

(K-Char-01) the Knowledge of the Holy

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God's judgments and wrath in order to understand his mercy and love, and warns against substituting our own knowledge for God's.

Duration: 1:05:03

Scripture: Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 7:21, Acts 2:38, Romans 1:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Knowledge of the Holy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the magnitude of sin and the need for contrition and brokenness. He highlights that a shallow concept of sin hinders our understanding of the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus. The speaker criticizes the message of some Christians who focus on personal benefits rather than the true message of the Gospel. He also challenges the church to consider moral questions and the role of God in a world filled with injustice and suffering.

Transcript

Lord, don't let me bumble my way through. The subject is too critical. And what shall we ask, Lord? Not the least, that we should come away with a sense of divine discontent with our sense of knowledge of You.

That we would not be self-satisfied or self-applauding that we have arrived, that we have a comprehensive knowledge of God, that we have our doctrinal house in order, and yet miss the sense of Yourself that evokes awe, reverence, devotion, and ultimately, adoration. So we're asking, Lord, that You'll use this time to stir us to that quest, which is a lifelong quest. Whoever arrives at that kind of knowledge, but who will ever begin to attain it, who is not aware of the need.

So, Lord, help us in this, my God, I pray, to feel our way into this subject. We thank and give You praise, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Have you understood anything that I've said so far? No? Okay. Maybe just to reiterate a few of those things. We mustn't assume that if we are correct doctrinally, that that implies that we have a knowledge of God as God.

Just put that into your thinker. Put that into your consideration. We mustn't assume that because we have a correct doctrinal understanding, that that equates and is equal to the knowledge of God as God.

What am I saying by that? Am I in any way negating the necessity for correct doctrine? Not at all. It is greatly to be desired. But we would be naive to think that merely to have a correct doctrinal understanding in itself constitutes the knowledge of God in a way that He needs to be understood, appreciated, loved, served, worshipped, adored.

It would be tragic if we substitute doctrinal certainty for this deeper awareness. They are not opposed, but we must not think that the one constitutes the other. Thank you, Lord.

So I'm looking at a book that has come into my hand just before departure by A. W. Toza, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. And his first chapter is devoted to the question, why we must think rightly about God. And his prayer that commences this chapter is that they that know thee not may call upon thee as other than thou ought, and so worship not thee but a creature of their own fancy.

It is possible, even in the name of Jesus, to substitute a deity of our own making and our own creating for the one who in fact is. The fact that we put the name Jesus on something that constitutes our knowledge and sense of God doesn't necessarily assure us that we are celebrating the God who is God. That name can be applied casually and indifferently and well-meaningly by many who do not understand and have not identified and been in a true relationship with the Lord as the Lord.

So the mere use of the name is not an assurance. It might actually be a gate to deception, how careful we need to be. That's what he's praying here, that we might call on God, not as the God who is, but the creature of our own fancy, our own imagining, and especially his charismatic generation in the prosperity era.

And the desire for health, well-meaning, blessing is so easy to have an inward image of who it is that we think that we're calling upon as one who will do our bidding and satisfy our need, but we're not calling upon the God who is God and the Lord who is Lord. It's a deity, it's an image, it's an inward projection. We're making God in our own image.

The fact that we put the name Jesus on that image does not make it in fact Jesus. These are the dangers and the pitfalls of which we need to be conscious. So how then can we have an assurance that the Lord whom we're calling upon is in fact the Lord and that the God that we're celebrating is in fact God? This is a real quest and we need the input that comes to us from men like Toza who have wrestled over questions just like this and are not often to be found in our generation, who praise that therefore enlighten our minds that we may know thee as thou art so that we may perfectly love thee and worthily praise thee, that we might know you as you are.

Playing around with Scotty's kids this morning at the breakfast table, I was told that one of them is a thinker, that that's what distinguishes him. He's a young little kid. I said, well, what do you think about the recent devastation of Katrina? You think it was an accident, a geological disturbance, a kind of thing, an event that takes place in nature? Or is there another explanation for a disaster? Could you believe that God himself is in that disaster? And if that's true, wouldn't that make God cruel? How could God be in a disaster that destroys communities and leaves a thousand or more dead? And there are greater devastations than that numerically.

