

# The Preached Word

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the profound significance and eternal implications of preaching as a divine calling that requires a heartfelt response from both the speaker and the hearers.*

**Duration:** 1:06:25

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 6:4, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "Word Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not underestimating the significance of preaching the word of God. He cautions against being melodramatic or having grandiose notions about the service, but instead recognizes it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for eternity to break into time. The preacher shares his personal experience of feeling inadequate and uncomfortable as a preacher, but acknowledges that this discomfort is necessary for growth and formation. He also highlights the importance of seeking guidance from God through devotion and scripture reading to receive the message to be preached.

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## Transcript

Good evening you dear saints. Isn't this all strange? Unrealistic? Is this really taking place? This is a set from a movie. A little church in Canada and a foolish preacher.

I don't know where I said it somewhere today, I said we never get used to this. It is forever strange. And even the Lord says that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Preaching is a foolish endeavor. It's a foolish phenomenon. It's at the heart of the church.

It's the purpose for the church's being. The church lives from the preached word. And the church lives to send out the word of proclamation.

Preaching is the name of the game. And I have never ever spoken a message on preaching per se as a message till tonight. It's come up in our conversation in that lunchtime session.

And someone had transcribed something that I had shared at our recent summer convocation. On preachers of righteousness. So, let me pray.

Lord, redirect me if I'm barking up the wrong tree. If this is just my own personal fancy and not your appointed subject and theme, I think you're powerful enough to redirect me. But and if, somehow, in the wisdom of God, it behooves your people to understand something of the phenomenon of preaching, and this is your intention, then I invite you, Lord, to give me grace to share it.

For surely, I feel foolish. I always feel foolish. And maybe we are condemned to foolishness in the wisdom of God and suspect that anyone who comes up to the pulpit leaping with assurance and even enjoyment that something is amiss.

If he doesn't come up dragging his feet like a snail and feeling strangely out of it and what he's being expected to perform to bring your word to men out of his own humanity, then it must be something other than the preaching of righteousness. So, I ask your blessing, Lord. Sink something deep into the foundations of the church, of this community, and beyond.

Bless those who are called to be proclaimers of your word. Give us, my God, a new, deep apprehension of this remarkable thing which you have made the center of your activity. Bless it on the feet of them who proclaim the good news.

How shall they believe except they hear? And how shall they hear except one preach? And how shall one preach except he be sent? Teach us what these things mean, my God. Enhance our whole appreciation for the preached word that we might sustain our preachers in prayer and not look to them as glib professionals who can somehow pull it off. Look, my no hands.

May we enter into their anguish and to their consternation and to their palpitations and to their tremblings to stand from this holy place and to send forth your word before your people in the point of time that shall not be given again. Deepen our whole appreciation, my God, for this phenomenon and the church out of whose bosom it comes and the world into whom it goes. We thank and give you praise, Lord, and bless you for the strangeness of this occasion and the topic, my God, it has pleased you to finger.

Bless it now. Grant grace, Lord, grace for speaker and hearer alike. We thank and give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, the difference between a preacher of righteousness and a preacher who is a professional. I spoke today about the gift of gap.

I've been around long enough that I'm beginning to become a little wary of men who are fluent and have easy ability that don't choke and splutter like me. How come they're not gasping? How come the words tumble out so effortlessly? How come they say it so cleverly and so properly? Because a real preached word will always be in disjunction and in opposition with the tenor, the spirit, and the wisdom of the world. God's mind and God's thought is other and contrary to that which the world accepts as wisdom, as being conventional, as being proper.

The word of the Lord is always in opposition to those things that men esteem and look upon as being prestigious. What the preacher has to do is to bring the divine perspective to them. He's got to bring the heavenly vista, the perspective of God to those that are dwelling on the earth.

Because they're living in la-la land. They're living in the land of make-believe and fantasy and false values and deception and darkness and lies. The whole world lies in the wicked one who is a liar from the beginning.

And it doesn't know it. It's deceived and doesn't know it. So the word of God brings the divine perspective, the truth of God.

It's a shaft of light. It cuts in. And therefore, it's going to be an inconvenience to be considered.

It's going to require something. In fact, I would say, if we hear a word preached that requires of us nothing, it is not likely to be the word of God. The word of God is not an amusement.

It's not a convenience. It's not to fill in the Sunday hour. The word of God is holy proclamation.

The word of God is a timed event in which the present truth as it is in Jesus needs now to be expressed in a point of time and place. And that word will always require something from us. You might almost say the church is moving from faith to faith and glory to glory by its response in obedience to what is required from it by the word that is preached to it.

