

# The Conflict of Two Wisdoms - Part 2

by Art Katz

---

*The sermon highlights the conflict between the world's wisdom, which is based on power and self-interest, and the wisdom of God, which is based on humility, dependence, and obedience.*

**Duration:** 1:07:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 8:2, Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:25-26, John 6:68

**Topics:** "Wisdom Of God"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for believers to rely on the life of God in order to be patient and kind to one another. The Book of Psalms is highlighted as a source of communion with God, with the speaker personally engaging in daily communion through reading the Psalms. The speaker also discusses the importance of understanding the suffering and death that Israel must go through in order to attain its glory. The sermon concludes with the reminder that believers should not expect instant gratification or rewards in this life, but rather trust in the ultimate fulfillment and consummation of their faith in the life to come.

---

## Transcript

Speaking of, if we can't identify it or define it, how should we fulfill it? You don't want to be slack students and allow something to go forth over this table and not understand it, not have taken hold of it. This is our critical call, our mandate, is to demonstrate this wisdom. Not just articulate it, but to demonstrate it.

So we have an obligation to be able to define it. So from Ephesians 3, verse 9, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world have been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent or in order that now, unto the principalities, get that part, and now, the now has come. The time has come for this fulfillment, that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, not to the world, not to men, not even for the church, but unto this realm of invisible angelic fallen presence called the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Doesn't mean heaven, it means in the air above the earth. We know there are strata, there are scriptures to speak of a third heaven, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which is purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is an apostolic mouthful.

And I would say that the church has been oblivious or indifferent or has just glossed over this remarkable centerpiece, and that the church that is to be the church of the last days must take this so deeply to heart

that this is the pivotal principle of its whole being. And this is the eternal purpose of God. So what does that mean, that a church that will take this to itself as its foremost reason for being will by that reason become irrelevant because it's occupied with the eternal purpose and with making a demonstration to an invisible heavenly realm that it has no value on the earth? That's the world's wisdom, that you're so heavenly-minded that you're no earthly good.

Here's a book about competing wisdoms. What does God say? Except you're heavenly-minded, except you have taken the eternal purpose, you are of no earthly good. It's because you have embraced the cosmic and the eternal that you have a relevance of an ultimate kind in the present.

There's a now that waits upon this appropriation. So what is this wisdom that the church is called to demonstrate or to make manifest and that God thinks it's so notable and so all-consumingly important that he did not hesitate, nor think it too extravagant, to create the world? In order that, through the church, this wisdom might be demonstrated. What is this wisdom? Dun-da-dun-dun.

The cross revealed the wisdom. The cross is the wisdom. The weakness of the cross? Huh? The weakness? OK.

The weakness of the cross? The apparent weakness of the cross. Well, when we say wisdom, what is God actually meaning through Paul? Is he meaning wise sayings like Confucius? What does he mean by wisdom itself? And that obedience unto the cross, the humiliation and the agony of that death, was the greatest and most intense exhibition of that wisdom. In fact, we can say that at the cross, two wisdoms collided.

The malignity of evil. Mal means bad. Malaria is bad air.

Malicious is bad spite. It's the malignity, the evil wisdom. What characterizes it? What did it show itself at the cross? See, there's a real collision.

Power, force, violence, threat, intimidation. The wisdom of this world rests on force, power, violence, threat, intimidation, fear. Say, uncle, don't you know I have the power to release you? Jesus, the powers of darkness trying to tempt Jesus in his final trial as much as he was tempted at the beginning in the garden.

If you obey me, I'll get you off the hook. You don't have to suffer this disgraceful death outside the camp like a criminal naked. You're an Orthodox Jew, and you're not even going to have your private parts covered.

Your hands can't even bring that measure of decorum that is instinctive. But men are going to gaze upon you in your utter nakedness. This kind of death, Romans would not even inflict upon other Romans however vile their crime.

This is the death reserved only for criminals and slaves. It's the most degrading as well as the most agonizing death. And Pontius Pilate is saying to Jesus, look, I can get you off the hook.

Don't you know I've got the authority to condemn you or to release you? And Jesus could have wavered and sagged and collapsed at this more formidable demonstration of a wisdom that really has the credentials to perform something. You could do nothing against me except it was given you from above. I've come to drink this cup.

So that the cross brings the two wisdoms not only into collision, but in their ultimate and most intense expression. In fact, it's the powers of the air now bearing on the body of Jesus in all of their vengeful and malignant character that will evoke a response from the victim that will be the greatest demonstration of the wisdom of God. Just like Stephen in his martyrdom with those stones thudding into his flesh, you know what happens when somebody steps on your toe accidentally? Something rises up in you.

Your body is being, how about dying by inches? But what was brought forth with a man whose face shone like an angel, filled with the spirit, and who saw the heavens opened? The compassion for his murderers. Lord, lay not this into their charge. The spirit of forgiveness.

This is what saved Paul. When Paul saw this demonstration, this is transcendent. This is beyond ethics and morality.

This is beyond religion. He saw the demonstration of God. And that was exactly the same thing demonstrated by Jesus at the cross.

Forgive them, father, for they know not what they do. The spirit of forgiveness rather than the spirit of railing. So utter malignity met utter magnanimity, which is the gracious kindness, patience, and suffering of God.

The cross is the demonstration of God, the ultimate demonstration of the wisdom of God, which is God, the sum and substance of all that he is. So the word wisdom doesn't mean what it means in contemporary terms, but value. What is valued? What is essential to the understanding of life and of reality? Is it self-interest? Is it taking care of number one because nobody else will? You're a fool not to? Is that the truth of life? Take care of it, nobody else will, you're number one? And you're not getting along with this guy that dumped him? Because after all, you're still attractive and try, try again? Or is there another wisdom that says bear it, suffer it, that believes in the sovereignty of God, that purposes are being fulfilled even in a yet unresolved way, and that God will come through at the end? And that the issue is not your compatibility or your happiness, but his glory.