If God is the author of those devastations, how can we reconcile that God with what we understand of God as love, justice, mercy, kindness, goodness? Got the idea? That's a remarkable question to place to a 10 or 12-year-old kid. But is it one that we ourselves are able to consider? Can we reconcile God in wrath,

anger, and judgment as being also the God who is the God of love, kindness, goodness, and mercy? Or do we keep those considerations from us for fear that if we open ourselves to those considerations, we might lose the little measure of security that we presently enjoy about who we believe God to be? You do, poor dear. Such a visitation should not come upon you.

You guys are about to graduate? Is that it? Imagine if you're still wet behind the ears. Imagine if you're ready to go out into your ministries and you have an inadequate sense of God as God, that you don't know him as you ought, and that he's more the projection of your own fancy and your own minds than what he is in himself, because you have never opened yourself to consider those kinds of questions about God in judgment, God in anger, God in wrath, that would threaten the safe way in which you like to believe God to be. Unless you're willing to take the risk of that threat, you're in danger of deception about your knowledge of God.

Unless you have factored in God in judgment and God in wrath, how shall you know God in mercy? What is mercy independent of wrath and judgment? In fact, the deepest love of God, someone has rightly said, is the love of his judgments. Can you imagine not just tolerating the judgments of God? Well, I guess it was necessary. I'm not happy for it.

It discomforts me that he would go that far and express his anger and indignation at a cost so great, but what can I do? I just have to tolerate what God chooses to do, but I'm not happy for it. I find it difficult to reckon myself with a God who will do that, like the Holocaust, the Nazi Holocaust and six million Jews. 1.1 and a half million of them were children and infants.

And to say that God was present when that took place and knew it and did not intervene to impede or to stop it, or even to go further, that what took place was in fact in keeping with his will and even his word, that had been spoken in earlier statements in Deuteronomy and Leviticus and through the prophets and Psalms, that there will be a last days devastation and that this is that devastation and that God is fulfilling his word in something that takes six million Jewish lives who are his covenantal people. Are you guys following me? Am I from Mars? You know what's wrong with you? You're American, all too American, which is to say you don't wrestle. You don't anguish.

You want comfortable and assuring thoughts about God, about yourself, about your future, about your ministry. You don't want to be jostled. You don't want to be discomforted.

You don't want to have your category stretched out or put into question. You're nicely approaching graduation, and so who brought this character in to upset you in any way? Except that this itself is the mercy of God. I wouldn't want you visited on your generation if you are presently in a place of shallowness with regard to God.

However correct you are in your categories. The world doesn't need correction, correct categories. It needs the reality of God as God.

And remember that when Jesus was crucified, they took his garment, and they could not part it because it was seamless. They had only to gamble for the entire thing because the garment of Jesus is one whole thing without seam, which means that his judgment, wrath, the anger, indignation of God is as much part of God as his mercy, his goodness, his kindness, and his love. In fact, if you had a more prophetic and deeper understanding, your ultimate recognition would be that his judgment, wrath, and anger, and indignation is the mercy of God.

It's not something opposed to the mercy. It is a mercy. That when every other device has failed, and men will not heed nor regard God in his mercy to keep them from a final cataclysm called hell, he will bring devastations in the earth in the hope of obtaining a repentance and a return.

When everything else fails, God will use judgment, not in a punitive way, but in a redemptive way in the hope of stirring people to the consideration of himself as God. Got that? So I appreciate men like A.W. Tozer who have wrestled with these questions. If you haven't seen my book on the Holocaust, you need to.

The Holocaust, where was God? How can we account for so great a catastrophe in modern times through the most enlightened nation of the world, Germany, that gave to the world Heinrich Heine, and Mozart, Beethoven, and Immanuel Kant? Do you know these names? Kant is the most profound ethicist and philosopher who gave the world a definition of ethics, what is right. Germany is a philosophical nation, a deeply cultured nation, great in writing, science, philosophy, music, and yet also the engine of the destruction of Jews in modern times through the Holocaust, in the same Germanic genius with systematic ability that was required for the execution of six million? Have you considered how can that be? How do you reconcile a nation that is exemplary for its culture and the magnificence of its civilization is also the engine of the destruction by the same German genius of six million Jews almost abolishing and eliminating entire European Jewry by the same qualities that make that nation to excel as civilization? If you have not considered that question, you're not yet ready for ministry. You're not yet ready to graduate.

