

K-444 the Law of God (2 of 2)

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the complexities of righteousness, shame, and the necessity of community in the Christian walk through the lens of David's experiences.

Duration: 30:08

Scripture: Psalm 119:1-80, Proverbs 4:23

Topics: "Law Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses concern about the lack of distinction between the church and the world. He emphasizes the need for the church to be fully immersed in God's intentions and to resist the temptations and values of the world. The speaker highlights the importance of the Psalm 119 in guiding believers towards a consistent and blameless way of living. He also emphasizes the need for genuine relationships within the church, where correction and admonition can take place. The sermon concludes with a contrast between the shamelessness of the world and the desire of the Psalmist to avoid bringing disrespect upon God.

Transcript

What evokes the scorn and contempt of men for David? Why wouldn't they admire such a one and seek to emulate him? Why would he be the object of irritation and resentment? They're found out and revealed by contrast, and that's why the Davidic element has always suffered persecution, opposition, exile, and death. To remove that witness that reveals the falsity and the fraudulence of our religiosity. And so we need to know, if we're going to pursue this, then we have to expect what David experienced.

There'll be scorn, reproach, and worse. There are other references in this psalm to the opposition that David experienced. Verse 51, they're called the arrogant, utterly deride me.

They just don't deride me, they utterly deride me. But why utterly deride? They don't just mildly critical, but devastatingly critical. They utterly deride.

They've got to extinguish, they've got to extirpate the witness that David is. You can't do that in part. The whole man has got to be negated, contradicted, or removed.

You see that? There's no such thing as just a partial acknowledgement. He has got to be utterly. And he calls them the wicked, those who forsake the law.

Well here's, no wonder they're opposed to David, who represents the one who seeks it. In verse 69, the arrogant smear me with lies. But with my whole heart, I will keep your precepts.

No matter what they do, I will not be deterred from what I must do. What is the lie probably with which he's being smeared? Likely something like this. An utter contradiction to what he is.

So for example, humility misconstrued by people like that would be called arrogance. Truth would be called a lie. Sweetness of spirit would be called critical spirit.

That is to say, a man like that is interpreted in such a way as to contradict everything about him to make it to be the opposite of what he in fact is. They smear me with lies. They have got to discredit me and take the very evidence of my love and call that lovelessness.

Take my humility and they'll call it arrogance. They'll completely controvert and contradict what the man is in himself, which he has to bear. That's the price and the consequence of this kind of walk.

Verse 74 is an interesting statement. Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice. Now what do you make of that? The ability to see David for what David is in himself is the reflection of the relationship that the seer has with God.

If that is defective or wanting or false, they'll not see David rightly. And he's bold to make that statement. Those who fear you shall see me.

He doesn't mean visibly. He means they'll recognize me for what I am and rejoice for that. And yet in verse 75 he talks about his own humility and that in faithfulness you have humbled me.

So this is not a man boasting in himself. In verse 80 he talks about, may my heart be blameless in your statutes that I may not be put to shame. This issue of shame comes up repeatedly, which by the way is a word as out of date in our generation as some of the other words that we have considered.

This is a shameless generation. It cannot be shamed. It cannot be embarrassed.

It cannot even blush. It's lost its capacity even to blush. Yet here's a man who is so, what's the word, calibrated that the idea of shame is so repugnant to him that it serves as an incentive to keep in the way.

He cannot bear to think that he would have to bear shame in having cast some disrespect upon his God by his conduct. Whereas our generation is exactly the opposite. It does not know shame.

And if you got the New York Times the way I get it daily, read the film reviews, the book reviews. Horrendous what the films celebrate. The drug addict, the homosexual, the lesbian lifestyle has become the grist of modern day culture.

The kinds of things that should repel us are the kinds of things that serve as vehicles for films and novels in our culture. No shame. In fact the more shameful the thing is the more it's celebrated.

So what a contrast David is as a timeless statement of God for every generation and especially this last. And it's a moot question to ask can we resist this generation and its temper except we take this psalm seriously and seek it with a whole heart and to be blameless. Otherwise how shall we not be drawn into this vortex that is so commonplace that people don't even blink.

We've lost the capacity not only for shame but for embarrassment. So this is God's provision not only for all generations especially this generation. And yet I have to confess that when I came to 119 in my reading I couldn't wait to get through it fast enough.

It was too laborious, too detailed, too long. I didn't have patience. It didn't speak to me.

But now it has. I hope it's doing that for you. What is hell if not eternal shame without remedy? Have you ever experienced a flush of shame where your face flushes you get red and your neck and your collar become almost like a burning you can't wait to get away from that.

