

(The Testimony of Jesus Is the Spirit of Prophecy) Selling All Your Possessions

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the radical call to surrender all possessions and self-reliance to fully embrace the life and salvation offered by God.

Duration: 1:21:00

Scripture: Matthew 19:16-26

Topics: "Selling All"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issues he sees in the foundation of life and reality. He criticizes the impersonal and materialistic nature of modern universities, where students are focused on attaining degrees and material success. The speaker reflects on a personal experience where he felt disconnected from a celebration of faith, realizing that there was a lack of a tragic sense of life among the believers. He emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects the significance and meaning of God, even in secular environments, and encourages believers to let go of their calculated stylisms and techniques in order to fully follow God.

Transcript

O Lord, I'm privileged that a Jewish boy from Brooklyn, no longer boyish, is standing before a congregation of this kind in this city in this Asia. Who would have thought, my God, in that early time that such a thing as this would come to pass? Let my mother be in the cloud of invisible witnesses overhead and enjoying the occasion because she came to the knowledge of you 10 days before passing this life and is now up there with the saints of old and relishing and cherishing that her son is a privileged servant, although for the first almost 40 years she was aggravated by the same thing that she now celebrates. So thank you, Lord, for her passing from death to life.

And let her enjoy her observing of us tonight in this place. And bring forth, Lord, something along the lines that my brother has prayed and expected. So we want to be astonished, not because we're looking to be titillated but because we have very real need, Lord.

The world is closing in all around us and its spirit continually nips, my God, at our heels and seeks to corrupt and to dissipate and weaken our faith and turn it into some kind of commodity, just another piece of something that can be purchased and obtained and practiced that will lose its vital prophetic and

apostolic significance. So, Lord, we're contending tonight for that precious faith and ask Holy Ghost assist, my God, to make this more than memorable, a pivotal statement, my God, that sinks deep into the foundations and against which every future thing will be aligned and considered. We're asking largely, Lord, our need is large, and we know you're able to answer.

So come and give us that remarkable grace and the prophet's reward that even as our brother prayed, I had the remarkable Holy Ghost tingling and sense of your presence that you were saying, Amen, that whosoever will recognize the calling which I have bestowed will receive indeed that reward. So let it be, Lord, and we thank and give you praise for this occasion now. Take it to yourself in full measure.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well I have before me my next newsletter article.

We publish four times a year a modest little newsletter. The circulation is so pitifully small that I hesitate even to announce it. But this is an occasion for me to use that article as a springboard to speak to you.

I'm reading from Matthew chapter 19, verse 16. I think that the same episode is also described in one or two other places in the Gospels. And behold, one came and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man said unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up.

What lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. So Lord, kindle these verses and extract from them what is appropriate for our consideration tonight that will have a lasting and enduring effect on all of our continuation with you, all our future, my God.

You're able and we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Well, I think it's some other addition of this episode.

The ruler does just doesn't come and ask. He comes running and asking, comes running and bowing and and making concession and acknowledgement in an obsequious way. Excuse my language.

A real deference to the Lord as a real teacher. And it was very flattering. Good master.

Honored teacher. What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? So there's something that is struck from the first that deserves our closest attention. And not the least is that Jesus does not succumb to the seduction of flattery and acknowledges that the greeting is appropriate.

He will not allow himself to be acknowledged as good master or even as good. Because had he made that acknowledgement, some fundamental note will have been struck for all time. That is of an ideological kind that dares not be conceded, which is to say that there's no man good.

No, not one. To receive that as compliment is to concede that it's true and that it's a fundamental premise that we can accept and even make it foundational to our own life in God. But Jesus would not receive it and brought it into question immediately.

So the question itself, what must I do to inherit eternal life is no small thing. But it's not just the issue of what lies beyond death. It's the issue of present life, the issue of continuance in God by the life of God, because the same life that is our privilege after death is the same life now that is the basis for our continuation before God.

The issue is life. And maybe instead of saying what must I do to inherit, what must I do to acquire it? And the fact that he raises it as a question that he can accomplish by doing is already giving the game away. It's already revealing a mentality of a certain kind, the Judaic mentality, that has to do with things that men can attain by their own virtue, their own works and attainment.

What must I do? See, this thing is riddled with error right from the beginning. It's the language of good man, good master. What must I do is a dead giveaway where this man is coming from.

What is his orientation? How does he understand God, life, reality? And these understandings are not so strange to us. You don't have to be Jewish to subscribe, even unconsciously, to some kind of an attitude by which man deserves a certain kind of acknowledgement that there is something that he can do to inherit or to attain. And I want you to know that I'm personally fiercely opposed to so much as granting an iota of credibility to a mentality of that kind.