Got the picture? We need to heighten our whole expectation about the word. God forbid that we should ever fall into a state in which preaching or the word is predictable or just fills in the hour or we can yawn our way through it or it's biblical. The fact that it's biblical does not make it God's word.

Anyone with any measure of wit and ability can go through a concordance and find certain scriptures on any particular theme and construct a message. Well, Art, what's the difference between that and the word of God? It employs scripture. Isn't scripture the word of God? Well, positionally, but it's the word of God when it's appointed, when it's quickened, when it comes out of a divine intent for a given time and place.

Like, for example, tonight. Well, what if I should miss it? What if I should be speaking something that I like to explore and is not the heart of the Lord or the Lord's mind for now, for this time? So, what, have we missed an evening? Well, you know, you win some and you lose some. It's only a service, Art.

Don't get excited. Don't get melodramatic. Don't have grandiose notions that this service is a once and for all that will not be given again.

Because that's just the way I happen to look at it. It's a once and for all that will never be given again. It's eternity breaking into time and we dare not miss it.

So, how can you know with assurance that this is what the Lord wants you to speak? Well, I don't know with assurance. I'm trembling. I'm sitting there fidgeting.

I'm agitated. I'm uncomfortable. I'm looking for the exit.

Isn't there a better way to make a living? It's an anguish, saints. The preacher of righteousness does not come running up as God's man of faith and power and smiling from ear to ear and he's got a neat little thing to go forth. He's wrestling.

He has taught the Lord as much as time will allow. And he thinks and has a disposition that this might be the word. But there's always the question that he may miss it.

But there comes a time when he's called up and he has to begin to speak. That happened last night. Were you there? How would you like to have been on the spot? The hour strikes and you're required to open your mouth.

It's a terrible paradox, an ungainly tension that the preacher of righteousness has to face. He could seek the Lord with all sincerity, fastings and prayers, and believe that he has the Lord's mind and thought. And yet when it comes to opening his mouth, there's always the prospect that maybe you've missed it.

And yet you're required to speak. You know what I'm really saying? I'm not just describing some professional quandary that is peculiar to men who have this election. I'm really, in the largest sense, describing what it means to be a believer.

What it means to be obedient to God. What it means to be faithful. What it means to give a word of witness in the time of the Lord and to whom and when and by what means and by what word.

If I did not receive the word of the Lord 36 years ago, in the time of my ultimate distress as an unbelieving Jew, ready to die in frustration and hopelessness, I'd be dead today. But the man who picked me up from the side of the road in Switzerland didn't say, Are you saved, brother? He didn't quote John 3.16. In fact, he didn't say anything. But did he ever listen? And as I poured my soul out to a Gentile stranger, this guy was drawing out the coiled tensions and conflicts and hopelessness and despair of a modern man who saw no hope for the future.

And when I finished pouring out my medley of complaint, I looked at this guy. He was nothing conspicuous to look at. I thought, What's he going to tell me? I'm an ex-Marxist, university graduate history teacher, well-read.

There's nothing new under the sun. And he said to me with a quiet but assured voice, Artie said, Do you know what it is that the world needs? I thought, Boy, this guy knows how to ask the questions. I'm dying for what the world needs.

And we Jews have been largely responsible for that world. We Jews have given this world Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx and every other German Jewish genius that has profoundly affected the world and the way it thinks and operates. And it's a dying world.

Yeah, I want to know what the world needs. Double dare you to tell me. And I leaned forward with such a scowling cynicism, Boy, it would have scared you to death.

And this man looked up at me and he said, Artie said, What the world needs is for men to wash one another's feet. And down I went. Talk about an ox being felled by the power of God, a spiraling down.

I sat on the chair with my arms folded over my chest. I didn't look in any way affected. Don't let that fool you when you're witnessing to Jews that they're not at all impressed.

Something is happening inside. Explosive. But my spirit was on the floor whimpering because that statement had touched the deepest strands of my heart.

What the world needs is for men to wash one another's feet. And all of a sudden I had a vision of the angry hot shots of the world who are going to change the world and bring bloodbaths with their Bolshevik revolutions and their strategies and plans, humbling themselves to wash the feet of the lowly and the despised. And something went up like a cry, Eureka, this is it.

The world doesn't need plans and programs. It needs a spirit of humility. What if that guy had said, Are you saved, brother? Do you know Jesus? Do you know who I'd be today, saints? Dead.