You're not yet ready to bring anything to anyone. If you have not raised that question and considered that question, the church that has refused to consider it is itself, what shall I say, wanting, is pathetic. The failure to consider the great moral questions of our generation robs us of any moral sense.

And what is a church that has not a moral sense of what is right, what is just, how do we explain, how do we understand God in a world of this kind and how much of its malfunction is already his judgment? And his judgment for what? So in my book, which has evoked the most hostile reaction in the two Jews I know that have read it, one was the head of the Israeli Bible Society. I don't know how he got the book, but he said usually I throw such stuff directly into the garbage, but yours was so unbelievably vile, so reprehensible, so altogether disgusting that I'm required to write you and to, what's the word, rebuke you because the thesis and the theme was totally vile in his consideration. What's the theme? That the Holocaust was not an aberration of history.

It was not a mistake or an accident. If Hitler had not lived, that the Holocaust was itself a fulfillment of those things that had been prophesied in Hebrew scriptures, in Deuteronomy and Leviticus and in other places, of what would befall us in the last days for our covenant rejection of God. At night we would hope, wish it were day, at day we would wish it were night.

The sword would come to us and the terror of the chamber within, I think I'm quoting from Deuteronomy 32, that even gives a picture of the chamber, the gas chamber, and it talks about the bodies stacked up, that the infant and the ancient, and the gray-haired and the aged, and then the young men and the women, was exactly the composition of the bodies when those ovens, gas ovens were opened. On the bottom were the aged and the infants and on the top were the young men and the women. Why? Because in the process of suffocation, as the gas began to fill that chamber, those that had the virility and the strength clambered to get up to the top where the air yet remained, and those who were the weakest, the infant and the aged, remained at the bottom.

That's spoken of in Deuteronomy chapter 32, as if God foreseeing the consequence that the judgment would take already gives a picture, fulfilled explicitly and in detail in the time of the Nazi Holocaust. Can such a judgment be deserved, if it is judgment? And of what are we Jews guilty, that would justify that kind of judgment that not only takes the adults, but the children? A million and a half of the six million were children and infants, surely they're innocent. Why should they suffer the consequence of the guilt of their parents? Except that God says, that the guilt of the fathers comes upon the children to the third and fourth generations.

That part of what makes judgment judgment is that the innocent suffer with the guilty. Oh, you dear guys. Lord, mercy.

See, you even need mercy to consider these questions. And up till now, you've not needed mercy. All you've needed was to be clever.

But if you've not needed mercy even to consider these questions, how shall you have mercy to extend? Because there's yet another Holocaust coming. The time of Jacob's trouble, that Jesus said, if this time were not cut short, no flesh would survive. But for the elect's sake, the time will be cut short.

In Matthew 24 and Luke 21, when Jesus was asked, what are the signs of your coming and of the end of the age? There's coming a time of trouble for the nation, such as it has not ever before known or will ever again know. And if that time were not cut short, no flesh would survive. From just that kind of reading, and I'm no great Bible scholar, I would say you would have to conclude he's speaking about something yet future.

Because he's asked, what are the last days signs of your coming? And he's saying, a time of trouble. Spoken of in Daniel and Jeremiah 30-31, the time of Jacob's trouble. And that's future.

And it will exceed every previous trouble that Israel has known. That means that the magnitude of that which is future will exceed the Nazi holocaust. That if Nazi holocaust took 6 million, what will this holocaust take? Because when Jesus comes, two-thirds of those present in Israel and Jerusalem have already perished.

The women are ravaged. And one-third passes through the fire. If that ratio is true, not just with Jews that are in the land at the time of the Lord's appearing, but Jews in the world, two-thirds perish.

We're talking roughly about the annihilation of 10 billion Jews in modern times. In your generation that is yet future, how are you going to stand it? How are you going to bear it? Maybe you'll be among those that will fall away from the faith. Because Paul said in the last days there'd be a great apostasy and a great falling away.

