

K-476 the Powers of the Air (1 of 2)

by Art Katz

The Church must understand and resist the powers of the air, which operate through institutions and governments, culture and education, to reflect God's values and sovereignty.

Duration: 38:58

Scripture: Psalm 118:17, Matthew 16:19, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:15, James 4:7

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of fear and manipulation in Italy, specifically by the mafia. He believes that the nation has been compromised by fear and controlled by a gang of thugs who use violence to manipulate the people. The speaker emphasizes the importance of the church standing up against this intimidation and confronting the mafia. He also highlights the power of the cross and how Satan was defeated, but still operates through fear and deception. The speaker encourages the church to have confidence in God and not be swayed by fear, as their lives are ultimately determined by Him.

Transcript

So I just want to read a statement by a very precious man, a lawyer, kind of a lawyer-theologian, who has written penetratingly on this subject about the consequence for the Church if we remain naïve and unknowing about this enormous but invisible spirit entity. Paul mentioned that I'm presently a student at a seminary. It's a Lutheran seminary, it could be any.

This is the Lord's choice for me, and I'm always trying to persuade my professor and other students to take Luther seriously, because there's not a page of his writings that is not marked by continual allusions to the devil, to Antichrist, to a whole demonic structure of things that he saw as being so eminently real, and which modern scholars have entombed and disregarded because it's an offense to modern sensibility and to intellect. The reason that we know so little about it now, however much the early Church was aware, is that since the Enlightenment of the 18th century and the advent of rationalism and empiricism and science, the Church itself, its theologians, and its spokesmen have become embarrassed by Paul's allusions to the invisible demonic spirit realm, and only kind of think of it as an echo or a Judaistic refrain from Paul's earlier life, a kind of mythological thing that doesn't in fact exist, but was only a vocabulary employed by a non-scientific generation. And of course the Polish would like us to remain in that kind of ignorance and that kind of indifference.

Here's what this writer says. Americans, including professed Christians, who have biblical grounds to be wiser, remain, it seems, astonishingly obtuse about these powers. They seldom impute to them personality or integrity as preachers, and commonly deem institutions and similar principalities as subject to human sponsorship, patronage, and control.

They attribute to institutions human patronage and control, when the fact of the matter is that the primary avenue by which these powers exert themselves and their influence upon mankind is through institutions, educational, governmental, cultural, and even religious. Yet to be ignorant or gullible or ingenuous about the demons, to underestimate the inherent capacity of these principalities, to fail to notice the autonomy of these powers as preachers, abets their usurpation of human life and their domination of human beings. Any social concern of human beings which neglect or refuse us to deal with the principalities or whose due regard to their own true identification is elusive, while any social change predicated upon mere human action, whether prompted by the gospel or motivated by pietism, is doomed.

I would go further. Any action is doomed, any evangelical action, any church action, is doomed to a kind of futility if it does not take heed and acknowledge the powers that prevail in the heavenly place. So precious God, in Jesus' name, we ask tonight, not only for instruction out of your great heart, who is the victor over these powers, who made of them an open spoil in a demonstration at the cross, but we ask that you would establish something, you would cause an event to take place by your word, by something that goes into the church of Jesus Christ, into this locality by your speaking, that you would put us on alert, that you would facilitate our maturity, that you would give us incentive to overcome the things that keep us from being that people who can wrestle.

Have your way with us tonight, my God, and do something incisive to break the church loose and to deal a devastating blow to these powers, to bring liberation, my God, of the kind that you intended by your own suffering and death for this community, for this state, for this nation, for nations everywhere. May the powers of darkness crumble and part as the reality of your church in its knowledge and maturity, its overcomingness, becomes pronounced. Let this speaking tonight be a significant step toward these ends, and will give you the praise, the glory, and the honor and the acknowledgement.

In Jesus' name, in God's people's stead. Amen. And don't be embarrassed to pray for me while I'm speaking.