Even if he had quoted John 3.16, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, I'd be dead. Because for him to employ John 3.16 at that critical moment, and it was not the word given of God by the spirit, it would have fallen to the ground with a thud. The word of the Lord is the now, rhema, speaking of God out of his own wisdom in the moment of time through a vessel yielded and available to that speaking.

It's a perilous thing to be a believer. We can't do this by the numbers. We can't do this mechanically.

It requires such a disposition before God. And the first requirement is that you're free from your own agenda. You have nothing to perform and nothing to prove.

You're available to God. And what if the Lord would have given that man something harsh to say to me, as I have been given to say to Jews in the course of my believing life? I've seen God slap men in the face with my word. And that arrested them.

But supposing I would have thought, it's not nice to talk like that. You don't want to lose this guy. Look at Jesus with Nicodemus.

A sincere man and a ruler of the Jews, a religious leader. And Jesus mystifies him and perplexes him that he must be born again or he cannot see and he cannot enter the kingdom. Must I through a second time pass through my mother's womb? Jesus did not alleviate his tension.

He compounded it by mystifying and perplexing him yet more. Not because he took a delight in confusing the man, but because the man was asking an earthly question and he was receiving a heavenly answer. And Jesus trusted the father who gave that answer to bring about the right result in his own time.

What a feather in anyone's cap to lead a Nicodemus to the Lord, a leader of the Jewish community. Wow, what a prize. We better handle this right.

Step one, step two. We were given the whole nomenclature, how to be saved. Jesus confused him.

He even said no man can ascend to heaven who has not first come down from heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven. He's speaking about himself. While he's talking to Nicodemus in the earth, he's saying the son of man who is in heaven.

He's confusing time and space. But he's speaking the truth. Because though he was physically in the earth, the source of his speaking and of his being was above.

And he was speaking from that place. Speaking is a remarkable phenomenon. Have you noticed lately? Or are you mumbling your way through life? Do you prize and esteem the thing that is given to us and no other creature, the ability to speak, to put words together, to express thought, to pray, to witness, to convey, to communicate, to articulate.

It's a remarkable phenomenon. But those who spoke God's word in that first apostolic generation, of them it was said they turned the world upside down. What kind of words were they speaking? They were controverting and contradicting everything that was established and understood, whether they were speaking to Jews or to Greeks.

They turned that world upside down. They brought a contrary word, another sense of things that has its origin in heaven and is truth. So the preacher of righteousness has an unwelcome task of an ultimate kind that requires an ultimate unction.

Because his words require a response from the hearer. Such words cannot be heard and passed over merely as being interesting or biblical or inspirational or instructive. If God is speaking through a man, something is required.

And usually, as the true word of the Lord, it's the man's life. The thing that the Lord is requiring is the death of the hearer. He's raising the issue of the cross for those who have not submitted to it.

And it's not a welcome word. And you know where the resistance is the greatest? To the cross and the message of total surrender to God, which is death, in the church. So the speaker has to look out on stony faces.

And that's why the Lord has said to me many times, don't look at their faces. You don't know what is churning up in their guts. You don't know the depth of the conflict that they're going through and why they're looking so sullen.

Because you're touching things that they can't even articulate, their ambition, their career, their hopes for the future. You're raising up a standard that begins to give them a chill and they would rather stick their fingers in their ear and run if they could. Or gnash upon you with their teeth.

Or stone you to death for bringing the unwelcome and demanding word. I'm not expecting to die in bed, saints. And wouldn't it be ironic that when my end comes, it doesn't come from outraged Jews, it might come from outraged Christians who will kill me and claim they're doing God a service.

Well, whether that's true or not, those of us who are called to be preachers or desire to be so used need to understand that that might well be the ultimate requirement. And how are you going to call your hearers to the cross and to death if you yourself have not come to it? You want to know why the same text and the same message from two speakers, one will leave the hearers totally unmoved and they'll sit and they'll yawn and walk away and what are we eating for lunch? And the other one using the same text, the same verses, and speaking essentially the same message leaves the people hanging on the ropes. How is that? Because for the first one, it's only a message.

For the second, he is the message. He's come to the cross that he's putting before his hearers. He is a man brought back out of the dead and in fact his proclamation is itself a death.

It's an anguish for him to try and grope and form and find his way through that word. With all the while, the possibility that it might not even be the word of the Lord and you've missed the occasion that will not be given again. Well, there's always tomorrow, Art.

Yeah, but this occasion tonight will never be given again. It's a once and for all. You can be there tomorrow.

The exact same congregation will not have this once and for all thing that God has given. You can't enter this stream twice. It's a holy moment.