And I think it will come from the disillusioned, shallow Christians who had happier expectations and cannot reconcile devastation of this magnitude with God who is righteous. They were unprepared for the realities of the last days because they did not understand nor know God as God. Because they did not factor in and had no stomach for his judgments.

I'm probably the only guy alive from whom you'll hear these things. And the fact that I am alive yet to speak to him is a mercy from God. Because such a man is not fit to live.

Remember when they threw dirt on their heads and vowed that Paul was not fit to live? I'm every day more approaching that definition. Because the world wants to put its fingers in its ears. My Jewish people do not want to be warned of coming catastrophe.

They say, this shall not come upon us. And that is the very statement of their apostasy and their unbelief. You can pray for me.

Three years in New York City without any visible fruit. Called by God explicitly and supernaturally. Come to New York, Art, and be present to the Jewish community there.

Three years. Maybe a dozen contacts in that time. Some very big fish who have shunned me, scorned me, slammed the door in my face, full of contempt.

Because what I represent, even though they won't give me an opportunity to articulate and speak it, is reprehensible and vile. Because it has to do with a sense of impending disaster that human flesh shuns to consider. This is the special duty of prophets to bring.

The sense of impending judgment. What's the difference between true prophets and false? The false prophets placate. They make nice.

They defer to men. They tell them they have nothing to fear. Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

And Jeremiah says, you've healed the wounds of my daughter lightly. The true prophet speaks to things as they in fact are and will soon come to be. Because he knows God and is not offended by the judgments of God and will proclaim them even though people despise him for that very proclamation.

So tell me, what is the church that has not a sense of prophetic responsibility and shuns itself from considering it, let alone expressing it? What kind of a church is that that has voided its prophetic responsibility to sound warning to its own generation of the judgments that are impending and imminent and must necessarily come to pass before and in the Lord's coming? What kind of a church is that? It itself is apostate. We must wrestle with the God who judges. And we'll know that we have surrendered to him and have come to a place of adoration because not only that we tolerate his judgments but we love his judgments because his judgments are righteous altogether.

In fact, can you know righteousness independent of the judgments of God? Paul talks about the righteousness that is revealed in the gospel. How? Because the Son of God suffers the judgment of God that should have come upon sinful men. But he takes it upon himself and bears the judgment and the stroke of God that leaves him mangled and so devastated in his own being that Isaiah 53 says he had no beauty that we should desire him.

He's marred more than any man because he's become the object of the judgment of the righteous indignation of his Father. That's the cup that he had to drink at Gethsemane. Have you understood that where Jesus suffered at the cross was the judgment of God? Because if you have not considered that then how shall you know righteousness? A holy God requires judgment and because animals could not themselves be the suitable object of that wrath but only a type of a once and for all sacrifice to come and man could not himself be it because it required something sinless then the Son of God himself had to bear it and voluntarily and freely did so and that's how the gospel is the revelation of the righteousness of God.

You cannot know righteousness if you shun the subject of judgment and have not made peace with a God who requires judgment for sin and iniquity because he is holy. And if you don't know the holiness of God and what that holiness requires and judgment against sin to placate how in fact do you know God? You know about him but you know him in a way that can be communicated to an unbelieving world that doesn't want to be disturbed or to a Jewish community that doesn't want to be warned. Can you persuade them? Paul said knowing the terror of God I persuade men.

If you don't know the terror of God how shall you persuade? Are you reading Oswald Chambers every day? Do you have a devotional life? Do you get up early in the morning before the day begins and spend time with the Lord in prayer, in his word and taking advantage of the giants that have left us such treasures to contemplate as A.W.

