

The Cost of Discipleship

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of savoring the Word of God, discerning the Spirit and the voice of God, and being aware of the Spirit's checks in order to avoid impetuous decisions and to be more obedient to God's will.

Duration: 1:17:13

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:15, Acts 16:25

Topics: "Cost Of Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts by expressing his feelings of being unprepared and tired, and the concerns about the audience's expectations. However, he is urged to preach on the cross. He then shares a personal experience of making a whip and handcuffs for a TV program, relating it to the story of Paul and Silas being beaten and imprisoned. The preacher emphasizes the importance of experiencing the Holy Spirit and the impact of Paul and Silas' obedience in spreading the gospel. He concludes by urging the audience to sober up and submit to the authority established by God, regardless of age.

Transcript

Let's start with the beginning with the sixth verse of the 16th chapter of the book of Acts. Now that when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, and after they were gone to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas, and a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia and help us. How many people got very much out of that reading, honestly? If we're really going to be honest, it sounds very much like a bunch of gobbledygook. A lot of strange sounding words with Greek names and spirit this, vision, blah, blah, blah, and usually we just read that and nod and then we go on.

So my first suggestion is that those scriptures which I read, and probably read better than most people do read the scriptures, were utterly in error. It is an offense against God to read as glibly the Word of God as I've just read these few verses. We're enjoined to live by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God, and glibness and superficiality and instantaneous experience and all the kinds of gratifications and things which are instant characterize our generation.

And I'm speaking especially to these young ones who've never had any basis for comparison as old crocks as I have enjoyed being born during the depression years. You've grown up in the age of instantaneous fulfillment, easy things, superficial, glib, hurried. And we've brought that same spirit or allowed that same spirit to permeate and express itself in our spiritual life.

So my first suggestion is this. Although you may not be imbibers of something called wine, I appeal to your imagination that the Word of God should be enjoyed and treated like a very rare vintage. That cork ought to be popped with great solemnity and care.

It's a bottle that's been stored for the ages for just this hour. And if the Lord will permit it, and you'll not think that I'm inducing you to run out and get, this is the wine of life. Let's savor it tonight.

Let's not be glib, because I'll show you what the consequence of being glib and superficial is. How many of you have recognized that in a space of one, two, three, four verses, we read of three manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Three manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Bang! Bang! Bang! And what are we reading but the experience of two Jewish men doing their Jewish thing, obeying God, and going about their journeys, being led of the Spirit of God, obedient to the voice of their Master, to go into all the world and preach this Gospel to every creature.

Now there are some of us sitting here who have been believers five, ten, fifteen, twenty, or more years, who have not so much as yet had the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And here, bang! In the space of three verses, four verses, there are three manifestations. This is therefore something worth noting.

And as we take a look specifically at these manifestations, we get an impression different from what we ordinarily associate with the Holy Spirit. We always think that the Holy Spirit is one beckoning, one that's giving you the ghost signal, but the first instances here are just the reverse. It says that when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia.

How do you like them apples? Forbidden! Now, the reason that this message is so important is because it does not just describe an episode in the life of two Jewish missionaries. It gives us the pattern, the characteristic pattern of God's way with His servants in the world. And I assure you with everything that's in me, it changeth not.

And if we're playing this game by the numbers, we're going to stumble and fall and be utterly lost and disconsolate and worthless in the end times. And I don't know about your nature, I don't need so much to be bidden of God as I need very many times to be checked. I'm more the Peter type, very impetuous, quite willing to go even before God sends me.

In fact, I'm so enjoying my time in Kansas City, I wonder about whether it was God who led me out of here two years ago or three years ago. Maybe that was human impetuosity, but I'm just kidding, it was not. We have to know that the Spirit of God functions not only to lead, but to check.

A kind of an inner gyroscope. And I remember the first instance in my own life when I was checked of the Holy Spirit. I'll tell you the kind of believer I was at that time, probably very reminiscent of where you are now.

Full of heady assurance about God. Full of enthusiasm that comes with the first flush of believing. And I was great to lay on hands and to pray for the sick and believe God.

It was a great adventure to be a believer. And by God, there were many miracles in those days. But you know, there's something about laying on of hands and praying for the sick that you don't necessarily expect to see the effect of your prayer on the spot.

And you can still leave the room feeling brave and confident, praying in the name of Jesus that indeed it has been accomplished. But there was one area of ministry in the name of Jesus from which I shied. It had to do with the casting out of demon spirits, because that was a far more direct encounter of a kind in Brooklyn that we called, put up or shut up.

And I was afraid that I would be treated to that experience when first I tried it, that the spirits would turn and say, Jesus I know and Paul I know, but art cats who? So it's interesting that the first time that God gave me to speak this message at a Christian college was also the first time that he checked me by the spirit. I tell you, it was a great adventure through those days. I had never done anything more than give my testimony.

And that first night when I had to preach, I went up trembling, not knowing what to say. And God whispered, act 16. And I opened the scriptures and tremblingly read the few insights that the Lord had given me.

And it seemed to me it was over so quickly. And I looked at the audience from time to time and nothing, not a ripple, not a glint of light, complete grayness and utterly untouched. And that hot burning thing was beginning to move around my, under my collar.

And I was hoping for the floor to open. I would be swallowed up and that would be the end of an abortive preaching career. And just in that moment, then that unspeakable mortification.

Oh, you thought it was going to be groovy to be a believer, huh? There's a cross, fellas. In that moment that I cannot describe that was so painful when I thought everything had failed in that moment, way across the corner of the room, somebody gave a powerful utterance in tongues. And in that moment, crack, the atmosphere snapped and everything changed.

And on the other side of the room, somebody gave the interpretation and it was a complete verification of all that I had spoken and even went further to pinpoint the meaning of God and broke through. And those people who were wavering, is this God we're hearing or is this cats? We were there till one o'clock that night. Such a powerful work of God was done by that work, by that speaking and by the Spirit of God.

Kids came up out of their seats, took the microphone, confessed sin, confessed resentment. And it was a glorious night of revival in the obedience to God because I heard the whisper of Acts 16. Well, in the course of those days, I remember I was coming back to my room in the dormitory late at night, a whole long day of counseling, of chapel service in the morning, of going into classrooms and sharing.

And then it was concluded that night with dormitory devotions. And it was about one o'clock in the morning and I was just stumbling back to find my bed. And wouldn't you believe it, as I walked through this narrow hallway, there's a kid looking at the bulletin board one o'clock in the morning.

And the aisle way was so narrow, I brushed shoulders with him and I said, excuse me, he said, oh, hi, Mr. Katz. I said, hi, we have just a word of pleasantry. And I said, well, good night, good night.

