

# K-284 the Anatomy of Cross Evasion

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz's sermon explores the profound significance of the crucifixion of Jesus and the dangers of evading its implications in contemporary Christianity.*

**Duration:** 1:06:03

**Scripture:** John 8:32, John 14:6, John 18:37, 1 Corinthians 10:14, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 4:14

**Topics:** "Cross of Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the spectacle and drama of processions and celebrations that should have been condemned. He emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the whole truth of God, rather than offering only partial views. The speaker challenges the notion of reducing Jesus to a great teacher and suggests that man has modified and controlled the truth to serve his own purposes. The sermon also explores the concept of the Trinity and the importance of replicating the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the church. The speaker concludes by highlighting the significance of the cross as the ultimate demonstration of God's nature and the implications that come with embracing it.

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## Transcript

Something that has been stirring my heart in a book that I'm carrying with me by the Swiss-German theologian Karl Barth a 20th century giant that has greatly blessed my own life and understanding and today little known, little rarely mentioned and I feel like not the least of my functions is to introduce this remarkable Christian thinker to Christian audiences who would not themselves ever seek him out or pursue his work and to be like a middle man to try and communicate the benefit that I receive in a language that you can hear from me but not maybe directly from him So his magnum opus, which means great work is a 14 volume study of the faith called Church Dogmatics and I have one of the volumes here two others are in my suitcase and it's called Neo-Orthodox that is to say, a return to

Christian orthodoxy because he came out of a generation of German liberal theology which moved away from the word of God and became, it was called the higher criticism and they were going to bring scientific examination to the New Testament and to separate the mythological elements from the true that had more to do to reduce German Christianity to such a state that it provided the vacuum into which Nazism came and my Jewish people were no little part in that movement away from orthodox Christianity into more liberal ways of understanding the faith that finally created the Frankensteinian monster that did them in So when, in 1918, Carl Barth published his first work called The Epistle to the Romans a commentary on the

book of Romans that exploded like a bomb in the midst of that whole

liberal theological generation he was a man returning to the word of God as the word of God and profoundly Christological Christ-centered everything that he sees in the faith has Christ at its center So I recommend, if you're going to begin with him begin with that book and it's a remarkable explosion Tonight I want to read from and comment on a section about the cross about the coming of Jesus Christ crucified and what kind of a crisis that brings to mankind and how it has affected the church to the degree that it has appropriated or subtly modified the radicalness of God's intrusion in time and history at the cross of Christ The crucifixion of Jesus is the epical event of all time and history E-P-O-C-H-A-L Don't confuse epical with epic an epic is like a saga a story, a narrative could

be a myth, it could be a sweeping kind of history but epical E-P-O-C-H an epoch or epical I don't even know how to define that word it's like an ultimate event in time something that affects an entire age the coming of Jesus into the earth in time and history is the single greatest epical event in the history of creation in the history of man God's actual visitation the coming of himself and the form that it took and the way it was culminated in his crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection has got to be the single greatest epical event in the whole history of the human race I stagger, I marvel that whole nations are completely oblivious and that the Jewish people themselves have found a way to shuck off the event from their own consideration for which we have paid greatly but that even

in Christendom the event has become modified sentimentalized, trivialized rendered almost into a non-event the greatest conspiracy in the history of mankind of the power of darkness has been to take this single great event and to make it a commonplace and to cheapen it and to make it in effect a non-event even by those who purport to support and to believe it so we don't know as we ought to know and we need to come back again to this single great event in history a return to the cross and its unplumbed meaning or we ourselves will not only be victim of this conspiracy to subdue and modify and to remove the content and its power we will be participant in that conspiracy even in our ignorance so we have to contend for this, the heart of our faith which is foolish, ridiculous offensive to

man calculated to offend a natural man in its own intellect and yet the event of all events so Lord again I'm asking mercy grace your own heart in this Lord we're attempting never before having gone this way or spoke on this to believe that this is in your heart for tonight and that you'll help us as we take the risk of failure of the whole thing collapsing because it's untested, untried and yet my God if you should succeed through the foolishness that I am and your people what a triumphant thing to restore something of the genius the efficacy, the power the unspeakable significance of this great divine intervention into the world that the world and the flesh and the devil seeks to subdue to controvert and to rob come my God and restore something of its mighty significance and restore it

to the church not as a piece of decoration but central let the thump that took place when that cross came into the dirt again reverberate and shake the entire earth and our earth and I thank and give you praise for this possibility according to your grace in Jesus name amen he has a section here called the falsehood of man and he says nothing reveals the falsity of man than the evasion the sidestepping of man from God and from the crucified Christ we are found out this event cannot take place in time and that we could in any way evade it and it forces us in one form or another to reveal that man is in his very nature a liar phony, falsehood, fleeing from truth because this cannot take place without having to produce some response in man against it if they will not receive it and in that

very response against the truth of man's condition is revealed most profoundly we are found out what shall I say about my own people the event taking place in our history, our Messiah in our Jerusalem or outside our Jerusalem and yet rejected and made a non-event as if Jesus is some kind of pitiful presumer who ran afoul of the political authorities and had to suffer their judgments and nothing more that you can cluck your tongue and feel a moment's pang for this misguided man who ran afoul but missed the entire truth of his coming as the very son of God, as sin bearer fulfilling a necessary sacrifice that no animal could provide and was himself both a sacrifice and a high priest.

