

K-496 the Wisdom of the Cross

by Art Katz

The cross is a scandal that reveals God's power and glory, and it is the basis of our sanctification, redemption, power, and righteousness.

Duration: 57:05

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 1:26-30, 1 Corinthians 2:1-2, 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

Topics: "Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the profound significance of Jesus' crucifixion as a demonstration of God's wisdom. He compares it to the revelation of God at Sinai, but argues that the crucifixion surpasses it in depth and significance. The speaker highlights the irony and repulsiveness of a crucified Messiah to both ancient and modern Jews. He asserts that the crucifixion exposes false wisdom and religion, bringing judgment on those who have kept mankind in bondage. Ultimately, the speaker emphasizes that the crucifixion was not accidental, but a calculated demonstration of God's choices and will.

Transcript

Let's open to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and just start with verse 17. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request the sign and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called by Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For you see your calling brethren, there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put the shame, the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put the shame, the things which are mighty and the base

things of the world and the things which are despised. God has chosen and the things which are not to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence, but of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification that as it is written, he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. And just a little piece of chapter two about Paul saying that when I came to you, I did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Just to focus in on a repeated phrase in verse 27 of chapter one, but God has chosen, God has chosen the foolish things. God has chosen the weak things, the base things of the world, things which are despised, God has chosen. So, I just want to begin tonight by just underlining what is in God's heart by choosing what he has chosen and what is in our heart if we have chosen what he has chosen, because things that are base and things that are despised and things that are foolish and things that are weak are not the kinds of things that men choose and God has chosen.

He performs something in a once of a once and for all kind in the crucifixion of Jesus, where he has gone out of his way to make a statement and to reveal something by his choices that are remarkable and it contradicts and it confounds all that men celebrate and admire, particularly religious men. Things that are foolish, the things that are weak, the things that are base, the things that are despised. He not only chose them, but he explicated or demonstrated his choices by his son being required to suffer them, to be made base, to be made despised, to be made weak.

So, it's a remarkable statement from God that has come in point of time in history once at the inception of our faith and we really need to understand why he has chosen and whether we ourselves really deeply agree with that choice, because to agree with that choice is not just to nod our heads in agreement, yes, well done God, but to continue to live and move and have our being in that same kind of choice, weakness, foolishness, things that are base, because this is God's statement, not just once but continually, to whom is this statement being made? Who is God wanting to impress? Why is he going out of his way to controvert all that can be understood to be religiously right and respectable and sound and to do something not only foolish but repulsive that one can call the cross of Christ Jesus a scandal. Jesus on the cross, the Messiah, Christ and him crucified is a scandal and if that sense of it has been lost to us, it's an unhappy statement of our own distance from the cross and God's meaning, but God intended it as a scandal, he intended it to contradict and to confound, but we need to understand what underlies this whole great demonstration and the point that God is wanting to make and to whom is it made, because it opens to us deeply the cosmic setting of the faith. Can you follow that? Something is being worked, not just for a demonstration in Palestine to a Jewish community of that time and then subsequently throughout all modern times, but even beyond times and beyond this age and into the ages to come.

God has made a statement through the crucifixion of Jesus and Paul who was formally inducted into the wisdom and the mentality of the religious world so profoundly that he despised the offense of the cross

and looked upon those who are subscribed to it as being heretics, felt fully justified to go out of his way to round them up and to persecute and to destroy them because it was totally incompatible with anything that he could recognize or understand or value as being the faith of his fathers. That's how radically different was the demonstration that came through the crucifixion of Christ and once Paul was radically converted into this new truth, which by the way could not be accommodated to any previous truth, it destroys all previous categories. It's an entry into something totally radical and other, so much so that Paul was hated for that and men vowed that such a one is not fit to live and when Paul preached as we read here, he says, I'm determined not to know anything but Christ and him crucified.

The crucified messiah is like a contradiction in terms. You expect a messiah to come as a deliverer, you don't expect him to come as a victim and yet Paul says I'm determined to know and I want to say that that determination is itself a statement of the cross. Can you understand Paul's heart? It requires something to shut out other views and perceptions of reality or spirituality or faith to be single-eyed in presenting the strange and scandal of the faith of God depicted on the cross.

