

Span-06 Apostolic & Prophetic Foundations 3 of 8

by Art Katz

The sermon explores Elijah's prophetic authority and the radical obedience required to fulfill God's purposes in the last days.

Duration: 1:35:56

Scripture: Ephesians 3:8

Topics: "Prophetic Foundations"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experiences of preaching the word of God in various challenging environments. He talks about the exhaustion and difficulties he faced while delivering multiple sermons a day. Despite feeling inadequate and facing hostility, he relies on prayer and obedience to God's calling. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not manipulating God through fasting and highlights the power of God's strength in our weakness. He also describes a specific instance where he preached to Jewish university students who initially showed hatred and opposition, but he boldly proclaimed the kingdom of God and the collision between life and death.

Transcript

Good morning, students, visitors and guests. We are examining the life and ministry of Elijah, the quintessential prophet of the last days, who must come, must restore all things. The wilderness prophet, who confronts the ultimate system of world evil, symbolized by Ahab and Elijah.

The political and religious system brought to its ultimate perfection in opposition to God at the time of ultimate apostasy. We need to whistle. Wow, what a stage for God's man to make his entry.

And what an entry, by confronting Ahab himself, whose wife has already seen to the extermination of all of God's prophets. Yet the man stands with all boldness, not an iota of fear. He could be signing his death warrant, as we say.

And we need to hang on every word, every syllable, totally unpremeditated. He didn't have a prepared script. I don't have one this morning.

We must never have one. He is our preparation. As he gave Paul what to speak on Mars Hill, and Elijah what to speak before Ahab, and for me what to speak before you, and what we shall speak before kings

and authorities in the last days.

He gives words. He gives utterance. And what a statement this is.

As the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, then the word of judgment. It shall not rain nor dew, but according to my word. A death sentence for the nation Israel, spoken as effortlessly as if he were describing the weather, according to my word.

Well, we need to take weeks to examine that statement. Why does it begin as it did? As the Lord my God lives. Is that a little rhetorical flourish? A stylistic introduction? Or is everything contained in those opening words? This is a demonstration not only of boldness, audacity, but supreme authority.

Such an authority that the word of God's judgment is his word. It shall not rain nor dew, but according to my word. As we said yesterday, that's either the height of presumption, human arrogance and conceit, or very humility itself.

To whom would God entrust such a statement? Such an authority to command the very elements. And this is not some superhero. This is a man you can put in your pocket.

Wilderness prophet. Probably skinny. Totally unimpressive.

Externally. But what he is in himself is, as the French say, formidable. You have that in Spanish? Good.

Because you had it first. The French imitated you. So you know I'm intrigued? What is the key to this man's authority? It's certainly nothing external.

There's nothing about him externally that's impressive. Let alone formidable. And yet he arrests the attention of Ahab, and he gives him a command.

Speaking to the king, assemble all Israel before me at Mount Carmel. He wasn't making a suggestion. He was giving an authoritative command.

As if the authority of the prophet is greater than the authority of the king. You know what the remarkable thing is? The king, instead of drawing himself up to his full dignity, who do you think you are? A squirt? You puny little nothing? Don't you know who I am? Elijah is not at all impressed. After all, he's commanding the elements.

He's the spokesman of the very God. In an age of apostasy, when the whole nation has gone hooring after false gods, and celebrates the false prophets as the true prophets, this troubler of Israel knows who he is in God, as the living God of Israel lives, before whom I stand. What does that mean? When you stand before the living God, in authentic relationship with him, and the recognition of what he is as God, what are the Ahab's of this world? As Shakespeare said, and you do know Shakespeare, or I take you out behind the building and whip you.

It's a disgrace not to know who Shakespeare is. Just because you're a Christian, doesn't mean you have the right to be illiterate. You have all the more reason to know the geniuses God has given to mankind.

As Shakespeare said in another context, equally appropriate about Ahab, sound and fury signifying nothing. Bluster and bravado. Hot air signifying nothing.

What a remarkable contrast between two men representing totally opposite things. In the eyes of the world, one is the king, supreme authority over the nation, one who can command life or death, and has done so through his wife's instigation to the prophets of Israel. And the other one, virtually unknown, we've never heard of him until now, suddenly thrust forth on the platform of history, speaking very few words, but speaking them in an absolute authority that even commands the earthly king.