There's another wisdom sense. Here's a wonderful place. I loved what Tony read to us.

That's beautiful. Here's a little fragment from the same God in Psalm, Psalm 8. Out of the mouths of babes and infants, you have established strength. Maybe you could say, paraphrase, you have exhibited wisdom.

Why? Because of your foes, that you might silence the enemy and the avenger. That you might shut the mouth of your adversary. Because what comes out of his mouth? Da, da, da, da, da, da.

You're not going to succeed. Your church is flaky. It's made up of a bunch of flotsam and jetsam in the bottom of the barrel.

And they can't even blow their nose and find their way out of a paper bag. And they can't do their chores. And you ask them one question, they look like they've never heard it before.

You can't succeed. What you need is power, authority, credentials. You've chosen the foolish thing, yes, purposely and explicitly to confound what you purport to state as being wise.

To confound what you purport to be as strength. So that I will be glorified in forever. My weakness is greater than your strength.

And my foolishness is greater than your wisdom. I have chosen babes and sucklings. I have chosen the bottom of the barrel.

My church is made up of the rejects of this world in order to confound the things that you esteem as wisdom and put before men as being the purpose for their life and being, which is false through and through. Got the idea? OK. We're not going to get this in one sitting.

We have to deliberate on this. And consider ourselves our own experience and histories with God to see what's being worked out. What would you say of Calvin, Luther, Karl Barth, the great giants of theology, the great formidable men of God, whose impact will be down to eternity? Were they babes and sucklings? Was God speaking out of the mouths of babes and sucklings? These men who are so erudite and deep, who know the scriptures in the original languages, and can quote all of the sources of other theologians who have spoken to these particular issues, they have such a breadth of understanding, such an eloquence, such a command.

They're scholars. They're men of God. They were involved in the Nazi time, in the Barman Declaration.

Karl Barth was the author of that, that opposed Nazi Germany. That that man is a babe and a suckling? And the answer is yes. Isn't it a remarkable paradox that you can be erudite? That means informed, instructed, deeply instructed, conversant with scripture, a scholar, and yet the reason that you have access to the content of God in scripture is not because you're an academician, it's because you're a babe.

It's because you come as a child, because you come with your hat in your hand, because you know that in yourself is no good thing, because you know you're utterly dependent upon God. Because if you have anything that's been given you, because God wanted to make a gift to the church through your labors. So you can be a babe and a suckling, even in your spiritual sophistication.

It's more a spirit and a disposition of dependence and humility upon God. That you don't become a braggart or become swollen up because you're a theologian or you have a breadth of knowledge. Someone asked Karl Barth to sum up his entire theology.

By the way, if you don't know this name, B-A-R-T-H, Barth, the H is silent in German. What's, give us one statement that sums up your whole theology. I have 14 volumes of Barth's Church Dogmatics, its supreme compendium of wisdom and insight into all the breadth of God.

Dogmatics is the systematic finding of the great principles that are implicit in God's word. You know what his answer was? ■ Jesus loves me that I know ■ ■ Because the Bible tells me so. ■ That's actually what he said.

He was a babe. And they say he was fun to be with. He had a sense of humor.

He loved Mozart. He was a great conversationalist. He enjoyed his students.

He wasn't some prissy professorial guy that you dare not approach. For all of that great learning, he was very human. Very, to be very human is to be godly.

So I appreciate that. He was a babe, as sophisticated as he was. Okay, I wanted to read some excerpts from this pioneering classic work.

And we can dwell on it and discuss the penetrating insight that this Dutch theologian has. That the powers, this invisible realm in the air, in the heavenlies over nations, have become as gods, behaving as though they were the ultimate ground of being. This is the demonic reversal which has taken place on the invisible side of creation.

No longer do the powers bind man and God together. They separate them. The powers are created by God.

They're not self-existent. They didn't come into being by themselves. They were originally created like Lucifer himself, or maybe beholding their own beauty and following his spirit.

They went into rebellion, one third of the angels. And they constitute this realm of the principalities and the powers. The original function of the powers is that God created realm that is supposed to lend itself to the purposes of God in creation and bring men into the relationship with the God who created them.

So they are functioning in an exactly opposite way in their rebellion according to God's intention. Instead of turning God to himself, they turn the devotion and worship of men to themselves as the gods of this world. And that's why they ought to be found in Shintoism and every form of human demonic religion as a substitute and a distraction and a turning away of men from the God who is God, who is the creator.

That's why when Paul begins his address at Mars Hill, his first words are, the God who created the heavens and the earth. And so they're offering an alternative scheme of value for men that is false and inducting men into the lie that eternity is a non-entity and is not worthy of your consideration. It's this life.

It's now. This is the now generation. Your satisfaction now.

In fact, your satisfaction is the whole pivot and center of life and reality and being. What's in it for you? Self-interest, self-aggrandizement, not only in the carnal realm, but even in the religious and the spiritual realm. So long as we're still having ourselves at the center, did you enjoy the meeting? How did you like the speaker? We're still in the wrong ballpark.

We're still on the enemy's ground and pursuing the wrong wisdom. The issue of what we like and what we enjoy, not satisfaction, is not the issue. It's the lie.

What is the Declaration of Independence? Certain inalienable rights, the self-evident truth that the pursuit of happiness is the foundation for government. Where does it say that in the Bible? The guy who wrote that, Thomas Jefferson, scissored his way through the Bible and cut out everything contrary to his humanistic and deistic credo. And he's the author of that ideological thing that is the foundation of our American life, the pursuit of happiness.

It's not spoken of as being an object of pursuit. The object of pursuit in the wisdom of God is the glory of God. And anyone who will pursue that makes himself a candidate, not for happiness, but for suffering.

