

The Compassion of God

by Art Katz

God's mercy is not just a feeling, but a fundamental aspect of his nature, and the church must reflect this by being consistent and genuine in its expressions of mercy and compassion.

Duration: 1:29:24

Scripture: Psalm 102:13, Isaiah 59:16, Romans 11:25-26, Revelation 15:4

Topics: "Compassion Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that it is not enough for Christians to simply appear good or have a Sunday face. He argues that true transformation comes when God's nature is established in believers, leading them to exhibit compassion and mercy even towards those who despise them, just as God does. The speaker predicts that in the last days, Jews will once again face widespread hatred and persecution, similar to the Nazi era. However, he believes that a radical change will come at the appointed time, bringing about a transformation in both the Jewish people and the church.

Transcript

Some statements of Karl Barth about God, that theology is the queen of the sciences, they used to say in Germany, when theology was taught at their universities as one of their faculties and departments, but it was looked upon as the supreme faculties, the supreme form of learning, because it called upon every other discipline. A true theologian has to understand about history, about philosophy, about ancient religions, about language, and so all of learning is brought to bear on the issue of God. So here's a theologian himself launching out and making some suggestions of how he understands God as the result of his laboring in the word and his own life, his own history, but I think he makes some precious statements and it would be revealing for us.

And we ask that, Lord, we want to be the beneficiaries of what you have invested in this man who has since passed on, but his work continues, my God, to bless, and so little known, deserving much greater audience than it does, and we ask, Lord, that our knowledge of you might be enhanced and something triggered and released through his own insight and that you lead us on from here, my God, to fiasco or to glory. We're willing to take the risk, Lord, because the issues are much greater always than reputation, and so we ask that blessing now in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

We'll try this on for size. Because grace, the gracious love of God, consists in God's own disposition and nature, it is therefore God himself. Grace is not an attribute of God.

It's God himself. It's what he is in himself. It's not something attached or something that is invoked.

It is very God. It is God's very being. His very being is mercy, and that's why when his mercy is revealed, he is revealed, and his final act in history is exactly that.

It's the revelation of God's mercy as it will come to the most undeserving people, Israel. It'll be pure mercy. In fact, what is mercy if it's deserved? Mercy only means something when it comes to the undeserved and is the pure gift of God, because no qualification from man has evoked it.

It's simply God giving himself as mercy. So the mercy of God lies in his readiness to share in sympathy and the distress of another, a readiness which springs from his inmost nature and stamps all his being and doing. Do you like that? Worth repeating? But before I repeat it, I want to say this.

Everything that Chalbot is saying about God is everything that God is wanting in us, that it would be the stamp of our being, that our mercy would not be some kind of exertion of something for the moment, but it would be the expression of what we are through and through, that we are something in the cookie. What do they say? That when you cut a bologna or a salami, that wherever you cut it, it's the same thing. Through and through, it's consistently the same thing.

This is what God is in himself, and the reason that we're interested, among other things, is that this is what he's wanting us to be in ourselves, the thing in itself. There's a German expression, the thing in itself. So what is epistolic and what is prophetic? It's the thing in itself.

What's a phony and what's a false edition? Someone who affects apostolicity, someone who affects and gives the impression of prophetic authority or insight with a certain kind of flourish. But the genius of what is prophetic and apostolic is the thing in itself. What God is wanting in the church is the thing in itself.

It's the word made flesh. It's God written in his people, formed in them, that however you squeeze it and press it or make demand upon it, it cannot help but be other than what itself is. See what I mean? If it's only an affectation, it's got to run dry.

I mean, we could be nice guys, for an hour perhaps, we can keep a Sunday face, but under the stress and duress of the end times, something much more will be required. Under the stress and duress of what will be imposed upon us by Jews coming in their unregenerate condition, bitter and vexed, and having been suddenly uprooted and having lost everything again in modern times, how will we respond to that? It will not be enough merely to try to be patient, you know, try to be kind. It's either we are patience itself and kindness itself, or it will fail.

And they will test it. And Israel and the Jew have historically and always been that test for the church. It's God's design.

And the church has always failed the test. Always. The greatest of God's men, Luther himself failed.

He ran out of patience. He was the one who had said earlier, I don't blame these Jews for not getting saved. The way we treat them as Christians, I don't blame them for shrinking from this gospel.

But later on, as he went on and tried to persuade Jews and saw that they were as resistant to the Reformation faith as they were to Catholicism, began really to get to him. And then finally, he felt that they actually threatened the Reformation because of their cynicism and unbelief and constituted a danger. And

then he began speaking in such ways as to equip Hitler four centuries later to actually burn their synagogues, destroy their Torahs, their Talmud, everything that he lashed out in his invective, Hitler fulfilled.

So if a giant like Luther could collapse before the thing that Jews represent, if the grace of God in him was not sufficient, and he being a giant in the faith, what shall we say? And there were other examples, Chrysostom, it's called the golden mouth orator. And he was a notorious anti-Semite. His apostolic writings are supreme, but when it comes to the Jew, forget it.

They vexed him because they were proliferated in all of the Mediterranean communities where the church was having its existence. And what they were doing was saying that, that, that, that, that, you say, you know God and you have found the Messiah, but you've only elected to endorse a criminal who died outside the city limits. And you don't even know Hebrew and you profess to be able to understand and to interpret it.

This is our book. And they go on like that to vex. Who was one of the early martyrs that they burned at the stake and he could not be consumed by fire? Someone had to go in and stab him.

Who was that? Polycarp. When you read the martyrdom of Polycarp, one of the lines that is written in passing is, and the Jews were the first to go out and to seek the combustible materials. It's really interesting.

So what will it take after such a history as that to give them a revelation of their God in some unaffected way, simply by being what he himself is, that they cannot disregard nor gainsay that demonstration and have to become the redeemed of the Lord, even against their own historic opposition. When Paul says in Romans 11, they are the enemies of the gospel for your sake, he's not playing on words. There has been no more formidable opposition to the gospel and to the church than Jewish opposition, not only physically in the persecution of the apostles in the apostolic church, but even the alternative messianic schemes that Jews have composed, like Karl Marx with Marxism, is a messianic scheme.

It's an alternative for brotherhood based on a complete material level. What shall we say of psychiatry and Sigmund Freud, an attempt also for the redemption of disturbed souls, independent of God. What shall we say of this guy who wrote books on children, Spock, another Jew.

Wherever you look, they have been influential in presenting to mankind alternatives to God's redemption. So in that sense to the enemy also. But when you finally have won the enemy, you've won it all.

That's why God says, this gospel is the power of God at the salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. If you can succeed with them, what is there in the Gentile world that will in any way be intimidating. So don't start where you think you can succeed out in the boondocks where you're more likely to have success.

Start where I was crucified. Begin in Jerusalem and then unto Samaria to the uttermost corners of the earth. Begin where it's most difficult.

Begin where the persecution against me was most evident. That's a complete contradiction of logic and the reason. We would say begin where it's easiest and develop confidence.

And then finally as a final thing, have a showdown. Go directly where the opposition is the most severe. Because all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth.

Go ye therefore. Don't look at your frailty. Look at my words and what I have promised.

