

K-551 the Gospel & Interfaith Dialogue

by Art Katz

The gospel must be brought to the Jew first, and any compromise of its absoluteness leads to a loss of the church's apostolic distinctives.

Duration: 1:01:02

Scripture: John 3:15

Topics: "Interfaith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the centrality of the cross as the only means of salvation. They mention Abraham Heschel's concept of pathos and how it relates to the church's identification with the Jewish people. The speaker warns that those who refuse to believe are dying in their sins and highlights the importance of believing in God's love and the sacrifice of Jesus. They also discuss the need for the church to restore apostolic authority and power and address the claims made by Rabbi Rosen about salvation without a mediator.

Transcript

This will be some expression of my response to things that have been expressed through Marvin in his presentations to us, centering in interfaith relationship, which has every sound of something to be desired, but I hope to indicate that I think that, in essence, it's deadly to everything that's apostolic. So I'm writing, interfaith relationship is predicated upon and requires, not only a respect, but the acknowledgement of the validity of rabbinical Judaism as being equal to or comparable to that of Christianity. This is, in my opinion, a deadly condescension that in one fell swoop destroys the apostolic foundations of the one faith that is alone the basis and provision for the one God, for the redemption of mankind and that of Israel itself.

It destroys the faith that is the faith. The world talks about the three great faiths. I've never acknowledged three great faiths.

There's only one great faith. Any faith after that is devious, deceptive, a distraction, an alternative that has its origin from below rather than above. So Christian faith is not another competitive alternative to other faith postures whose tenets are as deserving of respect, but the one redemptive act of God whose proclamation to the ends of the earth, make disciple of all nations, we are enjoined to obey with signs and wonders following.

Go ye into all the world and proclaim this gospel to all creatures. Those that believe and are baptized shall be saved. Those who believe not shall perish.

That language now sounds so antique, so archaic. More than that, sounds offensive. One of the great scandals of the faith is the absoluteness on the insistence of that solitary message as if there were no other.

Go you into all the world and that's why the North American Indian, if he embraces Christianity, is accused of embracing white man's religion or the Jew would become Gentile-ized. It's as if who dare has the presumption to think that your faith is the only and absolute standard to which all mankind is to subscribe. Well, that's just the name of the game.

Sorry about that. I myself was offended when I picked up a New Testament for the first time in my 34th year and read of a Jesus who said, no man comes to the Father but by me. If any man comes any other way, he's a thief and a robber.

Hey, that's running right across the grain of my whole relativistic upbringing, many paths to truth. It sounds so honorific. Everything has its own distinction and appropriate one way, one man, one faith, one salvation that the whole of our myth of our present civilization is antithetical to the absolute insistence of God in one way.

The question is, are we uncomfortable with that? Are we aware of how much that jangles the nerves of the world and how impolite to insist upon Jews that they should somehow subscribe to our, quote, Christian faith as if it's one of three or other faiths deserving of equal consideration. A pox of democracy, if you will. So, this uncompromising absoluteness is integral to the whole apostolic character of the faith from its inception, though it is today embarrassingly out of place in the pluralism of a relativistic world of, quote, many paths to truth.

If the apostolic faith is not absolute, it's not apostolic. There's an absoluteness, an insistence, a singularity. I'll touch this as I go on.

So, this is embarrassingly out of place in the pluralism of a relativistic world of many paths to truth. I believe that we ourselves have opened the door. That is, Christianity, in its present disposition, particularly in its interfaith mentality, has opened the door to this destructive pluralism that neither Jesus nor Paul would for a moment of confidence, by our condescension to the Christ-rejecting Jewish community, whose Judaism was birthed out of the rejection of the crucified one, and yet atonement obtained through his death.

So, this sounds on the face of it like a very hard indictment against Judaism. It's only stating the facts, that present rabbinical Judaism was born out of the rejection of the Christ event, followed by the destruction of the temple, and the priesthood and sacrifice that constituted the foundation of the then biblical Judaism. So that we have opened the door, once we have acknowledged the validity of any other faith, we have opened the door to a plurality of faiths.

The whole world now is ridden with these faiths, all contending, all claiming their right to contend one with the other, as if they have valid grounds. There's only one valid ground. That's the presumption of our faith, and it's more than an embarrassment.

It's a ground for persecution of the atonement obtained through his death, unwilling and unable to recognize with the Gentile centurion that this is the Son of God. Remember that acknowledgement, this professional murderer, watching this man on the cross, dying with such a magnanimity, forgiving his murderers, laid not to sin to their charge, forgive them, they know not what they do. This is the Son of God.

Something was revealed of the ultimate nature of that victim, to forge a confession and acknowledgement out of a Gentile centurion that the nation Israel was unwilling or unable to make, except for the numbers that became believers. And following that, by bribing those who guarded the tomb to tell the story that his body had been stolen by his disciples, denying the testimony in power and miracles of the post-Pentecost church, refusing the corroborating destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, prophesied by Jesus that took place in 70 AD. It's a system predicated upon repentance.

