

The Real or the Plastic?

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of authenticity and true faith in the church, warning against the dangers of plastic Christianity and the consequences of a superficial faith.

Duration: 56:40

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:11-12, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 5:5

Topics: "Authenticity"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker reflects on a night of a general meeting where an internationally known speaker delivered a message. The speaker expresses their disappointment and frustration with the hoakiness and lack of authenticity in the religious world. They emphasize the need for believers to be real, loving, and truthful in their faith. The speaker recounts a moment when they were called to the microphone and asked the audience to stand and sing the Lord's prayer as a way to bring a sense of respect and authenticity before God. Despite their initial reluctance, the speaker agrees to participate in the following morning's session only if God gives them something specific.

Transcript

If I don't have the same cheerful countenance as Derek, it's because we're cut out of different bolts of cloth. He comes leaping like a roe, always delighting in the microphone, and I come like a snail. For me it's always an agony, always with deep sighs and groans, and wishing that the floor would open and swallow me and that there's some other place that I could be, especially tonight.

Not because of the offering, but because of the thing that's on my heart, because I already have a reputation for being the bull in the spiritual china shop and taking things by the horns and being indelicate and lacking tact and causing furor and storms and all that kind of stuff. You're not helping me repent. It was true.

I want to speak in the spirit of the three dominant prayers that have been breathed for this Convocation. If Larry will remind us all, one was for a freedom in the spirit, the second was for a spirit of restoration, and the third, dealing with self-complacency. Well, what is in my heart, my touch, all three bases.

The kind of thing that usually falls to me to do is not to deliver fixed set pieces, but more and more it's an event that I'm involved in rather than a message. And what's on my heart has been born not out of study of a word or a theme, so much as the event of recent days pertaining to the very serious decision by a body

of responsible men to cast another brother out of fellowship to excommunicate him. The actual verse that was employed in the letter that was sent was to give him over to the devil for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit might be saved.

That was the first time that I have ever been involved in any dealing of that kind, anything as profound and as total and as serious and as earnest as that. I was not there in the eight hours of discussion that preceded that decision, but had I been there, I would have assented completely with that decision and felt that it was necessary. And then, as you've already been informed, the brother who was involved presented himself here with the statement that he was going to attend these convocations, that we had asked him privately to refrain from coming.

And then we faced him yesterday, and he came nevertheless. But this morning, in a meeting of the elders and responsible brothers, he expressed a note of repentance, asked apology, and spoke of a dream that he had had. And I think that the general consensus was to take this at its face value and believe that it's sincere and authentic and a step in the right direction for the restoration of a brother.

And I also hope and pray that indeed it is authentic. But it's the word authentic that is in my heart tonight, and all through the day. Maybe I've not yet sufficiently recovered from our experience of only a week or so ago in Winnipeg, where, by the Lord's providence, I was a speaker at Jesus 79.

I had one earlier such experience, I think in 1973 or 1974, the first of these Jesus rallies, and that was enough. I vowed then, never again, I would never again be part of this carnival outdoor atmosphere of women in their halters and shorts and cracking of gum and the stuffing of your face with potato chips while you're hearing what ostensibly purports to be serious words of God from the platform, and the whole atmosphere just chilled my soul. But when this invitation came for Winnipeg, despite my determination, I felt that it was God, and I went.

I wasn't supposed to be a speaker at the general sessions, but as is the format that is now increasingly becoming popular in these big charismatic shindigs, there's a large general assembly at night, but then the morning sessions are given over to the denominational and non-denominational charismatic groups, and I was invited to be the speaker at the Baptist charismatic group, so how could I refuse? So novel an invitation as that. And indeed, those speakings were blessed. Well, it fell to me to sit on the platform on the night of the big general meeting where an internationally known speaker was the message bearer for that night, and unlike all the others that entered into the general merriment, I sat there like a glum lump.

