

# K-537 Defining the Prophetic Call (2 of 2)

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the profound responsibility of prophets to communicate God's word with the right mood and urgency, rooted in a deep relationship with Him.*

**Duration:** 1:07:51

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 23:10, Jeremiah 23:29, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Prophetic Call"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the contrast between a preacher who lives a luxurious lifestyle and one who is deeply involved in the struggles and challenges of the community. He emphasizes the importance of communicating the substance and spirit of the kingdom of God, rather than just presenting truths about it. The speaker shares a personal experience in Germany, where he felt called to speak out against religious institutionalism and challenge the status quo. He also discusses the need for Christians to boldly proclaim the word of God, even if it means facing opposition and criticism.

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## Transcript

The difference between you sitting there and me is, I'm going to be required to speak on one basis or another on either what my natural eye sees as being impressively spiritual, or what my inner man is groaning about that is wrong. And when you speak on that basis, whew! You're challenging everything to which men have given their endorsement, and it's put up or shut up. Either that's God and the word of the Lord, or you're some wild freak who's doing damage to the body of Christ.

And you've got to act, because the moment has come, the bell has rung, you've got to come out of your corner. It's on, it's time, you're on the spot, now what will you do? And that tension is with you always. And maybe the Lord will allow an occasion here and there where it will not be Him.

And you have acted in a way in which you thought it was the Lord, but it was in fact yourself, merely to keep you honest, that you must not presume that on every occasion, impeccably, you can be confident that it's God, because that will remove the tension and the dependency. So God will allow a falling, He'll allow a humiliation, He'll allow a failure, all the more to charge your heart anew with the enormous gravity of what you are about, and the requirement to be cleaving to Him and dependent upon Him for your every word, not only for your word, but even the mood of your speaking. I gave a message in Zurich, at one of the hotels there some years ago, on the very night for the first time in the history of Switzerland that there was rioting in the streets.

Kids were freaking out, younger adults and so on. And I was speaking on the kingdom of God, and I was making an indictment. I said, what's going on outside the streets and the noise that was coming up through the building is the statement of a failed Christianity, of a Christianity that has not taken the kingdom of God seriously, and another kingdom of a darker kind is being exhibited below.

And I could not understand it, but the people were not being impacted by that word. And they began to chuckle and even laugh and smile, you know, and it was funny and humorous. I realized that the man who was interpreting me, that the word for him was too severe, and he was blunting the word by bringing it out with a kind of a humor and an intonation that was not my mood.

He was technically translating, but he was not communicating the mood of the speaking. And God puts a great premium on the voice of the prophets, not just their words, but their voice, because their voice carries the urgency of God, the divine seriousness. And if you change that and yet retain the technical word, you've lost the message.

And when I sensed what was happening, every warning was going off in me, and the young man who was with me, without a word between us, here's why God sent them out by tools, he got up from his seat, he sensed what was going wrong, and he came up on the platform and he stood right by me. And from that point onward, the entire night changed. When the interpreter faithfully began to translate, interpret the mood of my speaking, you know what the end of that night was? Down they went.

Boom. There wasn't a soul in their seats. They were prostrate.

It had never been seen. And German-Swiss propriety stretched out, groaning before God like dead men, receiving the indictment that what was going on in the streets was the statement of their failure to have taken seriously the kingdom of God. So, why do we say all that? That you're responsible not only for the word, but for the mood of God's speaking, and often your mood will be in violent opposition to the mood that's been already established in the congregation, especially by the, quote, worship team.

I've had more conflict with worship teams and worship leaders than I can tell you, because I don't know what it is with these guys. They have an independent purpose for their own being. Like, they're going to do their thing, no matter what.

And whatever time is left over, whatever mood they've established, however contrary to God, you do the best you can. Instead of working in conjunction with the word that is to come, or sensing the mood and heart of God, they've already got their choruses numbered and what they're going to sing and do, and their musical virtuoso and talent and amplifiers. They're going to do their thing, and then you make the best of it as well as you can.

I've had a whole message ruined, and many messages dulled, and the power of it lost because of that unspoken opposition and tension where a ministry is celebrated as a thing in itself. This whole worship team mentality. As if I could, I would pull the plug out of every overhead projector, and let us just choke and splutter along and miss a word here and there, and come into the spirit of God's worship, then we should be led, led, led with choruses and choruses and repeated choruses.

What they're really trying to do is to affect an atmosphere for a service, rather than touch the heart of God, let alone prepare for the receiving of a holy word. So there's a struggle going on right within the Church, and no man feels it more acutely than that freak who is bearing a strange word with a strange mood that is

contrary to and other than that which prevails, where everybody wants to go home feeling good. And nobody wants to go home in tension.

Another complaint that I received was, well, you let the people, you know, you didn't answer every question. And the people went home jarred and not happy, and I said, and so? What, are we under obligation? What is this, the age of merchandise that everything is going to be wrapped up in one package with a ribbon on, in one service, and send them home happy? What if they go home jarred and pained and excruciating even, and agonizing and questions that have been raised that have not been answered, and they themselves have got to wrestle and fight their way through to a place in God? There are very few pastors, few, my God, one in a million, that will be willing to allow his congregation to suffer that kind of stress and tension. Send them home happy is the unspoken premise of contemporary religion, to which we as prophetic men and women do not subscribe.