The last time that I spoke on this subject, I was gasping for air. Not physical, but spiritual, and had to pause between sentences. The exertion was so great to get the statements out, until a few of the more perceptive saints in the congregation realized that I was being opposed, and began to pray in the spirit, even as I was speaking, until I began to experience release, and the word of God began to flow.

I'm a little bit betwixt and between tonight, because I've got so much to cover, and I've got an abundance of material. One is a message that I gave in Germany only a few weeks ago. It may have been the first time that this theme was sounded in that nation, and the word was enormously received.

One of the things I said to them was that World War II may be over, and Nazism may be defeated as a political and military entity, but the spirit powers that brought Nazism into being, and moved through it to paganize and to destroy a nation, and then over the entire civil world, those powers yet brood over the earth, waiting their next opportunity to insert themselves into the affairs of men while the church sleeps. There's a direct conjunction between the rise of Nazism and the increasing ineptitude of Protestant Christianity in the land of Luther, to such an extent that a vacuum was created by which these powers had

opportunity not just to influence institutions, but to dominate and to possess them. And by this we need to be instructed, that sane German theologians would not acknowledge the validity of the subject of the principalities and powers, who thought, as I said before, that it was Paul a little bit off the wall in a Jewish manner, and that these are just picturesque ways of denoting things that are not spirit reality, were compelled to take a close look after World War II.

I mentioned that the powers operate through institutions. Not the least of these and the most formidable is government itself, the state. We need to understand that the powers were themselves given of God at the first, because all things are made by him, and there's nothing made which was not made by God.

And they were given to be a supportive grace to human life on earth, to work and to exert a benign, a benevolent, a good influence through the structures of things that are necessary for human life--government, society, culture, education, medicine, and so on. But with the fall, these powers, in their own demonic usurpation, still in their governmental place, have been since that time using their place not just to oppose God in the stratum that they occupy, but actually to win the loyalty and the allegiance of men to themselves that they might be celebrated and worshipped as the gods of this world. God-intended government within limits.

But when these powers have opportunity to exceed the limitation that God has established, because there's not a church to insist that they occupy the place which God intended, what we see is that they go beyond the definitions of God, and not content to rule and to manipulate, but to turn the loyalties of men to itself and become the object of their allegiance and even their worship. The Nazi state, the New Order, the perverse twisting of even biblical concepts for a satanic regime is the most graphic and recent historical opportunity that we have to glimpse the realities of the powers of the air. The fact that it was confined to Nazi Germany does not mean that it's not seeking opportunity everywhere to exert greater influence on the conduct and the affairs of nations and of men.

And we can begin to see already in our own culture and civilization where something goes beyond a limitation. Rock culture, punk rock, the music, education, where the legitimate purpose of being instructed in order to have a means of livelihood and have a significant service to mankind becomes something beyond that and requires the loyalties of men and brings them to a heat and a passion and a panic and an investment of their life and energy beyond what education itself should require. I'll always remember how I was instructed about medicine when I severely crushed a kneecap slipping on the floor of the YMCA having baptized a number of people on my way after that to the locker.

I found myself up in the air as if time was frozen. And I thought, what are you doing in that posture? You don't have accidents. And before I could think further, down I came crashing on my knee.

Virtually every page in the Bible that was in my hand was dogged and bent from the impact of that enormous crunch. I thought I was going to tough it out and God was going to hear me. And I spoke that night with a leg swollen like a football.

And the next day I was worse yet. He finally took me to a doctor and finally to a specialist, a Jewish orthopedic surgeon. And he looked at the x-ray and he said, Brother, he said, it ain't brother.

He will be, if not out. He said, Mr. Katz, your kneecap is not just fractured. He said, it is smashed.

You need to be operated on. This thing needs to be wired. I said, well, Mr. Katz, when can you do it? He said, not until Thursday.

I think it was Tuesday evening. I said, I'm sorry. I said, tomorrow I've got to be up to Northern Minnesota.

