

The Law and the Commandments

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and obeying God's moral law, confessing sins, and living authentically as Christians.

Duration: 54:13

Scripture: Proverbs 23:26, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:27, Romans 10:19, 1 Corinthians 11:1, James 2:10

Topics: "The Law"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of reconnecting with the authentic root of one's life in God before delivering a message. He compares this to athletes who warm up and prepare before a competition, highlighting the need for preparation and authenticity in preaching. The speaker warns against becoming professional and affected in one's delivery, urging pastors to remain natural and unaffected in their communication. He also criticizes the unreality and fantasy prevalent in both the world and the church, calling for a return to truth and a rejection of consumerism and entertainment.

Transcript

Huh? This on? Yeah, this is for recording. This is for recording. Can you hear me okay? Yeah.

I'm just gonna quote from two sources that are very dear to me and part of my... Well, the one at least is part of my daily devotional time, my utmost for his highest by Oswald Chambers. Are you guys reading that daily? If you're not, you're missing so much. I don't have a word for it.

I don't know another one who has the depth of insight and the felicity of expression as Oswald Chambers. Piercing, and I'll give you an example of what has inspired this morning's talk. It's his devotional for December 1st called The Law and the Gospel.

And he quotes always a scripture at the top, this one from James, "...for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And then he goes on to say, "...the moral law does not consider us as weak human beings at all. It takes no account of our heredity and infirmities. It demands that we be absolutely moral.

The moral law never alters either for the noblest or for the weakest. It is eternally and abidingly the same. The moral law ordained by God does not make itself weak to the weak.

It does not palliate our shortcomings. It remains absolute for all time and eternity." As my wife says, what do you think of them apples? It's rare to hear anyone speak in such a way to have that kind of a conviction. And I appreciated hearing it, reading it, being reminded of it, and all of a sudden with one fell swoop I was brought to a realization of the profound departure from any sense of the moral law as it affects even Christian society and civilization.

We have become law-less. We're not mindful of the moral requirement of God. And in fact, we have subscribed to the kind of subversive view commended to us by psychologists and sociologists that you can't help it or hep it.

Is that how you say it in the South? You drop the L? Can't hep it. And that we're victims of society. And I think especially of the black community.

Victims. There's a victim mentality. We're living only a few miles from a North American Chippewa Indian Reservation and we see a lot of that there.

That we're seduced into believing that we're helpless victims and we couldn't help becoming alcoholics or given to violence or the various things. The reason is that no one has impressed us with the absoluteness of the requirement of God about thou shalt not. I often in the my 35-year history as a believer and as the founder of a fellowship and so on and the various issues that have come up wondered how believers could have allowed themselves a certain line of conduct that would have been met by an obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Doesn't matter what your background is or your heredity or your environment thou shalt not. That God has said that overrides every other consideration and we're under obligation not only to acknowledge it but to do it. And if we are intent in doing it and find ourselves inert, weak and unable the Lord has then a solution in the cross of Christ Jesus.

But there has been a failure to apprehend the cross because we have not been driven to that cross by an earnestness that would have been born by our failure to take the moral requirement of God seriously. And so the whole of society has become pluralistic excusable sociologically minded and that mentality I think has come into the church itself and the ministers of the church are not as attuned as Oswald Chambers to the Absoluteness of God's requirement to make it known and we ourselves are cutting corners and taking liberties and that's what I hope to get into. Why it is that we ourselves as ministers are not as insistent in commending the requirement of the law of the commandments of the moral requirement of God to our congregants.

What is it about ourselves? One of the phenomena of our time is the leniency of judges today. They find it very hard to pronounce hard sentences. I'm amazed in our local community a man who was in charge of the finances for the local university and the running of their athletic program and their gymnasium and the whole thing pilfered from those funds something more than a hundred and forty thousand dollars and all that was required of him with the acknowledgment of his guilt was a statement of apology some kind of financial penalty to pay back some portion that he had spent and What was it? Civil works or what do they call that? Huh? Yeah, some kind of community service.