What that meant, that cross, that shedding of blood for this purpose I have come it is finished. All of the great things that are intrinsic to that event.

To miss that to shun that, to avoid that to give it another meaning is to condemn yourself to the lie and its consequence so let me read a little bit evasion means trying to find another place where the truth can no longer reach or affect man where he is secure from the invading hand of its knowledge and from its implications and from its implications an event of this magnitude is not for decoration it has implications for all the world and all mankind but these are implications that men shun because it's an ultimate statement from God and makes an ultimate requirement so there are those that are pretending that nothing had happened and occupy themselves with other interests and concerns. He might well have been writing about my own Jewish people I just recently published a prophetic attempt to explain the recent days of rage that have broken out in Israel. The greatest threat to the life of the nation Israel is from Islam and in that little article I suggest that Islam itself is a judgment against Israel that Islam is a monotheistic heresy inspired by Israel's own example of rejecting the triune God and the revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as was demonstrated at the cross.

What is revealed at the cross is unspeakable in what it says about God God's righteousness, God's justice God's mercy, God's self-sacrifice God's love. To miss that statement is to miss all in Israel's willing missing of it and shunting it aside as a non-event it missed the profound revelation of God as God well it's one thing to have a monotheistic view that was superior to paganism but once God has revealed himself in fullness in a triune way and then still to persist in a monotheism and to boast in it as if you're doing God's service is to invite a consequence that will not be pleasant Mohammed what's his name who inspired Islam? Mohammed wasn't it? Was inspired by Israel's example of a monotheistic view of God which was now in view of the revelation of God at the cross itself now a heresy so that Islam is another continuation of a monotheistic heresy but over the course of the ages now has come to constitute the greatest threat to Israel's existence. Here again whatsoever man sows that too shall he reap so we gave birth not only in the example of a monotheistic view of God which is an inadequate view and that which is inadequate and only partial is a lie the truth is the whole truth or nothing but the truth or it's not the truth.

To offer something in part as if it stands for the whole is actually a lie so that I meet Jewish people who will acknowledge Jesus was a great teacher well shouldn't I compliment them and give them a hug? No or that he was even a prophet I say you believe that? Well you're going to be then in the place of greater eternal embarrassment. To believe that he's a great teacher and a prophet and not to believe what he has said of himself and allowed to be said of him and for men to fall to his feet and worship him is to put you in a place of eternal embarrassment worse than that greater than those who make no such acknowledgement at all you're using a partial truth you're thinking that you deserve to be complimented but your partial truth is in fact a lie it's the whole truth and nothing but the truth that is the truth so Mohammed was inspired by Israel's example of a monotheistic heresy but also the church at that generation though it professed to believe in the triune God it lived and acted in a monotheistic way so there's a way in which though we

might subscribe to the correctness of a doctrine our actual conduct and the way in which we understand the faith betrays the doctrine in which we purport to believe. We did not live and act as if we understood and had received the fullness of God's revelation of himself in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there's a way that we can live monotheistically by living privately because one of the great benefits for the church is the example of the Godhead himself Father, Son, and Holy Spirit deferring one to another in a remarkable graciousness of submittedness by which one does not presume upon the other and the one is extending to the other a remarkable kind of grace that ordinarily would be retained for oneself so the Father exalts the Son and gives to the Son a name above every name both in Heaven and in Earth which you would think would depreciate the Father's own place but that's the Father's nature to defer and to give to his Son a name above every name and what does the Son do? he will not speak his own words nor perform his own acts but what he hears and sees from the Father he lives only and exclusively as a Son for the glory of the Father though in his humanity he was a tower of remarkable impressiveness who at the age of 13 could confound the doctors of the law at the temple yet in his entire life and ministry he never acted out of his sublime humanity but only out of that which was given by the Father and for the Father this is a Son.