I was completely out of it, hurting, actually, stunned and mortified at some of the statements that I was hearing made, and the whole happy atmosphere in which these statements were being received was a general sense of hokiness. I don't know of another word like it. I don't know how the English language has gone on this long without an adjective like that, a sense of artificiality, of things synthetic and feigned, of having the appearance of things real but being somehow false, although it employed real words, really meaningful terms, phrases out of scripture, references to the unity of the body.

I don't know what your reaction would have been had you been in my place and you had heard the speaker saying that he had taken to task a Pentecostal minister at a previous Jesus rally who spoke on the issue of sin and repentance, and he castigated this man because he felt that such kinds of speaking would interfere with the spirit of unity. Another statement was that let's forgive the Catholics for unity's sake and that there's no point in pressing past issues in that kind of spirit and sense. And there were prophecies that came that night from a certain assemblage of men who were called the word unit, Catholic

charismatic men who ostensibly have a gift in prophecy and who write them out on yellow legal pads and give them over to an overseer who then calls them to the microphone at the appropriate moment to speak to them.

I'm just describing my impression, a terrible sense of unreality, all the more because it was couched in things that are very real. You understand what I'm saying? Well, by the end of the night, my spirit was such that I couldn't wait to leave the platform, but unfortunately I was assigned to bring the benediction at the conclusion of the night, and I somehow felt that I should not be involved in anything that took place that night. I should not lend myself to anything that took place and be part of it.

And so I went over and tugged the sleeve of the man who was presiding at the platform and I asked to be excused from the obligation of bringing the prayer of benediction. I said, let someone else do it or end in some other way, but instead he called my name. And so I came to the microphone in that terrible agony and frustration that some of you might know, and all that I could do was to ask them to stand up and take off their sun bonnets and visors and come to a posture of respect before God and to sing with me the Lord's Prayer.

And that's the way the night ended. The Lord sort of bailed me out without further embarrassing implication and involvement. But as I was leaving the platform, a labe man who was in charge of arranging for these sessions asked if I would be available for the general session the following morning.

And at first I abruptly said, no, I want to say I'll have nothing to do with this at all. But then I said, only if God gives me something specific. And so we went where we were staying that night, my spirit still bruised and still pondering that night and our response to it.

Those that were in the car with me had reacted in a like manner. The young lady at whose home we were staying said that she thought that the raucous noise of that night was something akin to the noise that Moses must have heard coming down the mount with the tablets of the law. And that statement stuck in my craw.

It embedded itself in my spirit. And I woke the next morning still thinking of it. And we drove to this open park where this rally was being conducted, where I had to be the morning speaker at this Baptist section and discussing with my colleagues whether I ought not indeed take advantage of the invitation that was given me and speak a word distinct and different than other than the kinds of things they had been hearing.

And we prayed together because I didn't want again to fall into that role of bringing that kind of word. And so without making any haste to get there, in fact hoping that we would be too late, we parked the car and walked to the platform where the public meeting was taking place at the very moment when it was time for the speaker to be announced. They had already assigned another speaker in my absence.

But when the man saw me come up the steps of the platform, he immediately called to me and they rushed me right to the microphone. And so I began in the spirit of please pray for me. There must be something grievously wrong with me that prevents me from entering in to the spirit of general merriment that prevailed last night.

That I could not sit there through the night and listen to the statements and rejoice for them. And that as a matter of fact I shared the impression of this one that I described to you and read from the scriptures in

Exodus of Moses coming down the mount with the tablets of the Lord to hear the noise which was not the noise of battle nor the noise of victory but the noise of singing. And I said I have the impression also that it was this kind of noise that characterized last night.

And it has much to do with that earlier event in men and women impatient to wait for God to come down the mount with the real thing. And therefore simulating something like it but not it. A golden calf of a substitute kind and dancing and prancing about it.

Imagine how these words were going forth. And even as I had been walking up to the platform that morning I heard one of the so-called prophecies in which the speaker was saying I the Lord have been with you through this weekend I've given you my spirit and I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that and for me it was as leaden as anything could be without life. And I said my condition is even so bad I don't even witness to these prophecies.