I don't want my God Is there no real penalty murderers get away with like five-year sentences three years they're off on probation as if the whole severity of the law and its requirement has been greatly diminished to the detriment of society itself and Someone has suggested that the judges are lenient because they

themselves are in sin because they themselves want to be absolved from the requirement of Society and of God and so it Disposes them to be lenient with those who before them because they desire leniency for themselves That is to say they are not in a place of righteousness that they can perform and require righteous judgment Because if their own life was on the line they themselves could not bear the verdict The question is to what degree is that true of God's ministers today? This Decision to obey and seek to obey the absolute requirement of God I believe will be honored by God that there's something implicit in the law and the commandment itself That gives the grace to do it if we have the intention and the seriousness to obey it Something inherent in the law and in the commandment in the requirement is also a grace to perform it but we don't take it seriously enough to consider it and Looking back on my own conversion 35 years ago. I myself Jewish Half-baked intellectual was a determinist that is to say I couldn't have it. I was the victim of my environment I was the victim of my heredity what I was as a seducer as a An adulterer was just the consequence of factors to which I was born in which I have which of which I had no control You know when the first moment of realization came that I was not a victim and that I could choose and in fact the choosing of a line of conduct is Itself the birth of that which is moral and the absence of morality is the absence of humanity We're growing up a fearful generation of not only immoral youth and adults a moral not immoral a moral without any kind of moral sense And that's why they can come into their high schools and blast away 12 or 15 students and think that they're doing their God's service Without a twinge of conscience even taking their own lives Even suicide itself is not a fearful consideration because there's no concept of a God will judge Or that there's an eternity in which that judgment will Take place.

I like the German word for suicide Selbstmord self-murder Suicide is murder The fact that you inflicted upon yourself does not absolve you from the same penalty as if you had murdered another You're murdering the peace of God's creation How is it then that these kids coming out of Christian homes could not only murder their students But murder themselves with impunity without even a twinge of conscience Are we already seeing the fulfillment of the last days prophecies that in the last days? Not dangerous, but Paralyzed praise God in the last days perilous times shall come why perilous rather than dangerous Because danger is apparent peril is hidden Perilous time shall come men shall be lovers of self lovers of pleasure More than lovers of God disobedient unruly unthankful unholy Without natural affection that is to say that with impunity they can kill they can rape they can loot There's no moral sense at all Certainly, the church has got to be indicted in its failure to communicate that and the fear of God Traveling around the world as I do and churches of every variety and shape and hue I would say the most conspicuous lack in the contemporary church here and abroad is the absence of the fear of God When you take away the moral requirement of God and the eternal penalty for violating it You remove the fear of God, which is to say God as God you continue to mouth phrases about him You can intone and invoke the name Jesus, but the God that you're in fact Celebrating or relating to is not in fact the God who is God So I Thought I had left this back in my room to the praise God I didn't because you see how I mark it up Do you guys do that? I? Got suspicious in Czechoslovakia on my last overseas trip when the man who came up to be my interpreter was one of the elders of the church fluent in English But when he opened his Bible, I thought that I'm this is not going to work Why because first of all it was a small print Bible? How could the man even see it and find the appropriate scripture and there was not a mark anywhere in any of its pages? Nothing in parentheses nothing in brackets. No asterisks. No arrows.

Nothing with a yellow marking pen How can you read the scripture and leave it unmarked or read anything and leave it unmarked? I want to go back to my markings. I want to see what it is that caught my attention at the first and See it yet again So I'm glad I didn't forget This issue because the Lord has quickened some

things I think for this morning to remove the moral basis for life is to remove our humanity we're growing up a stunted and perverse mankind because the moral quotient is absent from their consideration and The church has not sufficiently registered that on the consciousness of its society So, how does that affect us why am I sharing this with you this morning? Because we cannot require of others a standard which we ourselves have not met nor intend to meet our Predicament is that we ourselves remain bound in unconfessed sins for want of a confessor. I Don't know any class of men more in this predicament than ministers.

There's something about the professional mystique the ministerial mystique by which a man comes up on the platform and people look at him With rapt admiration because he's supposed to be God's man of faith and power Our whole environment is so false so artificial so synthetic that a man of God cannot be a man He's got to be somehow of another species and kind that the congregation can admire at a distance but never hope to emulate They don't know guys that you that you're struggling. They don't know that you have your ghost in your closet They don't know that you are awake at night with dreams that are horrible even to remember and that you're capable of lust or worse being men and that there's no one to whom you can go to confess your struggle or the issue of Fallenness or or any of the kinds of things that you're of necessity bound to experience all the more as you come under the oppressive Attack of the enemy who wants to traduce you and wants to bring you down I'm often fond of saying that the church is not only God's provision for the sheep or for the shepherds also But it's only a church of a certain kind It's certainly not the church whose model is institutional and whose platform is elevated and whose man is certificated and isolated from an actual Involvement and the unmasking of the truth of his own condition to his own people as an early believer 35 years ago the golden moments that I remember is when the pastor broke on the platform and behind the pulpit and Confessed and admitted the defects and the deficiencies and the weaknesses of his own life It's as if the Holy Ghost flooded the room. It was a spirit of truth Our hearts were changed warm There was an identification with the man making that kind of confession and because he could make it we in the pews could acknowledge that We also had our defects our sins our hang-ups and that the false piety that had prevailed particularly in Pentecostal circles Had been rent by a man who had the courage to express the truth of his condition and to cry out to the congregation for help not the picture I Gave a message last summer.

