

# K-478 Heart Circumcision

by Art Katz

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of heart circumcision, which is the process of being separated from rebellion and selfishness through the power of the cross, and the need for a moment-by-moment reckoning with God to be made alive in Christ.*

**Duration:** 25:40

**Scripture:** Romans 6:2-3, Romans 8:8, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Galatians 6:14, Philippians 3:3

**Topics:** "Circumcision"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a report about a revival that took place at Ashbury College. The revival started with individuals coming to the microphone and confessing their sins. The speaker emphasizes the need for believers to separate themselves from sin and cleanse themselves from every defilement of body, soul, and spirit. They highlight that every sin is an expression of the root of self and that God calls us to lay the axe to this root. The sermon references Romans 6, emphasizing the importance of being dead to sin and walking in newness of life through the power of the cross. The speaker also emphasizes the need for genuine transformation and being a new creation in Christ.

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## Transcript

I understood and I heard recently a report from someone who was at that Ashbury College where the Great Revival broke out several years ago. It began with no preaching, just individuals coming to a microphone like that and confessing. Come ye out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord.

Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and my daughters. Having therefore these precious promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body, soul, and spirit. One act of yielded rebellion will do more to bring the revival of God than night after night of most eloquent preaching.

What a travesty against God and against His truth that this afternoon's session is just a little maudlin demonstration in coming up and just exhibiting certain grievous aspects of our life, and we're now utterly and wholly sincere with God. I want to speak a few words about the cross. If ever there was a slighted aspect of the salvation of God, it's the cross of Christ Jesus.

I am determined not to know anything but Christ and Him crucified. I glory only in the cross of Christ Jesus, by which the world is separated unto me and I unto the world. We are the circumcision, we are the

cut ones, who have no confidence in the flesh.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus and worship God in the Spirit. There's no way to contemplate Jewishness independent of circumcision, no way. It's just, it's beyond any kind of contemplation.

To be a Jew is to be circumcised. You have experienced a cutting. In Colossians we read, in whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

There are many of us in this room who have received an initial and physical circumcision when we were eight days old, over which we had nothing to say, that had nothing to do, was independent of our will. It was administered to us as an expression of traditional hygienic practice. But I tell you that there's a circumcision awaiting us as believers that has nothing to do with the facts of our natural birth as Jews or Gentiles, which except that we receive it, our lives shall continue to be maudlin, deceived, sentimental, up one day, down the next, confused, bewildered, incapable of love, and a sick catalog of willfulness, rebellion, selfishness, fear, lust, anger, pride, indulgence, and lovelessness.

Only a small portion of some of the things that were expressed in those who came up and spoke today. God said he's made every provision. There's a cross, there's a cutting, there's a circumcision not made with hands.

We are the circumcision. That's not an automatic thing. There's a very real coming to the cross and a continual reckoning on that coming, which is at the heart of the gospel, which so few understand or have a stomach or disposition to understand.

I'm just going to read what I believe is the heart of the gospel that shows the application of the cross as a separation from rebellion, selfishness, lust, anger, pride, and all of the other manifestations, which are aspect of only one thing, which the scriptures call the old man self, the body of sin. Romans 6, second verse, how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? I'm just going to ask you to make one substitution. When we come to the word sin, I want you to read the word self, because every sin from pride to anger to rebellion to lust and victim, whatever it is, is an expression of that old root, self, and there's a God who has called us to lay the axe to the root and has made the provision waiting for us to believe it and to receive it and to continually reckon on it.

How shall we that are dead to self live any longer in it? Don't you know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? It wasn't some mindless ceremony where you got dunked or you gave a pretty little testimony, you felt you went home with a little giddy sense of exaltation. It was the deepest symbolic and spiritual identification of going six feet under and the waters of God's judgment came over all flesh. For he that is in the flesh cannot please God.