And I wonder indeed that if my condition is not some kind of idiosyncratic thing I'm some kind of dyspeptic character who always seems to find the negative thing but if it somehow is an expression of the heartbeat of God we might well ask whether functions and events like this are some kind of massive deception in which we have been inducted unwarily and because the phrases have been so rich and so suggestive and because our hearts have panted after true unity in the body of Christ and because we've been impressed with the three or four thousand who gather out of Catholic and Protestant ranks that we have been willing quickly to call this that unity when in fact it is not. And if we can begin to explore that maybe we need to ask also about the validity of the whole charismatic phenomenon and whether we actually have an authentic baptism in the Holy Spirit and indeed whether we have ever actually been born again of the Spirit or from beginning to end we have been inducted in one of the most colossal jobs that has ever been perpetrated in the religious world in all history. Those were the kinds of questions that I raised and then I invited as many as would to come to the session where I would be speaking immediately at the conclusion of that morning session where I was to speak on the Spirit of Truth.

There was a cry that was expressed by one of the elders in the gathering of the elders that preceded this convocation here. We sat there awkwardly as such men will in the first meetings when you come together nobody wanting to break the silence nobody wanting to violate against the Spirit of God and introduce some carnal element but this brother, bless him, had the courage to express the cry of his heart which I believe is also the cry of God's heart. It was a cry for authenticity.

It was the cry of one who was increasingly conscious of something plastic a film coming over the religious world. It was a man who had not broken through that film and whose heart was desiring that which is real with God and with men. It's also my own heart's cry and this afternoon as I spent the entire afternoon pondering before the Lord the events of this morning a man making the statement of confession the desire on the parts of those men who were in the room so anxious for reconciliation to receive such a word as being authentically that of repentance no one knowing for sure whether indeed it was or not and not wanting to be the victims of well-meaning intention knowing that we have responsibility and can I just say a word about that that the responsibility goes far beyond the issue of the individual involved.

Can I say that it touches the whole issue of the validity of the church of Jesus Christ in the earth. It touches the whole issue of the government of God whether it's a mock or a truth. It touches the whole issue of whether indeed there's going to be in the earth an actual kingdom of heaven that can be recognized and discerned not only by those who make it up but by the world who presses their nose to the window to look

in and to behold the enormous phenomenon of people living in the truth and in love.

It touches all these issues when serious and responsible men will come to a determination to cast and give a man over to the devil for the destruction of his flesh. I would say that this is an ultimate judgment not to be done in pique or irritation or because it dismisses a... an irritating problem and well they were right in taking eight hours to come to such a conclusion. In fact, if you would know the tens and the hundreds of hours that preceded discussion and involvement with that same individual you would know that the whole thing was very soberly considered from beginning to the end.

A whole fellowship had been devastated its members dispersed to the winds it was a brave work that seemed to us to be going down the drain there was injury and damage and bruising the issues were not light. There was the issue for the individual himself his own restoration there was the issue of the preservation of that expression of the body of Christ and beyond that there were the larger and the eternal issues of the validity of God's word of the seriousness of God's men covenanting together to come to such a statement of agreement and the necessity to see it through to its ultimate conclusion. And so I pondered these things as I left this morning service all the more because of the references to suffering to the cross to atonement of the things that have been paid for in excruciation in blood and agony lest we find ourselves trampling on the blood of the Son of God ourselves guilty of some kind of plastic cheap counterfeit kind of charismatica when the cry of God is for authenticity in the earth.

Would you believe it that I took down a dictionary and looked up the word plastic in that the word has been spoken so often in these days?