We need to spurn and disown anything by which man can think himself to be good, deserving, inheriting, acquiring by virtue of his merit or what he is in himself because this is a, what's the word, an exemplary young man. He's a ruler. This isn't just some Joe Blow off the street.

This is an exemplary piece of Jewish accomplishment. And he acknowledges that he has kept all of these laws and all of these commandments from his youth up. What more do I lack? I have it all together.

I'm complete in my religious attendance to the commandments themselves. And so the Lord says, well, just one thing do you lack? And it's that one thing that makes or breaks everything for him and for us. And I'm supposing that we lack it and are not even aware of the deficiency.

And we're going on, even as Christians, even as charismatic Christians, more in the spirit and mentality of this young Jewish ruler than we know. We need eternal life, dear saints, not after we pass this life, but we need it presently for the eternal life is the life, the life of God. And we're called to live from it and through it because any other kind of service that has a source of energy, a dynamism of an enablement that is not God's life is ipso facto rejected by God.

And he'll not allow any performance of those things that pertain to his name, his glory, his honor and his purpose to be actuated by anything other than his own life. I think I'm not presuming upon God. And in fact, if this message itself and my speaking is not being issued out from the life of God, then I myself am a contradiction in terms before you.

But I trust in that. And the Lord seems to be faithful to continually supply and to be my enablement even at my advanced age and to lay country after country before us in the space of weeks to go from one to another is more than just the issue of physical exertion or the deprivation that comes from long hours in airplanes and just finding a speaking occasion. Every speaking from my prophetic point of view is a once and for all that will not be given again.

And what preparation have we had today? Just awaking less than a half hour from a nap before coming here, having had even a chance to review the text that I'm now employing and trusting that this little thing that I brought with me is God's text for tonight and that he'll quicken right on the spot and bring forth by the exercise of his own life what he wants through that text, not just to entertain, amuse, or even instruct or even inspire, but set forth something in the deeps by the promulgation of his word that will bring us down, that will devastate, that will set something in motion that will be consequential for all the future, even eternity itself. You see how mad prophets are, how large are their expectations, and which is not altogether uncomely or improper. The Lord does not frown on that kind of expectation.

He intends it to be normative. And when you think in terms as large as that, it's something that cannot be accomplished even by a Jewish speaker. So what hope for you? If the Apostle Paul had to frequently punctuate with groans and sighs the statement, who is sufficient for these things, what shall you say? The fact that you have not said it shows that you're living beneath the faith and the intention of God and that your Christian life is so predictable and tame that you can well conduct it on the basis of your own Singaporean ability, which is no small thing.

Your schools have served you well and taught you how to be diligent and your English is acceptable, but hardly more. And you've been taught to exercise your own skill, your own ability, your own wit, and succeed on that basis. And you're doing admirably, if I can just judge it by the magnificent cars that are to be seen everywhere, shining and gleaming fresh off the showroom floor, being operated by people evidently who have made it in life by the very skills that issue out of human self-sufficiency.

So how have you avoided that trap? How much do you resemble this young ruler in your secret mentality, which is being revealed to you tonight more than you yourself knew? Because you're unwilling and didn't realize that the only way in which his life can be conferred now, presently, for the purposes of God, is not to be rich, not to have possessions. It's the willingness and the requirement to sell all that you have. And the few of us will go that far with God.

And therefore, we fall short of the remarkable provision for the remarkable calling for which the world is wanting and hurting until it be established. So the life of God is evidently not given until we also comply with the same requirement made of him, sell whatsoever thou hast. What a radical requirement to be made to a rich man, not just part with some of it, not make a contribution of philanthropy, but altogether devoid, remove everything in which you could have had, any kind of confidence that will have sustained you, empty out, rob yourself for whatever we have, however accomplished, is of man and keeps us from an absolute reliance on Jesus for our life.

Can you understand that? Any possession that we have, sell what thou hast, what you have as man, that you have attained by your own efficiency, your own credibility, your own diligence, now do without. You want life? You want eternal life? Here's the condition. Sell what thou hast, because what you have is antithetical and opposed to what I am able to give you and incompatible.

If you want the one, you have to avoid the other. You can't have both. My life is not a little addendum.

It's not a little icing on the cake. It's the whole thing. But I'm jealous.

My life is holy and powerful and rich. Life is all inclusive. It's such a term.

It's not just energy, although it is profoundly that, but it's the wisdom of God. It's the mercy of God. It's the love of God.