We're not in the mood of sending people home happy. We're of a kind to send them home agitated if there are questions that they're compelled to consider that cannot be answered in one service. You can raise it, but you can't always answer it.

Now, if you give me three days, we might be brought all the way through. But how many churches are willing to submit to such a man for that length of time? One service at best, and get them away! You know what happened in the church there in Basel? Whew! They got something that they didn't expect, and I'm sure that they couldn't get me out of there fast enough. But now they're stuck.

I mean, a word has been sounded. And what an agony, as Bert will remember, when I had to labor through an interpreter who was so removed from my spirit and view that it was just agony getting that word through to the people through his interpretation. But even in that, God sufficiently succeeded to strike a note that was never heard in that Lutheran church.

So it's painful. And we're summing up some of what it means to walk in this office. Harold? Can I ask you a question, Art? You know, all the people you have, very stirred up and agitated, like they're angry, ready to tear you apart.

I heard a man say one time, he's an evangelistic person, and he says that when he shares the word with people out in the streets, he would rather witness to somebody who would rather tear him apart than somebody who would just come by and, look, that's nice, you know, take whatever literature and go on their way. No. Because his statement was that that person, once he comes to the Lord, will be as much as on fire for the Lord as he was against you.

Have you found that? Yeah, I mean, that's true. But here's what your remark is stirring in me, and I think I need to end this before a little break with this admonition. Don't think that because there is an intrinsic offense to prophetic obedience and faithfulness that you're under obligation to be offensive.

Now, there are a lot of amateurs around who are acting like prophets, that is to say, creating offense and being loudmouths and insensitive and bulls in the china shop. That's, what would you call it? That's a parody, that's a burlesque of the true thing. Don't think that you have to create offense and that authenticates your prophetic credential.

The offense will come in and of itself without even your consciousness. But if you think that this is a form, I'm a prophetic person and I'm going to shake these people up, you're an amateur. You do well to keep

your mouth shut and to be silent and come under the disciplines of God before there'll ever be a release.

And probably you may well have a legitimate calling, but you're going out into it prematurely. You've not been in the wilderness of God. You've not been dealt with in the deepest entrails of your heart and life, and you're just prematurely ejaculating a lot of nonsense and a lot of unnecessary controversy and not serving the redemptive purposes of God.

So just this one note. The one thing that God has spoken to me many times prophetically by other people, someone asked, did the Lord set you in by someone speaking prophetically? No. But this word many times comes to me by people.

The Lord has spoken to me that you're called to be a threshing machine with very fine teeth and you shall thresh the hills and the mountains and turn them to chaff. And I say, yes, I know. The Lord has had me to do this many times.

And then I think to myself, but what you don't know is how much I have had to be threshed before I can thresh others. All the more being Jewish, what is latent in my soul that I've taken up with my mother's milk and in the Jewish air that I have breathed that is antagonistic to a Gentile's? And how much opportunity do I have to ventilate that when I'm standing before God's Gentile people and not only give God's point but a little extra dig, a little zess, you know, you've got it coming, without even being conscious of it. And I'm sure that that must have been true of my earlier prophetic service.

And that's why there's a remarkable threshing of God. If you want to meet my threshing machine, she's in the kitchen right now. So God has that and many things to employ.

But don't go out before you're threshed and welcome the threshing and expect it because there are subtleties of soul in all of us, little insinuations of ambition, little presumptions of pride, little romantic notions of what we think prophetic service is that God has got ruthlessly to deal with, that when His Word comes forth, it is His Word, not only in its content but also in the mood of its delivery. So if we're going to thresh others, we will be threshed. And what we see so often that so discredits the prophetic office is a bunch of amateurs going before their time, doing their thing, thinking that of necessity they've got to rattle the cage.

And they see this rung and that rung and boom, they're like tigers going right for the jugular vein. And they say, oh, didn't you see that? Sure I saw it, but I'm not at liberty to touch it. Am I at liberty to address everything I see? No.

I can only address what God would have me to see because who's more blind and more deaf than my servant Israel? He does not proceed by his own seeing, neither by his own hearing, his own subjectivity, his own impressions. He's the Lord's. And maybe that's why God is more jealous over the prophetic man than any other because more than any other, his life is not his own.

A teacher is a teacher, but he's still himself teaching. The prophet is the communicator of God's own word. It's not his word.

It's not even his mode. He's dead. He has no life until God gives it, and God gives it for his purpose and glory only.

And I'll tell you this. Even when you see them falling like flies and going down on their faces under the power and the impact of that word, do you know what you're experiencing in that moment? Nothing. You're absolutely impervious and totally unaffected by what has brought others down on their faces.

You're looking like, well, what's happening? Why am I not feeling the impact of this, of the weight of God's word and the glory? You're out of it because it's not yours. You can't exult in it. It's not your work.

It's the strangest feeling. It is so terribly uncomfortable to be somehow detached from the power and the effect of your own word, and you're not allowed in any way even to touch it or to draw forth any satisfaction for yourself. Strange life, this, but praise God for the privilege and the high calling of it.

