

The Mystery of Incarnation (4 of 9)

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the profound mystery of incarnation, emphasizing the necessity of experiencing God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:09:54

Topics: "Incarnation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of watching and prayer, comparing it to the relationship between fasting and the body. He challenges the audience to give up their sleep and indulge less in their bodily needs in order to strengthen their faith. The speaker also highlights the need for devotion and communion with God, stating that the reality of God can only be obtained through fasting and self-denial. The sermon concludes with a call to live consistently in the image of Christ and be witnesses of his deity in humanity.

Transcript

So, Lord bless this little examination. I'm not going to read it entirely, just I'll skip around and see where it leads us. Because that's my strongest inward conviction.

So even the issue of incarnation is involved here. How do we proceed? You guys think I have all this nailed down? This is a first. We have never gone this way here before.

It's a subject we have never before undertaken. From John Murray and his statement on incarnation, which is classic Reformation theology, which we need to consider. That is built on the creeds that were given the church in the 4th and 5th centuries, and that they uphold to the letter.

Or do I read from today's Tozer, that is more or less of a devotional kind, that touches the issue of the church in its present condition and its need. So I have to say, in the want of any voice from heaven, my strongest disposition is to read from Tozer. So here's an example for you of how to proceed.

By the operation of the life of God, what is your strongest impulse? And in the absence of anything that competes with it, do it and believe that it's God. Which is not a presumption for the immature or untested believers, who any stray thought in their heads, they think is God's and they will express. It's a statement that is only consonant with a life of God's dealing in the school of maturity, in which a person would say that my deepest inward sense is this from God and I'll act on it.

A guy called me last night, Steve, he's been hawking me on the internet. Can I call you? How do you bring judgment? How do you exhort and rebuke? And I went on to give him an answer. It's not for a novice to perform.

And you're not in a place yet where you could know whether God is prompting it or not. And that the answer is not the technique or method of how or when, but what you need is a walk and a relationship with God over a period of time, by which in time you can have an assurance whether something is from God or not. But he was so American, he wanted to know now, what do I need to, how do I do? So today's selection from Tozer is entitled *The Holy Spirit as Fire*, and it begins with a quotation from Samuel Chadwick, who I think comes out of the Reformed Church, the pilgrim, what do they call them? The Puritans, he's a Puritan voice.

He writes, Spirit-filled souls are ablaze with God. They love with a love that glows. They believe with a faith that kindles.

They serve with a devotion that consumes. They hate sin with a fierceness that burns. They rejoice with a joy that radiates.

Love is perfected in the fire of God. It's enough to gulp to hear someone speak like that, and we're made to feel instantly like wow, this is so outside of our own present experience. Another source that he quotes, we do not go deep to study God.

We go deep to meet his reality. In such experience we cannot define God, for he is not definable, but we do ultimately define ourselves. In the depths we meet our smallness, our powerlessness, our need.

On the positive side, we discover the folly of trying to find our satisfaction in surface relationships. We're learned to our credit that God hides neither his greatness nor our self-understanding in three unhurried minutes of Bible reading a day. We suddenly know that the immensity of God never comes wrapped in contrived public prayers where many, either consciously or unconsciously, are prone to approve themselves to their merely human creditors.

They are prone to approve themselves in the hearing of those whose approval they seek. So the shallow Christian who's satisfied with a three minute Bible study or a quick devotional is really not meeting God in the deeps. What he's really wanting is the approval that would come from others.

That's the difficulty of reading aloud, to follow something when you don't have it in your own hand. If we would conceive of his greatness, he would be less than the human mind which could form the conceptions. If we could think the greatness of God, he would be less than his greatness.

Because if we could think it, our thinking then defines him and brings him down to the level of our thought. So therefore the revelation of God has got to be beyond our mind and beyond our thought. He is greater than all language and no statement can express him.

Indeed, if any statement could express him, he would be less than human speech and could by such statements comprehend and gather up all that he is. To a certain point, of course, we can have experience of him without language, but no man can express in words all that he is in himself. Or suppose that one speaks of him as power.

This too sets forth in words his attribute of might rather than his being. Or suppose one speaks of him as majesty. Again, we have a declaration of the honor which is his own rather than of him himself.

He is just showing the absurdity of a human attempt to appropriate God through language or through thought. Whatever our categories, whatever our concepts, however lofty, they are always necessarily something less if not something other than what God is in himself. How then do we understand the majesty of God or his holiness or his power? It has to be by some kind of givingness of God himself beyond what we out of our humanity can conceive or contrive.

Why does God withhold that? Maybe there are not enough asking him and there are too many satisfied with what they have humanly determined God to be. Because so long as we can determine, we've got him in a box and he's safe and he's a utility to serve our purposes. So there's a knowledge of God that is yet outside us that must be found and given if we should be asking.

To sum it up in a single sentence, every possible statement that could be made about God expresses some possession or virtue of God rather than God himself. What words or thoughts are worthy of him who is above all language and thought? The conception of God as he is can only be grasped in one way and even that is impossible for us. Beyond our grasp and our understanding by thinking of him as a being whose attributes and greatness are beyond our powers of understanding even in thought.

