

The Anatomy of Adultery

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the deeper spiritual implications of adultery, emphasizing the need for true faith and holiness in our lives.

Duration: 34:04

Scripture: Isaiah 1:2-6, Isaiah 1:16-19, Hebrews 12:14-15

Topics: "Adultery"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking action and living a holy life. He urges the audience to not just go through the motions of attending church, but to truly understand their responsibility as believers. The speaker references the biblical requirement of holiness and warns against living in sin. He calls for a genuine and powerful prayer life, rather than empty rituals. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's offer of forgiveness and restoration, urging the audience to seek justice, relieve the oppressed, and plead for the vulnerable.

Transcript

This is tape number K-010. Art Katz with the message entitled, The Anatomy of Adultery. I've been meaning for some time to prepare a message on adultery, and I've never quite gotten around to it, but I'm going to speak something this morning I've never spoken before, and it's hardly a message, it's just reading some scripture and commenting as we go.

The message that I'm thinking about is not just expressly designed to speak about the evil of adultery as if it pertains only to adulterers, but something about the anatomy of adultery, which is, the real word is adulteration. Anything that's an admixture, anything that's not pure, any relationship or thing to which we're called, to which we've allowed entry of the things and mix the things which are profane and the things which are holy. There are a lot of us who are adulterers who have never committed the act, and who need to have the anatomy of adultery open to our understanding.

For example, in Hebrews, which this is not my text this morning, don't turn for just for a moment here, really some interesting words where we're told that we should follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, for you know how that afterward he would have inherited the blessing. He was rejected for he found no place of repentance, though he

sought it carefully with tears. And I thought as I read that one time, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau.

And it really troubled me because I didn't recall any reference to Esau ever having been a fornicator. But I think that there's a certain anatomy of fornication. There's a certain quintessence.

There are certain constituent elements of fornication or adultery to which many of us are guilty, although we've never committed the express act. I want you to turn with me to my real text for this morning. And I want to pray before we begin it because our heart's beginning to skip already, right? Who knows what this madman is likely to speak.

So let's just commit this to God because we're on sensitive ground and we certainly need the careful guidance of his spirit and a spirit that will open our understanding. Let's not be offended at him. Let's hear what the spirit speaks this morning.

So precious holy God, Lord, have your wonderful way altogether. Shape, mold, perform the things that please thee. Help us to have very attentive hearts and ears, oh, that we might understand.

Gracious God, give us a vision of the enormous distance, the separation that has subtly and day by day entered into our lives, the admixture of things of which we've hardly been conscious that somehow has altogether conspired to rob us of our joy, our power, our peace, our light. Help us, Lord, to be a holy people. Speak to us now by your spirit, Lord, and we'll thank you and praise you for it in the wonderful name of Jesus.

Amen. Will you turn with me to the first chapter of the book of Isaiah? The Lord spoke to us recently that we should begin a very earnest searching of the book of Isaiah and taking him at his word, we began that, and the Lord began to immediately kindle something in my heart, and this will be the first opportunity this morning to share it with any congregation. The Lord gave Isaiah a vision.

I'm a great believer in visions. Without a vision, the people perish, and a vision is something very difficult to communicate. It just doesn't lend itself to words, and it requires as much a creative leaning forward on the part of those who hear it as the one who projects it.

So I'm going to ask you to exercise your spirits this morning and meet God halfway and read between the spiritual lines and try to catch the vision that the Lord wants to project. And when I know that this pertains to Israel, who knows it better than I, a Jew? And it's for that reason that my heart smarts over this. You know that there was a big conference at Emanuel Temple in New York City, which I guess would be the St. Patrick's Cathedral of Judaism, and they had invited speakers from all of the spectrum of Judaism to speak on the contemporary problems of Judaism.

And some man who had been led to the Lord through my ministry, who had been in the habit of attending that great cathedral, he said, Artie said, you ought to be a speaker there. And I said, I quite agree. And so I wrote a letter to the rabbi asking for participation.

It was true that I didn't represent Orthodox Judaism or Reformed Judaism or Conservative Judaism, but I represented Messianic Judaism, and from my point of view, I believe that that is the Biblical Judaism of God. And I got back a very snotty reply. Excuse my parlance.