Okay, we're in Jeremiah 23, and I'm acknowledging that this brother mentions a central thing. What is the source of prophetic speaking? Where does the prophet get his word? And if it's not out of the counsel of God, the secret place, how is it God's word? And so we just started to look at verse 10, The land is full of adulterers, for because of swearing the land mourns, the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Notice how nature itself reflects the spiritual condition of the nation, and how nature groans and travails, as we've said, waiting for the coming of the sons of God.

And their course is evil, their force is not right, for both prophet and priest are profane. Yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness, they shall be driven on and fall therein, for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord.

I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria, they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. So there's a consequence for false prophecy, as it affects the entire nation, and also the entire church, by the same principle. I have also seen in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing, they commit adultery and walk in lies.

They strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness. They are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. But that verse deserves a lot of attention.

Committing adultery and walking in lies echoes what we said before about the scoffers who walk according to their own lusts, that their view of the truth and of the Word of God and of doctrine is corrupted by their sensual and ungodly living. Here also, the walking in lies and the committing adultery goes hand in hand. You have to.

If you're going to commit adultery, there's a way in which you have to inwardly justify yourself, and you can only do that at the expense of the truth of God. And what's the consequence for others? They strengthen also the hands of evildoers. It's something like judges today who cannot bring sentence upon transgressors.

The modern court system is a calamity because of judges who will not and cannot judge. They cannot bring the severity of the law against the lawbreaker. Why? Because their own life, personally, is itself a transgression.

You cannot bring the severity of the law when you yourself deserve it. So none returns from his wickedness. They are all of them to me, O Sodom and Gomorrah.

There's an unhappy progression downward. That's how the city of righteousness has become the city of hooligans and of murderers. Verse 15, the last part of it, For from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness and gone forth into all the land.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you. Notice that God still calls them prophets. Maybe it's because the gift and callings of God are irrevocable.

They still retain their official title, but what they're performing under that title is, in God's sight, abomination. They make you vain. They speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord.

They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, You shall have peace. And they say unto everyone that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. This must be the very quintessence of what a false prophet is, giving a false comfort, a false assurance of peace that does not regard the truth of the conditions that need to be faced.

It's a making nice. No evil shall come upon you. And unhappily, it's that kind of prophetic statement that is coming forth even today, especially in Israel.

For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord? Here's the key verse. And hath perceived and heard his word, who hath mocked his word and heard it? You almost want to put that verse in a box, as if the Lord is saying, Of all those who not only profess to be prophets, but even those who have been called to be prophets, how many are speaking the word that can only be obtained in the counsel of the Lord? Isn't it remarkable how everything in God, in the last analysis, comes down to the issue of relationship? He'll never give anything independent of relationship. And when he called Moses up to the mount to receive the tablets of the law that thou mayest teach them, it was first, Come up unto me and be there.

And then I will give you the tablets of the law. And what characterizes modern-day ministries worldwide is the separation of ministry from relationship. We have made ministry a thing in itself.

It's not that we don't talk about worship and the Lord, but somehow we're able to perform it out of a virtue or servability or maybe even out of the gift, but not out of the depth of relationship. Relationship is not only the key to the bestowing of the gift or the tablets of the law, but the ongoing ability to rightly teach them. Once you sever relationship from ministry, you are on exceedingly dangerous ground.

And we had an episode in our first in Israel where the Lord separated the cat's family from the community. I was going through an extraordinary time of struggle with anger, and it was just a consensus that we needed to be separated from the demands of community and the ministry and go to Kansas City where a fellowship had invited us for restoration and healing. And over the course of weeks that we were there, I began to get some strange knockings at my door, and Jewish lawyers that were being saved were coming to me at six in the morning, and they couldn't go to churches and places like that publicly, but they needed counsel.

And so before I knew it, I was counseling and ministering to half a dozen substantial Kansas City Jews of a professional business class that were getting saved. I hadn't looked for ministry, and it was taking on such value that when it was time to come back to Minnesota, I thought that that was the most inane thing. And I tried to communicate to the community, What are you guys talking about? What do you want me to come up to the woods and twiddle my thumbs? Can't you see what God is doing in Kansas City? I wasn't looking for this.

This is God-given, and he's touching the heart of the most significant leaders of the Jewish community, and Kansas City is the heart of America. And I went on to develop all the significance, and we were just at odds with each other. And there was an exchange of phone calls and letters.

When will they grow up? Can't they see what God is doing and the importance of what he has given in this ministry? Finally, they couldn't see it, and I had to fly up here, and I took two of the leading Jewish believers in Kansas City to strengthen my hand here and to persuade these foolish Ben Israelites that what was going on down there far eclipsed any value that could be shared by my coming back here. What do they want? Just to be present? They just didn't understand, and all my voluminous experience being led by the Spirit of God, and I was utterly assured this was the calling of God, and it was something he had given. So I'll never forget the meeting that we had in my house, and they presented their case, and then I presented my case, and this was shut every mouth.

How God had done this, utterly sovereign, I was not looking for it, I was not touching the Jewish community in the heart of America, and the significance of this can't even be measured. What would my coming back mean but something much less? Don't you see? Don't you understand? It's the Lord. It's sovereign, and they weren't impressed, and we went on just like this.