It's eternal. It has significance for this life and beyond and the life to come. And you know what Paul said about that? Who is sufficient for these things? I don't even want to take a poll but have you ever had to cry that out? Who is sufficient for these things? You know that there are numbers of Christians, I would suspect the majority and even the majority of ministers who will go an entire lifetime in Christian service and never once have the occasion to cry out who is sufficient for these things.

Because for most occasions we think ourselves sufficient. You're only rattled with your insufficiency when you are convicted that this situation before you is a once and for all that's not to be given again and that eternity itself is at stake. Then you can say who is sufficient for these things.

I'm saying it tonight. Because the speaker knows that once that word goes forth those who have heard it are accountable. Dun-da-dun-dun.

Paul at Mars Hill. They call them a rag picker. What is this bumbler going to say? And some said we'll hear again of this matter and never did.

But some clave unto Paul and believed. There's a once and for all in the great capital city of Athens and once you've heard Paul, just once you are eternally accountable for that hearing. To hear Paul once is to put you before God as eternally accountable.

You don't have to hear five or ten or a hundred other speakers. One apostolic proclamation by the spirit of God and the word that is given and the strange message that Paul gave that the God who made the heaven and the earth is not worshipped by things made by man's hands. That he accused his hearers who are always seeking for the unknown God.

Him proclaim I to you. The arrogance of Paul, the assurance of Paul to speak the message of Jesus crucified and the message of resurrection to Greeks who never had any background in the Bible at all. He wasn't speaking to Jews who were conversant with these things.

He's speaking to atheistic pagans and holding them accountable for a message on Jesus and the resurrection. And yet some clave unto Paul and believed. To hear Paul once is to be eternally accountable.

How about us? To hear us once for someone to receive your witness once will they be eternally accountable? Or you just have quoted some convenient verse or been man-pleasing or compromising or condescending. The preacher who gives an invitation that is the issue of eternity cannot ask of another what he has not given himself. He has to speak spiritual words with spiritual thoughts.

God is both the Alpha and the Omega of his speaking. Anyone who has ever stood at the pulpit, the holy desk knows that he knows that he doesn't know how to begin and he doesn't know how to end. That's me folks and I'm not appealing for your sympathy.

I'm appealing for your understanding because God is wanting to restore apostolic and prophetic reality. He wants to move us from the realm of religion and glib speaking and predictable things into the realm of moment by moment dependency upon God and words that we can't wait to hear because we know we have to live from the word of God that proceeds from his mouth and it's going to come out of the mouth of our preacher. We're not coming for a service, we're coming for a life-giving intrusion from God that's going to require something and change something.

We've got to graduate, we've got to come up and out of this predictable, safe, religious environment that is comforting of a kind but leaves us unchanged. And if we're going to come out of it, it's going to be in proportion to the word, to the word of God preached. I don't know whether to cry or laugh because there were words and words but the word preached.

What is this preach? God forbid, Paul says, if I preach not the gospel. Through the foolishness of preaching, God saves those who will believe. What is preaching? It's a particular form of proclamation.

It's a particular form of address. It requires a cooperation between a man who is conscious of his humanity and its limitations and the invisible God and the power of his life through his spirit which is the resurrection. Having to come together in a moment of time to bring forth the word unto conviction and change.

It's a remarkable phenomenon and only the church knows it and has the privilege of it and has to produce the environment out of which preachers come. How shall they believe in him of whom they've not heard and how shall they hear except one preach and how shall one preach except he be sent? Sent from where? Bible school? A three month course in discipleship? Sent out of the bosom of a believing apostolic community who has suffered that man in its midst and has encouraged his growth as he chokes and splutters his way through to feeling his wings and coming into the maturity and purpose of God by first being tested on the congregation itself. A man like that is going to spoil your services.

If you give him a chance to open his mouth because he's not polished, because he's spluttering because just when you know that you're hearing something from God he's going to lapse into the flesh and into his humanity. He's feeling his way. He needs to be critiqued but lovingly.

He needs to be encouraged. You need to draw his heart out because you're drawing out the heart of God. These preachers don't come full blown.

Hey listen, I was a high school teacher for years and an articulate man but when God called me to the Lord's service you don't bring natural human gifts to the proclamation of God's word. In fact, my first experience, I was sharing it somewhere today with someone was a terrible and painful emptying out of any human resource that I had until the time of my conversion. I was a better teacher as an atheist than I became as a believer.

Much more engaging. Much more fluent. Much more personable.

Those students would eat out of my hands. When I came back to the same school district after a 14 month leave of absence as a believer what a mess. We couldn't put a sentence together.