How shall we know what Sonship is unless we have understood and taken for ourselves the pattern and the example that Jesus himself presented in a self-deferring Son who lives for the Father and the glory of the Father even to the point of drinking that cup that brought him to the cross to serve the Father's purposes and to trust that the Father would raise him from the dead when he himself would be rendered so inert as not to be a factor in his own restoration from death everything in a deferring submission to the Father and the Holy Spirit exactly that to Jesus not drawing attention to itself or himself but living and serving only to bring glory and acknowledgement and understanding of the Son who in turn reveals the Father I'm just giving you a quick survey but the genius of the Godhead

in three persons is a statement of what God is in himself that can only have been communicated by the action of the relationship between these three persons yet one God and what does Jesus say in John 17 when you shall be one as we are one then the world will know the Father hath sent me what is God wanting the replication or demonstration in the earth through the church of exactly the same genius of relationship of deferring one to another as is demonstrated and characterizes the Godhead himself it's a mystery dear saints, to lose that mystery is to lose the faith or to have it only in a narrow, impoverished form and so we Jews have paid a great price for the rejection of the revelation of God in his great fullness as was demonstrated at the cross the cross is the ultimate demonstration

of God as God so why do men avoid it? because it brings with it implications that they shun it's because it is the triumph of falsehood in this undertaking of evasion, even in the faith of such a truth as Christ crucified and yet how is this truth diminished and removed from the challenge that it represents it cannot be effectively resisted, it cannot be arrested, there's no place in which to be rid of it then it might well be the solution to to kind of transform it and take it and put it in forms by which you seem to be acknowledging it, but in fact subvert it, because man cannot dismiss this event from history and time and from his consideration but if he is to avoid its implications he's got to take the event itself and render it in such a way as to become innocuous, mild, religious

and rob it of its meaning and its implication and that's a way in which truth can be evaded in the name of embracing it and even as I'm saying that, can you recognize that this is in fact very much what has happened in history and time in what is called Christendom we have not shunned the truth as if it had not taken place but we have allowed it to take on forms of meaning in such a way as to be hardly anything more than a decoration that we wear around our neck or place on our walls but we have avoided the

implication of the cross in fact while we ostensibly seem to have embraced it that is evasion and that shows that man is a liar that man has been revealed and found out because the truth has come from God of such a kind as could not be what's the word? could not be removed could not be

discontinence it's too profound as an event so then something has got to be done to diffuse it modify it and render it in that way null and void so man will confirm it only in the sense in which he can regard it as tolerable and useful man takes the truth and affects it in such a way as to serve his purposes rather than the purpose that God intended in the sending of a son who was crucified he will understand and improve and grasp and champion it but only in the form of a picture which is divested of the distinctive menace which caused him to back up from it and only in a way in which it seems to be brought under his control and promises to become his willing and powerful servant, consoler and helper haven't we done that to Jesus? we made him an errand boy the benefits you're going to

receive believe on the Lord all you need to do is compare the gospel and its first proclamations that made thousands cry out, men and brethren what must we do to be saved? they were pierced through as against the kind of message it has become in our generation of the benefit that you'll receive by believing easy believism easy decisional Christianity where you're in the driver's seat and you determine when you're going to accept and you accept for the benefits that you will receive little wonder that the church and the world because of it is in the condition that it is it's evasion so what is a theologian? a theologian is one who gives his life to the study of the subject of God a theocratic theologian one who studies the issues of the faith breaks his head learns the original languages

understands what was said in Hebrew what was said in Greek ponders draws out its meaning reads what other men who have invested their life have concluded about certain texts and how they understand it it's a lifetime's giving we need to have an appreciation for men like this because their labors are heroic and they perform such a function that it would be a pity if their books should just gather dust on their shelves and not be brought into the church that might receive the value of their intensive and extensive labors which is what I'm attempting to do a little bit tonight so here's a man who has struggled with this issue he was himself a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church he knows out of his own practice how the congregations want to avoid the implications of this truth, he has seen it

in seminaries he has seen it in the religious establishment and what he's doing now in probing is trying to expose and to bring to our consideration this evasion of the truth he calls it a masterly way of escape when man succeeds or thinks he succeeds in handling the truth by facing it as he must and yet at the same time avoiding it namely by changing or transposing it into a translation of his own into an improved edition in which it looks most deceptively like itself and yet by a hardly noticeable alteration of accent is no longer itself but has become the truth which is mastered by him instead of the truth which masters him isn't that brilliant writing? it's taking a grace because the worst thing that you can do is read and the most difficult thing for an attentive audience is to

follow something being read but these statements are so remarkably incisive that I feel obligated to read them and that was a key one what is the end of this deceptive misuse of Jesus and of the cross and fashioning it into an acceptable domesticated Christianity instead of being mastered by the truth the ones who perform that make themselves the master and so they have muffled the faith and rendered it ineffective and non-threatening the only thing that is now directed into exactly the opposite of the original direction or intention of God this is the accomplishment or the attempted accomplishment of falsehood of the man of sin in the Christian era which is the age of the Holy Spirit and I wrote in above it which is