Are we looking at a moment in time in history? Or are we glimpsing the configuration of the last days? The church as a prophetic entity, obscure and hidden, unknown and ignored by the world, not where the action is, as the saying goes. Brought forth in point of time, at the crucial point, by God in His time, in His moment, to stand as ultimate confrontation to the powers of the world. And the last days collision between light and darkness.

The kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Am I exaggerating? Of what will be represented at the end, when these ultimate kingdoms collide? So if our class were smaller, and we were sitting in a circle face to face, and all speaking the same language, I would say to you, what is the key to Elijah's authority? This is more than human bluster. This is not macho bravado.

This is something quiet, that doesn't require amplifiers. It is not an external authority, registered by the appropriate decorum and dress and voice, of the kind that we ourselves have come to interpret as authority. What is authority? This is no small question.

If we are going to confront the world, in its own seeming authority, its power against power, authority against authority, what constitutes Elijah's authority? He has it unmistakably. Is it a gift that is bestowed? Something cumulative? That increases by obedience to obedience? Because in every act of submission to the obedience of God, there is an implicit recognition of the authority of God who speaks, and to submit to that authority, as Elijah arose and went according to the word of the Lord, is to receive the increase of authority? By submitting to authority? I don't know, but I suspect that this might be true. If it's true, we have authority in the measure to which we ourselves submit to it, and not reluctantly, but joyously.

However strange and contrary that requirement is, isn't that what we have been seeing here? In every obedience required of Elijah, God makes it a foolish obedience, a bizarre obedience, an obedience that requires the contradiction of all that Elijah should be given to understand. Contrary to his principles, to godly principles, to the law, to be fed by ravens, an unclean bird, is not God just expressing a whim? Is God conducting a test? Let's see where you are, Elijah. Are you more in love with the principles of God than the God of the principles? If I call you to something that contradicts, even your dearest understanding of God, what will be foremost for you? Your dearest understanding, or God himself? Are you following me? This has got to be over your heads.

You're too young to understand this. There is no way that you can. Just keep the tape for later.

But something is in my heart this morning, too deep for words, of what ultimate obedience is. It's nothing to obey God when he commands. As we say in North America, kid stuff.

Who will not obey when God commands? Is that an accomplishment? Is that a high watermark of spirituality? God commands, we do. But when he commands strangely, when he requires beyond our understanding, in a way that seems to put us in contradiction with what we understood about God, do we obey then? Or do we require God to conform to his own principles, and remind him that he might have missed his understanding? That an unclean bird is not the appropriate instrument to feed a prophet. Do

you know what I love about Elijah? And I think God loves the same thing.

Not only does he arise and go, but he doesn't even ask for an explanation. There is such a love for God that is measured by instant obedience, without hesitation, that requires no explanation. Well, it's one thing to be fed by ravens.

The next thing is to be fed by a widow, who herself is ready to die from starvation, and not even a Jewish widow. A Gentile widow from the country and city of Jezebel herself. Get thee to Zarephath, and I have commanded a widow there to feed you.

Now, just a minute, Lord. It's one thing to be by a brook and be fed by ravens. But this is enemy territory.

There is nothing more inhospitable and that enmity with the prophets of God than the spirit of Jezebel. There is nothing more hostile and less hospitable and there is nothing more enemy than the spirit of Jezebel against the prophets of God. And you're calling me to dwell in her country? You think that I'm exaggerating the ages-old conflict between Jezebel and Elijah? I wish you had been with me.

For two years in a Lutheran seminary, 65% women students and 100% of them were feminists. And witches. I was threatened to be thrown out of the school several times because I had the audacity to display my masculine audacity to call God He.

When everybody knows that what precedes the Father is the Mother Goddess of the Earth. In a Lutheran seminary, witches. A brother visited me one day.

I took him with me to school. He said, Art, the moment you walked into the room, you could feel the electric vibes. The moment you opened your mouth, with the most harmless statement, they were ready to pounce on you, to claw your eyes out.

I've never seen such vitriolic hatred of women against the men. But he said, of course. It's the old story of Jezebel against Elijah.