It's what God is in himself. And you want that? Well, here's what is required. Sell what you have.

Your possessions. Imagine if that's the requirement for us as much as it was the requirement for him. If you want an absolute reliance on Jesus for life, that whatsoever, that word, whatsoever thou hast is inclusive, not only of possessions of a material kind, but our spiritual insights, our ministerial ability, even the best of all motives in serving the purposes of God.

You thought it only meant carnal material things. That's kids stuff. It's easy to get rid of the BMW.

It won't be painless, but to get rid of your spiritual acquisitions that you possess may be more of a requirement than you know. Sell what you have because what you have is yours. You have obtained it, though it has its origin in God and it makes up something in which you are spiritually sufficient and even impressive.

But if you want the ultimate thing, this is the very thing that you must sell, must void, must give over. Because there's no man good. There's nothing good, but God.

Don't you understand the absoluteness of this? What this, what this confrontation means that has been set in scripture is timeless. It's ethical in its meaning. It's a collision of an ultimate kind, all the more significant because it's a young ruler, all the more significant because he's exemplary, because he's got it all together, because he's a really spiritual kind of guy that has obeyed the commandments from youth up, but he's also, of course, rich because the same character that will obey commandments and is diligent will also have a material consequence that adds to the substance of the man himself.

And Jesus says, sell all that you have, not some, not to reduce your acquisition so you live more modestly, but totally void, totally give over all that you have. Get rid of it because there's nothing good of what you have. Your possessions is equally indicted as you are yourself.

There's no man good. Why call this on me? Good. There's no man good, but God.

When are we going to believe that the totality of God's requirement if we are to enjoy his life and if we don't have his life, we'll have to turn the amplifiers up louder and simulate it and give the appearance of it. And we can do that and make a robust demonstration and enjoy it and think that by that elation that that constitutes the life. See how dangerous this is.

The life, dear saints, I don't have a word to describe. I'm only hoping and praying as I do continually before the Lord that I not only be an expositor of his word, but to demonstrate also its truth. So if what I'm saying does not issue from his life, which is also his wisdom, also his intention, which if in any moment it should subside or be withdrawn from me, I would crumple before you like the poor piece of dust and earth that I am.

I'm wholly dependent on the life of God. If he withholds it for a moment, I can't speak. I can't gesticulate.

I can't move my arms. I can't raise my voice. I have no being independent of that life.

And I'm not offering this as some radical alternative that is reserved only for the prophetic man. The prophetic man, like the apostolic man, is the demonstration of what is quintessentially God's intention for all the church. For if it is not prophetic and it's not apostolic, which lives from the life of God, has its enablement out of his power and wisdom and love and all of the things that are inclusive of that life, what is it? So something needs to sink deep into our hearings, to have a repugnance of the kind that God himself has for what is in man.

There's no man good. Why call this me good? I'll not accept your compliment. Only God is good.

And only God issues what is good. Even that which comes forth from the best and well-meaning intentions of man is still something less and other than that which issues from God. And even the disciples were beside them.

So well, who then can be saved? Who then can subscribe to this? This is so utter a requirement. And the Lord says with men it's impossible. Have you understood the faith to which you have come? The thing to which you have been called? It's an utter contradiction of the world, its wisdom and its way.

It calls you to be emptied of anything that purports and issues from man that is celebrated as good. Remember early in the Gospel of John, there were some who believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles which he performed, but he would not commit himself unto them because he knew what was in man, that they had come to the right conclusion for the wrong reasons. They had humanly estimated and assessed his miracles and on that basis had come to a human conclusion that he's the Messiah.

Though they came to the right conclusion, they came to it by the wrong means. And he would not yield himself to them even though they were correct in their assessment because they came to it humanly. But Peter, when Jesus said, who do men say that I am? And this impulsive fisherman said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. You didn't come to this estimation and conclusion because you had the privilege of an intimate association with me or saw my miracles or heard my teachings. You received something that had to issue from God or there's no way that you can have it.

And because you have it from him, you're blessed. And not only are you blessed, but this is foundational to all the church. On that foundation will I build my church? That what comes only from God by revelation by the Spirit that issues out of his life, only that is acceptable.

Only that is foundational. It's not enough to be correct, even biblically. How many of us are living in any way that can compare with this Jewish young ruler, that our life is as exemplary as his, is as moral as his, is as ethical as his, and is as serious about the commandments of God as he? There's not one of us that would compare.

And yet in God's sight, it's totally a ground for rejection. You want to follow me? Then you have to get rid of all that you have, all your possessions, your riches, your confidence, which is predicated not on me, but yourself and your own attainment as man. With man, it's impossible, but with God, that's the only good thing.

