

K-472 Walking in the Rest of God

by Art Katz

God's plan is to bring perfection and reconciliation through His timing and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 57:39

Scripture: Exodus 40:34, Psalm 23:1, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 19:44, Acts 17:14, Hebrews 4:9

Topics: "Rest Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his recent experiences in Europe and how they were influenced by a vision he had years ago. He emphasizes that just because God gives a vision, it doesn't mean it will be immediately realized. The speaker also discusses the importance of allowing oneself to be formed by God's hand and infused with His life and grace. He mentions the need for Godly character and describes a powerful encounter with Jewish believers who had suffered greatly but were comforted by the presence of God.

Transcript

Walk thou before me and be thou perfect. I used to wonder now, Lord, are you goading us? Or is that some vague standard toward which we should aspire? Or do you actually mean that we ought to be perfect as you are perfect? Well, as I get older, Lord, I believe it's the last. Nothing less than sheer perfection.

And isn't that ironic that it comes at a time when every standard is falling about us? As the world becomes increasingly slapdash, haphazard, vague, approximate, and every kind of standard declines, and every service is beginning to break down, and anything goes, God insists on his perfection. So as the world grows darker, we grow brighter. I've come back recently from 30 days in Europe.

I've never seen days so crammed full. Beginning in Germany, and going on through Yugoslavia, and concluding in Switzerland. I have to say that it all began with a vision which the Lord imparted to me and a German brother about four or five years ago, which I had quietly kept in my heart, waiting for the hour that the Lord would begin to fulfill it.

One of the lessons that I'm learning is, because God gives a vision, does not mean that it's to be immediately realized. Among the other reproaches that we experience in this day is the accusation, Oh, you cats, you're a dreamer. What about your vision that you said this was going to happen? Didn't you say that God gave you a conference at Columbia University, and he gave you the explicit name Shekinah, and

it's Shekinah 74 at the same university where the student rebellion broke out ten years ago, and that the glory of God was going to fall on the day of Pentecost, Shavuot, the Jewish holiday, and Orthodox Jews would be sitting in that audience, and they'd be overwhelmingly zapped by God and fall on their faces and cry out the Lord, He's God.

Didn't you say that was the vision that God gave you? Yes, I said that. How come then it wasn't realized? Well, it wasn't. But just before the conference concluded, we were instructed that we would have another conference in 75, and another one in 76.

And unbeknownst to us, it was not to be a one-time thing, but an annual event. I don't think that Paul ever did see that Macedonian. Remember that one who said, come over and help us? He saw a woman at a riverside, and he saw a demoniacal woman, and he saw a prison keeper and a scroungy bunch of inmates, but he never did see the man revealed to him in the vision.

So I'm learning a thing or two about God's visions. We need not expect its immediate realization, or even its literal fulfillment, but if it suffices to initiate us in a course of activity that shall bring about the fullness of God's intention, that's all that matters. I hope I'm not speaking in mysteries already.

God gave me a vision, a burden, pertaining to Germany. The same people whom I could not look straight in the face when I was sent there as a GI almost a quarter of a century ago. In the Korean War, when men were being hacked to pieces on Asiatic battlefields, where I thought that I myself would end my absurd life, because my name was Katz, and it came from the middle of the alphabet, I went with others whose names began with, in that portion, to Germany instead of to Korea.

And that began a love affair with the people whom I thought I would despise. I couldn't help it, though I tried to avert my gaze, I saw the fantastic resemblances between Jewish and German life. Our Yiddish and their German language, their Gemübschkeit and our zest for good food, good talk, and all the things which they themselves also celebrate.

In fact, strange enough, I felt more at home in Germany than I had ever felt in Brooklyn. In America, I felt as a man without a country, some kind of a kooky character, a man out of joint in time and place. But in medieval Germany, with the cobblestones worn smooth by the passage of feet over the centuries, in the shadow of ancient cathedrals, in towns that are redolent, reeking from life, then lived in that unbroken continuity, there I felt at home.

And so if you've read Ben Israel, you know where the first chapter begins, at Dachau, where I went on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which I thought to be a fit way to observe an important Jewish holy day, though I myself was a vehement atheist and would never have found myself in a synagogue. And there, a God whom I did not know began to drug my heart and save me from stereotypes and simplistic notions of good guys and bad guys, and begin me on a succession of steps that was to culminate in my salvation about a decade later. I've had a long-standing love affair with Germany, and the thing that God spoke to my heart about five years ago is this, that the same people which Satan had used to cast the Jews into the physical fires would be the same people that he would use to keep them from the fires of his eternal judgment.

As Ingers says, how do you like them apples? Well, that lay quietly in my heart, and I loved it because it was so in keeping with what I understand to be the character of God, just like him, to take the most vicious and untoward events and acts of Satan and turn them to his glory. I could think of the unspeakable

celebration of Jews around the throne of the Lamb through endless periods of time, rejoicing together with German saints who had occasioned their salvation by their prayer. My mother to this day can't speak the word German.

It's so loathsome to her consideration. And yet, if this realization is true, she may well be saved by some German saint supplicating and groaning in the spirit for her, though they may never see each other on this side of eternity. So I couldn't wait then when the Lord would begin to fulfill this.

We lived for a year in Denmark and we traveled on a few occasions into Germany, and not a single door opened, and I myself was not going to press one open. Someone came to me the other night and said, Boy, did I ever enjoy this service. Terrific preaching, brother.

I'd love to hear you speak on prophecy. I said, well, very likely you'll never have that occasion. How come I don't have a single message on prophecy? The guy was absolutely flabbergasted.

You're a Jew and you don't have a single message on prophecy? No. God has not opened that door. You can live in and near a country and God has given you a burning vision and not a single door will open.

