

The Cross of Christ - Part 2

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the transformative power of the cross and the necessity of encountering its truth for genuine faith and community among believers.

Duration: 1:05:40

Scripture: Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:31, Luke 22:31

Topics: "Cross of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares an illustration of a Japanese girl living with them who appeared to be a saint but revealed her true condition during a crisis. The speaker emphasizes the importance of authenticity and being formed in the image of God rather than our own image. They highlight the need for a life established at the foundation of the cross, as charismatic gifts alone are not enough to sustain us. The speaker also mentions the increasing controversy of the gospel and the possibility of many falling away in the last days, emphasizing the need for preparation and standing firm in the truth.

Transcript

I really want to apologize if I used vocabulary last night that confused people. I'm going to try tonight really to be conscious of that and speak as simply as I can. I think part of the problem was that I was quoting from a very erudite theologian, so there I go already.

But I don't see that there's anything wrong in God's people having their vocabularies expanded. Because language is enormously significant, and there are some words that simply cannot be replaced. So, oftentimes I speak like an amplified Bible.

I'll give three or four adjectives for the same word. If you miss the first one, don't panic. There'll be others coming.

We need to come to a place where we're not intimidated by each other, or the unusual ministries that God has in the body. Not threatened, but somehow that we have an ease of spirit, and that we're willing to open our hearts to receive what the Spirit is speaking, sometimes even when our minds are not fruitful. So, I appreciate that if you would establish your heart in that way.

As I've said, I've not spoken these messages before, and there's an element of spontaneity by which God infuses something as one speaks. So, if there's a disconnectedness or an awkward pause, don't become

uncomfortable, but enter into the process of drawing the Word of God out from his own heart. So, with that introduction, let's join our hearts together to hear from the Most High God, the God of Heaven, that he would breathe upon us a living Word, a life-changing Word.

Talk about intimidation. I was almost intimidated myself when I came in tonight and saw your ecstatic joy, and gathered that you'd had quite an afternoon, and I thought to myself, cats, you're superfluous. That means unnecessary.

They've already arrived. They need nothing that you have to say. Hallelujah.

Somehow it all works together. I'm not clever enough to understand how, but it does. So, gracious God, we love you, and we would desire, Lord, to love you more and to know you more, Lord, that you might expand our hearts and our understanding, Lord, that you would infuse into our being something from Heaven.

Gracious God, that has to do with the enormity of the theme of the cross, that we might be soldiers of the cross, Lord, that our joy might not be expressed only in circumstances like this, that lend themselves to the expression of joy, but that our people might learn to praise God at midnight, in cells at Philippi, with their backs hanging, mighty God, in strips of flesh, praising God and worshiping him, that the prisoners might hear us. Give us that kind of joy that will not dissipate, but that is constant, that has its source at the cross, which is the source of all life, mighty God. Use this occasion tonight to express what's in your heart.

We just look to you now with trust, love, admiration for working what you have in your own suffering and making available to us through it, life, reality, joy, power, all the things that pertain to godliness and life, in Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Christ, in whose precious name we pray. Amen. I want to read something of the melancholy account of the events that attended the night in which Jesus was apprehended and brought to the place of execution.

As you've gathered from my vocabulary, I've had some exposure in books and something of an academic background and was a teacher for seven years, but there's no book that more gives me cause for exultation than the Bible. One of the reasons that I delight in it is its enormous honesty. It is so utterly candid.

There's nothing that God has withheld. He just tells it like it is, and I stand in enrapt amazement for such a God who does not spare us and does not condescend, but he speaks the things that are true, even things that are painful, even things that at first stagger us, and perhaps if we had anything to do with the scriptures we might have omitted them, even the things that have to do with the humiliation of the disciples of Jesus in the way that they came completely unglued in the night of terror. I think that there might be something salutary, that means healthy for us, in reviewing some of these things.

Matthew 26, the 31st verse, Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night. For it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Mark 14, the 31st verse, After Jesus had answered that remark of Peter's by saying that you will deny me thrice before the cock crows, we read in the 31st verse, But he spoke the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane. And here he saith to the disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And we know that on that occasion the disciples slept in the hour of the agonizing prayer of Jesus.

In the 71st verse of the same chapter, When what Jesus spoke was fulfilled in the humiliation of Peter, where he denied knowing the Lord and denied it again. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak. And the second time the cock crowed, and Peter called to mind the words that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crowed twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And when he thought thereon, he wept. In the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Mark, in the 11th verse, After the events of the crucifixion and the resurrection, When the women came to the tomb and found that the tomb was empty and encountered the angel that told them that Jesus had risen, And they in the 11th verse, when they had heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, believed not. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country, And they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them.