And it was just to this effect, he said, since when, he said, do the problems of Judaism consist of apostasy? In other words, we don't need an apostate like you to tell us what the problems of Judaism are. And so I wrote back a lengthy five-page reply, liberally quoting from the prophets, of whom we're going to hear today, to suggest, brother, apostasy is not only the contemporary problem of Judaism, it is our long-standing problem. It is our chronic condition.

And I concluded this way. I said, tell me, please, when is it ever that our apostasy was healed? God says the things which befell Israel are written and given to us for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come. It's a very painful way to learn a lesson, that my people had to experience something, the record of which is given to you for your edification, that you who are the wild branch grafted in should not be wise in your own conceits and fall even as the natural branch has fallen.

So Isaiah cries out, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, in the second verse, for the Lord hath spoken. I wonder why it is that God has to appeal to the heavens and the earth to hear him. Perhaps it is that those who have natural ears have shut off their hearing.

It's something like the cry of Jesus, who said, if you'll not allow these Jewish children to worship me, the very stones will cry out. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. God has to appeal to the very natural elements because men themselves will not listen.

I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. And I suppose that that ought to occasion a certain pang in the hearts of those who are in the congregation this morning who have brought up children and have experienced rebellion against themselves. It's becoming the acute manifestation of our age and didn't God warn us that in the last days, perilous times would come and children would be disobedient to parents, flaunting authority, and many of you have fastidiously cared for your children only to experience the kind of pain which God knows in far greater measure of having taken exquisite and painstaking concern to nourish and to bring up children only to see that they have rebelled against him.

For the ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, dumb brutes. But Israel doth not know and what's even far worse, my people do not consider. O people that I could just take my heart out before you and wring it because we don't have the time and I don't have the ability to communicate to you the things which perhaps I am uniquely afforded the opportunity to daily see and hear in my ministry to my own Jewish people.

Dumb indifference, insensitive lack of concern, a running helter and skelter for every kind of substitute salvation but that which is afforded us of God. Even yesterday, right in this community, a precious Jewish man who belongs to so many committees and is doing so many things and obtaining Israel bonds and full of human virtue and goodness and ethical concern, but he does not consider. He has no knowledge of God and he does not seek him.

Our sinful nation of people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters that have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. And I've read these scriptures before but all of a sudden it dawned upon me, they were not just people upon whom evil had fallen but they were evil doers. And they were not ones who were simply corrupted but they were corrupters.

And I hope you'll not construe this as anti-Semitism. But let's face facts. Unfortunately, instead of being a nation of priests and a light unto the world, we are priests of a sort and lights of a sort and messengers of a sort.

But where the A.B. Hoffmans and the Jerry Rubins, where the disseminators of violence and rebellion and obscenity, where the masters of pornography and contemporary and voguish literature, we're corrupters. And I think that what God is trying to show us is that there's no neutral ground. You're either for him or you're against him.

There's no such thing as a middle stance or posture that's respectable, ethical, moral. You're not just going to be corrupted if that's your place. You're going to find yourself a corruptor.

And that is the melancholy history of Israel even to this day because they have forsaken the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. They've gone away backwards, spurned and rejected and despised the Lord. Those are very strong words, people.

And you know that it's interesting that while God describes that phenomenon in the same breath, he describes that all of their religious practices continue to flourish. And I don't think that we should be mindless about that and fail to understand the significance because in the 11th verse we read, To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? You see, Israel had not forsaken their sacrifices. Merely because they were apostates, they had not abandoned their religious practices.

In fact, I think it's quite an irony that at the very height of apostasy, religious practices are at their zenith. And I don't think it's any accident that in our own land that religious attendance is up, enrollments in synagogues, temples and churches. There seems to be almost a kind of renaissance of religion.

But lest we be wise and take it in our own conceit, it's quite possible, in fact, I believe that this is a pattern that while religion flourishes, in fact, it provides a wonderful cover, apostasy flourishes also. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? Unto me saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and of the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread at my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incenses and abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies.

I cannot, away with it. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting, your new moons and your appointed feasts. My soul hates.

They are a trouble unto me. I am weary to bear them. You know what the interesting thing is? Everything which God has just condemned are the very things which he appointed for men to perform.

These aren't things that were coined in the imagination of Jewish men who were trying to be religious. They were following the things which were prescribed of God. And he says that they are an abhorrence to him, and he hates them.