So not the least of the benefit of God in sending his son is that it makes deity visible. How does it say in Hebrews chapter 1 that we behold in his face? What a mercy that we're not left to abstract theorizing and speculation that will always be somehow less than what he is in himself. But that in the sending of his son, we can glimpse something of the magnitude of God because Jesus is the exact representation.

Because God who in sundry times and in different manners spoke in the past unto the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken unto us by his son whom he has appointed heir of all things and by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had himself by himself purged our sins sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. So he's greater than the angels.

Of course in verse 6 all the angels of God worship him and in verse 8 of the son it says thy throne oh God is forever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. And so the remarkable commendations in Hebrews, Colossians and John. Let's take a look at the prologue to the gospel of John that we have been mentioning that I've not looked at myself in the longest time and needs periodically to be seen again.

Chapter 1 in the beginning was the word. The word was with God the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

This is piling on paradox upon paradox and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made and him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not. Verse 10 he was in the world the world was made by him and the world knew him not. In verse 14 the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth.

And verse 18 no man hath seen God at any time the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father he hath declared him man. So the study of Jesus his person his speech his conduct his acts his suffering his death his pre incarnate life is the revelation of God the father. If you see me you see the father.

Why do you ask show me the father? Have you not seen him? If you see me you see the father. I and the father are one. It's a great mercy that the son not only brings our atonement but brings the revelation of God and saves us from vain speculation.

But even with the coming of the Lord there are dimensions that we're yet yearning in our inward being that only the Lord himself can bring because even Jesus if we're not careful can become a matter of fact entity familiarity. And we see him in his humanity and ironically lose the communication of God. So as much as that is a provision it's also a danger because even those who walked with him is this the one who we were told to expect or is there another? They had to send an envoy to John the Baptist to validate Jesus even though that he's there in their midst and someone has wisely said that those who were contemporary with Jesus and walked with him had a greater difficulty to recognizing in him the son of God and the father than we who have come 2,000 years later and read of the account.

That somehow the man in the flesh repels the recognition because we're affronted by flesh or distracted by the flesh and we cannot see the glory revealed through the flesh but the flesh itself constitutes a barrier to that seeing. That's not only true for Jesus that's true for the body of Christ that's why Paul said I see no man after the flesh even Jesus but we unfortunately see the man in the flesh and miss the deity the component of God that is working and expressing himself through those vessels. Here he talks about Pentecost and that which came upon the disciples in the upper room was nothing less than God himself.

Through their mortal eyes he appeared as fire and may we not safely conclude that those scripture short believers knew at once what it meant that God the God who had appeared to them as fire throughout all their long history was now dwelling in them as fire. He had moved from without to the interior of their lives the shekinah that had once blazed over the mercy seat now blazed on their foreheads as an external emblem of the fire that had invaded their natures. This was deity giving himself to ransomed men the flame was the seal of a new union they were now men and women of the fire.

I've never heard a single Pentecostal or charismatic ever describe the infusion or the baptism of the Holy Spirit in such words as these. And because we don't see it as such words as these we're receiving less than this. As your faith is so be it unto you.

If you're just receiving something like an endowment from on high as power and have not seen it as very God himself as fire infusing the soul and must necessarily bring a remarkable change then we don't see that change we don't receive that. If our faith limits us in what it is that we're receiving this was deity himself the spirit of God is the spirit of the Lord is God. Here is the whole message of the New Testament through the atonement of Jesus' blood sinful men may now become one with God.

So here it's touching the subject that's before us of incarnation. Deity indwelling men that is Christianity in its fullest effectuation and even those greater glories of the world to come will be in essence but a greater and more perfect experience of the soul's union with God. Bringing many sons to glory is the very same thing.

So deity indwelling men that I say is Christianity and no man has experienced rightly the power of Christian belief until he has known this for himself as living reality. Incarnation is not a doctrine to which we need to become acquainted or agree it's a reality that awaits appropriation or else it's vain. How much more can we mock God than just to celebrate incarnation as a doctrine to which we give our approval and still live outside that remarkable phenomenon.

Shall I read this little thing? This is the last part. Deity indwelling men that I say is Christianity and no man has experienced rightly the power of Christian belief until he has known this for himself as a living reality. Everything else is preliminary to this.

Atonement, justification, generation. What are these but acts of God preparatory to the work of invading and the act of indwelling the redeemed human soul? Men who moved out of the heart of God by sin now move back into the heart of God by redemption. Because incarnation is the final expression of redemption.

Atonement is its beginning, incarnation is its end. God who moved out of the heart of man because of sin now enters again his ancient dwelling to drive out his enemies and once more make the place of his feet glorious. He'll have the whole temple consecrated for his life.

The life will be in this temple radiating its light and its glory and expressing itself in the mundane and everyday walk that we have. That a word in season is life giving. A piece of counsel, a prayer for a brother or for a baby or a teaching or an act of ministry or just a little conversation walking in the way.

Our life giving activities when it issues out of the life that is now rightly indwelling the vessels for whom it was intended. What is it that Paul says that through their false salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to move them to jealousy and never explaining with an asterisk or footnote how that is to be fulfilled. Well we can only suppose being on this subject it has got to be this.