Finally, at the end of the night, one of the young Jewish brothers, who was, his voice was like a pipsqueak, and he's just a picture of all awkwardness and immaturity. He said, well, Ach, you know, he said, don't you remember that we have an understanding here that the ministry flows out of the life, and the life out of the relationships, and if you break that connection and have a ministry independent of that, he said, it's not going to be a ministry. And my head went, it's the voice of the Lord.

And within two weeks, we had come back from Kansas City. He reminded me of a central principle. Ministry flows out of the life, and the life out of the relationships.

You cannot break that connection. And I would say from deception, I don't say it's my last deception, but I needed to know that I could be deceived, and not deceived over something carnal, but something spiritual. And a man who had a track record of such exquisite leadings of God by the Spirit over the face of the earth in different nations and such uncanny requirements and dealings, and yet I could miss that.

And I had to be corrected and brought back to the truth by the youngest and weakest, least mature voice in the entire community was God's voice. If you'll not hear His voice in the mode that He's pleased to present it, how shall they hear your voice? So relationship is critical, and that's, I think, who has stood in the counsel of the Lord. What does that phrase mean? How is it then that these prophets who were speaking prolifically and influencing the nation toward evil were not in this place? Why didn't they get the word of the Lord out of His counsel and out of His presence? That there should even be a moment's hesitation about answering this is a real statement about us.

They were adulterers and walking in lies. How can such men be in the counsel of God? This God is holy, and you cannot come into that presence in that condition. You don't even desire to come into that place in that condition.

That's why you get your words from others or out of your own skull, because this requires a sanctification. This requires something about your own condition that permits that kind of relationship, particularly if it's an abiding. You don't just go there to get the word.

Let me put it that way. See how utilitarian we are in our minds? Well, if that's what the Lord says, I guess I have to find my way into His counsel, into His presence, in order to get the word. That's not the way it works.

It's being in the counsel of God and being in the presence of God that the word may come. But if you make the word and the attainment of it the condition for entering the presence, you're already off of holy ground. You're coming in the spirit of utility and not in the spirit of devotion to God for His own sake.

Come up unto me and be there. Not the benefit that's going to accrue to you for coming, even the ministerial benefit. That's simply because I am God and you are man.

I am the creator, you are the creation. Be there. And if no word comes, no word comes.

But if you come looking for a word in that expedient utilitarian sense that we have, it's no longer the holy ground. And I just, I can't say enough about this. We are ruled by the spirit of utility.

That is the Western mentality. We do this in order to obtain that. We're paying for this if we can get that.

But we don't know what it means to do or be for its own sake. Because we have never come to that place first with God, how shall we come to it with men? So therefore there's a warp in all that we do and say that does not have its true place out of the presence of God that cannot be entered in the spirit of utility. Humility is what God is in Himself.

And the only one who will display and exhibit it is that one who has been consistently in the presence of God's humility. It's humbling to be there. And that's why Moses could state it, not as a credit to himself but to God, out of whose presence that humility was established.

So is the God of Moses God still? It sounds like an asinine question. But we'll say yes, but in our deepest heart we don't think that way. And has He ever changed? Same yesterday, today, and forever.

Does He yet require His prophetic men to be in His presence? And I want to say, if I don't know about your experience, nothing is more difficult for me. Everything contends against it. The dinner bell, the faucet is dripping, the light bulb needs to be changed, did you feed the dogs? There are 10,000 things continually nipping at you that require attention.

And even if they're not, we're not so. This is something about the pulse of the flesh itself is inimical to seeking the Lord. Everything, a fly is buzzing around your nose, a mosquito has rested on your leg.

Seeking the Lord is an extraordinarily difficult thing, and few have the incentive. It's a suffering. In fact, just to be more ruthlessly honest, I would say it's a dying.

Living on the earth, in the flesh, and in the world and in time, to confine and to commune with God is an extraordinary and ultimate attainment. If you attain it, maintain it, because you don't want to have to do it all over again. And can you maintain it and still go to last night's birthday party and dancing and hooting and singing and stomping and not lose it or be jarred from your sensitive spiritual place by what seems to be just fun time, celebration? So we're talking about something very critical.

I would not expect in the earth today many men who are in this place. So what shall I say for the whole rash of prophets that have come? I won't say they are a dime, a dozen, but many men professing to be prophets, but are we hearing the counsel of God? And God's judgment about the failure to obtain his word

in that place is severe. In verse 19, the whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind that shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

The word wicked is almost exclusively used for those who should know better. I think, the way I sense it, it's not so much those that are out of relationship with God, worldlings, but those who profess or should have every reason to know of God and are yet, by intent, acting wrongly. That's wickedness.

The anger of the Lord shall not return till he has executed, till he has performed the thoughts of his heart. In the latter days you shall consider it perfectly. Notice that the judgment is deferred.

It's not immediate, but it will come in the latter days for something now that is a rife offense to God, namely the whole compromise of his prophets and the way it has affected the nations. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

But if they had stood in my counsel and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned away from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. How can we know that the word is out of the counsel of God? It has this salutary effect. It will affect the nation in turning it toward God rather than away from him and from their evil ways, their practices.