We have a prophetic school up there in northern, Minnesota On to whom shall we confess our sins? The scripture says confess your faults one to another that you might pray one for another and be healed To whom do we go to confess? What one of our elders or board members God forbid? That he could use something at some future meeting to bring us down Because he's imprudent and because it's for him. It will be an ammunition Where do we find a man appear to whom we can let our hair down and take the mask of piety? Away and show our weakness and defect the need and that that brother's prayer can actually heal us and deliver us. We're living unnecessarily with struggles and crises of a moral kind That we cannot bring to resolution because we do not avail ourselves of God's own remedy Confess your faults one to another one That's a public thing necessarily But one to another one that he that that one might pray for us that we might be healed and delivered out of that Bondage or hang-up or whatever that crisis situation is How does that relate to what to what I shared earlier? I'll repeat myself We are not emphatic about the absoluteness of God's moral requirement because we cannot face it ourselves It's not our favorite subject And if we do if we do make it our subject and our life is in is that odds or in disparity with that subject? Then to preach it is to become merely professional Glib Able to speak something that is not integral to our own conviction or our own integrity And you know what? I would say that condition is of all things most to be feared God forbid that we can come to a time when we can preach any subject whether

or not it's consonant with our own conviction and the truth and the integrity of our own lives and do a masterful and successful job of it If it's going to be apostolic and life-giving the man has got to be his message And where there's a disjuncture between the man and what he proclaims what we get is something synthetic artificial Religious it doesn't affect anyone.

They've heard a good biblical word. They leave unchanged and continue in their own liberty in Transgressing the moral requirements of God and falling short of the full humanity that the moral requirement brings Got the picture So I want to spend the rest of my time Subject of to whom shall we confess our sins and our faults because when I finish sharing that at our Discussion table there in northern, Minnesota. There were at least a half dozen or more Kleenexes completely saturated with my tears.

I Was not speaking academically I was speaking out of the groaning of my own condition and need to whom shall I confess who is there in my fellowship? Who is there with whom I'm in a relationship that I could trust with with these private aspects of my life Who will not at some later time use it? Who is there qualified to hear that confession and how important is that confession because if it does not take place there's a backlog there's a log jam Something in our spirits and in our inner man is being hemmed up We have not the liberty the freedom the fullness to communicate to God's people the things that would bring life to them and Therefore the result is we become play actors Professionals who are able to put together a good biblical word But it's not related to the reality of our life and therefore it cannot be spoken with the depth of conviction that it deserves the unreality of play acting of Becomes a kind of biblicism or sermonizing. I can't think of anything more pitiful than a church that is sermonized And in fact that probably is the truth of most Sundays everywhere in America You say well, what's the alternative? It's the Word of God that becomes an engrafted word a Liberating word a life-giving word. There's all the difference between a mere sermon However biblical and the Word of God spoken out of the truth and condition of the life of the man consonant with that word So rather than a convicting word, it's merely a professional word a biblical word a sermon and We lose contact with reality with our own center with our own authenticity I don't know if you guys have that problem.

You know, there's a time when I I brought a moratorium on my own speaking I took a voluntary Sabbatical because I had come to the point where I was hearing myself repeat myself I had come to the point where things that were original and given of God were now so threadbare So well-worn that they were rising up in my consciousness and I was repeating what was originally given But was not now not being spoken by the same Authentic givingness of God as it was at the first and I knew that when I came to that place. I needed to halt Oftentimes I'll get up to speak I'll choke and splutter and Hammond Hall, what am I waiting for? Why can't I just launch out immediately because I have not found my own Center The atmosphere in the room the worship that has preceded the message not always of the best kind the most conducive to the word In fact very often in opposition to the word has left me a bit discombobulated. I can't begin to launch out I I've got to make contact again With the center with the authentic root of my own life in God before I can open my mouth We ought to take more time for that.

