

K-553 Knowing Mercy

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the profound nature of mercy, its reception, and the necessity of extending it within the community of believers and beyond.

Duration: 1:04:47

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Mercy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the desire for success and recognition in our Christian service. He questions how long we can continue to labor faithfully without seeing visible results or rewards. He emphasizes the importance of the corporate life of the church, stating that the revelation of the Lord comes through the body of believers and their relationships with one another. The speaker also shares a personal experience of receiving a prophetic rebuke, highlighting the need for humility and the possibility of missing the mind of the Lord in our service.

Transcript

As I said to some committee that had come to an apostolic prophetic conference to teach us how to invoke the presence of God, which I consider a calamitous insult that we can manipulate God and compel him to come down if we hit the right choruses. Naturally, I could not be silent in that and I've never been invited back since that time, but my statement was you guys would do better to teach us how to continue to be faithful in serving God in the absence of his felt presence. So the last test upon whose graduation we ascend to the Lord as his bride is the confidence that he is with us even when we're not aware and sense that presence.

Nothing more delightful than the presence of God, but it's not always there, nor is it for us to command or to commandeer. If we have attitudes like that, and maybe I'll share yet a message, but if I don't, it's available on tape, where I nailed that attitude in the charismatic church as the deadliest antithesis to that which is apostolic. If we think that we can produce what only God can send, we have laid the axe against the very principle of apostolicity itself, because apostolos means sent one.

And if we are not conscious that we receive from the throne of heaven every good and perfect thing as sent, and we receive it as gift, as being also a mercy, what mercy shall we extend if we have not received mercy? You say, well, on what occasions will we receive mercy? Every occasion, like right now, is a mercy. Every congregation, every coming together in the Lord's name, and whatever it pleases the Lord to

communicate on such occasions is a mercy, rather than a predictability that we can count on because it's Sunday. When we come to that mentality, the church is no longer the church, it's a social, cultural, religious institution.

So if we know that we're waiting upon the mercy of God, and we so appreciate it, mercy doesn't have to come just in great crisis moments, where you're saved out of a lion's den. Mercy comes when you hear the Word of God. Mercy comes when you're walking with a saint in fellowship and in conversation.

Any grace, I was invited to sit with some saints from Michigan for lunch yesterday, and as we're sitting there and just kind of talking casually, at a given moment, in a totally unsuspecting way, something came out of my mouth that was pure rhema. It was a piece of wisdom from heaven about the church being called to a new way of conceiving of time, space, and relationship that does not make us dependent to obtain, to have, to clutch, to hold, in order to enjoy or have the security of a certain relationship with the blessedness of it. But we can trust the Lord in the fluidity of the kingdom of God to move His people and give us more in a visit, even a surprise visit, than we would have had had we fixed that person down for several months and had the possession of His presence, and that we have to disavow ourselves, repudiate earthly human concepts of time, place, space, and come into a heavenly view that completely frees us and opens a whole new exciting prospects of the dynamic of God in the flow of God from heaven to earth.

And right now, see, what I'm trying to do, I'm trying to recapture and formulate what God gave in a moment with such articulation, I would almost say such divine eloquence that you want to know, is there a recording? Did we catch that? But it came unsuspectingly, and it answered the deep question of those saints that God knew required an answer that would have to come from Him. But it came in the moment of His choosing. That was mercy.

Our moments ought to be more filled with those expressions of mercy if we're trusting and resilient and before God, and don't displace Him by anything that we ourselves produce. See what I mean? So we live by the mercies of God. If you didn't know it before, you'll know it the first time you stand at the doorstep of a Jew.

And I shared with the little group yesterday my first time when I came to Kansas City representing a Jewish mission in New York where I had been trained, being taken out of public school teaching, and didn't know how to begin. Here I had a year's training program in New York, and now I'm arrived, and I'm representing this organization in four states, and the Lord has given us a house in Kansas City for \$175 a month in one of the posh neighborhoods of that city, and a prophetic word that I have many people in this city. So how do you begin? By beginning.

There was at that time a Jewish community of 25,000. Well, I began by taking the dirty wash to the laundromat, because our washing machine had not yet been hooked up, and with my great mechanical ability, I didn't even know how to deposit the quarters and push the button. So I'm asking a lady right next to me, and she's telling me how, and I'm looking and listening, and I say, are you Jewish? Yes, and I am also.

Well, what are you doing here? Have you just arrived? Yes. And I began to tell her why I'm in Kansas City, and she was remarkably sympathetic. The fact of the matter is she gave me her address and asked me to visit her Orthodox Jewish husband.

So full of zeal, vim, and vinegar, on a Shabbat morning, I was walking up his steps with my Bible under my arm, and he's at the door, the glass door, looking at this apparition coming up, and when I came to the door, he opened it, and he blared out, how dare you come on the Shabbat, you know, with this message or something like that, and wham, the door flattened my proboscis by at least, it's much more modest now than it once was. So my first experience in the zealous missionary was a door slammed in my face without even an opportunity to say boo or to give answer, but that was not the last occasion, it was the first. So that it began with insult and rejection is not at all accidental, but already a pattern, a divine pattern, that we need to have the capacity to bear rejection, and it's painful.