Okay. God's very being is mercy. The mercy of God lies in his readiness to share in sympathy with the distress of another.

A readiness which springs from his inmost nature and stamps all his being and doing. It lies therefore in his will, springing from the depths of his nature and characterizing it. How would you like someone to make a statement about us like that? That what issues from us, issues out of the depths of our nature and characterizes it.

If there's anything that contradicts the church, it will be something that would be affected, a put on, a whitewash, an outward and external demonstration, an amen and hallelujah where there's no real rejoicing in the heart. Choruses that are mechanical or down a collection plate that is not given with the generosity of spirit. You see what I mean? If the church has any requirement to be the church, it's got to be the thing in itself through and through.

But what thing? That which God himself is. And in the last days, in the final showdown, this is what will be tested. And we will be found wanting if we are not in that reality and in that place.

So I'm not satisfied with what I am. I'm catching glimpse, but I see too often the infrequency, the lack of consistency. And that's never true of God.

He's always the same yesterday, today, and forever. It's through and through. It's not an externality.

It's not a put on. It's not your best foot forward. It's your foot.

It's what you yourself are. And this is what God is after in us. And how far will he go to obtain it? He'll separate a man from his wife only to show him what he would not otherwise have seen.

A kind of longing that almost borders on something illicit if it affects your disposition in such a way as to throw you off course. That it has a place more than is legitimate in God. Maybe I'm exaggerating.

I'm just playing on something current. But all of us are being found out of where we come to the end of our source in God and begin to exhibit those aspects of our humanity that show he's not yet quite formed in us. And I appreciate that revelation.

Painful, disconcerting, embarrassing, humiliating. But there it is. And God is truth.

So he doesn't want to show. And the issues are too great and a show can never succeed in it. We have got to be what he himself is in himself.

So the main point that the meaning of the word grace makes clear is that God's love and grace are not mechanical, but have their true seat and origin in the movement of the heart of God. It is here that we can appreciate the meaning of the idea of personality in God and what has to be defended against the conception of God as some kind of an impersonal deity like this. We need to struggle to hold fast to God and not to allow some lesser understanding of him that is not him in some abstract way, some formula.

And this expression of God's grace is in the full scope of his own personal freedom. Everything that God is and does is determined and characterized by the fact that there is rooted in him, that he himself is this original, free, powerful compassion, that this is rooted in his heart, in his very life and being as God. The mercy of God is the reflection of the statement that the father is the father of mercies.

And that Jesus is, and that God is rich in mercy. God's mercy is now, is new every morning. Remember that? These wonderful scriptures, well, much more that can be said along those lines.

I just highlighted some of these precious remarks to remind us that this is what God is in himself. And the text that I hope will be a good foil for this is Psalm 102. We're not going to look at the whole psalm.

The first part of it, when you read it at your own leisure, sounds like it could have been written by an inmate in a concentration camp. It talks about his skin on his bones and his desolation. My days pass away in verse three like smoke, my bones burn like a furnace.

My heart is stricken and withered like grass. I'm too wasted to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning, my bones cling to my skin.

I'm like an owl of the wilderness, like a little owl in the waste places. Verse nine, I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink. So I don't know why it is.

Well, maybe I do. I could suggest that this would not be too extreme a description of Jews in their last day's extremity. It is so reminiscent of what was already experienced in the Holocaust of the Nazi time.

And if Jesus said that that which is to come will eclipse any previous suffering, then this would not be an exaggerated summation of the kind of distress to which Jews will be brought in the coming time of Jacob's trouble. And what we're to consider then is set in this context. Jews are in their final place of extremity, and it's an extreme place where their bread is like mingled with ashes.

Their skin clings to their bones. They're desolate. They're like an owl.

They're the most abandoned of all creatures. Why? In verse 10, because of your indignation and anger, for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside. So here's a recognition that what is being suffered is not some happenstance, not some kind of aberration in history.

You know this word? As modern commentators are apt to say about the Holocaust, it was a freak incident. If that man Hitler had not lived, it would not have taken place. Just one of those freaky aberrations, those historical things that happen from time to time for which there's no real explanation.

More of an accident than anything else that has to be suffered. Not so. It was an explicit expression of the sovereignty of God.

And more than that, it was the fulfillment of the word of God spoken thousands of years before by Moses. In Deuteronomy's chapter 28 through 32, and in Leviticus 26, and the prophets themselves warned of it and even described some of these last days' sufferings. That at night you will wish it were day.

At day you will wish it were night. The sword will pursue you in terror. The sword from without and the chamber and terror from within.

You'll not have that interpretation or that rendering in every edition, but this Bible has it. Deuteronomy 32 actually uses the word, the terror of the chamber within. And who could not have lived through these historic times since the Holocaust? And when you hear the word chamber, immediately it evokes the recognition.

It's the gas chamber. What a suffocation, what a terrifying death. And then it says in Deuteronomy 32, and the young man and the maiden, something like will be found on top and beneath the gray hair and the infant and the suckling.

Exactly the composition of the bodies as they opened the gas chambers. The youngest and the most virile clambered to the top for the last gulp of air before suffocation, but the elderly and the young and the infants were always trampled at the bottom. Written by Moses thousands of years before the event in Deuteronomy 32 as a warning of what would befall us in the last days.

You read the Holocaust book, it goes into much more, but just to say that much here, that it's incumbent upon the Jews in their last days extremity, not to dismiss it as a historical accident or a freak circumstance, but to see it as coming from the hand of God as a chastisement intended for their good. And here the Psalmist who describes this last day's affliction and suffering also acknowledges that it's because of your indignation and anger for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside. My days are like an evening shadow, I wither away like grass.

So up to this point, the Psalmist speaking in behalf of his own people and identifying with them is describing the excruciating conditions of their last day trial and extremity. Then he shifts gears, but you, O Lord, in verse 12 are enthroned forever. So what can we say then, forever includes the Nazi time, today, and tomorrow.

Forever is all time, past, present, and future, and God is enthroned in all time. So everything that has happened in time is the result of that enthronement. He's sovereign, he rules from heaven, and he even rules that Jews should be reduced to this condition, because it's only out of that reduction and being reduced like this, nigh unto death, that there can be any kind of hope for resurrection.

And except that this nation be resurrected, what can be hoped for in the nations? Who was it who was writing about Jonah, is occupied with Jonah? Willie, he's fascinated with Jonah, and rightly so, and remembers that in some previous conversation, what is it that brought Nineveh to repentance? Some scraggly Jew who was trying to flee from the obligation to bring them the word of repentance, did not even want to see them repent. He had it against them. He would rather see God do them in, and even complained about God as he was sitting under that tree, and God had to rebuke him.

But so then, how is it that an unwilling servant, who was trying to run away from his obligation, is nevertheless swallowed up by a great sea creature, and spit out on the beach, and then reluctantly fulfills his obligation, and the entire nation repents, in a depth of repentance that has never before been seen historically, nor ever since? Show me a nation that has repented, as Nineveh did in that day, that they even prohibited the animals from eating. A fast was declared, which not only men had to observe, but even their creatures. I believe they put dust and ashes on their own heads.

