

# The Radical Kingdom - Part 3

by Art Katz

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*The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the mystery of the manifold wisdom of God and its practical consequences in the earth.*

**Duration:** 53:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 27:54, Acts 7:59-60, Ephesians 3:9-11, Ephesians 3:14, Ephesians 3:20

**Topics:** "Kingdom Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the church demonstrating the power of forgiveness and meekness in the face of unjust suffering. They highlight that this demonstration is not just a private matter but is connected to the cosmic design of the universe. The speaker also discusses the practical implications of this demonstration, explaining that it should be made on the same basis as Jesus' victory over the enemy. They emphasize the significance of suffering and how it reveals our final destiny and mission as witnesses for Christ. The sermon concludes with a mention of martyrdom and the invitation to ponder and search the Scriptures for further understanding.

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## Transcript

Well, I'm grateful to have made it through these first two sessions. I look forward to this conclusion. And it's something that I've never before spoken.

It's a mystery. And I pray that you're sufficiently alert to consider it and to receive it. I'm really taken up by it.

It's remarkable. I just want to proceed it by some references to martyrdom and then I'll go into it. And then depending on the time and the disposition and how the Lord will lead us, you still have a need to ask some questions.

We could conclude with some questions and answers. But it may be that some of your questions will be answered in this final session or the Lord just wants you to take them home. Ponder them yourself and search the Scripture yourself.

So I just ask you to be led of the Spirit and not just automatically want to divest yourself of a curiosity. We have to learn to bear the burden of unanswered questions and to receive the answer in the time and the way that the Lord often wants to give it and not just at the convenience of the place where the question

has arisen. So let's be real sensitive how we shall move with the Lord in the conclusion of this last session.

So let's pray together. Precious God, we're grateful. We can see that we have been led by the Most High.

This has been an unfolding of your mind. Who has been your counselor? Who has known the mind of the Lord? And what shall we say, Lord, for what I sense is before us now in a mystery of something that you want to express. And in that you have been so faithful to bring us this far, bring us all the way through in these immediate days.

We just want to acknowledge, Lord, that we count ourselves as privileged to have been, my God, in the place of hearing, in the place of dealing, in the place of transaction, in the place of apostolic and kingdom call. Come now, my God, as you are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, bring now the conclusion to what you have begun. Seal it.

Let it be perfect. Let it be, my God, the piece of history that we have asked of you. Be with me now, Lord, to move through this material in the way that it shall please you by your Spirit.

Give us hearing ears again, I pray, and we'll thank you and praise you for all of your goodness to us, the richness of the counsel of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Someone has written that for anyone to proclaim the absolute kingship of Christ and the necessary exercise of dominion by Christians in terms of God's law is to declare war on the world and to incur its wrath and hostility. I want to say that if we have or are taking seriously what God is speaking to us, in these immediate days we will put ourselves on a collision course for suffering. So long as we're content to play some lesser kind of game, this will not be any threat or risk.

But the moment that our intent is serious to see a kingdom realized and the righteousness and the law of God made known to men and the warning of an imminent judgment, you can be assured that reproach and persecution, suffering, if not martyrdom, will be our portion. And I'd like to make this a complete topic, and I regret that we don't have the time for it in itself, but I just will throw it out to you to consider. And I think I made a passing reference in the beginning.

Martyrdom is God's normative intention for every saint. It's not the experience of the few. It's not some kind of, what shall I say, minority experience for those who didn't play their cards right or those who had some particular election in God to suffer.

You shall be witnesses unto me. The Greek word is *martyria*. You shall be martyrs unto me.

True witness is martyrdom. And I don't believe that we're living truly unless we're prepared to die truly. One of the reasons why we're not living truly is because we have no anticipation of a martyr's death and therefore we have not seen to a martyr's preparation.

The issue is not so much as whether our lives are going to ultimately be required of us, but that we ought to live in the anticipation that they will. And I believe that this is true apostolic expectation, and of course it is absent from the church. It won't be if we take God seriously.

Nothing has changed. The world is still at enmity with God. We will not have this man to rule over us.

It is still the world's mindset. Man wants to exercise his own dominion and is happy with any man who diminishes or denies the kingship of Christ. But he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.

And so the issue is joined, and there are going to be sparks and increasing conflict and collision. I don't have time and I've got the material with me, but not the time to read it. Of the last epistle of Jacob Hutter, the founder of the Hutterites, one of the Anabaptist streams of men who suffered this kind of persecution and martyrdom.