Here are some of the meanings given in the dictionary soft enough to be molded yet capable of hardening into the desired fixed form easily bent twisted or manipulated easily let an influence lack of will and real character easily modified to suit needs conditions or uses subject to precious I'll tell you that a plastic world is devoutly to be avoided but a plastic kingdom is a tragedy of such proportions that I could break down and weep for the kingdom of God to be plastic subject to precious and influences to accommodate and suit the needs and moments of men is something that cannot be considered I looked up the word pseudo because I have a sense that we need to be alerted for the kinds of end-time deception the spirit of antichrist which is already so rife you know where it says in 2

Thessalonians that these things shall not be till there be a great falling away the Amplified gives an amplification which reads this way let no one deceive or beguile you in any way for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first that is unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come and the man of lawlessness is revealed who is the son of doom of perdition that's a little amplification that the King James and other renderings do not give the falling away of those who have professed to be Christians I think there's a lot of profession without actuality and in fact I have invited and encouraged Derek to come up after me tonight if there shall be sufficient time and I don't know how long my remarks will take to speak on a subject

that God has given him about the true being born again of the spirit of God so we're very much concerned with the things that are plastic the things that are pseudo false artificial synthetic imitative counterfeit the things that are spurious the things that are false I even looked up the word sham which says feigned pretended a trick that deludes a hoax imitation or counterfeit purporting to be genuine to act intentionally so as to give a false impression was this statement this morning of a brother a true expression of repentance or was it a sham was it feigned or pretended was it a trick that deludes was it a hoax an

imitation or a counterfeit I'll tell you that the answer to that question goes far beyond this morning far beyond the individual far beyond the men who are making such

reckonings it affects the whole corpus of God it affects the whole body of Christ everywhere in the earth and I am absolutely convinced determined you cannot shake me from this that what we will do with regard to this issue shall affect the body of Christ throughout this entire nation and in the earth and it doesn't matter whether anyone else in any other expression of the body knows of this particular incident or not they will be the recipients of our ability by the spirit of God to discern the things that are authentic or the things that are sham they will be either the victims or the beneficiaries of an issue of truth that was seen to its ultimate conclusion or that was allowed to slip by because of a disposition in men to reconcile the nitty gritty thing after all it's an irritation

and a nuisance and how long will this go on listen the guy sounds like he's repentant why not take it at his face value give him an opportunity to demonstrate it and let bygones be bygones I even looked up the word real not artificial nor fraudulent illusory or apparent genuine occurring in fact necessarily existent true if you don't have to wipe the saliva off your chin after hearing those words something is amiss with you don't these things excite something in your salivary glands my God are we so destitute and so numb that we don't occur in fact the very heart the knit the fiber the texture of the kingdom which is reality don't we understand that the world is freaking out and dying for the want of it don't we understand that there are men who are going berserk and absolutely beside

themselves because of the meaninglessness of the universe that they occupy looking for some novelty some cheapy some diversion to take them through the length of their hours because they have not glimpsed anywhere that there is an alternative that is available to them called the kingdom of God the kingdom of reality it simply has not yet surfaced nor been demonstrated by God's people dear children if we need to be anything foremost it is to be eminently real eminently loving eminently living in the truth speaking the truth walking in the truth doing the truth being true it's much more than just being correct or scriptural or doctrinally sound it's something that is suffused right in the marrow and the knit and the maw of your makeup it's in your eyes in your speech in the inflection of

your voice in your posture in your walk in your talk not artificial or fraudulent or illusory or apparent but genuine occurring in fact a true saint true conversion true baptism in the Holy Spirit true utterance in tongues true interpretation true prophecy a true word of God I was sitting in Aud Bibi's living room the other night and I just my hand fell to the ground and I the carpet and I picked up some publication that he'd received in the mail and I looked at the article because it said something about that dearth of the word of God that would come in the end times men would be running to and fro to find and to hear a true word and he went on to speak about the oil crisis always the interesting parallel between what is happening in the natural world and what is happening in the