Then I understood in what we represented and why the atmosphere was so vicious and prevails still and will become more fierce to the end. And God says, go and dwell in Jezebel's country. Her capital city, Zarephath.

Can I interrupt myself? On my last trip to Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, there were three outstanding occasions when I did not sleep the entire night long. Last night came pretty close. But nothing like what I experienced in Manila.

All through the night. Physical suffering. Anguish of soul.

Fierce and disgusting sensual imagery. Like a man skewered and being turned on a spit. I traveled with another brother.

The Lord sends them out by two, hoping he would wake up. How could he sleep through this? My anguish and torment was unbearable. My head was coming off my shoulders.

Sleep an impossibility. Except for him. He slept perfectly.

Through the entire night. And left me to suffer alone. It happened three times.

Each time we came to the capital city of a nation. The powers of darkness. Evidently knew me.

And greeted me in a special way. As if little thing that I am, represented some kind of formidable threat to the unchallenged powers of darkness. That find their residence in the capital city.

I'm not saying these things to draw your attention to me. To draw your attention to Elijah. Remember the brook dried up? But that was not reason for Elijah to pick himself up.

To find some other alternative. To make some rational adjustment. After all, we're not called to be fools.

God has given us a mind. The brook is drying up. So what are you going to do? Wait there and expire? You're Elijah.

God's very own prophet. I'm the only one left. You've got to preserve your life.

Not just for some egoistic reasons. But for the purposes of God. That were fulfilled.

So come on, look for something. Make some arrangement. Use your head.

He didn't budge. He would not move. He would not initiate any action for himself.

If God doesn't recognize the importance of himself as his prophet. And is going to allow him to die of thirst at a dry brook. So be it.

Because obedience is an obedience to death. It's a total obedience. Or it's not an obedience at all.

He waited. And waited. Every day seeing the brook become smaller.

And everything that is natural in the man. And in his humanity. Groomed in the instinct for self-preservation.

Provokes his human mind to race. To think of what he should do. To preserve his physical body.

Powerful forces. For self-survival. Operating through the mind.

Don't be a fool. Get with it. You need to preserve your life.

For Israel's sake. For God's sake. But there was something stronger.

More powerful. Than the operation of his mind. And the natural requisites of his body.

It was the spirit within the man. Schooled in obedience. Who could say with Job.

Yea though he slay me. Yet will I trust him. Of course you know all that.

And you're in that place. Well if so maintain it. It's a key.

This is what Watchman Nee calls. Shakespeare, Watchman Nee. In his book.

Love not the world. If that's not in Spanish. If that book is not in Spanish.

Put aside my holocaust book. Profound though it is. There's not another book like it.

But translate this first. Love not the world. Because at the end of that book.

Watchman Nee raises the question. What will it require. To stand for God.

In absoluteness. At the end of the age. In conflict with the ultimate powers of darkness.

There's a degree of faith required for evangelism. For ministry. But in this ultimate conflict.

Only one thing will suffice. Ready for this. An utterness toward God.

You can translate that in Spanish. An utterness. It's a word I never heard spoken in English.

We don't speak it. It's not compatible with our Anglo culture. It's out of keeping with the tenor of the age.

An utterness. Nothing withheld. Nothing.

Toward God. That's Elijah. And what the Elijah band must be.

And we will not obtain it in a moment. This is not cheap faith. This is ultimate faith.

And we obtain it by faith coming to faith. As we sang the song. Progressive vision.

Progressive faith. Increase from faith to faith. Till we come to an utterness.

That even if our physical death is required. We will not move till the word of the Lord comes. The Lord is waiting for such a church.

Our question is. Are we moving from faith to faith? Is this something that is conscious with us? And one day is not just like another. And we're like sponges.

Learning by osmosis. A kind of casual working our way through the days. That's not a prophetic mentality.

That's not an apostolic understanding. There needs to be something conscious. Willful.

Taking hold of life. Redeeming the day. As moving toward a goal.

Toward an end. Toward a conclusion. Toward a consummation.

That has to do with the glory of God forever. That cannot be obtained without us. That's living.

As the Lord my God lives. In the same way that he lives. I live.

For my God is not a casual deity. Yawning his way through eternity. Where one day is like another day.