It took for Paul a real determination. I'm determined not to know anything but Christ and him crucified because if you don't have that determination, invariably other things will come in to subvert, to lessen, to domesticate, to take the radical content out of that great faith and to incorporate it until it itself becomes another conventional religious thing and it's lost its power. It took a determination.

So it took an act of the cross of denial to block out any other consideration particularly for a man who was so brilliantly able to bring other perspectives. A man who was gifted and who could have proclaimed anything on the basis of his own ability and eloquence and he's equally determined not only about the message Christ and him crucified but the way in which it should be spoken not in human eloquence but in weakness and trembling and in much fear that your faith should not be established on the basis of the eloquence of man but on God. You understand why apostles are so dear and precious and when Paul announced that to those who loved him that they would see his face no more, they wept and hung on his neck because of his single-eyed determination both for the content and the manner in which this strange message has to be proclaimed or else it's not a saving message.

It's a strange message and God says that it pleased him. Notice God has chosen, God has chosen, God has chosen and it pleased God or God has chosen that by the foolishness of preaching he would save them that would believe. What is in my heart tonight is that our faces should be rubbed into the foolishness of God's wisdom and what God has chosen because it's really a moot question of whether we have chosen what God has chosen.

Do you follow that? Merely to nod our heads and to say yes it's true may actually contradict it but because this is so calculatedly alien to man so where is there an indication in the verses that have been read that God's whole demonstration goes beyond Israel itself, beyond those who witnessed it at the time of the life and death of Jesus, goes beyond every subsequent generation including our own but it's even calculated for something that is beyond this age and if we don't understand that something we don't have the apostolic perception of the faith because that drama is still at work. Can you pick up in the verses that we read for whom is God making all of this demonstration of his wisdom? Okay verse 8 and chapter 2 the rulers of this age and where else chapter 1 and but in chapter 2 in verse 6 it's the rulers of this age he's not speaking of men, he's not speaking of human magistrates, he's speaking of an order of government and authority that is above men and that influences men. The rulers of this world's darkness the principalities and powers of the air and you see it also in the first chapter the weak things of the world to put the shame

the things which are mighty well even the reference to the world is like world system the foolish things of the world system to shame the things which are mighty may go beyond referring to men and to these to the same the same principalities and powers the base things of the world the things which are despised God has chosen things which are not to bring to naught the things that are.

Well we'll find other places particularly when we'll get into chapter 3 of Ephesians about the stark reference to these principalities and powers but just for now I want to say that already Paul is warming us up to a view of cosmic things. There's a demonstration that God is wanting made to the invisible realm that goes beyond this age and this world and what can we learn of these powers and their values and their wisdom simply by seeing what God has chosen. You follow that?

I mean why has God chosen things that are weak the things that are based the things that are despised why must Paul come in weakness and fear and trembling must come and then the next verse that in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not know God and we talked about that last week natural religion by an understanding of God through nature or through deduction may give you some form of God but it's not the God in truth and the knowledge that you'll gain from it is not a beneficial knowledge it corrupts the one who has that knowledge it's elevating it's egotistic so God does not allow himself to be known by the world's wisdom but he's chosen his own wisdom which is a foolishness so I just want to read a little bit from another precious commentator on the cross where he talks

about the death of Jesus is depicted on a bigger and broader canvas than that of Palestine in the third and fourth decades of the first century it is a cosmic event that in the final analysis exposes and judges the wisdom of this age and the rulers of this age such an extraordinary statement that God is making it's so um loaded saves us from faulty knowledge it becomes the bit the message of it becomes the basis for salvation there is no other basis than the foolishness of this preaching but at the same time it exposes the things that are false false wisdom false religion and brings a judgment on those who have kept mankind in bondage over it all of this in one event the death of Jesus at the cross and he says the stunning thing about all this is that God himself is the protagonist none

of this is accidental or circumstantial this is the calculated demonstration of God's wisdom I don't know of another act maybe God at Sinai giving the law would be something similar to the revelation of God by God to men but this even eclipses that in the depth and the significance of what is being affected and yet it does not come from a mountaintop it does not come with peels of lightning and wreaths of fire and smoke and fear it comes in a in the garbage dump outside the city in a place where criminals are executed by a naked man suffering the agony of a Roman death between criminals and yet that statement is as profound in the revelation of God and in the workings of God as what came in Sinai but for a whole Jewish people who have been brought up in the sense of Sinai and the grandeur