In the Gospel of Luke, in the 22nd chapter, Jesus speaks a strange word to that same Peter who denied the more vehemently. 22.32 Well, let's begin with the 31st verse. The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desire to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. I have long been intrigued by that statement that Jesus made to Peter, And believed that the moment of conversion for Peter came, in the moment that he went out and wept bitterly, Seeing that he had fulfilled the very words of the Lord, that he would deny him three times. This is a melancholy statement of the condition of the disciples, Who were vehement in their espousals and their affirmations, That though all the world would deny him, yet would they deny him never.

Thus said they all. And yet, not only was he denied, not only did they flee him, but he was fled naked. It says, one of the disciples, clothed with linen, escaping the men, fled naked.

There's something about these ultimate moments of crisis that tend to reveal what is the true condition of men. There was a political axiom that we used to use in my academic days that went, Power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely. And I've just turned that to say this spiritually.

Crisis reveals, and absolute crisis reveals absolutely. In the absolute crisis of the apprehension and the crucifixion of Jesus, Even in the event of his resurrection, the true condition of the disciples of Jesus was revealed. And I wonder that unless we see in the humiliation of Peter something of our own condition, That there won't be a degree or a measure to which we ourselves will be required To experience the failure of all flesh in the moment of ultimate trial and crisis.

This brings me again to my theme of the necessity for an encounter at the cross. And yet there's nothing so unpopular as for the crucified God to be made a present reality through faith. Only this faith that comes in this kind of encounter is capable of setting men free From their illusions and releasing them from the involvement which binds them And confronts them with the truth of their own existence.

That's what happened to these men in the events of the crucifixion. They were confronted and the illusions of their own life had to burst. I don't know how to express this.

There's something that adheres in the absolute terror of the cross That will unmask us, that will reveal everything that has not been established in God. And maybe we need to sense how much of our own vehement statements, Our affirmations, our loud yeas and amens Are something of the same substance of that which was spoken by these men Before the revelation of their failure. It's coming to the cross in an authentic way that frees us From the illusions about ourselves and the things that are unreal.

But every coming to the cross is painful and for that reason men shrink from it. Because the cross is the picture of ultimate suffering, as I mentioned last night. But until we are willing to gaze upon the suffering of God, God crucified for us, We will not experience the release that will enable us also to enter into these sufferings.

There's something in the heart of the believer That is engendered by gazing on the suffering God In a way that is beyond our theology and our catechisms and our shallow understandings That frees us also to enter into the same suffering because of the love of him who suffered for us. The cross is the painful revelation of truth in the midst of untruth. And it is in this pain that the prospect of reality is born.

I was reading this afternoon from a book of messages on the cross by Spurgeon, the great English preacher. I've never read anything so grand as these precious messages From one who has entered into the glory of this mystery. And I'm reminded again of how little opportunity we have to hear this kind of preaching.

He writes, we see in Jesus the monarch of the realms of misery. Monarch means king. How many of us have ever thought of him as this kind of a king? King in the realm of misery.

The chief among ten thousand sufferers. Never say, I'm a great sufferer. What are our griefs compared with his? What are our woes and sufferings? Even so, I ask, what are our shallow griefs compared with the intimate sorrows of Emmanuel? There's something in contemplating the sufferings of God That makes our own small sufferings to be eclipsed and made tolerable.

And yet if we could hear as God hears the enormous screech and howl and shriek That comes up from God's people over the face of the earth For much less things, we would be astounded. If we have fits now And we're quick to moan and groan now over much lesser things What when real suffering shall be required of us? And I think that as the companion piece of the enablement that is given us by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit The other piece is the knowledge of the meaning of the cross As the suffering of God for our sake That will enable us also to bear what God shall call us to bear. There's a radical faith that is born at the cross That many of us have not yet tasted Because it's the place, as I mentioned last night, where all of the human categories are shattered.

Now will you understand me if I say That there are a lot of human categories that are to be found in scripture But for us they are human. What do I mean by that?