He's consciously moving toward a finality. The day of the Lord affects our perception of every day. Because we are consciously moving toward that day.

Are you esteeming the days? Once and for all? Never to be given again? Are you seizing it? Laying hold? Not content merely to take the meat off the bone? But suck the marrow from the bone. To live with an earnestness. A high seriousness.

An utterness toward God. That makes the church the church. And a statement of salvation.

In its own lifestyle. To the world that is dying all around it. It's a people who know how to live.
Because they live before the living God. Before whom I stand. Alone.
There's no other influence. No denominational prestige that I'm seeking. No recognition from men.
Church leaders that will help to promote our ministry. Because they have recognized our sterling qualities.
We are oblivious.
Totally unaware. Israelites in whom is no guile at all. We're living unto God.
Alone. Before whom I stand. And if you'll please him, you'll please men.
But that's not your motive. It's only the consequence. Of knowing what it means.
To know the living God. Before whom you stand. Alone.
Or their children. My memory is so poor. And the time is too short.
To give you illustration after illustration after illustration. Of how many times in my own life. In uncompromising obedience to God.
I have had to offend men. Christian men. And leaders.
And not be able to give them explanation. Because God had not given it to me. This is the obedience of the last days.
That can only be performed by those who know God as the living God. And before whom they stand.
That's not magic.
You don't come to that by a waving of a magical wand over you. It's a progressive realization. It's a daily battle.
And a challenge. If you could only see the instances and the issues that come before us. Almost on a daily basis.
Where a choice has to be made. For or against God. The prophet Elijah.
When he comes full orb'd on the stage of history. Is the sum of all of his previous choices. For God.
So that when he says to Ahab at a point in time. As the Lord God. Notice what he puts first.
Not just God. The Lord God. He's not Lord.
He's not God. He's not Lord of all. He's not Lord at all.
As the Lord God lives. Before whom I stand. On that basis.
That credential. That authority. I have to tell you.
It shall not rain or dew in Israel. But according to my words. Ahab had to hear.

But this wasn't a little bumptious statement. It resonated in the authority of God. By a man whose voice and manner and speech.

Was the sum total of obediences to God. And he had the authority to prove it. We're not going to have it by raising our voices.

The demons are not impressed with our little formulas. In the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus.

Maybe we get louder. We don't scare them. Forget it.

Quiet assured speaking. In the authority which is ours in God. In the history which we have in God.

Will compel the demons to go. Go in obedience. In utterness toward God.

And you'll go in authority. And now a final obedience. I fed you with ravens.

Now I'm going to feed you with a widow. A gentile widow. Who doesn't know you from beans.

She doesn't know what a prophet is. She's not particularly fond of Jews. Let alone prophets.

But I've commanded her to feed you. In Zarephath. In Jezebel's country.

In the capital city. So he arose and went. And did according to the word of the Lord.

And he found the widow. And she fed him. But I want to ask this question.

Shouldn't there come a moment. When God is requiring something. Of so absurd and radical a kind.

That if it is not God. It is clearly calculated for our destruction. Isn't the evil one able to imitate God.

Haven't we ourselves been jerked and manipulated in the past that way. Thinking that God is speaking. Sounds like him.

Gives the impression. We don't know any better. And we respond.

As I was being driven to the airport to come here. One of the three elders of our fellowship. Shared with me what God had told his wife.

That Ben Israel our fellowship. Is under judgment. And she better leave while she has time.

Or she'll perish. I said really? Are you impressed with that? You think that was God? Well my wife you know is a spiritual woman. Blah blah blah.

Well I think Ben Israel is still there. And will continue to be there. I don't think that that was the voice of God.

But a mature Christian woman. A mature. With a history of ability in demon deliverance.

Believed it was God. Sounded like God. Gave a warning.

You don't need it. And run now in panic. Maybe your wife.

How did Elijah know. Whether this word to go to Zarephath. Was not in fact the enemy.

Imitating the voice of God. And preparing for his destruction. It had that possibility.

So he arose and went. No ifs ands or buts. Not a moment's hesitation.

And it might have been his destruction. How did he know. That that was the voice of God.

Calling him to a contradictory obedience. Where his own life might have been at stake. How will you know.

Good question. Worth thinking about. How do we know the voice of God.