Tozer, Charles Spurgeon Oswald Chambers and today's selection from my utmost for us highest he cites the scripture in 2nd Corinthians for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him and talks about sin as more than just a series of boo-boos sin is a condition sin is inimical intrinsic to man something very deep then was required to save men from this heredity this utterness of sin and that provision is the crucifixion of Jesus at the cross of Calvary the message of the gospel which he says has lost its sting and its blasting power the gospel has become domesticated robbed of its power because we have not understood what it represents if you have not understood the enormity and the magnitude of sin the terror, the vileness of this

condition which is an affront to the holiness of God how should you understand what was required to expiate it we are no more we cannot exceed our concept of sin if our concept of sin is shallow as it is for most Christians even at their best everything else will suffer loss because we cannot then understand the cross the death of Jesus what was required to expiate this sin in the eyes of a holy God that the Son understood, recognized and was willing to bear freely and voluntarily came down heaven to become that sacrifice and what is our message when we say that we are sharing the gospel believe in Him and it will do you good and it will find you a boyfriend, girlfriend, health, prosperity, business what the benefits will be if you believe believing in what so I appreciated today's

selection we have ignored this issue of sin as a condition that is the deepest offense to the holiness of God the indifference of men to God the rejection of God and the world and maybe nowhere more hideous than when God is superficially acknowledged in the opening sessions of congress or the swearing in of a supreme court justice or other ways in which God is employed by men to sanctify and to justify their conduct and their operations as if He is some kind of an accommodation, someone to do our bidding that we can invoke but do not give Him the regard and the respect and the acknowledgement and the surrender and the worship which is His due there is a horrific rejection of God not only in the unbelieving world but even in the ostensible church that is an offense against His holiness

Jesus bore in His own person the whole mass sin, massive sin of the human race He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin and by so doing He put the whole human race on the basis of redemption He put it back where God designed it to be and anyone can enter into union with God on the ground of what our Lord has done at the cross it is finished and complete and I wrote in the margin it's not the act per se of sin so much as what it reveals of the truth of our condition somewhere in Matthew where Jesus rebukes those who are decorating the graves of the prophets and saying that if we had lived in the time of our fathers we would not have done to the prophets what they have done Jesus says all the blood of the prophets is upon you because you say that because you think that you are

absolved from the guilt of your fathers because you were born later and you did not yourself directly participate in their death that's how little you know of the truth of your condition you are not absolved because of the accident of time and history by which you were born after the fact that you say that you would not have done is the statement of your guilt because you do not understand the truth of your condition and therefore you are implicated and guilty of all of the deaths of the prophets from between the porch and the altar right up to the last and in fact before long you will even kill me there is a human condition dear saints in which we are all joined it's called sin and we are not absolved because we have not performed any grievous sin in our own experience so therefore for

what shall we be contrite or broken or trembling because unlike David we did not commit adultery with Bathsheba nor did we see to the death of her husband that's his baby that's his problem that's his sin oh yeah? so you think you are better than David? you think you made of better stuff than him? because you have not been brought to circumstances of the kind to which he was brought that made that sin possible for the sweet singer of Israel the king of Israel, the David that foreshadows the greater David to come that he was capable of that kind of sin but you are not you don't know yourself yet you don't know the truth of your own condition yet therefore you have not repented yet not based on what you did but what you are capable of doing by virtue of your nature how then shall you adore

the one whose sacrifice has saved you from the consequence of that condition and giving you the gift of righteousness in exchange how deep is your worship how much is it the work of spirit or is it soul and what is your message and what is your witness what is your authority what is your credibility if you have not deeply appropriated the cross because you have not seen yourself as identified with David and all who have slain the prophets sharing that human condition the fact that you grew up in nice middle class neighborhoods does not absolve you that's why the first public act of Jesus was to go down into the Jordan and be baptized of John and John was astonished I need more to be baptized of you what are you doing Jesus says this serves the purposes of righteousness I need to be

identified with the sin of my people just like Daniel of old who cried out our sins and by joining the nation in the waters of repentance I am not above their condition I am joined with them in it and I am already indicating what my destiny is at the cross I will actually bear that sin you know that the father so appreciated this voluntary act of his son that when he came up out of the water the heavens were opened and a dove came down and abided upon him and the voice of the father rang out and said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased the father was pleased by the act of his son who did not hold his skirts up as being holier than thou but went down into the place of repentance in identifying himself with the sins of the nation because he was the son of man as well as the son