ironically in the age of the Holy Spirit that this deception I think

most widely practiced in the charismatic realm in the same movement that ostensibly celebrates the Holy Spirit have these great liberties been taken as we said this morning where the word faith itself becomes a device of a means of obtaining something by holding God to some word so that it brings to you a Cadillac or help for this or for that that's miscarriage that's a grotesque mis-rendering of the faith and the word faith itself in the very era of the Holy Spirit which is the spirit of truth the Ruach HaKodesh sometimes it's helpful to translate the familiar phrase into its original language so that the impact registers Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit we've made the Holy Spirit a commonplace a doer of our errands but when you say the Ruach the breath, the spirit HaKodesh of

holiness then right away it's another way of perceiving this remarkable phenomenon given of God to men not to be misused or appropriated for our purposes but to serve his own by the power of that spirit that first must be recognized and received as the spirit of truth before we can have the advantage of the spirit of power it's a dove that is easily offended when the conditions are not appropriate to its nature and the church was so jealous over this reality that distinguished the church being full of the Holy Spirit the first modest even full of the Holy Spirit his face shone like an angel he confused even the doctors of the law in the brilliance of his wisdom being an unlettered man and only a waiter on tables this is what staggered Paul what this man was exhibiting being full of the

spirit he saw the heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of power so the spirit of God had to be brooded over jealously and the conditions appropriate to that spirit had to be maintained so when this couple came in to bring the proceeds of the sale of their property which I assume was a handsome donation Peter saw right through the subterfuge and he said how did you think not only to lie to men but to lie to the Holy Spirit and boom the man dropped dead right at his feet and when his wife came in a time later he said were you partnered with your husband did you say also that this was the full amount when it was yours could you not have done with it what you will but why did you make something to appear as the whole thing when in fact it was only in part we today would be so

grateful for the donation that we would not even question what it represented but Peter himself full of the Holy Spirit and apostolic integrity and jealous for the integrity of the faith so much so that his shadow falling on the sick healed them immediately discerned the error because he was himself so full of the truth unhappily we lack that kind of jealousy over the faith today and so much takes place that is so shoddy and so shabby that has diminished the reality of the church that no one's shadow falling on anyone confers anything so nothing is more dangerous than the falsehood in which he manages or at least tries to think that he manages to use the truth to silence the truth can you mention that that's why I say to these guys listen you want to have your fun and games you want to

talk about the power evangelism or church growth go ahead but don't touch the two great words prophetic and apostolic that's not your baby that's not a playground for you to indulge in and make it another kind of verbal sleight of hand this is holy holy stuff don't touch it play your games with something else even the body of Christ use whatever phraseology but these are sacrosanct terms because if they lose their meaning and they become cheapened and anything is prophetic any Winston personality who can tell you something about yourself who has the gift of prophecy rather than the office and maybe in some cases it's not even a gift it's clairvoyance it's occultic and that is received indiscriminately because we want the benefit or the excitement of the word then we have lost the game we

have thrown the entire game away you've got to be jealous for the truth and look at Paul later confounding Peter to his face when Peter dissimulated and Peter appeared one thing with the Jewish believers and another thing with the Gentiles and Paul shot him down he said I did not for an hour withhold the truth for the gospel's sake and he had to confront one who was the chief apostle even before his own conversion and do it publicly and to his face so much was he jealous for the truth of the gospel and the integrity of the church but what does that say to us that the same Peter who himself had discerned the error of another a short time after is performing his own and needs himself to be corrected and confronted that's what truth requires saints we have been lazy slothful, indifferent and

fearful Paul took a great chance of being misunderstood I can just imagine what what the observers might have said oh here's this young upstart he's only recently in the faith taking issue with this giant Peter who knew Jesus, Paul never walked with Jesus, Peter did and he's publicly rebuking him, that's because he wants to come to a place of greater superiority and greater recognition than Peter himself he's doing this for his own self-seeking motives you can believe that men would think such a thing though it is the farthest thought from Paul's mind, except that even if men would think that and he would have to suffer the shame of such misunderstanding he was willing for the truth's sake because truth is not cheap, it's only the love of the truth that saves us from deception, not mere

acknowledgement, and the love of the truth requires our own humiliation, it's painful before it's glorious so I appreciate a theologian of this kind who is seeing through the whole subterfuge of our modern Christianity because this event cannot take place this is too momentous, this is too epical, God cannot come in time and place and history in himself and perform what he did at the cross and be raised from the dead and be ascended on high without confronting the whole of mankind not only in that generation but every subsequent generation so when I'm challenging my Jewish people I don't begin with, do you know Jesus da da da da da, I begin with the truth what? you spent hours in the stacks of a library, pursuing some minute piece of information to facilitate your career or the attainment

of some doctor's degree or credential and you never once opened the bible or a book in any way to search out the credentials of a man who allowed himself to be worshipped by Jews as their lord and their God well you'll be held accountable for what you have chose to major in and what you have chosen to ignore your very evasion your unwillingness to spend any time on this momentous subject of eternal import, condemns you you're in evasion you're in a flight from truth I don't care what you have done in the pursuit of your career this evasion of Jesus will condemn you God will hold you accountable for failing to examine and failing to inquire as to who this presumer is remember what they said when they had the centurions guard the tomb, this presumer said that he will rise again on the third