How do we discern and distinguish. Between God and his enemy. Who is full of craft and wiles.

And knows how to imitate. Impressively. And has deceived many saints.

I don't have the answer. But a good question is better than a cheap answer. Are you asking them.

That's what a real student is. Not just to absorb information. And give it back on an examination.

A good student asks. To ask a choice question. Is the mark of a true student.

How does one know. What is the voice of God. As against him who imitates him.

When it's a crucial decision. That might eventuate in life or death. Am I exaggerating.

From the prophetic perspective. Every decision. Is life or death.

Like. How is it that we're speaking about prophets. Is that the only subject you know brother.

You don't have much choice in the matter. I have great riches. Inexhaustible riches.

In Christ. And things both old and new. How then did we decide that prophets would be our subject.

And what if it was a mistake. Still a good subject. We can't afford to miss God.

Everything is a once and for all thing. And that will affect life or death. Yes.

I met a young brother leaving the prayer room this morning. From this class. His English wasn't perfect.

But good. He said brother. Yesterday.

Was for me. Something I can't express it. Something happened to me.

That I have never experienced before. Praise God. It wasn't my intention.

It's a grace that was given. Because we were in the right place. In the right time.

With the right subject. Given of God. That we couldn't afford to miss.

That might affect that young man's life. Profoundly. For all the balance of his days.

That might mean the difference between life or death. For many. We can't afford to miss.

How can we know. When these decisions are so crucial. Who is sufficient for these things.

Elijah evidently knew. Not a question. No hesitation.

It blew his mind. Zarepha. Gentile widow.

He arose and went. He knew the voice of God. For the true voice.

Cannot ultimately be imitated. The powers of darkness might come close. And succeed.

With the shallow Christian. But not with the prophet. Who has a history in God.

In a life of obedience. By a word that comes. And does it.

The prophet is not a piece of magic. God goes out of his way to remind us. The book of James.

Flesh and blood like as we. But the curtain is, the shade is drawn. It's not for us to peer in.

And to understand what went into the making of the man. That he could come to such obedience. Such certainty.

This was not an overnight thing. Prophets are not made in a day. They have a history in God.

That requires suffering. Anguish of soul. Lord I don't know.

There were these alternatives. Do I have your mind. What if I miss.

I live continually in this tension. It's an anguish. I'd rather do something else.

But I'm not free to choose. I'm cool. And I have to suffer these things.

In the school of obedience. It's not cheap and it's not easy. How many want to enroll.

I was sharing with brother Marv. The two most important messages that the Lord may have ever given me to speak. Both of which were steeped in days of fasting before the speaking.

And intensive prayer. Spoken with confidence. That it was somehow the word of the Lord.

That when I was finished. There was this strange silence. Both times.

That gave every appearance. That the message was a flub. Don't think that fasting guarantees anything.

Especially if we're thinking to manipulate God. Everything owes us something. Lord three days of fasting.

Five days for one message. You've got to come through. Be careful.

He's not a God to be manipulated. The word fell like lead. And while I'm brooding over my failure.

Licking my wounds like a dog. Twice. Exactly the same thing happened.

A man comes up to me. With authority. Says I'm a Jewish man.

And a prophet. Sent of God. To tell you.

You have missed the mind of the Lord. With this message. And you have done incalculable damage.

To the body of Christ. It's a knife. In the heart.

Right up to the hilt. Of unexpressable anguish of soul. Because it could be true.

And no amount of fasting. Or prayer. Or sincerity.

Will guarantee. That you could not have missed the mind of the Lord. At any time.

No matter how extensive your experience. That risk remains. As a continual tension.

In which the man who bears the word of God. Has got to live. Have you been baptized? You who want to be preachers? Teachers? Bearers of the word? Have you been baptized? In fire? And the Lord wasn't there to say no my dear son.

Don't listen to that nasty man. I never sent him. He's a fake.

You just be assured. You spoke my word. And you will not return to me again.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to enjoy such vindication? But it didn't come. It rarely comes. And the Lord allows you to go a long time.

Wrestling with the possibility. That the man might be right. And you have missed the mind of the Lord.

I actually went into exile. Lived in my wife's country as I told you yesterday. And this man would send me telegrams.