So, this was the new innovation in Yafna, in that city, by a particular rabbi who was celebrated as being the founder of present rabbinical Judaism, predicated on repentance. And as I wrote that somewhere about 4 or 5 a.m. this morning, I put the word sick, s-i-c in parentheses, after the word repentance, which means what? It's predicated on repentance, and you've watched the crucifixion of the Son of God, very God, and have dismissed that, and you saw to it that a guard was put around his tomb because there was the outrageous possibility that his body would be stolen, and that the mischief of his disappearance would be worse than what began it, and yet his body was not in the tomb. And we know what happened.

There was a resurrection in power, and the remarkable paintings of these Roman guards being disheveled, their helmets falling off their heads, being cast in every direction in the power by which Jesus was raised from his death by the glory of God the Father. Well, they went and told the story, and they were bribed by the authorities, the Jewish authorities, to say that his disciples came at night and stole his body. And then the gospel says, and this account is believed to this day.

I'm just going back and reviewing the melancholy elements that led to the rejection of Jesus and the formation of the present Judaism, with which we hope to be in some kind of constructive interfaith dialogue. With whom are you dialoguing? You're dialoguing with the descendants who refuse the testimony of Jesus. If you'll not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins, who refuse to receive the testimony of the centurion, though they had as much opportunity to see the glory of God revealed in the ultimate suffering and death of the Son of God.

And then the absent, the lost body that they knew was resurrected because these guards gave the true account of what happened. Well, you say this hereafter, and they bribed them. When I read that, I'm staggered.

If ever men had an opportunity to say, boy, we really missed it. We thought this guy was a presumer and that his miracles were some kind of magic. And he was leading Israel astray down another path contrary to what we understood Judaism to be.

But now that he has been resurrected by the power of God the Father, this evidently is the statement of Father's approval for what was performed at the cross through him. And we've got to go back to square one to the drawing board and acknowledge repentantly before the nation, we have missed it and have been even the perpetrators of his death. But instead of that, they swallowed down the evidence of the resurrection, bribed the guards to tell another story.

And of course, the veil that was read from top to bottom by the power of God when Jesus gave up his ghost, which I think they say it was nine inches thick, had to be sewed together so that they could continue in their normative practices until the temple itself was destroyed according to the prophecy of Jesus. 40 years later, 40 being the number of judgments. This is a remarkable indictment of that generation.

But the point that I'm making is that that whole rejection constitutes the foundation of what's today called normative Judaism, with whom we hope to be in some kind of constructive dialogue. Now, the world ought to be really laying it on strong. And this sounds like it has all of the earmarks of anti-Semitic indictment.

No. The truth can be borne in another way. It doesn't have to be an incentive for anger, irritation.

Jesus said they don't know what they do. But now that we know, it ought to affect the way in which we relate to them, not bristling with anger and indignation, but a greater heart of compassion for the tragedy that was ensued by the rejection of him whom God the Father sent. And so it gives us a different handle, a different disposition in our relatedness with them.

So we're not condescending that they have a faith, however time-honored and attended by the sages of Israel and the commentaries of rabbis. I know how beguiling and impressive that weight of tradition is. I'm now being faced with it for the first time in my Jewish life, in my 74th year, with a wonderful rabbi.

And Mark and I went to a session at the Lubavitch Hafsdim in Brooklyn. Our jaws were agape at the beauty and insight of the things that were being shared. Nevertheless, despite the impressiveness of the erudition, intellectuality, scholarship that marks this Jewish people, we have to recognize the brute fact of the one event that has come in point of time.

And once it has come, everything is changed. Nothing can after that be honored that refuses to acknowledge, recognize, and make that the predicate of all faith, reality, and being. To ignore that and then found a Judaism on repentance and good works and mitzvot is a flight from reality.

You're going to have a Judaism based on repentance and not repent of your repentance? What kind of repentance is that? That's then only religious. That's only play acting. That's unreality.

And you're condemning generations to an alternative to God's redemptive provision and consigning them to perdition. For what could be a substitute for the blood of the lamb? What kind of religious practice? What kind of good deeds? What deeds can be good? That issue for men who are not good and can only be made good in Messiah alone, for God alone is good. So there's a whole ideological conflict of fundamental kind that if we do not face it and bring it up as issue, we do them disservice and consign this generation to the same perdition to which generations have preceded them because they go into death not believing.

If you'll not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins. I can't say I know what that means but I shudder only to quote it and evidently God knows what it means and thought it so significant that he didn't spare my mother after 38 and 39 years of resisting me to my teeth. Though we brought before her every saint who has ever crossed these grounds and she heard and saw everything that should have been sufficient to win her acceptance of the Lord.

She was a stubborn Jewish holdout till 10 days before her death. Nothing that we could say, demonstrate or plead could ever persuade her. Her son was transformed before her sight.

The world was coming to this door. Her son was being honored in nations around the world but my mother was unwilling to bend, acknowledge or concede until she was given a vision of hell. I don't know if you got that when Crystal was sharing the other night.

My mother was terrified, stark terror. The Lord did not spare her so much so she was beside herself and her friends are there and I had to be called at two or three in the morning to come down my mother's bedside and in 20 minutes she was falling in prayer to receive the Lord taking like taking candy from the proverbial baby. What happened to that backbone of Jewish resistance and stubborn opposition that could not even name the name of Christ and taking my hand and following word for word in a prayer to receive Jesus as Messiah.