spiritual world the extreme crisis for oil but nowhere near as extreme as the crisis that is in the kingdom for the holy anointing oil of God I don't know about you but I'm starving for a real word I want to hear an anointed word out of the heart of God I want a word that's incisive and penetrating that illuminates and lays bare real words real gifts real saints because there is real conversion born out of real repentance and real godly sorrow nothing feigned nothing illusory nothing deceptive nothing imagined nothing counterfeit nothing substitute real I hope I'm not presuming against God if I say tonight all unreality is sin that the very God who is true and his anointing which is true anything that is inimical and opposed to that God that is hokey and feigned and makeshift that is a

collaboration or a dealing or devious or wrought by men or imitated or simulated is sin and it has its corrosive and its deadly effect not only in eternity but in the here and the now all nature and creation is groaning for true sons for true fellowship and I would say that part half of the the friction between Charles and myself and our fellowships over the years that have sometimes surfaced in the course of these summer convocations has been this cry for authenticity this sense hey, aren't you guys a little too playful aren't you perhaps dangerously at the doorstep of some new kind of gamesmanship however attractive and however much it employs apostolic vocabulary watch it far better we don't know the words but have the corresponding fact than we should deal in the words and have only a

pseudo effect of what it is that we're so desperately seeking apostolic reality truth, glory all unreality is sin it's the sidestepping of the cross the avoidance of pain and suffering it is through much affliction that we enter the kingdom of God you know what the temptation is to say okay brother, sure you had a dream and you're saying repentant words this morning why not let's forget this terrible issue this division this strain this conflict at our doorstep that continues to surface we don't seem to be able to reconcile it it'll be a relief to receive your words as being sincere and I somehow sense that and I'm not saying that the words are not sincere but I'm only saying that God has triggered something in my heart that goes beyond the episode of these days to raise the larger

questions of authenticity before the body of Christ are we willing for authenticity's sake and for truth's sake not to take shortcuts not to grasp at the first straw that floats that seems to present the possibility of resolution and an end of conflict are we willing to see an issue pressed to its uttermost because if we not if we are not we may see men bend but we are not going to see them break and you may be content with bending but I'm not I want to hear snap crackle pop I want to see something crunch right at the foundation of that citadel of rebellion and self-will and independency of spirit and insubordination and raucousness and resentment and hatred and bitterness I want a breaking not a bending a little dent which will soon enough pop out again at the slightest provocation and

I'm convinced that's the issue of the cross and Charles brought up this morning with the references to suffering are we willing to enter into those sufferings and share in those sufferings that we might also experience his glory humanly we desire shortcuts unwilling to suffer the tension of seeing an issue through to its true resolution in God see I'm struggling some issues of my own isn't it interesting ironic that I should be preoccupied with such subjects as bridal love when I'm not a Derek Gitchin somber what can I say God has given me the theme but he has not yet given me the corresponding reality and one of my own tensions is not to jump the gun and to simulate something of my own that has the appearance of love and is not I want that which cometh down from above however long I've

got to bear the terrible agony and the reputation of lovelessness I don't want a saccharine counterfeit a slap on the back and a bear hug and a twiddle of the cheek and some adept phrase that makes me seem like one of the boys who's really interested in you when I'm not I want the burden from God for you as I want the burden of God for you for Israel and again not some sentimental thing that will as easily burst the moment that you're denied your petrol at the pump cry for authenticity in God's people for if we have it not how shall the world know and see that there's a God who is true and a kingdom that is true are you willing to suffer the tension of seeing an issue through to its true resolution in God a precious saint I know in California a profound woman of God said she had more hope

for my marriage than any number of Christian marriages that she has known that have started so beautifully and auspiciously when ours has started almost from the beginning in wretchedness and

problems and difficulties of adjustment beyond speaking I said how do you say that look at the history look at the pockmarked history of this relationship she said that's why she said I don't man over to the devil for the destruction of his flesh is to be lightly disregarded and left that or to be count demanded or sidestepped by some kind of devious strategy if that were the case it's the stake of the issue of truth and the reality of God in God's people it's the stake in the issue of the corruption of deceit and sham as the very leaven of deception which can permeate and corrupt the entire lump you