It can't be tamed, it can't be disciplined, it can't be shut up, it can't be boxed, it can only be crucified and buried. That was performed 19 centuries ago and God is asking us to believe that if we were baptized into him, we were baptized into his death. I tell you there's no greater demand upon our credulity and understanding and faith than this.

I've seen great giants of faith who can believe God for miracles and manifestations of his power and yet cannot believe that they are equated with him in identification by faith, in crucifixion, death, and burial. That they might say with Paul, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in

me. Oh precious people, precious people, except we believe this and reckon on this and make this the daily operating principle of our walk, we have only our shabby lives to show.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that just as like Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. There's a great big fat if that stands smack dab in the way.

If. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. All things have passed away and all things are made new.

Nine out of ten people recite it, but perhaps only one out of ten is the new creature. If any man be in Christ, there's a great big if. If we have been planted together, you're not planted together by nominal assent to the doctrines of God.

You're planted together by a vital existential act of faith, believing that this was done 19 centuries ago, and if you're willing to receive it and give up every last claim to your life and say, Lord, I've had people put their fingers right on Roman six and cry out with an urgent desperate cry. I believe this and I want it and I ask you to see me father according to your own word as crucified, dead, and buried with Christ. And I believe that in the conclusion of this prayer, it's no longer I that live, but Christ, the resurrected Christ who lives in me.

I am planted with him in the likeness of his death, and so too shall I be planted with him in the likeness of the newness of life. And if you're asking, gee, what will that do for me? You've not yet died. There's no consideration for me if me is going to die.

I don't know what what anointing God is speaking this now, but I know on other occasions when God is having to speak on death and the cross, and I can remember a special occasion in Sweden at a Pentecostal church with some of the finest looking saints that I had ever seen at a youth meeting with young people who should have come as missionaries to America to our youth, beautiful young believers, and God spoke this message on death, and they came out of their seats at the conclusion of that service at midnight. I tell you, there was a spirit of God in that place. There was such a solemnity, such an awe, such a hush, and as they were coming out of their seats, God was mocking them and taunting them through me.

Oh, you're too young to die. Don't you have contemplation for your marriage and for your future? And they just brushed through every one of these taunts with faces fixed like flint and took my hand in theirs and sealed it at the front of that church and died. I had a Norwegian man who was my translator on another occasion said, Brother Catcher said, can I speak with you privately? And we made a date the next day and walked streets of Oslo together.

He said, I'm filled with the Spirit. I administer gifts of the Spirit. I'm in full-time service, but something is missing.

What is it? And without thinking, which is when I'm best before God, I took out an imaginary death wand and a ballpoint pen, and I said, Ivan, supposing that your name were on this death wand and the Lord were asking you to sign. That was the last word I said. The guy took me by the scruff of the neck and flung me up against the wall and pulled a pen out of my hand.

And as the tears rolled off his face and bounced off the sidewalk, he said, where do I sign? He was sick to the teeth of being in the flesh one day and in the spirit the next, up one day, down the next. Brave resolutions before God. Yea, though all the world deny you, yet will I never deny you.

And the next day he denied him. There's no place for flesh. It's full of sickly resolution, and it never makes it.

That man signed by faith on the sidewalk of Oslo. And to all and every appearance, he continued to walk away. But it was no longer the he that lived, but Christ who lived in him.

Great things have happened through that life since, because the resurrection life of Christ has the whole possession of it. Guys, this is not mere Christian doctrine. This is the heart of the faith.

If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin and self might be destroyed. There's no other answer for it, that henceforth we should not serve self. For he that is dead is freed from self.

It's the only answer, because death is complete and total annihilation. There's no coming back. It's going six feet under, and the only resurrection that comes forth out of that grave is the same one that came out of the garden tomb 19 centuries ago.

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him, and nor shall it have over us. That death which is lust, that death which is fear, that death which is lovelessness, all the forms of death which were expressed here this afternoon. I can't love anybody.

I'm incapable of love, of giving it or receiving it. That's death. I'm afraid.

I'm fearful. That's death. I live in my imagination.