day so rather than and be worse than the beginning see that this tomb is greatly guarded well what happened? the lord broke the fetters of death out from a closed tomb and they could not find him and they ran to the authorities and told them that something of a remarkable kind happened in the night, in the early morning hours, and so the Jewish authorities bribed them handsomely and said you tell everyone that at night his disciples came and stole his body and then the scripture says and this is believed to this day what we willingly believe will condemn us men can believe that a bunch of Jewish disciples who are completely broken and disappointed and shattered by the crucifixion of their master are going to overpower Roman centurions and steal the body away at night and that story is

believed until this day we will be held accountable for what we choose to believe and what we choose to reject we are evasive we're liars, we want to avoid the implication of this great event because it could not

take place without making of us an ultimate requirement nothing is more dangerous than the falsehood in which man manages or at least tries and thinks he manages to use the truth to silence the truth or the true witness by finding for him a place by championing him by making him its hero example and symbol yet all the time patronizing, interpreting, domesticating acclimatizing, accommodating and gently but very definitely and significantly correcting him I remember when I was in Scotland I forgot what city, Edinburgh? some memorial for the world war dead world war one, a great

mosaic that ran the whole wall in the middle, and these soldiers dying on the battlefield was the figure of Jesus and the cross and the statement was clear, it was in Latin but you understood what they were saying for God and for country as if Jesus and the cross is some subsidiary for nation and patriotism and that what was happening on the battlefield was somehow the issue of the cross in which Jesus was present and identified with these soldiers so world war one was not some imperialist rivalry between nations for power and colonies and territory but some kind of way in which you can equate and combine the figure of Jesus with the battlefield dead as being one and the same thing as God and country that is using God and accommodating him to your purpose that transcends all battlefields

and as a matter of fact, had he been rightly received and followed, there would not be battlefields.

I've never forgotten that I was so stunned by this high handed sleight of hand to take this holy event and to make it a patriotic element to which the nation subscribes as if that's what it means to be Christian what it means to be Christian is above any nation let alone its imperial ambitions and what is paid on the battlefield for it you can't use God to condone sanctify or approve of that as if he's something available for our manipulation and employment well how come that the church didn't shriek and cry out and say what are you doing, take that mosaic down because it itself lent itself to this whole God and country thing by which God is only a subsidiary to the interest of nations that's how far it has gone what shall we say of coronations of funerals like Princess Diana you need to

read on my website a prophetic commentary on Princess Diana's funeral if there was no one else outraged in the world it was me I thought to myself if the church lets this get by without comment it will be compromised to its very root because a woman who was a jet set debutante and whose morality separating from her husband her own self aggrandizement and fashion and the kind of figure she even had an occultic advisor is celebrated in her funeral as if she's a Christian personage of the highest consequence all of the accoutrement of Anglican religion the highest dignitary the cleric of the church of England recited and presided over that funeral the flag was at half mast tons of flowers that took six weeks to remove we were having one of our own prophetic schools at home when this took

place and an English brother received a phone call long distance from his wife came and interrupted the school to give us the grave and profound statement about Princess Diana's death and then left to make sure that he would attend the funeral and write their names in the guest book I think that the charade of a Christian funeral for a woman who was notoriously non-Christian absolutely subverted the meaning of Christianity worldwide as that was an international event and played before the eyes of the world and that I myself was raised up out of bed at four o'clock in the morning my wife was glued to the TV set she never went to sleep not to miss anything of the great spectacle and the drama of the processions for me it was what else is new but the Lord had me up to see it and I saw just

how grandiose just how much of a spectacular with a cast of thousands and technicolor and acoustics and every kind of thing that men can perform to celebrate something that should have been condemned I'm

not speaking like what's the word a man a petulant man acting out of some personal peak P-I-Q-U-E as if this is only a narrow personal irritation I'm speaking as a man of a prophetic kind who's jealous for the faith and saw in that one act the faith produced and relegated yet further into non-Christian Christian meaning by the universal celebration of that funeral and the English church silent and participant so I receive a publication from England called Prophecy Today and I waited for the next issue to see the great editorial and the statement that would critique this and reveal it for

the fortunate thing that it was and the article never came it was never written it was never published they chose the discreet path of silence rather than putting themselves in a place of opposition with the tenor of the entire nation can you imagine a Paul in that day saying that this is a Diana cult because souvenirs that ran to hundreds of thousands of dollars were sold and so on that man would have been stoned to death there would have been a greater public offense running on that man and gnashing the teeth upon him than for any offense that I conceive could conceive if someone would publicly oppose the kind of celebration that was given to this jet set of debutante as being Christian we must be prepared to see the falsehood of man appear in a very earnest respectable devout and