just let one phony confession get through you give a brother the benefit of the doubt because you're too lazy or unwilling to suffer the truer resolution and you allow to come into the lump a leaven that will surely corrupt it and bring upon you the very spirit of deception which has affected him it's the issue of judgment in the church and the judgments of God being exercised through the church and in the world you wanna know something dear children for all of the hullabaloo about revival and this great happy charismatic thing and the hundreds of thousands that have been swept in my own opinion is that the church of Jesus Christ has never been in lower repute it's authority more questioned it's character more assailed the dignity and the honor of God more traduced the name of Jesus more

blasphemed than it is in this present hour I'm broken over the condition of the church because we have not been jealous over the issues of truth because we have chosen easier ways because we don't have a disposition for tension and suffering God has called the church to be a judge and a government an exemplar and an influence in society and in nations and in the world instead we are a backwater a hiss and a proverb a Sunday addendum providing the ministers to invoke the sessions of congress with prayer and the various other sanctifying things that society will give us tax deduction for but not the powerful alternative of another kind of kingdom that lives in the totality of God's truth and righteousness and love we ought to be sobered by the fact that Christianity has lost its witness and

credibility in the very areas of the world which spawned them the church at Ephesus in Turkey have you been to Turkey lately?

I have I've been to Ephesus and some of the other vestiges and the archaeological ruins of what was once the glory of an apostolic church Muslim land from beginning to end and what do you say about this Muslim resurgence which flaunts in the face of God's people a gauntlet that we can't even answer have you had my experience of standing in the church at Bethany outside of Jerusalem and trying to speak a word on the resurrection of Lazarus when out over the wall next door comes the wailing of the electronic megaphone of the call to prayer in the minaret of the Muslim mosque that drowns out your words and the spirit of it was intimidating it wasn't a happenstance it was a malicious gleeful delight of Islam in silencing the voice of God through his service don't you ever pick up a magazine

do you know what's happening in the world there's a Muslim resurgence in the earth and a little handful of believers that are in Muslim lands are going to catch it you pray for us that the Lord will seal the trip to Egypt next spring where we've been invited to bring a five day conference where the Egyptian saints will face reproach and persecution suffering and martyrdom how do you think that this Muslim Islam resurgence has taken place where was God sleeping or is it God's own statement and judgment against a sleeping church that he has allowed this phenomenon to taunt us and to cheapen us and to disparage us in the world in the very places where the church was born there the Muslim resurgence flares up in Greece the condition of the church is pitiful beyond all speaking the land of the

great church of Ephesus and Thessalonica 400 Pentecostal believers in all Athens and everyone divided against the other you can't believe the pitiful condition of Pentecost in Greece 4,000 Pentecostal in all Yugoslavia in a land that is 50% Muslim the church has lost its witness and credibility in the very areas of the world which spawned them societies and nations once acknowledging the sovereignty of Christ had become totally secularized even hostile to Christian witness was the process of that decline and diminution different from what it is today how much of the responsibility for it was due to the failure of men to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints and I have a sneaky feeling that doesn't mean the doctrines the tenets of the faith it means the

faith the utterness toward God the jealousy for the righteousness of God for the truth and the purity of his body we need to contend for that faith how much is it the same issue now we need to watch lest we find ourselves among the many that will have a form of religion but deny the power thereof the stakes are enormous it goes far beyond an individual far beyond the decision of a body of men who have responsibility in northern Minnesota it touches a kingdom it will have eternal reverberations it has to do with whether there shall actually be in the earth a kingdom that has its origin in heaven and shows forth heavenly things to a despairing mankind a church that will not be a backwater but will be a leader not the tail but the head that will set the tone for society and for civilization

and will show men what truth verity integrity righteousness true love unfeigned is and it has to do with issues like this now the government of God and the integrity of God himself the kingdom of God as an actuality in the earth an alternative to a plastic age to a bankruptcy of the spirit in which there is no oil an answer to the cry for authenticity final statement I'm reading today a magazine about Christianity in Greece this Greek spokesman writes if you were to take away lay efforts the initiative of certain labors in the gospel it is questionable whether the church as an organized body could raise up an army of warriors as an offspring of her spiritual stature and of her historical splendor the result of this situation is glances of pity at her expense an extreme fomenting of