The world does not hesitate to give it to athletes They don't go running out on the quarter into the boxing ring. They have already warmed up in the dressing room They come into the ring sweating and then they still prance and dance and and limber up Before the contest begins and we are supposed to be men instantly up on the platform and bang the gong rings and we're ready to deliver You cannot help but become professional Affected Ministerial a style and who is there in your congregation who's going to call that to your attention? And say brother Jim or whoever I just been noticing in these last few Sundays

You're your word and the way in which you bring it is becoming somewhat stilted your voice is becoming Stentorian it's like a rhetoric a professional delivery. You've lost your naturalness I had to say to a Assemblies of God pastor somewhere in the Buffalo area my last time out He was full of gusto and bravado and sweeping gestures And he was the man of overcoming faith and I knew that I knew that I knew that to see this man as BVDs To see him as a real in fact is as a remarkable a radical distance from what he was representing to the congregation Everything was hyped up voice the manner and as I left the room and the Lord Dropped a bomb that Sunday morning So at odds with the whole tone of what had been going on Sunday by Sunday in a word Reality came in a moment of time and the people were stunned not only for the word But the manner in which was it was presented in natural and unaffected Tolerance and earnestness in reality It was devastating for them in a good way, and I said to this brother at the door as he was saying goodbye I said I beseech you brother.

Please forsake this hyped up manner of speaking But Artie said there has to be a model of the overcoming you know believer to encourage them to the same I said if you're overcoming it doesn't have to be expressed in this hyper way the truth of it will be communicated Even when you speak naturally, but there's something false in the image that you're projecting There's an unreality and if the church is unreal Saints. What can we hope for in the world? The world is dying from its unreality from its dream factories from its Star Wars from all of its Entertainment craze, I mean I've been alive long enough from a depression, baby to watch the remarkable Radical consumerism that has swept American society and a great passion and appetite for entertainment for distraction for fantasy They love to see cities flooded with water and great upheavals and catastrophes and then go home chewing their gum The heck of it is those catastrophes are coming And they're ill-prepared to expect them or to experience them because they're living in a fantasy Dream world by which the world is stuffing its pockets and the church is not crying out well, you know what I did I Wrote a letter to the editor against Star Wars against the promotion that I resent having to go into a market and find six-foot cutouts of these bizarre Demonic creatures that are the Star Wars Panoply of characters looking down on me if I take something off the shelf that I can't buy a can of Pepsi-Cola without one of its images of a devil on it And that this has gone too far That this is an imposition upon our freedom that we have no choice no matter it crowds in on us even in the stores in the marketplace the concessions the Franchises it engulfs us, and I'm raising my voice in protest and crying out to the Christian parents Who have allowed their kids to go in their sleeping bags and sleep on the sidewalk outside the theater?

They'd be the first one with the doors open on the first day to see that film I said when when's the last time they ever did that for a Sunday service at the church? What is it? That's more compelling in that theater than what we are offering in our churches that they're willing to spend a night out in the cold in a sleeping bag to be the first one in How many hundreds of thousands of employees were dismissed from work in order to attend the theater that day that their companies recognized?

It's too big for us to fight against Hey guys, where our world is going sick, and we're the guardians of truth morality and righteousness and are silent We witnessed the princess Diana's funeral and didn't cry out. I Against the great travesty of the faith of celebrating this jet-setter in her Immoral affair with a Palestinian playboy that ended in violence as somehow deserving the highest form of recognition of Christian funeral in Canterbury Cathedral with the highest prelates and and ministers of that church in tones of great solemnity as if this were a saint With the flag being flown at half-mast at Buckminster Palace, and it took six weeks to clear away the tons of flowers that were heaped up around her home and the gardens and the walls and people signing the book I'll tell you if anyone raised his voice that day against the Diana cult

which by the way it has today become There are Diana cult churches in England where she's worshipped as a goddess If Someone had raised the voice they would have stoned him as they would have stoned Paul for opposing the Diana cult But not to raise the voice is to leave the church not only disadvantaged, but permanently morally crippled You say what good would it have done to raise the voice to write a letter to the editor to sound some opposition? I don't care what good it would have done.