And when you read the swelling apostolic phrases of that literature, you see that they saw that martyrdom was the logic of their faith. It was the inevitable conclusion to which their faith would bring them, and they anticipated it with joy. It was not some kind of dread anticipation, but a joyous climax.

So something is grievously wrong. Either they were weirdos who had a very peculiar mindset, or we ourselves are out of tune with God. But I don't have the time to read those things, but only to say that they saw the collision of kingdoms, they saw that their position would lead unavoidably to suffering and tribulation and finally to martyrdom, but it could not be otherwise.

And that this kind of suffering and death was not only not an argument against God's grace, but the actual proof that they were true disciples and on the right path. And these are just brief references, but in two examples that are given us in scripture, there's a kind of revelation that I want to bring to your attention, though I can't do it full justice. One is in the crucifixion, the suffering and the death of Jesus, in that something is revealed in his martyr death, if I can use that phrase.

I came up with a definition of martyrdom. It's adversity meekly suffered. See, Paul preached Christ and him crucified.

And his crucifixion and death, though it was suffered alongside the death of a criminal, was other than that criminal's death. It was Christ and him crucified. Which is to say, he did not die bawling.

He didn't die screeching. He didn't clench his fist at the authorities. He didn't spit out curses at those who were judging him, and crying out, come down from the cross and we'll believe you.

He died with such a magnanimity. He displayed in his death what God actually is in his nature. See, suffering reveals.

Even the world knows it, but we've forgotten it. And the great schools of acting always knew that if you want to be a great actor, you've got to suffer. Why? Because suffering reveals.

Adversity brings something into the pit and the marrow of the being of man, where he really lives. It strips the veneer, it takes away the things that are external, and brings you face to face with the things that are ultimately real. That's the nature of suffering.

So what we reveal in suffering is what we really are. And if we're going to bawl and scrawl and cry out, why me? It's not going to be the revelation of the nature of God and the meekness of God that had such a powerful effect when it was demonstrated by Jesus on the cross that some dumb Gentile clod, a centurion who was schooled in professional murder, and had nailed up any number of men, and watched them squirm in anguish on the cross, when he beheld the way that Jesus died, he cried out, truly, this is the Son of God. Something was forced as revelation in his Gentile consciousness that somehow was denied Jews who were anticipating the Son of God.

That was revealed in the suffering and the death of Jesus on the cross. The same kind of thing in kind is revealed also in the death of the first martyr, Stephen, in the book of Acts, in the seventh chapter. And I'm

a believer that the great principles of God are most cogently expressed in their first reference in Scripture.

You want to know what the true church is? See the first expression in Scripture. You want to know what martyrdom is? Read about the first martyr. There is something here that is universal, eternal in its principles.

In a man who died in the way that he did, whose death was the consequence of his bold speaking and witness without compromise, because he did not choose his own words, but because his life was given to another, he spoke the words that were given, and it brought him to a collision course, and to a martyr's death. But he being full of the Holy Spirit, Acts 7.55, gazed intently into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened up, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

For me, this is not just a statement of a man in his last moments of extremity. It's the statement of the man in all his moments. Because his dying did not exceed his living.

Because he was full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently up into heaven. That should not be our posture in our death. It should be our posture in our life.

And if it is not characteristically and consistently our attitude of seeing as we live, it will not be our attitude of seeing as we die. Our dying shall not exceed our living, and our living shall not exceed our dying. We need to be so full of the Holy Spirit that we see the heavens opened.

That in fact, our dying opens the heavens. And this they could not stand to hear. They cried out with a loud voice, and they gnashed upon him with their teeth, and they crushed him with stones.

One at a time, sinking into his flesh. You know what we feel like when our toe is stubbed by another. But how about dying by inches, a stone at a time.

Experiencing the crunch and the thud in our own flesh, and the trickle of blood that goes into our own mouths and eyes. And looking at the rage and the angry faces of those who are throwing death at us. What will be our final reaction? Will we curse them? Will we bite our lips to hold back the venomous scream, the desire for vengeance? Or will we say with Stephen, who called upon the Lord to receive his spirit, and cried out in his final breath, Lord do not hold this sin against them.

And having said this, he fell asleep. You see, it took a great death to bring about the conversion of a great apostle. And I believe that it was the witness to this death that set the stage for the conversion of the apostle Paul, who could not kick against this brick.