We prophetic men are steeped in it. We live in it continually. We need to, if we're going to set our face as a flint and speak an unwelcome word, in fact every word that we speak is virtually unwelcome, whether it's to the messianic movement, to the church, even sometimes in our own fellowships.

So there has to be a certain ability to withstand or to function without the necessity for applause or acknowledgement or congratulations, or to bear insult or rejection. I have experienced more insult and rejection in Great Britain than any other place on the face of the earth, but other Anglo-Saxon nations come close in second and third place. I gave a message in England arriving late, suffering from diarrhea.

See the Lord has always reminded you of your mortality, lest you think you're some ethereal agent. You're the messenger of God, which means angel, but his word is coming out through earthen lips and earthen bodies. So I was delayed in coming to the meeting.

It had already begun. I sit down with a huff, just like now, just arriving, and I look at Lord, what shall I speak? I'm going to be called on momentarily. Romans 11.

Romans 11, Lord. That's kid stuff. That's elementary, my dear Watson, as Sherlock Holmes used to say.

Romans 11. So I got up and naively began to speak Romans 11, and I loved the way I was hearing it coming out of me. It was a novel mode of expression.

There was a touch of humor and quaint things that the Lord just was expressing, but their faces, my God, you didn't want to look at their faces. Daggers were coming out from every pair of eyes and such evident disgust and content like I was talking about an orgy, some vulgar, sinful thing, and I'm talking about Romans 11, the heart of the great apostle's most systematic statement of his understanding of the faith, and these people are looking at me as if I'm a piece of repulsive humanity, and when I finished, as one man, the leadership of the congregation, together with most of the people, got up and walked out of the room and out of the building, not to come back. There wasn't so much as a thank you, but no thank you, or we disagree with this view, but we recognize that it's a legitimate biblical presentation, but no, nothing, not a word, just an out.

One of the elders was compelled to remain because they characteristically served tea after the meeting, and I'm his only customer. So I'm dangling my teacup with my pinky crock because I had gone to finishing school, my mother being English, and I said to him something like this. I said, Dear man, please tell your colleagues that they were not under any obligation to receive this word, but they were under obligation to respect it as being a biblical perspective held by many and having, you know, that kind of sense.

But to walk out like that and to leave the speaker with his face speaking up without even closing the meeting in prayer is the rudest thing that I have ever experienced, that I would not ever experience with

the lions, with the elks, with the Rotarians, with any natural earthly fraternal society I'm receiving from the church, the body of Christ. And I said, unless you repent of the way in which I was repudiated, I have to believe there's going to be a consequence of an unhappy kind for your entire fellowship. I was pronouncing a judgment.

The rejection of the prophetic word of the prophetic man almost invariably invites judgment because it's the last word is the prophetic word. Why were they so resistant? Why were they so repelled? Because they had a theory and a view of restoration, not meaning Israel, but the church itself. And they were the foremost expression of the restoration of the last days of apostolic verity.

This was the apostolic cutting edge movement. So apostolic, it could not recognize the prophetic word and dealt with it as I have described to you. But I'm saying all that to say this.

Cats, did you collapse? Did you sag? Did you go down into the dust? Did it take you days and weeks to recover and regain your confidence? Did you go on? No. I wasn't at all personally affected. It was not me being personally rejected.

It was the message that I was called to speak. Romans 11, the Lord said, how could I speak anything other? It was a set up, a divine set up that required my obedience. And I bore the rejection of the Lord's word, which is the rejection of the Lord.

The only painful thing is to sense the rejection of God's people to him. But it's never anything personal. You understand? But most of us are very sensitive.

If someone looks at us the wrong way or says something that's questionable, what do they mean by that? Or they don't affirm us as they think that we should. There's a natural cloying necessity to be affirmed by those whom you love and respect and whose respect and love you desire. You're not going to find that from the Jewish community, except in a glitzy, shallow way.

If you're a little cute Christian and coming and celebrating them in a way that they can afford to humor you, but if you're coming in a serious and an earnest way, but you're not expressing those purposes, then they sense that this is not some little pat on the back of that kind of admiration and fascination for Jews that many Christians have that is romantic. They're not going to schmooze with you. They're not going to love you up one side down the other.

Can you live with it? Can you face a kind of sense of distance and aloofness and coolness toward your presence? They're too polite to throw you out and they allow you to come, and it may take several weeks before they become accustomed to seeing you and the first polite word is spoken. Can you bear that? You see, this makes a new demand upon us, and can you come into an environment like that and be tested like that without first being sent out from a believing body? You need to be as much a sent one into the Jewish environment as anyone would be sent into darkest Africa or any remote corner of the earth as missionary. So you're not just an individual virtue also doing the acute thing.

You're an expression of a body who has sent you and has upheld you in prayer and is in agreement with your purpose in going. That means there's a new premium on the issue of truth of the fellowship of our corporate life together. Is it really corporate or is it just the assemblage of bodies that share a common facility and say hi brother and hi sister? Are we really joined in these burdens and callings and recognize them? Is their prayer more than ceremonial? Is it actual? Is it real? Is it like the ability to confer blessing

because you've come into a priestly stature? Is it real prayer because you've come into an authentic corporate stature that God hears and recognizes and that will affect what takes place? In the day when something dissolves and what seems hard, it's because there's been an investment of prayer gone out toward that people.

