gone to the meeting and I was the speaker. She went right to the phone to call an ambulance. Of course, I couldn't speak.

She took one look at me and went right to the phone to call an ambulance. Have you ever gone down like that? Would you like to? You can't order such an experience. But I'll tell you what.

Once having had it, you know you're nothing. If God only lifted the veil that much to let the glory of his light shine out on the subject of mercy, what would a whole unveiling have produced? Death. No man can see God and live.

They said, let us drive you down to the tabernacle. I said, nothing doing. And when I found my voice, I cannot go in a car.

Well, take your bicycle. Don't you understand? I can't ride or touch anything made by man. Don't you understand? I can't even walk down this road.

I've got to take the back route. Lest I see anybody on the way and just come right up into the building and onto the platform. I've seen God.

Only a glimpse. Oh, if our eyes would lift toward God, where we are really measured. Where then is our righteousness, wisdom, virtue, and purity? Our hotshot plans and programs of what we're going to do for him.

Our wickedness, which is our very ambition and folly that we can fulfill it. And impotence are mercilessly exposed. Hence the terror ascribed by Scripture even to holy men in the presence of God.

How could this theologian write like that? Because although he doesn't say so, he must have met God. Obviously, it's only in this encounter, but then truly and radically, that they experience this terror of their own condition, their own state. It is God alone who convinces man of his own corruption.

And when God does it, he does it radically. And there is no softening of the verdict that man is corrupt. Our failure to apprehend the truth of sin, redemption, and the cross stems from the doctrine of verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture that was itself not an expression of an overly developed faith, but a product of rationalistic thinking, making it readily apprehensible as though it were an object of secular experience.

What he's saying is, we have made it academic. We have institutionalized it. We have made the truths of God acceptable.

They're just another vocabulary that we learn to assimilate and to speak with a certain familiarity and ease, but we've missed it. Fear the day that it ever becomes familiar, and that we can speak it readily, easily, and glibly. Either we've never known it, or we've lost it.

If we don't choke and splutter at the depth of what is communicated of God and in his word, and therefore, he says, we divest it in its character as revelation. We rob it from being revealed truth. It's become commonplace.

It's become doctrine. It's become formula for salvation, step one, step two. What if the truth and basic form of all man's knowledge of the law and sin is immediate self-knowledge? What if in this matter, man is at bottom, only engaged in a soliloquy? What a soliloquy is? A man talking to himself, like Hamlet.

To be or not to be. Which he has dramatized with the help of biblical reminiscences. He's given it a certain aura of biblical orientation, but in essence, it's just a man talking to himself.

Convincing himself. Well, we can only repeat our question whether in this case, there will be or can be any knowledge of the real demand of God and the real sin of man. I'm sure he wasn't aware of what he was co-joining.

The real demand of God and the real sin of man. We don't want to see the truth of the real sin of man because we're equally not willing to see the real demand of God. What did Jesus say? If any man would know whether my words are true, let him do it.

We want the doctrinal knowledge, but we don't want the experiential walking out in it. That's costly. There's an evasion and it's inherent in man, and even in Christian man.

That's why we talk to ourselves or we soliloquize or we turn the truth of God into formula. And he says, will there be or can there be any knowledge of the real demand of God and the real sin of man, if that's what we are about religiously. Sin then takes on the appearance of something quite comfortable.

The biblical statements concerning it are still repeated with a certain uneasiness, but at bottom, they cannot be made with conviction. And at bottom, we can sing, we can owe the blood of Jesus, but we're only singing. You know what I mean? It becomes a familiar chorus and we're able to sing it, but have we dipped to bow and to put the thorny bush, what is it called, that lowly scrub plant? There's a name for it.

Hyssop. Hyssop. Hyssop.

Have we dipped the hyssop into the blood and marked the doorpost and the lintels of our life. I praise God for last Passover that the Lord didn't let me get away with watching two of our brothers with a rope around the neck of the lamb that we were going to be slaughtered for the Passover coming that Friday night and with their rifle over their shoulders saying, Art, you want to join us? And I said, not me, brother. You know, I'm squeamish.

And I went up the steps to my study and I got to the landing, had my hand on the knob, and the Lord said, go down with them. Not just to watch them do it. You do it.

You kill the lamb, and not with a gun, with a knife. I had never, the only, the closest I ever came to that was cleaning a fish after catching it. And if it flopped a little bit, I got a little queasy in my stomach.