Not by any expertise of mine, it was the Lord who out of fear and terror in anticipation of an eternal hell was willing to consider and even to speak that name in which she had grown so hard as to not be able to utter it. And the moment she spoke it, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The Lord did for her what he did for me.

Hey, I could no more get the name of Jesus out of my mouth 38 years ago than she was able in her 96th year to do. We were so schooled against that name and the only way it could be spoken even passively was blasphemously. To call upon that name with any kind of respect and reverence was actually beyond our ability to do.

Do you know that it's a grace to call upon the name of the Lord? You think it's a vocalization that anyone could perform at will? That's how little you know. It's a grace to call upon the name of the Lord as I saw it performed through my mother and through myself. It was given.

It's not a faith of our own. It's a gift, lest any man post. And that this new foundation of rabbinical Judaism, synagogue attendance, prayer, good deeds, as determined by rabbis, is supposed to be an acceptable alternative to the Levitical requirement for the shedding of blood in the absence of temple priesthood and sacrifice.

When what Jesus prophesied took place, the temple was destroyed, Jerusalem was destroyed, the priesthood dispersed, even the records of the priesthood. So there could not even be a resuscitation of priesthood because it was dispersed and gone. And with it the ability to perform sacrifice.

That was a tragic impasse that requires one kind of radical response or another. Either you have to rethink about this Jesus who bled at the cross as the eternal lamb of God without spot, who gave himself by the eternal spirit, or you have to find some kind of cunning equivalent and assume that God finds it acceptable. Because if he doesn't, you're an eternally dead duck.

So the millions have followed this, have been sent into eternal perdition, and its perpetrators, not willing themselves to enter, have kept back generations by their continuing hostility to the gospel. I'm paraphrasing that famous scripture. Not willing themselves to enter, they prevented others from entering.

Any condescension to the above necessarily diminished the apostolic distinctives of insistence on the singularity of the church's message, its absoluteness and urgency. A church that is not urgent is not the church. A church that lacks apostolic absoluteness about the primacy of its message is not apostolic.

To lose that distinction and that urgency and that insistence is to lose the church as the church. That's what I'm saying by that. We're risking very great loss in this ecumenical dialogue and interfaith relationship

with the Jewish community because of necessity it brings a toning down and an equivocation and a compromise from the absoluteness that is intrinsic to true faith.

A church that has become bland and nondescript ironically must fail the Jewish people itself and its mandate to them and bring corresponding loss to the Greek by a diminished gospel which by its very nature is always a divinely calculated scandal and offense. We prayed about that this morning and even thank God that the gospel is an offense and it is a communicate message. It does not commend itself to human intellect.

It's as if God has gone out of his way purposely to calculate a message of such a kind that no man can entertain or receive on the basis of his own intelligence. It defies intelligence. It defies every human thing by which men can endorse something.

It can only come as a gift, an understanding imparted by revelation in conjunction with the unsparing and uncompromising word of its absoluteness. But if we bring an equivocating word by which we retreat either in content or in tone the spirit of God and the anointing of God will not be there to bless. It will bounce off our hearer like how nice for you.

Do you believe that? Oh nice for you. You're happy? Good. It will not be the kind of message like oh I'm undone.

God anoints what he appoints but he's not going to anoint a deluded message that has suffered compromise in order to find some kind of accommodation acquiescence with our Jewish kinsmen. If we really love them we'll not spare them and we'll not spare ourselves because you don't know the gospel. You cannot know it in its character and its shameful scandalous nature until you bring it to a Jew.

Likely did a Jewish theologian Jacob Yochz whose brother Yates, the anglicized name, married me in Oakland, California. In one of his books I think Jesus and Judaism he says nothing reveals the radical character of the gospel than bringing it to the Jew. And this was God's intention to the Jew first.

Before you go anyplace else begin at Jerusalem, Samaritan's cause, begin with the Jew first. Come and bring the message of my birth, my divine origin, my coming down from heaven, my laying aside, my deity, my 30 years of obscurity, my three and a half year public ministry, my rejection, my crucifixion, my suffering, my death, my resurrection, my ascension, my seated in the right hand of glory and begin it with the same people who crucified me. Begin in the same city where the prophets were stoned.

Don't take it to Connecticut first and to the little places in the country and see if you can hoist that flag up or if it'll go over. The way Broadway productions are first begun in Connecticut and Rhode Island place and then if they find some sympathetic then they'll bring it to Broadway. No God says begin at Broadway.

Begin where I was crucified. So our respect for even our admiration for Judaism's erudition, scholarship, gentility, and charm, even the unrecognized desire for the approval of the Jewish community has resulted in incalculable loss to the purity, authority, and power of contemporary Christianity because Paul was not ashamed of this gospel, though it be a scandal, for it is the very power of God unto salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek. We are diminishing what the Greek gets if we have not gone to the Jew first.

This is not an invitation in saying all these things to resume again the unhappy if not tragic triumphalism and arrogant disdain of the early church's history with the Jew. Do we get mad at them now and put a number on them? This is what has been implied or actually stated in these days that the only alternative to

speaking this kind of hard truth is to be gentle to understand the cross-cultural elements and function in a kind of interfaith dialogue. As if the only alternative to interfaith dialogue is to lapse again into kind of harshness and triumphalism and arrogance that characterized the church in previous generations.