They're vain oblations. Why do you tread my courts and trample in the holy place? That's a confusing thing, isn't it? And I don't know that I have the answer to explain it. I only have a presentiment in my Jewish heart that there's no greater offense to the holiness of God than to continue to perform the prescribed things when our own lives and conduct and speech and heart contradict them.

Imagine some man or some woman continuing to go about the outward forms of marriage, dutiful to put a nice supper before her husband nightly, dutiful to wash his dainties in his socks and to hang his suit up and do all the kinds of things that pertain to domesticity, but her heart has gone a-whoring after other things. I tell you, if I were the husband, I would much rather eat gruel or a box of cornflakes and do my own wash than have a woman continue to mock me with the motions of matrimony whose heart has turned from me and to another. Oh, that we could understand the grief and pain of a God who daily has to witness people in his name going through superficial motions of religion whose hearts have forsaken him.

Far better we made no pretense, far better we stopped our mouths and far better we recited no mechanical prayers and sang no dusty hymns than that we should grieve a God in that way. I'd rather be a healthy atheist and knock my fist at a God whom I cannot understand than be some mealy-mouthed weasel playing at religion whose heart has gone after fornication and after adultery. Look at the fifth verse.

Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there's no soundness in it but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores and they've not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

You know what the thing is, people? That that very condition can exist and yet there'll be no outward physical evidence. How do you like them apples? I just realized it this morning in looking over these scriptures because I know that it's the exact condition of my people today and all of us who know Jewish people know is there a people more fine in outward appearance? Is there a people more ethical, more moral, more cultured, more civil, more humane, more awarded by the world for all of these honorific things and yet God says of them that from the sole of your foot even to your head there's no soundness in it. You're full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have not been closed up nor mollified with ointment because God sees not as man sees.

Man looks on the outward parts but God looks on the heart. And I tell you there are a lot of us who are not Jews who are yet ethical, moral, sensitive, humane but as God sees us we're full of bruises, rents, tears, putrefying sores that have not been bound up nor mollified with ointment. O to see as God sees and accept that God raised up a prophet that we might hear his cry how then shall we see? He says in the 15th verse and when you spread forth your hands I will hide my eyes from you yea when you make many prayers I will not hear your hands are full of blood.

You see this isn't the people who are forsaken praying. They continue to pray but they pray without effect. It becomes mere ceremony empty, forsaken of power or answer from God.

Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek justice and relieve the oppressed and judge the fatherless and plead for the widow.

Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they be as red like crimson they shall be as wool.

And I can't help but note all of the tremendous words that speak to our will. And I tell you people that when it comes to theology I'm a bumpkin and I wouldn't begin to express any kind of theological understanding. I'm just a simple man and I don't know the arguments that are Calvinistic or whatever but it seems to me quite evident that we have an enormous responsibility before God.

There are things that are incumbent upon us to do. And from my own experience and the places to which God brings me I hear a lot of people say Oh I can't! What they really mean is I won't. They mean I can't without a measure of pain.

And isn't it fantastic how sophisticated we can be in so many areas and so precise in our speech and in our vocations and professions. But when it comes to things which are spiritual all of a sudden we become like babbling infants. It's not that we cannot.

It is rather that we will not. Because we're unwilling to come to that place of obedience which invariably will bring us to sacrifice and suffering and death. Wash you.

Make you clean. You put away the evils of your doings. Cease to do evil.

Learn to do well. Relieve. Judge.

Come. Now. Praise the Lord.

I'm so glad he's not an academic God who just titillates us with a little message on Sunday but he's the God of now. Come. Now.

Get with it. The time is short. I'm not speaking to titillate your ears.

Have your eyes opened. Understand what your responsibility is. Bestow yourself.

It's not enough to occupy a pew. It's not enough to go through mere motions. It's a God who says that without holiness you shall not see the Lord.

And no fornicator nor profane person like Esau need think that he can inherit the kingdom of God. If you be willing. Don't you love those ifs? If.

Little to let it word. My God. What a fantastic mammoth obstacle.

If. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. And countless tens of thousands for whom the Bible is a dead book prayer, a sweaty exercise and witness a pure flight of agony have to live and suffer these terrible things because they've never come through that if.

They think themselves Christians. They've condescended to accept the Lord. Is that the language we use today? They've signed up and they're in membership with a certain church or denomination but they've never passed through the great if.

If. Any man be in Christ he is a new creature. All things have passed away and all things are made new.