And that when you hear something coming out of your mouth that's beyond your own cleverness, you know that God is with you and that he's responding to the prayers that have gone forth in your behalf. So can you see whatever aspect is touched in this relationship with the Jewish community, it redounds to the church and to the believers in a way in the formation of their own spiritual life and character, their true spirituality that nothing else would have served. And we have lost that historically and have suffered for that loss as is evident in the shabby condition of our present Christianity.

And if apostolic quality and stature and maturity and propheticness is to be restored to the church, it's going to have to take place by the same means by which it was lost, namely a resumption of relationship with this people Israel, the lost sheep of the house of Israel in our midst in the very communities where we are. Okay, so and where do you learn not to be thin-skinned, not to be hypersensitive? Where do you learn to bear some sense of rejection if not from the body? Not because it's malevolent and mean and calculated to test you and try you and therefore they're going to be indifferent and cool. No, you can't have a knit of life of bodies coming together and all of the variousness that God's people constitute without episodes, without issues, without a word, without a strange silence.

Oftentimes silences are more deadly than speakings. You're with the God that they would say something, otherwise you find yourself automatically interpreting that silence in the most negative and destructive way. That's the church.

It's a suffering before it's a glory. But now we will avail ourselves of this framework for the shaping of character and life because how then do we come before this people except we have been fitted in our relationship with the church to face them. See what I mean? And in one of my earliest speakings of Romans 11, when I came to that final thought, by your mercy they shall obtain mercy, I believe it was a black sister cried out in this mixed racial congregation, but Brother Katshi said, how shall we have mercy for the Jews when we don't have it for each other? It was like a knife went into me.

I'm haunted by the memory of that remark ever since, but she nailed something. We would have lived without the mercy one to another and considered that normative if it were not for the fact that we're now required to express a palpable and real mercy to the Jewish community. That makes us all of a sudden aware that we're not skilled in this.

We have not been mercy conscious. We have certainly not been mercy dispensing to one another. Our critiques and conversations are often like going for the jugular vein rather than a gentle way of bringing correction to a brother or raising questions about what he's sounding and expressing now and how biblical, there are ways of doing it.

Mercy is not just a little convenience, it's the essence of what God is in himself and we need to move in that or we'll not have it to extend to them and the place where we obtain it and express it at the first is in our own relationship when what we are about is true church and not just the casual conglomerate of saints who don't face each other and where mercy is not a necessity. Got the idea? Lord, mercy Lord, look at those faces, look at their hostility, look at their resistance. Can't you see it? That's the way it often feels to the speaker and he has to speak through that feeling because right at his elbow is the evil one saying,

look at them, they're completely turned off and they've heard enough from you cats and they're surfeited and they've had too much and they've come to a state, you know, your words are just falling to the ground, you better stop now.

Lord, these are elementary lessons. I'm happy that I have of what I can speak out of the history that you've given me privileged because we can learn vicariously from the elders in the church, that's what makes them elder, not their longevity but their greater age in the faith and they've gone through a more extensive experience than you and in hearing their experience we can vicariously adopt it. We don't have to wait for the opportunity where men will walk out on us after we have spoken.

We can sense what that humiliation feels like through the one who has experienced it and received the benefit and the lesson of it so that we can juggle out teacup, you know, without the strain. The most radical word I have ever been given to speak and a word of such a kind, a radical word is of the kind that can easily lend itself to be misconstrued and the earthly minded can take such offense at that while the spiritually minded are being blessed beyond all speaking. Well, I had two lines before me at the end of that message in the Hilton Hotel in Washington D.C. at a full gospel regional conference.

I was only seven years old in the Lord. I had hardly gone beyond giving my testimony. One of the first messages that I was to give and the Lord said, eunuch for Christ's sake, what did I know? And they served the banquet that night lamb, my favorite meat.

And I was on the platform. I had to leave my place at the table, turn away from that last temptation and find a place on my face somewhere behind the curtains to go down before speaking. But when I spoke, something came forth of so radical a kind that there are eunuchs that are born eunuchs, that freaky phenomenon of men who can never have the capacity to reproduce themselves.

There are eunuchs that are made eunuchs, forced, constrained, they're cut off, they're castrated so that they can serve in the courts of nobility and kings without touching the harem. They're not, they constitute no threat because they can't take advantage of it. And then Jesus says, and there are those eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs for Christ's sake.

And then I went on to explicate that as being the statement of the cross. And when I finished, well, there's one of those hushes, that terrible silence, when either you feel that you have goofed enormously or that what you're speaking is so unspeakably holy has never before been expressed that there's a silence that has come down from heaven and has encapsulated us in that silence. That's one or the other.

And when I looked up and gave an invitation, some people couldn't get to the altar fast enough to become eunuchs for Christ's sake, because that sexual thing touches the deepest aspects of self. And when you lay that to the altar, allow the axe to fall upon that, that really is the root that determines whether you're going to be all for him or only casually related. But there was another line.

There were those parents who wanted to become grandparents and watched their sons and daughters come to the first line and were angry beyond all speaking of what I had called them to do. They misconstrued the thought that this was, that they'll forsake sex and they'll never be able to have children and they always want to be grandparents. The anger was remarkable.