Because he saw a busboy die more magnificently than he was ever able to live as a Pharisee. He saw something in the revelation of the death of a man who was ordinary and had no theological or academic distinction. He was a waiter on tables.

Dying more gloriously than he was able to live for all of his Talmudic and religious knowledge. Till he came to such a point that he couldn't stand it any longer. It broke him.

It took the death of one to bring the life of another. It took a great death to birth a great life. And I think that in these things we have a foretaste of what is our final destiny and our mission as witnesses unto him.

It's going to be our suffering and what we reveal in our suffering as final witness to the dumb clouds who are going to watch our crucifixion. That they might cry out in seeing us truly. These are the sons of God.

Are you preparing to die magnificently? And to rejoice for the privilege? Do you understand Paul when he speaks about the crown that awaits him? Or is it for us just some kind of idle biblical metaphor that has no really cogent practical meaning? Do we count our present afflictions as momentary and light? Because we see the things that are invisible and eternal? We need to come into this kind of mindset, this kind of apostolic frame of thinking and seeing because we are on a collision course for martyrdom. Now that's a whole subject in itself but I don't want to say anything more about it. I don't have much with you to contemplate and to pursue and bring further.

And I want to come to the real substance of my concluding talk around one scripture and it's a mystery and it's in Ephesians the third chapter. Paul talks in the ninth verse about making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which was from the beginning which from the beginning of the world has been hidden God who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. I want to say that the issue of martyrdom and the issue of suffering is more than the issue of our overcoming.

There's something larger, far more cosmic and eternal and that is the fulfillment of Ephesians 3.10 that through the church the manifold wisdom of God is to be demonstrated to the principalities and the powers. Now this is going to be for you a complete mystery and you'll look blank unless you have some cogent sense of what the principalities and the powers and the rulers of darkness are. And yet it's not surprising that there's very little comprehension of what that refers to in the understanding of most Christians. One writer, William Stringfellow says this about principalities and powers. Americans, including professed Christians who have biblical grounds to be wiser remain it seems remain it seems astonishingly obtuse about these powers.

They seldom impute to them personality or integrity as creatures and commonly deem institutions and similar principalities as subject to human sponsorships, patronage and control. Yet to be ignorant or gullible or ingenuous about the demons to underestimate the inherent capacities of the principalities to fail to notice the autonomy of these powers as creatures are best their usurpation of human life and their domination of human beings. Just to put this into common English what he's saying is that far more than we have ever recognized there is a play upon institutions in the world through a spirit realm called principalities and powers that influences them far beyond any dimension that we have suspected that there's no way that we can even understand what is happening institutionally and in our culture if we do not reckon on the operation of the principalities and powers of the air that influence and adhere in the institutions of the world.

And that if we just address ourselves to the institutions we are naive we don't recognize behind them the sinister forces which are at play within them.

I'm coming to this kind of increasing comprehension of the principalities and the powers as they influence institutions especially academic institutions because I've had a little experience in them and as I go on in the faith I'm increasingly smarting or sensing the satanic influence and content even in the things that are not outwardly or blatantly sinful or perverse even the things that are applauded as estimable or ethical or doing some service to humanity I see the insidious and evil influence of the play of the principalities and

powers of the air upon these institutions they're phony I see the falsity I see the lie I cannot rejoice in the graduation ceremonies I see the hulky business I see the so-called rhetoric the phony speeches the lie and I know that the prince of the lie is

behind the whole lie of the subterfuge of the academic world how much more than other institutions of government and culture because we are naive and have not seen the sinister influence any social concern of human beings which neglects or refuses to deal with the principalities with due regard for their own dignity that is to say, not that they're dignified but that they exist, that they are authentic is delusive while any social change predicated upon mere human action whether prompted by so-called social gospel or motivated by some pietism is doomed in other words, if you just address yourself to institutions that seek to bring about some amelioration or some change just dealing with them horizontally and laterally and not reckoning on what is invisible but in the spirit realm your

efforts are doomed to failure our eyes need to be opened that behind the cosmos are the invisible realities where the action really is we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness we need to have our eyes opened apostolically to see as God sees where we're spinning wheels and we're just ventilating ourselves and our energies will amount to nothing now God says that through the church he's reserved something for the church that was not even given to Jesus himself and that is to demonstrate to the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God this has not to do with atonement or even the issues of government or society or the world but it's something that fulfills a moral requirement of God it's a mystery and just because it's a