I can remember a full gospel breakfast, I think it was in Germany. The speaker was from Sweden, a leading evangelical personality, but it could have been anywhere. He was wearing a... What's that shirt, and they make pocketbooks, it begins with a G, that company? Gucci.

Very exclusive. Gucci. He was wearing a Gucci shirt and tie and a silk-type suit and iris all ears, and he began by saying, And the Lord has spoken to me this morning and given me a word for you.

I said, Wow! And I leaned forward to get every syllable that had come from the heart of God, and then I went, as I heard it, Nothing from God at all. Cliché, just evangelical phrases and full gospel hogwash. And the thing that astonished me, I mean, I can expect that, but don't preface that with the statement that God spoke to me this morning and gave me this word for you.

Let that sink in, saints. What that means, what that produces, what that allows to come into the body of Christ, the men who were hearing that that morning and nodding their heads and amening and applauding and affirming, what are we doing, and what erosion, what is set, what takes place, what is the consequence of allowing that kind of monumental lie to be expressed and not to be contradicted? Turn the wine into water, at the least, and deaden and dull your sensitivity that the next time you'll be even a bigger sap for anything that comes down the pike and you'll accept it and applaud it. So where was someone in that audience that morning to get up and say, I'm sorry for whatever pain and dislocation I'm going to cause, but I cannot allow that phrase and that statement to be made in our hearing without being contested? That was not the word of God.

And we dare not allow that kind of terminology to be employed merely to sanctify or to give a kind of credibility to what is otherwise just an ordinary statement. And what is the condition of the body which is the church because of it today? What have we paid for cheap, casual references to God as if we could invoke Him at pleasure or say God gave when He didn't give? Or like one of the last conferences that I attended in Minneapolis where the theme was how to invoke the presence of God by our worship and that if our song liturgy is good enough, we can actually make manifest His presence. I did speak up that time, you can be assured, and have not been invited back since.

I touched the holy cow, you know, and I said you would be doing far better to teach people how to continue in faithfulness with God without the sensing of His presence, which is more likely to be our end-time reality, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, than to think that we can calculate or engineer and invoke God's presence at our will? My God, what have we come to? And not a single soul whimpered or called a halt or blew a whistle but applauded that as somehow being the last word. This is what the church is speaking. This is the most recent word.

This is rhema, this manipulation of God as if He's going to give Himself to the devices of many. When man will invoke the phrase, thus saith the Lord, it's almost a testimony to the fact that He's not saying. If He is saying, you don't have to embellish the statement by authorizing it.

The statement itself will ring with the truth of God and the sense of God. Is that a rhema statement of God of an original kind that we need to hear in the crisis place that we are? Or is it just some kind of an embellishment to give a charismatic order to our proceeding? And again, it cheapens the whole integrity of the prophetic thing and makes it a light kind of thing that anyone almost at will can offer. I would much prefer fewer such statements but when they come, you know that God has spoken.

As for example, the word that I heard in London, I forgot what the 32nd Pentecostal World Conference, it was a drag. And it was painful. Men were such performers.

The prayers were so studied. They were so calculated, not for the hearing of God but of men. And at one point in one of the meetings, there was a cry that came up out of the congregation.

Someone burst out in tongues and you got goose pimples. Your spirit was immediately alerted. Then there was a holy hush.

We knew God had broken in at last from something that was humanly contrived. And somewhere up in the balcony, a woman in German began to give the interpretation in German. And I could only understand it in part but sufficiently to know that the Lord was speaking.

And I was so naive, I thought the next thing would be the man at the platform saying, now can someone please render that word in German and English for our hearing. Instead he went to the piano player. And the piano player began, He is Lord, He is Lord, He is Lord.

And everybody got started and had them on their feet. And we lost one moment in God when he sought to enter. So I think it's the other side of the same coin.

The same ones who will dismiss God rudely are the same ones that will invoke him lightly. And we're called to come into that mishmash mess and bring the sword of the Lord and bring the fear of the Lord and the truth of the Lord to a people who have been long spoiled by such cheap things as I'm now describing. And every one of us at one time or another, more than we'd like, have experienced.

This is why we have anguished. And God is calling a halt. In fact, someone whispered to me later, if the Apostle Paul himself had come, he would have been shown the back door.

There would have been no place for him. It was a religious, institutional convention. And men spoke the conventional things, the things that pleased the hearing of those who are attenuated to religion as culture.

And in no segment of Christendom is that more conspicuous than in the Pentecostal realm. You want to talk about the greatest irony and travesty, but that movement that ostensibly celebrates the Holy Spirit is the one, I believe, most guilty of violating it. And men enjoying it, and loving, and men knowing how to speak and pull the heart strings, and giving the good old time preaching and the sawdust and evoking certain responses, but none of it was the Word of God.

At a crisis time in the world, and representatives from the entire worldwide Pentecostal movement coming together, and the one instance where God sought to intrude, he was instantly blocked out. Can you imagine what that woman felt like who gave that interpretation, or the broken soul out of whom that tongue came, to find the Word jammed back into your mouth? Have you ever experienced this? You want to know prophetic anguish? It's to bring the Word of God and to have it refused and come right back into your teeth. I don't have a word for this.