But the ultimate end of that pursuit is the glory of God forever and your own eternal reward with him in the life to come. These all died, in the description of the great giants of faith. These all died not having received the promise.

What? What a bum steer. Wow, what a misspent life. I knocked myself out.

I was faithful to obey God. I came out of Ur of the Chaldees and came into this wilderness and followed God. I suffered this and I suffered that.

And I don't even receive the promise? What is his word worth then? And what was the purpose of it all? These all died. If he would have said, some of them died not having received. Okay, maybe we could understand.

But none of them received. But they gave a good report. And yet they died as seeing that which was far off.

They saw that reward. They saw the promise and knew that it was to be fulfilled in the life to come. So that the whole of our faith is predicated upon not an instant and now gratification, which is the world's game, but an ultimate gratification and consummation that is in the life to come.

That's another wisdom. But how do we hold that wisdom if we hold it only as a doctrine or a credo, then we're going to collapse in this life. It will not be an incentive enough to bear what we must as saints.

But those that were stripped in Hebrews 10 took their stripping with joy, knowing within themselves that they had a much greater recompense in heaven. They didn't just hold a credo. They didn't just have a doctrine.

They knew in themselves as the great giants of faith that they had a recompense in heaven that would exceed anything that they lost in this life. And therefore they could take their stripping with joy. When you take your stripping with joy, the powers of the air are finished.

Because what then can they play upon? How then shall they attack you? How shall they make you say uncle? How can they compromise you? If you can take your stripping not just stoically with resignation, I guess I got to, but count it a joy, then you're in another realm entirely in which they can't even touch you. They're helpless. They're impotent.

They have nothing. They're stripped. They're defeated.

Your attitude has defeated them. But how did you come to that attitude? It's God's own attitude. It's the faith.

The giants of the faith have exemplified that before us. And that's the faith to which we are called because we take the eternal dimension into our profoundest consideration as it affects our now. Got the idea? We do not need to be instantly gratified.

We don't have to see the reward of our labor now. We know that we'll receive it. Where ear hath not heard and eye hath not seen what God has laid up for us.

And we can labor faithfully without having to receive the compensation now. The world would say you're a fool. Come on, where's the payoff? What, you got pie in the sky when you die? Isn't that the great reproach of this world's wisdom? Pie in the sky when you die? What are you gonna have when you die? And what you've accumulated in this earth through your dishonesty and lack of integrity and unrighteousness will be a vapor and dust.

And we will have an eternal reward that shall not fade away. Can you see the conflict of wisdoms? These are lifestyles. These are motives for being.

It's the definition of reality itself. What is real? What really counts? How do you define life? The church is an anomaly. It's a strange phenomenon in the world.

It's in the world but not of it. It's already living, hearing another beat and looking to an invisible realm of eternal reward. And yet it labors in this life and in this world.

Paul said his labors exceeded all the others and it does not need the instant payoff. See how much we need to be armed against anything? That panda's instant gratification now? What is fornication and infidelity? What do you call it when a married man? Adultery. Adultery, what is it? Instant gratification now.

Your wife has faded away. She's lost her shape or she's become dull or predictable and here's this alluring new prospect, always adventurous. The taste of forbidden fruit.

It'll always have an excitement and Satan will be there even to give a sensual excitement greater than what you have in your covenant relationship if you want, if you're living for excitement and you need gratification now. And the issue of your gratification eclipses every other issue. Even your children, even the family, even the church.

You're willing to scandalize everything for your gratification now. Take the average evangelical service. It is so performed so that you go home happy.

All in one time, all in one hour that you can end feeling good and having received the message and go home. They'll not allow you to go home perplexed. You'll go home disturbed, you'll go home agitated.

Questions raised that cannot be answered in the same moment in which the issue has been raised. And you've got to wrestle with it through the night hours and struggle and find the application, the meaning. And when you do, you've got something.

No, send them home happy. That's our purpose, they're paying for our salary and that's our performance. So even the very framework of our evangelical church systems are predicated on gratification and the avoidance of unhappiness, see what I mean? Because it has not understood the wisdom of God or this essential call of the church in Ephesians chapter three.

So there's a reversal of value systems, we need to know that. Conscious and deliberate subversion by the powers of darkness to seduce all men, to blind them and to have them to live according to false values and to misspend their lives and to wake up to the lie when it's too late to remedy anything and find that they have given themselves over into bondage to the enemy of God and will eternally lament and rue their misspent living and the rejection of God. That's the whole context of the struggle for souls of men in the earth.

There's no true demonstration possible for us as the church to make manifest the wisdom of God except as men who are dead and have been raised to newness of life and have no fear therefore of death for we have met it. Because the Lord has gone before us and taken the sting out of it. That Paul can say, death where is thy sting and grave where is your terror.

And once that fear is broken because you have passed from death and into life, how can the powers of the air play upon you? How can you be victim to their intimidations or to their threats? That's why Jesus was completely impervious. It did not matter. Wasn't Stephen a great loss to the church? He died when he was young.

He was already angelic. He had a wisdom that confounded the doctors of the law. What if he had lived? What greater contribution might he have made? Isn't it a waste that he had to go early? Or was it perfectly on time? Did he fulfill the purposes for which God had created him? Namely to give a demonstration of such a kind that Paul himself could not kick against those bricks.

There would not have been a Paul converted from a Saul except for Stephen. Once you have understood the polar principle of God and submitted to it, that there's no glory without first a suffering and a death, then you understand that Israel cannot be exempt. It cannot merely progressively be improved and attained to an impressive statehood.

It must have necessity because it has a glorious destiny passed through a suffering and a death that is very real. And so then you begin to see it in all the scriptures. You have the key, not just mentally, because the Lord has wrought it in your own life.