mystery you need not think that it is some kind of secondary or tangential matter I want to say that this mystery is at the heart of the moral cosmos of God and it is the ultimate mystery for which we have been chosen and that if we miss this mystery and do not consciously understand it and address ourselves to it we will miss also the lesser things that will have practical consequences in the earth we need to see that God has chosen us to make manifest his wisdom in a certain kind of demonstration that is the cap or the completion or the consummation of the whole purpose of God that was established from the beginning at the cross of Christ Jesus because that's where the manifold wisdom is the failure too of the church to consciously comprehend and appreciate this mystery will affect also

the realization of its activity in earthly things the mission of the church like the work of its exalted head is not confined to the earth its field is the whole cosmos talk about a man speaking by faith that's me right now of all places in Minnesota with a bunch of rank and file men to speak to them that if we miss understanding that our field of activity is not just the earth or the world but the entire cosmos we miss the ultimate mystery of God and the fullness and the purpose that God has imputed to us as the church I have never before heard anyone address this question I'm hearing it for the first time out of my own mouth and I'm believing by faith that we have come to an hour and a moment to apprehend the reason for which we have been apprehended in Christ it is more than the issue

of atonement it's more even than the issue of the amelioration or the transformation of society it's even more than the issue of the kingdom come it's an issue beyond the earth it's an issue beyond time it takes place in the realm of heavenlies in an internal realm and yet it has got to do with the very heart to apprehend the reason for which God sank that cross into the earth with a loud thud God is waiting for completion a demonstration through the church of that manifold wisdom to the principalities and the powers it is a demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God the fullness of the cross the weakness of God that contradicts satanic wisdom emphasizing power, force, violence intimidation, divisiveness that's

the demonstration it's the demonstration of the power of forgiveness of

meekness in suffering unjustly it's attaining the true destiny for which God brought forth the church with spiritual ends and it goes to the farthest reaches of the universe it reminds us that our faith is not a private matter but is integrally related to the design of the cosmos itself I'm not saying these things to be fancy or that I'm trying to find some cunning new doctrine or to elaborate some rarely spoken thing I think that this is nuts and bolts and is at the heart of the whole mystery of the gospel and the mystery of the church and the final and utter consummation that God intends through the church is this demonstration to the principalities and powers and yet it has a remarkable practical consequence because God wants that demonstration to be made on the same basis by which

Jesus made a spoil of the enemy that's the wisdom of God it's a response to adversity in meekness it's the same thing as what is spoken of in the scripture where it says that Jesus by the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God this is the heart of Jesus at the cross he offered himself, the lamb without blemish, spotless to God for the purposes and the glory of the Father is the same formula and the same way by which we ought to offer ourselves by the eternal spirit the cross and the spirit agree and the cross and the spirit therefore are the final and the ultimate revelation of what God is what God demonstrated on the cross is what God is it's Christ and him crucified it's the lamb slain from the foundations of the world it's the lamb likeness of God demonstrated under

ultimate adversity and suffering and that's what we need to demonstrate to the principalities and powers and every time we're brought to a place of challenge every time we're brought to a place of reproach a place of persecution a place of shame, a place of suffering a place of accusation a place of death what we reveal in that moment through the character that is shaped in us being full of the Holy Spirit and seeing the heaven opened is that demonstration to the principalities and powers through the church now why is this God's ultimate ace, so to speak because it's through the church it's guys like you and me who are roused about, drunks fornicators a bunch of crap that had no nothing to distinguish us and God saved us out of death and God cleaned us up and God gave us holy motivation

and God formed us into a body together we who are reckless individualists and Jews who could not tolerate Gentiles and vice versa and he's made of us one new man and one people the church and it's through the church the creation of God this ultimate masterpiece of God that the final demonstration comes to the principalities and powers of the air and when that comes all that God has intended in his heart from the first through the cross is fulfilled the final vestige of power of usurpation of the enemy is once and for all and utterly destroyed what began as the bruising of his head ends as his final destruction through the demonstration that comes by the church of the manifold wisdom of God his meekness in suffering and we shall not fulfill it except we are prepared for it and we are

failing as ministers except we are presently preparing our people for suffering unless we show them and understand ourselves what is the high calling in Christ Jesus which goes beyond the issue of atonement and goes even beyond the issue of the kingdom beyond the earth and beyond time into the heavenlies and into eternity itself into the very heart of the cosmos in this demonstration is the faith it's a mystery this is the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known can you believe that?