That there are things that we have gleaned and picked up or absorbed or adopted or spoken And have fitted in to our categories, to our understanding and to our theologies But they are still human understanding They are not things that have been born by radical confrontation with God In a kind of crisis thing that makes these things reality This is why these men could say, though the world deny you, yet would I deny you never And thus said they all They were absolutely sincere They really believed that, they were persuaded But when the moment of crisis came It burst like a bubble It had no substance and no power to enable them to endure And they fled in every one For one who had laid his head on Jesus

bosom fled him naked I think that we would be fools to ignore the meaning of that We

would be fools to think that we are made of better stuff than these men And that somehow if we were faced with the same crisis We would react in a more admirable way The cross is the place of repentance And too many of us have been so fixated on a salvational level And thought of the cross only as atonement for sin That we have not recognized it also as the place for the exchanged life By which we give over the shambles of the things which we are as natural men We repent of ourselves as men And recognize that in us is no good thing And we are willing to lay at the altar of that cross And forsake the whole of our life Recognizing that we need to say with Paul For me to live is Christ This is more than the forsaking of sin It is the forsaking of self And many of us who have come to the

cross for the forsaking of sin Have not come for the forsaking of self We have been willing to bring our particular maladies and defects and sins But we have not been willing to bring ourselves And what we have to learn in the cry of Peter who went out and wept bitterly That we are made of the same stuff And if we were faced with the same crisis We would likely also betray him Our charismatic gifts And the wonderful adornments of God that are given by the Spirit If it is not a grace which accompanies A life that has been established at the foundation of the cross Will not be sufficient to sustain us It would be interesting to wonder As the age comes to its end And the controversy of the gospel increases Which we are seeing now only in part in Iron Curtain countries But shall experience

also throughout all the West How many of us will still continue to convene like this And to be known by the name of the Lord And stand together to enjoy the things that we have enjoyed in these days We are told that in the last days many will fall away And just to repeat something from our brother Sylvester God is speaking things now to enable us to stand It is an hour of preparation for things that have not yet surfaced And become real for our life That gives me the unhappy task of speaking things that are distant As if they were present realities But that has ever and always been the prophetic function When Isaiah confronted his people in the first chapter of the book of Isaiah And he said from your head to your toe You are laden with saws that need to be mollified and bound up You are

full of bruises and ungainly saws Your city has been laid waste and ravaged They looked upon him as a madman For there was not a thing that they could see with their natural eye That confirmed what he spoke by the Spirit of God The prophet always speaks of the distant thing as the present reality And it would behoove the people of God to receive the prophetic spirit That they might prepare for these realities for which they are surely called Coming to the cross is coming to the place of shame We can't come to it in the authentic way that God would desire Except that we radically see ourselves as we see him also And I mentioned last night the double vision The two things that are revealed when we see God as he is We see also ourselves as we are Which is why the prophet cried out In

glimpsing the Lord high and lifted up Woe is me, I am undone For I am a man of unclean lips This is the prince of the prophets speaking Which is why I celebrate the same Holy Ghost masterpiece That the sisters of Mary celebrate called the Eisenheim altar Because it gives us an opportunity to glimpse What must have been seen by that Roman centurion And those that were with him In the ultimate suffering and death of the Lord It's the unhappiest, saddest, painful, agonizing portrait Of suffering brought to its final extremity in death It's a piece of shame And God has given me two opportunities to glimpse the masterpiece In person, so to speak The first as an atheist and more recently as a believer On a recent trip to Germany And as I stood before this painting the second time Awed and

stunned by the horror that is so masterfully depicted there My eyes fell on the loin cloth that covers Jesus And the thought came to mind Where does it say in the scripture That the enemies of God afforded him this elementary decency Why should we assume that God left the world In a condition different from which he entered it Which is to say he entered naked and he left naked And part of the agony and the suffering of the cross Is the humiliation of utter nakedness For which reason many of us refuse to go there It's interesting how I'm quoting And I've been so much affected by the writings of German theologians I want to read something from Dietrich Bonhoeffer Who gave his life as a martyr for Christ in this country At the end, at the closing days of World War II He wrote a little book

which I consider a masterpiece That I would commend to you, it's called Life Together I've not found anything finer that pertains to Christian community And I'd say in the same breath whether you realize it or not We are all being drawn to that We've learned from our own experience To agree with Bonhoeffer that the only foundation for life together Is the knowledge that we are sinners saved by the grace of God It is patently impossible to live in community with other believers And to feel yourself in any way superior to them Spiritually or in any manner And the only condition therefore that will permit true community Is the brokenness that comes with the awareness That we are sinners saved by the grace of God That we are all the beneficiaries of his mercy And we all live in the shadow of

his cross It's only that kind of humility that makes true relationship possible And I might say that it's the absence of that very thing That accounts for the strife, for the division For the fragmentation of the body of Christ everywhere in the earth today The cross is too conspicuously absent from our experience And therefore the pride and the self-sufficiency And the superiority that is part of God's people Provides the very conditions by which they find themselves fragmented Bonhoeffer writes Anybody who lives beneath the cross And who has discovered in the cross of Jesus The utter wickedness of all men and of his own heart Will find there is no sin that can ever be alien to him We have no basis for moral or spiritual superiority When we come to the cross in truth And contemplate

there the naked Savior And see also in our coming the nakedness of our own condition This revelation is necessary To see that there is no sin of which we ourselves are not capable Because on his head and in his suffering Was all the totality of sins for which he groaned For which we, if we have not been guilty, we are capable May I say that my life in God began Nine years before I was saved In a German railroad car on my way from Dachau back to Munich Having that day as a G.I. visited the concentration camp for the first time I was utterly sickened by the horror that I saw there I was a proud self-righteous Pharisee I was an arrogant atheist and a self-sufficient intellectual Who was utterly assured that the Germans were some kind of fiend And that somehow if all men could be like us, me