That's death. Death shall have no more dominion over you, if you shall submit to that one great total death, which was performed 19 centuries ago at a cross in Jerusalem by our Messiah. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, and that in you die, you die unto self once.

But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Here's the punchline. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto self, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If I would single out one verse of all the scripture that is the key cardinal pivotal verse upon which the whole way of God is hinged, it's the 11th verse of the 6th chapter of the Book of Romans. And the whole success or failure of our walk as believers can be attributed to only one thing, whether we are successful in our reckoning or not. Talk about faith.

In that moment when you're tempted, in that moment when habitual fear begins to exude its sickly familiarity, in that moment when lust begins to express its familiarity, when any of those expressions of self with which you've long been familiar in situations begin to rise up and take over, pride, lovelessness, anger, bitterness, jealousy, in that moment will you reckon yourself dead? You reckon yourself dead. He refused to lie with her. He fled.

There's a place for our will and it comes right down at the heart of this nitty-gritty when God says, do you believe the provision that I've made for you that separates you from the world, the flesh, and the devil? It's

not just the pouring out of my blood which cleanses you from sin, but there's a cross of separation upon which your whole self-life can be nailed, crucified, and killed, and buried with me. How many people in this room have been baptized and immersed in water? Many of the same people who came up and gave testimonies and spoke this afternoon raised their hands in that. You've not been reckoned.

I want to ask you, do you believe God? Walking in the Spirit is nothing more than continual acts of reckoning. I know it in my life so clearly that there are individual moments when I have a choice which was never available to me before I came to Christ. Before, I was only outcast.

It was the only alternative. Before, I was Vesuvius going off when someone crossed the steps on my toes, but now I know there are distinct moments. My wife texts me.

I'm standing at the faucet drawing a glass of water. I know in that split second I have a choice of reckoning myself in deed, in that deed, in that actuality, dead unto myself, dead unto that impulse that wants to get even and talk back, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus who is patience, kindness, love, and forbearance. I make the decision whether in that moment I choose to be dead to self and alive unto God or alive unto outcasts and dead unto God.

It's a moment-by-moment reckoning. People, nothing eloquent about this, nothing fancy about this, nothing preachy about this. This is the nitty-gritty mechanical working of God given at the cross.

I don't want to invite you to any kind of sentimental act of commitment, any kind of cheap schmaltzy going on our knees or a wailing or anything like that. For God's sake, God is calling us to maturity, the essence of which is reckoning by faith. My last question is this, takes two things, faith, dynamic, continual, operative, and the second thing, willingness.

How many actually want to be crucified and buried with Christ? Oh, despite our cries and our petitions, really want once and for all to be dead unto self and be alive unto God? If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat from the fat of the land. I don't know how to invite you to this. I think maybe it's the thing that continually separates the knowledge from the head and from the heart is the disposition of the heart.

Maybe we've only wanted to know cerebrally, we've only wanted to be clever in the scriptures or to be able to, quote, watch me, and I'm not abrading you, brother, because I think we're all given to this. When God sees a heart disposed to obedience by the operation of his own spirit, he'll make head knowledge into heart knowledge. There's no faith without knowledge.

How shall I call upon him of whom they've not heard? There has to be a hearing first. And God has spoken to me to speak this fundamental thing that you might understand what the cross is and how it operates. Now, the thing that you have to ponder in your own heart, are you willing? I taunted those kids by the spirit of God that night, oh, you're too young to die.

And they walked right through those taunts and laid down their lives. I said, you'll come to the front of this church, you'll not walk back again. How many of you who are sitting in these seats right now, I'm talking about literal death, would so be willing to right now, by faith, call on God and say, Lord, I want to die right now in this chair.

Die, I mean die, not just ceremonially or theologically or doctrinally, I mean die totally and wholly that I'm not even getting up out of that seat. This is the end of my life. I've come to the end of the trail.

I'm so sick to the teeth with frustration and defeat and up one day in a shabby testimony. I'm a lousy father and husband or wife or witness or believer or whatever. I give up.