The Lord is giving us a property. He said, the who? And that was the beginning of my witness. And that's the ridiculous condition, speaking the kind of language and flashing the kind of credentials that an intellectual and accomplished Jew recognizes and that astonishes.

And while we were talking, I had a hand on my knee. All of a sudden his eyes became white as a salsa. And he said, something is happening to your kneecap.

He said, the pieces are falling into place. He said, if I can put this in a cast right now, he said, you'll not need an operation. I said, do it.

And he did it. But I still had to stay overnight that night in the hospital. And here's the scene I want to describe to you.

There I was in my bed with my legs in that uncanny condition, all plastered up. And in came a nurse to give me a hypodermic. Now, I want you to know I'm not a sissy.

I mean, I've been punctured with more needles than the Army used to be down the line. And on both sides, there were people giving it to you in both arms at the same time. And I watched men with ribbons on their chest fall over in a dead plane.

Jacob, the sight of a hypodermic, it has never terrorized me. In fact, my wife says, I've never seen a man who is so unafraid of you. She said, the only time I ever see your face blank is when the light from a police car comes up and it wears you down.

And I can tell you that it's not because it's going to cost me a few bucks. It's because something in my soul curdles that I have broken the law. And I have offended against God as a minister.

Other than that, I'm not conscious of fear. And so when she came with the needle, I said, what's that for? Oh, she said, this is for pain. I said, well, I don't have any.

Well, she said, you must have. I said, no, I'm uncomfortable. But it's tolerable.

I don't need that. Well, she got indignant. Her lips got blue.

And she stormed out of the room and came back with another nurse. And this time, they had pills. And I said, no, I won't take that.

I don't have a propensity for drugs. And they went out again, stormed out, and came back. The last thing I remember are these two nurses and two doctors in the doorway talking among themselves with all kinds of gesticulation, waving their hands and spitting froth everywhere, and with such consternation that this man refused to yield to the conventional wisdom by which pain should be alleviated.

And I realized that inadvertently and unwittingly, I had touched a very deep premise of the medical fraternity, and something yet deeper than that, about civilization itself, predicated on an unchallenged premise, namely the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. I don't care what the American

Constitution says or the Declaration of Independence. Our unspoken premise by which we live and move and have our being in our civilization is the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure.

And it has made cowards of many. I think that you can note without my elaboration that that is a distinct contradiction of the premise of God, which is the cross of Christ Jesus, of a suffering that precedes a glory. That's only one illustration of how inadvertently I stumbled upon a revelation of something deeper than the mere practice of medicine, something that had such a heated quotient about it that when you refuse to yield to that wisdom, you have offended an unspoken thing that is very deep at the whole wisdom by which a world is administered and jerked and manipulated.

What kind of a church, then, can successfully stand against the powers that have manipulated and intimidated mankind throughout the centuries through fear, through hype, through false inducements, through deception, through playing upon anxiety, through inducements for reward and gratification, by which whole peoples have been jerked and manipulated for fear of their lives, for security, and every such thing. We know that the powers of the air were defeated at the cross, but the world does not know. And therefore, there's a whole value system, there's a cosmic struggle between two orders of light and darkness, each seeking to impress mankind with another way.

The only kind of church that can successfully resist the powers of the air and break their influence over a community and compel them to break out of their orbit and leave off the kind of manipulation that has turned men away from God and influence them against God is a church itself that does not move according to its wisdom, nor reflect its values. Namely, a church that is without fear, that cannot be made anxious, that has no regard for its own life and does not count its life as fear until it's done. Now, we ostensibly believe that.

We subscribe to that as doctrine. But the enemy knows Jesus. It says, Jesus I know and Paul I know, but the church of Rumi, Durham, who? It can see through our pretensions.

They can see whether our Christianity is merely phraseological and verbal or whether in fact we are living in an overcoming condition that just shall live by their faith, free of fear, free of anxiety, that the determinants of our life are not the rise and fall of the stock market or any other secular factor, but the God to whom we are related. My last time overseas, I spent several weeks in Italy and ended in Sicily, the land of the Mafia. And in fact, I was 11 days in the very city where I had come as a merchant seaman 40 years before as a 17-year-old high school dropout Jewish kid looking for adventure, meaning, and significance to life.