And I took a step and something went, check. I turned to this boy, I said, say, do you want to talk to me? Oh, no, Mr. Katz, I don't. Are you sure? Really? Well, good night then.

Good night. Check. Are you sure that you don't want to talk to me? Well, he said, it's not really anything important that would really interest you.

I said, are you really sure? I mean, I don't mind staying up. No, it's really nothing. It's a trifle.

Well, OK, good night then. Good night. Check.

I said, look, buddy, will you just walk with me down the way? We hadn't gone 50 paces when this son of a minister who gave every outward appearance of well-being, of knowing when to say the proper amens and hallelujahs and just looked like a victorious, overcoming Christian told me that he was going to commit suicide that night. He had had it. He was at the end of his rope.

His life was filled with so many savage instincts that he could not control. He was full of anger and bitterness and jealousy and murder. And he was going to kill himself before he killed others.

And when he said that to me, I went gulp and I knew it was dum-dum-dum. The Lord was backing me into a corner by the checking of the Holy Spirit. I knew that nothing less than taking authority in the name of Jesus against these spirits would suffice.

And it was a matter of life or death. We went back into the student chapel. I told them what I thought was necessary.

I summoned up all the faith that I thought I had. And I laid hands on him. I didn't even know whether that was necessary.

And in the name of Jesus, I commanded these murderous, savage, jealous spirits to be bound and cast out of his life and to go into the deep. Something like that. He felt nothing.

I felt nothing. And just a word or two of counsel after that and I left him. The next morning, I was walking across campus and coming toward me was someone who looked familiar, yet I could not place him.

And then as he came closer, yet I recognized this was the boy of last night. But he bore an entirely new face. About a half hour after I left him, the Spirit of God filled him with his glory.

And evidently, our prayer to set him free of filthy spirits had worked. That was my first experience of being checked by the Spirit. So I want to assure you that this is something very valid and something that we should be aware because many of us will be impetuous and be very willing to go, but we won't be as anxious to be checked.

And so be alive to both activities of the Holy Spirit. Now notice that they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. You say, Art, I can't believe that.

This must be a typographical error. The Spirit of God will never contradict the Word of God. And the Word of God says, go ye into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature.

Now hear this. The way of God is filled with seeming paradox. And it may even be that it may appear that the Spirit of God is leading us in contradiction to the Word, although it's not in actuality.

The general injunction was to go, but the Spirit of God at any given moment can alter, can redirect, can seem even to contradict. And that's why we've got to understand that if we think that we're going to play this by the numbers, that we've got it all figured out, and we know how to proceed from one to another, we're going to miss it. I can't think of a generation that's going to be required to know the operations of the Holy Spirit and the still small voice of God and the characteristic patterns of God more fully than your generation.

If you'll not know the way of God and his characteristic manner of speaking, and know the Spirit when it is the Spirit, you're going to miss it. How many of us, if we were commanded to be fed by ravens, would believe that that was the voice of God speaking? Because every one of us knows that the raven is a bird of prey, a scavenger bird, and it's the least likely instrument to feed God's prophet in a day of extremity. But accept that you know that God is a God who always uses the least likely instrument, who always picks a Jewish people, not because they're great in number or glory, but because they're few, who always chooses a stable to make his appearance in time, place, and history.

Unless you know the God of foolish things, you'll miss it when he speaks to you by a still small voice. Guys, these things are given us that we might contemplate them and understand, that we might enter in to the workings of the Spirit of God with a minimum of loss, of trial and error, because the hour is short. I'm almost purposely restraining myself from getting grandiose and lavish in gestures and making this a preachy thing.

I'm really more concerned to be a teacher than a preacher, and I want you to understand and see the principles of God that are expressed in the pattern that we're reading right here. And so, after they were gone to Mizrahi, they essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not, two checks, and then a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him saying, come over into Macedonia and help us.

You know what the interesting thing is? When they were obedient to do it, they never did once ever meet that man. I just recognized that tonight for the first time, sitting by the side of the room, looking over again on scriptures very familiar to me. I had never before realized that.

But looking on my own experience, I can see how God allowed me to have a vision of certain things or a certain understanding that would prompt my activity and conduct, but I never did see the realization of the thing which I thought was God's intent. For example, God led us out of Kansas City to New York and subsequently to Denmark and then to Israel. And I was perfectly persuaded that the reason for our going to Israel with the family was to be established as Jewish believers in the Messiah Jesus, to establish the point that a Jew can believe in Jesus as Messiah and still be a Jew in every sense of the word, if not more a Jew.

And therefore, we were processed as immigrants. We lived at an opan where they teach Hebrew and we were just like every other immigrant who came from Russia, from South America and other places, learning Hebrew and just applying ourselves to being Jews in our land. But it wasn't three months before we were kicked out, not by any intent on my part.

I didn't want to do anything or ruffle anything. The Lord brought people to our door and remarkable things happened that came to the attention of the authorities and offended some of the people there and led to our being booted out. We never did become Israeli citizens.

We never did finish the Hebrew course. We never did see the fulfillment of what I thought was the vision of God beckoning me to go there. And yet I know with all my heart that God's purposes somehow were fulfilled, even in the shame of our ejection.

And we therefore returned to the United States far sooner than we had ever thought to do. And I'll tell you it was evident from the very first day back in the United States that we were right on God's perfect time schedule. What had happened in Israel was no accident.

God knew the end from the beginning. He allowed me to go and move my entire family under the assumption that we were to obtain citizenship. It was never realized.

But the fact of the matter is we went. And in going we fulfilled the purposes of God. Now I know that some of you precious children who are hearing me don't yet understand what I'm talking about, but make a note because later on you'll have just such an experience.

But I'm convinced that many of the adults who are hearing me know what I'm talking about and have already experienced it. And so after they had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them. Now here's a question I want to raise.

How is it that there are those of us 5, 10, 15, 20 years or more old, and some of you who are only just 5, 10 or 15 months old, but there's a likelihood that you can multiply that number in years and yet not have the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit for your life. How is it that these men were so lavishly treated by the Spirit of God and we have our tongues hanging out and it's a far more sparse, infrequent experience? And I believe that the answer is this. Not that God has changed.

Not that the Holy Spirit has changed. But that we have changed. There's a Holy Spirit, even this moment, just palpitating to break through into the lives of many.

But He's looking for a heart that when He shall give them vision, after they shall see it, they shall immediately endeavor to go, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called them. And loosing from Charles, they came with a straight course to Samothracia and the next day to Neapolis. God is looking for a people who would assuredly gather that God is calling them.