And it pleases God to keep you in obscurity and hiddenness until the moment of His perfect choosing comes. How would you like to submit to that condition? That seems to be the pattern in all scripture. And Elijah kept in hiddenness and obscurity until the moment of God's choosing.

Then he brings them forth to the central stage. If I know anything about a Jewish prophet, oh, did he have zitsfleisch? Did he want to go, go, go? And he saw all of the prophets of God slain day by day in the increasingly filthy condition of the apostate Jewish people and he had to keep himself silent? I know what an itch he had to leap out and say, oh, how long do you remain in this condition? I don't know what else he would have said, but not a word. I've recently had an experience like that.

Hebrew University. I watched a crowd of 300 students come together to watch a dancing and singing ensemble from a Christian Bible college in Wenatchee, Washington. Gentiles would never so much as lay their eyes on a Jew before they met me.

Come to Israel completely uninstructed and do more work in four days than decades of conventional missionary endeavor. And God opened doors at the Hebrew University, Hadassah Hospital, a home for convalescent soldiers from the Yom Kippur War, and a street meeting in Tel Aviv where the presence of God was enormous. When I saw this crowd form, my immediate impulse was to leap into the midst of them in the first row and say, brethren, the God of our fathers, and go on.

But the Lord went, zip! And I'll tell you, for those of us who are called to walk in the Spirit, the hardest thing may be the obscurity and the hiddenness and the silence until the moment of God's perfect choosing. Then he brings forth his Elijah, his Joseph, his Jesus. And what he does in moments after that shakes the earth.

The timing of God is exquisite. You say, Art, how did you get to the Hadassah Hospital and to the Hebrew University? Did you write letters and make arrangements and wheel and deal? Not a stitch. We went without any plans, any communication, nothing.

Believing God that somehow it pleased him to send us, and we were not tourists. And so we sat at the Rome airport on the hard concrete floor. The plane was delayed.

And I was giving these young Bible college students some orientation toward Israel. And I noticed we were being observed by some of the passengers also waiting for the delayed flight. And so when we were called, we started to walk up the gangplank, and one of these men came somehow alongside me and we got into a conversation.

And he told me how enormously impressed he was looking at these young people. He said, they look as if they've come out of the 19th century. I knew what he meant by that.

There was an innocence about them. They somehow were different from other young people in the world. I said, if you're impressed with them silent, you ought to hear them singing, see them dance.

He told me by that time he was a professor at the Hebrew University. How would you like to arrange something for them at the Hebrew University? Oh, he said, that would be fine. I got his phone number.

I used to call him three days later. He used to make all the preparations. And I called him and said, I've done everything in my power.

Impossible. Since the Malat Massacre, this would take months to arrange. The security measures are so extraordinary.

Well, I said, I'm just sorry. I said, but listen, what if they just came noontime and took out their instruments and began to sing and dance and if anybody wanted to listen, they would stop and listen. He said, well, sure, try that.

We came that day with three busloads and we stopped at the gate with guys with Tommy guns, machine guns. They wanted to see our certificate, our pass, our permit. And so they sent from us a hotshot to explain and I said, we don't have one.

What are you doing here? Well, we were invited by a professor so-and-so. No good. You still have to have an official permit.

I said, look, my best Yiddish intonation. Look, I said. They've only come to bring mitzvah.

I think I even used my hand a little bit. They've only come to bring blessing. Oh, okay, he said.

And we let in the three buses. And these kids unpacked their instruments and began singing at noon and within five minutes we had 300 Israeli students with their jaws agape, listening to the goyim, Gentiles, praising the God of Israel and singing the songs of faith and joy. We had been that morning earlier at Hadassah Hospital and the kids had been talking about wanting to plant trees and leave something behind rather than take something out of Israel.

And I saw a sign on the wall that said blood donor and something in my heart went, click. And I began, I'd like to give you blood. And so I went up to the official and I said, we have 30 Christians who want to give their blood for Israel.

And the official went, clunk. An occasional Jew maybe, well padded, but 30 Christians want to give their blood? Never heard of such a thing. We came back that afternoon after the Hebrew University and they took us five or six at a time and the rest of us waited in the hallway and they were just overwhelmed.

And one of the kids said to me, Arnie, do you think they would mind if we sang in the hallway? I said, not at all. I'll ask this doctor, an American Jew who was looking at me clearly like, cats, what are you doing? I said, listen, these kids want to sing, do you think it's okay? He said, we're so grateful for what you're doing today. We've never had such a response.

The hospital is yours, do what you want. So they began to sing and I'll tell you that with their voices there went an effulgence of the glory of God through the corridor and it was only a matter of moments I heard the loud clicking of heels and there she came, a woman doctor with a white gown on. I knew it, I knew it.

She said, you can't do this without going up to our floor and singing also. And so she sent down a student nurse and when we had finished giving our blood, up we went. We went from room to room, ward to ward, floor to floor, hours, praising God, singing through the hallways, laying hands on the sick, worshipping God in the spirit, praying for healing.

The glory of God. My scalp, like six inches high off the top of my head and embracing and weeping and gray, disconsolate faces, hopeless and doomed, beginning to break forth into smiles of hope and expectancy, praying for infants that were doomed to die and just the glory of God moving through the corridors. Never seen such a work.

And so it was at the hospital with the multiple amputees, beautiful Jewish boys with one eye and one arm left, hacked to pieces, gray, disconsolate, broken, and the doors burst open and come these Christian kids, praising God in the beauty of His holiness, singing the songs of faith and joy and they begin to blink their eyes and what's this and falling on them with kisses and love and expressions of affection. It was the presence of God coming to comfort His children. And when we left, I draped my arm over one mutilated, hacked to pieces, beautiful Jewish boy.

I said, Dear brother, take this occasion of seeming tragedy to seek the face of the God of your fathers that He might convert it to joy. In and out. Pow, pow, pow.

Street meeting in Tel Aviv. No preaching. Not one word.

