

K-477 the Powers of the Air (2 of 2)

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon emphasizes the necessity of authentic community and corporate prayer in overcoming spiritual oppression and demonstrating God's wisdom to the world.

Duration: 36:22

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the power and purpose of the church of Jesus Christ. He criticizes the superficiality of traditional ceremonies and patriotic messages, stating that they do not truly educate or empower individuals. The speaker encourages the audience to seek revelation and understanding, to recognize the operation of spiritual powers, and to engage in a genuine wrestling with these powers. He also mentions a book called 'Christ and the Powers' by Hendrick Birkhoff, which explores the vertical dimension of spiritual warfare.

Transcript

I just want to put that on record, because God is wanting that quality of praise from you. God has called us to more than just casual pew sitting and a succession of Sunday services. The other example is intercession, but intercession of such a kind.

And I praise God for every individual who is called to the ministry of intercession. I'm alive because of these precious women. They might even be interceding tonight.

I pray that they would, that we would have a heaven that would be open above us, and that the word of God would go out unrestrictedly. But there's yet a more powerful kind of intercession, and that's the kind that's corporate. And if you read the book, Reese Howell's Intercessor, you know that the outcome of World War II was affected by a small band of saints in England who fought a battle in the air in intercessory prayer to affect actual events in the war that turned the tide against Hitler and eventuated in the Allied victory.

One was when England was hanging on the ropes, and all that was needed was an invasion of England. It would have been out of the war, and we would have had no springboard for the invasion, the Allied invasion of the continent. But instead of invading England, which every military logic pointed to, Hitler, despite the counsel of his own military advisers and generals, invented Russia.

And it was the beginning of the end for the Nazi cause. Why? Because a small prayer group in England, appropriating and apprehending the mind of the Lord and his wisdom and stratagem, interceded and prayed that deception on that man to turn the course of events and the whole course of the war. We are in a position to affect history.

We need not be the hapless victims of circumstance. We need to recognize the operation of the enemy and to receive the direction of God, given only together, and to pray it into being as reality by a people who were so disciplined and so unified and so one that if anyone of Lee's house prayer band so much as began to pray an individual kind of prayer, he would immediately rebuke them and tell that person, hey, that's for your prayer closet. And there wouldn't be any embarrassment because they have come to such a quality of relationship and reality together.

I want to go on record tonight to say that I believe that the quality of our prayer will never exceed the quality of our relationship together. The kind of prayer that is going to affect the powers of the air, that will influence history, change the course of things, break the power, make the powers to release their grip, will not exceed the quality of the relationship of those who are praying together. And that then allows me to share with you how the Lord showed me this in our community, how we have daily morning prayer meetings, foremost and first activity of the day, no matter what our physical need.

And we came together one morning and I felt very hungover. I felt just heavy and oppressed. And I thought, well, it's me, you know, melancholy Jewish personality.

But you know what the advantage of community is? You have access to each other's lives. You don't have to suffer your individual complaint by yourself and unto yourself and think that it's just you when you can find out, because of the frequency of your life together, that the other brother is also feeling oppressed. And this sister, and in fact the whole community is feeling it.

And then someone reminded us, well, Art, don't you know that this is the time that the Chippewa Indians are having their powwow just a few miles away? And we realized that during that powwow, that so-called Indian culture, there was a greater release of the influence of the powers of the air and we could actually feel the oppression where we were, where we began to pray. And at first it was the kind of prayer that saints make, you know, dutiful, obligatory. But we realized there was really a war on and we got with it.

If you had walked into that trailer ten minutes later, you would have thought it was an insane asylum. You would have seen people in such postures of prayer, stretched out on their faces, groaning, or people flailing with their arms as if they were in a boxing match, standing, sitting, lying, it didn't matter. Not one was self-conscious of how he or she appeared to the other.

We had been together too long. We had been through too much to have any concern for proprietor how we would appear. We were wrestling.

And as we wrestled, I saw the grimacing, ugly confidence of the symbolic prince of the air that has presided an unbroken domination over northern Minnesota to bring such a toll of death to Indians who never lived to get through their adolescence, who get wiped out by drugs or by alcohol, or are smashed in car wrecks, drunken in their driving, or kill one another, the reaper taking his toll, who is a destroyer and a marrer of men. He curses not our church to make it persist and to cease. And as we were praying, I saw that ugly confidence looking at us with a smirk from the inner ear.

Ah, he said, ha ha, with that Israel community, they're just a pile of problems, no sweat. But as the crescendo of our prayer rose, the ringing power and authority of our prayer, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, hey, and I think I better know this bent Israel community too, because this is more than just religious obligation. There's a quality here that is unmistakably authentic.