of God got the picture so if we would say we have not done what our fathers did is to deny the truth of our condition as men our essential inexorable sinfulness so to say as being Poles Polish well we would not have done what the Germans did is to fail to identify yourself with the truth of the human condition what Germany did was more than a national sin it was a revelation of the condition of man and what he is capable of performing under the circumstances that permit it and that their culture and their civilization and being even the land of Luther and of the Reformation did not save them from being the executors of the Jewish nation and it is not because they are German it is because they are man and because we are man also whether we are Polish or anything else we need to identify

with them in their sin and be broken with them and sharing that identification and repent and have a remorse and a contrition or else you are going to be shallow complacent braggadocio, what's the word,

hot shots who know how the thing that you need more than anything else upon before graduation is brokenness and if you are going to wait for the sin of Bathsheba you will wait indefinitely you don't need to perform David's sin to share in David's condition you need only to identify with Psalm 51 and say, Lord I see myself like that blot out my transgressions I'm not waiting for it to be proved by my falling I know that I'm capable and if I've been saved from the shameful consequence it's only your mercy but I'm asking for forgiveness as if I were one with David in his iniquity blot out my

transgressions and take my iniquity from before me or what is my message you've got to be the message not just proclaim it or how do you appeal to men for repentance if you yourself have not obtained it and not been broken by the acknowledgement of the truth of your own condition our problem is our failure to see in the death of Jesus the truth of ourselves our disobedience and shallow presumption and indifference toward God and his requirement to be holy as he is holy this is not an option, this is a command if you remove the issue of holiness the cross has no meaning the sacrifice of Jesus is vain and equally is our message God requires holiness holiness requires judgment judgment reveals righteousness and all together they move us toward an apprehension of God as God am I sounding like

some Old Testament prophet am I bringing you some Jewish thing that the New Testament has negated or that the New Testament has fulfilled has God changed, is there an Old Testament God, New Testament God or is he the same yesterday, today and forever do you know God in the awesomeness of the Old Testament you can prepare yourself for Sunday's message on Psalm 18 begin to read it it is colossal it's a statement that not one of you can ever in a million years ever begin to conceive let alone express it's a knowledge of God as God that betrays and reveals our shallowness and until we can appropriate and come into the depth of that knowledge and understanding what are we and what have we before it came, Psalm 18 read it in advance it's staggering it's conceptual in a way that is completely

out of tune with our time so either our time and our age is out of tune with God or that Psalm is an anachronism that is only a curiosity that we need not take seriously but as for me in my house, I prefer to take Psalm 18 not only seriously but as definitively as being the statement of reality and as far as this age is concerned deception, vanity passing away, Psalm 18 is enduring, Psalm 18 is the statement of truth reality of God, timeless and eternal and it's to that that I want to relate myself and assimilate and walk and live in that reality because it will make you strange even before Christians, like today but if you're not strange, how are you in the faith because we're called to be strangers and sojourners if you're too comfortable if you're too accepted, if you're too socially

agreeable, you're a Christian but you're a nice guy too you're probably out of the faith even while you're subscribed to it's correct doctrines you've got to be strange, we are an anomaly we're out of joint with this age we're chafed by it, we can't bear it it's painful to live in this world and in this life and see it's advertisements, it's TV, it's ed, it's newspapers it's culture, let alone we should subscribe to it one dear lady who came to our prophetic school she said my son is the youth leader in the charismatic congregation of our location and they went from their youth meeting to see Kill Bill sanctioned by the church and that somehow they have a degree of spirituality by which they can listen to rap contemporary so-called music, rock see films of that kind and not be adversely

affected by it and the church sanctions that you guys hate the world, love not the world nor the things in the world you realize how despicable the world is and who is it's prince and it's architect, it's wisdom, it's ethos out from the bowels of hell and the most vile thing about it is not it's pornography and the vilest expressions that are immoral and amoral it's the things that are depicted as somehow good and

acceptable and benevolent and beneficial that are intrinsically false the day that I yanked out the cord from our television set is when I came into the room and saw my kids and the kids of the community watching a program on the Olympics, a drama of the love affair between a Russian and an American athlete and when I saw what was being depicted as romance and as love and there

was not an iota of pornography or any foul words spoken which made the thing much more vile because it was depicted as good I yanked out the plug and that was the end of the TV in my home Do you have that kind of sensitivity?