Living epistles. And I was holding back the crowd. We made room for these dancers.

We never saw more spiritual dancing. Dancing to the Psalms. Can you believe that? And a couple of Israelis next to me were saying in Yiddish, Are these missionaries? I said, no, these are goyim, whose heart is the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit.

They've come to express their love for Israel and for the Jewish people. Oh, they said, okay. And you could see their faces just relax.

And when they heard this singing and saw this dancing, they were just overwhelmed. And when that was over, they pressed right into these young people and began to talk with them, ask them questions, take them to their homes for tea, for food. And till the wee hours of the morning, fantastic, deep, rich ministry of sharing and witnessing all around in Tel Aviv.

We ended up ourselves in the street, one o'clock in the morning, hand in hand with Israeli soldiers and young college-aged kids. One or two of them had even lost members of their own family in a recent massacre, an attack from the sea, from a rubber dinghy boat. And I said to them, look, guys, have you ever considered Israeli geography? What kind of a God is it who has left us so defenseless, so open to the

attack of our enemies from every direction, even from the sea? Is that the same kind of a God who would not allow us to look to the arm of our own flesh for our defense, or to natural barriers, but look to Him? You know, these guys have studied the Bible as their curriculum, and they think that it's a collection of myths and fables and history.

I said, do you remember when Jehoshaphat stood on the steps of the temple, and he said, Oh God, we have no might in ourselves, but our eyes are set upon thee. And they stood together with their wives and their children, and the Spirit of the Lord spoke into the congregation by the priest Jehoshaphat's yell, The battle is not mine, but yours, saith the Lord, go ye out against them tomorrow. You know how we ended up praying, hand in hand, Oh God, if you're real, and you're the same God that heard the prayer of that king and gave answer, we ask that you reveal yourself to us in this Yeshua HaMashiach, of whom these Gentile students speak and sing.

It was a night of glory. I didn't plan to share that part, but you know there's an axiom that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. What would you say about a God who would say that the way to Israel's salvation is through Germany? And not through a face-to-face witness, but through a deep ministry of supplication and groaning in the Spirit for the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And so God has led us in a succession of steps now to the realization of this vision. Our first contact was with a wealthy, elderly German in a city called Wuppertal, who lived in Berlin through all the war years and had many Jewish friends. And I said, but dear brother, what did you do in the early 1930s when you looked out your window in your apartment in Berlin and saw the Nazi youth pulling the beards of the old men and breaking the store windows and lighting the epithets and beating up the Jewish kids? What did you do then? Well, he said, I looked and I pulled the shade down and I walked away.

God had me to say to the same man early one morning, only a few weeks ago, God has given you another opportunity to be an instrument in the salvation of these Jews. Don't pull the shade down a second time. But he did.

We thought he was going to give us his house as a center for Jewish discipleship where God was going to be using Jews to effect a reconciliation in a divided body of Christ in Germany. You think you have problems here? They have animosities and splits and divisions that go back almost a century. Fierce contention.

Rivalries coupled with German pride, German arrogance, German stiffness. You can't believe what a knotted mess it is. Only a sword can cut through that bloody knot.

And God is saying, if God can send a band of Jewish believers, maybe they can compel an audience from Germans who will not give it to anyone else, even Billy Graham. And maybe they'll be reconciled and there'll be a one spirit and one accord that my work can be effected that they might cry for the salvation of Israel. So we had a conference at Columbia University and I thought, well, the Lord is going to show me who these disciples are today that will send.

And the first night there came the call for the fornicators, gross sinners, liars, hypocrites, and I'll tell you, the aisles were full. They came pouring out. Down the aisle, down the front, weeping, sobbing, choking, spluttering.

And I saw that mess and I said, Oy vey. Is that the condition of the Jewish believers? Evidently, the kind of glory of God is not going to fall as quickly as we thought. And so this year's conference, which the Lord is leading us now to have, is going to be on the shaping of godly character.

And there's a place which God has given us, first a 95 acre camp, and now a 160 acre farm across the road from it. Not unusual to have 30 degree below zero winters where men are going to be called to be shaped for these end time ministries. And if they're not willing to tend the physical sheathing we have over 75 and there'll be more, in sub-zero weather, together with their brothers and sisters in these severe conditions, how then shall they minister in Germany? How then shall they react to the latent anti-Semitism which is still there on the part of German Christians? How shall they respond when they'll be unseen, unrecognized, unapplauded, unheralded? And have some way to win their way between the charismatic, the Pentecostal Germans, the Evangelical, the state church? It's a very severe calling.

But God in his wisdom is putting together something that spans continents and is a most beautiful unfolding. I went to see that man on this most recent trip, and God waked me 3 o'clock in the morning with this burning vision I was telling Paul today. I prayed till 5 and tried to get out of the house and found myself locked into the house.

I said, Lord, what's this? And God said, You're the spirit of life, a picture of the spirit of life locked into Germany in a fearful, insecure people who do not know me as they were. And I didn't get out of the house till 6 in the morning, and finally had to be let out by the housewife, the front door, the foyer, and out the front, the gate, 50 yards away, and gave me a key to unlock the gate that didn't even fit. I had to leap over the gate into the street and walk down the street looking for someone to inform me how to get downtown, and had a conversation with a man waiting for a bus who was a Muslim, a Turk, a foreign worker, and began to witness to him about Jesus as the one hope that can reconcile Arabs and Jews in the streets of Germany.

Then another day later in Bonn, Germany, a home meeting, ended up baptizing nine Germans in the bathtub of that apartment. The next day to a German community near Frankfurt where we thought we were just going for a social visit, the Lord began speaking one night over the coffee table by the spirit, and these men pushed aside their cups and sauces and put aside every consideration and two days later, God had done such a work by his spirit of an exchange of life, of money, of substance, of concern, that it would take me the rest of the night to describe the complexity of what God has done. These men who had never before laid eyes on me are paying the down payment to enable us to get into the farm in Minnesota, and the house which we thought to sell in New Jersey that would finance the farm is now going to be retained for their use as their first outreach in the United States.