And that's why Jesus could say to the disciples, all fools and slow of heart, not to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not the Messiah to have suffered and died before he ascended to his glory? What's wrong with you? Haven't you guys seen the whole text? Haven't you seen the sum and substance of the wisdom of God implicit in all scripture? Why did you think that I would be absolved and I'm going to be your hero in shining armor and be the deliverer from Rome and be the kind of Messiah you would have hoped for to restore the glory of Israel without my own necessity to pass through suffering and death? It's fools and slow of heart. It's an issue of heart. And now we have very much the same mentality with present Israel.

Fools and slow of heart to think that present Israel could attain to its glory without first passing through suffering and death. So here again are the great issues never more exemplified and more put before us as challenged than in the way in which we perceive the subject of Israel. But that requires three, four day seminars.

What is God saying in Ephesians? Not that you should hold a mental understanding of the wisdom of God or be able to exposit it with eloquence, but that you should demonstrate it. It's got to be formed in the very substance, grit of the church itself. And Birkhoff speaks of it, that the existence of the church of Christ by her very presence, she breaks through the unshaken stability of life under the powers.

She is made up of men who see through the deception of the powers, refusing to run after isms, standing with the community of the people. Their very presence is an interrogation and questions the legitimacy of the powers. The church becomes the thing in itself.

It's not just a mental view or that we have subscribed to a certain understanding. We have become, our very presence raises the question of the legitimacy of the powers. The reality of what the church has come to in another wisdom itself confronts the powers.

That's why it's through the church that a manifold wisdom of God is demonstrated. So it's more than a mindset that God is after. It's the actuality wrought into the character of the church corporately.

A little illustration that comes to mind as I'm saying that in my earliest Christian life. Some have heard this little anecdote. Seated at the teacher's cafeteria in Oakland, California with one of my Jewish colleagues, a woman who was deeply offended by my conversion to Christ.

And we're eating lunch and usually I'm witnessing to her in my infantile way as new babe in Christ, but this time I'm silent. And yet as I'm eating, I can just sense her growing vexation and irritation. Unbeknownst to me, she was having an affair with another teacher against her own Jewish husband and living on pills to down her guilt and her conscience.

And my very presence was somehow irritating until finally I looked up and she broke out with anger. She said, even when you're silent, she said, you condemn me. You're a living indictment.

You're a living conviction, even in your silence. I've never forgotten that because I believe that this is God's intention for the church. We so become the thing in itself.

We're so living by another wisdom. It is so in what in our character in life that it becomes an indictment against the world and against the powers. And because it does that, it's the very key of setting worldlings free.

We're not just offering them a salvation, step one, step two. This is what you have to do and make a decision. We're demonstrating what being free in Christ means.

They see it in the corporate life and not just the individual virtue also who has arrived in faith. They see a whole body living in another realm of reality altogether, which is God's. And the very sight of that is liberating.

The very sight of that makes the person aware for the first time that he's in prison, that he's bound, who thought he was free and having a ball doing his own thing. Now he sees authentic liberty, authentic life, authentic reality in the church. So to come to that is God's intention and we're not gonna come to it without the dealings of God and the issue of the cross being raised for us, you see how fastidious we need to be as the church to avoid any employment of the world's wisdom.

And the church reeks with that employment. Manipulation, threat, intimidation, what's the, inducements that manipulate are playing on the wisdom of the world. To give an altar call with a musical background so as to soullessly affect the hearers and to bring them to crocodile tears and a false coming forward that avails nothing is exactly the name of the game.

That's the powers of the air. That's why they can say, Jesus, if you're not important, but who are you? You're playing our game. So what it means is that who's ever given the invitation is trusting that the naked and un, what's the word, unabashed, uncomplimented word of God is its own power to evoke the response not needing any kind of soulless auxiliary to bring a response.

For to use that is to be manipulating and to be inducing and therefore to be on the grounds of another wisdom. What shall we say in marriage? With a wife and a husband playing the game of pouting and so affecting the man as to evoke a guilt as to obtain a response. And it works both ways.

Children with their parents crying. I marvel at you parents. You tolerate the kind of crying that your children perform that is clearly not a crying out of any need, but purely a manipulative device to get you to act in order to placate them.

When you do that, you play the enemy's game and you wonder where's your authority? You've lost it right there. You should say, an end of that. Enough, I'm not here that.

Change your face. Don't give me that business. I'm not going to be manipulated by your.

The moment you do, you've lost the ground of authority before God. The enemy has won right under your own roof in the most ordinary mundane aspects of your life. That's what I mean about being fastidious or we lose the game because the whole church is affected by your compromise to your own children.

So we need to review the whole sum and substance of our life and see how these issues come up in the most ordinary aspects and our condescension to manipulation in any way as ministers, fathers, husbands, wives, or the children is already losing the game. A companion question to something that Simon brought up during the break time. What is zeal? If God says the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this, how is that different from our zeal? What speaking is God speaking and what speaking is our speaking? There's a whole realm that we're first touching because we have been too mindless and assume that whatever issues from us is God.

So zeal is an intensity and we can duplicate it. It could issue out of our own soulish realm, our own enthusiasm because we like a particular thing or are keen about it, but it displaces the zeal of God. I would say the condition for the zeal of God as the condition for the word of God is the death to our own zeal and the death to our own word.

We have no compunction. We have no necessity to be heard. It does not matter to us whether we're heard or not heard.

It doesn't matter to us whether we're recognized or not recognized. We do not need the acknowledgement of men, their slap on the back. We're dead men until the life of God activates us and the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

It will be his own zeal, pure and holy and uncorrupted by any element of self-interest that always will insinuate itself when we act religiously. So the fact that what we're speaking is correct or biblical or doctrinally sound does not in itself justify it. Is it the Lord's word in the Lord's time for the Lord's glory, for the Lord's honor, for the Lord's purpose? We have to be so removed from any element of interest in ourselves that only the cross itself can attain.