They've seen pious Christians, they've seen religionists, they've seen people who keep their nose clean and keep their skirts up from the mud. But have they seen God in the flesh? Especially coming through a Gentile. What could be more staggering to the Jew that where he least expects to see deity he sees it in a Gentile because it's the light that lightens the Gentiles which is the glory of the people Israel.

And when you read Ben Israel you'll see how my salvation was set in motion by the revealing of that light to a Gentile girl for whom I had an instant contempt because she came from Kansas or some place in the Midwest she was a wasp, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant the kind that we Jews are turned off by. And yet far from being turned off there was something communicated to this girl that pierced me and I'm probing her motives because she's willing to spend time with me and she's not afraid. She's sent to Europe and having graduated high school I mean a little upstart.

I'm a sophisticated university graduate, world traveler and what does this little girl mean to me? And yet she's willing to spend time with me. We met accidentally and I'm probing her motives as we're walking in the woods surrounding Zurich in Switzerland and saying hey how is it you're not afraid of me? Oh it's the love of God. How is it you're being kind? That's the love of God.

This kid mentions God one more time and she's finished. I can't stand this God talk and I have driven men into the ground who are infinitely more sophisticated in their faith than she. So what is this little thing? She mentioned God one more time.

I said look kid you're a nice girl. I appreciate it. But listen I can't stand this God talk.

Answer me one question that no Christian has ever been able to successfully answer me. You have been talking about God. How do you know that he is? Lean back, scroll fine.

I got her now. What is she going to say? Some little brittle piece of Sunday school? I'll demolish her. I'm all revved up.

My rolling thing is ready to flatten her. And she looks up with that little snub nose, freckled face, gentile puss and she said but Archie said I know that God lives. He lives in me.

She might have said the incarnate God but I would not have understood that language. But that's what she's saying. He lives in me.

You know what happened to me? I went down. I was felled like an ox with a blow. I went down by that little shattering statement spoken in a little softer feminine voice.

And as I'm recovering like what hit me? Where is the power of that statement? It's not even philosophical let alone theological. And then it occurred to me. But it's true wise guy.

And she has the face to prove it. You're in the darkness and she's in the light. For all of your Marxist background and your university background and world travel, this little high school kid is in the light and you're in the darkness.

And you know what? I was jealous for the light that shone out of her. That's how God started it. Huh? Classic.

So how's the light out of you? The light that lightens the gentiles is the glory of the people Israel. And if we don't see that glory through your light we don't see it. But if you're just coming pharisaically and telling us how and what's wrong with us or whatever.

This little girl in her innocence and simplicity shone and radiated the light of God. The incarnate God was in that girl. And I was in the darkness.

I'm the Jew. And she's the gentile. And yet she possessed something totally absent from my life.

And for a single moment I was made conscious of that absence. It had never before occurred to me until I saw the reality in her. It's an invincible reality especially when it shines through out from a gentile face.

That's the mystery of the gospel you guys. That's to the Jew first. If the incarnate God is dwelling in you.

If you receive the whole atonement, not only the forgiveness of your sins but the impartation of the life. And you're walking consistently in it. Why did this little girl be willing to go with me? I'm twice her age.

I'm a foreboding angry man that would scare people at a distance. And this little girl completely mindless and selfless and innocent willing to walk with a stranger and suffer my caustic remarks. And she's the instrument of God.

Oh there's much there saints. Incarnation is the issue of Israel's salvation and as well as Greeks. So few there are who without restraint will open their whole heart to the blessed comforter.

He has been and is so widely misunderstood that the very mention of his name in some circles is enough to frighten many people into resistance. The source of this unreasoning fear may easily be traced but it would be fruitless to do it here. Sufficient to say the fear is groundless.

Perhaps we may be, we may help to destroy its power over us if we examine that fire which is the symbol of the Spirit's person and presence. The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame. It is not an accident of language that is called the Holy Spirit.

For whatever else the word holy may mean it does undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity and the Spirit being God must be absolutely and infinitely pure. With him there are not, as with men, grades and degrees of holiness. His holiness itself is the sum and essence of all that is unspeakably pure.

So whatever awakens you, that he quotes from John Wesley's mother, Susanna Wesley. Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God and takes off the relish of spiritual things, that is your sin. Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures the sense of God, takes off the delight of spiritual things, that is your sin.

It could be innocuous, in itself it's not something to be despised or to be rejected, the world approves it. It's valid, it's natural, but if it serves in any way to cloud your knowledge of God or your delight or relish in the things of God, that for you is sin. So you don't measure it the way the world measures.

That's a real nasty boo-boo, an infidelity, a sexual sin. No, it could be harmless, it could be innocuous, it could be attested, valid and approved, even through the church. But if in you it serves to cloud your reason and your knowledge of God and rob you of the delight from the things of God, that for you is sin and needs to be feared and resisted and given over as much as the most conspicuous and blatant sin.

That's Wesley's mother. I'll tell you, a mother like that, the son has got to go far and did. Both sons, John and Charles, the great hymnist, no transgression.

Well let me say, the base of all true Christian experience must lie a sound and sane morality. No joys of valor, no delights legitimate where sin is allowed to live in life or conduct, because it clouds that incarnation. That little girl was sinless.