When we went that night up to the penthouse apartment of the head of the Full Gospel Businessmen, when Inger and I walked in, I felt like the proverbial turd. The moment we walked in, people turned their

shoulders. Here's that despicable man who dared spoil this full gospel conference by bringing a message with such sexual innuendo to heighten the issue more than just realizing that you've stumbled into something beyond what you could have imagined.

And you have to bear the angry reprisal is that a man came up to the platform and he said, I'm a prophet sent by God, a Jewish believer to tell you that you have missed the mind of the Lord. You have done grievous damage to the body of Christ and you need now to go back to the microphone and recant your message. How would you like to hear that after three days of fasting for one message, thinking yourself obedient? And that knife went into me and was turned right up to the hilt.

You know why? Because it might be true. And it's the prophetic tension in which every servant has to live that however much he has sought the Lord, however much he has fasted, however much prayed, however much studied, it could be that you have missed the mind of the Lord. And as much as you thought it would be blessing, it has become indeed something detrimental to the body of Christ.

That danger always exists. And every true servant lives in the conscious awareness of it, that the very next breath, the very next word, the very next message might be that. And that your past successes where the Lord has vindicated you and shown that this well-done, my good and faithful servant, does not inure you against the prospect that the very next message after that applause and celebration and success of having served the Lord might be that failure.

That's the tension in which the prophetic man has got to live continually. That guy never let me go. Shortly after that, we moved to Denmark.

This guy used to send me cables and telegrams on Jewish feast days reminding me that I needed to recant that message and that The Voice magazine would still receive my message to negate what was spoken. And how shall I know that this guy's wrong? After all, he's a Jewish believer and he's a prophet sent of God according to his own testimony. Why should I be more correct than he is? I had to live with that possibility.

And the Lord was not there to say, now, art baby. That guy's a flake. He's a self-appointed prophet.

I never sent him. You were obedient. That was the word of the Lord.

You need to know that it's going to evoke the kind of reaction and resistance that you see, but you faithfully served me. That was my heart. The Lord was totally silent, not just that day, not just that night as I arrived on my bed as a young believer.

Lord, did I fail you? But for weeks and months following, so much so that I refused to receive any invitation to speak anywhere. Who am I to speak? If at any time there is the danger that I would miss the mind of the Lord and do incalculable damage to the body of Christ. About three months later, after lying like a wounded dog, licking my wounds and God silent, I want to tell you, dear saints, the silence of God on an occasion like that is purest love.

Had he only spoken to alleviate my tension and allow me to breathe easily, he would have done a disservice to me. I needed to know what it means to bring the word of God in a baptism of fire that has, at every speaking, the prospect of such error and loss and that you could never have a supreme confidence. I needed to know this.

He had something more important for me than to alleviate my tension and gratify my soul by saying, well done, good and faithful servant. His love for me was to keep silent and allow me to pass through a baptism of fire and a suffering over the bringing of the word that when the release would come again to speak the word, I would speak it and prepare for it with a much greater solemnity and depth of seriousness than I would otherwise before have done. You understand? His silence was love and it will be love for you also.

There'll be times when you'll crave something from God, even a sense of his presence or a word or even coming from a brother or sister that what you're about is of God. It'll seem like a dead end. There's no profit to it.

You're not received and there's a hostility or a very scant politeness and where did you get this wacko idea anyhow to seek to establish relationship with Jews in your locality? You'll have every discouragement and the Lord will allow you to bear it because it's a refining. It purifies your soulish, the soulish elements that crave for recognition and as it came up in one of the committees last night, my observation in almost 40 years in the faith worldwide is that the most powerful thing I see working on Gentile Christians is a desire for Jewish approval. Unconsciously that Gentiles crave from Jews.

Jewish recognition is so devoutly to be desired that they will pant to get one word from a Jew that would be honorific. Why do we need that? They are the chosen people even in the present apostasy and to receive even a word from them of approval carries a resonance of heavenly things that even God intended but has taken this kind of perverse soulish form. So you need to be inured, I-N-U-R-E-D, of a need for Jewish approval.

If you can be indifferent to rejection, you can be equally indifferent to applause. You need neither the commendation of men nor their censure because you're serving the Lord Almighty and everything is unto the Lord, by the Lord, for the Lord, to whom be glory forever. But you see, that's got to be more than a creedal statement.

That's got to be more than quoting a scripture. It's got to be in you, that understanding, Jesus knowing in himself that he had come from the Father and was going to the Father. It's a deeper kind of knowing.

In Hebrews chapter 10, Paul celebrates a saint of his knowledge that has been completely stripped of everything and who took his strippings with joy, knowing within himself that he had a greater recompense in heaven. He didn't know it creedally, he knew it existentially. You guys, can you follow a statement like that? The question is, how do you come to that inward depth of knowledge that enables you to remain steady? And as I've already said in one of the meetings, when you guys solemnly considered at the end of, was it yesterday? It seems like a week ago, this call, and I heard the depth of your prayer and Dan's cry especially, which was summing up for the entire body, the recognition of the depth of this call.

I thought, this is not just a call to the Jews in the last days. This is a call to modernism. And in fact, a true witness to the Jew is a modern witness.