I'm saying no. I'm saying no. We need every lesson that we've been given in these days on how to understand our Jewish kinsmen and how to speak in a right way and knowingly, but not sparingly.

To spare is to allow to destroy. To love is to take the risks of offense and even of rejection. But to placate, condescend, that one scene in the film that we saw that pierced me through was this Irish rabbi, Rosen, I'll never forget it, with his van Dyck beard and real evident assurance and having it all together polished and urbane.

I don't need a mediator. I already have a relationship with God. And then another reference to the Messiah.

Well, whatever the issue is of who the Messiah is, it no way diminishes what I already have as a relationship with God. Well, can you have that when Jesus said, no man comes to the Father but by me? How then can you have a relationship? One of two things is right. Either your relationship is more imagined than it is real, or our confidence in what Jesus said needs to be reconsidered.

There's an absoluteness in the gospel that says you cannot come. No man can come to me except the Father draw him. There's an absolute clarity in that word.

So what do you do when a rabbi who gives every appearance of not only civility, not only erudition, but a moral tone to his life, that just makes us gasp and look up with admiration, says that he has a relationship with God that our knowledge of New Testament Scripture says he cannot have? We're faced with a conundrum. Either we're wrong in our assumption predicated on those New Testament verses out of that very mouth of Jesus, and that he has it without Jesus. That means the gospel itself is an irrelevancy, not only for Jews but for anyone.

Or this man is deceived and thinks that his culture and refinement and ethicality is somehow a relationship with God. He cannot know him by the Spirit. So what do we do when in the presence of a Jew like that he makes a statement and we are silent? Our silence is validating that statement.

Our silence is implying yes we're in agreement with your contention that you have such relationship. What we really ought to do if we love the man is to say I'm sorry dear sir, I don't care what your subjective impression may be, but if the scriptures and the New Testament out of the mouth of Jesus themselves be true, it's impossible for you to enjoy the relationship in which you're boasting. You're a deceived man, or we're deceived, but we're not going to be silent so as to condone and validate your presumption.

And you're the spiritual leader of a Jewish community and communicating that and encouraging others to the same kind of assumed relationship that cannot exist short of the acknowledgement of the blood and the forgiveness of sins. For my arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is my ear dull that it cannot hear, but your sins, God says, have separated you from me. What greater sin than the sin of presumption and of spiritual pride that boasts in a relationship that is non-existent and puts greater confidence in the subjectivity of one's feeling than in the stated word of God, the Son of God, who alone is righteous and not a man that he should lie.

Are you understanding me here guys? Yes. There's a conflict here. There's something struck and it's not happenstance or inadvertent.

It's absolutely calculated by God from the beginning. We're joined into a remarkable issue with the Jewish community. How we relate to them in that issue is the issue is the whole thing that we're about in these days and by which the age is concluded.

So do we move in the direction of interfaith dialogue and acknowledgement and endorsement that you guys may not have Jesus, but what you do have is impressive and we don't want to be ungainly and be a sore thumb, the bull in the china shop, insisting that you have to share out Jesus. All the more when in his name you have suffered persecution for 2,000 years. What kind of love is that? What kind of respect is that? Shouldn't you back off and not be insistent on your gospel? Many paths to truth, or is there one path? And if we buckle before the Jew in their seeming civility and refinement as if they have no need of that path, we're opening the doors for many paths, none of which lead to heaven and all of which lead to perdition, which Satan is quite handy to provide for the deceived millions in the world.

The issue of the Jew is the issue of the gospel. Amen. It's the issue of the gospel to the Greek.

It's the issue of the church. And so I'm sharing my burden as it has been triggered by listening to our dear brother Martin. And someone said they're happy that I'm seeing this because they were worried to me in New York.

Is Art himself being taken in? Is he being seduced by the impressive scholarship and erudition and refinement of these precious Talmudic men, fifth generation, why we're like clods next to these men and their remarkable knowledge, not only of Hebrew, but the other Semitic language, Aramaic, and so on. So, you know, they ask questions. We're stunned and stupefied.

We can't give answers. They seem to have all the answers. The effrontery of insisting upon our faith in view of all that is either colossal egoism and arrogance or absolute humility.

One or the other. The rabbi can't understand why by now I've not thrown in the towel. Hasn't he told me enough to show me how fortunate this whole Greek myth is about Jesus and how it was a commonplace in the ancient world of a godly son born mystically from the heavens and lives and dies and then is resurrected and Jesus is only a takeoff on that mythical pagan origin? How can you continue, Art, to be a Jewish man and subscribe to that nonsense? Haven't you seen the light yet? Why do you keep hanging on? I'm hanging on for your sake, you dear rabbi.

That somehow, at one point in our five, six hours together on a particular Wednesday, in some moment when I think I'm not at all succeeding and I'm ready to throw in the towel, one last word or look or gesture and boom, the word has come, light from heaven, a key turn, and a man gasps, falls on his face, and cries out my lord and my god. That's what we're waiting for. That's what we're praying for.

It has nothing to do with my cleverness. It's my learning. Where do I come even to begin to match notes with such men? But trusting a word, a word will come that will unlock his soul and bring light on all that he already knows, but has not come to him as revelation.