If she was given over to hanky-panky and had a little boyfriend on her side and was already indulging herself, her testimony to me would have been invalidated. Her face shone. There was a radiance because her life was clear and pure in God.

Praise God. And you know what? In 35 years in America, I never encountered that phenomenon. It had to take place overseas in a rare encounter, because so rare are the vessels that communicate that light, because their life is clouded.

They've allowed sin and indulgence to rob them of that purity, and therefore the life and the light is concealed. They would have no disposition to talk to a stranger. They would probably turn away out of fear for themselves.

No transgression of pure righteousness dare excuse itself on the ground of superior religious experience. To seek high emotional states while living in sin is to throw our whole life open to self-deception and the judgment of God. This is written in advance of the charismatic movement, because Toza died in 1964, just as it was beginning.

But how prophetic this is for a movement that so celebrates experience, emotion, eyes, that you run all the way to Toronto to experience what you can't find in your own prayer chamber. Can you reread the last sentence? And coming back with her husband in the car, she freaked out. He had to stop the car and pull off to the side of the road.

She was shrieking at the top of her lungs in such an emotional scare, because she had lost the sense of herself as a person. She had lost her identity by going forward and seeking an experience where people

were cackling like animals and barking like dogs. And something happened in that environment that robbed her of her own sense of herself.

And as she was driving and the atmosphere had dissipated that had been provided there, she became aware of this and she was thrown into an alarm that the poor man had to pull over to the side of the road. His wife was freaking out. So there is a danger in seeking for a high emotional experience as somehow to bring the knowledge of God.

And we may be barking up the wrong tree and opening ourselves to things of a kind that he calls open to self-perception and the judgment of God. Being holy is not a mere motto to be framed and hung on the wall. It is a serious commandment from the Lord of the whole earth.

The true Christian ideal is not to be happy but to be holy. The holy heart alone can be the habitation of the Holy Ghost. So quoting from James, cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be heard in the morning and your joy to heaviness. Because the Holy Spirit is also a spiritual flame.

He alone can raise our worship to true spiritual levels. God forbid that we should sync the hyphen up by turning up the amplifiers as we are prone to do. We might as well know once and for all that morality and ethics are everlasting as though by Christianity.

The faith of Christ undertakes to raise the soul to actual communion with God, to introduce into our religious experiences a super-rational element far above mere goodness as the heavens above the earth. The coming of the Spirit brought to the Book of Acts this very quality of super-mundaneness, this mysterious elevation of tone not found in as high intensity even in the Gospels. The key of the Book of Acts is definitely the nature.

There is in it no trace of creature sadness, no lingering disappointment, no quiver of uncertainty. The mood is heavenly. A victorious spirit is found there, a spirit which could never be the result of mere religious belief.

The joy of the first Christians was not the joy of logic working on facts. They did not reason. Christ is risen from the dead, therefore we ought to be glad.

Their gladness was as great a miracle as the resurrection itself. Indeed, these were and are organically related. The moral happiness of the Creator had taken residence in the breasts of redeemed creatures and they could not but be glad.

This is incarnation and the evidence is gladness. Not gladness predicated on events or your ship coming in or feeling good or happy because now you have received this inheritance or God has given you a better car or your wife is finally shaping up or the church. This is something inward.

It's the joy of the Lord. It's the gladness of God that comes with his existence in the believer in an incarnate way in our flesh. And so it ends with a poem by A.B. Simpson, the father of the Missionary Alliance, which movement itself is far removed presently from its founder's reality, who writes, O fire of God, begin in me, burn out the dross of self and sin, burn off my fetters and set me free, and make my heart a heaven within.

Baptize with fire this soul of mine, and do me with thy spirit's might, and make me by thy power divine, a burning and a shining light. Burn in, O fire of God, burn in, till all my soul Christ's image bears, and every power and pulse within his holy heavenly nature wears. Burn on, O fire of God, burn on, till all my dross is burnt away, till earth and sin and self are gone, and I can stand the testing day.

Precious. That next to last verse, burn in, O fire of God, burn in, till all my soul Christ's image bears, and every power and pulse within his holy heavenly nature wears. And if an innocent high school graduate, who by every appearance is only a wasp, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, can display that image, then in what vessel is that possibility denied? And in what form will it take in every vessel? Will it be one standard thing, or will it express itself in the uniqueness of the earthen vessels for whom it is exhibited? And how much is that witness being denied by somehow our failure to appropriate that life and live consistently in it, though we're told to be witnesses unto thee? There's much more than quoting a scripture or citing John 3.16. It's evidence of him, deity in humanity, God in the flesh, and coming forth in speech and appearance and tone in the way unique to that vessel.

This is the mystery. This is Christianity. This is the faith.

This is the consummation of atonement. Anything less than this, just to be forgiven your sins, and not to be walking in this measure and this reality, is to be doomed despite the grace of God, who intended the full measure, which he himself exhibited for the first time as God in the flesh, and is bringing many sons to that very glory. But will it come if we do not desire it? Will it come if we do not seek it? Will it come if we are content with the measure that we have, and are unwilling to empty ourselves, not of our defects, but our virtues? It's not our defects that are the hindrance.