But how many of us moan and groan and whine, I don't know, is it God? Is it the devil? Is it my own human desire? And we're betwixt and between and aggravated. Now Kishka's turned over, now knotted, and we wrestle. And I don't speak academically.

This is my own experience. How is it that Paul and Silas assuredly gathered that the Lord had called them? How did they know it was not Satan because they were already on course? How did they get to Asia to begin with? And maybe Satan was trying to divert them and to distract them from the real purposes of God and bring them to some European wasteland where the people were much preferred to drink beer out of skulls and not so much as receive their message. But they assuredly gathered that the Lord had called them.

Oh precious people, this book is as profound for the things that are left unsaid as the things spoken. And the thing which is left unsaid is the process by which a disciple of God is fashioned. So that when the day comes, when the vision of God shall come forth to important tasks, we shall be so experienced in discerning the spirit and the voice of God that we might assuredly gather, this is he speaking.

Now just in these days in Kansas City, I had just an opportunity to test this. Just before I went to Columbia, in a morning within the space of an hour of minutes, in a course of a conversation with a brother at whose home I was staying, it just is the most artless kind of innocent conversation about certain practical considerations and bang, bang, bang, I knew within moments that the Lord was calling us to establish the Ben Israel Ministries as a non-profit religious organization with a headquarters in Kansas City. That the day has come when we can no longer continue to operate as a private individual and that somehow the Lord wants to have this ministry expand and that it cannot expand until it be established on another foundation and that that foundation is going to be set in Kansas City.

Why Kansas City? Because I have more friends here, more who know me, trust me, love me, and understand our burden and are sympathetic with it than any other place in this country or this world. I didn't realize until I came back just a few days ago how many people we know here, how much our labors have been watered and nurtured of God in the time that we've left, and the Lord has great allies everywhere about us who will stand with us in an end-time ministry to the Jewish people that shall be so controversial and so fearful that no man dare undertake it alone. How do I know this in just a few moments? Because I've got 10 years of basic training.

Now I want you to know something kids, you don't have to wait to graduate school to begin to discern the voice of God or to be led by His Holy Spirit. I'll tell you that on the writing of a term paper, on the selection of a subject matter, on a word that shall come out of your mouth in a class discussion, in a word of witness, in a commentary to a teacher, you can be just as exquisitely and deeply, profoundly led of God as Paul and Silas, and the stakes are every bit much as great. In fact, the season is such now that God is not taking 10 years to bring men to a degree of maturity and usefulness.

We don't have that much time left. You guys are growing up so fast, I'm astounded and I'm embarrassed. In six months, in a year, in two years, you've got such insight and such depth of understanding and such a degree of mature commitment that that makes me as an adult just blush.

God is doing indeed a quick work and He's speaking to you such things tonight to save you from the laborious and time-consuming process, which is no longer a luxury available to us, that you might vicariously enter in to the experience of a Paul and Silas, that when a vision shall come to you in the night, you shall assuredly gather, it is the Lord calling. And setting forth with a straight course, you shall immediately endeavor to go. In a word, the Spirit of God is given to those who assuredly gather.

The Spirit of God is given to those who immediately endeavor. The Spirit of God is given to those who set forth with a straight course. And every one of those things completely contradict the tenor of this age.

Compromise, concession, deceit, equivocation, chickenness. I just invented a new word. Cop outistry.

Really, you have to understand that that's the Spirit of this age. And where is there a man who knows how to set his face before God and seek his face with supplications in fasting and prayer and sackcloth and ashes? Where is there a man who assuredly gathers that the Lord is calling, who sets forth immediately with a straight course? When God will find such a heart, and we're going to see what the consequence of

such obedience is in a moment, you can be assured you're going to be receiving visions before long. But what was the vision that Paul received? It was a Macedonian beseeching, come help us.

So I want to suggest as a footnote in passing why it is we don't receive such visions. Because such a vision can only come not into one who's obedient to go, but one who's in a position to bring the help. Just let's take inventory guys and be honest.

How much of our prayer time is spent moaning, lamenting about our own pitiful spiritual condition? Are we in a position to bring help to someone else? Is God going to see to it that we're exquisitely led by the Spirit or we're through long and dangerous journeys only to come and find that our faces are sticking out and we don't know God, we don't know his Spirit, we're not people of faith, and we break down when the first rejection comes or the first disappointment or the first persecution or the first suffering? Is he going to send people who moan and groan over a dissatisfying income tax return or they didn't get a B plus but they got a B minus and they're resentful and pout about the teacher? Such a one will never receive a vision beckoning them, come help us. Such a vision comes to mature saints of God who are in a position to bring help. And one more thing before we pass on, we've got three hours for this message tonight.

Note this, after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go. Oh praise God. He saw the vision but we endeavored to go, assuredly gathering the Lord had called us.

Ever hear tell about the body of Christ? Ever hear tell about God's authority? Another thing which is in contradiction to the tenor of the age, because every one of us have grown up in a bumptious spirit that can't be told, no one's going to tell us, we know. And in fact the older person is the more suspect he is and he cannot receive our confidence. Are you so rightly related to God and to the body that when a vision will come to one in the position of authority that you will know that he has assuredly called us? I remember one of the last times I gave this message, a woman came to me who was really trembling.

Her husband had received a vision of God. The man was in his early 50s, not a kid. This wasn't some lark.

He was a professional man with deep interest in the community and home and cars and prestige and all these things. And he felt that God had called him to sell all and pick up and go to the youth with a mission school in Germany and learn evangelism. And that wife was fluttering like a leaf.

And she said, well, when God will show me the same vision, then I'll consider it. So I said, look here sister. After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go.

Your husband is the head of your body and the vision comes only to the head, but the whole body is expected to respond. Now I tell you children that this principle is so fantastically important and that's why we're not playing at games. I know that there's a scintillation, a certain kind of heady excitement in being a Christian and singing and coming into fellowships like this and different kinds of messengers coming to town.

But God is saying, sober up. You're not going to be allowed the luxury of this kind of titillation long and begin to understand the sober fixed principles of God. Are you rightly related in the body of Christ? Are you submitting to the authority which is over you? It may well be that that authority is only 22 years old or less, but if it's the authority established of God, submit yourself.

Because when the action shall come in the last days, it's going to be quick and it's going to be fierce and the fate of multitudes for eternity shall rest upon our obedience to the visions of God and our

understanding of the pattern of his working. Are you still with me? Is it warm? Are you distracted? Loosen your ties and let's have as much air as we can and I'll try to be as quick as I can. Okay, therefore losing from trust we came with a straight course to Samothrace and the next day Minneapolis and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia.