They used to laugh up their sleeves. Oh he's ridiculous. What an awkward picture this guy is.

He's walking into walls. What happened to your charm cats? What happened to your ability to speak and to inspire? Gone. And it was like that for months.

That to go to school every day was the ascent to the cross. I knew it was going to be a day of humiliation and failure. And what heightened the paradox all the more is that I was not now content merely to communicate history.

I was wanting to communicate salvation. Because I had more access to these students than their pastors or their parents. What happened to my classroom was the issue of eternity for these kids.

And here I am stumbling and tripping and walking into walls. No personality. No attractiveness.

No fluent ability to inspire. And it went on for months. It was dying.

But it was the crucible out of which a preacher is formed. Are you willing for this? You're not going to get it in three months or a year in a Bible school. It's a fiery furnace of humiliation.

And humiliation is death. Especially when it's before 35 kids five times a day with your colleagues looking and snorting down their noses at your failure. And you're a Christian.

It took months before the Lord sent me a man to explain my predicament. I said, brother, I don't know what's happening to me. I was more successful as an atheist than I am now as a believer.

And I have all of this intent to touch the lives of my students. I'm a mess. I can't put anything together.

I have no personality. Oh, he said, don't you know what's happening? No, I don't know. He said, God is emptying you out.

That you would have no confidence in the flesh. I don't have much confidence right now. Or at any time.

You don't know how to begin and how to end. You think I came to Dunville with a game plan? Or how to bring revival? Or a series of clever messages? I came. But I came out of Quebec, out of Montreal and out of Vermont and out of previous commitments right up to the last moment.

And all I could do was bring the tired body here and begin by beginning as those of you who were there last night observed. Painful, awkward, spasms. And tonight, is this the proper use of this night? Who's sufficient for these things? Who knows the beginning from the end? Who knows what is appropriate in the wisdom of God for this people in this locality? I don't know it.

But to trust. To come up reluctantly. How did I get into this? Who asked with such a calling as this? It's not a delight, it's an anguish.

But God has got to be the Alpha and the Omega. You guys hold tight. And I don't know what the end will be.

I don't know tomorrow morning or the final message tomorrow night. But if my God is as faithful as he has up to now always been, when the last word comes and we'll look back on the spate of these messages, we will see in them at the end the line upon line and the precept upon precept. And that God gave us an Alpha beginning and he's going to give us an Omega ending.

But that ending will be a day of new beginning for those who have received the word. And who could have known it? Are you guys praying for your preachers? I was sharing this morning, I'm astonished how often I'll come to a church on an occasion and sit in the pastor's office minutes before the service is to begin and there's not a thought about a word of prayer. There's a kind of unspoken presumption that somehow Kid Katz is going to pull it off.

That somehow the professional can do it and we don't need to consult God or appeal to him or pray. That somehow there's a convenient grace always available. All we have to do is begin and it'll come.

What presumption? It's only possible from the people who don't understand the dynamic, the paradox, the contradiction, the tension of trying to bring a heavenly utterance from the throne into the earth of Dunville, Canada in a point of time that cannot be missed. That know that it's an anguish that requires prayer. The seeking of the Lord.

The going aside and out of the room to go down to the basement or a prayer room and pray while the man is speaking that the heavens might be opened and that he might have utterance and be able to speak as he ought. If we're going to hear the word of the Lord and we desperately need it not messages, the word of the Lord we're going to have a people who come into a new understanding and a willingness of sacrifice to pray before and during those messages and after. Hey, I just came back from Oklahoma.

The university, the state How does it go? Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

And in the first prayer meeting with the Baptist pastor in his congregation and I opened my mouth and I heard myself praying blow winds blow with gale force from the east and the west and the north and the south come my God and course through the institutions of the university the secular and religious of this city and perform what you will in force, in gale force and as I'm praying I have a little vision of the sign outside the church on a stanchion blown off the stanchion and hanging by the thin conduit wire that keeps the thing from crashing to the ground and it's at an awkward grotesque angle and they tried to brush that away and I said, no, no, I said to the Baptist pastor unless you're willing to see the sign of your church knocked off its stanchion which symbolizes the whole tidy

little thing that you'd like to have remain we are praying in vain for the spirit of God to blow are you willing to have your sign knocked over and dangling grotesquely if the spirit of God will blow through in the kind of force that is needed in these last days well I can tell you that God answered that prayer and the poor saints who invited me are now catching it having to explain me and apologize for me and how come this and how come that and the protocols that somehow were offended and to which I was oblivious it was an event that shook that city, its churches and its academic institutions because the Lord answered that prayer so if you come to the pulpit after this too glibly, too easily, too enthusiastically you're probably disqualified you need to come up reluctantly how did I get