As we know from the first fruit of Stephen's modernism was the apostle Paul himself. Could anything less succeed with a man of that obdurate hatred of this devious sect called Christianity, though it did not at that time have that name, except a demonstration by a busboy of a magnanimity and a grace that forgives its murderers in the very act of being murdered? Where do you find that in orthodox Judaism? Where can law ever so fit a man to respond in a moment like that when his own blood is running into his eyes and mouth and speak with such concern, not for himself, but for those who are stoning him? Hey, this soul has too

much up here not to recognize that what is being exhibited and demonstrated before him exceeds anything that could be known under the word religion. This is altogether something transcendent.

This is something beyond religion. And he was pondering and weighing this demonstration because it did not come from some notable rabbi. It didn't come from some great commentator from a busboy from the lowest of the social levels.

So I'm sure that on the road to Damascus, as he's kicking against these pricks, trying to fathom its meaning, the Lord meets him. And in the moment of the Lord, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It came in. That testimony of Stephen and the call and the revelation of the Lord come together in a moment that left the man as good as dead.

That he neither ate nor drank for three days is not a man going on a voluntary fast. It's a statement of death. He lay there and I'm sure his whole life was going before him as he reviewed it and all of its pharisaical training as the prize student of the rabbi Gamaliel, but it was death and he needed to be brought to life by the laying on of the hands of one of the most ordinary and simplest of saints, Ananias.

How do you persuade a man who's called to safeguard the Jewish community from missionary efforts, not to construe you as being that threat and persuade him sufficiently to open the door to your visits? How do you commend him to him what you are about in a way that would sufficiently turn him to admit your presence? Because if you don't get behind beyond him, you don't get in. Because if we go deceitfully and dishonestly, we negate the whole thing that we are about. So we have a conundrum.

We have a built-in paradox, but I hope that you're sufficiently mature in the Lord to know that paradox is the wellspring of transcendent truth. Whenever you're stopped by what seems to be apparent contradiction, not only in scripture but in life, and pressed through what comes out of that seeming contradiction that seems so stupefying and for which there could be no conceivable answer, is an answer that you could not have conceived, but a transcendent wisdom that comes from God. Okay, you dear saints, I'm really elaborating this because this is critically important.

Praise God for it. If we don't give an answer to this question, if we don't resolve this in our own hearts, we're stopped before we begin. It's true, our ultimate intention is their salvation, no question about it.

We're under obligation to the Lord. Go ye into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem and unto Samaria and then to the outermost corners of the world, to the Jew first. They know that we have this obligation under the Lord.

So for us to say that we're not concerned for and don't desire their salvation or their conversion, that ugly word, because you know what the word conversion connotes to these Jews? Being forced to convert or die. That's why entire Jewish communities slit the throats of their children. How would you like to do that? Think of that, the dolly little things that are scampering around in these days with us that you, you the parent, have to see to the death of your own child.

Talk about Abraham and Isaac. And then when you're finished with your children, you can go to work on your wife. And then when you're finished with her and your whole family is a mound of bodies and blood, you can take your own life or have a brother do it for you.

That when the doors burst open in that closed synagogue where the Crusaders were hounding and shouting and yelling for your blood, who have crucified Christ, Christ killers, now you're going to get yours.

When the doors burst open, there was an eerie silence and the entire Jewish community was steeped in its own bloodbath. So when you say conversion, my Lord, talk about waving a red flag in a bull's face.

There is no more inflammatory word for Jewish consideration than missionary. And when I gave Ben Israel to this precious family for whom I've asked your prayer, Bina and Yisrael, in Brooklyn, the Lubavitcher community, and there was a dead silence for weeks. I thought, what have I done? Till finally she called me and her first question, Aaron, are you a missionary to the Jews? Because the book describes my coming to Kansas City, where I had the door slammed in my face, in the book.

So her question actually was, is that why you're here in Brooklyn? Is that why you've come into our family? You're a secret agent seeking to convert us to Christianity and that we would avoid our Jewishness and take on this Gentile identity to this miracle worker, this magician who walked on water in order to deceive Jews and take them away from the law. Two of their eldest daughters are married to rabbis. I've sat at the same table with their husbands in this movement.

A third is being married now. Their eldest son is a rabbi and living in New Zealand and visiting the New Zealand farms to make sure that their procedures are compatible with kosher rating. I'm going to come to that thing as a missionary, and yet am I not jealous for their souls? Do I not desire their conversion? Because I think somewhere in Isaiah, he says, God desires for all men to be converted.

But the word itself has been so poisoned historically that anything that begins to resemble that instantly brings a note of rejection rightly on the part of a Jew. So here's our conundrum. They know that we're under obligation to the Lord and that it's natural for us to desire that they should receive him.

And yet we're coming under the guise of wanting only to establish relationship and to come into a fraternal relatedness with our brothers, even though we diverge over the issue of Jesus. How do we answer this question in truth is one of perhaps the most significant questions before us at this time. And we have to find an answer, not for ourselves, but for the church entire.

We cannot be devious. Why do we press Jesus? Perhaps it's a statement that we have not an adequate faith of his own ability to convert. For he, how does it say it? He converts to the uttermost all who come unto God through him.