We would have the condition of brotherhood that my Jewish heart desired But in the horror of what I glimpsed in the concentration camp that day And may I say that the present Dachau is not the same that I saw 25 years ago It has been nicely tidied up, thank you And the horror and the sting has been removed Every ugly barrack has been taken away and it has been nicely landscaped with stones Nothing of the stink or the wretch or the whipping posts Or the places of horror and torture remain Except for the gas room and the oven And yet that today is sufficient to sicken us Imagine how much greater was I stricken as a Jew 25 years ago to see that place while it still carried the stench of death And I'll tell you what confrontation with the reality of horror did It saved me from going on being

some kind of bumptious Self-righteous character Who looked down disdainfully upon Germans Because I recognized that in the magnitude of that horror That I myself was implicated And on the train that day in

that stunned condition and sick in my soul Locked in with a German veteran who was without arms and without legs In one of those unusual encounters that God himself will perform I recognized beholding my enemy that there for the grace of God go I That it was only by dint of circumstance that I was wearing the uniform of Uncle Sam It was only a fluke and a caprice of faith that I was born a Jew And that had I been born a German I would have been easily capable of stoking the ovens with bodies Dear children, we shall never come to a proper place in God Which is to say the foundation in

repentance Until we acknowledge that we are capable of atrocity My Jewish people will never be reconciled to their German brethren Until they come to the recognition of which I've just spoken That not only they are capable of doing the same But to a certain degree in the ironies of history They already find themselves involved to some measure or another Inflicting atrocity on men Do you understand what I'm saying or do I have to play that again?

And what have we Americans learned in our own recent and unhappy experience In Vietnam and so forth But that red-cheeked boys from the U.S. are just as capable Why? Not because we're Americans or because we're Jews or because we're Germans But because we're men And it's from this that we've not yet sufficiently repented This confrontation with the truth Is in the first instance Critical and destructive Remember how God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah Tear down, root up, destroy, pluck out Before you build and plant Confrontation with the truth Is always in the first instance painful and destructive There's always something that's got to be removed Before something is established and built up This confrontation does not promise the confirmation of our own conceptions Hopes and intentions It promises first of all the pain of repentance And fundamental change I agree with Derek That the act of repentance is an act of will But what the Lord is enabling me to see is That it's also a painful act of will To repent is painful It means forsaking something And anything that has to be parted That has had a long history Or is dear or familiar When it is wrenched from us or is required to be given up Is painful The religion of the cross does not elevate And edify in the usual sense But scandalizes The believer However, if he has been freed at the cross Is willing to suffer for truth's sake Again and again I wonder if you have ever thought of the conjunction of the words Suffer and truth In my own experience Lover of truth that I am I've never enjoyed the truth Without having to experience the measure of suffering that accompanies it Truth is painful And the first realization of that came Nine years after the incident in the train compartment When the God of my fathers Of whom I had no knowledge whatsoever As a darkened atheist Put into my hands a New Testament Aboard the deck of a tramp steamer On my way from Italy to Greece Where I was going to pay homage to my culture heroes Who gave rise to humanism and Greek philosophy And God confronted me out of the Greek book The New Testament To show me how Jewish it is And none more Jewish Than the Holy One of Israel Of whom I was reading for the first time in 34 years And in one utterance out of the mouth of Jesus I experienced a revelation from heaven That utterly persuaded me in the moment that it came That there was a living God I was reading his book And Jesus was who he claimed to be I had been a seeker for truth From my high school dropout days on And truth finally confronted me And I didn't shout Hallelujah And my first thought was What is this going to cost you?

I knew that my mother would never understand it And 14 years later almost to the day She still has not Still believes that I have joined the enemy's camp That I have identified and made myself one With the same people who pelted her with stones On her way to school in London as a little girl And were the ones responsible for the destruction Of the Jewish people in the Holocaust How could I do it?