Until we know that and are jealous for that, we will shun the cross. We will not want the death that comes and we'll find some way yet to hide self-interest under the cloak of spirituality and invoke even God's name in sanctioning our activity, which is what I've just said now is a definition of religion and is descriptive of the general condition and activity of the church in the world today, even when it is charismatic. The unwillingness to suffer silence, the instant necessity to get the congregation revved up and provide the atmosphere and not wait.

The unwillingness to suffer a failed service or a failed message, to rev it up and make sure that it succeeds. That even the issue of success itself is cross-inhibiting because success in the wisdom of God is not ultimate wisdom or motive. What is? We were all on that same thought.

Okay. Why didn't you say it, you cowards? And that's why Paul finishes his great statement on Israel. Romans 9-11 talk about ponderous, weighty, revelatory genius of grasp of the mystery.

He finishes in the last few verses, all the depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, who's been his counselor, of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. The centerpiece of Paul's apostolic heart is not success. It's the glory of God forever.

It's an issue greater than Israel. It's an issue greater than the church. And unless that's central, we'll not be willing for the cross and we will be slaves to success.

We'll not be willing for the humiliation of failure. And no real preacher that proclaims the word of God has ever come through without that furnace and testing of failed occasions in which he has got to bear, because he never knows from the one to the next of what God will be pleased to do. Yesterday's success is not going to establish tomorrow's success.

And maybe the purpose of God will be more served by your failing than by your succeeding. Because what is failure and what is success? As it is seen from the human religious plateau, as it is seen from the perspective of heaven. There's been more value probably gone forth in spluttering choked expressions than the seeming eloquence of men.

And are we willing to taste that? It's a suffering. Humiliation is death sense. It would be easy if it's just one fell swoop a bullet would finish.

No, our life is a succession of deaths. What does it mean when you speak the truth in love? It's a death. Though it's the truth, it's painful to express it.

It's gonna be hard before it's glorious. It's likely to be misunderstood. Your motives will not be understood.

It's easier just to walk away and let the issue lie. Death is at the cross, it's at the center. And the wisdom of God will not be made manifest until the whole church subscribes to it.

And then we'll be free, not only from the work of the powers of darkness to mock us or to tempt us by fear or intimidation, but we will be free ourselves from exercising or expressing intimidation or fear in order to win our way or to obtain from men our devices. Though the one thing that chills my soul is when people tell me that somehow they're afraid of me. I'm surely not conscious of any attempt to make people fearful.

I don't want their fear. I don't want them to be intimidated that they should look with any kind of awe. That's a misconstruction on their part.

That's a subjective projection. I hope that I'm not unconsciously projecting that. God forbid, and if there's so much as a shred, I want the cross to extinguish that.

And so how do churches function? With heads where the buck stops here and the man is the authority and the CEO. But by threat, by intimidation, by fear, by losing favor. And what is a sect? That when you want to leave, they tell you, if you leave here, leave us, you're going to hell.

You'll lose your salvation. Threat and intimidation to coerce and to keep people in an ungodly relationship. So if the church is corrupted and affected by its condescension to the use of manipulation and devices of fear, how then shall we defeat the powers of the air? In fact, such a church has not even this intention.

It only wants to succeed. Method is something humanly contrived as device to obtain a fixed response. We should be without method.

We don't know how to proceed one morning from the next. We don't know how to conduct the service. We don't know how to conduct church.

We don't know how to conduct community. And when we came here 26 years ago, because the Lord called us to community, the thing that he gave us as the inspirational motif was the statement out of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book, *Life Together*. Anyone who comes to community with the design for it brings the seeds of destruction with him.

And what do you come with? Nothing. You come with nakedness. You come as a child, you come in trust.

And you know that there's going to be failure, humiliation, disappointment, disillusionment, the kinds of things from which your flesh wants to run to the quickest and nearest charismatic success, but you come. Remember what the disciples said, where shall we go? Are you going to leave me also? Where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. So how did the community continue for 26 years? By what the Lord himself mediated day by day out of our time of prayer together as we stumbled and fumbled our way through with many disappointments, heartaches, and struggles.

Not a method. So organization, method, humanly imposed structure is the antithesis of the wisdom of God. A babe does not know methods, it can only trust.

So the church is at a crossroad. There are competing wisdoms, even to have dominion over the church. And we could say right now presently that the enemy seems to have won the game and is running the show, and seems to have affected the larger church.

And only a remnant is resistant and seeking to find the true way, and are the object of derision and rejection from the mainstream who look upon them in a contemptible way. So there's a real struggle here. But the issue is the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God.

And I would say for those churches that have embraced method, organization, and structure, they are not even occupied with what is eternal, let alone the eternal purpose. They are immediate. They're right now, they want to bring a program that will placate and suit the needs of their immediate congregation.

And they're doing it. But it's not an apostolic entity or reality. And the powers of the air over that locality are completely unmoved from their entrenched place where the only thing that will move them is the establishment of this reality in that locality, not because it subscribes mentally to the truth, but it demonstrates it in its entire body.

It is the reality of its life. It is the very demonstration. When they see that, they're finished.

We can organize home groups, but unless they are an organism of authentic relatedness and not a miniature replication of the larger church now brought into a smaller congregation in the house, then nothing is served, even if the numbers increase. So this has got to be striven for. We need to be conscious that the spirit of the world has affected even the church and its methodologies and the great issue of motivation.

Is it for the glory of God? Is it for the success of your labor, of your work? Now, here's the remarkable thing. Where do I receive my inspiration on this subject? From a theologian out of the Dutch Reformed Church, out of the basic evangelical fundamental denomination, this man has this profound insight. Karl Barth was from the Swiss Reformed Church.

So lest we become too categorical in our renunciation of established organized churches, the Lord has a wonderful way of finding his babes and precious men, even within these institutional arrangements. Because listen to this statement. I don't know where this man could have conceived this wisdom.