And I want you to know this, wherever God leads you by his still small voice and by visions, be it so ever humble, be it so ever modest, be it so ever inconspicuous and unseen, it is in God's sight and should be for you also the chief city. Understand that? Wherever it is that God leads you by his will, in God's sight and for you, that is the chief city. And I'll tell you that our eyes have been corrupted.

We measure things quantitatively and we think that unless we're ministering to audiences of thousands and see great visible responses, that somehow we're second-rate saints and we're off in the backwater someplace. But I'll tell you if that backwater is a place to which God has brought you by his spirit, you can be assured that that is the chief city. And so on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made and we sat down and spoke unto the women which resorted to the... Oh Paul, you really blew it now.

Man, don't you know that it's on the Sabbath when you're supposed to be in the city, not out of it? Man, if you want to have ministry to the Jewish people, you go where they are. And on the Sabbath they're in the synagogues. But they went out of the city.

Well, you say, man, and you're holding Paul up as a model to us of obedience to the Holy Spirit. Where did the Holy Spirit say, Paul, get thee out of the city and go by the riverside where prayer is wont to be made by certain women thither? I want to tell you something about what's happening in my life. I've heard the audible voice of God many times, many times.

The first time was 10 years ago in Jerusalem as a vehement atheist when I stumbled into that bookstore selling Bibles operated by charismatic Jews. When I was stunned upon that discovery in that very moment, I heard the still small voice of God. A minute ago if someone had said, there's such a thing as hearing voices, I would have said, get thee to the, you know, shrink.

But I'll tell you it's a different thing when you hear the voice, especially if you're Jewish. However much you've contended against voices, you know that this is the voice of him with whom we have to do. And so I've heard that voice not only in that day, which led in my obedience to it, to blessing and salvation, because the voice called me by name and commended me, ought, you are not to leave.

I didn't ask any questions. I wasn't given any explanation. I obeyed.

And four days later, I was in the kingdom of God, a new creature in Christ Jesus. Now since that day, 10 years ago, I've heard the voice many times. I've sat on platforms waiting to be called on, had received my instructions, instructions from men, give a testimony, send them home, rah, rah, rah, rah.

But on the platform, I'm hearing a still small voice say, ought, preach on the cross. Ought, preach on the cross. And I'm carrying on an argument.

Oh Lord, it's too late. The hour is late. Everybody's tired.

I'm not prepared. Look at my condition. I'm spent.

Look at the kids. They're too young to understand such deep things. And they don't even have Bibles.

And they came for a rah, rah, rah time. And look at all these people that came from different places that know me, that want to be impressed. And look at my reputation.

Ought, preach on the cross. And I'll tell you what happened when I finally was called up to that platform that night, after they had the popular pastor contest. How did you know how that works? You get a hundred points if somebody shines your shoes, and a thousand points if somebody cleans your Sunday school classroom, and the minister with the most points wins and gets the gold cup.

Well, they had a runoff and a tie, and took about a half hour of the program until they established the most popular pastor. It was disgraceful. And I was so glad I had not invited any of those radicals who opposed me that day at the university in that afternoon's outreach during the Kent strike, when the universities were closed and we had a fierce encounter, to come that night to that church and see what contemporary Christianity is.

They would have been greatly disappointed. And so in that atmosphere of popular pastors, I brought my weary carcass up to the pulpit, and the voice was saying still, ought to preach on the cross. And I knew that God wanted me to show that the cross is the one way of God, from Genesis to Revelation, that I should preach the cross out of the Old Testament scriptures.

I had never done it before. It was calculated to fail. And failure meant mortification, death by embarrassment.

I'll tell you, that death is a lot worse than just your life snuffing out like that. If death was only just flicking a switch and a cessation of consciousness, man, we would just skip over to it. But that's not the death that really scares us.

It's the death of suffering. It's the death of mortification. It's the death of unspeakable embarrassment that frightens us.

I took my body, and I described my predicament, and I prayed, and I believed God, and I opened my mouth, prepared to die. Obedience is always an obedience unto death. And in that moment, the unction of God fell upon a tired spirit and body and spoke powerfully to these people.

It was like an explosion. When it was over, nobody gave an invitation. They just fell out of their chairs.

They were on their faces. These handsome pastors, well-groomed and cultivated, were strewn all over the platform, the steps. There were sobs and cries.

It was a great work of God. In obedience to the still small voice, preach the cross. But I'll tell you that I'm hearing the still small voice less as I go on in the walk.

Oh, you say, Art, what is that? Are you backslidden? No, it's really a promotion. I needed the audible voice of God when I was yet a child. But as I become more conversant and more familiar with the characteristic ways of my God and can intuit his spirit, I need less audibly to be spoken to.

So you know what's happening these days? I don't get the message in advance, like, Art, tonight you're going to speak on Acts 16. That's rare when that happens, when I have a clear assurance of what I'm going to speak or do. More and more it's a trembling right to the last moment, right before a university

audience, as it was the other night, right here at UMKC, when something was slightly moving upon my heart that had to do with Shakespeare.

Oh, well, everybody knows that. I mean, what has that got to do with evangelism? And yet I could not shake it. And I was waiting for the still small voice of God and it never came.

Well, what do you do when you're called on and your face is sticking out and everybody's looking up and their tape recorders are poised and shoved? So I spoke on Shakespeare, on Julius Caesar and the assassination of Caesar, and made a comparison of his death and the death of one far more noble, but far less understood and celebrated. And I believe that God was in that. The point is this, children, that God is leading us into such a relationship that we not only will not need always to be audibly spoken to, but our relationship will be so one with God that the very thing we intuit, the very thought which is in our head, the very word which is in our mouth, the very act which we perform is the word and act of the living God.

Remember what Elijah said, the same one fed by ravens? Always says, as the Lord my God liveth before whom I stand, it shall not rain but according to my word. And it didn't rain for three and a half years. Elijah's word was God's word.

Why is that? You know, it's interesting that there's nothing, there's a discrete silence before we come to that first verse of the first King 17. Not a word is spoken of what it took to make an Elijah. Say, what kind of an apprenticeship do you suppose he served? How did he come to such a point that he could hear the voice of God commanding him to be fed by ravens and immediately go? How could he come to such a place of boldness? He could stand before King Ahab without trembling and say, as the Lord my God liveth, it shall not rain but according to my word, knowing that a drought was going to bring crisis and shortages and crippling constrictions in the economy and men's fear would mount and their hearts would fail them.

And you know when men get afraid, they hate and they act murderously. And he could stand before King Ahab, whose wife had single-handedly seen to the execution of all of God's prophets and without trembling announced, it shall not rain but according to my word. The Lord doesn't give us one word of understanding of what it took to fashion an Elijah.