Who was the apple of her eye I knew that for truth's sake I had to step over my mother And I've had to experience the door being slammed In my face in her Brooklyn apartment As she cried out in the

slamming of the door He's gone mad, he's gone mad Truth is expensive and painful And yet I have not an end of praise For the God who is the God of truth And whose spirit is eminently and first The spirit of truth before He is the spirit of power And more than we've realized The absence of Pentecostal power Is in exact proportion to the absence Of the spirit of truth In the earth and among God's people And if you want again to see apostolic glory Which is more than Amen's and hallelujah's If you want to see again The shadow of a simple fisherman Falling on the sick and healing them If you want

to see Signs and wonders following I think that God is going to have to Restore the spirit of truth to us In such proportion As that if any man come among us And give a part And allow that to appear for the whole The spirit of God shall kill him on the spot And he shall be carried out feet first How many of us would be willing For the restoration Of the severity of God The divine severity of God Against a partial lie In order to enjoy again The magnitude of the glory Of the spirit of power That existed in the apostolic age Do you hear what I'm saying There's a world dying For the want of the demonstration Of this power And it shall not return Until God's people are willing also For the magnitude of truth Because the spirit of power Is first the spirit of truth And when that dove departs

He takes his power with him also And if you'll understand this I'm not trying to be loving I am loving How much in our charismatic sessions I'm not speaking about These immediate days But experiences that we've all had Where we come away with a leaden feeling And the amen's and the hallelujah's Rattle in our ears But somehow Our souls have not been uplifted How much of that has been an exercise Seeking to fill the void Which would be filled Had the holy dove been there In fullness All children love truth Love truth And you'll not love it Except you'll be willing to suffer for it And if you're willing to suffer for it You'll find yourself at the cross For surely is there one among us No acting No posturing No deception No subtlety of lie No ambition of heart No braggadocio And vehement

statement Yea the world will deny you Yet will I deny you never There's a cross To which God is bidding his people come If they are to be established In this last age From which we shrink Because it's painful When we see the God who is truth Crucified We're willing also To enter into that portion of suffering Which is ours And we can say with Paul That the suffering of the present time Is not worthy to be compared With the glory That shall be revealed in us I'm just a simple believer Despite my vocabulary But I can't help but notice The conjunction of two words Again and again and again Suffering and glory Suffering and glory It's rare to find an occasion When God will speak the word glory Without first breathing the word suffering In the same verse Ought not the Messiah to have suffered

Before he ascended to his glory O fools and slow of heart Not to believe all That the prophets have spoken Every time Jesus made a reference To his impending suffering and death You'll read that the very next verse Peter is ready to do something Or be somewhere Or some kind of fleshly exercise Completely missing what the Lord is saying It's not because he's Peter It's because he's man And there's something that adheres in flesh That shrinks even from suffering as subject Let alone suffering as experience But if we are called to be anything We are the people of the cross And one of the greatest parodies And shames of our age Is that it has become A piece of junk jewelry A suction cup fixture For our dashboards And a piece of architectural Decoration for our churches This is an age of

restoration And first is the restoration To the cross of Christ Jesus It needs to be raised again True faith which is commitment Must ultimately bring us to this cross The German theologian Whom I quoted yesterday Writes Christians who do not have The feeling that they must flee The crucified God Have probably not yet understood him In a sufficiently radical way If we will not join him In the scandal of public

nakedness Unto death We must like the beloved disciple Flee nakedly from him Though we delighted earlier In resting upon his bosom I'm going to read that again True faith which is commitment Must ultimately bring us To this cross And Christians who do not have The feeling that they must flee The crucified God Have probably not yet understood him In a sufficiently radical way If we

will not join him In the scandal of public nakedness Unto death We must like the beloved disciple Flee nakedly from him Though we delighted earlier In resting upon his bosom I'm going to read that again True faith which is commitment Must ultimately bring us To this cross And Christians who do not have The feeling that they must flee The crucified God Have probably not yet understood him In a sufficiently radical way To a certain degree our faith Is a patsy faith It's innocuous, easy, glib We've learned and we've been inducted And we can speak it and quote it But unless we have fled Even as the disciples fled From the horror of that confrontation On that night We have not sufficiently And radically understood The cross that is raised before us We will not join him In the scandal of public

nakedness Unto death Which is the negation, the doing away For us of our own self-image Our self-assurance Our religious notions And so forth We must like the beloved disciple Flee nakedly from him Though we delighted earlier That's a beautiful picture of us Tonight at the beginning of this meeting We were still enjoying Resting upon the bosom of the Lord And the delights that he made available In the ministry of this afternoon But I think that it's sobering And needful to be reminded That the one who characteristically And always leaned his head On the bosom of the Lord Was the one also who fled him nakedly There's something about the cross That radically polarizes And gives men one of two options Which is the place of nakedness And shame and suffering Or to flee him nakedly And there is