I'm not expecting it's going to do any good You can't your your little your lone voice is not going to counter this tremendous flood of pap But not to sound your voice Has implications for you that are irrecoverable to be silent is to be condemned There's something that requires our speaking on these things as the guardians Appointed by God over the issues of truth morality and righteousness and our silence condemns us and our silence What reinforces and condones those things as if we agree? So I'm being reminded in these days of a time when I was in East Germany before the wall came down I'm upstairs in my attic room and downstairs are about half a dozen elders of the church of that East German city I've been there for several days and now this is a goodbye And they're waiting for a final word for the church and its leadership, and I'm upstairs looking to the Lord And I'm writing on the back of an envelope And I come down with my envelope and I say to these men your first obligation Is to confront the communist authorities and to oppose their Program their propagandistic program, which is a lie It is ubiquitous. You know that word like a phone booth on every corner So is their science German-soviet friendship for 45 years? Of alcoholism was the highest in all of Eastern Europe Because I believe that God has framed us and made us to live in Righteousness, and if we are compelled to live in an environment that is unrighteous that is untruthful Our bodies our physiologies themselves will react against it will be driven to alcohol to stupefy our minds Because our minds are being attacked in something. That is the lie I said you guys have an obligation to stand for what is made in God's image and to go to these communist authorities and say In view of our call and our responsibility to stand for what is made in God's image We oppose this assault that has come upon the minds and souls of men in this relentless campaign of propaganda And we ask you to stop it What an insane request you know that you're not going to be taken seriously You know that you might be opening the door to a concentration camp for yourself.

Why do it? because Integrity righteousness and truth and your calling in God as the ministers of God Requires an end to silence. That's why it's not the issue of whether it's going to succeed It's the issue that we cannot afford to be silent Have you guys ever read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life together as we say in Yiddish mama mia this This is superb. I just said to Adam this morning reading it again That I would think that this would be required study in any seminary any Bible school that trains ministers I just want to give you a little taste over the issue of the confession of our sins one to another The depth of insight that this dear martyr had Is astounding he makes it really in fact the whole issue of the church as the church That the final breakthrough to fellowship does not occur because Though they have fellowship one with another as believers and devout people they do not have fellowship as the undevout as sinners The church is only the church when it recognizes itself as sinners being saved by grace Not to acknowledge that and for its ministers to acknowledge that about themselves as well Leaves the church in a mentality and a state of being devout It's a false artificial and pompous atmosphere where he says no one dares allow himself to acknowledge the truth of his sin, but the fact is that we are sinners and So we remain alone with our sin living in lies and hypocrisy Now he says you are a sinner a great desperate sinner, you know what they have you thought about Paul I'm the chief of sinners When did Paul make that statement is he referring to his pre conversion? Or is he referring to his present condition as the chief apostle of the church? I think it's the latter In fact if you have noticed as you've gone on in the faith That the deeper you come in the knowledge of God and of his way and of his understanding the issue of your sin becomes much more

apparent No way, is it more conspicuous than for the man who has to perform spiritual things? Maybe it's not as evident for the man in the world But for the man on the pole on the platform and in the pulpit to have to deal and speak things of a spiritual kind shows yet more acutely the truth of our condition and That there's no accident that God calls The prophet Ezekiel son of man son of man.

Can these bones live son of man prophesied son of man? What is he doing? Does he have to remind the prophet that he's the son of man? Yes Because the prophet has the uncanny paradox of having to speak not only the Word of God, but to speak the Word of God as Very God he is the mouthpiece of God while at the same time. He's acutely conscious of his humanity He sweats. He's weak.

He's confused. He's doubtful. He's fearful.

He's anxious He's concerned for how he's going to be heard how he's going to be received. Oh son of man So there's no one more acutely or should be more acutely conscious of His humanity than those who are called to proclaim from their earthen lips the words of God That's why Paul saw himself as chief of sinners But there's an answer for God when we acknowledge that that is our condition Because he comes as the sinner that you are who loves you who wants you as you are He does not want anything from you a sacrifice your work. He wants you alone.

My son. Give me your heart This message is liberation through truth. You can hide nothing from God It's astonishing.

We were talking on this trip. What is the fear of God? How do you define that? What is it so critical so essential to the truth of the church? And I've never heard anyone really seek to define it. We talk about it and around it, but how much do we understand it? and I say one of the evidences of its lack is the liberty that we take even as ministers as if God were not God as if he were not omnipresent as if he were not Omniscient as if he did not only hear and see us in what we say and do but even hear the secrets of our hearts Even understand and knows our thoughts How then do we allow ourselves the liberty of thoughts that are incongruent and not in keeping with his holiness? It's an evidence that we don't really think that God is seeing and hearing That's the meaning of the fear of God It's an ever-present awareness that very much affects not only our external behavior, but our inward disposition We don't allow ourselves the luxury of thoughts and contemplations that are incompatible with God If we believe who he is, you see what I mean? So this message is liberation through truth and Through him men could be saved as sinners and only so could they be helped all sham was ended in the presence of Christ Do you hate sham? Do you hate pretense? Do you hate duplicity? Do you hate play-acting which is the meaning of the word hypocrisy putting on a mask? Giving the appearance of something which is not you have it all together.