What is in union with himself and issues from himself and nothing in between and nothing other is good. Believeest thou this? If you believe it, you're as good as dead. You'll go down on your face.

You're destitute. What? Lord, just when I had it all together and thought myself spiritual and singing the courses so robustly and with real enjoyment and conviction and living far more impressively than ever I've done before, and now you're telling me, wow, if any aspect of that is the result of my own energy and intention and human striving, that it's void, and that as much as I enjoy this acquisition of spiritual understanding, if it's humanly obtained by my own cleverness and projected, I have to get rid of it. I have to be emptied in order to obtain your life and live through that life, to be dead and hid with Christ in God until his life is revealed.

Well, what if he chooses not to reveal it? Like now, what if a man is called up onto the platform and having been given so elaborate an introduction as this and he stands there at the podium and nothing happens. He can't draw upon his 75-year history or 40 years in the Lord or even the accomplishments of today that were impressive. He's totally dependent on the life of God that will be revealed if God chooses, but he'll test us.

He'll not always be at our elbow for our convenience to save us from embarrassment or failure or humiliation. There will be occasions if we cast ourselves in such utter dependency upon him when he'll choose to keep it unrevealed and withheld and allow our faces to stick out embarrassingly and we have not a clever word to say or a spiritual foot to put forward. Are you willing for that humiliation, to be so tested, to be hid with God in Christ until his life is revealed? Because when it's revealed, it's no longer the issue of a successful evening or an enjoyable message.

His glory follows. I think the Lord is wanting to ruin you tonight. And I don't feel guilty because you're so charismatically impressive.

But I tell you what, that there's a note of sorrow in my heart tonight that I just learned en route to this meeting that one of the most celebrated so-called oracles of the hour, internationally known, has been found to be in a condition of alcoholism and homosexuality. And I'm sorrowing, not only for the man's fall, but suspecting that it's the beginning of the unraveling of a garment that is long overdue. It's the emperor's garment.

You know that story where only the child was able to see that the emperor is naked and everybody else was oohing and aahing at how impressive the supposed garment is? It's a false garment. It's a superficial garment. It's a religiously contrived something that we have celebrated too mindlessly and enjoyed.

And the Lord is pulling and unraveling the thing from the bottom. And who knows where it will end when this most conspicuous figure celebrated as the oracle of the hour, God's present prophet, is found to be in a state of moral fallenness of the most shameful kind. Well, where were those who were close to him? Where were those who should have observed the earliest signs of a tendency and propensity toward a movement away from righteousness that should have been corrected in the moment? What is it that was working that made this figure so compelling and attractive and full of hype? I've sat in rooms.

I've gone out of my way to hear the man. If indeed he could be the oracle of the hour, I was willing to take second place. But alack and alas, every time I extended myself, it was with disappointment.

And yet I watched this figure on the platform being introduced much more glowingly than what was spoken of me tonight. And the man didn't even stir or bat an eyelash. And I was waiting for him to come to the microphone and say, I appreciate, brother, your good intention, but I have to say, I'm not what you're describing.

I'm just a servant who has the gift of prophecy and I can give personal prophecy, but I'm not an oracular figure who's bringing ultimate statements of the kind that are out from the heart of God for this moment that touch time and eternity and interpret prophetic scripture in the light of present events and things that are future that consummate in the conclusion of the age. I'm not that kind of prophet. Don't don't introduce me as the oracle of the hour and the prophet.

I'm not that. But alack and alas, the man never stirred and allowed this heavy acknowledgement to go forth as if it's true. Unlike Jesus, he didn't stop this acknowledgement.

Jesus would not for a moment allow this young man to go on and acknowledge him as good master. Was not Jesus a good master? My God, he was better than a good master, but he would not receive that compliment in the spirit and mentality from which it issued for to acknowledge and to receive that is already giving the game away. He would not allow himself to be considered as a man who is good because there's no man good.

But God, what must I do? This young ruler shows where his mind is. What what what must I accomplish? What must I perform? What can issue from me that can attain eternal life? He doesn't know what it means to sell all that you have to relinquish, to let go, abdicate, cease from yourself, surrender, renounce, abandon ourselves to the Lord, not the things that we want to be rid of, our bad habits, our temper, our unkind disposition, our carnality. No, the possessions that make you rich, your accomplishment, your spiritual attainment, your efficiency, your impressiveness, your worship leader ability, your preaching, your gift of gab, your aura of authority, the kinds of things that have elevated you to a place of prominence.