Long distance phone calls. On Jewish feast days. To call me to repent.

And recant the word. Which had done such damage. And he could have been right.

You can never have an ultimate assurance. And have to live with this tension. This unbearable tension.

That's the prophetic requirement. And we have to receive it. But it will keep you humble.

After yesterday's great success. And people falling out of their seats. Under the tremendous unction of God.

That was yesterday. And no necessary assurance for today. Today the question that remains.

A frightening question. In which we can never have a total assurance. And with which tension we must live.

Still want to be a prophet? And bear God's word? There are not many candidates. And I don't blame them. The Lord has discreetly pulled the shade down.

It's not for us to peer into Elijah's life. His history with God is unknown to us. But be assured of this.

He has a history. Of dealings with God. Of excruciating and painful moments.

Of horrible struggles of faith. Of terrible disappointments. Of moments of glory that cannot be described.

Of having to look into the disappointed faces of his colleagues. When he didn't come through as God's man of faith and power. For there's nothing more painful for a man of God.

Than the disappointment of God's people. Who thought it had been he who had restored the glory of God. I shared that at one of the Sunday services.

Do you remember that? City College of New York? First gospel outreach in its history. The city of my birth. A school 95% Jewish.

Never had had a gospel outreach. Until the Lord called us to that. Clearly confirmed that.

Months in advance. Whole seasons of fasting and prayer. We didn't take this once and for all occasion lightly.

To penetrate right into the Jewish mainstream. A door like that does not open every day. You can't get into synagogues today.

Jewish institutions. I was the director of a mission to the Jews in New York City. Two and a half million Jews.

And you couldn't get beyond their doorkeepers. They lived in these great towers. With a uniformed man at the door.

You couldn't get past him. You were near. And yet so far.

So the Lord opened the door. Once and for all. Much fasting.

Much prayer. And I flew in from Boston. Where I had spoken the night before at the University of Boston.

Up half the night. No problem. Rest is not the issue.

His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The battle is not yours, saith the Lord. But mine.

But go you out against them. Tomorrow. And so tomorrow came.

Picked up at the airport. Driven to City College. And I walked into the room.

I have a pretty good gift of description. But I can't describe this. The atmosphere was unbelievable.

Electric. You could cut it with a knife. Unmistakable hatred.

Venom. By Jews who came. To see this freak.

Who believes in Christ. In whose name we Jews have been persecuted for two thousand years. You heard of the Inquisition? It followed us into Central America.

And he is going to preach Christ to Jewish university students whose lives are ethically impeccable and have no need for his Christ. Let us at him. We'll make sport.

And into that atmosphere I came. As the God of Israel lives before whom I stand. Is he standing in that? Are you standing in that day? Is he a living God? In the face of the sea of opposition all before you? In which you have never felt more weak.

More vain. It was like speaking at the University of Illinois. Seven days of meetings.

I've never done this before. And the Christians printed up a strip of paper. Cats is coming.

With no space between cats and is and coming. Cats is coming. Who's cats? The first meeting was at the Student Union Building.

To begin seven days of meetings. At a time when there was much political unrest in American universities. Opposition to the Vietnam War.

So we had a little huddle of prayer. The Lord bless you brother Art. Go get him Tiger.

And the prayer circle broke. And I stepped out to the place of speaking. Utterly alone.

I could understand Elijah. Lord they've killed all the prophets. And I alone and left.

And left alone. And look at their faces. They can't wait to get at me.

These intellectuals. These arrogant atheists. This is a joke for them.

Cats who? So I gave my little talk. They were relatively respectful. Then I opened for questions and answers.

There was one guy in the back of the room. I knew from the beginning. He was trouble.

Mr. Cats he said. You've been speaking about God and Jesus. Let me ask you one question.

Watch this fellas. I got him now. It'll be over before it begins.

Answer me this one question. Do you believe in hell? So I took out my little pocket memo pad. And I looked under H. I had no memo pad.

It was only me. All alone. And the God who lives.

And before whom I stand. And the issue of salvation. Coming to an unbelieving university.

In a mood of terrible political hostility. Was at stake. So I opened my mouth.

This is what we have to do saints. Yes we can miss God. It might be true.

We've done incalculable damage. Could be true the next time. No amount of experience will assure you.