And that's the only thing that the powers of the air are required to acknowledge and that will move them, is authenticity in the church. And if the church is not authentic, what is it? Can we expect authenticity in the world of deception and appearances? But the church that is the ground and pillar of truth, and speaks the loving truth, and exhorts one another daily while it is yet today, that kind of a people are candidates for both authentic praise and authentic prayer. I watched that smirk wipe off the face of that demonic visage, and I watched a trembling lip and a faltering step as it began to back up as we pressed in, we were really wrestling.

By the way, any athletes here can tell you that wrestling, as the Greeks knew, is ultimate confrontation. You can play any other sport. Yes, it's demanding, you've got to be in shape, but wrestling is beyond even the issue of physical ability.

It's beyond the issue of mere strength. It's beyond the issue of muscle power. It's the issue of grit.

It's the issue of tenacity. It's the issue of your fiber, when you're locked eyeball to eyeball, and the difference of winning or losing with an opponent who equals you in physical strength are those intangible qualities of character that enable you to persevere and to endure and not to yield until the victory is won. I want to ask you pastors and ministers and leaders and elders and deacons in this congregation, are you seeing to it that your people are in that kind of an environment and receiving that kind of word and that kind of challenge as to form this kind of character? There's a war on, folks, and we'd better recognize it, for we wrestle.

And there came a point where I watched this thing just break in fear and take off in panic, and we didn't stop praying. We continued to pursue in the realm of spirit. Hey, listen, you guys, anybody got a straightjacket here? Am I going to be carded out of this room tonight? Some of you have been co-creators, like this speaker has really flipped out, he's gone off the deep end.

Was he describing what is most eminently real? And have we determined that this is the reality to which our lives are called? And that we're not to be seduced by the appearance of things that is everywhere about us in the beguiling and tranquil environment of Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, that says with every breath and every palpitation and every shopping mall and every beautiful living quarter that this is the best of all possible worlds? And that church is only a Sunday institution, and that we should enjoy the services, and that's the sum or the be-all of what the faith is. Is that it, or have we determined by a willful immersion of ourselves in the apostolic scriptures that there is a war, that there is a conflict between powers, that the issue is the whole issue of mankind and the nations and the earth that God has made, to a power that is bent upon its destruction and its perverse twisting and distortion and marring, who has already taken such toll that rivers of blood have flowed by wars, racial and national, that it has inculcated by breathing upon nations in their pride and their nationalism and their racial consciousness every kind of thing that makes men to act in the wisdom of the world, in the gods of this world, rather than in the wisdom of God. Maybe you can turn with me to Ephesians 3, just to see how well you're being fitted and prepared for the purposes for which you were sent.

This is a remarkable book, this Ephesians. It's so remarkable, it's so lofty. We think it's just Paul carried away in a flight of fancy, that he's just using a kind of special, hyperbolic, exaggerated language, that in fact he does not really mean what he says.

But I want you to believe, he means every single syllable. And he talks about himself in his calling as a minister in the 7th verse of chapter 3, of the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of this power, to me who am less than the least of all the saints. This grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church through the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

I'm not going to determine my conduct tonight before you by the seeing of my natural eye because of it. If that were so, I would sit down now. I'm going to go on by the Spirit.

I don't care if you look fatigued, I don't care if you yawn, I don't care if you think that it's irrelevant. God wants something spoken, something proclaimed, a word, gone out into the foundation of the Church and into the very earth itself. To the intent that now, and I believe that our now has come, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the Church, the only agency by which it can be made known.

And we need to ask, a Church of what kind? Social? Casual? A Church whose congregation is only the casual aggregate of individualities? Yes brother, good to see you. How are you doing? See you next week. Is that the Church that is going to make the manifold wisdom of God known to the principalities and powers of the earth, the scowling, defiant, scummy, and disdainful forces of darkness that hate God and hate God's way and hate God's people? Are they going to be impressed by aggregates of individualities that are islands unto themselves? We wrestle the weapons of our warfare.

And I don't think that we'll ever wrestle successfully so long as we're going to countenance a Church that is white on the one side and black on the other. It's we, it's our. Something, I'm getting a Holy Ghost chill right now, I want to say you just touched it.

Because that's the very area in which the powers of the air have prevailed. Through fear, through jerking, through manipulation, through intimidation, through threat. You can't do this.

This will happen. You don't dare risk this. How will it look? Look at the past, look at history.

God is calling for something transcendent that is beyond fear, of which the world knows nothing. And until it's demonstrated, we have no credibility with the powers who have scoffed and disdained us until now. To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known.

What is the manifold wisdom of God? I've been describing what is the manifold wisdom of the powers of the air. It's a whole totally different value system. It's predicated on totally other assumptions, on another kind of view.

It celebrates force, violence, threat, intimidation, terror. It seduces men by appealing to lust and prestige and power and wealth. What then is the antithesis? What is the wisdom of God that God is waiting to be made manifest through the Church? The very same wisdom, and only the wisdom, that was demonstrated at the cross by Jesus Christ himself.