That's what God is after. Who doesn't want to get rid of the things that we want to dump? It's the possessions that are rich that are things that must be voided and given over if we're to have life. Go thy way, sell whatsoever you have.

Talent, ambition, spiritual attainment. The remarkable thing is you probably even have it from God. But you have it.

It's yours, your possession, and your confidence and trust is not so much in him who gave it, but your attainment of it and your manipulation and use through it. That's why it's got to be given up, given back. I said this morning, there are too many young squirts recently saved that are on the platform with their guitars.

Where and what is their qualification to lead in worship who hardly know the Lord, but are competent in their musicality? I've watched them chew gum and crack gum and smirk and smile and flirt with the girls even while they're strumming. And the poor minister who has given them this opportunity is being diminished before their sight because they are where the action is. They're influencing the atmosphere and bringing attention to themselves in the supposed name of the Lord, who is the object of worship, so-called.

Phony baloney, dear saints. Corruptive, defiling. We need to relinquish and take that guitar from that young man and not give it back to him until he demonstrates a sanctified life through observed discipline and dealings of God, where he really comes to know the holiness of the Most High and can worship him in spirit and truth.

Until then, he needs to abdicate and forfeit his musical ability and talent. And whatever is the comparable thing that we have as possession needs to be go and sell what you have. Go and give it up.

Go and relinquish and forfeit it. Because there's one thing that you lack. And to lack that one thing is to lack everything.

I don't know how to say it. If you lack that, no matter how impressive are the other things that are a part of your life, Christian personality and service, to lack that is to lack all. This one thing, you lack this.

And it has to be so precious in your sight to attend to this one thing that is lacked, that you're willing to forfeit your ambition, your attainment, your preaching style to whatsoever, that you'll have treasure in heaven and you'll have treasure from heaven that exceeds the best that we can know and waits upon the totality of this renunciation. Put that into your Singaporean pipe and smoke it. Did you hear that? You who got A's in English? The best we have needs to be renounced.

And God waits on the totality of renunciation if we are to receive the gift and the privilege of eternal life. Which is the life that Jesus said, I've come to bring you life and that more abundantly. There's no distinction between that life and the life that's eternal.

The privilege is that we don't have to wait to die to have that eternal life. We can have it now, not as an enjoyment or as a new possession, but as the source of our being, our reason for being, our ability to be and to serve, which at any moment, if it pleases him to test us, he can withhold. Because we're dead in our humanity, in our confidence and what we can employ and are hid with God in Christ until his life is revealed.

And when it's revealed, it may not come out in a way that you would appreciate. It may come out in a way that will embarrass you, make you an object of reproach, have you to speak foolishly and carry on in such a way as to make people frown and look strangely at you who thought that somehow you were godly and a servant of the most high. But how do you begin like that? As we had occasion just days ago in Germany to begin three days of meetings with German students who found us on a website and wrote to us and said, you seem to be the real thing.

They needed the real thing. They were desperately urgent for the real thing. And they weren't looking for some accomplished charismatic personality who can give them cliches of a kind that they've already heard that are stone cold dead.

And so we came. I arrived in the back of a car half the size of what you drive. It was a little, I don't know what it was, but it was little.

And I was so contorted. I couldn't find a place. We had like a three-hour drive from Holland to Germany, and I was crumpled in that back.

My neck was stiff, couldn't doze off, and I desperately needed sleep. Why? Because you're up three in the morning, four in the morning, five in the morning. Doesn't the Lord know you need your rest? Why does he

bring you out of your bed for these insane devotional times that could just as easily have been obtained at 7 a.m. and 8 at a reasonable hour? Why three, four, when the Lord knows that you've got commitment that day and you need to be at your best and strongest instead of arriving crumpled and exhausted and spent and looking out on a sea of German faces who are looking you over and wondering what they're going to get, who had hoped that somehow you would be the real thing.

I looked out on them. I sat in the, just like tonight, listening to their choruses, which were almost as good as yours. And the strange thing was I couldn't enter their celebration.

In fact, the more they sang, the more I mourned. I was sorrowing. I had to touch my eyes with my handkerchief.

Tears were welling up in my eyes. Why am I feeling like this? Shouldn't I enter this celebration with these genuine, sincere saints? And when I got up, I was in the strangest mood. I opened my mouth and I said, You lack a tragic sense of life.

Pow! Do you think I knew what I was talking about? Not a bit. All I knew was this, that that statement had to be made. Something needed to be sounded, not just as a device to arrest their attention, but to pierce them in their inward deeps, because I was conscious, maybe especially as a Jewish man, that hardly a generation after the Holocaust that had taken six million Jewish lives and a million and a half children, this generation of university students is completely untouched and unaffected by that recent tragedy and have not a visible, evident, tragic sense of life.