Now I came back 40 years later to the city where trafficking in the prostitutes and pimps and gangsters of World War II was now addressed to church. Ten days with one fellowship and three mornings at 6 a.m. speaking with a leadership group on one subject, the principalities and powers of the air. And after the 10th day, I was supposed to leave the Patriarchate Arch one more day.

Just speak to the elders and leaders of the church on one more day. So I agreed. And on the morning of that day, the Lord wakes me early as is often His manner with me, and He gave me about seven particular and explicit points of application of the messages and the teaching of those days.

As you can picture the scene of these very precious and dedicated saints, such men, so calmly, so given to God. And I began to relate to them the practical and explicit application that God was wanting from that church in that city. And that number one on the list was that this church should confront the Mafia.

The Mafia is a perfect illustration of the powers of the air operating through a bunch of thugs who have manipulated and jerked generations of Italians through fear of death and fear of violence, that even the state and the apparatus of government itself is terrified and rendered inoperable. As we drove to the beautiful nation of Italy and the great cities, Venice and Rome and Florence, I thought, my, how is it that a nation of this magnitude, these great cities, this agriculture, this industry, this culture, this history, should have so little regard among the nations of the world? It's simply not taken seriously. It's the land of pizzas and Ferraris and avant-garde films and things like that.

But it's not a nation to be reckoned with as a power of significance among nations. Why? Because I believe with all my heart it has been produced and compromised through fear to this illicit gang of thugs who have manipulated an entire nation through fear of violence. So what was God saying? There's only one agency on earth capable of revealing how fraudulent and empty and defeatful that intimidation is.

There's only one people who know that Satan was defeated at the cross and made an open spoil. He was disarmed, but not extinguished. He's operating without arms, but he roars like a lion, and he can seduce and inculcate fear to people who do not know what was recorded at the cross and who do not reflect it in the actualities of their life together as the Church.

God is asking the Church to stand before a .45 revolver without a tremor, with the absolute confidence to say to these thugs, you could do nothing except it was given you from above. And if it's given you from above, so be it. Because the length of my days is not determined by the prestigious care and attention to diet and vitamin pills.

The length of my days is determined by Him. Can you see what I'm saying? Can you see what God is wanting? That we need to come of age and to move from the things radiological and verbal and make them the actualities of our life personally and corporately together. Because these powers are on an increase, and our culture is being increasingly affected and manipulated by them because a whole world is completely mindless of what it is that underlays the whole of reality.

The principalities and powers of the air in the heavenly places. For those of us who have traveled abroad, and particularly in Eastern Europe or in Muslim countries, you know that when you cross the airspace or cross the border control to move from a Western nation to Czechoslovakia or East Germany, immediately there is a self-change in the air. There is indeed something in the air, and that air is different in every nation and every locality depending on the existence of a mature presence of the saints of God who have successfully operated against it.

In socialist Marxist nations where the church is diminished, we feel the heavier and the oppressive power of these spirits operating through the organs of governments to blind the minds of men and even to stultify the minds of men. Because I'm persuaded that Satan is hell-bent to destroy everything in God's image, to make men feminine and women masculine, to believe men of their minds to make us blobs and mindless kinds of things that suck back the cans of pop and shove the popcorn in our mouths while our feet are up on the coffee table watching such terrible tap as is calculated to turn our brains and sensibilities into scrambled eggs. If you think that that's merely innocuous culture, that there's not a power behind those things, influencing the content and the use of technology in every kind of blinding fascination and array, you have got another thing coming.

My last message to the saints of East Germany, not that I think about it, writing on the back of an envelope with a flow pen certain things that God was pressing on my heart because there was something building in

my spirit as I walked and moved and ministered through that country in those days. I couldn't stand to see the propaganda signs. Forty-five years of German-Soviet friendship, it would say.