An extensive collaboration with the purest work of God I've seen on the face of the earth who have also the same burden. They have Germans, this is how I met them, in Jerusalem, where they've sent a team of German believers living very quietly and working very obscurely to effect a reconciliation among the divided body of Christ of Jewish believers in Jerusalem. God sends Germans to Jerusalem to reconcile the Jews, and he sends Jews to Germany to reconcile the Germans.

His ways of path finding us. Then other ministry through those days, I can't begin to tell you a variety of places. Germans, Americans, army chapels, I came to one army chapel in the course of those days, potluck Sunday night, chicken, bawling kids, not-nosed babies, the whole works, noise, one stocking up, one stocking down, the chaplain was a careerist, hail fellow well-met back-slapper, my heart just went

clunk, hopeless.

And I was going to get a half hour on the program before they showed the film in the midst of the fried chicken and the whole works. I went upstairs and I prayed with some of these German brothers, we came down, and they called on me. God gave me Isaiah 6 about the holiness of God.

And the moment that I began speaking, a hush fell over that room. Not a single baby whimpered. I think even their noses dried up.

When I gave an invitation, 13 people stood to their feet and among them was a Jewish GI who had never before heard the gospel, who was saved in the moment of his standing. Not even a prayer for salvation. Absolutely done in, staggered.

And then picking up stray men in ministries, singular lonely men, unrelated to others, bringing them to a place where they can be related, encouraging them in their ministries, and then to Munich to do such a work for two American boys who were living there and struggling independent of each other. Things that can't even be shared. And then on to Yugoslavia where I was invited by a Yugoslavian brother with whom I had gone to Leningrad a few years ago.

He heard me speak in Germany on my last visit. He said, these Yugoslavian ministers need to hear this end time message. I said, well, you think so? Arrange it.

He did. And I came to this conference of the leading Pentecostal denomination in Yugoslavia, preceded by another speaker, a fine German brother, not knowing their need, couldn't speak their language, and in four days God reconciled a denomination about to explode. God did a work that when I was driven to the airport four days later, they said God sent us the living word.

In the moment of our greatest crisis and need, at the point when we threatened to explode, God sent a prophet with the living word. And I did not even know the situation. And I would go to the meetings out of my hotel room, not knowing ten minutes later from the room to the pulpit what to speak.

And after four days, looking back, I could see the continuity of God, how he had laid the foundation line upon line, precept upon precept. Stunning these men, breaking, weeping, the wonderful, deep, rich work of God. I could say, without exaggeration, in touching this key denomination, at the moment of its greatest crisis, the only instrument available to God in that nation, he had touched the nation.

And I flew from Yugoslavia to Zurich to spend one night there with German brothers from that same fellowship who had an outreach there. I needed to take a walk. And we took a walk through the streets of the city, and all of a sudden I remembered, this is where it began eleven years ago, I hadn't been back to Zurich in eleven years.

It was in these same streets that I met that American girl who was on vacation, who was willing to spend that time with me, and whom I was querying, why are you willing to be kind? And she kept saying, it's the love of God, it's the love of God. And finally, at the end of my exasperation late that afternoon, I asked her, how do you know that God is? And she gave me that answer that exploded my heart and arrested my life for God. It happened in the streets of Zurich.

And the very next day when I left Zurich, hitchhiking, on my way, this constant broken Jewish bum, intellectual, frenzied, trying to understand the perplexity of his life, I was picked up by that Swiss man, and

when he found out that I was Jewish, took me to that coffee house, and at the end of pouring out my soul to the stranger, he asked me that one question. He said, do you know what it is that the world needs? And I had my arms folded over my chest with that fixed, cynical expression on my face, what? And he spoke that one line from which I had not yet recovered. He said, what the world needs is for men to watch one another speak.

Phew. That was the first night I ever heard the gospel in 34 years. It happened in Zurich.

And all of a sudden, I had just come back from Yugoslavia and Germany, trailing clouds of glory, God-touching nations, God-affecting this, God-spanning continents, God-working His end-time purposes for Israel, and I was reminded where it all began 11 years ago, when God picked up off the streets of that city a broken hulk and led me step-by-step to a salvation in Jerusalem, and about a decade later had fashioned an instrument by which He was affecting these things. I want you to turn to the book of Acts and the 17th chapter. Oh, I didn't tell you, and there's so many things I can't tell you, and I'll forget, and I won't have time.

While that conference was taking place in Yugoslavia, in a city I had never before heard, we were walking in the streets one day, and we asked a woman for instructions, and she was just about to get up on a trolley car, and I said to my Yugoslavian brother, stop her, she's Jewish. Oh, Artie said, how do you know she's Jewish? I said, brother, don't argue, stop her. He stopped her just before she got on, and indeed, she was Jewish.

She walked us back to the hotel, and before she left us that day, I had the names and addresses of two other Jews in that Yugoslavian city, whom we had gone to see, and before we left that city, in the course of those four days, we had visited nine Jews, a remnant of the previous Jewish community that existed before World War II, and in fact, went to the synagogue one afternoon, now abandoned, and had one of the most melancholy experiences of my life, with the plaster hanging down, bricks falling out, no electric, no illumination, floor creaking. We walked into this old building, having such an eerie impression, and I came and I felt around in that half-darkness, and walked up on the platform to the ark where the Torah is kept, the scrolls of the law, the star of David now faded, and I opened up the ark, and there was nothing inside. It's something of the same stunned shock as a surgeon opening a chest and finding no heart in it.