no neutral ground There is no intermediate option It's the one of these two things If I would and if I could If I were able by the Spirit of God I would want to breathe into you Something of the fear and the awe Of these things To save us from a shallow And easy believism Cheap grace Casual amens and hallelujahs Which in the day of trial Which most assuredly come Will not be sufficient To enable us to stand This is the foundation It's the cross It's a wonderful practical way In which God gives us opportunity To share his nakedness His humiliation, his suffering And it's the way by which Sin itself is dealt with And fully put away It comes in confessing a fault One to another Or a confession of sin To a brother Many of us have never Practiced that And many of us are playing A kind of

a game By which we commit to God Sins that we want forsaken But it's a kind of private cop-out And the weight of the thing And the guilt of it remains Because we have not Gone horizontally to men As we have gone vertically to God Shakespeare said Cowards of us all And I would just paraphrase that To say the confession of sin One to another Makes cowards of us all Much of our life is secret The deepest tremblings of our life Are unknown to others And way in deep below Where the true life is Far from the facade Of the easy amens and hallelujahs And the good things that we say and do And the bright faces that we wear Is where God wants truth And until he has it He's not going to have glory In the church Until he has it There's not going to be a kingdom at hand To which men can be invited to

repent That they might enter God is after something deep, children And it's only to be met at the cross Bonhoeffer writes It was none other than Jesus Christ himself Who suffered the scandalous public death Of a sinner in our stead He was not ashamed to be crucified For us as an evildoer It is nothing else but our fellowship With Jesus Christ that leads us To the ignominious dying That comes in confession In order that we may in truth Share the cross The cross of Jesus Christ Destroys all pride We cannot find the cross of Jesus If we shrink from going to the place Where it is to be found Namely the public death of the sinner

And for that reason I will accommodate thousands I am much more fond Of an intimate circle of saints Who are moved from glory to glory Even as by the spirit of God

Beholding each other's faces Face to face I think that we lose the opportunity Sitting in large congregations For the kind of confrontation in truth With each other and at the cross That would make us The real people of God in truth In the deep and physical pain Of humiliation before a brother Which means before God We experience the cross of Jesus As our salvation The old man dies But it is God which has conquered him Now we share in the reality Of the resurrection of Christ And eternal life In confession the breakthrough To new life occurs God has given us provision That we might be a people in truth And I am discomfited And concerned That we see presently In modern day Christianity And especially in the charismatic realm Which seem to move Away from this direction The symbol of the

cross In the church points To the God who was crucified Not between two candles on an altar But between two thieves Where the outcasts belong Outside the gates of the city This cross does not invite thought But a change of mind Which is a definition Where the cross The theologian writes No longer invites a revolution in thought It becomes the end of thought In idolatry Have you been sufficiently scandalized By the cross?

Have you trembled before it? I praise God that I have an honest wife Who refused to receive Lutheran confirmation At the appropriate age As a young girl growing up in Denmark Because she could not fathom The mysteries of the faith And was simply brainwashed And indoctrinated To espouse certain things To win the approval of men And to receive her confirmation gift And to go on My wife is a precious, soft, tender thing Unlike her husband That's the balance in the body of Christ She can't Ever see anyone being hurt She's the most wonderful hostess And she'll just drown you in goodies She's always making nice And she trembles Lest she has to be identified As being joined to that one Who speaks the ungainly things And my dear wife can't understand How God the Father, the God of love Would allow his son To be so cruelly treated And be crucified I'm waiting for the revelation Of the cross for her And when it comes You're going to find A very authentic saint I praise God That she will not allow herself To be glibly brainwashed And indoctrinated In the catechism of the faith But she needs a revelation Of what the horror of the cross means What it meant for God And what it means for her Maybe what we need is more waiting On the things that are true And less rushing in To the things which are glib That the God who is the God of that Which is perfect Will give it to us And will encourage Even to stand naked and empty Waiting for the truth of God As I said last night Would we be willing For the three hours of darkness To come over us That came over him In the time of his crucifixion Where the earth was made dark God is so touching me To consider the things that are heavenly That I have developed a contempt For everything that is earthly And I'm willing For every earthly thing Every earthly category Every earthly religious understanding That when the light breaks forth again After that time of denial And the suffering of darkness I might know from a light Which comes from heaven Am I speaking mysteries to you?

To the degree that our life Was sham and posturing We are invited With the one abandoned on the cross To abandon also our previous identity As known to others I gave last night the illustration Of the Japanese girl Living with us precious Who gave every appearance Of being the complete saint Until crisis revealed What was her true condition And the porcelain exterior cracked And then we had to go Through a long period of time In that agonizing of that darkness That covers that which is earthly Until true light broke forth And she came to an authentic place in God How many of us realize To what degree our own life Is sham and posturing Are you formed in the image of God Or in your own image?