That doesn't let you off the hook, being Asian, and that if you're not German, you're not under obligation to have a tragic sense. If you don't have a tragic sense of life, you're a shallow piece of goods. History has passed you by.

You're living in the present now. You have the narrowest focus. There's every reason to have a tragic sense of life, whether your history confirms it or not.

German history is your history, because it's man. It's what man has done, man and his failure, and not just ordinary man, but German man, far more exemplary than Asian man, if you'll allow me that Western bias. You may cut me off from Chinese food hereafter.

The worst of fate for Jews. German is the epitome of civilization, of man's accomplishment. Call the theologians, the philosophers, who's the one, the ethical, the imperative, Kant, K-A-N-T, and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Wagner, Beethoven, Mozart, Heinrich Heine, poets, philosophers, theologians.

It's the genius of civilization, and they were reduced to something bestial and became a machine for the systematic annihilation of the chosen people. Hey, saints, that's tragic. Something is rotten in Denmark.

Something is amiss. There's something wrong in the very foundation of life and reality, and how can you be a student in this factory of a university with concrete walls, and it's not the older universities with ivy-covered Heidelberg. This is a new university, cast in concrete, something like this decor, and impersonal, and these are the students there to attain degrees so that they can become professionals and make a living and have an impressive kind and have their own BMWs.

No tragic sense of life, and do you know what? I did not know what the next sentence should be. My dear brother who was with me thought, it's finished. It's over before it begins.

I've seen Ott get himself into predicaments, but this is one from which he cannot extricate himself. This is absurd to begin that way, but you want to know something? Three days later at the final meeting, the Lord had moved us from a moment of utter senselessness that defies rationality and expectation unto glory. He made a deposit in Germany that will touch that nation, that will touch the church of that nation, that will have consequence of a kind that can't even be estimated because he began in an utterly and absurd and foolish and unpredictable way by a man who lives from that life and has to yield to that life even when it brings forth something that he himself doesn't understand and to which he would not even agree and offends his own taste and sensibility.

That's what it means to live by the life of God. Are you willing, you Asians, who I understand have a culture that has to do with keeping faith and being esteemed and recognized as spiritual, are you willing to be that absurd, that cast upon God, that foolish, that crumpled, that weak, to come out of a car where you can hardly straighten up and fogged over by lack of sleep and exhaustion having gone through severe demand already in Holland before you arrived in Germany and open your mouth and let the Lord whose wisdom is in his life give expression as a beginning for which you don't even know how to continue let alone where it will end because he's the Alpha and the Omega of every occasion, not just the beginning of creation, but every day in our Christian life he's Alpha and Omega. He's got to begin because only he knows the end from the beginning, but can he begin through you? If you have your own sense of propriety and rightness in what is spiritually acceptable and are not wanting to be cast on that dependency because, after all, you've got something of yourself and your own and you're intelligent and you're able and you're spiritual, sell all that you have.

Forfeit, relinquish, give it over. Not the cheap things, the best things, the things that you most want to cling and possess for its man. You can't do it.

Therefore, we don't enter into the kingdom that heavenly dimension of reality and authority though we prattle about it profusely because we trust in our own riches and make them our confidence and our dependence. Boy, cats, where did you get that statement? Right out from the life of God. Not my cleverness.

What is he saying? We prattle about the kingdom of God. We're fluent, dexterous in our vocabulary, and we're so naive as to think that because we can mouth these terms that we have some measure of its reality. We don't even know what the kingdom is.

We have no sense of its theocratic reality and rule and that it's Davidic and must take place from the holy hill of Zion through a restored Israel and out of there Jerusalem must go forth the law and the word of the Lord. But we talk about the kingdom and we think that by invoking that kind of term it brings a little bit more of a luster and dimension of seriousness to what otherwise would be merely charismatic. We prattle, we speak, but we have not the awesome sense, the reality of the requirement and the significance of that kingdom even now because with man it's impossible, but not with God.

When will we believe him that without me you can do nothing? How would you like to predicate everything in this trust and confidence that if he be not God, if there be no resurrection, you of all people are most to be pitied and if he will not supply what is needed in the moment, which is not just the issue of your reputation, but a life and death moment. In fact, aren't all your moments life and death moments? Or you

don't see that way? You just thought you go to school or you're at an office or you're learning in college and university and one day is like another and so if you meet someone and talk to someone it's interesting, but no big deal. You see, you're living beneath the intention of God.