What if you never get away from it? What if you have to live eternally with that shame without remedy? If hell was nothing more than that it's hell enough. And certainly that will be the heart of hell and maybe that's the burning that is alluded to in scriptures that we always think of literally as fire. But the burning of embarrassment of recognizing that what you had allowed yourself with liberty is from the other side in the day of eternity utterly repulsive to God and now you'll see it as God sees it and that you've given yourself to it freely and you've died in it and have to live now with the shame that you didn't previously recognize.

That's why Jesus said if you'll not believe that I am he you will perish in your sins. You'll live forever and eternally with the acknowledgement of what should have caused you shame but your sins did not permit you but in eternity you'll have the full flush of something that will not leave you. It's what shall I say it's to be devoutly avoided and maybe the church's lack of a proper evangelism is the statement that we ourselves have not understood this component of hell or we would have warned men more earnestly.

The reason we've not seen it is because we're not in it. We're not in that righteousness that considers shame as David did so we cannot communicate that to others. How everything is so intrinsically caught up and here's a good question who can attain and maintain that condition independent of other believers? Who as a solo Christian however virtuous in himself can walk and maintain that kind of condition outside of the strength the prayer, the admonition the correction, the oversight that comes in a body or shall I say in a community.

So the whole prospect for this reality cannot be attained as solo virtuoso saints outside of the context of God's intention. We need to attain and to maintain a stand like this looking in one another's faces speaking the truth in love correction, admonition, exhortation, rebuke. If we lack those things surely we'll never attain or if we attain we'll never maintain this consistent mode of living.

So this is really a cry for the full givingness of God or we lose it. And maybe that's why we've lost it. We're essentially solo and though we might attend the Sunday service we're not that deeply related that we can receive the correction the admonition from a brother who knows us well enough because of the frequency of life together to bring the correction while something is incipient in its first stages and needs to be nipped in the bud then.

So here's a real appeal you know for the context of God. Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it proceed all the issues of life. And this temptation is powerful.

We've seen it. Self-exaltation at the expense of another especially if the other is more publicly recognized. One verse here that there are many that catch my attention but on verse 104 through your precepts I get understanding therefore I hate every false way.

There's a corresponding verse 163 I hate and abhor falsehood but I love your law. So your hatred for what is false will be proportionate to your love for what is true. And maybe that's an indictment.

We have not the hatred for the things that are false because we have not the love for the things that are true but it's expressed in David. It's not unbecoming to him to hate what is false and it's not unbecoming to us so that hatred is entirely relative to the love. If one is absent the other cannot follow.

Because our whole culture and present civilization is steeped in it and totally it's entirely false. But where's the hatred? You think that that hatred is unbecoming to a saint or to a David? Should we be free from hate and no love only? And is that an idealism that really is unattainable that as I've been trying to say the love and the hate are inextricably joined. If unless we have a hate hatred for the false how shall we love what is true? It's the love of the truth that saves us from deception.

I'm concerned for those things that constitute a true and full humanity. So the same man who delights the same man who praises is the same man who hates is the same man who loves. These are emotions of an ultimate and total kind that we know only in part.

So like walking in Shadowland David is God's beloved because of the fullness of what he is in his spiritual humanity. And I'm concerned for our capacity. Do we have a capacity for emotion of this kind of hatred, love, delight, joy, praise? These are not words that distinguish the world.

They know the things that are passing. But there's something about these states that are the very nature of God himself. And if we are blunt or dull and have not a capacity for delight, will we have a capacity for the hatred of what is false? If we have not a capacity for that, will we have a capacity to love what is true? So I'm concerned to see the whole of the humanity of the church elevated and fulfilled which is God's intention.

This is a son. A son is something in totality and we know only in part the pity is we're satisfied with what is in part. So we don't know sorrow.

We don't know tragedy. We don't know grief. We don't know the ultimate emotions that would distinguish our humanity and comprise it.

Therefore, there's very little difference between us and the world. And the world needs to be simulated or stirred artificially in something that is the equivalent but not the real thing. Because joy is of the Lord.

Hatred of what is false is God's hatred. Love of what is true is God's love. So we need to declare war.

How should I say it? Is it compromise on a too willing acceptance of a condition less than God's intention and be willing to be open for tragedy, for grief, for sorrow, for joy, for hatred, for love. As if we ourselves have never been encouraged to the fullness of these states, these states of being which constitute a true humanity and we need to be encouraged in it for this is salvation. This is the salvation to the uttermost.

This is our witness. See what I mean? So that's why my eye catches on a hatred of every false way. There's something, someone like this can instinctively pick up the subtlety of things that are false.