of God and the shakings and the thunderings and Moses how can how could they understand something was being enacted in their midst in a way that was that for which they were totally unprepared and yet they missed it and Jesus wept over their missing it and said you have missed the day of your visitation and are missing it still because the idea of a crucified messiah and one who is in fact God is as repulsive today to modern Jews as it was to our forebears 2,000 years ago and the one thing flows out of the other one thing is the consequence of the other a church that will insist on this message particularly in an age of technology prosperity high-tech civilizations that still talks about the centrality of the cross and the surrender to that God is opening itself for retaliation from the

same powers of the air that were who suffered a defeat at the cross so God is the author of this I like his phrase the stunning news that God is the protagonist God hath chosen for God hath chosen God hath chosen we want to understand God we need to know what he chooses and because it reveals him don't your choices reveal you what you do with your time what you do with your money those you select as friends the things that you read the things that engage you your choices reveal who you are and God's choices reveal who he is he's chosen everything that is that contradicts what the world celebrates and then he goes on to say that Jesus himself was in agreement with this choice because he suffered it but it was also the will of the father and he gives a verse in Galatians 1:4 where it speaks

of who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present age according to the will of our God and father Jesus was in agreement with the will of our God and our father and of course the Holy Spirit also in complete agreement with the mind of God and though we'll get into this probably another time he says that this agreement and what is revealed in it becomes the principle of Christian community a Christian community are those who share this view and subscribe to its truth and endorse it they prefer and choose God's and God's weakness and that what a Christian community is is a band of souls who come together in agreement on this foundational issue of the cross and what it reveals of God and lives a life in keeping with the cross a cruciform life of the principle of self-denial

which is weakness and foolishness and so on so the action of Jesus is God's action but it's the choice of God who did not spare his only son but gave him up for us all it's not like God is merely continuing with something out of the old testament origins and brings an expected fulfillment in Jesus but what he brings and how he brings it completely controverts and shatters the conventional religious understandings that men have had in relating to Moses and old testament things it's like a discontinuity like a sharp rupture that really tests the heart of loving the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul you shall have no other gods before him unless that love is really there can you recognize the one who comes and allows men to fall at his feet and cry out my Lord and my God

and not rebuke them they're faced with a paralyzing contradiction between their thought forms of God as they had come to understand him and then a figure who seems to be in complete contradiction to those expectations something radical has to give we have been inducted 2,000 years later into an existing Judaism quote and unquote that we have come to subscribe to as being true because we grew up in Christian homes and we've gone to Sunday school and we attend services and churches so we have not been faced with the abrupt and radical requirement of the recognition of God's act as they were required and maybe it's for that reason that there those of them that came through it were radically transformed they were they became men of another kind you you know whereas our conversions do not seem

to produce the radical change of life and differences that seem to have taken place with those of the first century saints so I'm wondering if it's not tougher for us because we're being inducted in things that have become conventional and acceptable and have lost the shock value and the confrontational thing that must have come to them in the unexpected way in which God revealed his wisdom part of now fighting our way through to the faith is to so grapple with it again that it comes to us in a fresh way that the cross if it has not brought a rupture in a certain sense to us will to so wrestle till we understand what a scandal it in fact really is and then accept that scandal and make God's choice our choice is that making any kind of sense that ties in with verse 29 of chapter one that

no flesh of glory in his presence and we're daily struggling over the issues of flesh that don't want to give up the ghost they want to continue to assert and to express themselves and in fact to have a prevailing

existence but what's God's answer but of him you are in Christ Jesus who became for us or becomes for us wisdom from God righteousness sanctification and redemption so again not the least of what has been worked by the cross is the revelation of God's choices God's wisdom God unmasking and revealing the things that are false making clear that man by their own wisdom cannot come to the knowledge of God giving a message for salvation that must be preached in order to be believed unto salvation and also giving an entirely new basis and framework for living itself that this

crucified one is now to be the basis of your sanctification your redemption your power and your righteousness that no flesh should glory in his presence can you get all that and it's just an astonishment the totality of all that God has wrought in the scandal of the cross the message of salvation if it's not this message if it's just principles or steps to how to get saved and is not the preaching of the cross the foolishness of the cross it's not a basis for salvation where Paul says it is the power of God it's foolishness to men but to those that are saved it is the power of God so even the message itself that establishes the salvation of men has a power in it given by God because she has chosen it and it requires a certain kind of preaching you can't even speak about it from a human or