Are you chafed by living in this world? Do you see how vile it's values are? Do you see how it encourages men to mispend their life, their energy, their time How false it's values, it's aspirations, it's ambitions Do you see how much it is like something sweeping even into the church and affecting and coloring the church touching men for their ministerial ambition that are so often the leaders of our congregations are much more compatible with CEOs of corporations than they are with the prophets and apostles of old Have you not chafed over that?

Have you not anguished over that? Or have you made your peace with it and in your secret heart you even desire to be elevated and find a place of prominence in that very system Shame on you Sentimentality trivializes the cross as a rejection of its truth and allows men to have an attitude of utter impertinence and human arrogance against God in their sin My son is in that very condition both my sons and the one that I'm presently living with in Brooklyn with his long hair that I've got to pull out of the sink that is clogging the drain He would much sooner part with his life than part with his long hair What is it about that hair and his identification with it that is so central to his unbelieving being I won't hear a word about God though he's living with a man who is eminent in the purposes of God My own son pray for him Ariel whose name in Hebrew means lion of God and is far from anything approaching that condition impertinent, arrogant self-justifying who is now presently separated from his own wife and his own children being determined by the authorities of New Jersey whether he's a fit parent that can even see them without an adult supervisor and yet in total disregard of the God whom he so desperately needs Having grown up in Christian community my other son has just divorced his wife who is a saint and is arrogant in thinking that he has done God's service by that divorce For how can God expect him to live under those conditions with a wife who is nagging and carping and making his life miserable when there's a much more attractive prospect available if he could be free to enjoy it, which he has now done My own flesh and blood Oh you dear saints Mamma mia Lord And to live with that arrogance which is not recognized the conceit that thinks it can live independently of God while its life is absolutely messed up and children are its victims and still have no need of God where the need is so conspicuous and so great And I'm unable to communicate successfully with either son world figure that I am in the purposes of God with books in many languages I'm unable to persuade my own sons of the error of their ways What think ye of that?

How do we account for that? I wrote at the bottom of the page I like this edition, it gives you a place to write your own notes Are you writing? Do you have your own pens, your own reflections, your own meditations? You should be Even if no one else ever sees it it is good for you to be able to put yourself down on paper to make a statement, to articulate something, to form your own thoughts I needed last night to hear myself I needed last night to hear God on this subject which I had not yet apprehended but waited for my own mouth We need to speak, we need to write in order to hear, to define, to wrestle with and come to a reality of ascending We must be slow for this Like after the break, supposing I have nothing I've had enough already, who knows And we'll spend the rest of our time together with your questions Do you have questions?

And I said to Gary Volk's precious young son I said, look, what God has brought to your house a man who is almost 77, who has been a believer for 41 years has been all over the world the truth of God in remarkable and perfect ways and he can pass through your house as a guest for two days and you have not a single question to ask him Better to have an ability to raise a question than to have a glib and facile answer You know that I had come back from Southeast Asia and Africa and places like that It was the weather hot Well, we'll make a lot of sense for a ten-year-old kid But do you have a better question?

I've raided an African brother who drove with me to Minnesota, New York day and night, same car side by side stopping places for midnight snacks which was at the Kansas City iHop, and it was his name Mike Bick spoke five times to a hundred students and this black brother had not a statement or a question to make of me I had him side by side in the car for seven days from Minnesota to New York and I raided him for his failure to be able to conceive of a single question put to a man who was a walking trash Not my vanity does need to be a question but you need to be able to raise them to invite, to exempt, to extract, to draw out from the heart of God the deep things and the sacred things That's why I came to this mission I've done my best, I've done my best I've done my best, I've done my best but what will you do with the time that the Lord brought in in a once and for all occasion that will not be given again when will we again be together like this and have this ample opportunity for connection as given to us now and what have you made of that opportunity and if you're capable of making it, what does it say about the truth of your condition or shallowness, and what will you be communicating when you graduate?

People are amused when I meet someone, I'm immediately asking, what do you do for a living? Why do I ask that question? Because I want to know what they do, because what doers they are. They try to be a production line and punch some offer through something of a merely just to kick the wolf in the door. What do they do for a vocation? How do they spend the majority of their time? What is their significance? At first, what do they do? I wrote here, when the cross bearing Christ, the crucified Son of God, who was railed against and set into its socket with a thump, the ground recoiled and reverberated and quaked.