But you know what would cost him to surrender to that revelation? His wife, his family, his place in the Jewish community, his forebears, fifth generation Talmudic scholar. It's nothing less than a death sentence for such a man to believe in Jesus, because if he believes he will equally proclaim being Jewish.

The cost of everything, but it will be the key to life to those who will hear him.

So, this is not an invitation to resume again the unhappy, if not tragic, triumphalism and arrogant disdain of the early church's history with the Jew. The church was pricked and provoked by Jews who were saying that, that, that, that, that, that. You claim that you found the Messiah.

You're a bunch of Gentile dum-dums. You don't even know our language and that's how you're interpreting it. You're all wrong and you've missed it.

And beside that, we're coming again. The scriptures speak of our restoration. God is going to honor us.

We will be exalted above all nations. Can you imagine men like Chrysostom and other of the early church leaders being pricked and chased by that kind of Jewish boasting? Or Luther himself at a later generation? The church has failed in its relationship with the Jew and has allowed itself to be provoked and irritated unto resentment rather than absorbing like a pin cushion this necessary refutation and bearing it and loving them even in it. I know from my own experience, speaking at university campuses from Harvard, Yale, University of California, Tubingen, wherever I've been in the world and I've spoken at universities, why do I speak with them? Because that's where you're likely to find a Jewish audience if you can't get into the synagogues.

And very invariably, when you come into a crowd of Jewish students, the anger, because what do you represent? You're a paid flunky. You're some kind of missionary with a Goyeshe Bible under your arm trying to persuade them to forsake being Jewish and speaking that name by which we have been persecuted historically. And boom, they let you have it.

And you're like a pin cushion. You just have to absorb all of their accusations, all their indictment. And you can't say, no, no, no, no, that's not me.

I'm not related to the Crusaders. No, no, I'm not with that institution. They don't know the difference.

For them, it's all Christianity. You're coming in that name. You're invited with them.

And before you can get a word in edgewise, you have got to allow them to express their screen, give off their invective, all of that anger. And then when it's spent, you might get in a word. Well, the church has not been willing to do that.

So by all of the things that I'm reviewing, I'm not inviting the church to pick up again and be to the Jews a hostile, arrogant entity. But to know the truth of the situation and to bear that truth and yet come to them and relate to them in the love that knows and will not be affected. It does not require our arrogance.

It's a realistic affirmation of indisputable centrality of the cross. Does not imply a corresponding contempt, but a pathos of identification with our Jewish kinsmen who have been inured to the saving faith by a time-honored religious culture, commendable and attractive in many ways, but Christ rejecting at its heart and hence without the saving faith. That's a tremendous statement.

Not bad for 4am. A realistic affirmation, the things I'm putting before you of the indisputable centrality of the cross as the only one faith, the only one saving faith does not imply a corresponding contempt, but a pathos. If I had got a chance to ask a question last night in that Marvin mentioned Abraham Heschel, I would have asked, could you please enlarge on Heschel's concept of pathos in his two volumes on the

prophets? Because the Lord himself quickened that word for us last summer, that the church needed to come into a pathos of identification with the Jew is the root of the same word as sympathy.

If you can have a pathos out of a knowledge of the truth of that one, not out of a naivety or an unwillingness to see the truth, but knowing the truth, knowing the rejection, knowing the hostility, knowing the anti-Christ propensity of this community and its leadership, and still have a pathos, and still have an identification, and still have a profound sympathy, not just of a sentimental kind, but of a kind for which you would lay down your life. So I could say to my rabbi as he drove me to get my car on my last visit when it broke down and I had to leave it across the river in New Jersey to be repaired, and we were alone in the car together, I said, has any man ever loved you as I do? Who do you know who could match the affection that issues from me for you from anyone out of your own Judaism? Don't you have abused me, called me names, and acted with anger and insulted me? Who else do you know within your Jewish framework who has loved you as amply as I? He did not answer me a word. He knew it.

It's the love of God. It's the pathos of God. And so I'm saying the knowledge of the truth does not require us to be arrogant or hostile to them.

It's one thing to be innocent and not know and then be blithe in your conduct, but to be knowing and to have pathos is a statement of uttermost spirituality. In fact, it's coming close to the character of God himself. Remember what is being waited for, that the deliverer might come out of Zion and take transgression from Jacob? When my servants shall have compassion on her stones and pity upon her dust.

When my church shall have pathos for the Jewish community and know how long they have suffered their rejection of me and how hostile they've come in their framework and how they oppose themselves in their own ignorance and bleed in sympathy for that condition and pray for the lifting of that veil, then the deliverer shall come out of Zion. Why then? Because his purpose for the church has been fulfilled. He has a bride for the bridegroom that's just like him, adorned for him because he shares the pathos of God himself.

Now he can deliver Israel. For the whole object of Israel was inculcating and providing the incentive for the church to come into that condition. That which is not of this faith is still sin.

Know that scripture, that which is not of faith is sin. And I'm just enlarging it to say that which is not of this faith is sin. The faith by which salvation is obtained.

Because all of the so-called great faiths employ the word faith. But what does it mean? A compendium of doctrinal statements of the distinctors of Islam or Judaism, whatever it is. But the faith that is the faith is salvific.