But you have to open your mouth. Whatever the tension. Whatever the unpredictability.

We are required to speak. And to obey God. Despite every appearance of the contrary.

I opened my mouth. I can't remember exactly what I said. Something like this so well as I can recall.

Under a tremendous unction. I said you know. There's no figure in all scripture who has spoken more prolifically about hell than Jesus himself.

He said we will be held accountable for every idle word we speak. He himself never spoke an idle word. But he spoke about a wailing and gnashing of teeth.

An inexpressible anguish of soul. A fire that shall not be extinguished. And I'll tell you what brother.

You who asked me this question. Not because you wanted an answer. But because you wanted to ridicule God's servant.

You would do well to hear this answer. Lest you find yourself. Sooner than you think.

Experiencing that reality. You ever see a man go. He just withered up.

And blew away. And we began seven days of living. In authority.

And in power. Four to six meetings a day. I was exhausted.

I couldn't remember my name. From fraternity houses to classrooms to here to there. Taken by the hand like a child.

And come into another environment. Of hostility and antagonism. Without a prepared word.

Praying under my breath in the spirit. That's all I had time for. When I got to the next room.

And opened my mouth. Pow! A man came into that room. A veteran from Vietnam.

Half crocked with drugs. Didn't know what was going on. But he sensed something electric.

And he sat down on the floor. And when I finished. I opened for questions and answers.

And these men jumped me. Antagonistic. Mean.

Vicious. And this unbelieving man. Half crocked on drugs.

He got up and he said. What are you guys doing? Don't you know that God is here? And got saved? Today. He's the director of the entire French work.

At Youth with a Mission. Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. And he has opened for me.

Doors of utterance. That I could never have imagined. Five days of conference.

On the prophetic word. You're only getting a fraction. The year later.

Five days of conference. Apostolic foundations. Historic proclamation.

To the whole French speaking world. To a brother who opened the door. Because he came into a room.

Where God was. So. If God could do that for Gentiles.

What is he going to do in City College of New York? Of course he's going to break through. His Jewish kinsmen. Who have a destiny in God.

And have never had the privilege of hearing the gospel. There was God at the University of Illinois. And at Boston.

Harvard. Yale. University of California.

Should I get in Germany? What is City College of New York? I came into that atmosphere. Vibrating with hatred. And I opened my mouth.

And nothing came out. Of any value. With any anointing.

The word of the Lord fell to the ground. With a thud. And I knew it was not going to get better.

It was over before it began. And I couldn't fathom it. Lord you've been so faithful.

I'm not conscious that there's any sin in my life. Why have you withdrawn yourself? Look at this audience. The potential to break into the Jewish community of New York City.

Very Babylon itself. And there's no unction. No anointing.

And no explanation. You have only to bear it. And to continue speaking.

And every word is an anguish for the soul. Because you know it's flat. And dead.

And not life giving. And you cannot alter it. But have to continue to speak it.

Baptism by fire. If you're going to speak the word of God. If you're going to call your nation to repentance.

In this historic apostasy. Who've gone hooring after false gods. And football and sport.

And rock music. Sensuality. Gross living.

With Sunday services. And you're going to confront them. In a point of time.

And speak a word that brings fire from heaven. That they may know the word is God. You've got to go through this history first.

That word that day was a complete failure. And the question and answer time? These Jewish men got up. Dignified.

Van Dyke beards. Skull caps on their heads. And the full dignity of their office.

As rabbis. As professors. And they shredded me.

What kind of a fool are you? To come with your New Testament? Your King James Gentile Bible? To speak to scholars? You're an ignorant man. You don't even know Hebrew. You're a paid flunky and traitor.

You're in this for money? What other motive could a Jewish man possibly have? To bring such a message? To Jews? That was anointed. That was powerful. One after another after another.

And I had only to bear. Die? I die daily? I died a thousand deaths. Martyrdom would have been a welcomed alternative.

Just to die once. But this death. This humiliation.

The worst part was not the outraged Jews. It was the faces of my Christian colleagues. What a face of disappointment.

They could not conceal it. They had hoped that this would be the penetration. This was the historic moment.

And we had missed it. You know what their faces were saying? Cats. Haven't you ever heard of prayer? Don't you know what it means to fast? The failure is evidently yours.