Maybe that's why it is that you need so desperately to hear when I say you, I don't mean this particular congregation I mean Christendom. From Jewish men who were enemies of God and had enmity with him but who were so powerfully crashed into the kingdom of God that they know what it means to be in Christ. I tell you that if I were not in Christ right now my knees would be knocking.

Where does a man come to presume to speak in a way like this? It's only because I have a perfect confidence that it's not a man speaking that I dare lend my voice to what's coming forth. This is what it means to be in Christ. If you'd be willing and obedient you shall eat the good of the land but if you refuse and rebel you shall be devoured with the sword for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it and we know the

tragic history of Israel when God speaks he means it.

How is the faithful city become a harlot? It was full of judgment it was full of justice righteousness launched in it but now murderous. I don't know about eternal security and other things which you may believe but as I read that verse God described the city which at one time was faithful a city that was filled with justice and with righteousness righteousness launched in it but now murderous. How is it possible to go from that high lofty pure state and swing to the other end of the spectrum and find yourself debased and utterly fallen in the worst work of the flesh that's listed in Galatians murder.

I tell you if it happened to Israel is it possible it might happen also to us? Is it possible that we might be murderers already? Not having committed the act but lending ourselves only to willingly not to obedience but to anger, resentment, bitterness unloving spirits. And here's my key verse I haven't even come to it yet are you patient with me this morning? Thy silver is become dross thy wine mixed with water. One little precious verse and I began to do a little homework about dross and about silver well we know that silver is a precious metal it's the symbol of righteousness it's lustrous and it's white and we know also that it's malleable it can be fashioned rather easily into different shapes and forms it's easily molded it's susceptible and I tell you once that you've been made into silver by the righteousness of God you are more susceptible to be shaped and to be conformed than you were before you knew him.

You're either going to be shaped and conformed to the image of his son or you're going to find yourself more malleable and more easily conformed to the spirit of this world. Before you came into the dimension of the spirit it could not touch you but once you're in it I believe that you're more susceptible to the kinds of spirits that are loose in the world that's the very nature and character of silver itself. What else do we learn about it? It's ductile that means that silver is a carrier and every engineer and electrician knows that silver is a prime metal for the conduct for the conducting of electricity it's a carrier and I want to suggest to you today that silver can be a carrier for either good or for evil.

And I'm just going to quickly turn to 2 Peter where that spiritual principle is made very clear. In the second chapter in the 21st if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they are again entangled therein and overcome the latter end is worse with them than the beginning for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness never to have become silver than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. Silver is a carrier for good or for evil it's ductile it's liable to tarnish when exposed to the air and to the atmosphere and especially to sulfur.

It needs therefore continuously to be polished which is only another word for being buffeted and I wonder how many of you are conscious of that process of God's working in your life. I tell you I am buffeted daily and I wonder often the kinds of things to which I'm subjected at the hand of the Lord excruciating things and trying things but I know that except that I submit to that buffeting how then shall I luster forth for the Lord.

Isn't it interesting how God can give us profound sermons over mundane and picayune things we bought a used Volvo and I wanted to polish it and I'm an old-fashioned guy and I really wanted to do a job and not just put a little thin coat of wax over that and I bought blue car cleaner which I think is the toughest thing to polish a car with on the market but oh oh oh what a job it does and my brother Paul had an electric polisher we poured that stuff on and he began zzzz with that thing and I was disappointed nothing was really happening there just wasn't enough power in that electric machine to do the job and I had to face up

with it it was going to take pure unadulterated elbow grease and so I just rolled up my sleeves and I went to it and I did a patch at a time and I rubbed that sucker

back and forth and the grime was coming out and that luster was beginning to break forth and I stood back like an artist looking at his easel and I appreciated my work I enjoyed it I'm an old-fashioned depression baby and I want to see the fruit of labor I like real luster and then I turned to another panel and I began to work on it and inadvertently my head was turning back to the first panel and I would turn back and turn back and finally I threw my rag down and I had to come back to that first panel it wasn't good enough I tell you it was heads and shoulders above the shine and sheen of most cars but it was not yet perfect and I knew it and therefore I took one more swipe and I poured that stuff out on that panel and I went to work on it once more with that cloth and I buffeted it and