God's man of faith and power While inside and inwardly you're trembling you're aware and conscious of your weakness the contradictions of your life The difficulty of your own teenage children the unhappiness of your own marriage the sexual problems all the kinds of things the fantasies The erotic things the temptations, you know all that But you purport yourself and carry yourself in such a way as to give no evidence at all That's false And if we're not about truth and about reality, what are we about? I? Would say the church is God's provision for a mankind that's God's plumb line from heaven to show that there's another standard that makes for sanity and That we would not only speak this but we represent and depict this in the character of our own life and being and Who's more at the heart of this whole enterprise of God than his ministers for us to be diligent toward the truth? To keep our hearts with all diligence to be jealous about infraction about play-acting to be immediately conscious when we feel ourselves drifting off and

becoming a bit professional and ministerial and Instantly to despise that and cry out to God and come back again to the place of naturalness before God and before men To despise any Affectation that would give the appearance and the impression to those hearing us or viewing us that somehow We're made of different to other stuff than they So the breakthrough comes in confession, it's the breakthrough to community the difference between church as an institutional Sunday setting and the Apostolic reality of a people whose life is together the breakthrough comes in confession Because in the darkness of the unexpressed The sin or the struggle poisons the whole being of a person. It'll it'll corrupt the whole being of a nation I think it did that for Germany It was not just German liberalism that made the way for the advent of Nazism. It was German piety It was German orthodoxy as well as liberalism.

Both were phony and Flaky one was a liberal disregard of the Word of God and the other was a mechanical and external Attention to Pietistic living but not to reality and in that vacuum of unreality in the absence of apostolic Verity in came the demonic thing of Nazism with a bang and corrupted and took possession of an entire nation the advent of Nazism and the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people of European Jewry and the World War two that threatened the whole of Western civilization Can in fact be laid at the door of a church that was defunct even while it was either liberal in disregard of the Word of God or pietistic and orthodox technically correct, but whose life was not true We should learn from that history because I believe the issue is going to come to our own shores So Sin must be brought into the light the unexpressed must be openly spoken and acknowledged All that is secret and hidden is made manifest It's a hard struggle until the sin is openly admitted the last stronghold of self-justification is abandoned the sinner surrenders He gives up all his evil He gives his heart to God and he finds the forgiveness of all his sin in the fellowship of Jesus Christ in his brother You guys have a brother? Is there one in your congregation or one in your ministerial fraternity who's a brother to whom you can go? I've had a lot of activity in Germany. The German word is sales saga Which means concern for one soul everyone has a sales saga who is careful for this So, you know, they found out the guy who's living in Frankfurt his soul Keeper lives in Munich and they see each other about once every three months four months five months That's a cop-out that is exactly the kind of orthodox and pietistic devices that Brought corruption to Germany before if there's a man who's watching over your soul He needs to be a man with whom you're in daily relationship Where he sees you in the various aspects of your life and stress and the reality of it and not just on some distant Sunday To whom do we know and whom can we trust to confess our sins with a brother? Who is really a brother on that daily basis the whole of our ministerial system? Militates against it because it cultivates the ministerial mystique by which you're not to expose your frailty and weaknesses to the congregation But be detached as if you already have it together It gives them a false sense of what you are and a sense that they in the pews poor souls Can never aspire to you lofty condition and you both go on in terrible and reality together That's religion. That's Christendom.

That's death Do you have a brother? And I cried out and I saturated a half a dozen Kleenexes because we're living in community There were about 30 of us on 160 acre farm. This was a willful choosing I have come out of the Baptist Church out of the local evangelical church out of Pentecostal ism out of full gospel out of all of those things because there was an artificiality this mere Sunday relationship Is not the reality out of which a real witness to Jews can come At that community is the name of the game. It's not an option It's the very definition of what church in fact is but who has a stomach for it We like our privacy We want to go from our sweaty Sunday back to our house by the pond or the lake and away from the fray We don't want to be open on Monday to seeing the same faces here in the same situations We like a private of privatistic lifestyle and the world has encouraged it.