And that which is not of that faith is still sin. So what good deeds can issue from those who have not come into that faith and see their own, quote, faith as a viable alternative? We are not called to denigrate nor boast, but proclaim the truth in love. This does not mean condescending sentimentality, sentimentality and avoidance of the intrinsic fence, but of being cruel in order to be kind, of being firm, of being insistent.

My mother, Arthur, I don't want to hear another word of this, not another word. I said, look, the day will come in eternity when your cry and regret will be not that I have said too much, but that I've not said enough. Is that a nice way for a son to talk to his mother? Well, what's nice when an aged lady's eternal

destiny is at stake and one must be cruel to her in order to be kind to her, but not sparing.

I'm such an enemy of sentiment, I can't tell you. I see sentiment as the most devious thing that has ever issued from the bowels of hell, that is disguised as being somehow attractive and commendable and nice to receive and feel and to express, but destructive of truth and keeping people from the kinds of issues that will affect them eternally. A pox on sentiment.

To those, and by the way, our kindness will be construed as cruelty. You call that love? You call that being a Christian? That's the retort that we'll get, that yes, that is being a Christian, whether or not you understand it. And if you don't understand it, I don't wait for your understanding in order to speak that truth.

Your understanding will come because I've spoken it. To precipitate a crisis of faith can only be justified in the light of eternity. I mean, why stir an old lady up? Why kidnap her from Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, where she's lived for the last 30 years in her condominium with all of her adorable little ditsy goo on the walls and her honorary plaques from Hadassah Hospital and all of the Jewish things to which she's contributed and her husband, who was a dead atheist, was the vice president of the Jewish congregation, and take her away out of that environment that is so sentimental, so condescending to the flesh in December and bring her to Northern Minnesota because it was the only interlude when I had some free time on my schedule to affect that kidnapping.

If I had waited until I came back for my next trip, my mother would have been dead. So we hastily constructed that little place for her near my house and packed her bags, got her goods moved and sold and disposed, and she was barking to the last, we almost had to take her with her chair out of the house to the airport and muttering and complaining all the way, and when she finally got here, complaints. If I had known that you were going to be making all these trips, I would not have come.

What do you think I do when I'm home? I'm a minister, I have a call. Try and explain that to an unsaved Jewish woman. The only time she ever changed the tune and blessed my going was after she had called on the name of the Lord.

Because on the second day, she said, as we were told, what about the others? The way is narrow. And now that I was going on a trip that would further this message and establish places of refuge for Jews in flight in the nations to where I come, she sent me with blessing. And what do you think happens? Ten days after my departure, she dies.

And then I'm in Scotland. Well, what do I do? Do I continue in the work here? Do I go home? Do I go to West Palm Beach where her body has been brought back to be buried alongside her unbelieving deceased husband? And John Parsons worked out an economic wonderful package door-to-door from Aberdeen, Scotland to West Palm Beach and then to London. I just don't have to miss about seven or eight days of ministry.

And so I'm putting it before the Lord with his parents and finally felt my mother herself was encouraging me to go on. And that more than my physical presence at her tomb site, she wanted me to continue in that work that would bring salvation deliverance to her kids. I said, Lord, if that's true, let the very next meeting in Scotland bear unquestioning evidence that you have promoted something by my being present that would not have taken place otherwise that has to do with Jewish flight and rescue salvation.

And in the next place, up in the highlands of Scotland, where at the base of the highlands where the cattle are brought down after the winter and then they're fed in that place and kept in a kind of ambient condition and then sent to market, the Lord gave me the sense Jews will be coming down from those passes, from those high places. They'll be thin and stretched out and physically exhausted and they'll have a place here where you're speaking. Because of your speaking, this Christian body will anticipate their coming, will have prepared for them, they will be fed, they will be rested, and they'll not go to market from there, they'll go to Zion.

So, to precipitate a crisis of faith can only be justified in the light of eternity. Why the cut raised excruciating issues for those who are already comfortable in their Judaism? Can't we allow them to die like that? Only eternity justifies striking that crisis. It's the issue of what lies beyond this life.

And anyone who knows anything about Jews knows that we have very little consideration of what lies beyond this life. We are of this world, this life oriented. The life to come is not part of the general understanding to be found in Judaism.

In fact, it's a subject that's not encouraged and not developed. Because what knowledge can they have for what lies beyond death? And that's why so much attention and energy is given to succeeding in this life. That's why we're so successful.

That's why we have to amass a fortune, win a Nobel Prize, leave behind a name, a legacy, because there's no life beyond this life. So, one of us is terribly wrong. We have that medieval notion as Christians that this life is only preparation.

It's a veil of tears. It's a formative time for that which is to come, which is eternal. Paul, seeing the things that are invisible and eternal, saw his present afflictions as both momentary and light.

Either he's all screwed up or he's all right. But he had a view of that which is invisible and eternal that affected his present profoundly, which is totally absent from Jewish consideration. So, I'm saying this.

If eternity is eternity, the issue of eternal hell and anguish of soul without remedy, without relief, we have a justification for promoting an anguish of soul presently. And the crisis that comes through our word and our witness, it will set in motion those things that redound to eternal salvation. But do we ourselves believe that? Have we retained a sense of that which is eternal? Finney said, when the church loses its sense of hell, it will have lost its reality as church.