into this I'm a piece of foolishness and the preacher not only preaches the message he preaches Christ and he even preaches Christ when Christ is not the explicit subject of his message every message that is a true preaching is the preaching of Christ even when Christ is not himself the subject how can that be when Paul says to preach Christ because there's something if it's the word of the Lord he is that word it's something about him that reveals about him that expresses himself if it's a prophetic word it is the spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus the preacher is not only proclaiming he's setting forth and demonstrating something of the reality of the Lord in preaching Christ even when Christ is not explicitly the subject it's a mystery and where does the poor sap get

his message in the early morning hours in his time of devotion turning through the verses of the book of Psalms and the chapter for that day or some devotional reading or something quickened in the scripture and he gets excited and the foolish guy might even make some notes and pictures that night speaking from that with great freedom and relish and but you know what happens by the time that the night comes and he opens his bible and he stands up before God's people and he looks at his outline and his notes stone cold dead where's the excitement of that early morning hour it has chilled it has dissipated away and now the poor man needs to decide was that indeed the Lord's quickening and is this now the word even though I do not feel the same lift and excitement that I had in the discovery

in the early morning hours in the cold grey dawn or the hour that now is and if you're seeking the Lord for a message you're already barking up the wrong tree it's too utilitarian you ought to be seeking the Lord not for a message but because the Lord is the Lord your devotional time is not a utilitarian time by which if you

put in your time God is going to give you what you need that night it's not devotion unless it's free of any practical and utilitarian use to which you will put God if he quickens something for that night fine but you're not seeking him for that quickening you're seeking him for himself that's devotion and out of that devotion a word might be given but to seek the Lord for a word is no longer devotional but utilitarian got the idea? so preaching is an act of faith to

trust the Lord that what was quickened early is now his word though you no longer have that initial excitement and have to fight the battle of faith again in a kind of a death and a kind of overcoming believing and trusting and speaking as you look into stony faces I'll tell you the kind of furnace of affliction to which God puts his messengers like speaking at City College of New York 95% Jewish in the first gospel outreach in their history where months before in visiting the school and the Christian club or society that was in the school the spirit of God came down and so assured us that we would have this outreach that we knew that we knew God was appointing something and it was three months off we had plenty of time for prayer and plenty of time for fasting and preparation the first

gospel outreach in the City College of New York 95% Jewish and I have been in Harvard, Yale the University of California tubing in in Germany universities in Denmark and Europe but this is the first time in New York and the night before I was at Boston University and the Lord blessed it was rich and got to bed late and had to get up early the next morning to fly into New York City and got there and was picked up and driven to the school and walked into that auditorium and you stopped breathing every seat was taken and there was a murderous intent on the part of that audience for the man who was coming up to speak dignified Jews with van Dyck beards and yarmulkes on their heads educated knowledgeable came to do in this freak who was going to preach to them the gospel from a Gentile Bible

called the King James Version but I had seen what God had done at Harvard I knew what he had done the night before at Boston University what will he do now seeing that we have had so long a season of preparation of prayer and fasting and I opened my mouth and the text was Isaiah 6 I saw the Lord high and lifted up and when the first line went out of my mouth it went directly to the floor with a thud it was totally unanointed and I knew that I had had it it wasn't going to change and I just had to suck air and continue and finish my message without the anointing of God looking at the most hostile audience you could ever imagine waiting to do me in and when I opened for questions and answers they did so these distinguished men got up and not to receive this abuse from my Jewish kinsmen but

to look into the face of disappointed Christians who had hoped that this was going to be a remarkable event and you know what their face was saying cats, don't you know how to pray haven't you ever heard of fasting that's all I've been doing but where was God because you know what dear saints you can never have any assurance that God is going to be with you in the preached word at any given moment you might not only have missed the Lord or he has some other purpose to serve he's not under obligation to accommodate you and you have to take the possibility that though you experience the glory of God at Harvard where people were stupefied and riveted in their seats with their hands clasped over their mouths at the power of God that on this occasion it could be completely other and you have

no control over it you have to be willing for the glory of God that might come but also for the most disappointing failure and death the one or the other and that day at City College was death I went home with my tail between my legs and I wanted never again to speak publicly especially at a university or a college whatever gave me the presumption to think that I was called to such a thing and you know what the Lord said nothing he wasn't don't worry Art, I'll explain this to you later nothing, silence letting you learn

what it means to be responsible to bring the word of God whether it brings an evident blessing or a collapse that's the school of the Lord and after about three weeks I got a phone call from a Jewish lady whose voice I could hardly hear it was so weak Mr.