All resistance and every attack against the gods of this age will be unfruitful unless the church herself is resistance and attack. Not what the church does, what the church is. Unless she demonstrates in her life and fellowship how men can live freed from the powers.

We can only preach a manifold wisdom of God to mammon if our life displays that we are joyfully freed from its clutches. They took their strippings with joy. Joy is an ultimate divine emotion.

We might be able to conjure up happiness because our ship has come in, or we won a car or we hit the lottery, but joy is ultimate emotion from God that only accompanies the things that pertain to his glory and that he has made manifest through his power. So when we can joyfully demonstrate freedom from the clutches of mammon, then we have become the thing in itself. What does that mean? What is mammon? Money, finance, power, all the kinds of things.

Not to succumb to that, but to be conscious of that, to trust the Lord. So this is what the church demonstrates to the powers. The very existence of such a church in which Gentiles and Jews who heretofore walked according to the powers of this world or the wisdom of this world live together in Christ's fellowship, it itself is a proclamation, a sign, a token to the powers that their unbroken dominion has come to an end.

See what the church composed of Jews and Gentiles means? And by that extension, we can say black and white in every variety and shape of saint where there have been historic enmities. When such a church can demonstrate in its fellowship the reality of God, then the powers are finished. That means our fellowship is not some wooden thing or some formal thing or humanly structured thing, but fellowship, going from house to house breaking bread, authentic relatedness where the masks are face to face, heartfelt, struggling through.

When the church will demonstrate that, the powers are finished because they capitalize on and they play upon the differences in men. That carnage that came in Africa, the Rwanda, these genocidal tribal eliminations. What shall we say in the Balkans? Serbian.

What's the word? They wanted to cleanse. Ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing and tribal genocide are the powers of the air succeeding in playing upon nations and men their vitriolic hatred that has to do with division, strife, enmity, discord, violence, death.

The church is God's standard and statement of another wisdom where men, despite their differences and all the more because of their differences live together in a heavenly fellowship where those differences are not obliterated but are richly encouraged and drawn from so that women can be women without being masculinized and men can be men without being effeminized and we can receive the richness of what God himself has bestowed in the varieties of his creation to the glory of God forever. We're not intimidated and threatened by those differences. We're not fearful.

See what I mean? This guy is white, this is whitey or he's Jewish and he's out to hoodwink me because he's crafty. I don't know. The church, the church is the thing, guys.

It's a living vital laboratory of the demonstration of another way that is totally heavenly. Another wisdom and it's got to be made manifest in the earth and don't tell me that we're going to attain to this without suffering, without battling through, without being dealt with, without being confronted, without the disillusionment with our failed brothers and the most painful of all disillusionments is with ourselves. When the Lord gave the call to come to community, I knew it was my death warrant.

Yes, it's one thing to live in a 17 room house in New Jersey and be a charismatic Jewish darling and have two Volvo's and be invited by Catherine Coleman, da, da, da, da, da, da. But it's another thing to come to the boondocks and live with the same saints every day and that they should hear Ingers cry with the door slamming behind me. Go tell them what a great saint you are and have to walk like a piece of lead to the prayer meeting knowing that everyone has heard that.

I'm just going to... It's humiliating. There's no shortcut. It takes a willing coming to the cross.

Okay. Doesn't it say somewhere about coming to the Lord's table and as often as you do this, you show forth his death? I want to suggest that there's a particular strength and enablement for dying that is given in the eating and drinking of the blood and the body of the Lord. Or else we make of this a game, death to self, that somehow we never come to the dying of it, but I believe that we receive a particular enablement in the power to die by eating and drinking of his body and of his blood.

Every time we eat this, we show forth his death and his death is the only real death. The other kind is a self-affected, charismatic playing and dying to self by which we never attained the death. So I hope that that's an answer.

When we fall, I cannot carry the cross is because we have not come to the table of the sacrament of the Lord in a true way and it has been reduced to a kind of little plastic cup and a little wafer that we mechanically hold waiting for a signal that we might eat it together who are not together. Communion is communion by those who are authentically related and need because of the desperation of what life together requires of them to the enablement of God given in the cup and in the bread. When we first came to this place, if we had communion once a month, plenty, that was enough for me.

I was still scarred by my Pentecostal Psalms of God experience of the once a month plastic cup sitting like a dummy waiting for the signal to drink together, but we were not together. It was not long, two weeks, three weeks into community that we began to think we need a communion more frequently than once a month until it came to a time that we were virtually taking communion daily. You know why? Because we could not be nice guys.

After two weeks, our nice guyism ran out and our irritation and shortness of patience and every other ugly thing began to show itself and we needed the reality of the life of God in order to be to each other what we must. So I can't say enough. I've spoken about the provision that the book of Psalms is as an extraordinary literature, but what I do every morning with the reading of the Psalms is the taking of communion by myself.

It's not that I forsake communion with the saints. I love it, any opportunity as often as you do this, but there's not a morning, including this morning in which I do not eat and drink of the Lord because this journey is too great for me. I cannot make it to the mount.

I cannot bear this cross. I cannot suffer these deaths except I eat and drink of the Lord's death and that is a precious provision and enablement. So we've got to elevate the sacraments.

As we talked this morning about elevating the word of God, there's a famine for the word of God. Plenty of gift of gab, plenty of volume of words. I just sent a little email note to a new prophetic ministry that is flooding my box every day with three, four, five, six prophetic statements that are so long, it takes you hours to read them and when you read them and you come to the end of it, what have they said? The Lord is saying, I encourage you then and then.

Is that what he's saying? Does he need to say that? Don't we understand? Is it a cogent word, fresh from the throne of God that is a vital prophetic impartation or is it some housewife who has nothing more to do but to sit before a computer and I think that the Lord is saying. And I wrote them a letter saying, I've never known God to be that valuable. The God that I know and the prophets that I know are very sparse in their speaking.