I mean, it was a repentance of a complete kind. How was that? Because the man who was spit up out on the beach, having been three days in the belly of the whale, was three days in the grave, and when he came up on that beach, he came up as the man of the resurrection, and nothing is going to precipitate an

authentic response to God, but that. And if Israel is going to be the nation's that, it must come to them in a resurrected form.

And the only catch about resurrection, more of us would be wallowing in resurrection, is that it must be preceded by death. Hosea says, he has stricken, but now he will make us alive, and hereafter we will live before him. That's real living.

Resurrection life is life. That's definitive life. Anything less than resurrection life is, what can we say, a facsimile thereof.

It's an intimation or an approximation, but it's not the real thing. The only real thing is resurrection. And it's necessary for Israel, and the purposes of God, to come into that mode, and therefore a death must precede it.

You, O Lord, are enthroned forever. Some purpose is being served in your enthronement that will glorify your name, because your name will endure to all generations. Now we come to the part that I want to dwell upon.

You will rise up and have compassion on Zion. You're not going to just find it in that moment. You have always had compassion, because you are compassion.

You are mercy. Even when Zion is going through its affliction, you have not become all of a sudden stony-hearted. You're not some impersonal deity who can look down with contempt as your people are groaning, because you said in all of our afflictions, you're afflicted.

You identify, you share in that suffering. You're not some impersonal deity that detaches himself from something for which your people need to pass. You're in and with your people in that thing.

That's what you are as God. That's what compassion is. Come, passion.

Come means with. How do they graduate? Cum laude. That means they graduate with laudatory things, with praise, with an acknowledgment for significant achievement.

Compassion means with suffering, with identification. So if we're going to be as God, we're going to have to be compassionate with Israel in her last day's affliction. And it's not enough just to cluck our tongues and say, oh, too bad, what a pity, but somehow be with them in it as God is with them in it.

And this is so beyond any kind of sentimental feeling for Israel. In fact, it will blow the whistle on sentiment. In that day, sentiment will reveal itself for the shabby thing that it is, an inadequate human response that might impress men for a moment, but it has no redemptive power.

Only compassion does. And compassion is God. It's his mercy.

You will rise up. I love that phrase. It sounds very resurrection-like.

You will rise up. There will be a manifestation of your life, which will be expressed as compassion for it is time to favor her. The appointed time has come for your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust.

The nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth your glory, for the Lord will build up Zion. He will appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute.

He will not despise their prayer. Let this be recorded for generations to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord. That he looked down from his holy height from heaven.

The Lord looked at the earth to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die, so that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem, when peoples gathered together and kingdoms to worship the Lord. That is, talk about poetry as being a condensed statement, an intensification, that if this had to be written out in prose form, in what is being said here, it would take pages to express. This is the most intensely compressed statement of something that not only is at the heart of last days, but through the last days and into the millennial glory and into eternity itself, of referring to unborn generations, who will praise the Lord for what he will do and exhibit when Israel passes through this extremity, having compassion and arising and favoring Zion at a time when Zion doesn't deserve it.

In the midst of her judgments, this affliction that Israel suffers is a judgment. It's not some arbitrary thing that God is saying they have to pass through, because there's a principle of death that precedes resurrection. The death is the result of judgment that is deserved for historic sin, for recent sin, and the sin of our fathers never acknowledged.

So he's just in that, but he's also compassionate in that. But the question is, what releases God to finally have mercy on Zion and to turn the situation around so as to bring a praise to his name that unborn generations, looking back on his coming forth at that time, will forever celebrate him. This is in keeping with Paul's conclusion of Romans 11, or the depth of the riches, for unto him be glory forever.

Something happens in a point of time, at the end of the age, but it's a happening of such a magnitude and kind that generations to come will have occasion to honor God in the remembrance of it. What's the something that in the midst of the most terrible afflictions of judgment, when this people are nigh unto death, and even into death, and groaning as prisoners, this is not fanciful. Jews are going to find themselves in chains.

We're going to find ourselves in dungeons and in dark places of absolute hopelessness, cast away in the farthest, most remote corners of the world, where only God himself can bring a release and a deliverance and a return to Zion from that abject condition. This is the worst that Israel has ever known and ever experienced. Jesus said that, that if this time were not cut short, no flesh would survive.

But it's in that time that God suddenly arises and says, the set time has come. It is finished. Now it comes the time of release and deliverance, having nothing to do with their deserving.

They're in a judgment that they deserve, but I will arise and have mercy on Zion and deliver them. Even the captive, even the one in the dungeon, even the one in chains, I'll bring him back. And when you read the prophets, the phrase, I will, I will, I will, just hits you between the eyes.

What a difference between a Zionist return, which men affect by their own wealth, their own energy, their own skill, hiring planes and bringing people back as against, I will, I will return you. I will bring you out. I will deliver you.

Why is that important? Because it's literal. And when God will, it cannot be done without being done before the face of all nations. They are going to see the extremity of God's judgment, but they're going to see also the extremity of God's mercy.

And to see God both in judgment and in mercy is to see God. Paul says in Romans 11, all the severity and the goodness of God. This is what God is in severity, but also in mercy and that his mercy takes place over his judgment.

His mercy is supreme, even over his judgment. And we don't know God unless we make allowance for both. We spoke this morning in our little prayer time that the fundamental error of all mankind and the church is an inadequate or warped or distorted knowledge of God.

That maybe we have celebrated certain attributes over others. We like kindness. We like goodness.

We like love, but do we like judgment? Are we as willing to acknowledge that God in his judgment is as much God as God in his mercy? And until we receive God in his totality for what he is in himself, have we really received God? And if we see God only partially, is it really God? Or are we forming a deity of our own imagining who cannot answer? So the revelation of God as he in fact is, is the salvation of mankind. And it saves them once and for all from their false gods. There's no longer a question about Allah or Hinduism or any other kind of false or occultic thing.

The God of Jacob and the God of Israel has once and for all in one last measure revealed himself as being the only God, the creator, but also the God of Israel, Israel's judge, but Israel's redeemer. This is why the issue of the dealings with Israel in the last days is for all mankind. And he says again and again, it will not be hit in the corner.

It will be before the face of all nations. So the question now before us, what is the thing that determines that the set time to favor Zion has come? The question is, there's got to come a critical juncture. There's got to come a moment when God himself elects to reverse the judgment that he himself has brought and to take a people who have been reduced to nothing by that judgment, who deserve to be counted down and out and historically once and for all finished as having any purpose in God, having suffered such judgment twice in this century and judgments throughout their history, including their expulsion from Israel, the destruction of the temple, the loss of the priesthood.

And that's why, what is the letter to the Romans? It's Paul's answer to the church at Rome over one question. What about Israel? Is God finished with them? Are we now the Israel of God? Can we safely assume that because they have stoned the prophet sent unto them and destroyed the holy one of Israel, the Messiah, that they are finished? They're down, they're out. They had a calling, but they have forfeited it.

I want you to know that there are many segments of the church today who believe that now, but they will never quote Romans 11. Isn't it remarkable? If you leave out just Romans 11, you can make a very good case for saying that God is finished with Israel and history will, will, uh, commence such a view. They deserve to be finished by any human reckoning, but this is exactly where God reveals himself as God.