But only one reference in the book of James that says that he was flesh and blood like us, we and he prayed that it should not rain and it rained not for three and a half years. Flesh and blood just like you. Oh I tell you guys, you're another generation called for another hour and just the thing that preceded that you're coming on the scene was a groovy Christianity.

An easy kind of thing of throwing a couple of bucks in a collection plate, coming to a few meetings, strumming guitars, singing a few songs, having a nice warm cozy feeling of solidarity. But God has called you to something far deeper, far more meaningful, far more costly and the effects of it shall redound for eternity. Flesh and blood like you shall speak a word and it shall come to pass.

Flesh and blood like you shall command fire from heaven to fall and it shall fall and men shall fall on their apostate backslidden faces and cry out the Lord he is God. But you say, Art, when does all this begin? It's begun and you're enrolled in the school of discipleship already if you have but eyes to see and ears to hear. And God wants you not only to hear the specific instruction which you're receiving tonight in this word but also to hear between the lines the voice of his speaking.

There's a voice of urgency, can you hear it? I know that this has been punctuated with a little humor and so on but despite all of that there's a God who's speaking solemnly and urgently in a measured way for your careful consideration. Don't just hear the words, don't just take the notes, but catch also which is equally as important the voice with which God is speaking. The hour is short.

The end times are already upon us. Men's hearts shall fail them for fear. It shall not reign for three and a half years.

We're going to see the most severe dislocations in society that has been spoiled by affluence and comfort and great luxury and leisure and men shall not be prepared for this debilitating experience and you're going to stand up and say in the fury of the crisis when men shall seek desperately for answer, you're going to say, oh I know the answer and say, what what? Christ is the answer. They're not just going to wave you away like you're a little irritant and a little fly. They're going to fall upon you and gnash upon you with their teeth.

To stand up and to proclaim in an age of extremity and crisis that Christ is the answer is not going to be just mildly shrugged away. It's going to be fiercely contended against and we're going to hear cries of fanatic superstition. Insane and I wonder perchance if believers in this country will begin to have the kind of experience that believers behind the iron curtain are now having.

Finding themselves committed to mental institutions dangerous to society because of their strange superstitions and their irrational beliefs. Or have their children plucked from their bosoms lest they be instructed in the same things. Oh guys, grow up quickly in the admonition and the fear of the Lord and stand and be used of God because you understand his way.

Okay, so they went out of the city. Where did it say God says go out in the city? It doesn't say and I don't believe that God said it. I believe that Paul intuited it.

He just went. For him to live was Christ and if he had a hankering to go out of the city that was Christ's hankering and if he didn't feel led to go to the synagogues that was Christ's leading. Have you come to such a place in your relationship with the Lord where his life is your life, his thoughts are your thoughts, his impulses are your impulses, that to speak or to do whatever is in your heart is his will? About how many light million trillion years away are we from such a relationship and there's a spirit of God appealing to you tonight to consciously seek, undertake to obtain such a relationship that you might say with the Apostle Paul, for me to live is Christ.

I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me. Oh we've quoted those scriptures and we've quoted Watchman Nehemiah and we've talked about Romans 6 and we have excitement and wonderful Christian coffeehouse times discussing these scriptures but for how many of us are these things true? I want you to know with all my heart I believe that Paul was not just a wolfen for him it was absolute actuality and if you applaud Paul and think that the author of a half the new testament and the one who brought the life-saving message to Europe by the way the recipients of which you are that this is somehow an expression of his wit of his intelligence of his brilliance of his courage you are so grossly mistaken. Don't you dare pay him one single compliment except only for one thing obedience to the cross unto death.

He was crucified with Christ and think of the wonderful natural endowments that were nailed to the cross brilliant intellect prized student of the Rabbi Gamaliel a man who had never so much as violated the law by

his own confession upright stalwart courageous personable intelligent all these natural endowments were nailed to the cross for him to live was Christ. Will you believe with all your heart that that's not a doctrine but an actual possibility and don't let go of God until it becomes your experience and I tell you when it becomes your experience it's not once and for all but again and again and again you shall be caught up and be invited to the cross to be crucified afresh to reckon yourself dead unto self but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. If I had another half hour I would go on in that but I know that this hurts.

Okay try and be patient. Lord help these kids. Okay so Paul did not wait for the word of God he simply went although every natural reckoning says that you stay in a city where the action is but guys God has called us to an hour where we are no longer to proceed by natural reckonings.

I think that the end of the big promotions and productions and evangelistic crusades and big conventions and all that jazz is going to come to an end in practical terms because people won't have gas to get there but it's going to serve the purposes of God and just because we before we could afford to rent hotels and we could afford to print up slick four-color brochures and invite all kinds of guys to slap the pulpit and to delight us now we're going to have to be very careful. Now we're not going to be afford the luxury of indiscriminate conventions and conferences and all that jazz but the conferences to which God will call us must be entirely of his spirit and I'll tell you the ministry that we'll receive there will be far different from that which we've received in times past. Momentary enthusiasm and excitement but no deep ministry to our hearts lives marriages families and the nitty-gritty aspects of our life.

Okay Paul led by the spirit didn't go where the numbers were he didn't look to acclaim he didn't look to see where he was going to be most conspicuously used he had a hankering to go out of the city and he came to a place where women met for prayer and a certain woman named Lydia a seller of purple of the city of pharatera which worshiped God heard us whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Isn't that tremendous? Here's a woman who had a heart toward God and God opened that heart to attend the things which were spoken of Paul.

You say how do you know that she attended to the things that were spoken because the very next verse says and when she was baptized oh praise God and when she was baptized oh you think baptism is some icky thing you know just a groovy little good time you get wet and dunked and and you can say you've been baptized well maybe for many it is but I tell you that if this woman were Jewish to be baptized was to sign on the death on the warrant of putting her life away for her to be publicly baptized and to be identified as a believer was looked upon as death to her community to her family and who knows what other consequences she would suffer even to this day a Jewish kid can come home from school and say mom I believe that Jesus is the Messiah and his mother's likely to say that's nice Irving

sit down and eat your lunch but let Irving come home two weeks later and say mom I've been baptized and he's likely to hear you're no longer my son in Israel they have the law of return any Jew anywhere in the world atheist pornographer rebel revolutionary if he's a Jew he has full right to come to live in Israel but there's one question on the application it says religion you can write atheist you can write I don't know any kind of nonsensical philosophical thing they just let you write in but you write messianic Jew Hebrew Christian and they'll say just a moment buddy have you been baptized and if you say yes it's baptism people is a river of separation and death and when she was baptized don't you love Lydia no ifs ands buts whys hows her heart was open that she attended to the things