Have you determined for yourself What you think a successful saint ought to be And how he ought to carry himself And what he ought to speak and quote and do? How much of your witnessing is compulsive? How much of your activity for God Is a work and a labor? An expression of legalism Because you have not come To that place at the cross Where there has been the exchange of life That rest of God In which no work from us is required So I'm just speaking to those Who are conscious And I think that maybe we all Would realize to one extent or another There are things in us that are phony Make-believe, imagined We're full of little petty fears There are shadows and things in our life That need to be abandoned at the cross Which is the place of abandonment If we do it, the prospect is open For the first time By union with the crucified To find identity in Christ by faith With the Lord from heaven Obtaining citizenship In the new creation I said to a young lady last night I'm hoping that before these days end You're going to encounter The crucified God on the cross There's going to be some kind of a transaction And I think that the first expression of it is I'm expecting to hear from you Another voice and another quality of speaking Isn't it interesting how voice Is so much the emblem of our personalities And sometimes if your ear is trained to it You can pick up in the speech of people And most frequently in ministers The things that are faked and put on The raising of the voice And the lowering of the voice The voice as an instrument of manipulation Seeking a desired effect in the hearer Rather than the natural outflow Of authentic personality founded in God And being a vessel for the expression of his life You keep hearing men speak like that And you'll be drowned in unreality And become so blunted in your own spirit That you'll not be able to discern your own Would you be willing to give up that which is false?

That which is your own image? For which you have even been complimented By believers who think you an admirable saint To recognize that you're made of the same stuff as Peter And that if the circumstances would require it You're likely to hear yourself denying him Three times before the cock crows twice To be free in Christ is free indeed We've quoted that like fools But have not recognized That in Christ means An identification in joining with him on the cross Our own images and subjective things Have been projected upon God And when we think of union with him We think of some predefined Christ Every hair pertly in place Gloriously gowned, fragrant But how many of us would be willing to be joined With the Christ of the cross?

With a bloody bright bridegroom Splattered with spittle Full of gore And by being joined with him Sharing also his shame And if I know anything about God And anything about his way You have not been authentically joined with him So you've been joined with him there And that's where you'll find your identity in Christ In your union with him In his death, in his suffering In his burial, in his resurrection to newness of life I'm a fool for the resurrection You better not let me be near any bathtub If there's so much as a saint Who has not been baptized into Christ Because I believe that we have been withheld The glory of God And we have not shown forth The glory of his resurrection Not so much because we have wanted for water As we have wanted for saints Who are willing to identify with him In humiliation and in death and in nakedness That precedes the burial And also the resurrection We have made the doctrine of atonement A doctrine only And we have not preached Christ crucified One writer comments We have made the bitterness of the cross The revelation of God And the cross of Christ Jesus Tolerable to ourselves By learning to understand it As a necessity for the process of salvation Isn't that true?

We've made it tolerable for ourselves And that we might understand it As a process for our salvation It has the same spirit As I heard a priest say once About the charismatic movement That he was considering joining it Until David Wilkerson Made those unhappy remarks About the end times And the Catholic Church Persecuting its charismatic members And he said, and I took several people To that conference,

Catholics That they might be exposed And we decided not to join You don't join the movements of God You don't join You don't become a Christian By indoctrination And by the ability to say certain words Haven't we made to a great degree The cross tolerable By learning to understand it Would to God that we couldn't understand it Would to God that we were staggered by it Mystified, vexed,

broken Crying out for the revelation of what it means That we might come to him at that cross In spirit and in truth We're so American We've made everything Into a kind of a methodology That is amenable to our ease I'm coming to the end If you'll be patient Perhaps it can be said that in proportion We have suppressed and destroyed That which is unique and particular In our own lives This Japanese girl was precious But it was only good Rather than perfect How much more joyous Is the true thing becoming for us now When the good thing was shattered At the base of the cross of Christ Jesus How much of that kind of true individuality Has been suppressed in us How many of us are Cardboard mache saints Paper mache mannequins Without true personality How many of us are as dead as doornails And as

dull as stale donuts And once we get beyond Our favorite categories And favorite scripture or theme We have nothing more to say I think it's one of the scandals of Christendom That an atheist is oftentimes A more compelling company than a believer Where is the richness of our personalities Where is the full auburnness of our lives Why are we so anemic It's because to a great degree We have not received in union with him That fullness of life And continue to clutch that thing Which God would have us to give up In nakedness at the cross We have sidestepped the cross The scandal The truth of him who was crucified We have unbloodied the cross And made it a non-event Preferring the fig leaves to the bloody skins Nothing has changed Since the beginning of the ages There's something about us