Christian form well that's what German Christianity had become just before the advent of Hitler it was devout it was pious it was orthodox it was earnest it was respectable but it was lifeless and it was inert it had no power either to discern the Nazi phenomenon as coming from the pit of hell or any authority to oppose it its orthodoxy was shallow it was only technical in word it lacked the vitality of a real faith because it had come to serve the interest and needs of men who want a supplementary Sunday Christianity that makes no real demand upon them and allows them to pursue their real passion their business, their careers their life, the imperial ambition of their nation without contradiction that makes Christianity a non-faith and the judgment is just as Islam is a judgment on

Israel's rejection of Christ and the triune God revealed through him so also this rejection of the real faith was judged by the Nazism, the demonic phenomenon that came to the land of the reformation overnight and took complete sway and swallowed up and possessed all of the aspects of government and power to give expression to its demonic character almost bringing the world into complete destruction western civilization and almost succeeding in eliminating the entire European Jewry to the extent of 6 million.

That's not some backwater place in the world.

Some pagan people who didn't know better. This is the land of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Kant and the land of Luther it's the land of Carl Potts, it's the land of theology. The remarkable thing is that most profound commentary and scholarship on the Old Testament is German and yet that generation participated in or acknowledged or was silent in the rise to power of a Nazi regime and a Hitler right out of the pit of hell, out of fear because their devout formal, correct religion lacked apostolic power and reality and collapsed like the proverbial deck of cards you know that the interesting that the word glory in Hebrew, kavod means also weight that somehow the glory of God has to do with a certain density of certain weight and what I noticed in many of the prophetic things that are celebrated today is a lightness, a lightness of atmosphere, a levity a kind of joking around a lack of weight or seriousness or significance in what is taking place I go out of my way to hear these men being celebrated, to hear their oracles, to hear what they are saying from God for the church in these last days and I'm not getting any statement of that kind at all, they give a little preachment, they'll give a little homily and it'll be correct but it's only throwing a scrap to the dog, it's only fulfilling the requirement that they should not be accused of not bringing a message but the real purpose is personal prophecy and the excitement that follows when people are identified or called

up and given a word it's light, it lacks solidity, maybe that's one way to tell the fraudulent from the real if we are accustomed to the things that are substantial, we'll sense the difference right away, I don't know how personal to get but I feel like there's such a tremendous pressure to conform and to go along and to be swept up by those things that by which many people seem to be blessed and yet your own heart aches and you're troubled and you can't even identify it that you feel that you're the strange one, something's wrong with you, that you can't enter the celebration that others are having what's wrong with you? Well I want to comfort you, it's probably what's right with you and what I've had to do, and maybe this might be helpful for you in the guarding against the deceptions of the last days is to keep your heart with all diligence and to cherish and treasure those authentic realities that have been obtained over a course of time with God and to keep that inviolate and not allow it to be transgressed against or invaded by something that seems to be of the spirit that seems to be affecting people that are crying or collapsing and yet does not touch your spirit at all.

Can you tell the difference whether something is soulish or in the realm of spirit? As a rule I don't like loud music and I remember one time I'm sitting in a Pentecostal congregation and they were loud as the dickens and I was all set to reject or even to speak publicly against it, but within moments something was coming through the loudness that touched my spirit as being real. For them loudness was not a disguise, loudness was an exuberant and true expression of their love for the Lord and I received it and I rejoiced with them because my spirit witnessed to the truth of what was coming even in and through the noise. Other times when people seem to be affected my spirit is untouched.

So can you distinguish between soul and spirit? Can you keep your spirit and not allow anything to have access into the inner man to compromise it that is not compatible with what you already have and already know that has come from God over a period of time and is tested and which you're jealously keeping. My heart goes out to young believers who have no history with God and are so hungry for an experience and are so moved by external things that they're easy to be played upon. But for those of us who have some history with God and we know the things that have come from Him, usually through our suffering, through obedience, through humiliation, keep that and cherish that.

When something fresh comes that seems to be and is not compatible with what you already have and the sense of God that has been nurtured over a period of time, don't allow it to come in and invade and corrupt the thing that is pure and that is in your heart and from the Spirit of God. This is an age of deception, saints. The worst kind is that which employs the vocabulary of the faith.

Jesus Christ neither is nor ever will be identical with the figure which in His name the man of sin causes to enter and to act under His patronage and advocacy. He is not ensnared by the yes with which this man greets Him, the more surely to deny Him. God will not lend Himself to those things that seek to exploit Him and to employ Him in their own purpose and ends.