We're glad to put that over. It's our virtue. It's our ability, religiously, that stands in the way of the full appropriation of the divine life, because life only comes on the basis of death.

As long as we're clinging to something and want to succeed on the basis of that, his life is yet withheld. So, we need to empty ourselves of ourselves, not at our worst, but at our best. Then the life has opportunity.

Then the glory inhabits his temple. Then it radiates and shines out, not just in the great moments of requirement, but in the everyday. We had mentioned earlier in these days of the difference between the raven who never came back to the ark, and the dove who came back because it did not find a place for its feet.

There's something about the dove as the symbol of the Holy Spirit that will not roost in any old place. A raven will, but a dove is, what's the word, impeccable and holy and separate. That's the unique nature of that bird, symbol of the Spirit, that had to come back because it found no place for its feet.

It will not roost anywhere. Maybe that's why it is we're not experiencing the fullness of that Spirit, because we have not come to a place of repentance, because the way that Chambers is using the word repentance here is more than just the forsaking of sin, it's the forsaking of self, emptying out completely of all that is human, because that's not a fit place for the dove. And man is no good thing, even that is best.

Why call this thou me good? There's no man good, no not one, but God. So we have not understood repentance and the depth of God's intention. Of course sin needs to be repented for that blatant activity against God, against thee only have I sinned.

That was yesterday's thought. But here is repentance in its fullest sense, not just the giving up of sin, but the root of sin which is self, and that is the ground for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Just think, if when I had asked that girl 41 years ago, how do you know that God is, and she would have quoted me a scripture, or she would have quoted John 3.16, or given me some conventional Christian reply, I would be dead now.

No question. But the one statement that bludgeoned me and brought me down, and all my proud arrogance was, I know that God lives because he lives in me. And my question to you is, how did she know to say that? How did she know that she was not to use a John 3.16 or some other scripture that would have turned me off completely? How did she know to avoid any truism about the faith, the mechanical recitation that Christians often speak when they're in a situation like that? How did she know to speak what she spoke? It was completely uncelebrated.

It was not something that came by, now what should I say to this man? This is a Jew. He's a toughie, let's see. No, it came out in the remarkable, effortless spontaneity of the life of God in that vessel.

And it was a life-saving word, a life-turning word. Because as young as she was, the life, I think, was so consistent in her that she always trusted it. Whether before a school teacher or friends in a church situation, or now on the road encountering a hard-nosed Jewish atheist.

So, we need to dwell on that remarkable testimony that effortlessly issues spontaneously by one who lives by that life and will not trust a scripture, will not trust a religious response. Because, hey, this is a Jewish guy here, I've got to really say the right thing. She was as innocent, simple, trusting as could be.

And she was the provision of God at a critical juncture where a conventional religious answer would have killed me. Deity was incarnate in Christ, not because he was born with it, but because he emptied himself of it and obtained it by faith in relationship with the Father, in devotion, in the same way that is available to us. And if I don't bring you to the text of Mark chapter 9, before our days are ended, remind me, and begin yourself to look at the text of Mark 9, that begins on top of the Mount of Transfiguration where the glory of the Lord is revealed, but ends by being brought into the valley where a demon is rattling and shaking and throwing the stuffings out of a young boy, into the fire, into the water, and the disciples could not cast him out.

And the Father says, if you could do anything to help us, not recognizing who Jesus is. And Jesus is stern in his rebuke of the disciples for their failure. He assumed that they ought to be able to express the authority that he had conferred upon them and cast, but why could we not, after he cast it out, they take him aside, why could we not cast this out? Well, because this kind, this ultimate kind, that is calculated to do in that son, who is the symbol of Israel, because when he asked the father, how long has the son been suffering this? And the answer is, since childhood, virtually since his inception, the powers of darkness have been out, not just to harass his life, but to end it.

It's only a miracle that any vestige of it yet remains, but these devils are not satisfied that even when they're commanded to let him go and come out of him, they rattle this life one more time and lay him down in the dust that the people said he's dead. But Jesus stretched forth his hand and raised him up. And so what the disciples could not do, Jesus did.

And why could we not cast this out? Because this kind, this ultimate kind, will not come out except by prayer and fasting. What is he commending to his disciples? Some method, some technique, or

something that's to be obtained in the reality of God, that the devils are required to acknowledge and to loose their victim, that is not his by possession of being God, but was his by relationship with the father through prayer and through fasting. And that's the same means by which we are to obtain it, or at the end of the age we will fail in delivering Israel from the powers of darkness that are out to extinguish it.

Why? Because if Israel is extinguished, there's no kingdom, there's no Zion, there's no return to Zion. And the only way in their wisdom is by extinction, and we see it even now in the Islamic theory. So who can contend against this, in an authority greater than what they carry through Satan? How do we obtain that authority, who are just dust ourselves? And when we see something being thrown into the fire and vomiting and puking out and foaming at the mouth, when little faith we have dwindles and becomes extinct, how then shall we contend against those powers? This kind cometh not out, but by fasting and prayer.

Because only in those activities is the reality of God to be obtained that is greater than the reality of darkness. And if you're not obtained it there, you'll not succeed. So that the issue of Israel in the last analysis is not some heroic last days' work by no hands, but is the result of a lifelong devotional relationship with the Father by which that reality that is divine is imputed in communion.