religious perspective but you've got to preach the cross in the manner of the cross in weakness foolishness and trembling dependency you've got to determine not to know anything else that would compete with it and you've got to determine not to allow any mode of expression to have part in it so that even the carrying of the message to the salvation of others itself is a reenactment of the cross you see what God said in motion with one thing boom and then not only that by the means by which one comes to God is out of the cross but having therefore been saved by that preaching and come to faith by that preaching how does one then continue in that faith by being in him who is made unto us sanctification redemption power and righteousness are you ready to throw all this on you almost have to

gasp I mean like God this is going too far can you understand why this is hated because of its totality and that will not tolerate anything that it contradicts this isn't it interesting how the necessity to preach is itself the raising of the cross for the church because this gospel is foolishness to them that perish have you ever tried speaking it to a sophisticated audience or to a university audience of Jewish intellectuals you don't know the foolishness and the scandal of the cross until you've got out of your own mouth to speak it in the face of erudite and sophisticated men you know I have to confess I get intimidated when I read time magazine or any modern journal of the depth of their accuracy their reporting their acumen you know the acumen their sophistication their conceptual

brilliance all of a sudden I feel so intimidated I feel so small and weak and inept and and what am I about and what's my message and how could I ever speak that to them so the way God has constituted even the issue of the church's obedience is an issue of the cross and the church that has not this message and will not bear it and bring it through the foolishness of the preaching will soon enough become emasculated and not be the church it may continue in its religious forms but it loses the vitality and the power that comes with obedience to the to the foolishness of God the cross is central and foremost and especially to the Jew how God has set us up this prestigious powerful worldly wise people who have been the victims of a false Christianity for two thousand years and cannot

distinguish between those forms and what we represent when when they hear and see a guy like me they think of the crusaders the Spanish Inquisition Jews burned at the stake and I'm one with those persecutors and I can't say now listen guys don't get hasty don't jump to any conclusions I want you to know I'm totally unrelated to worldly and apostate Christianity I really represent New Testament faith and I'm part of a

remnant people no way that you can even get a word like that in edgewise or there could even be you simply have to bear the misunderstanding of what you represent and suffer it so obedience is a suffering that's a cross how about determining not to know anything but how about preaching a foolish message is a suffering how about being dependent upon being in Christ for your

righteousness for your sanctification for your redemption for your power it's putting you in a in a tight place that no flesh should boast in his presence at cross when the Lord dropped that um thing from heaven it cuts through everything and it cuts still if we see it and and surrender to it what was he operating from evangelical principles or making a hasty underspoke calculation of his own on what would be the right way to speak to Nicodemus what was the source of his wisdom and understanding and authority and power and sanctification and redemption but the father he was living from God in a total dependency that's what made him a son but it's it's in a it's an enormous humiliation to be so restricted I can just see his mind in that conversation with Nicodemus a good master and uh what

must one do to inherit eternal life and Jesus wanting in his humanity said well look here let me explain and just giving him a clear concise methodical perfect statement that would have guaranteed the salvation instead he hears himself saying except you're born of uh of the spirit and of water you cannot enter the kingdom of God and knowing when he's hearing those statements that he's going to rattle the man no man comes down from above who no no man ascended was not first descended even the son of man who is in heaven he's the son of man in Jerusalem lots of bewildering statements calculated almost to confuse and there's no indication in the scripture that Nicodemus was saved by it or not trusting anything but the life of God and what it will give that's why the church that is formed on

the basis of the cross is another kind of fellowship it's another kind of understanding it's another kind of fraternity it opens itself up to the retaliation of the powers of darkness that hate anyone who takes this seriously and it makes a kind of a covenant with God that we're willing to walk in the way of foolishness and weakness that your glory might be revealed that's the whole payoff there are times when a team of 200 mules could not keep me from a place of confrontation and speaking with a single individual and other times I'll be sitting in a plane and there's a person either side of me I'll not say a word the entire flight long there's just no divine incentive so if we're not ruled by our religious conscience of what we ought to be doing and this and the life of God has really