Is it through him or through us? And maybe if we have a works mentality, or we have not a sufficient appreciation for the grace of God and the work of God as being exclusively his that only employs us as he will, we can relax and have no obligation to put the pressure. But most Christians want to put a notch in their own belt. They want the trophy.

Hey, listen, we're fishermen. We know what that means to come back with an empty creel. You want to have something for your involvement and come back with a specimen that's instinctive in men.

And it's not dissolved because we're believers. We want to catch and we want the admiration of believers because we're the ones who hooked and reeled that one in. So here's another interesting, powerfully significant thing that needs to be considered.

How can we be free of that unconscious force in our personalities that desires to succeed and to obtain a fish and to win a soul and to not put a notch in our belt? How long can we go on without seeing any evident success for our involvement and our sacrifice and yet continue to be faithful? It may well be that that Jew will not see the Lord until the day of his appearing, when we shall see him whom we have

pierced. And on that day, mourn for him and mourn for him in that day all the more because the testimony and witness that you gave that seemed to be like water off the duck's back was resident and was inward and now is called for in the moment of the seeing, just as the testimony of Stephen was called for in the moment that Jesus appeared to Saul. But can you labor without evident success? Can you labor faithfully without visible reward? Because this whole society, this civilization is a now civilization.

You get your gratification now. You win your reward now. Even when you sign, you have a million plus dollars signing bonus, let alone the millions you're going to receive as an athlete.

Everything in our society is predicated upon present reward, but the kingdom of God is predicated upon deferred reward. And when you read the roll call of the great giants of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11, it says, and these all died not having received the promise. It's not that one or two of them did not receive or that a majority did not receive some fluke from God that he'll later make up for.

Not one of them received from Abraham right through to the roll call of all of the giants of the faith. They all died not having received the reward. They died not seeing the gratification for which they labored and sought, but they saw it from a distance and they knew that in the next life, in the life to come, there will be the full reward of God's intention and promise.

Can we wait for the next life? Here's another interesting question. Are we this life oriented? Or are we the world to come oriented? And which orientation is becoming to an apostolic and prophetic saint being groomed to be the bride of Christ? Are we this worldly or otherworldly? Because that phrase is spoken with contempt to be otherworldly. Well, Inga, I get it.

You know, the moment she comes in, are you guys in heaven or can I bring you down to earth? She's always nagging in that way and hanging onto the skirt of her husband lest he taken up into the stratosphere and be lost forever. So I'm always hearing the screen needs repairing. The faucet is leaking.

There's no air conditioning in the kitchen. It's too hot and it's unbearable. Nothing but a litany of earthly vexations and complaints from the moment I arrived to the moment I'll leave.

And I think what is working is not that these complaints are not legitimate, but there's a desire from a woman who does not share the same spiritual perspective to get me on the same ground that she enjoys and in which he is secure. You understand that? You can pray for us. So what world do we occupy while we're yet on this earth and in this span of lifetime? Where are the predicates of our true reality, foundation, and value? Can you understand that? It says Jesus speaking to Nicodemus said to him, no man ascends who has not first descended, even the son of man who is in heaven.

You ever read that in John chapter three, here's Jesus speaking to Nicodemus on the earth in Jerusalem as the son of man and saying that while I'm speaking to you here on earth, my effectual life, the constituents of my reality are not here on this earth, but are in heaven. And that is God's normative intention for every sink. What we need is heaven, more heaven while we're yet in the earth.

And what we're doing and bringing to the Jews is in fact, some measure of heavenly things. But we still have to face the stubborn fact that they are lost souls. We desire their salvation.

They know that we desire their salvation. So how getting back to that question, do we express ourselves to the Jewish community leadership of why it is that we're wanting to come and to be received in their presence? Jews are so centered in man and human accomplishment that they can almost be insulted by

the statement of the Lord that no man can come except the father draw him. That even if you had a willingness, you cannot come except that that's a grace provided and drawing you.

So it robs man as being the instrument of his own salvation. So we need to be deeply Calvinistic and less Armenian and know that the issue is not our man, what we're going to perform, but what the grace of God performs for he saves to the uttermost all who come unto God through him. So that's the dynamic that God has to work.

I don't know, does that answer the question of how we speak to these authorities that we have no such intention? We're not missionizing, we're not proselytizing, we're there to enjoy the benefit of that relationship. We're honoring them. We're making up for the deficit of the generations in which this relationship has been voided and that it's not a device or an expediency to get in an order to snare their souls.

The transfiguration of Jesus on the mount and that the disciples went down under the sight of that glory when they heard the voice of the father, this is my beloved son, hear ye him. And then I think the text says, and they saw no man but Jesus only. And some commentator said they did not even see their own seeing.

They did not see their own seeing. They saw no man but Jesus only. They did not see their own humanity.

They did not see their own seeing. They lost their self-consciousness even as being agents that see, which is the sublimest seeing. They were separated even from themselves as being vessels who perceive.

If that doesn't make sense, I can't explain it. But when I read that, I went, wow. Talk about transcendence.

Not only did they see no man, they did not see their own humanity. They saw no man but Jesus only, and they did not see their own seeing. Well, if we can come to some sublime, transcendent state of that kind where we are really Israelites in whom is no guile at all.