So the issue in the last analysis is devotion, not heroics. Read that text because it sums up the whole issue of incarnation. But incarnation how? Through fasting and through self-denial and through communion.

Not prayer as petition, but the kind of prayer that should begin after petition and not be ended by petition. This is a remarkable last days' statement that we need to dwell upon and consider. I wouldn't want to eternally myself carry a disgrace that I would be grieved to eternally consider that I failed in the crucial moment to be Israel's deliverer because of sloth, laziness, indifference and neglect.

And not seeking God at his source and that I did not have the requisite authority and presence to compel those demons to let go of their victim. Jesus could do it, not because he had God as God, but because he had God as communion. The disciples could not do it because though they had been on the mount of transfiguration and had seen his glory, it was quickly dissipated when they had to see the horror and the ugliness of the demonic powers below.

We have to carry with us a greater reality than that which is in the world. Greater is he who is within us than he who is in the world. But is he in us in that degree? And is it the same in every believer? Do we have the same standard amount? Or is it proportionate to the room that we have made by our own emptying and the giving of ourselves for the place of communion with God? When we're not seeking him for what we can get from him, but seeking him and spending time with him for what he is in himself.

That's devotion, it's not commerce. And so my earliest question as a Christian was, Lord I see a lot of Christians, but where are the disciples? I thought they were another species. Or maybe they are.

That's why Forsyth says that it took the power of God for Jesus to empty himself of God. That's how powerful this thing is, it requires a divine power. So even emptying is something that requires the grace of God.

But are we intent on emptying? Do we desire to break that power and open ourselves to God? Will he not give the grace when he sees the heart? And if we're not experiencing it in one fell swoop, will we receive

and experience it cumulatively over a period of time as the result of our devotional giving of ourselves to God? Because is there anything more foolish and more discouraging than to seek God? Especially in the early morning hours while it's yet dark, and it's so unrewarding, and you feel like a jerk and a fool out there, feeling the cold draft on the floor, and nothing is happening, and we are an event-oriented American people, utilitarian, there's no payoff, then why the investment? Why the sacrifice? We're being tested to see if we'll persevere. That it's not an issue of what we're going to receive, because we're not in it for payment, we're in it because he's God. He deserves this consideration, that even if we feel and sense nothing, and it is to us unprofitable, we still, because he's God, owe him that kind of devotion.

And I showed the people who visited my upstairs place there, you see this chair? This is the vectors where they meet. This is where everything has its origin. In the morning where I was this morning, I can't remember, it was 2 a.m. I'm always arguing with the Lord, couldn't you have waited at least an hour? I mean, wouldn't that have been just as adequate as two? But you don't argue, you're up when you're up, and invariably, it's against your convenience and against your rest.

And yet, so what came out of it? I read this, I read all my devotional material. I had my scripture of the psalm for today and the book of Proverbs for today. I took communion for today, but I'm not conscious that anything formidable has entered me by that devotional time.

But I would suspect that we would be having less this morning if it had not first taken place. So, whether or not there's a payoff, the Lord deserves that attention, and he's getting it from very few. No one had ever commended to me the need for a devotional time.

It came late in my Christian life. Your experience with him at Ben Israel would have been different if I had known it then and was practicing it then. So, this is where the mystery of incarnation has its nexus in devotion.

Isn't that remarkable? There is an impartation and a strengthening, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they require, again, a second baptism, and how many more, we don't know. So, we can't say that we have it and lean back on our haunches and go on with something where the stream has dried. And the Jew will test it.

That's been their function historically. To test the church and its presumptions and what it says about itself and its knowledge of God. And if you can pass that test, then there's no Greek who need intimidate you anywhere.

That's why it's to the Jew first. This gospel, not as a little abracadabra formula, but as the genius of God's redemptive plan for all mankind. It behooved him to empty himself.

We need to dwell on that text in Philippians, where Paul so nails it. And it says, have this mind in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, and what, how does it say? Not counting it presumptuous, did not insist, but forsook and emptied himself of that very thing. Have that mind in you, which was in Christ Jesus.

Have a mind that empties itself and humbled himself. What a humility for God to forsake himself as God, to forsake his deity and leave himself vulnerable and undefended with nothing more than the frailty of his own humanity and whatever could be added to it through faith in God the Father through relationship and devotion. He puts himself in a remarkably vulnerable, susceptible place from his very infancy, dependent

upon those who would care for that defenseless little entity called a child, an infant.

And yet he grew in grace. Think on that. Let's say that positionally, God can never forsake being God, but he can forsake employing his deity.

He can forsake employing his omnipotence and his omniscience and make himself therefore as frail and vulnerable as any other man. That would be a remarkable sacrifice. And in fact, that's where his birth began.

How did his life end? In death at the cross, that if a resurrection did not come to him from outside himself, by the glory of God the Father, he remains in death, the grave and in hell. So talk about emptying oneself and in complete confidence in a life and source outside from yourself was exhibited from his birth through to and including his death. And in that way, he is the complete patterned son that never forsook this so great principle of emptying.