It is mortifying. It's the antithesis of the joy and the gratification that comes when the Word of God flows out of you and through and into the people who are receiving it. I mean, that is like tonic for your soul.

The very opposite would be when that Word is not received and comes back into your teeth. It's unbelievably anguishing, and we have to be as willing for the one as the other, or we will not speak the other. The call to the prophet is the call to the cross.

It's a frequent, if not continual, form of suffering of an exquisite and ultimate kind, and that's why there are false prophets. That's why, if I can say it, the charismatic movement itself is a kind of false movement, wanting the effulgence of the Spirit and the excitement and the activity, but evading the cross and the necessity for suffering out of which the Spirit of God is given as solace, comfort, and power, so that we come back again, again and again, to the cross. And what message does the false prophet speak? Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Words of comfort, when God would not have His people to be comforted, but to be agitated. So, if you're standing alone in that, can you bear the reprisal? Can you bear the rejection? Can you bear the mortification of that Word coming back into your own teeth? Can you bear giving the Word and then someone cueing the piano player to drown it out? You die a thousand deaths. It's an anguish.

And I went out on the sidewalk after that, and they were making television interviews that they were going to broadcast at CBN and other places, and I was listening with astonishment. People, what a wonderful convention this is, and God is really with us, and we're hearing such things from God. Lord, take me away.

Either I'm all freaked out, or I'm not hearing what they're hearing. Where's truth? Where's reality? And am I to presume that I'm the only one that really is seeing and hearing the truth? There's that haunting, accusing thing. Who are you to think that you alone are so aligned with God, and everyone else somehow is missing it? Maybe we can say that that can only be conducted in a church in which the fear of God has been long absent, that we can take such liberties and act with such presumption, and that's a statement that the fear of God that should have been communicated through prophetic men has not been our advantage.

Either they were not there, that restoration has not yet come, or that so much as it did, they were not welcomed and not given opportunity to communicate that fear. How do we know that it's God's word and God's counsel? Because it's likely to be the word that is expressed in verse 29. Man's word and the false word is peace, peace, when there is no peace, but my word is like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a

hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.

My word is not a cutesy. My word is not making nice. My word breaks up the deeps.

It demolishes and it burns. And that's how you can tell whether it's a false word or a true word. Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words, every one from his neighbor.

Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith, behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them and cause my people to err by their lies and by their likeness. Yet I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not prophet this people at all, saith the Lord. One thing that this text reveals that is kind of intrinsic to false prophet is likeness.

There's a certain levity, a certain kind of air of casualness that seems to prevail in conferences and sessions where men who have not been sent of God speak as if they had. This has been my observation, and I've mentioned it in the paper, because both Carlton and myself were at a conference where that levity prevailed in the very place where the man who was introduced to the congregation was introduced as the oracle of God, the prophet of God for the hour. Worldwide, global, and yet not only was his own speaking disappointing, though biblical, but there was a levity and a kind of a likeness, a kind of a joking spirit that even when it was over, the people like rose up to eat and to dance and to... How does it say about the golden calf? They rose up to play.

And it seems to be the evidence that where something false is, there is also the spirit of likeness and of levity. The unhappy thing is that the great overwhelming numbers of Christians in the world have never heard such a word, and all they've ever heard they assume is normative and that this is what the word of God is, and they have no basis for comparison, but to hear such a word once is to be ruined forever for anything less. And therefore there's the great cry and need for that word, that authority to come in to the earth that the church might be readily ruined and make candidates for the truth.

Okay. What do you think it means about... Let's view my words in verse 30, everyone from his neighbor. Have you noticed how much they speak the same kind of word? I've been around now like 30 years, and I have to say that what I've seen is a succession of fads, panaceas, gimmicks, things that we latch on to.

I can remember when the body of Christ, the phraseology of the body of Christ, was in. Everybody was speaking about the body of Christ except me. The revelation had not yet come.

It was as accessible to me as to anyone. I could equally as employ the vocabulary, but I would not. I was the only missionary in the American Board of Missions to the Jews who had not a single message on Israel and prophecy.

How come God had not yet given it? There's a way in which we can put our finger... Which way is the wind blowing? What's current? What is now popular? I know that if I speak on faith, they'll love it, or prayer or worship or church growth or power evangelism. We seem to go through periods where certain things have found a place of acceptance, and then you just move in that, and you pick up what others are saying, and then you say it. You know you're going to find an acceptance.

It's been proven. What's the difference between speaking about the body of Christ because it's in vogue and because you can learn it as anyone else and waiting for the revelation when it is given? What difference would it make in speaking when it will employ unavoidably very much the same words, and yet

for the hearer, the hearing of the one and the hearing of the other is a profoundly different experience. One communicates information.

The other communicates revelation and life that becomes an event. I went to New Zealand, and one of the principal men in that country, a pastor, and he's established a movement that there may be 20 or 30 churches that are part of that movement for that nation, followed me like a puppy dog. Every place I went, there he was, and finally he arranged things that were not on my program.