the possession he knows quite well when to speak and then if you are speaking and uh you remember Paul at Mars Hill and after he said and God has chosen a day in which he will judge the world but that one who was raised from the dead and some scoffed and some turned and some said we'll hear again of this matter and others claimed and believed Paul stopped came to a certain point he went no further and we'll just have to know that too but the point is this is a whole dependency upon God that is totally outside of the realm of religion this is no more operating by principles or by what we determine as being necessary or good or any compulsive thing that we think we should be doing it's of him are you made he's made unto you redemption power sanctification righteousness so here's an aspect

of the cross that I think that the church has especially neglected has not the faith to believe and and do we really desire that total dependency upon being in him and shut and being cut off at the pass from other sources that are available to us out of our own ability and flesh thinking God's whole desire why God has chosen God has chosen is something in his own heart in a demonstration to the powers of the air to the ruling cosmic powers which if they had known they would not have crucified the lord of glory shows that they're not though they are spirit realm they are not irrelevant to what takes place on the earth they can so

influence the conduct of men as to crucify the lord of glory himself these are powerful things and the battle with them is not yet over it waits on the church of

of this kind that we're talking about to conclude it but I want that we should understand why God has chosen the things foolish and weak we cannot succeed against these powers on their ground that's why we can't rail though we're railing we are railed against because to rail to answer in anger is their ball game it's their turf that's that's what they are about that's why we have to reply with kindness and goodness as against anger and hatred that's why we have to love our enemies and do good to those who despise us because there's there are two wisdoms in opposition here but it requires from us not merely the subscription to the wisdom of God but the doing of it when every corpuscle in you wants to get back at that one who is humiliating you or or rubbing you the wrong way and you just

want to speak out a stinging retort and let him have it and you have the last word to to swallow that down and to answer in kindness or in silence is the cross see what I mean this is a lifestyle and God's waiting for it to be established in the church there's a tremendous portion in psalm 8 that really gets at the nub of this cosmic contest of why God chooses foolish and weak things must choose them so ascending church is an apostolic body and an apostolic body is one that doesn't rail doesn't answer back in kind that is living the cruciform life the cross-centered life and that's why your individual hang-up I don't want my fingers just going like this is really the issue of the body you know you may think it's your issue alone but we're all affected by it we're waiting on one another to

come to a place corporately where we are we are in the mode of God that could make us a sending body because that one who is sent speaks the word and when it's heard it creates faith itself even among those who have been viciously opposed until that hearing it's a supernatural act in the power of God that comes from sent ones so the whole issue is really an apostolic body and an apostolic body is the issue of the cross-centered life to an entire community of people who subscribe to it as a matter of fact I would say except your community you cannot subscribe to it you have not the strength individually to come out of the flesh and into the place of cross-centeredness except through the counsel prayer encouragement and witness and example of others around you of like faith who have the

same intention and are pulling for the same thing let's let's look at Psalm 8 here verse 2 out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength because of your enemies have you ever felt like a babe and a nursing infant even when you're 66 if you come into an academic and worldly environment that's prestigious you feel like a babe you're a child you're out of it but it says that you have ordained strength because of your enemies that you may silence the enemy and the avenger or literally shut his mouth because his wisdom says that you've got to be mature sophisticated educated you've got to have credentials you have to have a degree you have to be a seminary graduate you don't have a distinction or an ability to speak but for God but the scripture says God hath chosen

a babe the foolish the weak thing and ordained strength out of that weakness exactly because of the enemy because it contradicts the wisdom of the enemy to silence the enemy and the avenger but it rests on a babe that's available one who is willing to be as weak as a babe that God might ordain strength through you in your weakness to silence the enemy that's the kind of church that God is wanting and waiting for so God chooses the weak and powerless as the means of shaming the wise and the strong and it's God's choice God chooses just to focus on God choosing the weak and the power powerless is a statement of God himself do you like a God who chooses the weak and the powerless do you like a God who chooses the thing that is foolish because God's choice reveals God and he not only chose it

once in the crucified Christ but he chooses it as a continual mode of Christian life it's a reversal of all that the world celebrates as wisdom it's a contradiction of all accepted value and those that are weak like the babe has if they have strength it's because it's ordained and it's given it's not your strength it's what the strength that God gives in the weakness not in themselves and the Christ who becomes for them wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption and by the way how does Christ become that does it happen automatically once and for all from the time you're baptized it is a moment by moment drawing from the grace of the life it's not some fixed or mechanical thing it requires a living faith that freely chooses moment by moment what God chooses these are my remarks now