I wasn't at it more than one or two minutes when all of a sudden my cloth just began to slide over the surface of that hood we had arrived and the last filth and grime which had been insinuated into that pigment because it had been exposed to the air since 1969 finally was loose and that rag just slid over that thing and such a luster broke forth as would dazzle the eye I've got a certain sense about my Jewish God that he is not the God of the second best he is not the God of mediocrity he is a perfect and holy God who says be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect be holy as I am holy and a lot of us have a thin coat of wax over a lot of grime and it suffices for the world and it enables us to quote and unquote get by but we've not yet lustered and shown forth the silver that we

are that the eyes of the world might be dazzled oh precious people are we willing to subject ourselves to the buffetings of a living God you can see how gracious and loving he is because for some of us today the buffeting is begun you know what dross is? when the Lord says thy silver is become as dross it's that scum it's that refuse and waste that always attends the making of silver it's part and parcel it's got to be but it doesn't have to remain and it doesn't have to swallow up the precious stuff itself but I'll tell you what it takes to remove the scum and to remove the dross it takes effort it takes diligence it takes an act keep your heart with all diligence for out of it proceed the issues of life and I'm amazed continually how diligent we are in every other area of our life our

professions, our business, our properties and our dealings my, my, my how we minutely examine every line but when it comes to the thing which we are vessels in the house of God silver there we're slipshod, forgetful we neglect to be diligent with the precious thing which has been afforded to us my brother Paul who's an engineer and has left it to serve the Lord with all his heart told me because I don't know a thing about science that although silver is a great transmitter that when silver is tarnished that it's less effective either than more base metals to transmit current put that in your spiritual pipes and smoke it we're less capable of transmitting the precious things of God than even base metals and God doesn't just end with thy silvers become dross thy wine is mixed with water and

I thought, Lord, why is that? why are men willing to mix their wine with water? it's because they have an inadequate supply and they have to complement it by diluting it and I think we Jews are more familiar with wine than you fundamentalists and I tell you that if you've never tasted it there's something about wine which is very special which I don't think is in any way a haphazard, the Lord did it there's a certain savor there's a certain bouquet there's a certain body we speak about rolling wine on our tongues you can just lift it to your nose and something exhilarating even begins to penetrate your nostrils it's no wonder that the Jews equate wine with life we raise the glass and we say I'chaim to life it's the symbol of life it's effervescent, it bubbles it's spirited oh, oh, oh,

pitiful thing that such substance as that has ever to be mixed with water to be diluted and add mixture and what about our civilization? aren't we eminently the adulterous civilization? the fruitcake civilization?

Dagwood Bumstead sandwiches? every kind of mixture that human ingenuity can conceive we not only do it, but we relish it well, I can remember only just a few years back you didn't dream of mixing certain colors like blue and green everybody understood there are certain laws that are not to be violated and now it seems that we've raised up a generation of designers and people of cunning artifice who have taken all of the things which were sacrosanct and not to be violated and in them, they've exploited them and delighted themselves in them and have given us every kind of uncanny and berserk combination you name it, in color, in food we love to mix, mix, mix but there was a God who said that we should not mix wool and linen there's a God who said we should not mix the various seeds with the vignette there's a God who said that women should not dress as men and that it's a shame for a man to have long hair there's a God who made us male and female but we've been mixing, mixing, mixing and I tell you very often, you have to study a person for some minutes before you've determined what their sex actually is we've come a long way from the holiness of God a long way and those of you whose hair is as short as mine this morning don't sit there smugly it's because you've been permissive you've been so tolerant, so nice you've not raised a voice in protest you've not heard nor expressed the cry of God at that subtle mixing that's been going on in our civilization life yea, verily, even under your own roofs that we're beginning to reap the kind of harvest that we are homosexuality, it's not such a bad thing after all listen, we should be tolerant and have a Christian attitude toward homosexuals and after all, it doesn't hurt anybody we're coming into that really permissive spirit of the age anything goes any combination, any admixture our silver is become as dross and our wine is mixed who loves us because in the 25th verse we read and I will turn my hand upon thee and purely perch away thy dross and take away all thy tin thank you Lord I've been waiting for that tin to go because I can't think of any greater abomination than a tin saint and you know what tin is? it's a cheap counterfeit substitute for silver it looks like silver it's white it lends itself to a shine but it's much softer it's not the real thing there are a lot of us today in Christendom who are tin saints tin is used for plating we're thinly plated over outwardly but inwardly we're something else again we're not pure silver and if the Lord threw down our coin it would not ring true it would bend and buckle and crack and reveal the just a thin plated coating which we too often unfortunately are

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