You don't understand the eternality of even accidental contact of a word that can come in season, that can set something in motion that will affect a man's salvation and his eternity and it has got to come from you and not out of your cleverness because you can quote John 3.16 Are you saved, brother? He needs to hear something else. What he needs to hear has got to come to him from the throne of heaven and the wisdom of God who knows that man intimately and you cannot know, but are you yielded to the life that can give you a word for that one because eternity is at stake and who is sufficient for these things?

You do err because you do not appraise life apostolically and prophetically because your one day is like another because your Christianity is a succession of services which are enjoyable but you do not live in the intensity and appreciation of what life means and why we're here and what can be touched by us even in seeming accident by a God who is utterly sovereign and knows the end from the beginning and has given us works to walk in before the foundations of the earth were laid which work is taking place tonight?

Believe us now this or is this just a novelty? A Jewish guy that happens to be in town and let's have him because he has some kind of prophetic reputation it'll be enjoyable One of us is devastatingly in error I look upon tonight as a once and for all occasion that will not ever be given again and that we dare not miss it and merely to bring something good is not good enough It's not enough to be biblical and doctrinally correct or amusing or to be a novelty There are issues at stake of such moment, of such consequence that we dare not miss God in any moment Life is to be heightened in our appreciation for its significance and its meaning And how are we to meet these requirements?

Even as young believers Aren't you in school with non-believers? And don't you have teachers that are utterly secular who need to hear from you and see in you some measure of divinity that makes their heads to turn and makes them to rub their chin and wonder what about this student? There's something about her or him and the essay and the assignment that I'm reading is more than just a kid fulfilling a requirement There's something here that has a resonance that comes from another place beyond the earth Only the life of God can provide that kind of reality dear saints and that reality is reality and anything less or other is unreality and God is beginning to judge it and unravel it and unmask it and show it forth as naked before the whole charismatic world that has celebrated and luxuriated in that unreality And I praise God for it Tragic that it would require a man's humiliation in such deplorable sin But if that's what it takes to be waken from our sleep and to agree with God that there's no man good and without me you can do nothing and that we need to sell all that we have and we're to receive the life by which we're called to live and to give expression in our time and age then it's not extravagant for him to require that man's humiliation if it'll save us from living beneath his glory in predictable Christianity adorned with charismatic flourishes that fall short of the glory of God Without me you can do nothing He yearns for the infusion of his life for us that comes with union with himself For the believer can each day be pleasing to God only in that which he does through the power of Christ dwelling in him the daily inflowing of the life sap of the Holy Spirit is his only power to bring forth enduring and eternal fruit This is from Andrew Murray in his book Abide in Christ You know where Andrew got it?

From God Where did he make this profound observation that came to him through the life of God to which he submits and yields and which is his life When Paul says for me to live as Christ you think he's just coining a little phrase? You think he's playing on words that this is a piece of rhetoric? That's cute? Or is

Paul giving us the definitive principle by which this man lives this remarkable apostolic lifestyle and makes himself an object for the attack and persecution and oppression of his own Jewish kinsmen and the powers of darkness that hate this man's guts and have seen that men will vow and throw dust up in the air and on their heads that they'll not eat or drink until he's dead because the man is not fit to live How come you're getting by with much less?

How come you're not an object of oppression and persecution? How is it that you're one of the nice guys who's both Christian and nice and good fun? Because you're not in Paul's place You're not in that apostolic realm You're not in that intensity of life You're not living from the life of God which the world hates And the powers of darkness want to be able to say Jesus we know, Paul we know, but who are you? There's nothing about you however well-meaning your intentions however impressive your worship however much your programs that makes us in any way to take note of you let alone to fear what you're about because it only issues from your unaided humanity with a little flourish charismatically from the Lord but it's essentially you And it's only him that terrifies us His life terrifies us because his life is omnipotent, omniscient it's powerful, it's rich it's totally antithetical to the death that we represent There's a contest between life and death not in the narrow biological terms but in the largest cosmic, spiritual and philosophical understanding that there's a contest between two alternatives life and death and the world lies in the wicked one the evil one, the father of lies who's the author of death and celebrates death and has a whole religious movement that loves to take the heads off of shoulders of men who are western, American and especially Jewish what a trophy they'll have in me because I'm all free that kind of evil that loves death because it hates God and when you read the Psalms what do you read in the Psalmist?