The wisdom that suffers as a lamb going to the slaughter, that is silent, that does not seek to defend its own interests, that does not respond in kind against evil, that prays for its enemies, that says, lay not the sin to their charge. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. If you guys can receive my fancy vocabulary, there are two M's I want to deposit in your consciousness, that at the cross was a final and ultimate showdown between these two cosmic wisdoms, the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the powers of darkness, meekness of upended and assaulted by violence.

The violence that is even now being exerted in iron curtain cells where the saints are tortured and threatened. If only they'll say uncle. If only they'll show that they're fearful for their own lives.

If only they'll break and crack, just like any other man, and show that they do not have a certain residue of something, and seeing the eternal weight of glory, they can suffer this present affliction as being light and momentary. That is the powers of the air to those that have yielded themselves to their influence, that they have, that they work to bring the power of the wisdom, which is torture and threat and intimidation and violence, right against the bodies of the saints. It's an ultimate confrontation, as it was for Jesus.

Ultimate and utter malignity. Evil meets utter magnanimity. The grace of God, the meekness of God, the love of God, the long-suffering of God.

What shall we say who grow in dignity? How shall we come to that transcendent manifold wisdom of God as to be made known to the principality? Why is it even important to God? And this is a demonstration world without end throughout all ages. It's beyond the issues of the earth. It's beyond the issue of how our salvation affects us or our society or a kingdom come even in the earth.

It's a demonstration to the powers of the air. And it says in the very next verse, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are never going to come into these realities until we have deeply taken into ourselves what is the eternal purpose of the church.

We need to understand that there's a satisfaction that God is wanting that has to do with our salvation. He wants to demonstrate something to the church that is made up of the outcasts and the Paul Gordons and the former hippies and drug addicts and seducers and those who live for the essential delight and worked into us through true church. We stand as an eternal evidence of a people who in their ultimate confrontation with the powers of the air, exactly as Jesus did and spoiled.

We have to complete what he began. He sees a church that is, what do you think he's experienced? The jazz, the oppressions, the persecutions, the circumstantial oppression and things waxing worse by which he thinks to defeat us and to reveal that our profession of the faith is designed to from faith to faith in glory. We need now rightly to interpret the circumstances of our lives against which we were murmuring, not recognizing that God is even now by those circumstances trying to teach us the wisdom of his patience, of his meekness, of his self-denial.

The cross needs not only to be proclaimed but demonstrated in the reality of our lives and in any locality where there's a church that gives that authentic demonstration over it the powers of the air have been. Why is it that it's so difficult to proclaim the gospel? Why is it that men are so resistant? Why is it that our labors are so meager in result and fruitfulness because we have been acting horizontally and laterally, not recognizing that releases men to hear and to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. A theologian wrote, to whom I'm indebted for the beginning of the opening if you want to make a note, I think I'll put it on the paperback, before world, now they're willing to consider.

He writes, any resistance and every attack against the gods of this age will be unfruitful unless the church herself is resistance and attack until she demonstrates in her life and fellowship how men can live freed from the powers. That is to say without fear, without anxiety, without apprehension, without trembling. A church that can say as Jesus before it, the prince of this world comes but he has nothing in me.

As you can look at the catalogs and go through the malls and see this splendiferous merchandise and you don't palpitate and I, having food and raining, you have learned therein to be, you're not jerked by streams you're not moved by wisdom your very presence, a presence of such a people who have come, compels the powers of the air to violent molestation and rape and racial violence. Free sway in it until there's a church in the midst who can call their bluff and say you're defeated, you're disarmed you're powerless we refuse to give you free sway in our community your pornography will cease. A church that can demonstrate it is free how do we come to that? It's the issue of the mafia but what's the issue here? Based on the history and what has that invisible security of discernment or operation, so long as we remain only casually related.

So long as we are fixed in our own selfishness so long as we tremble over our own security, so long as we think that the determinants of our well-being is the rise and fall of the stock market or the economy until we can come to the place where we can say you have no power except we need to be free Jesus beat the devil's worst by presenting he disarmed but he didn't eradicate I wrote here something happened when meekness and humility a demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God that these powers are obliged to recognize where nothing else can impress them than the very nature of God the holiness of his character exhibited under extreme duress and pressure as only suffering in extremity can reveal it you can almost say that suffering reveals and ultimate suffering reveals ultimately

that's what happened at the cross the deepest and truest character of God was revealed in Jesus in his suffering and his patient response to his afflictions when the powers of the air had unparalleled sway to do him in a triumph at the cross he triumphed in that place and is also the place of our triumph how fools we are that the very things which we have complained about in the church namely the trials and the irritations that come to us from the saints is exactly the provision of God for the shaping of his godly character in us to move us to that ultimate place of response by which we reveal the manifold wisdom of God and it says that Paul says that he created all things in order that through the church come on guys you really believe that he created all things the universe the galaxies