They love Sunday Christianity They'll even give you a tax-deductible benefit if you'll maintain it But don't become so radical as to have a shared common life Daily going from house to house daily breaking bread breaking down these Institutional things and coming into the apostolic reality and the glory that the church knew at the first the world would not look too kindly on that But even with that We know what a struggle it can be and I've said many times in our own community You know But for the want of one thing This community can become only a trailer court The fact that we're living on the same property and just a few moments walk from each other's houses does not in itself Bring the reality of community. It can become only a trailer court unless you avail yourself of that proximity Unless you desire the visit of a brother who comes unannounced while you have your feet up on the coffee table Watching the football game when he thought you were studying scripture You see what I mean? There's so much pretense so much phoniness that only this kind of grit of a daily reality is the antidote of God against it So in confession the expressed acknowledged sin has lost all its power it has been revealed and judged as sin Now the former sinner stands in the fellowship of sinners who live by the grace of God in the cross of Christ Jesus He can confess his sins and in this very act find fellowship for the first time This is what keeps us from fellowship fear intimidation being found out that our false side will Will be revealed if we allow ourselves any kind of intimacy and real relationship one with another we keep each other at an arm's length We're polite. We're cordial but no more because if we're more than that It opens the door to the revelation of the truth of our condition for which we fear And I'm inviting us all to press through the fear and find the grace of God and the profound provision He has given for us in confessing our faults one to another So The sin concealed separated him from the fellowship made all this apparent fellowship a sham The sin confessed has helped him helped him to find true fellowship with the brethren Jesus Christ the confession is to one But the fellowship is to all The sin that has prevented true fellowship has now been met in confession with one but now though the rest of the body is not aware of what has transpired between this one and that one they receive the benefit and A man like me who travels and is in various churches of every kind of description Ministers conferences the moment I enter a room I Have a kind of sensitivity to catch.

What is the corporate? Personality of those who have congregated and we try to drown it out with our amplifiers or in other ways to affect Something that will disguise it, but we are the sum total of the truth of our lives and when we come together That is what affects our atmosphere. That's what will affect the communication of God's Word the receiving of God's Word The effect of God's Word is dulled and nullified Depending on the reality of the truth of those that are hearing it And if when and if each life is a private island unto itself with its own Secrets of the unconfessed things we bring all that baggage into the room and expect this guy to play some kind of spiritual roulette and come up with something that's going to penetrate all that when he himself is in a fix and A struggle that he dare not acknowledge to anyone Little wonder that our Christianity has become a mere Sunday culture little wonder that it has not affected the Jewish community at all We're going to move them to jealousy with what? If we Jews are anything we can see right through Pretense and false falsity, but while you guys were subscribing to Jimmy Baker and all of that stuff These Jews would see them for a moment on TV set and flick it away. They know a self The aggrandizing ministry when they see one they know what is false and phony we've been grounded in truth and reality Hey when you live a life of persecution for centuries It does something to sharpen your sensibility of what is true and what is false the church has not affected Let alone influence Jews.

I was not saved by the witness of the church But by the sovereign mercy of God that pursued me for 14 months as a hitchhiking Jewish Atheist and ex-marxist and only because that his pursuit was released by one of my former students and her mother who prayed for this atheist But not I was lived in a Christian country 34 years. It meant nothing It was no more impressive than any synagogue, and I was a seeker

after truth So confession occurs in confession occurs the breakthrough to the cross Confession is the presence of her brother in the presence of her brother is the profoundest kind of humiliation. That is the cross There the old man dies a painful shameful death before the eyes of her brother It is painful, but yet more painful to retain the sin than to confess it It was none other than 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 In order that we may in truth share in his 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 So there's a deep pain and humiliation before a brother which means that we experience the cross of Jesus Which becomes our rescue and salvation the old man dies, but it is God who has conquered him now We share the resurrection of Christ and eternal life He even goes so far to say as that the confession of sin is the renewal of baptism That the joy of baptism is conferred afresh with every confession of sin Just a fresh way of appreciating how grand a provision God gives us in our brother That's the very definition of what a brother is and to say brother and slap someone on the back in the foyer of the church Who's not a brother is a sham And we ought to be dead set against all sham all pretense all appearances It's going to take this kind of diligence this kind of pain this kind of suffering this kind of a cross To maintain the truth of God that a brother may be a brother.