He said, I don't understand it, Art. You're speaking on the kingdom of God, but only a few months ago, so-and-so came through and he mentioned an internationally known speaker. If I mention a name, would everyone know it? He said he spoke on the same thing, and it was good, he said, but what is it about you speaking on the same thing? He said, I'm following you everywhere you go.

I thought to myself, well, I know the other guy that he's mentioned. He has his own marina and private tennis court and charges \$7 per tape, and has a lifestyle that you cannot fault as wrong, but is it compatible with the substance of the kingdom, that though he was presenting truths about it, it was not the communication of the substance and the spirit of it, as would be communicated by a man who's slogging his way through the mud, the ice, the fleas, the flies, the mosquitoes, the saints in their every condition and subjectivity and struggle and anguish in the community, which is a feeling your way out of religious institutionalism into something that bears the mark of God's kingdom, which was the very key by which the door opened in East Germany for me when I came, after God had years before showed me in a moment's vision that Germany was a key to Israel's last day's salvation, and living in Denmark and passing through Germany never once speaking, the door had not opened. And then I got to East Germany because some man thought he was Jewish, struggling against homosexuality, had gotten a copy of Ben Israel somehow, and wrote to me, and we started a correspondence, just a flaky character, I don't even know where he is today, and finally invited me to Leipzig.

And I came during the trade fair time as a tourist, but he brought me on a Friday night to a charismatic prayer meeting where the cream of the crop was the best of the church of that city, and they gave me ten minutes to bring a goose foot, a word of greeting, and I didn't say unaccustomed, as I am to public speaking, and I just bring you greetings from the saints in America, and we love you people, just want you to know that we're with you in your struggle. I said something like, don't feel sorry for yourself. Don't say that, why do we have to struggle and don't have the material condition of life that saints in the West enjoy, or their degree of freedom.

Because I want to tell you that I know saints in the West whose standard of living is less than yours, and whose freedom is much more restricted. And if God has not a communist regime to employ by which to affect the issues of discipline for his last day saints, he has other ways. People came up to me after like, could you come back, can we hear again, you know, what do these things mean? And the door was opened, and I've gone again, and again, and again, and again, not in a lexic, but the Holy Strimly, by that one word that God gave on the spot by the Spirit.

Now, what made that word so effectual? Because, though I didn't mention it by name, the saints that I knew whose standard of living was less than the East German standard, I know you'll not believe this, eating is cooking, and whose freedom was less than the East German standards, because we could not hop into a car and go to Bemidji when we felt like it. There weren't that many cars, and we didn't have that much gas. Every trip to Bemidji was rationed.

And what we found out, more saints wanted to go to Bemidji to get shoelaces and bobby pins. What they really wanted was an excuse to get away from it all, because they were getting bored by looking at the same faces in the same confining environment, and were cut off from the kinds of free movement and going into shopping malls and things like that that gratify the flesh. And our poverty did not allow it.

We were very poor saints. I never filed an income tax statement for the entire ten years we lived in the first history of Ben Israel, because our income was beneath the poverty level. Yet there was a time during it in which we had our own airplane.

Try and figure that out. But clearly our lifestyle was more restrictive and materially less than what the East German saints knew. And the reason that that was so is that there was a king over this piece of kingdom.

And we were living in America at the fleshest time of the prosperity season. And the prosperity message was the message of the hour, and everyone was raking it in. And here we were in the midst of that, a little dot on the map in the nowhere place, struggling for the most elementary things to sustain life.

I'll tell you that we faced issues, I'm not exaggerating, literal life or death, when we had to make determinations of how to use the sparse income that we had, housing, food, or a ministry trip to East Germany. And the struggle and the violent tensions that came up in community over such decisions that you'd be astonished. We can talk about the differences between Bert and myself or an emphasis on things intuitive or biblical, and enjoy it.

But what came up in community was life and death because it's your wife who's pregnant, and you're living in an uninsulated shack, and the Minnesota winter with 20 to 30, 40 below degree days is right at the door, and you're talking about taking the money for that insulation in that building and making a once and for all trip to Europe? How do you know that's God, cats? And whoever said that you were an elder and in authority, look at your marriage, look at your... That's what we're talking about, the ingredients of the kingdom, the anguish, the suffering, the struggles with God's own people and the best of God's own people. And that's why when I went to New Zealand and spoke on the kingdom of God, there was a penetration of power and authority, a reality that made this man of God who had spawned 20, 30 churches follow me like a puppy dog because he was hearing something of another kind. And that would be the issue of our authority and the reality and the power of our speaking as well and no other thing.

And we'll get into this probably tomorrow where I raise the issues of prophetic lifestyle. There's something about apostolic poverty that is more than accidental, and I know that religiously we can... What's the word? We can perform at it and make a cheap kind of thing like eschatolicism has done. Poverty and abstinence, you become a human thing.

But there's a place for lifestyle, simplicity of lifestyle and dependency upon God that has very much to do with integrity and the quality of the word that is issued. And I'll bet you dollars to donuts that the men who are saying peace, peace and are bringing comforting messages are somehow not living in that poverty. In fact, the very popularity that comes with speaking messages that are approved and that men want to hear will assure you of response both in admiration and applause and in giving.