So I encourage you to be able to die by the provision of his death every time we eat and drink of his body and of his blood. As your faith is so beat unto you, you think it's an emblem or a symbol? That's what it'll be. You're eating and drinking, emblem and symbol.

You believe that it's the body and the blood and I'm not talking about Catholicism and transubstantiation. I'm talking about the Lord imputing to these elements the vital ingredients of his life. The bread is the body, the structure, the framework, the character.

The Lord's humility, his integrity, the simplicity of Christ. The wine is the blood, the spirit, the essence of his being, the sweetness of his spirit. The spirit of sacrifice that he gave himself without, spot unto God by this Holy Spirit as a sacrifice in Hebrews.

So the spirit of God is the very spirit of sacrifice and of givingness and of outpouringness. When you eat and drink of that, he'll be formed in you. That's not the only activity, but it's a substantial and distinctive provision that should not be despised.

It needs to be resurrected because it has lost its meaning in our conventional religious life and therefore its value. We cannot live the level of God's intention except by the power of that life. But it's not only the power, it's also the character.

You're not only receiving the energy, the dynamis of God, you're receiving what he is in himself, his essential being. For what is humility? What is meekness? What is integrity? What is righteousness? What is truth? What is love if it's not God? Those attributes are not to be found in the earth. They're totally divine and God gives us the means to obtain them by eating and drinking of him.

That's why he said, if you'll not eat and drink of my flesh and drink of my blood, you have no life in you. But the life is not in the power, it's also the substance and the character. So I encourage you to come to that table in that faith and receive that benefit.

And then we will exhibit the authority of God. Having taken the character of God, we can exhibit the authority of God because we'll not be compromised or corrupted by authority as swagger because we have the companion attribute of his humility. So there's an episode in this little paper, the very first speaking on this subject, an episode that was fresh in our history.

In the first prophetic school, two brothers from Zimbabwe wanted to come to the school, one black and one white, but the American consulate official refused to give them a visa because he assumed that they would take that occasion to come and never to return to their country. And so five o'clock in the morning, I get a phone call from this consulate. I'm refusing these young men their visa because I believe that they have... And I said, well, okay, and I hung up.

And after I hung up, I thought, where does this guy come off to make that assumption? And how dare he impede the design of God in bringing young men to this table that they might receive some things that will be of consequence for their ministry, for the church of that nation? And so I wrote him a letter. I'll read it to you. I wrote, there's a thin line between being an official and being officious.

See, we're told to respect authority and government and structure is ordained by God and we are submit to it. But they have their parameters, they have their limitations. And it's one thing to be official within the parameters of God, but to exceed that, as this man was doing, is to become officious.

And I'm having the audacity to blow the whistle. I'm telling him he's out of line because he cannot know what I know as a believer. I have to instruct him that the God who has ordained government and given him his post and place is now being exceeded and that he's gone beyond and he's infringing, in fact, upon God.

And that this is a tendency and a danger in which all administrators in the earth stand. There's only one healthy corrective that will keep you from such error. And that is to recognize that the earth is the Lord's and the nation's and the fullness thereof and all those who dwell within them.

You need to be reminded, sir, that you are only called to administer in a certain restricted sense to serve actually the purposes of God. For as Dietrich Bonhoeffer tells us in his book on ethics, government itself is only an instrumentality given of God to establish that sufficient amount of order by which the church may continue its life and its purpose. For God has created all things, including governments, in order that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be demonstrated.

How can he know this? I'm saying this. The government official I spoke to was offended. Somebody, there was a Christian secretary in the office who told this young man, when he got that letter, he blew his lid.

How dare this upstart, thousands of miles away, tell me how to conduct and function in my office and that I'm being officious. But within a matter of days, he mysteriously granted them their visa. This is beyond the issue of men and flesh and blood.

And I have not yet quite savored the full mystery of this experience, but I think that this is what it is. Something was expressed to the secular authority by the church in the authority and anointing of God, citing the word of God as our authority and as our sole credential and bringing these earthly authorities into the recognition of the limitation that God has set for them that required the principalities and powers operating through government and through this man to draw back and to release these men for the purposes of God. So I'm reciting an episode in which the church expressed through me and the authority given out of a body was able to address the man, but in addressing the man, actually confronted the principalities and powers operating through him and said to him, we're blowing the whistle against you.

We know your game, you've gone too far. Release these men, grant them their visa, and it was done. So this is more than just being a statement in the world.

It's an authority in the world and it'll bring release when that authority is expressed through the divine prompting of God, but the powers of the air are compelled to recognize it because they know that you know who you are in God and who they are and who has won the triumph at the cross and insist upon the application in terms of the practical release of that visa for those men. They came, they received benefit, the black brother especially with whom we are still in relationship who is now in Zambia and that he will be an effectual key to the work of God in that nation because he came not only to receive the benefit at the table, but the benefit of relationship which is ongoing still. It was critical that he be released, but the powers of the air being exercised through government in a usurping way exceeding God's limitation had to be corrected by the authority expressed through the church drawing on the word of God and expressing it toward the release.

So this is not a game. We can't fame this. We can talk all we want, but here we had a real graphic example of the practical issues of the Pentecostal powers being confronted and requiring to submit to the authority of God in the church.

So the author says, clairvoyant and warning words and deeds aimed at a state or nation are meaningful only insofar as they spring from a church whose inner life is itself the proclamation of God's manifold wisdom to the powers of the air. If we had not this inner life, even if I had stated something correctly, it would have fallen with a thud to the floor. But there was an implicit authority because what was being expressed had been tempered and came out of the nit and the grit of community itself that is submitted to the authority of God that is under his and living in his wisdom.