The willingness of that loss in the land of that eternity is the very definition of loss. What loss? The loss of losing their friendship, their relationship that we cherish because we have said something in an ungainly way or raised a question that has exacerbated and wounded and caused upset. The fact that we're willing to suffer that loss might be the greatest testimony that what we are about is so persuasively real.

Do you understand that? They know that we love them. They know that we cherish that relationship. But we're willing even to risk its loss and the offense that comes by raising the question of eternal life and salvation from Jesus, for there is no other.

And when they see the willingness to risk the loss of that relationship with themselves, they might think, this guy's not just woofing. He's not just speaking out of his doctrinal cap. Evidently, the issue of eternity for him is unmistakably real and that he's persuading me in a knowledge of something that I could not have except that he communicates it and he's willing to do so at the risk of the loss of my love and my

friendship.

There must be something to what he's saying or he would not take that risk. That's being a witness unto the Lord. To hear the boast of Rabbi Rosen in the video shows us that he has an unquestioned relationship to God, has no need of a mediator, that which appears as true.

For only one of the other can be true, as I've said. The word of Jesus, that no man comes to the Father but by me, or the rabbi's subjective confidence in the face of it. To be silent as Christians when such boasts are made is to confirm or validate the one who makes it and turn the word of Christ into a lie.

It gives to that Judaism of validity, that Paul's cry in Romans 9 that he would wish himself a curse for his brethren's sake would never have allowed. Why is Paul making that cry if a Rabbi Rosen can come to a seeming salvation independent of Christ? Why would he wish himself a curse? We've got to reckon these things. For us to allow the risks of the loss of the soul who makes it and the whole apostolic virility and character of the church, this church, to be silent when such statements are made, is to put the church, its theology, its doctrines, its grounding in the word of the Lord, in question.

Hence more has been lost in the name of core interfaith relations than can be understood when we confirm them in their suppositions by our silence. Sometimes one must be cruel in order to be kind. And to be cruel in this case is to say to this Rabbi, I'm sorry dear sir, I don't care what you feel subjectively, that is a patent no-no.

It cannot be true or it makes my faith a lie. One of us is in grievous error and so long as there's breath in me, I'll contend for my error because I believe that your eternity is at stake by it. To say that we have a long haul, a phrase that our brother has used often, is to imply unlimited amounts of time as if there were no eschatological urgency of time running out, as if the lengthened shadows of global anti-semitism do not presage the devastating time of Jacob's trouble in which Jesus himself spoke in explicit warning.

What a long haul. Judgment is at the door. Things are ready to collapse.

Israel's existence is in greatest peril. And Jews worldwide now, you don't have to be a Zionist anymore to be an object of attack. You have only to be Jewish.

What long haul? Is this the best of all worlds where we will have the luxury of continuing an unbroken relationship and over the course of time maybe something might be worked? Well if you come into a mentality like that, I want you to know it is non-apostolic. For the distinctive of apostolic church is the expectancy of some imminent, soon to be fulfilled, eschatological reality. We're moving to the climax, a last day's upheaval, a clash of kingdoms, the powers of darkness, antichrist, fearful things, blood and fury and fire poured out on the earth.

Jerusalem itself will be cleansed by the spirit of burning. So what long haul? It may well be that it's longer than we think, but I think we ought to act and believe on the assumption that it's short. The time is short and these things shall shortly come to pass and we have not the luxury to cultivate hopeful long relationships.

We need to find a first and early opportunity to speak the word, however jarring, however crisis bringing, that will set in motion those considerations that will make for salvation. For not to have an attitude of eschatological expectancy is no longer to be the church, and that's why I'm saying that if we come into this framework of understanding that is called interfaith relationship, we are threatening and forfeiting the very

character of church as church, and not only do we then do disservice to the Jew but also to the Greek. So the whole of man's eternity might hang upon a present moment when time might not again come as was demonstrated in the unsparing conversation of the Lord himself for Nicodemus.

There was only a one-time conversation, not a long haul, and something had to be spoken, however jarring, that would set in motion those things that make for salvation. While Judaism's definition of the word salvation might differ from our own, the one definition that counts is that given by God in the death and resurrection of his son as the one determinative for all eternity. You don't believe in salvation or you think it means social justice and other conditions that need to be attended.

That's nice, but I want to give you the definitive understanding of what salvation is, as God himself sees it, defines it, and by which we ourselves will be held accountable. It's that definition that you need to know. It's not that we respect yours, you need to come into the understanding of God himself, for his salvation is the issue of death, resurrection, and newness of life.

It's utterly supernatural and hinging upon the acknowledgment of him whom he has sent and what was performed in him and the calling upon that name. You may have another concept of salvation, but it doesn't save. This is the one that you need to know and to act upon.

So this is not a matter of opinion, but conviction, which we are under obligation to share as non-negotiable, though it brings its necessary offense. An opinion can be tolerated, even humored, maybe even respected, but a conviction requires a yes or no for or against God. Are we presenting something as an opinion that they can chalk off and say, well, it's nice for you to believe that? Sweet.

Are we saying, no, this is a conviction, this is out of God's very heart, this is established in his word. If you'll not believe it, you'll perish. It's not something that you can idly dangle and play with as an opinion.