And that night I came to the conference, and the scripture that God gave me, standing on that creaking synagogue floor, and your house shall be left to you, blessed one. And I said to these Yugoslavian ministers, if you'll not be reconciled in Christ, if you'll not lend yourself to the building of God's end-time house, and overcome your divisions and strives, and the things which have divided you, I shall come again and find that your house is desolate. You'll be as foreboding a sight as the synagogue which I've seen today, and God will leave you with your plaster ceiling hanging, bricks falling out, your house shall be left to you desolate.

And that's how God was using the circumstances of those days. To fish for Jews, to reconcile the body of Christ, to seek out the lonely individual ministers who need to be comforted and strengthened and exhorted, to go into army chapels and speak about the holiness of God, and to do the variety of works which have pleased God before German audiences, American audiences, unsaved Jews, from day to day, following in the course of God. And that, dear children, is really the substance of the thing that's on my heart tonight.

There's a beautiful illustration of this in the 17th chapter of Acts where a guy by the name of Paul, caught up in the purposes of God, we read in the 14th verse that his brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea. Here's a man in service to God, no preconceived notion or plan. If we return to the previous chapter, the 16th chapter, who was successfully establishing the churches in Asia and was arrested by the Holy Spirit that forbade him not, and redirected by a vision, and was sent to Greece, and now by a succession of steps into Macedonia, into Berea, and now on his way to Athens, the brethren sent away Paul.

They conducted Paul and brought him unto Athens in the 15th verse. And so we read that in the 16th verse, while Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. I hope this means to you what it means to me.

I can almost salivate as I read these scriptures. You know why? It's so undramatic. It's so ordinary.

It has nothing to do with great bombast or voices ringing from heaven. It has only to do with a man who is led by the Spirit, a man caught up in the purposes of God, variable and instrument to speak to Jews, to contend with intellectuals, to be in this city or that, in Asia or Europe, it matters not. A man on course with God, by God, who says, for me to live is Christ.

There's not a situation that he's going to find that will face him. There's not an untoward event for which he is not prepared. My last day in Switzerland, at the very end of those 30 days, the next to last day, I was at Youth for the Mission in Lausanne, some of the greatest ministry that they had ever recorded on their video, and Peter Van Woden, you can say that without boasting, Peter Van Woden, the son-in-law, the nephew of Corrie ten Boom, came to hear me, and as he was driving up the driveway, the Lord said to him, take art to see this Armenian millionaire.

And so he told me that after the service, I had heard of this man. I said, why don't you call him, see if he's available. He called him only to find out that this man was deathly sick, terrible case of flu, can't see anyone.

I said, well, and yet I didn't feel good about that, as if Satan was stealing something God intended. I said, look, brother, how about if we just go and raise him up right out of the sickbed to know that God has sent us? Yeah, he said. And we drove out to this man's place, right near La Brie, and when we got there, the man was sitting up in his drawing room.

That afternoon, while in his sickness, the thought came to him, what am I doing in bed? I ought to be out. And he lifted himself up, and the sickness broke. We found him fully clothed, alert, and well, on the phone, trying to find us and make contact with us.

And here we were, knocking on his door at the same moment. He said, God has sent you. He didn't know for what.

I didn't either. But we both knew that this was a divine encounter. You don't have to know for what.

The same God who sends you, we'll shortly explain. And I gave that man a two-hour expression of the burden that God had given me, because he had an enormous concern for Israel. And I said, except that you're a man of the Spirit, you're going to miss this.

It has nothing to do with bombast. It has nothing to do with wonderful evangelical designs of winning the Jews. It's an unseen, invisible, slow, quiet work of God beneath the surface.

And he was a spiritual man, and he saw it. When I finished that, he said, Artie said, I can't contain this. Will you write me a statement that I might study it and prayerfully consider what God will have me to do in this venture, which I have since done.

The next day, the day of my departure from Switzerland, the same Peter Van Vorden comes again and takes me to see another millionaire, this time a Jew. These two men know each other. And we went to see him in a suite of offices on our way to the airport to fly out.

What a suite of offices. Staggering. What a man.

How impressive. Taking phone calls, speaking French, Hebrew, English. A South African Jew with a clip accent, a picture of sophistication, suave, self-assurance.

What do you want, he said. I didn't know. But it became clear.

And he began speaking first, telling me about all he's doing for Israel, the thousands upon thousands that he invests in that country, the fundraising campaigns, he's a big macher, a big organizer. His wife is a former inmate of Auschwitz, and she's a big leader in the Zionist women's organizations. His son had 40% burns on his body as a tank commander in the recent Yom Kippur War.

He's telling me all these things, and I said, excuse me just a second, Norman. Here I'm telling this man, multimillionaire Norman. I said, Norman, if you continue this way, I'm going to weep.

Whatever do you mean, he said in his clip British accent. I said, you're the living epitome of our chronic Jewish era through the ages. How do you like to begin that way? What era, he said, do you mean? I said, your priorities are completely disordered.

If you think by your fundraising and your organizations and your wheeling and dealing striving that you're going to save Israel, you are grossly mistaken. I tell you, God shall intensify our crises until we shall have no alternative but to look up to Him. That was the beginning of my statements.

Two hours later, and we had to leave because the plane was ready, this man was absolutely pinned to the wall. No one had ever dared speak to him as I spoke to him. He knew, though unsaved, he was hearing from God, with the authority of God, that God was calling his life for commitment much deeper than anything that had to do with Israel bonds or fundraising.

And he also wanted a statement that he might read it and study it and consider what should be his response. All crammed into one 30-day period, something like what we're seeing in the life of Paul, on course for God, no plan, brought to a place in Athens, and while he was there in the 16th verse, we read, and his spirit was stirred in him. Dear children, everything begins by the inception of God by his spirit in our spirit.