the earth, its seasons vegetation, food human beings, societies nations, institutions of culture to assist life, that he created all things in order that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities of the powers of the air and they purpose this eternally in Christ Jesus do you believe that are you staggered by that can you understand that, that something is so important to God as an eternal demonstration to the praise of his glory that he has created all things in order that through the church my God upon any definition of the church that has restricted it and reduced it to something less than this eternal glory and we shall not rise to it we shall not become this we shall not suffer when only suffering can teach and establish in patience and

in character as the ultimate demonstration except we are seized by the apostolic vision of a God who has created all things in order that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be demonstrated to the principalities and powers of the air that has so mocked God, usurped God, disdained God sought to win the allegiance and the loyalty and the worship of men for themselves as God's waiting for one thing and he's created all things for it the church I want you to leave tonight with a new respect, a new esteem a

new devotion to the church of Jesus Christ and glory to the Lord it is the genius of God, it is the purpose of God it is the glory of God and such a church is going to take more than Sundays and midweek bible studies when you give yourself two weeks for his sake according to

the eternal purpose which he purposed and accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord this was a three day seminar, not a one night shot at it but I'll take what I can get and I'm going to pray now at something much more than this thumbnail sketch is going to be registered on your students, you're going to become students, you're going to search out the subject you're going to look for its literature you're going to ask for revelation and understanding, you're going to begin to squint and recognize the operation of these powers in ways that were previously disguised to you, I cannot stand a high school graduation ceremony, I cannot stand the so called patriotic messages from the veterans of foreign wars and the gratuities and the little things that are given and all the nicety nice and how

we're preparing you for life when I know it's a lie it's a deception it's a fraud, it's a cop-out, it's an institutional gimmick, it's a self-perpetuating system that really has not educated men, has not opened to them the nature and the reality of the life that is before them and yet we flash our flashbulbs and we buy our gifts and we celebrate and condone and affirm that life not recognizing that their powers that operate through it want to continue their manipulation want to continue their false values want to continue their lies, want to continue their deceptions, I want to pray now that a church is going to rise up in the city that will see apostolically and deal authoritatively with these powers that have so long victimized men and crushed the image of God in them, sold them down

the river, kept them from the full openness of God's image in them and from the knowledge and the relationship with God and had them palpitating and cowering before the false gods of this age if only they'll get a raise, if only they'll get a date, if only they'll get someone to sleep with, if only they'll get a fix jerk, manipulated terrorized, threatened moved by the powers of the air for false values because the church was not called called enough and has pronounced the victory of Jesus Christ in this locality and has demonstrated it by the authenticity of their life together.

Let's pray. Thank you, Lord, precious God.

We ask your power tonight, Lord, to break false loyalists. My Jewish people are a historic illustration of the celebration of a false religion and all of their intense Jewish loyalty for Judaism that has kept them ironically from the knowledge of their God. And we sat and patted them on the back and loved and articulated by their religious culture not recognizing that that's exactly the soulish means by which men are everywhere kept in bondage.

We ask your blessing tonight, Lord. And, Lord, I pray that your word shall not go forthward, that something has been sown in the foundation of the church here and in individual lives that we might actually constitute for us a coming of age, a dawning of maturity, a recognition that our church is more than the succession of happy Sunday services, but is the preparation for a combat, a war, an eventual and ultimate triumph, I shall redound to the praise of his glory. My God, may eternity come into our consciousness.

May we break the power of time. May we see the thing that is eternal and fit ourselves for it and by such a means be made more valid in our own generation. Lord, I pray for authority in the church, discernment in the church, even the recognition that individual deliverances is not the issue, the real issue of human experience.

It's peripheral. The real issue are the powers that have bound nations and compelled them to war against each other and has destroyed and marred and is even now sweeping through our houses and making fathers to lie with their own daughters. Perversion! Destruction! Corruption! Everything against the order of God.

Bring us of age, my God. Bring us to this. Bring us to the authority.

Bring us to the praise. Bring us to the intercession. Bring us to the prayer.

May we find each other in a new way. May we look for opportunities to be together more frequently and more significantly and more intently than what was known before. May we not be satisfied with a backlash on how you're doing, brother, and think that that is the description of Christian fellowship.

May we find the koinonia of the church that will not allow any one of us to go in and want us and not allow society to do it. May we be the church that cares, the church that loves, the church that is a church that wrestles. Seal your word tonight.

May it be an historic word. May it be a pivotal word that has turned something for the history of the church, my God, in this region that will have effect and consequence in this generation and in the ages to come. World without end.

Eternally. For Jesus and for His namesake we pray and God's people say Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22595.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/k-477-the-powers-of-the-air-2-of-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net