It's a conviction. You have either to reject it or to receive it, for or against God. That's the issue.

That's the issue of eternity. This is not a matter of opinion. They are a target.

That they are a target is not the issue of some carnal delight of putting on national belts. We're targeting Jews. Hey, that's not nice.

They don't want to be singled out for this kind of attention. It's not that we give some carnal delight, we want to put a national belt, we witness to a Jew and let one to the Lord, but the testimony of the very God for people who remain the apple of his eye. They are his target.

They are the apple of his eye, they are the object of his consideration, particularly as we come to the end of the age, and that he's full of compassion, mercy, and will not allow them to perish. He's not slack concerning his promises, but he's not willing that any should perish, and of this people especially, for they are the apple of his eye, the target of his affection and attention. It is the Jew who is the far off and needs to be made nigh by the blood of Jesus, that he might be created a new and Messiah Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should be like them.

You read Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 to 13, not as it was originally intended, as a statement to Gentiles, who were far off, without God, without hope in the world, who are now brought nigh, but read it as God's present statement to the Jew, who we've come full circle. It's the Jew now who is without God, without hope in the world, and who is far off, and needs to be brought by the blood of his own Messiah into

the commonwealth of his own people, their hopes and covenants and promises, that he might be created anew. That's what salvation is, in the blood of Messiah Jesus, unto good works, not your works, not your religious works, not works that issue out of conscience or thinking that you can bargain with God and negotiate so much work for so much recognition, but the good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, for no other work is worth walking in.

That which was established before the foundations of the earth were laid. No other work is considered by God as good or acceptable in his sight, but that which issues from the faith which is the gift of God, and not of ourselves, lest any man boast. This is the conversion which is an issue.

It turns a murderer and persecutor into a chief apostle, a Jacob into an Israel, and must be effected on this side of the grave, and is ultimately the issue of Jewish identification itself. To comfort Jews with platitudes, that we are all God's children, is to do them an eternal disservice. To as many as received him gave he the power to become the sons of God, but not until then.

He who hath the son hath life, and he who hath not the son hath not life, and the wrath of God abides upon him. Jesus did not mince the terrifying words in John 8, 21 and 24. If you will not believe, notice the emphasis, if you will not believe, kind of implies you have every right and obligation to believe.

After what I've said, what I've spoken, what I've done, why do you not believe? If you still persist in willing not to believe, you need to know that you're dying in your sins, and what is the capstone and the summation of all your sin is that unwillingness to believe. How shall we, in superficial deference to men, say thus? Read again John 3, 15 and 16 and believe that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. The day of our Lord is at hand.

Brands need to be plucked from the fire, and apostolic absoluteness, singleness of eye, certitude, authority, and power needs be restored to the church. The issue of the Jews, the issue of the church, the issue of the Greek, the coming of the Lord, his theocratic ruling kingdom, will need to be governed by this felt-sensed imminence, its nearness, and not be lulled into a non-apostolic casualness that expects an indeed desirous and long call. This kind of urgency is totally compatible with apostolic faith and need not express itself as frenzy, as if the suggestion that if you're going to have this sense of urgency, you're going to be foaming at the mouth, you'll be irrational, you'll come on like gangbusters.

No. You can have a sense of urgency and be sober without frenzy, and that that sobriety and the high seriousness of the eschatological faith is that to which we are called. We walk by faith, not fear, especially the fear of falling into extremes, worst extremes, by being urgent.

Speak the truth of love, but speak it. To void reference to the word to come, the world to come, is to void the faith and to confirm the unsuspecting into the greatest of all deceptions that there's no life beyond this life, and that this life is small. The shriek and holler that comes in the moment of eternity is incalculable.

The bachelor said that in that moment, when the day of eternity, the moment of eternity comes, all values as we have understood them will be totally reversed. That which we celebrate in the world will be abhorred by God, there'll be a complete reversal, all to which we have subscribed good, our life, our energy, and time, and it's too late to remedy anything. It's an eternal shriek without belief.

We need ourselves now to hear it by the ear of the spirit, and have that as always a backdrop in our relationship with this people. Eternity is at stake. So it voids the faith and confirms the unsuspecting into the greatest of all deceptions.

It is to diffuse the gospel, it is to weaken it, the distinctive of the church itself as church, and becomes a victory for the powers of darkness in the very name of interfaith relationship. As it is written, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense. Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed.

So Lord, thank you. Blot out anything that I've spoken, read, commented, that is in disagreement with yourself. Allow to remain that which is in perfect agreement, that was calculated for our consideration.

Let it find a place of deposit and be brought again and again to our consciousness, and especially to stir us if we're faced with a challenging issue with a Jew, where we would be tempted humanly to back up, to retreat, to compromise, to go easy, to go soft, to make nice. Remind us again of the issues of eternal life, and that one must be cruel sometimes in order to be kind, and not to withhold the word of truth. Bless this word so much as it was your own.

Let it be factored in as much as your brother wants to respond to it, and we just thank you and give you praise for this interfaith dialogue between ourselves, which we can afford as luxury, but not with them, not on the basis of their acknowledgement that there's some inherent validity which they already possess independent of Christ. In Jesus' name, in his name we pray. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23999.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/k-551-the-gospel-interfaith-dialogue/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net