that were spoken and when she was baptized you can always tell those people who here because they do but I'll tell you what a fortunate gifted generation we are who haven't we heard from Bob Mumford to Derek Prince to the greatest and the largest to the to the to the smallest to the we've heard them all not once but again and again on tapes on video in teachings and books we've had an opportunity that no generation on earth has ever heard had to hear the fullness of the counsel of God but it doesn't show as much as it ought I know so many people who are continually listening to tapes but they're as carnal as selfish as greedy as anyone you can find and you can listen to tapes till your ears turn cauliflower you're not gaining a thing until you're obedient to the first thing that you've

heard she attended to the things that were spoken and the evidence is she was baptized immediately and her household boy she must have had some relationship with her kids they must have been like one and what a woman this was and she said if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come into my house and abide there and she constrained us oh praise God that he would raise up such Lydia's as this for our generation say Paul and Silas are going to be leaving town in a few days but Lydia remains not only does she bear the stigma of baptism but she bears the stigma of having received these dangerous Jewish radicals under her own roof and she constrained them you know the kind of invitations we give oh come on over when you're around will you love to see we'll have fellowship and yeah

sure but it never takes place we don't like that it's kind of an invasion of our privacy and besides if they're liable to come over what mood are we in and right now I'm in a good mood I look good and I'm showing myself off to be pretty nice saint but they might knock on the door that day when I've had a fight with the wife or barked at the kids or have been angry with your parents or thought murderous thoughts or who knows what so better let's not take the risk of real fellowship we say come over but we don't constrain each other and she constrained them oh that there might be such a heart in us to attend to the things which are spoken to do them and to constrain one another to have fellowship and to give the full testimony that we're wholly committed to God independent of the stigma and

the suffering and the reproach which shall automatically fall upon those who shall do it I remember as a young I just saved I read the book of Acts and other places says those that live godly lives shall suffer persecution and I came to an assembly in California and was there for months and never so much as heard of anything to do with persecution because we simply did not fulfill the conditions of God those that live godly lives in Christ shall suffer persecution we don't know as a generation what it means to set our faces to seek the Lord we don't know what it means to attend to the things which are spoken we don't know what it means to constrain God and not let him go except that he bless us may God put such a heart in you which is a complete contradiction to the easy believism and

superficiality of your own generation that you might be used in glorious ways by him and so it came to pass as we went to prayer a certain damsel possessed with the spirit of divination met us which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying and the same followed Paul and Christ saying these men are the servants of the most high God can you hear that freaky shriekish shrill intonation these men are the servants of the most high God which show unto us the way of salvation say that's interesting the demon spirits knew who Paul and Silas were but the Jewish people didn't to the Jewish people they were only dangerous radicals who gave every appearance of seeking to remove them from the faith quote unquote of their fathers or from familiar traditions ever had that experience to be confronted

like that as I just experienced in Colombia where a Jewish kid told me that I was preaching hatred after I poured out my heart and spoke of the Lamb of God in Isaiah 53 have you ever had the experience of

being completely misunderstood have you ever been accused of being an anti-semite because in the course of your remarks you made use of the scriptural phrase the lost sheep of the house of Israel you know what Elijah heard art thou he who troubleth Israel and so too shall you you know what you're going to hear anti-semite what's the matter than the Jewish people suffer enough were they wiped out in the holocaust and aren't they struggling now to retain their identity as Jews in Russia and are you going to deprive them of their last measure of Jewishness and invite them to become

Christians call that Christian love anti-semite that's what you're going to hear guys men will not understand you they will not see you as the messengers of God to show unto them the way of salvation the demon spirits will know who you are and you'll have your hands full fighting them but you'll be fighting and suffering from men also are you prepared if God would give an invitation tonight who is there among you who would elect to have a walk such as Paul and Silas knew if you'll raise your hand I'll direct you step by step into just such a ministry how many of us at the end of this night would raise it to speak for myself I remember one time I got carried away in prayer at my bedside and I cried out to the Lord oh God I said make me such a one as Paul and the words had no sooner emitted

from my mouth then I leaped after him to catch up every syllable and jam it right back and swallow it down hard because all of a sudden it occurred to me say how many times was he shipwrecked how many times beating in fastings oft suffering to the responsibility of all of the saints in the church beaten with rods and and left for dead and stoned if that's the price of being a Paul no thank you God is not speaking tonight to titillate your ears there's a call of God and not everyone is going to answer it and so it says that she's streaked in this way these are the least servants of the Most High God which you want this way of salvation and this did she many days but Paul being grieved turned and said to the Spirit I commend thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and he came

out the same hour just an ordinary day in the life of a Jewish servant of God he turned to the Spirit and he came out the very hour and guys this is where the war is our war is not against those who misunderstand us our war is in the heavenlies with principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and high places Paul didn't speak to the woman nor did he speak to her owners her masters he spoke to the Spirit and I think it's we should note this it says Paul being grieved turned and commanded a spirit to come out you know I used to think when I read that that that the modern translation would be Paul being bugged he was irritated and it just to get rid of this irritation he said spirit I command images go no Paul being grieved is different than Paul being bugged Paul was not given to human

irritation he was given to experiences experiencing the grief of God for a mankind bound enslaved hopeless and damned Paul being grieved and cut in his heart to the quick turned at that poor travesty of a wreck of a human being whose life was not her own and commanded the Spirit of God and he came out that hour not only because he had the faith but because he had the love it's a faith which worketh by love remember a lot of us have the faith but we haven't put it all together we don't grieve for a stricken world put that high on your priority list give me such a heart O God is yours that I might grieve for those that are stricken and whose lives are not their own and you know what God is not going to direct your attention to demoniacs who are crippled and all gnarled up and evidently need

to be loosed what he's liable just to put you right down in your classroom next to that kid who lives with a silver spoon in his mouth and drives to school in a late model car and he's got all kinds of spending money but I'll tell you with all my heart if you have ears to hear he's every bit as much perhaps more the slave more the lost soul more the crippled stunted creature without hope than this poor demoniac have you eyes

to see are you grieved are you cutting your heart or were you envious that their clothes were nicer than yours Paul being grieved turned and commanded the Spirit of God to come out and I'll tell you if our hearts were cut for the condition of those about us our words wouldn't fall as they so often do as water off a duck's back in vain we would be seeing telling effect