I'm reading what I've written in the margins here and why would anyone choose to have their sanctification redemption wisdom and strength from God rather than out of themselves because in first Corinthians one according as it is written he who glories let him glory in the world this is the motive for the moment by moment dependency and trust of forfeiting any confidence in yourself to obtain what God says is made available to us through the crucified and risen Christ is because you're jealous for his glory can I read you a little bit out of Kolbach that I so admire talking about why the cross was necessary and God's choosing of a crucified Christ and I remember that we said that Jesus on the cross is the statement not only of God but of man in man's condition and in man's sin that we can

never know what sin is because the very nature of sin is to disguise itself as sin and that the most profound revelation is the judgment that God brings upon it at the cross that the picture of Jesus stretched out and grotesquely agonizing under the suffering of the cross is the judgment the statement of God's judgment on sin that we learn sin in some measure by recognizing the judgment that God brings upon it as a righteous God and what was necessary to expiate sin and so Bart says that we are sinners and what our sin is is something we can never know by reflection about ourselves in the light of a standard of good and evil which we have freely chosen and discovered man makes his own standards and man impresses himself by living up to the standards that man makes and that's why he can't

be convicted as a sinner on the basis of things that he can see but when another demonstration is set before him and as as what sin is that was the whole point.

He says we have to learn what sin is where God himself has told it to us by taking seriously the accusation against us and our corruption that he took upon himself in his son we want to understand the issue of sin as God himself sees it we've got to recognize it in what he has done about it in his son to forfeit that revelation is to forfeit any real understanding of man's depravity and that we Jews have especially suffered for the want of that and have been essential humanists with enormous confidence in man because we have never understood what is man's condition on our own and therefore this affirmation of man was expressed also to toward the Germans right up till the time of Hitler and a German civilization that was so much a testimony to German brilliance so that when our judgment came it had ironically to come through the man and mankind that we had so celebrated as the projection of ourselves so that our suffering and our death was not just a mechanical death but the most bestial cruel inhumane death that those who have spent any time examining the ways in which Jews were brought to their death in its cruelty say animals would have been incapable of that kind of devastation that this is beyond what is even man can conceive it's not just a putting to death it's putting to death with a relish with a certain kind of diabolical hatred and cruelty which by the way is exactly the same statement that could be made not only for the holocaust of the Jews but for the holocaust of Jesus.

Jesus wasn't just nailed to the cross there was a vehemence a bitterness a delight a malicious hatred in visiting upon him everything that could be wrought through violence and cruelty if you can still celebrate man after that then you are deceived because the men that perpetrated that diabolical disaster were not just some scummy residue that happened to be around but they were the best of mankind that existed in that generation namely the proponents of Judaism Jewish religion and Roman law you had the best of the secular world in Roman civilization who by the way invented crucifixion as execution and the best of the religious world in Jewish religion at that time both conspired and both were employed and both were elements in the devastation that came upon Jesus to miss that is to miss

very much and the same logic is true in the holocaust the holocaust would not have been the holocaust even if there had been the same six million victims if it had been perpetrated in Africa or some remote backward primitive place in the earth what makes the holocaust the holocaust in an especially painful and yet significant way is that the cruelty and the maliciousness of its death came not from the most primitive but the most elevated the most educated the most religious the most philosophical the most moral the most ethical the most cultured of all civilizations to that day God is saying something and man even after it having suffered it has still not gotten the message so that we can get telephone calls from the holocaust museum in Washington where a young Jewish girl is doing her

duty and trying to get some funds and you say as I teasingly did and what's this for well that we might have exhibits and that through education we can inform this generation so that there would never again be a repetition of such a disaster and I have to bite my tongue and I finally say you dear girl if education could have saved Jews from disaster certainly it would not have come from the most educated civilization of modern times in Germany but you're still barking up the wrong tree you still have a confidence in human values human solutions human answers you'll not turn to weakness and and trembling and cry out and call upon the God of your fathers but you'll still seek through power through education through learning through museums through exhibits through things visible and