We're not feigning something and not giving the appearance of something while we have some ulterior motive. That's the kind of presence that needs to come into their midst, trusting God to do his salvational work, and we just to express whatever it pleases him by his spirit to give. We have no need to see them saved to put the notch in our belt and to win the success.

That is with the Lord at some time that he'll be pleased to do it. If they point-blank ask, are you here to convert us? Because it implies to them that they are in a place of spiritual inferiority and that we're coming with a superior thing and from a superior personal place. So this whole issue of conversion is loaded psychologically, emotionally, and historically.

Everything is weighted against us as I'm so fond of saying in my observation of this mystery for 40 years, every card is stacked against us. God could not have given us a requirement more difficult to penetrate than the issue of the Jew, and he's allowed and made it difficult for that very reason that we would be totally cast upon the grace of God. And Paul's generation to be a believer was considered one of many Judaic sects.

So there's a certain legitimacy and acceptance on the part of the Jewish community to that sect, so much so that they were allowed into the synagogue. The Gentile believers as righteous Gentiles and God-fearing people who wanted to be further inducted into Judaism, though they were believers in Christ.

What's happened since is the Holocaust, the pogroms, the Spanish Inquisition, the burnings at the stake, the mass suicides, the forced conversions, the whole polluted corrupted history of the church and the Jew, which Paul did not have to factor in and work against, are the things that are part of our quandary.

So this is the tension. He states a classic requirement that is as incumbent upon us as it was him, but in the realistic walking out of that with that intent, we have to also recognize what has happened historically that raises such enormous barriers to the promulgation of the faith and even to be in a place of hearing. It was for me a revelation to become the head of the New York work of the mission to the Jews that recruited me out of high school teaching.

After being sent to Kansas City and laboring for three years, I was called back in my fourth year to head their principal outreach in New York City itself. They had a seven-story building on 72nd Street. And what I learned in that one year is that though we're in the midst of the Jewish community, the greatest residential Jewish community in the world, to be near was yet to be far, that there was no direct access.

You could not come into the synagogues in the way that Paul did in his time. You could not come into Jewish institutions and schools. You could not even come into a Jewish neighborhood and to ring the bell or go to an apartment out facing the doorman and being able to establish why you're there and he buzzes and sees if not one will receive you.

In a word, what I learned is that at every hand there were obstacles, there were obstructions, so that the frustration was you're in the midst of two and a half million Jews, you're near, but you are practically speaking far. See what I mean? Mere proximity does not mean access. So now we're considering, by the Lord, finding an access by establishing relationship and how to communicate that and to alleviate Jewish fear that what we represent is some new cunning and insidious gimmick to rob their souls.

So we have not been this way heretofore and it requires such wisdom from the most high. No single believer is virtuoso enough to show the grandeur of the faith in himself and that the grandeur of the faith and of Christ is evidenced in the relationship between believers. Love has got to be expressed between one and another.

The wisdom of God requires a conveyance and an object, a subject. So we have to disabuse ourselves of thinking in individual virtuoso terms. In the long run, the way in which the revelation of the Lord is going to come is not by the superiority that we may enjoy in individual ability, but what can only be expressed in the matrix of the corporate life.

They've got to see not just an individual, they've got to see the reality of the kingdom as it is expressed in our own relationship with each other and with them and before them. So just to register that note, because everything is so individualized in our present society and civilization that we lose the genius of what is corporate. The Lord has got to be revealed in his body.

It's in the dynamic of the operation of God through his body that he is exhibited and seen. Okay. Scripture says, be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks of you for the confidence that you have in your faith.

So our task is to promote that question, promote that asking, because they see something of such an imponderable kind that they cannot equate with Gentiles that they're compelled to ask, and then we're obliged to answer. Okay. Need to be made virginal and have the heart of God for this people who in their

present condition are often unattractive and abrasive and irritating and arrogant and superior, so that if there's anything to be played upon that's yet resident in us, it will find its place.

So maybe the word of God itself, we're cleansed and purged by the word. Even our discussion is a cleansing, but it behooves every one of us as Gentiles, and by the way, Jews not exempt from being anti-Semitic themselves, but as Gentiles coming out of a culture that has been anti-Jewish, anti-Hebraic, that believed in the protocols of Zion, that there's some kind of world conspiracy on the part of Jews, and that they control the press, they control finance, and that there's sufficient evidence of their placement in these things to support such fear. We need to ask God to wash by his blood and give us a virginal disposition for this people, which is his own, and not only to flush out anti-Semitic residue, but philo-Semitic, which is the other side of the same coin, which is to say a kind of an affection with the mystique of Israel, a romantic kind of imagining about them that is just as phony and really opposed to the truth of the relationship with the Jew as to be anti-Semitic, as to be philo-Semitic.

So you want to be voided of all soulish disposition, whether it's for or against, because they're both in essence negative, and what we want is the authentic heart of God, and he'll not press himself if we clutch and retain something of a soulish thing that warms our hearts, or that we have come to enjoy and delight in, which is not given of him. So there needs to be a spring cleaning of both philo as well as anti-Semitic things that might yet be residue. You know that phrase that there's no fury like a woman's fern? There's no anger against the Jew greater than that one who is disappointed in his love for the Jew, because that love is more an extension of our own soul than it is the unconditional love of God, and when that is offended or disappointed, what seemed to have been first an affection for the Jew becomes a hatred.