But what kind of a brother is it to whom we can confess? If the breakthrough in confession brings new life And the dark night of secret sin is given over to whom shall we confess Except Someone who himself lives beneath the cross is himself a forgiven sinner and knows that he's capable of any and every sin that Someone will have the courage to share with him even a minister There are not many such brothers You know why because of the environment that we have allowed to prevail in our churches is not the conducive to the formation of them We're responsible for that environment and when we encourage men to truth and to reality and to bearing their hearts We're going to find men who will have experienced the cross and to whom we can go in safety that they're not going to use our confession as some retaliation, but hold it with respect and with Propriety and prudence because they themselves know themselves to be sinners saved at the cross That's the church that's reality that's the heart and marrow of the whole thing Well, he just ends with two warnings that We don't grant to ourselves our own absolution and that the feebleness of our Christian obedience is to be found precisely in the fact that we are living on self-forgiveness and Not a real forgiveness Not worth the price of the book doesn't this man see through that many of us are living in an assumed forgiveness that we have obtained in our own little private confession to God, but it's not a true forgiveness because we have not gone horizontally to men and We assume that that's a true one. Then how comes that it's still lingering. How come we're still occupied with the same hang-up How come that the thing that defeats us? Still lingers because it has not been a true breaking with sin It has only been a private absolution a subjective thing that we have performed to save us the embarrassment and the pain of the cross But it does not bring its answer We're living on self-forgiveness and not a real forgiveness and self-forgiveness can never lead to a breach of sin God gives this certainty only through our brother our brother breaks the circle of self-deception It's in the reality of the other person that the issue of sin is really met and we experience It's the liberation anything else is a self-assumed and self-perpetrated Absolution that doesn't work.

God is not mocked. He's not a phony baloney. He's not going to go along with our pretenses He's after truth and authenticity because he knows that Eternity is at stake life and death is at stake for others.

And if we become a sham performing Church the lives will go untouched and Not be saved out of hell and out of death And the second danger And I'll end with this is let him God against ever making a pious work

of his confession If he does so it will become the final most abominable vicious and impure prostitution of the heart The act becomes an idle lustful babbling Confession as a pious work is an invention of the devil What kind of confession is that? It's an inadequate confession It's a general confession rather than a specific and a concrete one it avoids really mentioning and Signifying the real and acute problem.

It speaks in general terms and becomes an impure pious confession that is false a lustful babbling an invention of the devil Confession as a routine duty is spiritual death So You know what follows this the joyful sacrament of communion imagine coming to the communion table clean Cleared forgiven really forgiven because the power of the sin has been broken both in confession to God and confession to men The vertical member and the horizontal and we can come to the communion table and Celebrate the blood and the body of the Lord in truth for if we make that a feigned Liturgical and ceremonial thing without content and without reality without truth.

We have all men are most to be pitted It has not affected anything we've quaffed back a little plastic cup and we leave the room unchanged It has not been impartation of his life Which is only given on the condition of reality and authenticity and the community of believers who are forgiven sinners So I want to pray for that Okay So I thank you Lord for giving me a little extra time This is too precious too important too significant to be rushed through these men didn't have to hear from another slick Operator who can tell them about evangelism to Jews, although I can tell them You had a much more earnest agenda this morning and one that is critical for all the church and critical for its ministers And Lord I ask That where the shoe fits will wear it that our hearts will be open for the the Bobbed word that your word will be as a dagger and as a sword my God to cut into us God forbid that we have become play actors professionals ministers who conduct ourselves and carry on the kind of sham life our poor wives are Suffering for that exact thing because they have an inward flame of integrity and they are chafed In their inner being when they hear the husband's performing Because who knows them better and who has seen them in their weakness and defect and in their BVDs Than these wives and know the disparity between how they professionally deport themselves and what is the truth of their life altogether?

My god you wore a seamless robe You are an indivisible God There was no separation between your ministry and what you were in yourself You were the message and we ask again that you would bring forth at the end of the age Ministers of this kind who can model that reality and bring their congregations into that reality in hope that the Jewish community roundabout Observing and perceiving that reality that is not a mere Sunday piety will be moved to jealousy to believe and so And the age blessed is speaking my god may it go out to many through the tape and may it bring about a depth of Repentance that we have overlooked and have run from Toronto to Pensacola to find Alternatives to the shame and the pain of coming to the cross we wanted an uplift something to correct our grayness and not Recognizing the need to be dealt with at the root in the heart of our own problem in the locality where we are in the Fellowship where we are in the brothers with whom we are related.

We didn't have to run from Dan to Bersheba It was right before us if we only had the courage to avail ourselves Bless your ministers Lord I pray and bless your church through your ministers and bless society through your church and we thank and give you praise in Jesus name Amen

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