Can you picture that? Here's this tormented, stricken body being raised up and set into its socket, that when it went into its socket with a thump, something like a shock wave went through the whole of creation. We're even told that the heavens were darkened and that there were lightnings and earthquakes and rumblings. People came out of their graves.

And the enormity of the event of this Christ being raised up, set in its socket. Have you felt even a minor reverberation of that event, which reverberates still, though it was 2,000 years ago in its action? Has there been any quaking in your inner man? Has your foundation been shaken by the crucified Christ? You need to read Jürgen Moltmann's book, German theologian, The Crucified God. Make a note of that title, The Crucified God, Jürgen Moltmann, M-O-L-T-M-A-N-N.

Picture me sitting in the study of a pastor in Germany while his mother-in-law was sewing my torn pants. I'm sitting in my BVDs in the chill of his office, looking at his bookcase, as I just came from Mike Brown's office and looked at his bookcase and found the gem there. He's loaded.

And as I'm looking at this pastor's bookcase, my eye fell on one title, The Crucified God. Wow. I never thought of Jesus as the God being crucified.

God crucified? I said, I'm not leaving this house without that book. I don't care what it takes. If I've got to step over bodies, knock out windows, I'm not leaving without that book.

And I didn't. I left with that book. And that book made a massive impact in my soul.

Because the very title itself beggars the mind. God allowing himself to be crucified. What that means.

We need to ponder, you dear saints, the cross, the centrality of the cross, the significance of the cross, the death of Jesus, the issue of sin, of atonement, of expiation, of all of the words by which sin is dealt with and righteousness revealed and righteousness obtained. And by the way, two minutes before three, do you love righteousness? Come on. Jesus as the son of God loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

You cannot love righteousness without equally hating iniquity. And hating it when you recognize it in its most subtle forms, where it is paraded as something good and commendable and to be desired in the world. You've got to hate it in order to love righteousness, or you will lose the distinction of a son.

And what it earned Jesus was an anointing of gladness above his brethren. Love righteousness, you dear saints, and you'll not love it until you understand what was required to obtain it, and that the cross itself is the most profound revelation of God in his righteousness and his holiness and his honor through judgment. That the Jewish people are called to be a nation of priests and light unto the world and the very setting of the theocratic kingdom that shall have its rule out of Zion need themselves to be brought to be holy, who are today the head of the dream factory, Steven Spielberg, the rap artist that are promoting all that is filthy and vile and contrary to God.

What will it take to bring them to the place where they can take up their destiny as a priestly people and make him known? Whatever it's going to take, God is going to perform. Will you be able to bear it when it comes, or will you be offended by that God because you didn't understand him, because your notion was too shallow, because you couldn't reconcile how God would go that far and yet be a God of love, because you have not sufficiently considered the issue of eternity, and you're too narrow and myopic in your categories. So Lord, bless these children that they might be a blessing in this earth, in this disfigured earth, in this painfully contorted world that is so slipshod, so utterly sick, so vile in its sin and iniquity and unrighteousness and arrogance and impertinence and contempt of God, even in the church that ostensibly celebrates him, are these things to be found.

God forbid that these young people should be fitted into a system of that kind, but let them be a prophetic voice, a cry, a call to waken to the realities of God while there's yet breath. Help them, my God, even to recognize the need and truth of their own condition and to be willing to be brought into a deeper apprehension of the reality of yourself, which cannot come without pain, and that they're willing for that pain rather than they should live out their lives shallowly and superficially. Come, my God, and take this strange time and turn it to the eternal good.

And for that we give you the praise, the glory, and the honor, for it is nothing less nor other than purest mercy and altogether love. And we thank you that there's such a love as will not let us go. Thank you, my God.

Whether we understood you this morning or not, this afternoon, let every word that had its issuance from your heart in the throne find a place of lodging and come back to turn our heart and thoughts to you in a way that was deeper than we could have otherwise known if you had not so spoken. Receive our gratitude, Lord, for that mercy. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

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