of our witness and our ministry so what's the consequence of this obedience so what's the reward for being led by visions to Philippi and going out and ministering to a woman and setting one other woman free and when a master saw that the hope of their gains was gone they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers and brought them to the magistrate saying these men being Jews do exceedingly trouble our city remember the first time I read that verse I was like someone off the launching pad and my cry to God was Oh God make me that kind of a Jew oh I tell you we Jews have been battling it around for centuries what does it mean to be a Jew right Bob but I'll tell you this is the definition those who bring divine discontent to a smug and complacent generation who

think that they have it made those who shake campuses for Christ's sake those who will not let men to continue in their smug self-satisfaction because they profess to be concerned for Biafran of Vietnam but who press upon them the claims of God knowing as Paul knowing the terror of God I persuade men I'll tell you that when you'll be led of the Spirit of God be it however humble and however modest the ministry is going to have effect and the world is going to rise up in its whole system in anger and fury against you and if you've never experienced men gnashing their teeth upon you tighten your safety belt it's coming the first evidence that I had as a brand-new believer that I had indeed stumbled into it the kingdom of God was not the applause that I received from men and the

congratulations but my dearest and most devoted friends and even my mother turning in anger and bitterness to reject me utterly with the cries he's gone mad when I began to experience the reproach and persecution I knew indeed I had made contact with the Living God I'll tell you kids if you're gonna be faithful to God and be led by the vision and by the Spirit you're going to touch the world system at its heart and you're going to have men gnashing upon you and dragging you into the marketplace where the rulers are I don't want to make this sound like some kind of village socialism but I'll tell you that there's only two systems two kingdoms the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this present world and that kingdom is ruled over by a prince by the name of Satan and it's worked by certain

basic principles having to do with greed power lust ambition and the fulfillment of human gratification and I don't care whether the form of society which fulfills those things is called capitalism or socialism or communism it is still the kingdom of this present world and it has ever and always been at enmity with God and if you shall touch that system in any given place to jeopardize its vested interest the world is going to rise up against you as it did our master and you shall suffer in like and measure of proportion to the effectiveness of your witness as his reproach persecution suffering and death glad you came tonight this is very real very real and that's why I don't have one iota of guilty conscience of keeping you longer keeping you uncomfortable I don't when we'll see again

this is a divine moment with God and I want to speak this full and I'm almost finished this is the consequence of obedience to the Spirit of God not the B'nai B'rith man of the year award not the junior chamber commerce of the year award I'll tell you when you'll see such awards of that flee in the other direction now never forget resting in Pat Boone's study just before we were gonna have a meeting in his grand living room for about 150 200 Jewish intellectuals movie directors film writers and as I would had my hands on my head and looking around they were there were the white buck shoes sure enough dipped in

bronze good old icky Pat the guy who was for me the symbol of all that I despised in Gentile America but I love him now fervently as a brother he's just not the same fellow and I

saw the golf awards and all that stuff and then my eye fell on a plaque on the wall B'nai B'rith man of the year award 1956 and I chuckled to myself and I said Pat baby it's the last time you'll ever get one of those nine people were baptized in his pool that night in the meeting that ended at 4 in the morning five Jews and four Gentiles there was there was a Jewish man who was saved but he wasn't gonna be baptized uh-uh that's too much of a commitment but when he saw these other Jewish people coming out of that pool crying hallelujah experiencing the power the reality and the love of God the release and the emancipation having crossed through that Jordan of separation from the wilderness of Egypt stumblings and into the promised land he said I want to be baptized now well I had already

come out of the water my clothes were changed and I I said well Pat can you take him in yeah Pat was gonna baptize him so while we're waiting for Pat to get out of his clothes this precious young film director 30 years old one of the most beautiful Jewish men I've ever laid eyes on cultured intelligent talented good-looking had his arms around my waist trembling at the prospect of going into a river of separation death he knew that this act of public commitment was going to cost him and he knew and I knew that very shortly after shall come upon that beautiful head reproach accusations fierce cries buffeting persecution and who shall know what the end is and as I was patting his head like like a patriarchal Jew just like the father Abraham petting the young one and I was praying Lord I

said bless this precious vessel and fill him with your glory and before I can continue praying something erupted on my chest and I looked down and this brother was speaking in a heavenly language on my chest no one so much as it had even mentioned the baptism in the Holy Spirit but we've come full circle and it's not the Cornelius's the Gentile Cornelius's upon the holy upon whom the Holy Spirit is falling today but Jews and God is asking you now to serve as Gentile Peters and go and bring the message of God to the Jewish Cornelius's and even while you're speaking shall the Holy Spirit fall and you'll see the wonder of wonders so Pat isn't gonna get any more B'nai B'rith awards but I'll tell you there's an award laid up for him in heaven there's a crown of glory but there's another crown

that must precede it it's called the crown of thorns and these men being Jews do exceedingly trouble our city and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive neither to observe being Romans and the multitude rose up together against them and the magistrates rent of their clothes and commanded to beat them and when they laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison charging the jailer to keep them safely who having received such a charge thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast and stocks oh you thought this was a historical episode interesting bit of antiquity being described not so this is a slice of the bologna and wherever you cut it it's bologna still this is the way of God and it's never changed you're gonna be dragged in the places where power is

and you're gonna be publicly humiliated and they're gonna rise up together against you at a recent meeting at the University of Massachusetts and I did not just have to oppose the Jewish rabbis and the kids who came to gnash on me and it looked upon me as enemy but in the course of the heated discussion a man rose on the other side of the room with a white clerical collar and nice gray at the temples right out of central casting with a pipe the archetypal liberal minister you know and mr.

Katz he said I believe that your God is too small my Jesus he said died for all the world irrespective of whether men individually accept him and I could see in that moment an arc shooting across the room of

common sympathy and understanding with the Jewish contingent on the other side and in the middle with the believing kids and their eyes are going blink blink blink and later that night they said art they said tonight we saw what the end time configuration is going to be a small band of dedicated believers speaking the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus beginning first at Jerusalem and suffering what men have always suffered to proclaim the way of God but a greater number playing at a much groovier game of religion in great sympathy with one another whose words are titillating and easy to

receive and they rose up together against them I'll tell you there's nothing that unifies men as their opposition to the children of God well you know what they say about Jews you take two Jewish people you get three arguments but one thing that Judaism is agreed reform conservative Orthodox they may not agree about the yarmulkes or a certain ceremony or ritual or other kinds of liturgical things but one thing they're agreed when a Jew believes in Jesus he's no longer a Jew isn't that interesting what the basis for unity shall be for every religious group in the end day opposition to us who believe oh isn't this ever the pattern of God and so these men had their clothes torn from their backs and they were beaten they laid it says many stripes upon them I just gave this message over TV and