that prefers Fig leaf aprons Than bloody skins We always want an easier way Something less costly That will get us by And in so doing We've portrayed our own life in testimony Because we have fled him We've avoided death We have not been lifted up in him Nor he in us To the result that we have An evangelism that has not impressed the world And we think that by dollars And by stadiums That somehow it's going to work When I Be lifted up I will draw all men to myself And I don't believe that he's going to be lifted up Except by a people Who have met him In this radical way at the cross The theologian writes in conclusion As we have avoided The Christ who was profaned In crucifixion We have voided the world Of the sacred also What an echo that rings in my heart Is the word Christian who is

virtually out of the faith A writer Who said that if we will not Not be radically sacred We shall most assuredly become Radically profane I want to say tonight That the profane condition of the world It's vulgarity It's obscenity It's drug traffic It's What do you call that with nakedness Pornography It's parlors that are opening In New York City even now Making their owners Ninety thousand dollars a month Where a locker is assigned to you In which you can disrobe And enter into any one of several rooms And pick the orgy of your choice That this ugly profanation of the earth Has got to be laid at the feet Of the people of God Because they have not been A royal priesthood To have shown the world That which is sacred And we've shown them That which is glib We've shown them A style of

religion superior to Dead fundamentalism While we still have fallen short Of the glory of God And we've not shown them the sacred Because we have refused The identity with the profaned Christ on the cross We are incapable also In that same measure Of showing forth the sacredness of God I'm speaking a mystery And I know assuredly That the two things go together Crisis becomes reality When faith encounters The total truth of the crucified Christ Here's my conclusion For tonight When we will see ourselves In the fleeing and denying disciples When we will go out And weep bitterly repentantly When we

will bring Our clutched and protected Lives to the cross The things that are hidden And concealed And be joined to him Nakedly in his shame Then shall we be raised with him Also to newness of life

This is going back to first things To a foundation That should have been laid At the beginning But many of us in this room Are ourselves victims Of the shallow evangelism Of our own age We never were converted To the promise of the benefits That would accrue to us There's a God who's restoring the cross For those who have missed it Come back to that foundation That should have been laid in the beginning Lest we build our charismatic houses Upon the sand of earthly pretense Because I tell you With everything that's in me And I can say it as a Thus saith the Lord I don't know what your theology is Or what your anticipation of rapture is But I know that we are being fitted For confrontation and for suffering For his namesake in the earth Any man who does not glimpse this Is blind already And

maybe our fat condition Our full gospel burps Our well-fed thing That we give as a picture of ourselves Is a reflection of the fact That we think that we're going to be Conveniently whisked away Before anything shall be required from us By way of trial and standing More than what I've described physically I've described ourselves spiritually And there's a God who's calling us to be lean And soldiers of the cross Who will stand when the rains will descend And the floods will come And the winds of adversity will blow And beat upon your house And great would have been the fall of it If it were not built on this rock Christ, Jesus, and him Had been crucified I glory only in the cross of Christ, Jesus, the Lord Said the Jewish apostle Who could have gloried in any number of things And who was

not indifferent nor unknowing Of the gifts of the Spirit And the other things that we so celebrate today Even at the expense of the cross But he gloried only in the cross of Christ, Jesus I invite you to glory in the cross And to build your charismatic house on that rock Hallelujah One last word from Spurgeon What a saint Notice that Paul does not say that he gloried in Christ Though he did so with all his heart But he declared that he gloried most in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ Which in the eyes of men was the very lowest and most inglorious part Of the history of the Lord Jesus He could have gloried in the incarnation Angel sang of it Wise men came from the far east to behold it Did not the newborn king awake the song from heaven Of glory to God in the highest He might have

gloried in the life of Christ Was there ever such another So benevolent and blameless He might have gloried in the resurrection of Christ It is the world's great hope concerning those that are asleep He might have gloried in our Lord's ascension For he led captivity captive And all his followers glory in his victory He might have gloried in his second advent Yet the apostle selected beyond all these That center of the Christian life That point which is most assailed by its foes The focus of the world's derision The cross And putting all else somewhere into the shade He exclaims God forbid that I should glory Save in the cross of our Lord Christ Jesus Learn then that the highest glory of our holy religion Is the cross The history of grace begins early and goes on later But its middle point

stands The cross Of two eternities this is the hinge Of past decrees and future glories This is the pivot Let us come to the cross And think of it till each one of us In the power of the spirit of God shall say God forbid that I should glory Except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ Can we pray?

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