I thought to myself, what a filthy lie. These Germans won't even give these Russian soldiers the time of day. They still remember when their wives and daughters were raped by these Russians as they broke into Germany against the fleeing German armies at the end of World War II.

There's a bitterness and a hatred to this day against them. But for political reasons and because of fear, they're required to make some kind of minimal acknowledgement of that presence in their own nations. But friendship, it's a lie.

You say, well, what's the difference? There's all the difference. Because a lie that is every day acknowledged, every day visible, every day seen by the train stations, by the factories and wherever, in the newspapers, in the media, permeates the human mind, sculptifies it, affects its ability to think, it reduces one's humanity. And you know what I had to say to those elders that day? You guys need to go to the authorities in this locality and tell them that we know that you don't understand this, but we as the Church have an obligation to communicate to you that by your mindless propaganda system, you are turning an entire nation into robots.

You're making of men mindless tap by the assault on their minds and the integrity of their minds by the incessant propaganda that is everywhere about them, and that because you are God and you are standing for that which is made in His image, you want to bring that to their attention and ask them to desist. You should have seen the faces of those elders. Hey, this is more than determining whether we're going to have an evangelist come or change the carpet or have a building program.

But I want to tell you that this is the function of the Church. To make clear to the powers of the air and those through whom their subversive spirit activity is being expressed that there's a God whose earth this is, and of mankind made in His image, and that the whole purpose for their being is to seek after the Lord if happily they might be found of Him, and that God has established the bounds of their habitation and given them the structure of government and society for that purpose, but that's all and that's the limit, and if you exceed that limit to scramble the minds of men and to obtain the royalty that is owed to God alone, you need to be reprimanded and to be rebuked. Now, who can stand before communist officials and say that without fear? And what if it will get you thrown in jail? And what if they throw the key away? It still needs to be said.

Something needs to be registered. Something needs to be proclaimed by a church that has an apostolic authority whose very speaking to the powers of the air affects the change. And then we had a prophetic school up in our community in northern Minnesota.

And God began to send us men and women from different parts of the world. It was choice. We had them from Indonesia, from Japan, from Africa, from Zambia, from Zimbabwe, from Australia, from New Zealand.

We had a little United Nations living and studying together and working together with their hands in the dirt, experiencing the realities of the kingdom. But before the two brothers from Zimbabwe could come, they had tremendous opposition by the U.S. consulate in their country. And I wrote letters and as the director of Ben Israel Ministries that we were operating a legitimate, prophetic, biblical school.

And they had every right. That guy would not budge. Finally, about five o'clock one morning, I got a long-distance call from the American consulate.

Mr. Katz, yes? Awakened me. I was groggy. I just want you to know that I'm denying these men their visas.

I said, on what grounds? Well, I just don't feel that it's right. And if they go, they probably will find ways to remain in the country. I said, well, okay, and I hung up.

No sooner had I hung up than the spirit of God began to take over. How dare this guy exert his official authority to deny that which is legitimate and prevent sons of the living God from the free mobility that would redound to their training and preparation for their kingdom use in the earth. That is government exceeding the bounds of God's intended limitation.

So I wrote him a letter. We had a copy of it. I wrote something like this, Dear Sir, I have an obligation, acknowledging and respecting your office to express mine, and to speak to you from the expertise and the understanding which is my privilege to enjoy as a minister of God.

The scripture says that the earth is the Lord's, the nation's, and the fullness thereof, and those who dwell in them. And we recognize that God has established government and its limitations. But I also want you to know that there's a thin line between being official and being officious, and you have exceeded that line.

Therefore, I insist upon the visa to be granted to these men, sign, you know, sincerely yours in His precious service, our debts. These brothers came to our country with a visa. And they learned from the Christian secretary in that consulate that when he got that letter, he fumed and he raged, just like those nurses and doctors when I refused to take that medication.