God created all things in order that this manifold wisdom of God might now be made known listen guys you just have to bring yourself to where God is there's nothing that I'm saying now that commends itself to

your reason there's nothing here that you'll approve of because it's reasonable it has nothing to do with your reason it has nothing to do with what you like or don't like it has everything and only to do with God and what he likes but you need to understand it you need to agree with it you can read it again for yourself it's Ephesians 3, 9-11 this is the mystery which for ages has been hidden by God in God who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church unto him be glory in the church can you think of anything more hideous than that the church should be a means to our ends a means for the elevation of ourselves the fulfillment of our ministries by which we receive acknowledgement from men or financial or monetary security or some kind of Sunday or other benefit that is a hideous distortion and caricature of God's intention through the church unto him be glory in the church he created all this in order that this mystery might be fulfilled through the church to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places I don't know why why he needs to make this demonstration I only know that it pleases him and that's all that I have to know do you know it? that now might be made known it's a mystery and yet because it's mysterious does not mean that it's impractical it does not mean that it's unrelated to the substantial calling that we have to usher in a kingdom and to pursue righteousness and I know that I know that I know except that we understand this mystery because if we don't take a genuine hold of it we're going to fail also in the practical and the earthly things we need to see what is ultimate if we're going to be effectual in the thing that's immediate we need to see what's eternal if we're going to be effectual in the thing which is in time because you cannot cut this asunder you cannot hack this up into nice convenient dispensational pieces it's all one continuum in God through the church through the church this is enough reason to be it true church that makes manifest this mystery because nothing less than a true church can a whole church that is apostolic like its founder a whole church that lives in the meekness of the spirit of Christ a whole church that embraces suffering with humility a whole church that lives in the spirit of forgiveness and is able to love the enemy and does not dismiss that as some dispensational thing for a future millennium it loves the enemy now it suffers patiently now it endures misunderstanding now T.

Austin Sparks a great setter forth of the faith of God and an influencer in Watchman Me writes that the cross lies at the heart of every disappointment triumphantly born and every adversity meekly suffered that's what the cross is that's what the genius of the cross is that's what is the manifold wisdom of God and it contradicts the manifold wisdom of Satan Satan says if your flesh is pierced if you are falsely accused if you are shortchanged if you are denied you have every right to shriek and howl and get even isn't that what the Arabs are doing now isn't that something that is rending South Africa between black and white isn't that what has been the justification of every bloodbath in the history of man looking out for number one and giving those guys what they deserve the Huns or whatever you want to call them the whole history of mankind is the history of retaliation the whole history of mankind is violence and brutality the whole history of mankind is acting out its life in keeping with the wisdom of Satan rather than the wisdom of God but God is saying that at the end of the age He is going to have a people a heavenly body who are going to show forth in suffering not anger or bitterness or vengeance but patient and meek endurance they are going to suffer and triumphantly bear it and pray even for those who are persecuting them Lord lay not this sin to their charge and when hell sees this when the principalities and the powers see this they are finished it was one thing to see it in Jesus and it bruised their head but to see it in a church of men who used to fight and rape and loot and hire and shrink and to see them in the same land likeness is the final and ultimate demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God are you consciously moving toward the fulfillment of this mystery?

I'll tell you, I came back from my last trip overseas wounded and convicted of God for impatience and arrogance of spirit you say, what horrendous thing did you do? nothing but in little things I showed an

impatience and an edge so while my mouth was speaking peace out of my own life was yet issuing another kind of spirit which is the spirit of impatience which in the last analysis is the spirit of murder and I've come back and I've said to God Lord I don't want to go out again until you have brought this to the cross in me I want to know the meekness of the Lamb in my own life and there's a whole church that needs to know it and needs to demonstrate that manifold wisdom if I can give you a little recent anecdote in my marriage there have been many anecdotes most of them painful because