All the more because they parade as being true. They give the appearance and the guise of something to be acceptable that all the world and even the church accepts. But the man who is in this Davidic place instinctively chafes when something is intrinsically false however much it's gilded over and made to

appear something more than what it is.

How shall we be the church of the last days except we are so tuned in to this condition of being? What if the entire Christian culture is false? Not just an aspect of it or a false speaking from it. What if the totality of what passes? Are you guys hearing me okay? Because my own hearing. What if what passes for Christendom or Christianity is itself lock, stock and barrel false? Predicated on things that are false.

That are predicated upon the lie, compromise, man serving things. Can we discern that? And can we hate that? And can we hate that without hating those who are trapped in it and aren't even in propagating it thinking it to be true. Can we be the David in their midst even to blow the whistle on what is false but in such a way as to be heard and to be received like a gasp of recognition.

As for example came one day as you may have heard on tape or some other occasion in Australia where I was just passing through and this church was not even in my schedule but they fitted me in. And it was a roaring success a charismatic success and their worship and everything that was so lauded and I sat on the platform waiting to be called on and had the most ungainly sense in the inner man. It was not right.

And there came a moment of time when God froze the scene of them in their worship and I saw the mask removed and what appeared to be overcoming gaiety and joy was really masking deep sense of inferiority and lack of real overcoming victory. And then I had now I'm hearing myself being called on to speak do I speak in keeping with the appearance of people who seem to be overcoming and what have I to say to them. I need rather to learn or do I speak from that momentary glimpse that God gave when he froze the scene.

Well of course if you're God's man there's no choice. And I said I perceived at a certain moment then I described and you could have heard the proverbial pin drop there was a deadly silence. It was a moment of truth and the issue was would the church receive that truth or stone the one who brought it because it would mean going back to square one and undoing all that had grown up in a false religious way being celebrated as overcoming triumph.

And you can almost feel a moment of time where the forces were like that and praise God for the integrity the essential integrity of the congregation's leadership. They paused and then they broke and really broke and came down because it was the moment of truth as God himself saw it and needed to be spoken that they could see it and repent of the imitative Christianity that was false. So if we're going to be such in the religious world that is false we need to have David's discernment hating every false way not just as a luxury of a private discernment but as a basis for a speaking in and a bringing of life giving change rather than to hold it or too embarrassing to speak it.

This is not David's personal luxury. When you hate what is false you'll have to act against what is false and speak against what is false and maybe the ability to persuade others whoever convinced they were before that what they have is true is the truth of the one who is speaking it and the spirit of truth that is being expressed in that moment. So this is no small thing.

We can't go through this and pass this up. This is Davidic. This is at the heart of what is Davidic.

And I'm saying that we lack this depth of identification with God because we don't want to experience grief. We don't want to experience sorrow. We don't want to experience things that are uncomfortable.

We want the things that are pleasant and nice and in portion. But unless we're given to the totality of the range of what God intends in our full humanity we're going to fall short. So this too will comprise an aspect of that which I believe is calculated to move Jews to jealousy however much they think themselves real.

They are the architects of dream world of illusion of what's the word? Help me somebody. Fantasy. Steven Spielberg.

The Dream Works is the name of his corporation. Jews are prominent in entertainment in things that are false. And so they need to be to meet what is true and be convicted of what is false in the program of God through the church that is Davidic.

In keeping with that there's some reference to cry. I'm trying to find it here in Psalm 119. 145 is expressly using the word.

With my whole heart I cry. Here's a passion. And something that we can go an entire lifetime and not express.

Crying is out of the depths. This is not some saccharine tears. This is not, what do they call it? Crocodile tears.

This is not schmaltzy sentimentality. This is anguish. This is anguish of heart.

That is a cry of urgent desperation to God. With my whole heart I cry. Answer me O Lord.

I will keep your statutes. I cry to you. Save me.

Maybe even save me out of a false world that is threatening to engulf me and even to compromise my integrity. It either wants to extinguish me and remove me altogether or make me like itself. I cry out to you.

Because if I'm going to stand for truth and the whole law and righteousness I'm going to be an object of opposition that they'll seek either to compromise or to extirpate. So I cry out unto you. I cry to you.

Save me. I rise before dawn and cry for help. You think that that offends God? Or is that something for which he waits? And the capacity for crying in the true sense is the capacity for hating, is the capacity for loving, is the capacity for delight, is the capacity for praise.

Can you see we're living at a sub-level which is not true living. Until there's authentic cry there's no authentic praise. There's no authentic worship.

There's no authentic love. We're living beneath authenticity. In a style and a mode that the world applauds and gives us in its culture.

But this is transcendent. This is above culture. This is heavenly.