He's not making a human reckoning. He's making a divine reckoning. That is to say he's acting, speaking, and doing out of himself, of what he is in himself.

Mercy is not something that God lays on. It's what he is. And so there comes a time when nothing more will reveal it than the reversal of this judgment that comes in a moment that God himself has chosen.

And it's such an abrupt turn and so visibly seen that there's no question because prisoners are taken out of their dungeons. The shackles of men are loosed and God will bring them back on litters and on donkeys on the backs and shoulders of Kings and Queens, that the very people who afflicted them will be the people who were bringing them back and lick the dust of their feet and count it a privilege to in any way have served a people who were once so universally despised. We're going to see in our generation, in these last days, Jews universally despised, hated with the most bitter vehemence as we saw in the Nazi time.

Like this man who shot up the people there in Los Andes, smiled the picture of him when he gave himself in, like I'm doing a service. I'm alerting the nation, it's time to kill all Jews. And I don't want to die before I've performed my measure.

Till it comes, I could talk till I'm blue in the face and you'll not really believe it, you'd have to see it. It would help you if you understood the Nazi time. It would help you to see the process by which Jews who were so included and formidable in their German society and civilization became progressively non-citizens.

They weren't allowed to sit in the parks. Jews not welcome. You can't buy in their stores or you can't sell to them.

Finally, they're removed from certain professions. They couldn't, they were professors in universities with long histories of a distinguished kind and having published many books, they're out. Their books were burned before they were burned.

It was a process by which a German civilization was brought to a place of sharing the fanatical and demonical hatred of the Jew that resided in Hitler as so abiding a passion that to the last day of the war, and here the military historians can never dope this out, the Germans continued to expend manpower and resources in the annihilation of Jews in the factories of extermination, instead of employing those things in their own defense. That they were so fanatical in the necessity, this compulsion to destroy Jews that it even exceeded their own necessity for defense. That's how rabid it was and will yet become.

They will be universally hated. There's the rise and fall of the Third Reich, William Shira. There's a number of books on the history of the rise of Nazism.

I've got a book that is an outstanding gem that I picked up for five cents in a book sale at the Cass Lake Library. Written by a Jew, Fritz, I can't remember his last name now. It was his doctoral thesis at Berkeley and what it is is an examination of Nazism as an occultic phenomenon.

You know what he goes on to show? That the most preeminent leaders of the Nazi movement, those who were the ideologues, the ones who formed the ideology, were almost invariably the disillusioned sons of Protestant ministers. Isn't that a remarkable thing? It's a statement of a rejection of faith and a launching into its opposite. They became demonic.

Of course, Hitler himself. That was a dress rehearsal. As formidable as that was, six million Jews, as well as millions of others, being systematically cremated.

What we're going to see in the last days will eclipse it. I'm reminding myself, who was with me? Was it Simon or John Parsons? We were at Auschwitz, the most notorious death camp in Europe, in Poland. Auschwitz is the German of the Polish word, it was the Polish town that was a soldier's barracks that the Germans took over and then began the process of annihilation, but it was inadequate.

Three kilometers away from scratch, they designed an entire factory of extermination called Birkenau. That was the thing that did me in. The railroad tracks still exist that come through a gate that say, Arbeit macht frei.

Your work will free you. They were coming to their death, but the lie was over the gate that somehow it's a labor camp. In the first installments of Jews coming to these camps, someone wrote, the women made their faces up with their cosmetics, thinking they were coming to some kind of rest camp for the duration of the war.

They went right from there directly into the ovens. It's a maniacal thing, but to see that Birkenau and the train track going right up through the gate to the place where the gas ovens were, the crematoria, and then the barracks for those who were not immediately killed, but had served in labor. As far as the eye could see, every building was down, but what remains in every place is the foundation and the smokestack.

I have some pictures. It's like looking over a vast piece of real estate with the foundations of these barracks in every place in the layout that the Germans plotted in that mentality for which they're so famous. Their scholarship, what makes German scholarship is the fastidious attention to detail.

The energy to read and to footnote and to examine is the same energy and persistence to detail that affected a system of human annihilation. It was a great issue, a problem of logistics. How do you kill and dispose six million victims? As we were walking away that day, John Parsons said, if what is to come is to eclipse this Nazi time, how many other camps like this will have to yet exist, not only in Poland or Germany, but everywhere in the world where Jews are? If God does not cut this time short, no flesh would survive, but I would say the greater majority of Jews that are alive in the world today will not survive the time of Jacob's trouble.

There will be a surviving remnant. That means that there are about 10 million Jews in the world today outside of Israel, and that the great majority of these will perish. Because God says elsewhere, I will bring them out of the nations where they have sojourned, speaking about the rebels who have transgressed against me, but I will not bring them into the land.

They'll be uprooted, but they're not going to make it to Zion. They'll perish in the way. It boggles the imagination, and only the fiercest kind of demonic hatred against the Jew can explain the energy that will systematically see to their annihilation.

I'm saying all that to say this, that this hatred will be universal. Anyone who has not the spirit of God will be a likely victim of coming under the influence of that hatred. Only those whose hearts are alive in God and are filled with the love of God, in whom the nature of God is thoroughly established, they alone will be the only ones able to resist this filthy thing that will swamp mankind.

It's just under the surface of civilization now. All it takes is a rupture. All it takes is the Lord's release.

All it takes is some historic event, a war in the Middle East, this cutting off of oil. As happened before, men were clubbing one another at the gas stations to get to the gas pump because their Sunday pleasure was

aborted because of some kind of event in Israel that stirred them to fire. What is appropriate for Jews is also appropriate for the Church.

The people of God come under a double penalty in their transgression against this and in their sins. They have forfeited much, and therefore it's not uncommon to see that the sons of ministers should become the opposite. They should become the demagogues and the proclaimers and the ideologues of a Nazi demonic system that exalts death rather than life.

Even the Gestapo wore the skull and crossbones as the insignia on their caps. What is it that will set in motion a radical change from that time? When is the appointed time come? That's the language that is used here and that's where we need to examine because I believe it has everything to do with us. You will rise up and have compassion on Zion for it is time to favor her for the appointed time has come.

How do you for your servants hold its stones dear and have pity on her dust? The issue that brings God's release is not something that Israel does, it's something that the Church does. Or to be more accurate, it's something that the Church has become and it's expressed and revealed in her attitude toward the Jew and toward Israel at a time when she is universally hated in the world and in the depths of the terrible judgment that God poetically touches one thing to show the measure of it that these servants, it can't be Israel, Israel is not in a servant condition, they're in an apostate condition. The servants must be us, it's the Church.

But what about the Church? It has come to a time when it has pity on her dust, compassion on her stones. What does that mean? That we have taken an interest in antiquity? That the stones mean the ancient cities of Israel like an archaeologist? If anyone has the Amplified, it says the ruins, why don't you read that, Pearl? Verse 14, these are not the stones of antiquity, these are the stones of her ruins. These are the evidences of her judgment, that the Church, her servant people, have an identification with Israel, not when she's flying high, the way has been true this charismatic time, we love to go for the Feast of Tabernacles and celebrate Israel.