Have you ever had your spirit stirred within you? I can't take the time now, but I can give you illustration after illustration of this phenomenon. It begins with a freaky feeling that no one else but you perceives. Everybody else seems to be having a ball shouting their amens and hallelujahs, but you're getting something, something strange that's ticking in your heart, and shortly before long, God has got you up in a

place where you're not scheduled to be, and you're speaking words that cut like a sword, and turning people off right and left while others are being brought from death to life.

It always begins with the inception of his spirit in our spirit. How many times have you experienced that, and turned it off, or turned away from it, and would not consider it? He saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Praise God for man whose eyes are open, and who perceives and whose heart can be wounded.

Therefore, disputed he in the synagogues with the Jews, and with the devout persons in the market daily with them that met him. Notice, beginning with the inception of something that winces in his spirit, a step-by-step unfolding of God that is going to bring Paul to a key place where he could never have gone if he had sought by his own efforts to be there. He saw the idolatry, therefore he disputed in the synagogues.

Doesn't that seem strange? What have synagogues to do with idolatry except that its grossest forms are practiced there? Haven't you noticed that in the Gentile equivalent of the Jewish synagogues? I'll tell you that idolatry can be performed even in the name of Jesus if you have a spirit in which God can wince. And with the devout persons in the market daily with them that met with him, and I'll assure you it wasn't the soul that Paul encountered who in any way was haphazard or accidental. Everything was right on in the purposes of God that began with the inception of a man being wounded in his spirit by the spirit of God.

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him, and some said what will this babblers say, and others he seemed to be set aforesh a strange god because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him unto Areopagus saying may we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? And so Paul was brought by other men to that one place which is the central place of discussion where the key men of Athens were to be found. Others brought him.

First it began by brethren bringing him to Athens. Then he was led to a synagogue, then to a marketplace, then by others to Mars Hill. There's a wonderful unfolding in the purposes of God in which God employs the circumstances of other men and conditions to bring us to the place that pleases him.

Have you ever experienced that? It has not a cotton-picking thing to do with striving. It has nothing to do with preconceived notions of how we shall evangelize or do this or to do that, but only to be men and women led by the Spirit of God in his time and place, divorced altogether from any purpose of our own. It's effortless.

And then we read in the 22nd verse Then Paul stood in the middle of Mars Hill and said, You men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions I found an altar with the inscription To the unknown God, whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. I don't know, as often as I've read that before, you know what I never noticed? Paul is insulting sophisticated intellectual Athenians.

Him whom you ignorantly worship, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. That's almost like beginning a conversation with a celebrated personality and saying, Now Norman, if you continue in this way, I'm going to weep. I perceive that in all things you are the living personification of our Jewish era through the centuries.

Hey Art, that's no way to talk. Is that what you learned in the schools of evangelism? Is that how you witness to your people? I know more, presume, in any way, I believe, about the things that God will choose to speak or to do at any given moment. I've seen him do such variable things.

I wasn't too long ago on an airplane and I'll tell you that I can fly 20 times and not speak to a passenger 19 times. Hey cats, don't you know the world is dying? Man, shouldn't you be redeeming the time and shouldn't you be witnessing with those who are next to you? No. I've learned after 10 years that God is well able to open his mouth whenever it shall please him.

And every time that I have sought to open it, it hasn't availed much. But when he opens it, something is transacted for time and for eternity. So let me give you this illustration.

I'm taking off from Chicago, just about to close the door. One last passenger comes in, huffing and puffing out of breath and plops right down alongside me. One of the most attractive black girls I've ever seen.

And the moment she sat down, something in my spirit went boing. Something began in my spirit by his spirit. And before we had come to the place of taxing, I was coming on like gangbusters.

But I was breaking every guide, every rule in the evangelical guidebook. I was getting under that girl's skin, I was goading her, I was teasing her. She told me she was a graduate in psychology.

And I said, oh, I said, what hope do you think that that offers for a distraught mankind? And she would tell me, and I would take her answer, and I'd go, Crack! What else you got to say? Crack! Just picking apart her puny little humanistic notions. And she was a graduate student in the humanities, grew up 30,000 feet, and I thought, have I ever got sucked out of this plane to my death? She wouldn't even notice and just turned the next page of the Vogue magazine. She said, me first, then my black people, then mankind.

Oh yeah. I finally came to the point where I said, what hope do you think that the Bible offers for mankind with? Oh, she thought it was Uncle Tom religion. And she began to rant and rave, and God began to, out of my mouth, to prick this girl, almost unmercifully, and goad her and get under her skin, and I sensed in my spirit that somewhere way back, as a child, she had been exposed to the Word of Life, and over her spirit had grown a hard, sophisticated, outward veneer, and the only way that God was going to crunch that was not by polite speaking, but by saying I perceive in all things that you are too ignorant and too superstitious.

Are you willing to insult people if God shall put such words in your mouth, if that's what it shall take to arrest your hands, even though it violates what you think should be in the guidebook? She came to such a place of exasperation, she was trembling with indignation, and my mouth was not stopped yet. And finally she said, if you'll not stop, she said, I'm going to call the stewardess and have your seat changed. And all of a sudden, the blood began to rush up to my head.

And I thought, how's that going to look at? A stewardess is going to come and change your seat, Reverend Arthitan? And I know what every passenger on the plane is going to think, and you'll not have any opportunity to explain. Still willing to be God's fool in God's mouth? And at that particular moment, before I could think further, there was a blonde woman on the other side of this black girl, who had been overhearing our conversation with a cigarette out of the corner of her mouth, lipstick over the lip line, mascara, peroxide blonde, I mean, typical bitty. I think she even had a big fat cross hanging on her bosom.

And she looked over past this black girl and said, yeah, she said, why don't you leave her alone? What a beautiful illustration of what end-time ministry is going to be of those led by the Spirit. Striving for the soul of one who has not even any notion of a God seeking to save her, and unwilling even to receive the testimony. Having to suffer embarrassment and reproach, and not being able to explain, and having to listen to the castigation and the bitter words of those who are going to say to us, why don't you leave them alone? Are you willing, children? That is what it's going to come to in a very soon hour.