I'm a man for the truth and I'll tell you what, I'll step over my own mother I'll crush and I'll bludgeon for the truth's sake and somehow my wife has not altogether appreciated that over 18 years and somehow however keen my discernments have been of her carnality and error and shortcomings she has not changed the truth has bludgeoned, has not worked a thing you know why? it was in the wrong spirit it was the wrong moral base we've had separate bedrooms for some time and you know what happens when a man is denied in his flesh and the impatience and the irritation and the anger and the self-justification that comes now you pounce on your wife when you find her justifiably in a mistake and let her have it but I came down one day, I forgot how this took place it was just a few days ago anger

was still stunned and marveling over it and I said to her in such a quiet and measured way I don't know where this statement came from I said you know you're a rather disagreeable woman she didn't say anything to me then but she has not stopped talking of it since she said that one statement has done more to penetrate my soul and convict me than any of your scathing condemnations and critiques of my carnality over the years do you know why it was effectual? because it was spoken in the spirit of the Lamb it was not spoken in a reaction to my woundedness or my being denied it was truth spoken in love in another spirit and something happened to my wife a release because something was touched in the heavenlies in the principalities and the powers that have long had too great a sway in her

life something had to be lodged something had to be moved something jerked in the orbit of the cosmos way up there in the invisible realms that touched a little Danish woman right here in Minnesota because in a moment when I should have spoken with greater anger or irritation or personal peak something came out that was of another kind the wisdom of God and since that time my wife has not been all that disagreeable see, there's a practical consequence but there's also a mystery we've got again and again and again by the eternal spirit to offer ourselves without blemish to God that's the mystery that's the wisdom so every true operation of the cross is an operation of the spirit so that God is all in all and brings to the core of the cosmos by every such act of the church his

quintessential self the nature of the Lamb see, I'm glad this is being taped because there's no way that you can receive this in one hearing I don't know that I understand it in one speaking but I know that what I'm speaking is true because the life is offered by the eternal spirit something is revealed that is both the spirit and the life which is the nature of God himself ultimately right at the core of the cosmos where the principalities and powers are every time we act in adversity, in weakness rather than in anger or self justification is your church experience shaping this character in your life? then your church is wanting and is outside God's intention for it as church because if our character is not being shaped in the church where is it being shaped? and it will not accept that

we see this mystery and desire to be apprehended by him for the reasons for which he intended that we be apprehended that God might be all in all where Jesus was on the cross is what God is it's the ultimate revelation God is like that that's the image of the invisible God that's God's nature we're on the cross or a cross situation and we act as if there's a heaven opened and we can say to our persecutors or of them

Lord forgive them they know not what they've done I'll tell you if we can't react to our wife who is our persecutor how shall we react to the world who will become our persecutor God gives us such wise as basic training and if we flub it there we're not going to make it in the world because the things that are little are the cosmos that's the mystery of the faith and I praise

God for such a faith I praise God for such challenge I praise God for such a high calling because I was made for this and anything less would leave me bored stiff anything less is not sufficiently demanding it does not require of me what this requires this is ultimate this deals with the cosmos and yet immediate practicality we need to see it and we need to lay hold of it so the church that was once sent to us perverse, selfish, brutal is the ultimate demonstration of the triumph of the cross in all that is inimical and opposed at the very axis of the cosmos the heavenlies what was bruised at the cross by Jesus is now utterly devastated and destroyed by the church in its patient suffering God is not greater than he is in this humiliation more powerful than in this helplessness more

glorious in this self-surrender he has acted in himself by this he has robbed Satan of his force patient suffering has proved stronger than hate its might is powerful in weakness the inner life of God that is ultimate godliness has triumphed over ultimate godlessness the love of God has gone outside the gate in the garbage dump it has condescended even into hell in the beginning and ultimately has gone upward even into the heavenlies can you see the magnitude of this? from the garbage dump outside the gate of Jerusalem right into hell the triumph of the cross was taken and now at the end of the ages its going to be taken into the farthest reaches of the cosmos through the church in its demonstration to the principalities and powers of the manifold wisdom of God the cross of Christ Jesus

is now this is that for which we have been apprehended in Christ Jesus a cosmic struggle for the mastery of creation at which the cross is the very heart how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation not to press for the fulfillment of Ephesians 3.10 is to do despite to the cross and the blood of the son of God to be satisfied with atonement only to speak of the cross only in terms of atonement the whole purpose of God in this ultimate mystery is to do despite to God's grace and to short change as it were the cross of Christ the coming of the Lord is the outcome of the church's arrival at its heavenly position did you know that? that the Lord's appearing is not some fixed chronological event that is going to come irrespective of our condition but on the contrary our condition has

everything to do with hasten the day of the appearing of the Lord and you know what it's waiting on? this final demonstration the fulfillment of this mystery into the cosmos into the heavenlies because it's waiting for the church it's what's happening in your house and what's going on behind your shutters and your pull down curtains because we're in this together it's not a private and an individual matter it's the church it's through the church getting its fulfillment so this is the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now at last finally be made known through the church through the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places this Paul says was in accordance with the eternal purpose the margin says which he

carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord you know what I feel like?