But he granted them the visa. I'm not saying these things to celebrate myself, but to give you the first, what shall I say, illustration of what God is wanting in a much greater and more formidable expression through the entire church. Number one, an awareness of what are the true issues that underline all of reality, that move upon institutions, political and cultural and economic, that make men to rage and to fume and go to war and to be violent and to hate and to destroy and to murder or to become homo and to celebrate that as some kind of emancipated lifestyle.

The powers are running amok and finding easy access to men and institutions because the church has been fighting a lateral and horizontal battle, not recognizing that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. It's not the mayor. It's the principalities and powers of the heir of the world's rulers of darkness.

That's not to say that you ignore the mayor, that you don't express what you should as believers to him, but that expression will be vain unless there has first been a successful wrestling in the heavenly place because we're told that our weapons are not carnal, but mighty to the bringing down of strongholds. I want to give you two illustrations of what our spiritual weapons of warfare are. Number one is praise.

But don't by that think that I'm referring to our familiar charismatic choruses. I mean, I love that. That's precious and enjoyable and it warms our hearts.

I'm sure it blesses God and it affects the atmosphere of our services. But you know what we need to beware? Lest unconsciously we use music, we use personality, we use any kind of religious thing as a manipulation to affect some response from God's people, because manipulation is the wisdom of the

powers of the heir. And if we in any way move in that wisdom, we render ourselves null and void as a valid antithesis to their authority.

Are you following me? So what kind of praise am I talking about? Let me give you an illustration. The kind that's not cheap. The kind that does not come easily.

The kind that is really not so much the statement of our musical virtuosity as it is the celebration of the profound and authentically tempted work that God has done in us together. And the illustration in which God showed me this was at our community, northern Minnesota, in the wintertime, 20 to 40 degrees below zero. The Lord gave us a community-type building.

It cost us \$1,100. It was a metal building. We had to move 18 miles.

It was like building the Panama Canal for us. We did it by the grace of God. But it had no running water.

It had a wood stove for heat. And we had our Friday night potluck gathering there. And what the women had to do was to cook their food in their own separate trailers and households, wrap it in quilts, bundle their kids, get bundled themselves, sludge through the snow and the freezing cold, and hope that the food would stay warm, that we could have a precious meal and time of sharing together.

I'll tell you, fellowship that is as sacrificial as that has got to be blessed, has got to be joyous. And that night, as we were eating and enjoying one another, a Mexican couple, part of our fellowship, had just come back from a trip to Mexico. And they were sharing their experience and how they were able to bless the saints in Mexico.

I mean, talk about poor. Talk about poverty. We don't even know what the word means in this country.

And how through the experience of our poverty in Minnesota, yes, we were poor, because we submitted to conditions that God Himself established, and we might learn what it means, that the just shall live by their faith, and not by their salaries, and by their handsome incomes, and by the things that can be produced by their own effort. And these people were able to encourage the saints in Mexico out of the life that we had lived together. And when they shared that, I don't know what happened, we somehow just found ourselves on our feet.

We were standing before the Lord, and we just began to rejoice. All of the frustration, all of the struggle, all of the many times that we had confronted each other and were vexed, and we said it's the elders' fault that we would be living better, and every kind of thing that challenged authority and made us to move through such tearing issues that made us spit our guts out, had also brought us to a place where God had refined and shaped and moved upon us to bring us to a greater spiritual reality together. And we began to thank God for it.

And our praise began to ascend up on high. And I don't know that it was beautiful to the musical ear, but it had such a volume. It had such a quality.

It was so unquestionably authentic. It was so much the overflow and the expression of the spontaneous heart that is grateful for the God who has worked such visible and actual redeemed things in their lives that in a certain moment of time, by the eye of the Spirit, as this praise rose, I saw the heavens part. I saw the ugly, menacing powers of the air that brood over our northern Minnesota and have victimized the Indians and the whites there and turned the one race against the other and have had our field then

actually jerk and tremble and were broken out of their orbits and moved aside by the authenticity that rose and penetrated the heavenlies.

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