And that's what gave the authority and penetration to obtain that release. It was in our inner life. But how did it get there? Through suffering, through trial, through all of the kinds of things through which men must go that the church might be the church as an organism and not an organization.

Organization can never obtain this. So the issues are very great and God is waiting for this reality. And the demonstration of that reality in the last analysis actually saves the redeemed of the Lord of Israel.

Isn't that remarkable? The church that can confront the powers is the church that moves Israel to jealousy. One and the same. Now by the virtue of the one, you have the virtue of the other.

You've come to a certain place in God. Although the Jews may not recognize it, they are affected by what is exhibited and can only be exhibited corporately. Not the issue of an individual virtue also or an odd cats who has come of age.

The whole church. God is going to shift Israel through the church in the nations. And this is the message that we bear to the nations.

No wonder it's boycotted. They don't wanna hear it because what it means for the church is the cross. It means death to organization, death to success and the various other deaths to career and petty kingdom building and a whole surrender to the life of God.

But they're unwilling. They wanna succeed on another basis. Though the message is Israel, the ultimate message is the cross.

What a difference in what I'm setting forth as against Christianizing government or affecting it in a way that makes it amenable to the church's programs about abortion. That's like playing at a kiddie level. This is what I'm hoping to set forth is where the action really is as the powers of the air will necessarily recognize

it.

They know whom to fear. They recognize the authority of God. They know whom to oppose.

They know the authenticity of God when they see it expressed in the church. The pity is they see it all too frequently. The church that is cross-avoiding, bent only on its success and of its programs and careers will never exhibit that which the powers of the air are compelled to recognize and to flee.

Where did Hendrik Birkhoff receive his insight? By being in Babylon. He was within the church structure. But I believe that he was not an arrogant critic of that structure, but a man who submitted to its authority with a respect and yet understood its deficiencies and was instructed by it so as to give us this value.

And one of the most beautiful examples of this that was the whole foundation for the kingdom of David was how David related to Saul as Saul being his very persecutor and putting his life at threat. And when he had his opportunity to eliminate the threat by eliminating the man, he refused to extend his arm. And his conscience even bothered him by merely cutting the corner of his robe.

But had he acted in any other way as his men were prompting him and saying, hey, isn't this what God said you were gonna get an opportunity? Well, look, it's here, now do it. Do him in and get rid of this threat because you're the future king of Israel. You're already anointed.

He would not stretch forth his arm against God's anointed, though God's anointed was apostate and even threatening to the Davidic life. That was the formative key, in my opinion, to the Davidic kingdom which followed and it's the formative key to the kingdom of God that shall follow in our age by the way in which we relate to the existing structures occupied by the powers of darkness and that are even objects of opposition to ourselves. So, and how we respond would be the critical issue of the coming of that kingdom.

And how did Jesus respond at the cross? He did not rail against those authorities. He didn't curse them, you brakabraks, don't you know that I'm the one, not a word like that. And how did Paul respond when he learned that he had spoken unadvisedly to the high priest? Oh, wow, the man was so full of deference.

And what is that high priest? He's a crumb, he's apostate. He's the one who's engineering Jesus' crucifixion. So how we relate to authority, even apostate authority, is critical to the whole fulfillment of the kingdom for it demonstrates another wisdom.

So Lord, precious God, what shall we say to you? We are so far removed from the reality to which we are called. That this is the eternal purpose of God. Not our programs, not our successes, this, to make manifest, to demonstrate the manifold, many-sided wisdom of God that has at its essence self-denial and the whole world is arrayed against that wisdom and pervades another wisdom that has even corrupted and found great sway in the church.

Great success in the church. So my God, grace we pray. Thank you for touching the issue of communion and saving it from loss as being some abstract religious requirement that doesn't serve anything and being the holy provision to make it to this mount.

So bless your saints, Lord, and give them a fresh perception of that great blessed provision. Even the provision to die, to show forth your death is in the cup and in the broken bread. And that we might be that, Lord, for our generation.

So we thank you, Lord. Oh my God, this is instruction of the deepest kind and we're so fearful that we will lose it, that it will fall through the crevices and the cracks unless your grace, my God, that has imparted this gives us also the ability to retain it. And to retain it, Lord, not that we might be hot shots at the coffee time and show how clever we are, but to retain it in order to implement and to walk it out into the air.

So we bless the church, Lord, and bless the representatives of it that you have brought, my God, to this room in these days. Select souls, everyone, privileged beyond all speaking. Thank you, my God.

We love what you're saying, my God. And may these great truths be restored. May men go forth from these tables and from this place to bring new dimensions, my God, of message and communication to the areas and places in the world we have brought them that will affect everything in a new way and make such a requirement of them that they themselves must be in the knit of authentic relationship in order to show forth that wisdom and to express that authority.

So we thank you, Lord, that something is being transacted at this time that is once and for all and that is altogether precious and holy, holy, holy. And we say, Lord, let not a syllable fall to the ground. Let continue to strive with us.

Let your word work in us and in our deeps, breaking us up in the deeps and flushing out and bringing to fresh recognition places where we have conceded to the spirit of this world and its wisdom and condescended to being number one and looking to our gratification, our career, our recognition, our esteem, and bringing, my God, that cross, welcoming that cross. What would we do without it? Where is there a power greater than self but the cross? And oh my God, it has not lost its power and we're asking that we would open our bosoms and say, Lord, come and lay the ax to the root and the ventricles and little things that issue from that root that have deep places of hiding in our being and keep us from the absoluteness taught God and the witness and the testimony of the church in itself that alone defeats the powers and saves your people, Israel, and glorifies you forever. Come, God, and every nation have such a people and we thank you and give you praise.

Let the tapes go far and wide and wake the sleeping and raise the dead to the true and the apostolic faith as it was given in the beginning. We thank you and give you praise. In Yeshua's holy name, amen, amen, amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10887.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/the-conflict-of-two-wisdoms-part-2/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**