I said to the technicians in a studio I said say you happen to have a whip in the house I wanted to show something visual it's not interesting to look at this Yiddish a gezicht for an hour you've got to see something you know on TV so they made me a whip they took strands of leather and they nailed it to a sort of piece of broom handle and then I said to the guy you got some pieces of metal or bone or something on the end and he made a cat and nine tails and when the program began I had this thing in my hand and a pair of handcuffs and I was hefting them and the cat and the program began I said something like this no script Holy Spirit I said you're probably wondering what these objects are and wondering how are they compatible with fundamental evangelical messages but I'll tell you that

they're far more compatible than you think and then I went on to go into act 16 it says they laid many stripes upon them and people we owe Paul and Silas reverential respect you are the recipient of the stripes which they bore any man who has ever benefited from the reading of the book of Philippians let alone the coming of the gospel to Europe and eventually throughout the old Western world owes these Jewish men an enormous debt of gratitude which is in fact why God tells us in Romans 10 and 11 that now God is waiting for you Gentiles you non-Jewish believers that by your mercy that the gospel might come to the Jewish people for how shall they call upon him of whom they've not heard and how shall they hear except one be sent I want to ask you tonight would you be willing to suffer many

stripes laid upon you that Jewish souls might know that their God lives and that Yeshua is indeed the Holy One of Israel as Jewish men 19 centuries ago were willing to have many stripes laid upon them for your sake many stripes it says what does that mean it means a man was stripped I mean wholly stripped and publicly humiliated and bound to a pillar like this with his hands high and some brute took this filthy instrument and let him have 39 swipes we can imagine the first crack crack and all of a sudden ugly welts all over the back you get sick already just to hear the sound let alone to see the effect but it's only number one then comes number two crack and the ugly welts are really beginning to discolor and the skin looks like it's on the verge of breaking and crack and sure enough

outcome the first spurts of blood and crack again right into those wounds and crack again and again and again and again and again you don't think that you're gonna live and the pain is shooting through your brain like daggers and your wood to God that there were a death where your consciousness could be snuffed out you don't know how you can bear it and you've only got 15 strokes and you've got twice as

many yet to go and that whip cuts again and again again through the skin through the flesh to the bone then you're cast down into the inner prison and bound in stocks can you picture us oh we were so filled with excitement it's wonderful to serve the Lord and to be led of the Spirit of God what an adventure and look we set a woman free and another was baptized in a whole household but now

what's happened there we are with our backs hanging and strips bound that we can't even move your your posterior is hurting now because you don't have too much room to adjust your position how would you feel if you were confined to that spot and could not move the whole night long days long bound in stocks and not even a position to minister to your torn and bloody back and the atmosphere stinks from the wretch of puke of urine of human excretion and hearing the moans and groans of men in sickly dark unventilated cells I've had the privilege of visiting catacombs I've had the privilege of seeing in Rome the cell where Paul spent his last days and it was a dark little hole I had a stoop over I could not stand erect the walls were glistening with sweat and that's where Paul wrote some of his

bravest epistles Oh precious kids how do we speak such a thing coming to a place like this tonight well-fed going right from this meeting to the ice cream parlor where is a good one by the way I tell you and I'm trying I don't want to be melodramatic but there are many that are sitting here tonight maybe many's too generous there are some who are sitting here tonight who shall bear in their bodies the marks of Jesus before they pass this life and there are some here tonight and I'm almost assured myself included who shall not die a natural death in a bed or you think that that's too extreme a statement to make art you're really given to the dramatic I tell you with all my heart you can count on it this world is going to change so abruptly you will not believe the suddenness in which we're

going to be plunged into end times into the crisis extremity and all the things that shall attend it and we shall be hated of all men for his namesake so shall there be a falling away and we're not going to see great meetings like this it's not going to be that groovy anymore it's going to be arduous demanding painful and far less than this will have a stomach for such a walk I'm convinced more and more that the messages I speak are not intended for the multitudes they're intended for the few what would we do to find ourselves in that cell bloodied beat to a pulp humiliated and we thought we had been obedient to the heavenly vision Oh God where are you and why do you allow us to suffer like this where do we miss it did what we told that we were called to prosperity with children of God

and were heirs and co-heirs with Jesus Christ and we have all things yes including his suffering but I'll tell you we come now to one of the grandest verses in the entire holy writ and I want you to take your pen a pencil and put a box around that verse and let it blaze in your heart and sink deep into your hearing and let it be raised as a standard to which you aspire for your spiritual life in the 25th verse of x16 it says at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God one moment's reverential silence before we go further just at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God Oh Lord forgive us on those days when our hearts are leaden and we got stood up on a date or our teachers didn't understand us or we didn't get the grade we deserved and we went home pouting

and when we came to the service our spirits were still so overwhelmed that we couldn't raise our voices in praise really how then shall you do when your back is bloodied children of God we're called to be children of praise the prisoners heard them and suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were loosed were opened and everyone's bands were loosed the keeper of the prison seeing awakening out of a sleep and seeing the prison doors open he drew out a sword and would have killed himself supposing the prisoners had been fled but Paul cried

out with a loud voice saying cool it do yourself no harm we're still here and so the doors burst open and all that jazz there's no rush to go you were free to begin with can you

see that and so it says Paul cried out with a loud voice saying do thyself no harm for all here then he called for a light hallelujah and sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas oh I'm sick of trying to buttonhole people and in quote John 3:16 are you saved brother and press an unwitting unwilling piece of literature upon them I'd love to see men tremblingly springing in fall down and cry out as this one did sir what must I do to be saved a lot of us are giving the answer before the question is ever once asked and our ministry is not to give unwanted answers our ministry is to create the right question when they'll see our freedom all the world is gonna go berserk for the want of an ounce of gasoline all the world are gonna have their stomachs rumble when they

can't have their goodies every day but they're gonna look upon us and see us in yet another way somehow we're not disconcerted somehow our life still seems to go on somehow our joy is still full excuse me and for many that shall shall bring men saying to us say what must I do to be saved and I'll tell you right there the whole issue is joined for they said believe on the Lord Yeshua Hamashiach Jesus the Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house what must I do to be saved poor fellow he still thinks he's got to earn it but Paul told him what the definitive Judaism of God is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and tonight God has told us what believing is it's not just giving idle assent to a body of doctrine is hearing a still small voice of God immediately

endeavoring to go understanding that your obedience is not going to bring you a reward and applause but suffering and reproach if you've got that kind of commitment and trust unto death you'll be saved to the uttermost not just for eternity but through an ugly and savage and time darkness in which our lights shall shine brightly

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/5/SID5038.mp3>

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