So when I read you Forsythe, this is all the climax of our days will come through this remarkable English writer who had an apprehension and a sense of the mystery of incarnation beyond anything I've read from any other source. Just to compare these two, they're darling men, both of them. One is from Scotland.

And in fact, it may well be that Forsythe is Scottish born also. But one is out of the Reformation doctrinal theology, which is classic, goes back to the creeds of the church in the fourth and fifth century unvaryingly. And this man who says the issue is not substance and persons, even that language is too Greek and it limits God.

The mentality is not amenable to the mystery. And then he goes on to show the growth of Jesus in his humanity by the same means by which it's available to us. And it's a remarkable thing.

So we're being fitted for a climax that is rare. And how precarious is this little book? I went to Columbia University to hear a debate on the issue of Israel and the Palestinians. It was a dud.

And I went across the street to the teacher's college. What is it called? The girls college. They're right across from Columbia.

But they're a Jewish professor of theology who has written a book on Paul, was lecturing on life after death. And that proved the dud. And so I came all that way from Brooklyn on the subway, an hour and a half each way.

And many times I'm going home at night. They change the route and you have to change trains for this train, that train. And it's just a drag.

And both things have failed that seemed so promising. So the thought came to me, from whence I don't know, why don't you visit the used bookstore just around the corner from Columbia where you've been before? So I walked over to the used bookstore. I said, you have a theology department? They pointed me to a section.

And I came to that section. This book was lying on the top of books. I picked it up.

Oh, P.T. Forsythe. Yes, the cruciality of the cross that I had in a little booklet form. The person and place of Jesus Christ.

I'm looking through. 15 bucks. That's too extravagant.

Now you can't indulge yourself. And I looked at another book and I said, any discount for senior citizens? He said, I'll give you both books for, I don't know what, 15 or 20. Sold.

And I took this book home. And even on the subway, *mamma mia*, what insight, what fidelity to the English language, what remarkable conceptual power, what fresh way of perceiving the ultimate reality of God. As I will be reading to you tomorrow if I'm here for class, but certainly Wednesday and thereafter until we consider this remarkable statement.

So be prepared for a treat. But you're not going to come to it if you first don't labor through the issue yourself. That's why those questions were given.

To heighten your sensitivity and your own grappling with the great mystery of incarnation so that when we hear from this man who has grappled, we will receive all the more of the benefit because we've done some homework of our own. Can you take a little statement from John Murray before we end today? And this is a commendable man, but very exacting. He talks about the hypostatic union.

This is the word that the Greeks, the theologian of the early church in their council at Chalcedon in Icaea came up with. How do you reconcile the issue of the deity of God and the humanity of man in Christ? They talked about a hypostatic union, the doctrine of the two natures in one person, and the formulation of Chalcedon, one and the same son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood, perfect deity, perfect humanity, subsumed together in one person, the Lord Jesus, truly God and truly man. This is the classic formulation.

Consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead and consubstantial with us according to the manhood. One with God in deity, one with man in his humanity. To be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusably, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of nature is not being taken away by the union.

Can you get that formulation? Two natures, two wills, how to be reconciled? And from which of these is Jesus acting as the God-man in his earthly tenure? One person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons. It's Jesus, the person, is made up of the two natures in union, in deity and humanity, perfect in both. One and the same son, the only begotten God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is admirably summed up in the Westminster Confession. And that's the more modern day translation of these earlier church councils. This is from Westminster.

And every true son of a reformed family learned the Westminster Confession by heart. Something that would never have required of us. In which they would recite two whole, perfect and distinct natures, that Godhead and the manhood were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion.

The divine is not changed into the human, nor accommodated to the human, nor is the human transmitted into the divine, no conversion. East is east, west is west, never the twins shall meet. They can't meet, because they are by nature inextricably opposed.

You can't mix God with man, oil with water. That's what they're saying in their formulation. The divine and the human do not coalesce, so as to form a third.

There's no third thing created by the union of the two natures. No composition, neither are the natures mixed. No confusion.

The case is that of duality, with each nature possessing and exercising its own attributes without interference, curtailment or modification. Duality in every respect, in which the created is the antithesis of the uncreated. What the person is in the virtue of the one nature is in sharp contrast with what he is in virtue of the other.

This contrast applies to the spheres of consciousness, intelligence and will. Cut and dry, this is it. Two natures given, opposed, perfect in both, in union somehow, but they cannot be mixed.

So each nature is possessing and exercising its own attributes without interference, curtailment or modification. The question is when are they exercising this? Who is crying out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Is it the deity of Jesus or the humanity of Jesus? Who is saying, if you see me, you see the Father, I am the Father of one? The deity of Jesus or the humanity of Jesus? Who is drinking the cup in the garden and will not allow it to pass? Is it the humanity of the Son or the deity of God? Who is saying, if you see me, you see the Father, I am the Father of one? The deity of Jesus or the humanity of Jesus? Who is drinking the cup in the garden and will not allow it to pass? Is it the humanity of the Son or the deity of God? See, it raises great questions. If it's deity, well, good for him.