Katz can I come over I have some questions to ask you I'm a Jewish woman I said okay, can't you find anybody better but if you can't then come and so she came a chain smoker with one foot in the grave just emaciated shop worn done in by the world and asking me these questions about Jesus and finally with the last question she snubbed out her last cigarette and she said well what must I do to be saved so I told her and she was willing to follow me in a prayer and did clutching my hand, that little bony hand word for word and she passed from darkness to light she passed from death to life right before my eyes and I'm leading her out and putting her coat on her shoulders and I said by the way how is it that you came to me didn't I tell you that my son was at that meeting at City College

three weeks ago and he came home with your book and he said mum, something happened today unlike anything I've ever seen a Jewish man came and stood in the midst of a hostile audience and they were chewing him up and spitting him out and he answered them, not a word he said I've never seen such patience in the midst of such attack and I had to get his book and she said and I read it and I had these questions all of that suffering and that failed preaching was for one frail Jewish woman but what if there had not even been that what if there's no vindication at all what if you don't see any measure of the success of your word can you bear it will you be the bearer of the Lord's word if you have any need in yourself to be approved, to be honored, to be blessed to be applauded, to be

celebrated you've got to be able to bear the reproach, the disappointment and when God does vindicate and people are affected, you do not rise in your egotism or celebrate yourself because you know that you know that you know it's the mercy and the grace of God how does a man come to a place where he can be equally impervious either to compliments or to reproach and to abuse and have one thing only, to be faithful to the Lord and the word that he believes he's to speak, it's through the process of God in the congregation and in the church that will sustain and bear him and encourage him in such a walk and in such a call because the man is more than the proclaimer of the message the man is the message in himself so I was to speak to 500 students in Pensacola, Florida and they made the

mistake of taking me to lunch at a Chinese buffet and I was so bloated with food, I didn't think I could give my name, rank and serial number and when I looked out on the 500 people, they were all young, I thought how are these guys going to understand me and especially now I'm so overfed and I opened my mouth and as if a furnace door broke off of its hinges and the Lord poured out such a message of Israel's apocalyptic future, of the coming devastation of the nation of Israel that completely controverted all of their happy expectations for that people and made them aware that there's a devastation and a ruin coming into the land and that will affect Jews worldwide I haven't spoken to you that message yet but we're not finished yet and they were swept by the word of God and the power of

God and the anointing of God that confirmed the word as truth and when I finished, the head of the school came and took the sting out of the word and made nice and straightened it out and made it acceptable in such a way as to diffuse it and to lose its value and you have to bear that but the young people came up when it was over onto the platform and they were feeling me and touching me and looking like we have heard about prophets but you are the thing in itself the man is the message and that requires an extensive and intensive preparation from God to be the bearer of the word and be the word well let me try and finish because the man has not only to express the word of God but the mood of God he can't even interject his

own emotion or his own feeling sometimes he'll speak in a

monotone as I expressed in an earlier sharing this lunch time and sometimes you'll be carried away till you're almost falling off the platform with an emotion that's not your own even the mood and the disposition of the word is the Lord's he has to have so great a possession of the vessel that not only is the word his but the disposition of the spirit through which the word comes is equally his and you know when you face that when you come into a charismatic situation, amens and hallelujahs and people are having a ball and singing at the top of their lungs and have it all together and you are sitting there waiting to be called on feeling like a lump there's no rejoicing in your heart you cannot enter in to the amens and hallelujahs there's something that is false, it's superficial it's a

noise and there's no confirming witness in your own spirit to the truth of it and then you're called up to speak and you've got to make an instant decision whether you're going to speak in keeping with the mood of the congregation that seems to be unanimous and you're the only freako who has a different sense in your inner man completely at odds with what is being celebrated and you speak out of that painfully and if it's the Lord's word and the Lord's mood it will triumph over the religious excitement and the amen hallelujah atmosphere that has been generated but is false and needs to be pierced through and have the air let out from it and bring the people back to square one where truth is and where reality is and where God is waiting to meet them in the place of truth because you are

obedient to speak not in the word of God but out of the mood and the spirit of God completely in disjunction and in opposition to the prevailing mood that seems to sweep over all the people as being greatest success got the picture? will you be praying for us fellas? the Lord has to possess the man whose mood and his words are not his own and for all of the difficulties it's a rare privilege to be the bearer of God's word to be a preacher of righteousness not about righteousness but righteousness itself because if it's your word rather than the Lord's word it's already unrighteous however biblical however man pleasing, however successful it's not the preaching of righteousness because it's not God's word but yours you're only a preacher of righteousness when your word is God's word and