religious pride merchandising in religious things and an inability to take a saving initiative and to shake the ground of Satan at its foundations and to inflame the hearts of believers an inability to take a saving initiative in the world, a backwater, no influence, nothing really to be regarded, a bunch of hokey pietists at best, a little charismatic hand clappers, little choruses that are innocuous, charismatic clinics that affect nothing.

Where is that ponderous presence of God on the earth, that force, that voice of judgment, that clarity that teaches men how to live and shows what truth is? To take a saving initiative and to shake the ground of Satan. Paul I know and Jesus I know, but the body of Christ in La Porte, Cass Lake, Bemidji, who? Spokane, Washington, who? It's going to take an utterness toward God.

If the church is to have a saving influence, to shake the ground of Satan at its foundation and to inflame the hearts of believers. Will you pray for me for the church? Will you understand why it is that we have been trembling over the responsibility of these days? Why it is we're not so quick to grasp at what seems to be the olive leaf of peace, the sense of things plastic, things faked, things hokey, things counterfeit. Hail, hail the gangs all here, Jesus 79, hokey things over the nation.

Great cavalcades, thousands of souls in their halters, cracking gum and stuffing their face with potato chips listening to pontifical addresses about let's forgive the Catholic Church without the necessity for repentance of the blood of martyrs that has flown incessantly for 2,000 years. Well, some hotshot speaker

may have the privilege of forgiving them, but it's not my prerogative and especially without any evidence of true repentance. Where's their breaking? Where's their acknowledgement of what they have wreaked on the Hutterites and the Mennonites and the Anabaptists and the brave men and women who were tied back to back and thrown into streams to drown or were burned at the stake or cut into pieces and flogged to death? I'm not so quick to pronounce a cheapie.

I'm waiting to see the authentic signs of brokenness, acknowledgement of true sin, that there might be true restoration, true reconciliation, true fellowship at the cross of Christ Jesus. Shall we pray for truth? Precious God and head of the church, you who gave your life's blood for your eternal masterpiece, the church of Jesus Christ, that it might be a glory unto thy name. Lord, will you break our hearts, mighty God? Would to God I could experience the relief of tears.

Let this lump, mighty God, that is in my chest break. Let there be a groaning and a crying and a writhing for the lamentable condition of the church that bears your name in the earth, that is a reproach to your holy name, that is smiled at by knowledgeable men and reporters and slicksters about the born-again football players, the born-againers and all of the cheapie phrases that touch holy things and defile them. Precious God, will you restore to us a sense of reverence for you? Will you restore to the church the fear and the awe of God? We're willing, precious God, to see your glory and power restored to the point that if it means some of us being carried out feet first, we're willing.

Let the church be an awesome entity in the earth where men are exercising by the power of your spirit true government and true authority, that their words shall not be smirked at or laughed at or dismissed, but that men would receive them with the appropriate tremblings they deserve, that they might be broken and not just bent. Lord, if there are any of us here tonight who are bent but not broken, we ask your mercy. See us as the pathetic victims we are of a cheapie age.

Easy come, easy go. Easy decisions for Jesus. Why don't you accept him already? Nobody had ever required of us a repentance that we might believe.

How many of us are continuing to struggle, Lord, with stubborn problems and habits and difficulties that will not go away because we can't stand the suffering and the humiliation of confessing them to another? We've been living in the spirit of false confession and we're struggling with the same stubborn problems that will not go. Mighty God, will you help us? Will you break us for the church's sake? Will you purge us, precious God, of all the plastic things, all that sugary stuff and marshmallow stuff, of sham-fabricated affection and love which is only human and passing and qualified and has to do with whether we're in a good mood or not. Will you get that truth out of us, Lord God, which people are so quick to accept and give us a disposition even to suffer, lovelessness, while we wait for that which is authentic to fill our hearts? Have a real people.