So what is it that man fears when Jesus Christ encounters Him? What is the oppressive and painful element in the truth which He would like to evade and which since He has to face it, He can evade only by reinterpreting and transforming the truth into untruth. Isn't that a remarkable thing? That the truth can be converted to untruth. I love what that widow woman said about Elijah when he brought her son back from the dead.

She said now by this I know that thou art a man of God and the word in your mouth is truth. What a statement implying that in another mouth the same words are untruth. They are technically true, but in one

man's mouth they are true, in another man's mouth they are a lie.

She was able to distinguish that the word of God in your mouth is truth. May we be able to distinguish and not be deceived because deceivers are employing the very vocabulary of the faith. But in their mouth is it truth.

What is it that falsehood seeks to silence, suppress, and eliminate? What is the truth which the man of sin hates yet does not expel but tries to absorb into falsehood as his supreme achievement and thus to transform it into untruth? And his answer in defense against that is the man Christ Jesus who is called the true witness. Since this man is identical with the truth and the truth with him, the encounter with the truth and therefore with him, and we refer to the encounter with Jesus Christ becomes an absolutely vital, binding, decisive, and even revolutionary affair. That is why the man of sin would like to escape it.

He cannot accept this identity. And since he cannot alter the fact that he tries to reinterpret it, to transform it into a non-identity, the truth may be accepted on the one side by the one who attests it on the other, and they separate it. They cannot violate or offend him, nor cause him any discomfort, nor demand any decision.

The false thing is accepted because it does not make requirement. Judaism is acceptable because it does not make requirement. When Paul was in Athens and was grieved by the idolatry that he saw everywhere about him, it says in the very next verse, so that he disputed with the Jews in the synagogue and with the devout persons in the marketplace.

He saw the city wholly given to idolatry, and the next verse says he debated with the Jews in the synagogue and with the devout persons in the marketplace. Why? Because it's in the synagogue and with the devout that idolatry is the most blatantly practiced. Because it's a synagogue does not make it authentic.

Religion itself can be an idolatry when it makes no requirement of men and only serves their needs and employs a vocabulary that lulls them into a kind of easy acceptance that they feel they have been in church, they've done God's service, and are now free to pursue their own interests. It's not whether the synagogue is Jewish or Christian, idolatry is practiced most profoundly in the religious places. And we need to recognize that and not endorse that, go along with that, become seduced by that, but oppose that.

It makes no demand and requires no decision. It goes without saying that if the truth is separated from the true witness, Jesus, it is made the mere idea of intercourse between God and man. That instead of the reality, the idea of the reality, the doctrine of the truth, rather than the truth, becomes the standard by which people think themselves in the faith.

That if they have the doctrine, or they can verbalize the statement, they think that it is the truth, and that becomes the substitute for the truth. That is one of the deadliest traps that we would be satisfied with the mere verbalization of something as if it in fact represents the truth, rather than being a mere statement or summary about it. You have to be jealous for the truth as the thing in itself, and not think that the doctrine, or the subscribing to the doctrine, means that you have that reality.

So the offense which man takes in the encounter with Jesus Christ, and which he seeks to avoid in his falsehood, consists in the fact that the true witness is the man of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and therefore the truth is the truth of his death and passion. How do you distinguish the true from the false?

From a false Christ, or a verbalization about him? You cannot separate the truth of the faith and of God from the person of Jesus as the one who suffered the death and the passion of Gethsemane and Golgotha. When you remove that content and that reality, you really are a candidate for deception.

This is intrinsic. This is central. This is the event that has come down.

This is the suffering and the death that was experienced. And unless you're rooted in that reality as central and intrinsic to God's act at the cross, you are a candidate for deception. If you shrink from the necessity for the suffering, the agony of the cross, if you have sublimated, taken Jesus out of it, then another Jesus can be put in his place, but it's not the same.

This is the distinction. And that's why Paul said, I'm determined not to know anything but Christ and him crucified. It's the crucified Christ.

It's the suffering Savior. It's the garden and the cross that distinguishes the truth of this Christ. To see him today is to see this one condemned and expelled and rejected in our place.

To believe in him is necessarily to realize that his place ought to have been ours. To love him and to hope in him is to be required in remembrance of what we deserved and as a sign of fellowship with him to take up and bear our much smaller crosses and not to be able to escape this requirement. The narrow way of the Christian who belongs to him leads through the straight gate of discipleship, means neither more nor less for man than that in order to win his life, he should give it up for loss and really lose it.

It is thus that Jesus Christ is the true witness and himself the truth. What is the issue of this truth and the communicating of this truth? Those that have really believed it have entered and maintained the narrow way of discipleship. The suffering, the loss of their own life for his namesake and in that very act they duplicate and repeat what is the heart of his act.

They give up their own life and in giving up their own life they validate his sacrifice and commend the truth of it to others by their own example and by their own walk. That is the truth. That's how the truth is maintained.