Certainly God would have redeemed this occasion. Out of His love for His own kinsmen. The fault must be with you.

And you know what you're saying? You agree. That's right. And you go home like the dog licking his horns.

And there's the devil right at your elbow. Who ever thought that you were a speaker? What made you think that you had a ministry on university campuses? You're a failure. You have no qualification.

You really missed it. When will you ever know that you'll not miss it? If you missed it there, when will you ever not miss it? Give it up. Go back to high school teaching.

Whoever said you were called? That's right. That's right. I agree.

That's right. And God was not there to vindicate me. Silencio.

I know a few words. Painful silence. You would have given your soul for one word of comfort, of confirmation.

But it did not. The Lord allows His man to suffer his failure in silence without explanation. I can't wait to get to heaven.

For a number of reasons. But not the least of which is to hug Paul. And to find Elijah.

And to say, brother, correct me if I'm wrong. But in the private dealings of God with you, before the confrontation with Ahab and Israel came, did God ever bring you to places of humiliation? Of failure? To the dark night of the soul? Where you not only wondered whether you were called or not, but you wondered whether there's even a God. And He let you anguish and wrestle through these questions that you might have a history in God.

I know what He's going to tell me. Art, you won't believe what my secret history was. Before I could stand before Ahab and the people of Israel and speak in the authority of God and command fire from heaven to save them from death.

Do you have a history with God? A secret history. Are you willing for that? The Lord who knows you through and through. He knows your fears, your frailties, your particular weaknesses.

He wants to test you, try you, sift you, purge you. You're called to bear the word. There's a baptism coming.

I want to pray for you. If you don't mind, we interrupt ourselves when we come to a certain place. I think we've come to it.

We need to pray something here. Maybe the Lord will honor my prayer because of my own history. That you might have a history.

Would you believe this when I came this morning? Yes, I've got my notes, but I did not know what to speak, how to speak, what direction to take, how to redeem the time. Trusting the living God, the Lord God

of Israel, who lives before whom I stand to redeem this time. Can you believe that? You can believe it through me? What can you believe it through you? When you will stand in the holy place and you will have to speak the word of God once and for all, that will not be given again, with life and death at stake, out of your mouth.

You may have the faith to believe it through me, but can you believe it through yourself? Son of man, Guatemala, Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Chile, the whole of this hemisphere, every nation of it, needs to hear. The prophetic word of God, by men who can bear it, who have a history with God, and have had a baptism with fire, that they might cherish and reverence the word, and open their mouths and speak it. When the moment comes, even though they may well have missed God, and have to live with that possibility, and the unbearable tension of it, will yet speak.

That is what the hour is requiring. What your nations need, who are apostate, and are hesitating between two opinions. I won't ask you to raise your hand, but how many of the young men here, feel they have such a calling? The prophetic call.

Call to preach. Call to teach. To bear the word of God before men.

Holy calling requires fire. So Lord, these are your precious children. You know them by name.

They're yours. You brought them forth out of their mothers' wombs. For this hour, for this generation, for these last days, and the world is perishing.

It staggers like a drunken man. It reels in its own vomit. It doesn't know how to live.

It waits for a word. The word that must come. The word that must be spoken.

To an obedient servant, who takes the risk, and speaks in the authority of God, and brings fire, because he has passed through fire. Look at these children, Lord. You know what their hearts are saying.

They're trembling. They're transacting. For their nations' sake.

For the world's sake. For Christ's sake. Lord, whatever it takes, whatever, to come to an utterness toward God.

Do it. Bring me through the fire. Grant me a history, and the knowledge of God.

I'm a living God. Before whom I stand. Alone.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, my God. We're asking for an historic moment.

Right now. In this moment of transaction. Something being established in heaven.

Let there be eternal consequence. Let the angels in heaven rejoice. The invisible cloud of witnesses be glad.

For something is being decided now. That will affect many nations. That will conclude the age.

That will affect Israel. That will bring your coming. Your kingdom.

Your glory. Seal it, Lord. Seal this consecration.

And perform it. Withholding nothing. In the preparing of men and women.

For the Elijah task. Of the last days. In Jesus' name we ask.

Amen.

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