I feel like I'm a man who's hearing for the first time the gospel of the kingdom I feel like anything up till now has been some stunted and abbreviated and articulated doctrine that has only to do with private, personal narrow salvation but this is the gospel this is the good news this is the glory this is the mystery this is the faith this is the calling and if you think that you can do it independent of the cross and the position of

authority that it gives us in power you're mistaken it all goes together and the cross is at its center we can't succeed in this and fail in the kingdom it's all integral and indivisible because ultimate is immediate now Paul says in order that now through the church I thank God that I'm saved I praise God that I'm in the church I praise God for the high

calling I praise God for adversity I praise God for the wife that he's given I praise God for the demands and the trials of community I praise God for every stretching because I understand that he's wanting something that he'll not be fulfilled he'll not be gratified he'll not be pleased until he has it it doesn't have to make sense to me I only have to know it's a mystery for which he has created all things in order that now through the church so I just want to pray that when our trials come when our sufferings come when our persecutions come whether it's under our own roof or in the local community or on some ministerial battle front when disappointment comes when something pierces our flesh we shall triumphantly bear it and that every adversity shall be meekly endured I want to make

this my conscious goal and I invite God to deal with my character in life to deal with my impatience that he might work that lamb-likeness in me for the fulfillment of the mystery through the church hallelujah I just want to pray that this word will come into our consciousness that we'll rejoice that we'll not grind our teeth and purse our lips in self-pity if somehow we are elected for a measure of suffering or adversity it has to do with the fulfillment of a mystery that has been waiting until now precious God Lord I don't know about these guys but I count myself so privileged I can hardly stand it my God what a calling truly how shall we escape so great salvation Lord we never understood the magnitude no wonder our lives were half-vast no wonder my God that they were slip-shot and

casual and indifferent no wonder it was just a get-by thing no wonder we were escapists and rapturists no wonder we were just getting by because we did not understand the mystery and the calling of the church till now and Lord we just want to say thank you that you have elected us here in Minnesota in this place to speak these things to make them to live in our spirits to raise our sight heavenward to come in my God to the glory of this mystery it exceeds the kingdom and yet the kingdom shall not come in indifference to it and I ask my God every grace and every enablement and I thank you for the glory of the life that came forth out of your death by which we can meet every adversity and weakness teach us how to draw from that life how to reckon ourselves and be dead unto ourselves but

alive unto God bring this my God from adversity to adversity from suffering to suffering for a while may we live continually with an open heaven seeing Jesus at the right hand of God and the glory because we are filled with the Holy Spirit and because we look up to an open heaven I bless these men and I ask my God a seal on this holy speaking and the themes that it has pleased you to sound in this seminar we know my God how how apt we are to forget and for the things to leak but we ask Lord a holy seal that the spirit, the substance the reality and the truth of what you have spoken my God in these days will remain forever in our spirits it will change us it will enlarge us it will enable us to walk differently and to be differently because in your wisdom you have appointed something now

through the church we bless the church of Jesus Christ in this locality we bless it precious God in Cass Lake in Walker, in Bemidji Thief River Falls in Detroit Lakes my God in Oshkosh, in Timbuktu in every aspect, in every place where it is there is nothing to look at nothing to consider church full of weakness and full of contradiction we ask you a blessing upon the church and Lord I ask you a particular blessing upon these men who are before me who have been appointed for these days who are called and chosen to be leaders to be messengers to be the ministers of the gospel of the kingdom to raise the standard of

the cross and to make known what has been previously hidden in God throughout all ages the mystery of the church that through us shall be made known to the principalities and

powers the manifold wisdom of God seal us for this calling my God we cannot speak these things except by the grace of your life and your wisdom and we pray now that it will be spoken this gospel shall be proclaimed the gospel of this kingdom to all nations and then shall the end come seal up these men my God may we leave transformed may there be something new in our step something more erect in our posture a different kind of light in our eyes a far more serious visage in our demeanor and in our confidence less wavering and confusion indecisiveness in our voices greater assurity greater confidence greater solemnity greater fear of the knowledge of God greater respect for the high calling in Christ Jesus greater love for the church greater celebration of the cross greater exaltation of the

spirit change us because we have heard your word and let there be an impact in the earth and we'll thank you and praise you and in eternity also in Jesus' holy name and God's men said

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