Anyone could admire and identify with the people when they're riding high, but who will identify with them when they're at the depths of their most dismal judgment and their cities are reduced to rubble. I'm saying this is why I'm disliked, because if we had a conference in Jerusalem two years ago on the coming necessary devastation of the land, that present-day Jerusalem is going to be reduced to rubble. Haifa, Tel Aviv, all of the great centers of Israeli life, with their new Tower of Commerce and their freeways and all of the things that have been built, because they have a confidence that they're going to go on forever and so has every previous civilization before it's been destroyed.

They built their towers and their monuments and what's left but some shrub, some ruin of what was once a proud civilization that assumed it would go on forever. Israel is going to suffer, present Israel is going to suffer that devastation, but the question is how will we relate to it when she is in that condition. This love for her dust and compassion for her stones is not some shabby sentimental response, but the deepest identification of the church with that people, with that nation, in the dregs of their judgment.

Got the idea? And I don't think we've yet begun to scratch it. Do you know the way in which you recoil yourself even now from another believer if they if you find a basis for disappointment? It's not hard to do, in fact you're daily tempted and do it. You can't maintain your identification if you are somewhat crestfallen or disappointed in what you hoped or thought such and such a believer or person was to be.

How then will you find it in yourself to be able to identify with Israel, being a gentile, who are having difficulty even now when Israel is not in that notorious condition, to be in that time in such identification with her as to have compassion and pity and mercy. And also what God is getting at, he's waiting for something so deep in the condition of the church that cannot be affected. You cannot put this on as a performance.

You cannot summon this emotionally. This is something that will measure to what degree we are in God himself. This is where he is.

He's compassionate and merciful and identified in the death of the transgression and the sin of his people. As is stated in the scripture that while we were yet in sin he died for us. He didn't wait for us to come to a condition that would appreciate a salvation.

While we were yet rebels, while we were yet in transgression and sin and iniquity, he died for us. He was identified with us, not in our virtue, but in the depths of our vice. And if he had not that identification, his redemptive act on the cross would have been meaningless.

He was willing for that death because of this identification. And will we be able to come to that same kind of attitude of the Jew that he had toward us, except also through a death? Yeah. The issue of Israel and Israel's redemption is not Israel.

It's the church. They're out of it. They're completely out of it.

They're reduced to ashes. They're in prison and dungeons. They have no power.

They are inert. They lie unto death. If there's any redemption, it will come because of us or it will not come at all.

This is all the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. That he makes the key to Israel's redemption, the church, but a church of what kind is the question. Not a church that has a sentimental attachment because that sentiment will go out like a puff when the nation becomes despicable in her sin, but one that will identify with her in her sin and in the judgment in which she will languish in that last day.

The set time has come when the Lord sees that his servants have compassion upon her stones and pity for her dust. The moment he sees that he arises out of Zion and becomes their deliverer because what he has been waiting for has been obtained. He's not content merely with an Israel that will be redeemed.

He wants a church that has been transfigured, but however gracious his enablement doesn't mean that we're automatically going to come into it or else we would see that operation now. If we're finding fault with each other now and withdraw and recoil on the basis of disappointment now with ourselves as Christians, where is the nature of God in mercy and compassion that is expressed of him right through to the root of his being? It evidently is not yet our appropriation and so he's waiting for that. He's given every enablement, every provision for godliness in life, but he has not yet obtained it in the church.

Why didn't the oldest son have compassion on his younger brother who's coming back now to the father? What did he lack when the father said everything that I have is yours? Does that not mean that he has what the father is in himself as well? Why then didn't he exhibit it? Why was he unwilling even to come into the house for the celebration? So everything that was with the father was with him, but he was not acting in that everything. There's some kind of choice where we don't have to necessarily surrender to God's

grace. We can steadily continue in our own humanity.

There's something delicious about being critical and being offended or feeling ourselves justified in the way in which we react and respond to each other that men will actually prefer that than to exhibit the compassion of God. There's something perverse about us that prefers to act in its own humanity and to enjoy its self-pity, its criticism, because when you're able to find fault in another brother, it's not to say he's without fault. What is the unconscious thing that is working in you but self-exaltation? When you can see that we're on the wrong tangent on this text and that really speaking about Pharisees and enjoy that observation, there's something for you in it that's exhibiting a kind of spiritual pride that is one opsmanship on the other.

I'm not saying that's the case, but it would be a tempting possibility. Are you understand how deep this is? And that until this is wrought out and the nature of God is made manifest in us, there's no deliverance for Zion. And so long as there's no deliverance for Zion, there's no deliverance for the nations, that God has put all his eggs in one basket and that that basket is the church, and that what we have historically failed at, namely to be able to respond to the Jews with compassion, is the very last thing in the end that is the measure of whether we have come to the fullness in God that is already our privilege.

This has been the historic thing that the church has always failed and there was one last final showdown and we are the ones in this generation to either exhibit the same kind of impatience of a Luther or the condemnation of a Chrysostom or to exhibit God. This is the put up or shut up. It's not enough to be nice guys or to have a Sunday face or any of the other things by which we have deceived many and even ourselves that somehow we have it together.

This test is not something that we can pass through glibly, it's the acid test of put up or shut up of whether God's nature has become so supremely established in us that even the Jews in this most vile condition will not exhibit anything other than a compassion and a mercy which is God's. When he sees that, the deliverer will arise out of Zion for what he has been waiting for and holding back the fulfillment of the ages has come to pass in the church, his servants and the fact that it's as significant as I'm making it out without exaggeration is proved by the very next line of this text. The nations, verse 15, will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth, your glory.

What a statement. The kings of this earth, the hot shots, the self-satisfied, the smug, the contemptuous of God and of his faith are going in one fell swoop to have their whole attitude reversed and see in God something that they had never before acknowledged. They will fear the name of the Lord.

What will take place that will stagger the world and bring an awareness of God that up till now is non-existent? One thing they're going to see visibly historically, such a move of God, such a demonstration of God that was precipitated by a condition that has come to pass in the church, that they will fear the name of the Lord. They will have to acknowledge. The air will go out of their rebellion for the sight of this demonstration.

It is that awesome. And all the kings of the earth, your glory, because God's glory is his mercy. Remember when Moses said, show me now your glory.

God said, okay, I'll hide you in the cleft of the rock and I'll cover your eyes. You'll be able to just glimpse my after part. And he says, he went before him and he showed him his tender kindness.

He showed him his chesed, that's the Hebrew word, which is the word for grace and also the word for mercy. Moses asked to see his glory and God showed him his mercy because God's mercy is his glory. And when he'll show his mercy to Israel, because we have released him to arise and to deliver Zion, the world will see God because they will have seen his mercy and they'll fear his name forever.

I mean, I can't believe that God is, that we're coming to this final pinnacle and everything is coming to one payoff. And it's the issue of the attitude of the church toward a people who have become historically so despised that the only reason you can avoid being infected by this universal hatred is that you have come to such a place in God that it not only does not affect you, but you exhibit exactly the opposite. Everyone is out for their death.