And I'm not demeaning the motives of men to say they're choosing a wrong message in order that their lifestyles might be maintained and subscribed, but somewhere in the realm of the labyrinthine colleges of the soul, somewhere someone must know that to be accepted, to be popular, to be approved is also to prosper. And to speak a word that is unpleasant and contradictory is somehow to assure that you're going

to cut yourself off from the kinds of things that would have maintained a lifestyle that you would have thought appropriate. So God knows and sees through it all, and there's nothing that he'll judge more severely than men who say, Thus saith the Lord, when God has not said.

I wish we could come to a place of really brokenheartedness over this, that somehow our travail over what has already so saturated the body of Christ, these cheap utterances, these pseudo prophecies that need to be prefaced with the magical words, Thus saith the Lord, all the more because it's not the Lord saying, could somehow be expunged from the mind and the memory of God's people, that they would be made virginal again, and that they would be brought to a place of appreciation and expectation and willing to wait for true word when it comes. For when it comes, that word alone brings life-changing power. There's a waiting which requires as much a dying in the church as the dying in the man who is sent.

And as I said, to fight your way through to the secret counsel of God and to be in his presence, not just on the hit and miss basis to obtain the word, but as a communing that is consistent, out of which the word will come when God chooses to give it, is so rare, so painful, so difficult, that the flesh shrinks from it. It's easier to hear the word from other men and to imitate and repeat that, knowing that it's already popular and has found approval. But we desperately need to hear, what is on God's heart now? And the only one who can communicate that is He who is close to that heart.

And everything conspires against it, including your own flesh. And the things that are legitimate, your family, the light bulbs, the dogs, someone's got to do, you know, it's like when I made the announcement in public speaking that the church was birthed out of ten days of waiting on the Lord. And some young believer comes up to me afterwards and said, Arden, all your travels around the world, have you found a church today that has waited ten days on the Lord? I began thinking through some of the greatest fellowships I know, and I knew that not one of them did.

And then the Lord said, how about your fellowship, Hotshot? And I came back with a message to Ben Israel, we need to wait on the Lord ten days. Was that ever popular? And, oh yeah, we'll do it in a convenient season. And we found that the season never came.

The phone was ringing, this demand, this requirement, and finally the kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent need to take it by force. And we just declared, starting Monday, we're stopping everything. The phone is off the hook, and we elders are going to begin first in seeking the Lord in prayer.

Around the clock, we fell asleep after the first two hours, until the Lord showed that three-hour shifts for ten days, fasting for ten days. Most of the women fasted all the way through, and if not, they fasted most of those days. And it was just a remarkable time.

So it was a lesson that it's never going to be convenient. There's a dying to find your way into the place of the secret counsel of God, and you cannot enter it with the spirit of expediency. I'm saying this for those who are not here, and just have come into the room having said it earlier.

That's contrary to God's spirit and to God's wisdom. Come up unto me, not for any benefit you're going to receive, even spiritual benefit, and don't fast and have ten days of prayer around the clock, because you think that by that you're going to evoke fire from heaven, and you need a fresh baptism of the spirit. That's utilitarian.

Seek me for my own sake, without any regard to whatever benefit might accrue to you by so doing. And it's in that place that the word of the Lord will come, and no other, or not at all. So Lord, we just ask you to write this on our hearts, just as you wrote on the tablets with your finger.

It's so contrary to the ethos and the mentality and the spirit of our civilization, even our Christian civilization. Everything is for effect. Everything is this in order for that, that everyone can go home happy.

Everything is predicated upon man, his satisfaction, his benefit, his gratification. And where are you, Lord, in all this? And how we have even had the nerve to cheaply exploit you and to employ you for our ends and say, God has said when you've never said. And Lord, we're crying out for the body of Christ that has been so compromised by this, so cheapened and so seduced by this, that when the true word comes, it offends them, and they cannot receive it.

So spoiled has their healing become. And Lord, we're asking first for ourselves. We're not ashamed to say that our own souls have been discolored and painted, and that the spirit of expediency has even colored, my God, our own seeking of you.

We don't know what it means, really, to seek you for your own sake without any thought of the benefit that would accrue to us, even in obtaining a word that we'd love to see come to your people. So Lord, we're asking you to help us, purify our hearts as your heart is pure, and have men, my God, that come to men out of your presence, bearing your word, knowing that your word will never be convenient, that your word will always require, it will ever and always be a hammer upon the rock that breaks it to powder, it will ever be a fire that burns and consumes dress. And we're praying, my God, again in these last days for that word to come again to men.

I'm asking you to bless every soul in this room however young they are in that calling, to groom and prepare and fit them for being bearers of the prophetic word that comes only out of the secret counsel of God, and that they would live in the matrix of a community that is supportive and attentive to their life and their character, and that we are all in this together. Lord, bring these things into our deepest consciousness, we pray. Thank you for opening this subject in the way that you have.

And just continue with us, my God, that the word of discussion about it will itself be for us the hammer upon our rock that pulverizes and breaks us into pieces. We thank you and give you the praise for such a precious morning, so insightful, so rich, so explorative, so true. Thank you, Lord, for the jealousy that will not let us go.

In Jesus' name.

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