This is the nature of God himself. So I'm crying out for the cry. I'm crying out for a church that is full-orbed as Paul himself was.

A full-orbed man. Complete. Total man as Jesus is.

Total man, total God. The God man. And these are divine attributes.

And so we should aspire to them. Desire them. And see the lackluster casual character of the church that is more reflective of a world that wants to keep cool and be indifferent than a Davidic kingdom that will move Jews to jealousy and glorify God.

So if you've been living in a place beneath a cry, cry out to God for a cry. Lord, I'm not moved to cry. There's nothing that has happened in my Christian life that has so affected me in my deeps that I'm compelled to cry out to you.

And I know that there's something stopping me. There's an inhibition. Maybe I'm afraid to let go.

Or I don't want to be embarrassed. I don't want to be seen as being extreme. And so I'm living moderately but I'm not living well.

I'm not living totally. And I want to come into the totality of your intention. If David could cry, I want to cry.

Because if he cried out for the abuse against truth in his generation, what shall we say for ours? And maybe it's for the want of that cry that the world has had free sway to go about its falsity for no one has blown the whistle. No one has called attention that this is false. It doesn't chafe us.

It doesn't hurt us. We've learned to live with it, even to enjoy it. So I love these references.

Now we can understand in this context, where we read before, give me life. Didn't he have it? Yes, he had it biologically. But he wants a life that has the capacity for cry, for hate, for love, for praise.

He wants a life that is divine because the conventional and the natural life cannot rise to this. It's limited by temperament, by culture. Give me the life.

Can you understand why David is crying out for that? Because it's out of that life that this amplitude of being is given. This is life. And anything short of that is not an adequate life.

And David knows it. So may we know it and make that our play. Though the life is already given, few of us are living in that life and are living yet in our own humanity and expressing it religiously and inadequately.

Verse 163 says, I hate and abhor falsehood. Is that redundant? Is that like saying, I hate and I hate? Is there a difference between abhorring and hating? Is God emphasizing something by the use of two words that are similar and yet express nuances of difference? What's the difference between abhor and hate? I hate and I abhor. Maybe a word for that would be detest? How about 165? Great peace have those who love your law.

Nothing can offend them or make them stumble. Was it yesterday or sometime we were saying, is there any people more subject to offense than the church? The world is not as susceptible as the church. My God, just look cross ways.

Say a wrong word, an inflection, and boom. Someone is offended. We're so prone for offense and here's God's antidote.

Not to become thick skinned but to love your law. What's the connection there? What is God wanting us to see? Nothing can make them stumble. Nothing can offend them.

Why would the love of law insulate us against a tendency to be offended, which is rampant in the church and keeps it from the unity and reality of God's intention. Anything in 160? The sum of your word is truth. The sum of your word is truth.

Because we have a tendency just to emphasize an aspect of it. But truth is all of God's counseling word in its totality. So we're not going to be in a position to discern what is false except that we come eminently out of a nexus which is true.

And that is the suffering. That is the suffering. And it's not in a moment.

It's day by day, week, month, years of confrontation, of heartbreak, of disappointment, all the kinds of things that need to be obtained through struggle and coming out of the world that is false. We need to remember David is also a king. He's the head of state.

His attitude and constitution affects the whole body that is under his oversight. So this is not in a vacuum of some man as a spiritual virtue also in himself, but a man having to have this reality with God as will affect the nation that is under his oversight which is to be a witness to all nations. So we need to be reminded of that lest we forget and think of David in some exclusively individualistic sense and miss his relationship and his role that this is imperative for a king who will affect the whole tenor and makeup of those who are submitted to his authority and his oversight.

And because the stakes are so great, this is not just my life, Lord. I'm affecting an entire nation whose call is ultimate to the nations and is already in a place of increasing falsehood and false worship even moving toward paganism and idolatry. So the cry is heightened by the consequence and the weight of what has to proceed from him as it touches the nation, which is exactly the truth for our cry.

If our life is the only issue, it will not engender a cry. But if others are being affected by us in the church, then there's a reason for a cry because the consequence is so great. And so I can say out of my own experience were it not for my responsibility in the church, I would be much less, much less the man, much less the servant if it's only me at stake.

But when it's God's people at stake and the church and the witness to Israel, the fulfillment of God's glory and purpose, I'm compelled to cry. I'm compelled to be the man. So we have to put that we have to be reminded that's the context.

Why do we have to be reminded? Because our whole culture is so individualistic in its whole mentality that we almost exclusively think only in terms of the individual. We do not see the corporate context, the kingdom, the nation, the church that makes, then gives the reason for the cry and the reality that God is after.

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