So I think that the vilest forms of anti-Jewish hatred are not going to come from the rank and file. We might reasonably expect it from those who now profess an affinity or a love for Israel, but it's more the work of their own soul than it is the divine reality. That will be disappointed, where divine love can never be disappointed, because divine love, unlike human love, is unconditional, does not require anything from the object loved.

It's the statement of the lover rather than the object, and that's the condition to which we must come and remove every lesser thing in order to receive that holy thing and to express it. It's because if we've had this kind of soulish fascination and affiliation with them, for whom else have we had it? Benny Hinn and the gospel heroes and the false celebrations of all kinds. If we're to be effectual in his behalf for this people, we must be the ground and pillar of truth itself, not just in our credal statement, but what we are in ourselves, the word made flesh, and our relationship with them will bring us into exposures about ourselves that would not otherwise have been seen.

This gives me opportunity to share something that a number of you may have heard from me, but it doesn't hurt to express it again. If the reality that is to be conveyed to the Jewish community is in its heart apostolic, the high priest and the apostle of our confession must did not issue from the same place from which it issued in Paul, namely his first verse and the statement of Romans 9 through 11 is that he would wish himself a curse for his brethren's sake, and that there's such a cry of identification with his brethren, and that he's willing for the forfeiting of his own salvation, that they might know Christ. That's the deepest heart cry of identification, but it has been dismissed by the church as a Jew identified with his own Jewish people ethnically, but if we see the identification not being ethnic, but apostolic, it has an implication for us of a totally new kind.

That is to say, if Paul's cry does not issue from his ethnicity, his Jewishness, but from his apostolicity, that means that we can have a cry of that kind to the same degree that the wellspring of our life is not ethnic, but apostolic. Do you understand me? To say that Paul spoke out of his apostolic heart is to say that he spoke out of his union with Christ, and that what his cry was Christ's cry, and that that cry then is the sounding of the whole mystery of three chapters, 9 through 11. It begins with the cry, and it ends with, unto him be glory forever.

So, here's a remarkable paradigm for us in the last days. If we're to end with the glory of God forever, and the consummation of the great mystery of Israel's restoration in the last days through the church, must it not also begin with a cry of a comparable kind? And that we cannot absolve ourselves and say, well, you can't expect of me what issued from Paul, because I'm not like Paul Jewish. I'm a Gentile.

The issue is not your ethnic, racial, generic origin. The issue is, to what degree are you in the place of apostolic reality, in communion with the apostolic heart of the Father? Then, to that degree, as Paul was, you'll express, and the foundation of your outreach, your ministry and relationship, issues from that identification, that compassionate cry. See what I mean? That's a wholly new way of viewing the relatedness to the Jew.

That is not to be dismissed, well, that Paul could say that because he's Jewish. No, Paul said that because he's apostolic, and we will say that to the degree that we are apostolic also. So to what degree can we say, evaluating our present Christian life, that we can say with Paul in truth, for me to live is Christ.

In him I live and move and have my being. To what degree are we living in ourselves, still living in our own humanity, subscribing to correct doctrine, employing it from time to time, but essentially what issues from us, issues from this side of the resurrection, we are not living out and walking in resurrection life because our own human and natural ability and proficiency is sufficient for most demand and requirement that comes to us in our modern life, even in our Christian life, even in our church life. But when we begin and commence a relationship with the Jewish community, we will find that what is natural, however well-meaning, however well-intending, however skilled, is not enough, and that the only life that will serve the great design of God in his majestic intention of the reconciliation of the church with the Jew is the life that broke the fetters of death and raised him from the dead and ascended him on high.

Do you have the faith to believe for that life and to live in it consistently and to speak out of it and your compassion is not some human equivalent, your affection is not some soulish thing that comes up out of the corridors of your own humanity, but is the very heart of God with whom you're in union, that if he ceased, you cease, that you're dead and hid with Christ and God until his life is revealed, until that you have no life, and it's a no man's land, it's the most uncomfortable feeling to be cast so totally upon God's life, upon the reality of resurrection, that if his life is not revealed, you're a dead man. You have nothing to say, you have no calmness, you have no attractiveness, you have no cleverness. People think, oh, you're going to be a wonderful house guest because they heard you publicly under the anointing and assumed that that's you.

No, if the same God who gave the grace of anointing and unction publicly does not give something comparable in a house visit, you're just a dull thud and you've got to be willing to be a dull thud if you're going to enjoy his life when it will be revealed, not when you commandeer it, not when you want to see it invoked for your convenience when he is pleased to give it. There's a suffering and a humiliation and that total dependency upon that life, unknown by most Christians who subscribe to the truth of resurrection as

doctrine, but do not eminently live and have their being in that reality. And this is the whole issue that must be formed in us and expressed through us to them, that for which they will not be able to gainsay.

So I want to end on that supreme point. So put a seal, my God, on this morning. Thank you for the precious privilege of it.

Let nothing fall to the ground because we are clever to retain it, but because you who have given it are also able, my God, to keep it in our thought and heart and spirit and life and bring it to full consciousness and conduct and effect. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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