You're out for their life. And if this identification is a cheapie, and it's just a sentimental thing, God does not arise. What does identification mean? What did identification with us in our transgressions mean for Jesus in order to affect our redemption? It wasn't just that he looked upon us in our pitiful condition and clucked his tongue in his sympathy.

His identification meant taking our sins upon himself. It was such an identification that he came in union with us in that condition that we who knew no righteousness could obtain righteousness because he who was righteous became our transgression. There's a brilliant statement about Jesus as mediator, maybe I'll bring it tomorrow, that I obtained at the Lutheran seminary.

What does that mean that Jesus was the mediator? I used to think, well, he was the instrument by which these redemptive things were transacted. Luther, in his brilliance, understood and says that to be a mediator is to become one with the thing that is being transformed. He became sin for us who knew no sin.

That when Jesus was on the cross, the betrayal of his disciples, every vile sin that had ever been perpetrated and ever would be came upon him. He became that sin, not technically, but actually so loathsome in sin that the father had to avert his face. What do we pray this morning? Lord, show your face because to show your face is to be blessed.

Let your countenance shine upon us. To withhold your face, to turn your face from us is judgment. Jesus had to bear the judgment.

The worst and most excruciating thing of the crucifixion of Jesus was not the physical torment, which is not to say that that was not unbelievably gruesome and the cruelest form of death known to men. So despicable that Romans counted it a shame that any Roman would have to suffer crucifixion. It was only for criminals or those guilty of undermining a nation.

What do you call that? Like subversives. It was an unbelievably ugly sin. It was a death by asphyxiation.

That's why they broke the legs of the victims because so long as they could stretch their bodies by stretching their legs as their chest cavity was filling with fluids from the particular posture and the torture, they could breathe. But the moment they couldn't stretch their legs, they drowned in their own fluid. They were asphyxiated.

That's why they broke the legs to hasten the death. So this physical aspect of crucifixion is unbelievably grim. But the worst thing that Jesus suffered was not that.

It was not for that reason that he cried out, take this cup from me. The thing that made him cry out was to become sin and therefore having to have the father turn his face from him. Because if there was anyone who lived in intimate association with the father, it was Jesus.

It was his life. And now he has to bear becoming sin. The mediator identifies with the sin to the point where he becomes it.

Who of us is willing to come into and identify with Israel in the condition of her sin and of her judgment? When God will see that willingness and that ability because it's God's very nature being expressed. The fullness of time has come and the set time has come to favor Zion and to astound the nations and to complete his whole great redemptive work. He has all these eggs in one basket.

And we are that basket, the church. And the issue is not that we have arrived at something only in this life, but having arrived in that condition, that will be our permanent condition throughout all eternity. And only in that permanent condition can we be to the nations in the redemptive theocratic rule of God, what we ought.

We have to be to the nations as God himself, because we're invited to rule and reign with him from his throne. He's not going to extend that invitation to some carnal believer who is going to take his advantage in that role or whip someone or throw his authority around to rule with Christ is to rule in the spirit of Christ. So whatever we, whatever defects we have now that somehow we can conceal or get by, we cannot take into eternity.

It will necessarily require the forfeiture of the privilege of ruling and reigning with him in his theocratic rule eternally. And so the whole preparation for that comes in this life and the whole test of whether we have obtained that preparation comes in a final historic moment toward Israel itself, not when she's at her best, but when she's at her worst. Just survey your own heart in these days, these very days, over these very tables and in this very room and see what your attitude has been toward one or another, and especially toward me.

Because whoever the person is, who's the focal point would necessarily be the object of the criticism and the critique of God's people. That's the name of the game. That's the suffering that you bear knowing that you're called to be a focal point.

And that somehow the Lord has not perfected you and allowed a sufficient number of defects and shortcomings to be evident so as to give opportunity for people who want to dwell upon that and find reason to be critical or judgmental or to withdraw themselves. Can you see what I'm saying? This is more than a school. This is a laboratory.

This is a dealing of God. I'm just identifying the elements that God employs. And even as I was sitting there this morning, I thought, you know, for all the times that I've knocked this pastoral mystique that pastors celebrate, where they keep themselves out of the view of God's people, and they just come onto the stage for their performance.

And you can look with awe at the man of faith and power, but he doesn't allow himself to be known. Then he retreats back again to his privacy till the next occasion. But we're not in that situation, but I was envying it today.

I would like to be out of view and just come and do my thing and leave you with your own impression and not have to give you opportunity. If we will not identify with Israel in her sin, will we be able to identify with God and his compassion? Can we turn on the one and not have the other? In fact, does the mercy follow our identification with them in their sin? So if we are self-righteous or have a lurking question, they don't deserve the mercy of God, showing that our own Christian lives are not predicated on grace, but on accomplishment and on merit. We don't know our own hearts, guys.

We're living in a culture that emphasizes one's attainment through one's own merit and one's own performance. And we say grace, but what is the actual basis in which our life is being lived out in God? The brother talked about the Pharisees, that that was a parable for Pharisees. And then someone said, yes, but that's us.

We have Pharisaical hearts. We're proud. We're disdainful.

We're contemptuous. We look down on the young brother. We see ourselves as one who have labored unstintingly.

We're self-exalting at the cost of another. That's far, so far removed from being able to identify with Israel. Not to identify with Israel is really to say, I would never be capable of their transgression.

That's them. They deserve what they got. I would never, I. To identify is to say, there but for the grace of God, go on.

There's nothing that they have not performed. There's no transgression. There's no breach of God.

There's no apostasy of which I myself am not also capable. I'm with them. I understand.

I identify with them. That's exactly my condition. I know what my final message in Germany was true and false repentance of the German toward the Jew.

It was a blockbuster as if God pulled a pin out of a hand grenade and rolled it in the middle of congregation. Boom. They came down.

I mean, the shrapnel was everywhere because I was in Berlin at a conference on prayer for Israel and it was schmaltzy, sentimental, self-serving, crocodile tears, that pseudo identification that is self-exalting. That was, shouldn't we owe them something? They suffered at our hands. It's the wrong thing.

It's the wrong basis altogether. When they had a final night of repentance toward the Jew, I could barely contain myself. It made me soul sick.

My guts were just roiled up like that because what they were performing was a cathartic exercise that relieved them from a sense of guilt and that's all that they were wanting. They wanted a relief. They didn't want the redemption of Israel.

They weren't willing to identify in suffering grown with them. They want to be relieved of their conscience as Germans. They were celebrating that.

I'm suffering. I came home to the apartment where we were staying in Berlin and they had a computer. I just sat down and I began to type something, I don't know what, and then I showed it to Klaus, my brother with me who was the interpreter.

He began to work on it in German. Then we went from there to Nuremberg, the final stop. Nuremberg is the city where Hitler had his great Nazi rallies.

It has a pagan history going back to a time. The spirits of that yet remain overhead. The first night, rough.

I had conflict with the worship team led by the pastor's own wife and the pastor himself droning and going on with announcements and petty things that were robbing the time of a man who professes to recognize the prophetic call but not giving it the opportunity for its expression. My subject was the kingdom of God. Came the second and final night, the Lord said, speak from what you have written.