We could admire that, but can't hope ourselves to emulate or to attain to it, because we're not God. But if it's his humanity, because he lay aside drawing from his deity, then there's hope for us in the deity from which we can draw in our humanity. So I wrote in the margin here, but which was employed at any time? Yes, you've given a correct doctrinal statement, but you've not shown us from which source did Jesus draw at any moment? Did he draw from his deity or his humanity, if they cannot be mixed? I'm asking the question, which was employed at any time? Why do we assume that the miracles were the result of divinity rather than faith? Why do we assume that the raising of the dead of Lazarus or the daughter who died and that Jesus said, she's not dead, she's asleep and brought her forth and the various other miracles of the man who was born blind to receive his sight.

Why do we assume that because they are miracles, they are the expression of deity? They are the expression of the power of God that was accessible to Jesus, but not to us. Why can we not question what we saw there, including the raising up of the young man in Mark 9 who had been thrown into the fire and foaming at the mouth and left as one dead, was not that he could perform what the disciples could not? Why could we not cast him out? Well, because I'm God and because I could exercise a power not available to you. That's why I could do what you couldn't.

Then why does he rebuke them? How long do I have to suffer you? Why does he give that rebuke as if he had every right to expect that they could have cast out that demon? So, he's not saving that son out of his deity, but out of his humanity by faith in a relationship with the father by which the reality of deity and its authority is conferred to the son in and through his humanity and works and succeeds in delivering him and raising him up out of death. When he extended his arm, the people there said, this young man, he's dead. He's not just been cast down, he's now dead.

Jesus stretched forth his arm and he raised him up. There's an expression of resurrection power by which Jesus himself later is to be raised, now being expressed even before his death and his resurrection. And the question is, by what power was that performed? Through the person in the nature of his deity or the perfect humanity? If you lay aside the deity, it was the humanity.

What was the humanity in which deity was imputed and obtained through devotion and faith and worship in relationship with the father, which evidently the disciples lacked or they could have performed that miracle themselves. And he upgraded them for that lack because he expected that they would have every reason to be in the same relationship with the father as he. And what's his statement to us today? What's his categorical rebuke to us? Why could you not deliver? Why are you not delivering? Why are you failing to express my reality and my power? It's because you are as lazy and as indifferent and you're sleeping when you should be up.

And even at Garden of Gethsemane, they slept. And he said, you could not watch for an hour? Watching is to prayer what fasting is to the body. You could not for an hour give up your sleep? Well, rest already because soon enough you'll be betraying me.

You could not watch to indulge into your flesh, into your bodily need, which Jesus, don't you think he was exhausted? You dear guys, the demands that were made upon him, the thousands that crowded upon him, the messages that he had to give out of a boat to avoid the crush of a crowd, the miracles that the daily responsibility to represent the father and an environment that was so inimical and hostile to God, though it was religious. And the powers of darkness that brooded over this man were continually pressing upon him. Don't you think he was exhausted that he could not have enjoyed an undisturbed rest that he had to be up while it's yet dark and find a place alone to seek the father.

If he and his humanity and his devotion as a son could fight against the necessity for the gratification of flesh, what then are we not able? So this is the mystery that waits for fulfillment. It was the person of the son and he alone who took human nature to himself into union with his divine nature in one divine person. Of this construction in Catholic, the universal doctrine has been to the effect that the human nature was not itself hypostatic, that is personal.

There was only one person and this person was divine. So his statement would be that Jesus wore his miracles by the employment of his own deity and his own, the power of God. That was his ever with the father and that though he may have emptied himself of omniscience, he did not empty himself of power and that was what is exercised in the critical moment.

This is classic reform theology, very much at odds with PT Forsyth which you'll hear later because they cannot reconcile how the created thing could be in union with the creator. But if it can be and in fact it's the intention of God and in fact glorifies God and shows God forth that it takes, not only does it take God for us to be a man, it takes a man for God to be God. I know this sounds heretical, that without manhood God could not show himself as God or come into the fulfillment of God.

That there's a human thing necessary for God as there's a divine thing necessary for our humanity. That this is the mystery, that though it sounds scandalous and heretical that if you detach the human from the divine, you have neither the divine or the human. The human is only human when the divine is operative, appropriated and is the life force because without God what is man but a physical thing that is hardly better than animals and without the moral character of God in fact becomes bestial and worse than animals.

It takes God to be a man but to what degree does God require man for the showing forth of himself and the fullness of what deity is and that in fact that humanity so to speak in character and morally as Forsyth suggests was available to God in his pre-incarnate life. That's why Christ in us is the hope of glory. The issue of the union of these natures and their expression as God himself orders it in his sovereignty and will

by those who are leaning and will not initiate out of their own humanity something other or different from his own will and desire.

So he can express that deity through the yielded humanity that Jesus himself exemplified as a son. This is mystery but it's mystery that waits on fulfillment and the hour is now. So let's end this morning with a prayer but not a prayer that we compose out of our unaided humanity but out of our humanity suffused with his deity so that he is the source.

That's why Jesus said the father is greater than I. How can that be if they're both God? What he means is greater as the source of which I am the acting out but the source is his word, his thought, his act. Let incarnation now be expressed in our prayers and then in our worship and then in our service, then in our testimony, then in our ministry, then in our marriages, then in our fatherhood and motherhood and brotherhood and the church will be the church and God will have obtained his glory. Let's pray.

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