That's how the truth is conveyed. It requires the narrow way of discipleship and the willingness of ourselves to give up our life and to lose it. It is thus that Jesus Christ is the true witness and himself the truth.

Any kind of thing that employs the name of Jesus that does not make this requirement and does not call the believer to this narrow way is itself fraudulent and a deception. And I would say you're pretty much describing contemporary Christianity. That's right.

To what degree is it fraudulent? To what degree is it deception? To what degree has it evaded the costly truth of God and leaves the world without a witness to him that would be through our expression of having because of our belief in him come ourselves to the same willing self-sacrifice. Well, that's about what I have noted. Let's have a little prayer.

So precious God on high, Lord, redeem our clumsy and inadequate effort to see what has been made of the extraordinary sacrifice of your son. Of the great epical event that no man can evade even 2,000 years after it, it cannot be evaded without making the one who evades a candidate for deception and eternal loss. And Lord, we speak in behalf of the church that has aided and abetted this deception that has taken

the sting out of death that has made the cross an article to dangle from our neck or a piece of church architecture or decoration but has robbed us of its requirement.

And we have been too willing compliance in this fraudulence, Lord. And we have allowed the world to perform and have its games, even with such a global event as the funeral of Princess Diana as actually constituting a Christian funeral for a Christian woman who is clearly in her own life such a complete rejection of that faith, a humanist and even worse in her occultic affinities and what she represents in the world of lust, pleasure, appearance, fashion and to be celebrated as Christian, be given a Christian funeral. What does the word Christian mean, my God? After we have silently been compliant and gone along with this kind of sleight of hand, no complaint about the mosaic of World War I as if Jesus is a supplement to the nation on its battlefield as if the interests of Great Britain are the interests of God and of Christ.

So, my God, we ask your mercy, we ask correction, we ask Lord for putting some iron into our soul, lest we like the German church before us be in a state of complete collapse and make way through our syrupy, shallow Christianity for spirits of another kind. Yes, if it could happen in Germany, it could happen anywhere in the world if there's not a viable true faith that has been jealous for the truth of it and is willing for the implications of it, it will collapse when these powerful dark forces sweep through. So, my God, grant us something of the apostolic jealousy that Peter knew, that Paul knew, who would not allow for a moment Peter's own deception and confronted him publicly.

Give us a jealousy for the truth that is willing to bear its inconvenience and even to suffer for it, a jealousy for the truth that makes us to examine our own heart and our own condition, our own easy going along with the crowd, not wanting to represent something that would make us conspicuous, swallowing down even the spirit agitation in our own inner man to go along with the crowd that seems to be having the greatest ball and shouting Amen and Hallelujah and thinking something's wrong with us when something was right. Our spirit could not receive this masquerade, this this play acting and we swallowed it down. We should have stood up, we should have cried out, we should have called a halt and we ask my God for your forgiveness where we have defaulted and gone along for the fear of man greater than the fear of God.

The unwillingness to be looked upon as strange and what's with you? Everybody else is enjoying this so my God teach us how to keep our spirit and give us a history of true relationship with you that we jealously guard and maintain and will not allow the admission of anything knocking on the door that appears to be spiritual when it is not compatible with what we already know of the truth of God. Lord, this is an age shot through with deception the powers of darkness having a field day, not only in the world but in Christendom itself. So do we bless you Lord that this was your thought tonight, this was your topic tonight and we ask you to touch us in the deeps by it show us where we ourselves have deferred too easily, where we have not been jealous to maintain the truth.

Show us where we are evasive ourselves, where we have shrunk from the implications of the cross for ourselves have not been identified with the suffering Christ, not willing ourselves to suffer. So do we bless you my God. Come Lord all precious God convey your jealousy to us, convey to us what it cost you my God to come down in time and place to bring the reality of God to a world that was shot through my God with death with falsehood, with the lie.

Thank you that you are the true witness and where we have deviated, where we have not known you, where we have been sloppy slovenly careless that you would call us to task my God. To be jealous for the

truth, jealous for the word, jealous for Christ crucified so do we bless you. Bless your church in New Zealand my God I pray.

Have a nucleus have a remnant who stand for the truth. Have a plumb line that has come down from heaven that is visible and gives witness of the truth for it is the truth through and through. For the word of God in its mouth is truth.

So do we bless you. So do we look to you. So do we call upon you.

So grateful for your forgiveness, for your mercy, for your graciousness because you know that we are as dust. You know our frames. Come Lord put iron in our souls we pray.

We thank you and give you praise for your brooding jealousy tonight and felt it important enough to devote one entire session to the recovery of the truth and to bring us to an awareness of the terrible erosion that has swept through all of Christendom in this age of the Holy Spirit where the worst violations have taken place even in that name so do we ask you forgiveness for all the church and have mercy Lord we pray. Have mercy Lord bring us to the place of reality and the knowledge of you that is true we thank and give you praise in Jesus name

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