I took up the paper with me and I did. The wife later who had never spoken to me in all my visits to that church over the years spoke to me and said, from the moment you opened your mouth it was like a sword. In that message, God identifies what true repentance is.

It's not a feeling of guilt for the past of what you have unhappily inflicted upon Jews. It's your identification with the Jew in that your sins as Germans is actually exactly the same as Israel's own sin. It's the sin of apostasy.

It's the sin of God rejection even in the face of your German orthodoxy. It doesn't matter whether you were orthodox and you had the husk of correct doctrine or you were liberal and were rejecting it. In effect you did what the Jews did.

You made of the great faith a Sunday addendum. Your principal faith and your real concern was your imperial ambition for your nation, for its commerce, for its industry, for its wealth, for its culture and your religion had become a kind of shriveled Sunday adornment. You garlanded the cross with roses.

You robbed the faith of its glory and its power and the evidence of it is that Jews were 2,000 years in your presence and they were never once ever affected by your witness. You could not bring them to redemption so you destroyed them and there will be no true repentance toward the Jew until you repent toward God. Remember what the prodigal son said? I have sinned against heaven and my father.

Germany needs to know it has sinned against heaven and that their sin is not the holocaust. The holocaust is the symptom of their sin. The holocaust is the evidence of their removal from God even while employing the name of God.

There's no worse idolatry than to use the name of God and Jesus in vain when in fact your real religion and your real heart is in commerce, industry, trade or war. And when I saw what was going on in Berlin and the rebuilt Reichstag building there, their senate, their congress hall with a brand new dome and 500 barracks out there perfecting something, I said, you know, my impression was that this was not just Germany rebuilding its capital for itself. This was the formation of a global center and that your ambition has never been altered now that your nation is reunited because nothing has ever broken the deep-seated German desire for its own gratification as a nation and therefore the Jews were your victims of your removal from God and until you acknowledge that your sin is exactly the same as Israel, there's no basis, there's no true repentance.

And the evidence of when it comes will be this, you will be able to tell Jacob their transgressions and Israel their sin. Instead of buttering them up with all kinds of condescensions and making nice and making all kinds of things that gratify the flesh of Jews, you will be able to tell them their transgressions. It says in Isaiah, don't hold back, let your voice be like a trumpet, tell Israel their transgressions and Jacob their sins.

That is love, that is mercy, that is God, but this nice and being sorry and consoling Jews on a long basis, that's a self-serving operation of the kind that your religion has always been self-serving and until you repent of that self-serving religion and recognize that your sins are as grievous as Israel's and break and repent at that level, you'll not have any meaning for Israel. You'll always have to reiterate your false repentance, you'll always have to have another occasion of feeling sorry and when they heard that word, down they came. I mean, you couldn't find a space to stand, the bodies were all over in groanings like you'd never hear and finally as they worked it out with God, some were getting to break through into another realm and I encouraged them to give God their voices and give a priestly expression of praise and worship that is not some faint thing that requires amplifiers and something was beginning to issue from these people on their faces that was going up to heaven.

It was Hebraic, it was authentically heavenly and I said, now you are more a threat to the powers of the air over Nuremberg and Germany than ever you were with your amplifiers. This they despise and this terrifies them for this is authentic worship that has come out of authentic redemption and will change the nation. True repentance is the name of the game and I wonder if we will be able to identify with Israel until we have come to it.

You want to search your heart, don't measure your relationship with the Lord about your feelings in times of exalted worship or his sense of presence. In the cold gray dawn of morn, what is your actual face, heart, attitude toward the Jew? You may never have seen one, it doesn't excuse you. There is something in your heart.

God has established that as a Gentile. There's a necessary and inevitable enmity and the only way it can be healed and cured is not by God just touching that thing but by infusing you with his entire nature. The only way to be to the Jew what God himself is, is by being God himself in you.

If you want the truth of your of your condition, measure that one thing. What is your attitude toward these people? Because they give you every reason to be offended. They were getting A's in school and you were struggling and happy to get a C and they didn't even sweat a beat of sweat.

How can you do that and sit in classrooms with Jewish kids like that and not become envious? What are you so kind of saint? The only way you could have missed that is to be some kind of a saint. It's calculated to find this out. To have compassion on her stones and pity for her dust is not only to identify with Israel and her judgment but to invite our own judgment.

Even a decimation by those who will despise what they see in us. What will more offend those who are already victimizing Israel than to see others voluntarily identifying with her? Will that not bring upon our heads their same wrath and the same judgment? Will we not in some degree then make ourselves candidates for persecution? Are we willing? If that's what identification means, it's easy and cheap to have a mental or emotional sentimental but if it's an identification that's going to invite our own disaster, are we willing for that identification? Even physically, that identification is pseudo. You know that word P-S-U-E-D-O? False.

If we still retain an iota of self-righteousness that believes ourselves morally superior to Israel. Why is my mother not saved after 35 years of my conversion? She's seen remarkable and dramatic changes but what she has probably not seen and is yet waiting for even unconsciously is for me to come down off my high horse. She's still sensing a moral and spiritual superiority that renders her incapable of our own response.

So long as the Israel will find in the church some aspect of a superiority over themselves, they'll not hear from us. That the key to opening the blind eye and the deaf ear is that the word that comes comes from those who are with them in their same condition and not being spoken to them from a place of moral or spiritual superiority. We're faced with a conundrum.

Our very history in God, our knowledge brings that sense of spirituality and yet at the same time not to feign something or conjure something up but actually have an identification with this people in the depth of their own depravity as being our own. That's the heart of the problem and I don't know how to solve it. Just trusting the Lord that even maybe through the word as will be a hammer upon the rock, that rock will be broken.

What the Lord gave me recently is this statement. The word Israel is not in its full and true and ultimate meaning an ethnic or racial designation. Not all Israel is Israel and not all the Jews were Israel but that Israel is a statement of a spiritual kind of an identification with the God of Israel.

What makes Israel so distinctive in its best was its union with that God and its Hebrew practices and its worship and its faith and its psalmist and its prophets were the expression of the life of that God. When we will come to that even as Gentiles, may all the more as Gentiles, that will devastate the Jews when they see it. But that kind of quality that reveals their God cannot be an overlay, cannot be a superficial thing that we learn as choruses and hitting the tambourine but comes out of a depth of union with him, that comes out of a depth of union with him in death and then also in resurrection.

It's that moral superiority, that self-righteousness, that stubborn thing that will not give up the ghost that keeps us from that full union and that's what God is probing and feeling for. And nothing will reveal it but with when Israel is in her fallen condition, can we identify with her in her fallen condition or will we then exhibit not an identification but a condescension? You understand the difference? What it means to condescend? Condescension is when one is superior to the one to whom you're giving your comfort but identification means you're in the grave with them. So natural Israel is waiting, so to speak, on spiritual Israel and the nations are waiting on the transformation of natural Israel which they have seen in all of her ungainliness, selfishness, doesn't give a rap how the world is affected by us.