I'm going to kill that lamb, that beautiful animal that was so trusting. And I went down to the fellows and we walked up. I said, hang him up by his hind legs on this tree and give me that knife.

I had never done it before, saints. I didn't know how to do it. I trusted the Lord.

And I brought that knife across the throat of that lamb and out poured its life's blood right into the snow. I'm grateful that God saved me from academic acknowledgement, from talking professionally that Friday about the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, blah, blah, blah, blah, and singing the blood of Jesus. I had to see something of that reality at my own hand.

And isn't it interesting? David was there with my grandson, watching. And I remember the scripture we had studied in the Bible study that the whole house of Israel shall kill it in the evening, in the twilight. Not just the professional, the whole house.

Oh, dear saints, we've got to contend for the faith. This is what it means. Because if we lose it, what have we to say to a dying world if it has become for us a formula and a convenience and a liturgy and a song service? We've got to know that blood.

The reason we can get away with it is because we have only been discomforted by our sin but not grieved. We have been made uncomfortable, but we've not been terrified. The negation in which sin has its reality takes place only in our consciousness of God, in an encounter of man with God, I put it in the margin, as He is, as He indeed is, and not as we suppose Him to be.

Are we speaking of real sin and real grace when there could be no mention of a real history? If there's not a real lamb and a real cutting and a real blood shedding and a real cross and a real Christ crucified, can there be a real grace? And if it's only a vocabulary, do we have the authenticity of grace? And doesn't the absence of it show in our lovelessness and our inability to be to each other what we ought, let alone to the Jew? We talk about God's mercy on Israel, He'll have mercy upon whom have mercy. The first thing that rises up out of the heart of the church beside themselves is, but they don't deserve it, because our lives are predicated on deserving and merit and works, though we have subscribed externally to a doctrine of grace, but don't know it in the authenticity that we must, because we've not contended for it. So the decline, well, at no stage of His development is man absolutely corrupt, absolutely incapable of good.

The world is ethicized and spiritualized. I would say Judaism is the world ethicized, because Judaism, in my opinion, is hardly more than an ethical humanism. And the world is Christianized or spiritualized, is our failing as believers.

And the two failings together account for the melancholy condition of the world today, with its Bosnia, with Rwanda, with the Hutus, with massacres, with genocide, with rape, with the whole pathetic condition of mankind, because to be merely ethicized and spiritualized is not to touch the heart condition of man. But this conception of sin, which is so acceptable in its basic perversion, is the fatal fruit of that arbitrary act in which man himself undertakes to set up a criterion for the knowledge of sin, in which this knowledge is simply a matter of self-communing, and man becomes his own lawgiver and judge. If you have not Christ as the demonstration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the wrath of God upon it, then everything becomes a basic perversion, an arbitrary act, a humanly engineered thing where we set up the criteria for what we think sin is, and what it really is, he says, is a matter of self-communing.

We're just talking to ourselves. It's an in-house thing. Man becomes his own lawgiver and judge.

And is it not inevitable that the man who has arbitrarily attained to these offices will be able and ready to acquit himself? If you're the judge, you'll take it easy on your little old self. You'll find a way to exonerate, justify, and be lenient if you're the judge. And when you read of God's judgments, you're horrified and offended.

If only he could be such a one as you, he'd be far more just and merciful and moral, even when it is done with an appeal to the help of the Bible. We can do this and employ biblical vocabulary, and maybe that's the cruelest and ultimate deception of all, because we don't realize that we're not any safer in employing biblical terminology, but all the more does it fasten us in deception. And I'm not saying that there should be

a flight from biblical terms, but their right employment.

And maybe no one is in greater threat and jeopardy of deception than the Church for all these reasons, that men are safer in the world, that have not a presumption about being in right standing and right relationship with God, than those who think they have and have not, and reinforce it with credo, doctrines, song services, liturgy, and all the rest. And that's why deception is so pervasive in the Church, because there's something about the nature of religion and even spirituality that lends itself to it. So, divine knowledge is the exclusive matter of revelation and faith, but we have to understand this concretely, and not in an abstraction of our own choosing.

The knowledge of human sin is enclosed in this knowledge and not anywhere else. It's the knowledge that God gives, and not what we think ourselves to be. It is irrelevant and superfluous to seek for a concept by which to measure sin.

To construct such a concept, even from biblical materials, is indeed a form of sin, and perhaps the main form. Maybe the ultimate form of sin is to use biblical terminology to form a certain concept of sin, of God, of atonement, that is something less than other, than His truth. And that is the final statement of sin itself, when we go that far.