Have glory in your name, precious God. Have a true church. Be the influence in the earth again that you ought.

Take back the territory that has been ceded and yielded to Islam. Let there be a vibrant church of Jesus Christ again in Greece and in Turkey and in Jerusalem. Bring your people to true repentance and true return.

We'll thank you and praise you, precious God, for the love that pursues us and will not let us go, for thy kingdom and for thy name's sake. Amen. I have a concern on my heart, and I don't know how to validly

express it, but my concern is that we don't try to, even in our sincerity, sing away the tension of this moment, but that whatever God wants to do, that we allow him to do that, and that we take time, if necessary, to wait on the Lord in silence, or we dismiss the meeting, or whatever the Lord would have us do.

Amen. It's not my custom to come before such a large group, but I have a small word for you. I spent last night with a brother whose heart is torn over the same situation, and it's more towards the repentance of the body of Christ than one man.

The issue at which has been cast before you, I hope you dare not take it lightly, because my father's tears cry for your heart, and they fall upon my soul. I want your heart, and I'll settle for nothing less. Dare you to stand in my presence and throw this in my face, and I shall consume you.

Truly this world shall see my wrath, and they shall see the glory of my saints revealed in the hearts of those that dare love me. Even so, come Lord Jesus, and I know there are those hearts here that are not yielded. You're not playing a game, and I truly can feel those tears, and it's just like drops of steel when they hit my heart, and he weeps, and he receives the repentance of those that are repentant, but he desires all of you, every single one of you.

There's a place, and if I could spend tonight too, if it would do any good, I'd do that too, just with him, but only do what he calls, and that's what you must do, only what he calls you to do. If it means give your life, you give it, because you love him, and it's not a game, and it's not a play. We desire to see life come forth, because we can touch a brother and heal him, and indeed we shall, but cry with my father and with I, and yield yourself to the beckon of his spirit, and I know these issues have not been a short time in coming, and it's not easy to see them birthed in your own life, or in your brother's.

Like Brother Gitchum here, I know him very little, but I have died for that man this year, and it's not easy to see someone so frivolously dance before God, and kick it in his face as dust, and God has chosen that man, and blessed him, and sent him partway around the world to bless us with the love that the world has so long waited to see, and that knot that twists within you is not there because of indigestion, it's your father, and he wants your insides, and if you are called, he's going to get them, because he, nor I, nor anyone else called to this ministry will let you go. And for that we are committed, and for that we shall die. God bless you.

Charles and I are just whispering together about should we dismiss or not, and so I was instructing him what he should say, he said, you dismiss them, and I was saying, let them go soberly, and not to leave bent, but to invite God to press, to increase the pressure unto breaking, and if they have nothing to repent for in themselves, let them repent for the condition of the church, break and weep for the church, be broken for the condition of the church, don't let it be a dull pressure that will in time subside, but invite the Lord to press unto breaking, don't bend, don't be satisfied with merely being bent. So Lord, we just ask you to seal what was the work of your spirit tonight, whatever the human admixture, Lord, we ask you to make that null and void, dissipate it out of our memory and consciousness, but let that which came out of your own pure heart continue there to work, mighty God, to vibrate, to penetrate, Lord, to work a real work, gracious God, to break us, have a supple-yielded people, mighty God, who live in the shadow of the cross, not a phony, pious people, but those who are sinners saved by grace daily, who can hear the confessions of a brother, for they themselves live beneath the shadow of the same cross. Thank you, Lord, for this love of which we're conscious tonight.

Seal us in this particular speaking, strive with us through the night hours and in these days to come, and let your word have all of the effect and intent that was in your heart to perform. We bless your holy name and thank you for such a love as this, a real God, not playing with kids, but speaking to us as true sons and daughters. Bless your name.

Dismiss us with your blessing. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

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