To see that transform is to bring the fear of their God upon them. It's like a set of dominoes going down but the first domino that sets in motion the whole cycle is the church to present Israel as the true Israel of God, not feigning a performance but being the authentic Israel of God itself. Can we as Gentiles who have grown up in South Africa, Canada, Great Britain come to a place of identification with Jews whose lifestyle culture mentality is altogether other? But can we come into it not through some cultural assimilation of tambourine banging, I mean I appreciate that, but through the union with the God of Israel, the God of the Hebrews whose genius was invested in them at the beginning and that they still bear the traces millennia later however much they have been removed from him and that nothing will open their blind eyes than the revelation again of their own God, all the more powerful when it comes through the vessel for whom we expect it least.

But when Paul speaks at the commencement of his great statement in chapters 9-11 in Romans about the mystery of Israel, he begins by saying I would wish myself accursed for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh that they might know Christ. And I raise the question, was Paul speaking out of his physical and natural identity with his people or was he speaking out of his apostolic union with Christ that sees them as his brethren for whom he would wish himself accursed? Because the same question comes

up in Matthew 25, when did we see the least of these your brethren? The failure to see the brethren, Jews as our brethren that we as the Israel of God do not realize that we are in union with them even in their apostasy and that it's that knowledge, that willing knowledge, that union that will be the key to their release, that the deliverer will come out of Zion, waits on that identification that they are our brethren as much as they are Paul's, not because of the flesh but because of the spirit, because of our identification with their father they are our brothers. And the older brother said your son has come back to you, he didn't say my brother, he could not identify with him as his brother.

His sinful proud heart of condescension could not even bring himself to that identification. When we will come to that identification because God has dealt with our pride, they will recognize the union and the affinity and the identity and we'll be able to open the book for them. You may have heard me share this in the Nuremberg neighborhood at a meeting in a hotel where I'd spent the afternoon at the cemetery that still remains of the Jewish community that went back to the 1400s.

The Nazis could not knock over those tombstones, they were thick slabs of granite and they were effaced by time and by weather, you couldn't read them anymore, maybe a faint semblance of Hebrew and I was so moved by it. I always visit the Jewish cemeteries and I came back to that meeting and I looked into the face of that German audience and I said I saw these tombstones, these Jews have been with you since the 1400s, they've been with you since 70 AD from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, they were dispersed into the Holy Roman Empire that subsequently became Germany. How is it that for all those 2,000 years you never communicated to these Jews in your midst that the God whom you celebrate is the God of Israel and the God of Jacob and do you even today know that? And the fact of the matter is are you willing to know it? Are you willing for that identification? It's a shameful identification.

God is not ashamed to say I'm the God of Jacob. We know what Jacob was, a usurper, a wheeler dealer, a shenanigan divisor, but God says I'm the God of Jacob. Are you willing to identify with that God and with that people? And these Germans, their jaws dropped because the fact of the matter is they were not willing.

They preferred to see their Christianity as something separate from and other than what the Jews in their midst had known and did not communicate to those Jews that the God whom they worship is their God and preferred to have it so. And that's the very issue that Mary Jo is bringing up because it's a humbling and if there's any nation that ever needed to be humbled by this identification was Germany itself. Look what has been the result historically of an arrogant nation not broken and lacking the humility of God because it failed to see what God was doing for it in his sovereignty by putting this nation in its very midst and calling them to come under that nation in the capacity of servants and to make their savior known and to explain to them their transgressions and their sins that that's why they were in Germany and not in the land.

That their exile and their expulsion was the statement of their transgression, but God was waiting for their return and wanting them back. That that nation could not have performed anything more glorious than to have been the servant people of God to explain to Israel their transgressions and their sins and enable them to return as the people of God. It would have been the blessing for all the nations of the earth including Germany itself.

So this we're not talking about some small thing and even today could it be the saving grace of Germany before it yet embarks on another expression of imperial ambition. They want to be the masters of the

world. This European union is a German enterprise.

They still have this ambition and nothing will cure it than the brokenness that comes when you're willing to come under a lowly and despised people in your midst and play second fiddle and be for them what God wants as against your own ambition for yourself and that's the issue of the church also. Is there anything that will antagonize us more than to be in that condition and see God take this despised people at the bottom and exalt them and make them the head of the nations. That nations will have to come to their Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles or God will not allow them to have reign and that they would be called by a new name and be called the priests of God and that there would be as a diadem in his hand and be greatly honored before all the nations.

We will be as indignant and angry as about that as the brother seeing this son receiving a robe, a ring and a fatted calf. That revealed his heart that this son who deserved nothing should be so celebrated really reveals this Jacob self-righteousness that God has asked not until Zion travails that Jerusalem is birthed. She doesn't birth herself.

She's incapable of that exertion. Someone else has to take the pangs of travail of identification to bring forth that which will bless all the nations. Why should we share some other woman's travail when it's her baby but when that baby is born we're suckled by it and nursed on its knee.

Isn't that a remarkable thing? Someone else travails for it because Jerusalem itself, Zion cannot prevail. It's enervated. It's worn out.

It's despairing. It's crunched by its judgments. Someone else has to take those labors.

What woman would do that? It's enough for a woman to bear that for her own child. Who will bear it for another? What kind of a woman is that? What kind of an intercessor is that? Intercession is not a technique. It's an identification of the most profound kind where you're willing to bear the burdens and the pains of another that you could easily have avoided if you had not voluntarily taken that upon yourself.

But the voluntary taking it upon yourself is the demonstration of very God. He voluntarily took upon himself how it prevailed. And when he sees that again by the church for this despised woman the end of the age will have come.

And it's a voluntary thing. It cannot be imposed. It's a remarkable thing.

And it's a mystery. So maybe just let that rest well in our hearts and have its work. And I'm so yearning for the word to become an event that we would actually see the breakthrough here.

Maybe it's yet to come or it will be after you leave or at some future time. And I'll read the rest of this tomorrow. So let's just invite the Lord to take this word.

The depth of what is being spoken and transacted. And that will not return to him void. So Lord we bless you.

You are probing. You are searching. Wow.

You're going deep my God beyond anything that we have ever considered. And we love it. It's so good.

It's so needful my God. So much is at stake. I appreciate what Adam shared because he caught the bob of it.

He understood. And where's my place in this. What about my glory.

You never gave me a fatted calf. And I've been faithful. And you're going to give it to these guys.

They're cop-outs and they've blown it. What that necessarily reveals of our secret hearts. And until you have that heart until you put yourself in that heart and have become yourself in us Lord.

What shall we say. We will always be the older brother who despises and is unwilling to be gracious and even to come in to celebrate. So we invite you Lord just to continue to work your word.

Thank you my God. It's deeper after something that you didn't think too extravagant to bring your sons from distant places to expose them to these to this word. And we pray Lord that it will not be turned to void.

So much as it pleases you even before the end of our days together. May we see the fruit of it. May my mother be at first food of it.

Thank you my God. That this is not accidental. This is sovereign.

That this old lady so representative of Jewry through the ages so stubborn so resistant is in our midst in this wilderness. So my God work the wonders of your will and receive the praise of your people to the eternal praise of your glory for the depth and the magnificence of what you are after and what you alone can perform. Thank you my God for this measure today.

Let it have its continuing work we pray. We receive our gratitude in Yeshua's name.

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