And the fact that we can do that, and not be conscious that we're doing it, and justify ourselves in doing it, and celebrate ourselves in doing it, and communicate that to others as truth, is the final statement of the depth of what man is in his own perversity and depravity. That's why Paul cries out in Romans 7, Who will save me from this death? Paul's not your average Joe, who's a masturbator, and fornicator, and stealer. He's a virtuous man.

He's so righteous, and he so loves the God of Israel, he goes out of his way to persecute that sect that he thought was threatening to it. But his condition was such that when he saw it, Who can save me from this death? But I praise God for Jesus Christ. What an apprehension of the Messiah, of the Lord, of the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, that took away his, and always saw himself as the least of all saints.

That burned into his heart. And that's what made him an apostle. And that's what will make us apostolic.

How exactly true this is of the Holocaust, and this is my statement, as it is of the crucified Christ, the two great tremendum of modern times, the two great holocausts, the two devastating, epical events, from which mankind has turned away, and refuses to see, or has modified, ameliorated, taken the sting out of it, as I described what happened at Dachau. They took down every barrack, took down the whipping posts, and reconstructed the whole place, according to the original specifications. The German mind, that if you rebuild the barrack, to the centimeter of the exact, original specifications, that you have the reality.

There's something in man, that doesn't want the reality, and wants only the simile, the shadow, the equivalent of, because it exonerates, and removes from him, the evidence of his own, the truth of his own, condition and need. You think that Germany, has yet repented for the holocaust? You think that their multi, millions of Deutschmarks, that they have paid, in reparations to Germany, is the statement, of their full acknowledgement, of their sin, in the atrocity, of the genocide, of the Jewish people, in the Hitler time? Do you think that their heart, as a nation, has really been broken? I would say bruised, perhaps, their pride may have been bruised, when they would say, how could we have done, something like this, being Germans? Maybe it was an aberration, there was a moment in history, of a perverse kind, that won't come

again, but it is certainly not the statement, of our condition. How do you know that Art? Because this generation of Germans, faults that generation, and says so much, as if we had lived at that time, this would not have taken place.

And Jesus said to his contemporaries, because you say that, upon you has come the blood, of all of the martyrs of God, from faithful Abel, to the last prophet, who was slain between the porch and the altar, because you say, you would not have. How little you recognize, that you share in the sins of your fathers, and the fact that you were not there historically, does not exonerate you. You are guilty, because you are man.

And because you say you will not, all the more you will. You'll crucify me, you'll stone the first prophet, the first martyr Stephen, and you'll persecute the apostolic church, and hound it unto death, because you think you're righteous, because you say, you would not have done. Oh, dear saints, God softened me up ten years before my conversion, by allowing me to visit Dachau, when the stench of death was still there.

I was a hot shot, righteous, indignant, self-righteous Jew, who had a fervent hatred for the German. We were the good guys, they were the bad guys, until I went to the place of horror. You've got to go to the cross.

You've got to see the stark reality. You can't put, you can't garland the cross with roses. You've got to feel its brutality, and its splinters, its gore, and its blood.

You've got to see Dachau, you've got to understand Auschwitz, you've got to leap into the grave with the victims. You've got to see their bones and ashes in the oven. When I saw that, I freaked out.

My fuses blew, my categories with them. And somehow, inwardly though, I didn't have the words to say it, I somehow knew, there's not a righteous man upon the face of the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not. If God were to mark iniquity, who could stand? The magnitude of this horror, eclipses my fragile notions of good guys and bad guys.

There is no good guys, we're all bad, whether we're born in Brooklyn or Berlin. And on my way back to my barracks, on the train that night, back to Munich, alone in a second-class compartment, I thought myself alone, but I looked up, I sensed another body, but it was only partial, no arms and no legs. A multiple German amputee, from the recent war, with his arms with hooks, and his artificial limbs, sitting opposite me, with his blonde hair and blue eyes.

The Jew and the German. The victim and the victimizer. The persecuted and the persecutor.

And something rose up involuntarily in my self-righteous heart, of anger and hatred against him, after what I had seen that day. But the poor sucker was in pain himself, and writhing on his seat, trying to adjust his limb, and he couldn't swing it with his hooks. And I had my arms folded over my uniform, saying to my heart, Suffer, you dog.

Whatever little thing you're experiencing, there's nothing you can do about it.

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