temporal to avert a future disaster the two wisdoms are still in conflict and our Jewish people having suffered the devastation of the recent holocaust and standing at the brink of yet the next are still seeking in their humanistic way to find solution to the increasing perplexity and I have to say that not the least of their of their reasons is that there has not been a church in the earth of an apostolic kind centered in the cross that disavows any confidence in man and trusting in the flesh that could have been a testimony to the Jew and save them from their their foolish attempts to preserve themselves or brought them even now the meaning of their own history of suffering through judgment that might have saved them from the next why why haven't we brought that message and why haven't

we been an example to them of the wisdom of God which was spurned 2,000 years ago because we ourselves are spurning that wisdom because we ourselves are not cross-centered because we ourselves are very much dependent upon the world that's wisdom and its way because we have no stomach for foolishness and weakness and trembling and therefore our witness of this other order of reality and of another wisdom is not being set forth either before them or the world itself the cross is still the issue well here's a little piece that might touch my last statement out of call but we are now summoned not in ourselves but in him to see and acknowledge that we are liberated and that again not in ourselves but in him by his coming for us by his taking our place our sin is canceled and forgiven we are

summoned to accept our life on this presupposition as those who are liberated whose sin is canceled and forgiven in him the genuine confidence that our being in sin belongs to God and not to us that the

responsibility which we owe him in this matter has been borne by him we do not believe in Jesus Christ if this is not our fully assured confidence the son of God has sought and found his glory in accepting the dishonor of our state well you need to read this yourself but i think it's just trying to get at the fact that there's a way in which even truth can become robbed of its content and its reality and that though we subscribe externally to the principles we have not really understood what has been brought on the cross in Christ's death terms of our own sin both the statement of it and

the answer to it and therefore the life that flows from it is not the full life that has also been made available in him or even the way Paul begins 9 through 11 i would wish myself a curse for my brethren's sake that they might know Christ indicates that they are under something of such a kind that nothing less than maybe his forfeiting of his own salvation though he would be willing if that would in any way assure their salvation i'm just reading that today and yesterday who of us has that sense of urgency because by every natural appearance they're successful comfortable their homes are often more successful than our own their marriages their families they seem to be in many ways ideal if you look with the natural eye and yet by the word of God they are under covenantal curse and the

judgment of it can come at any time and that's the kind of warning that we ought to be expressing because the gospel proclaims that everything that in us is sin not only i but none of the apostles could think or believe that there's such great wickedness in the world if the gospel had not come and revealed this and brought it for light for before the gospel came there were many excellent and pious people who live virtuously and honestly there were many wiser and more prudent folk than we could swear to the world outside the gospel was at its very brightest in art and wisdom in virtue and honesty it's ironic but you can almost say it might be describing jewish society in germany just before the identification and it had even a brighter air aspect in the air of spirituality which the

spiritual orders have invented and made as we have learned to know that is how the world is when the gospel is not there we find in it wise and prudent and honest and humble folk and reason is caught for both worldly virtues and the spiritual estate if they are maintained lead them to the devil with their show of being pious and wise and holy and humble but when the gospel comes that the child jesus is to be preached it belongs to it that we must understand that the holy are the greatest sinners the wise the greatest fools and the quiet and upright and hard the most bloodthirsty murderers and certainly the gospel has no more bitter enemies than high and prudent and wise and virtuous holy folk the more advanced they are in such first virtues the more bitter they are against the gospel

really true that is the respectable and the religious that are more vehemently enemies of the gospel than the unrelated and the ordinary because it challenges a whole order of things a whole seeming rightness a whole wisdom a whole mode of living so that the cross cuts right in and challenges all that men have seen as right but when the cross comes here in the light of the one to whom all this was done who had to suffer all this we see plainly the man of sin here we have the actuality and the totality of evil and it is obvious that this is no product of an excited and unbalanced and unjust fantasy but a fact this is man the being whose heart whose inmost and most proper nature is disclosed in his attitude to Jesus Christ that's a remarkable thing that Jesus is like a litmus test that

one's response or reaction to him is one's response and reaction to God even by seemingly religious and respectable people there's something about him and even his name that provokes and brings to a boil people who otherwise in every other way are well-mannered and polite there's something like of a calculated offense in the bringing up even of this name on this person

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