Are you love the Jewish people, do you? I hope it's not your schmaltzy sentimentality, because that's going to go up like a vapor as the crises of this age are going to unfold. Are you going to be willing to stand with Jewish people when reproach shall come upon them, and harassment, and growing anti-Semitism even in this country? Or shall you, like this German man, pull down the shade and walk away? He said, if I didn't do that, I would have shared their fate. And so, what are the alternatives? Paul began by not mincing words with these Athenians when God brought him to Mars Hill.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worship with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. Who is made of one blood, all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not false in every one of us? Do you realize what Paul is saying in one or two verses? This is philosophy of the deepest kind. This is a statement for the purpose of being that all of the philosophers in all of their striving and seeking and mental exertion have not been able to deduce.

He told them why it is that God established the earth, how and why God gave bounds, the purpose for all human beings to seek God that happily we might be found with him. You know, there's nothing unctuous about this. I don't think he quoted yet a single scripture, and in fact he was not going to.

He spoke philosophically to philosophers. As I passed by, I noticed the inscription to the unknown God. Praise God for man who notices.

Praise God for man who is not unfamiliar with the culture of the people to whom God had brought him. Praise God that he did not trot out little tired religious clichés or four spiritual laws or five or forty. Praise God that he didn't even seek to bludgeon with scriptures.

Praise God that God had the possession of a man in such a way that he could speak to other men even philosophically and yet end up speaking to them about the resurrection from the dead. And I don't believe that when he came to that point, he shifted gears and all of a sudden began to become religious. That his voice changed and he had a pontifical look on his face and all of a sudden he began to trill.

It was the same naturalness, the same matter-of-factness. Now look guys, this is the way it is. Look, if you continue this way, I'm going to weep.

I notice in all things that you're too ignorant. You don't even know how to worship God. Listen, this is the whole purpose for existence.

Now the God who weeps in times past in such practices as this is winking no longer, but is calling all men everywhere to repent. And so he goes on. This delights my soul.

What is the word? Is this a low-profile thing that I'm speaking? Or low something or other? Or not very zippy and bombastic and great wavings of arms and raising of the voice to great crescendos? But I tell you we have here a picture of something very dear to the heart of God. I have always rankled at those who are concerned about becoming spiritual. All of this walking on eggshells and trilling with the voice and fixing the face to have the proper religious expression.

What a bunch of phew! As a guy said to me whom God destroyed at a recent service on Easter Sunday at a big impressive denominational church where they came in all of their finery those who'd only come out once a year and the pastor before I was introduced spoke about taking up an offering to compensate for the purchase of the new choir robes and the reupholstering of the choir seats and it was religious from beginning to end. There was a guy who had been brought to that service by his backslidden girlfriend hating every moment of it. He told me later he said, it was all BS.

He said the moment you open your mouth and out came such an explosive word about choir robes and finery and Easter expectations and religious posturing he said something began to thunder and hammer my heart and God attacked me and when I gave the invitation couldn't get out of the seat fast enough. Those sitting in their fineries didn't budge an inch but a man was just destroyed and fell on his face before God and he kept crying till one o'clock we couldn't get him away. It's really said.

It's real. It's really, really said. I can't believe it.

What's happened? There's really God. God found me. God.

I want to just conclude by reading a little bit from a little booklet written by a Chinese writer. This writer says, many people cannot minister the word of God apart from special revelation. If at any given time they have no fresh revelation then their ministry comes to a standstill because revelation is the source of all their utterance.

I'm not against revelation it's the source of much of my utterance but not all of my utterance. What came forth on that airplane to that black girl had nothing to do with divine inspiration that I heard my heart now ought say this. It was simply a mouth engaged by God out of the fullness of things that God had provided there coming forth to bring necessary life in the form of penetration that we need revelation if we are to have uttered ministry as a fact.

But please bear this fact also in mind that revelation is not given us in unbroken continuity. It was not so in the case of the Twelve Apostles and it was not so even in the case of such a man as Paul. I think Paul just got up at Mars Hill and right on the spot, right in the moment which God brought him without premeditation, without any opportunity he just drew from the collective experience of that day.

I noticed as I was walking here there's an inscription to the unknown God and the God of whom you are ignorant and it's not fashionable and he just went on like that. Right in the vernacular and the idiom of the day out of his own personality, out of the fullness of all that God had invested there in the years in which God had him to shape. In a certain instance Paul said, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet despite that he continued to minister.

He dared to utter what he himself believed without having any fresh word from the Lord. Two Jewish boys who were related to us went a quandary about whether they should go to Israel. Some said yes, some said no.

Some said they were not mature enough, some said they needed the experience. They themselves didn't want to offend against God. I'd say to go to Israel now is not a lock.

It could be a matter of life and death. I was only passing by and I was stopped. What do you think? And in that moment something went, I can say, go and I'll take full responsibility for your going.

I'll tell you children, when God has the possession of you and there's a necessity to impart life in any given moment he can do it. And it doesn't need to sound like, thus saith the Lord coming out of a sound chamber. He dared to utter what he himself believed without having any fresh word from the Lord.

This is an amazing thing. Paul distinctly says that he was expressing his own judgment. He was not uttering what had been given him at that specific time but was simply giving his own opinion on the matter which was brought before him.

What a terrific thing to do, this writer says. He dared at times to express himself on spiritual matters without immediate revelation. To speak under such circumstances would have been presumption on the part of others, but there was no presumption on Paul's part.

This isn't some amateur. This isn't some young guy trying his wings. This isn't some neophyte thinking what shall I say in a certain situation? This is the man of God who has been fashioned in obscurity and hiddenness and the dealings of God and brokenness and temptations and trials.