it's a word that requires and a word that calls to the cross and invites to death it's a righteous word it's God's word and you leave the result with him as I will tonight so Lord precious God on high the faithful one who in your own earthly tenure was also a preacher of righteousness and has called us my God to that great call we suspect my God that the ache of your heart as you have had to observe the decline and the degeneration of the preached word in our generation you have seen the glib hucksters who are personable and charismatic in their personalities and know how to touch the heart strings and how to manipulate and how to give invitations and how to affect congregations so that a whole generation is being raised up without the word of life without nutrition with biblical themes

my God that you may or may not have ordained and so I'm asking Lord for an elevation of your word an elevation of expectancy for the word of God that your preachers will believe that what they are speaking is indeed your word that they'll be willing to go through the furnace of affliction and the testings that will bring them to that place where they are wholly and totally dependent upon you and that there's a greater issue than their failure before men is having missed the Lord and they're willing for the anguish and the struggle of that I ask my God that you would give to your people in this locality a new respect for the preached word an anticipation that it is going to be God's that they will expect to hear from the mouth of their preachers God's own word with every intention of

receiving it and meeting the requirement of it and doing it by your grace Lord everything rests on the efficacy and the truth of your word that comes to us from the throne of heaven through men frail, sweating palpitating, fearful anxious, conflicted anguishing men bless them who have that call and bless those who will undergird them bless those who will be in prayer for them bless that church that can send such men into the earth whose feet will be blessed who bring the word of God's salvation from the holy mount because they have served their apprenticeship and tested their wings and were tried out and critiqued and encouraged in the bosom of the saints they were sent out of a believing body who know what the word of God means and were willing to bear up with the young preacher as he

comes to maturity in the exercise of it grow us up Lord my God grow us up break my God the religious familiar kinds of things the whole service mentality the enjoyment of it the psychic religious relief of it give us pastors who can send the congregation home unhappy agitated they are not going to get it in one sitting with a pretty bow around it that they can go home happy it's all done in one fell swoop let them be agitated let them wrestle let them seek the Lord let them be strained before God what is this man saying we want to be changed we need to be changed Lord we need to come of age and we are going to come to it through the word bless your word Lord and bless those who proclaim it give us a new respect, a new esteem a new intercession for those who bear it and we thank and give

you praise for this remarkable phenomenon the foolishness of preaching at the heart of the church at the mystery of the church of its call and of its purpose in the world and we thank you Lord help us with a little help my God in all of our infirmity and weakness and frailty bless tonight let it not be a dud but your intention even if it leaves us confused or bewildered or dissatisfied because we are en route to a conclusion that you have not yet given and that we don't know until you give it you are the alpha and the omega of our faith and we are holding steady and trusting that these are once and for all days that will not be given again and that you will even exceed any thought and intention that we had about revival come my God take the possession of these days give us your whole

heart and mind we thank and give you praise in Jesus name amen this just might be an occasion for you and for me to do something and I think as Art has spoken here there is certainly a message for you and for me and I wonder if tonight is an opportunity for the pastors and the preachers and the hearers to kind of connect as parties partners in the preaching of the gospel and I see Pastor Ralph Tenbrinky Jr. is here from Jubilee Faith Pastor Randy Raycroft is here and Tom Blackwood and Mike Lessard, I saw them over there from Calvary and Art Pastor preacher and pastor in a sense to some of us and you are hearers and I wonder if tonight is a time for you and the preachers, the pastors to come together and say you know we are in this together and while the pastor or the preacher may labor

over his message that he is going to bring maybe the hearers need to labor over their own preparation to hear as well so I wonder tonight just as we close and let's close the evening but these pastors are here and I'm going to ask you maybe before you leave tonight pastors and listeners to their sermons why don't you just get together and talk tonight and affirm one another challenge one another so we are in it together the Lord has something to say to both of us let's work it through together let's close Father we are grateful again for the ministry that you have challenged and charged our cats with the message that you have given to him tonight has come to us and we must do something with it and so would you now lead us in a time of connecting with one another and affirming one another

and challenging one another recognizing that we are learners together that we are pilgrims in the same journey walking the same road and heading to the same glory Father in heaven would you graciously give

us grace tonight as we bless one another in this endeavor preaching and hearing and we'll give you the glory, the praise the honor if it were not for you we would not be here we would not have the privilege

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