Jesus said to Peter, when you are converted, strengthen the brethren. And it took for Peter's conversion a deep act, a recognition of repentance when he saw that with all his fleshly resolution, with all his Jewish impetuosity, he was loudest in asserting that though all the world deny him, yet would he never deny him, he was the first. And so did they all.

Those that are in the flesh cannot please God. I'm talking about a literal death, people, that if you'll pray, and something I'm going to speak soon is a prayer and ask you to follow me, you're not getting out of that chair. Still willing? Yeah, but Art, what about, I had things ready for me when I got home and I'm engaged to be married or I was going into ministry or I had this intention or that.

Forget it. You are going to die. Still willing? It's getting a little icky now.

Isn't it a little scary to say, what if Art is just not batting his mouth and this is real and I'm really not going to get up off that chair? I tell you, if it's not that, it's nothing. You will not get up off the chair, but there'll be a resurrection. If this does not work, people, I close this book and I fold up my tent and I sneak silently away.

I have nothing, I am nothing, and have no message for the world or for my people. Christ in us, the hope of glory. Either he is my life, my speech, my utterance, my ministry, or there's nothing.

You mustn't be deceived because it has a Brooklyn accent. You mustn't be deceived because your body will get up off the seat and you'll still continue to speak in familiar ways and there'll still be your personality. But I tell you that for every concrete act of reckoning by faith, you're going to see a quality of life go forth through your accent, through your speech, through your personality, which is not you.

I glory in the cross of Christ Jesus, Paul said. God forbid that he should glory in anything else, who was the Hebrew of the Hebrews. For me to live is Christ.

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And you show me a Christ who is willful, rebellious, selfish, fearful, lustful, angry, proud, indulgent, and loveless, and he's not my Messiah nor my God.

For as often as you'll allow him by acts of reckoning, it'll be the resurrected Christ speaking and doing and being through you. Christ in us, the whole book of glory. This is the ultimate discipleship.

Oh, children, believe it. Desire it. Do it.

Reckon it. Would to God it was so simple as throwing aside a pack of cigarettes, and I heard the great cries that went up from others that followed. I don't know what to throw away.

I don't know how to escape. I don't know what to do. I want to be delivered from it.

There's a cross. There's a cross. There's a cross.

There's a circumcision not made with hands. Can you say we are the circumcision? On our brochure, under the menorah, we had Philippians 3.3. It has got to be the very motif and theme of God for this messianic movement. We are the circumcision who rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Why? He saved us not only from our sins, but from ourselves. We rejoice in Christ Jesus for what he did on the cross. It's unspeakable in its meanings.

I have no confidence in the flesh. In fact, we have so little confidence we've crucified it and buried it with Christ and worship God in the spirit. I'm going to ask you to bow your heads, many of you who said you were willing to die, who have been baptized in water, because God has said today, don't you know that as many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? That's what that meant.

And if you didn't know it, how then could you believe it? And if you don't believe it, how then could it be operative? Because without faith, it's impossible to please God. There's a deep reckoning by faith, now and from this moment forth, that you might say when the tempter comes and tempts you in the way in which you are most susceptible, in your fear, in your pride, in your lovelessness, in your lusting, in your flights of imagining, in your rebellion, in your willfulness, in your selfishness. Sorry, buster.

That guy who was willful, selfish, lustful, proud, he died at five after five at a hotel in Raleigh on a Thursday afternoon in July. And I'm going to reckon on that transaction with God right now in the face of your temptation and every other moment. I want you to follow me in prayer, if you mean business with God, knowing you'll not get out of that seat.

Dear God, out of your mouth, follow me. Dear God, I believe your word. I receive your provision.

I glory in the cross of Christ Jesus. I give up every claim to my own life. And right now I believe and ask you to see me together with your son, crucified and buried with him, that I might say, it is no longer I that live.

It is no longer I that live. Thank you for receiving me into his death and burial. Be therefore from this moment on, my life for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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