Stuffed with the fullness of God. A man who can say, for me to live is Christ. In him I move and live and have my being.

There was not a situation that would find him unprepared. There was not a confrontation that that would stagger him. There was nothing that would tax his own natural powers or boldness or skill or intelligence.

He had gone far beyond that. For me to live is Christ. He was not just the man of God.

Have you noticed this? The man, an odd cat, eleven years ago on the streets of Zurich, a bum, broken nothing. The revelation of God through the face of Gentiles and the salvation of God in Jerusalem. And in the course of the years that follow, God shaping a godly man.

And then a man of God and maybe the final stage, as with Paul, as with Elijah, as with Jesus, the God-man. You can't tell where Elijah moves off and God begins. You can't tell where Paul moves off and Jesus begins.

There's God trying to bring us to the place where we can say, as the Lord my God liveth before whom I stand, it shall not reign nor do, but according to my word, and the elements are arrested. That God has so worked his life into a man that his word is God's word. The secret is that over the years there has been a ceaseless increase of the grace of God in his life.

In Paul, we meet a man. Oh, hallelujah. It takes God to be a man.

God hasn't called us to be defeat spiritual beings, trilling with our voices and walking on eggshells, but a certain fullness of life in the design which God intended. A life that God has dealt with, which he has poured in his grace over the course of years, in trials and experiences, and so written his life into the life of that man, that at any given moment, despite the need, the situation, Jews, Gentiles, Germans, chapels, conventions, conferences, Yugoslavia, millionaires, whatever the need, he is able to draw forth out of the

grace that he has invested a life-giving answer for the moment. In Paul, we meet a man.

The most precious thing here is that though Paul was not consciously speaking the word of God, he was all the while under the control of the Holy Spirit and was spontaneously expressing the mind of God. He winced in the Spirit when he saw the idolatry in the city. A wealthy Christian can, out of the abundance of grace in his life, speak the mind of God without the overweening consciousness of being God's mouthpiece.

And I'll tell you, every time, he will come out with a Brooklyn accent, a North Carolina accent, or whatever is the distinctive manner of speaking of the vessel through which the life of God is being poured. And I'll tell you what, children, when I came to the end of that 30 days, or any 30 days, or any trip, or any challenge, or any experience which God has left me, you want to know something that's happening now? I'm as fresh on the last day as I am on the first. None of that chronic exhaustion that used to characterize me in times past.

You know what I'm learning? It's the Father who doeth the works. Hallelujah. I remember going from one meeting to another, tired, trying to think, what am I going to speak? Lord, I apologize, I haven't had time to pray, I said, Lord.

And the Lord said, I didn't expect you to pray. How do you like that? I said, what? He said, I have appointed others for that task. You have enough to bring your body and your faith.

And that night, I mentioned that in the meeting, and a woman began, she winced and cried out. At that particular moment when I mentioned that, and came to me weeping after the service to say, only a few weeks ago, God whispered your name to me in my sleep, and I didn't heed it and rolled over. And when you mentioned that, He pricked me that I'm one of those called to pray for you.

Oh, dear children, no striving, no exertion, no necessity to be spiritual, to be clever, to be only in the possession of God, in His place, in His time, for His purposes. It has nothing to do with our thinking, our prearrangement, our plans, what we would think would be the clever way to evangelize Jews. Who would ever conceive of Germany? How shall that be obtained? What are we going to do in Minnesota? How shall the community be established? By what wisdom? What principles? How shall the funds be found? What shall we do when we get there? The same question, really, essentially, I had to answer a few years ago when I went to my first place of ministry in Kansas City as a missionary to the Jews.

Lord, what do I do after we move in? I've had a crash program, a year's kind of training. I'm wet behind ears. I don't know which end is up.

You know what I did? I took the diapers to the laundromat. And at the laundromat, I asked a woman how to operate the machine, and she told me, and I found out she's Jewish. What are you doing in Kansas City, she said.

Mm-hmm. The time she left, she had a list of scriptures so long, and that was the beginning of our ministry in Kansas City. Just take the diapers to the laundromat.

In the course of time, it came to pass when he was faced with a need, he could immediately speak the word that met the need. Here we see the lofty heights to which under the new covenant, the grace of God can bring a man. Here is a human life that has been wrought upon by God over the years.

God has been ceaselessly molding this life and purifying it until at length something has been wrought into the man's very constitution. You know how something is wrought? Over an anvil, with the pounding of a hammer, in a red-hot oven. This is wealth.

And this is the result of unremitting divine activity in a human life over years of time. That's the burden, children, that I had to share with you tonight. The challenge to confront, to baptize in bathtubs, to comfort believers, to encourage, to establish, to exhort, to search out Jews, to testify, to give the prophetic word, to save a denomination, to weep the groan, to come to Jewish community centers and seek out and fish for the Jews, to stand in the middle of graveyards and weep over the 2,000 stones in the Valley of Dry Bones, to do all those things in all those countries and see the purposes of God affected, and to be as much at rest on the last day as you were at the first.

It's the Father who doeth the works. You know that there's a rest which God has prepared for the people of God? Oh, hallelujah. I pray that something will be worked in your spiritual appetite to be fashioned to be such a one as this.

Something tempered on anvils, heavy poundings with hammers, hot burning ovens that God might infuse and build and shape the substance of His life and grace unto you, that at any moment you're fully prepared. Have you been struggling to be spiritual, striving to be spiritual, conscientious of how you should witness and what you should do? The answer, children, is to allow yourself to be formed at the hand of God and so to infuse His life in you. It's not going to be done in a day.

It will be done in obscurity and hiddenness that when He is finished with the process, it will be hard to say where you end and where He begins. It's all one. You'll be commanding the elements and they shall obey you.

Will you bow your heads with me?

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