They're after my life, my persecutors they harass me they don't let me go I'm continually an object of their derision they bring me to shame they're wicked, they're evil, they're malevolent they're after my life not just my physical existence but the principle by which I live, which is God and they hate God in me for he is my life and they want to destroy that by destroying me How many of us tonight can say for me to live is Christ more than that, how many of us are willing to be brought to a place where we can say that and desire that because we know that without that life who is sufficient there's a world dying outside this door in their BMWs and sleek cars and Mercedes and you name it, they're dying in their era they have no sense of what lies beyond this they don't even know that

there's an eternal life that if they don't obtain it now they'll not obtain it ever who's to tell them who's to break into that unreality that is so pervasive and so accepted that people think it normative and that you're the queer ones we have a task burden and obligation for our generation and our time for all Asia this cats has boasted that Singapore will be the Antioch to Asia that out of the Singapore will come apostolic men sent from apostolic bodies whose word is more than just an interesting or inspirational thing but is an event it comes in the power of God but where is that sending body if it's resting on its haunches and is content with what it can perform in itself out of its well meaning intentions and its own humanity and is not cast upon God for all of life that if there's

no resurrection we of all men are most to be pitied and prefer to have it so and make that the condition of our life and being casting all upon God Andrew Murray the same spirit that dwelled and still dwells in the sun becomes the life of the believer in the unity of that one spirit and fellowship of the same life that is in Christ praise the Lord that the Italians invented the phrase Mamma Mia what a statement I'll tell you what that statement eclipses human brilliance and spirituality the statement itself is divine in its wisdom and in its origin and it issued out of an earthen vessel called Andrew Murray who knew and spoke this reality because he lived through it and lived by it what was available to him and to Paul is available to us well why

don't we have it brother because you have

not sold all that you possess you have not given up and relinquished your treasure and your riches your clinging and cleaving and want all this and heaven too and even want to succeed on the basis of what you have as man and you can charismatically but not apostolically not prophetically not gloriously the unity the same spirit that dwelt and still dwells in the sun we are dead and hid with Christ in God becomes the life of the believer in the unity of that one spirit and fellowship of the same life are you having fellowship with the life don't think that it's obtained in your choruses the fellowship with the life has got to be while it's yet dark and day has not yet broken and you're up at 4 or 5 a.m. and on your knees or on your face in your prayer cabinet and in a private and quiet

unseen place with God there is the test of your affection and your devotion not what you can sing impressively in the corporate environment the early morning hour where you're foolish and weak where your body cries out to stay in bed and you get out in foolish devotion and seek the Holy One of Israel and bow before Him for the piece of dust that you are acknowledging that you don't know how to put one foot before the other to walk out this day that has come which is once and for all and will not ever be given again where issues of an eternal kind are ever before you that require a wisdom beyond your own and an ability beyond your own and you'll prostrate before Him and in communion not only to the acknowledgement of who He is but in the receiving in that communion something from His life

and you're foolish enough like me to take communion daily you've got to have the bread and the wine it's not enough to wait once a month for how often you have it you crave to eat and drink of the Lord you need the substance of that bread of life that has come down from heaven you need the wine which is the essence of His Spirit to fuel you in the man for the day that's before you which you cannot attend in any serious way except in that power that's what he's talking about in the fellowship with God in the place of communion before day begins in the houses of sleep you're foolishly out of bed and before the Lord and you're not going to give up because you don't feel anything there's no sense of His presence so this must be a foolish and wasteful investment I'm not feeling anything and if

I don't have the sense of God's presence what's the point? because you're in it to get something you utilitarian Asian saints I know you only too well so much invested for so much obtained the spirit of utility that prevails in the world governs your spirituality you're willing to extend for a service if there's a benefit but communion with God doesn't dangle a carrot before your nose and offer you benefit that's worth your investment it's because He is who He is because He's the living God, because He's the creator because He's full of grace because He has provided an atonement that has saved us out of death and hell that we could not have earned or obtained by any merit or any act that we could perform He needs daily to be honored and to be acknowledged and to confess that without you I

can do nothing Lord, how am I going to speak to these Singaporeans tonight at this cornerstone church beyond being a mere novelty and a piece of amusement how are you going to say something Lord that's going to go into the very deeps of that fellowship, that congregation and require a total reassessment of what we are about and where are we going and by what means and how we need to factor in this word that has come for it strikes at the heart of our being that's what we have to seek the Lord before the day even begins and trust that when that hour comes and you're awake in the half hour before the meeting, having a nap that is so desperately needed and brought there, looking all dressed and ready to go, that you yourself know you're a crumpled piece of merchandise and in you is no good

thing if the life of God is not going to be active, that there's something more at stake than the man's reputation.

It's the once and for all moment that will not be given again that only his life is sufficient to answer, not only by its energy but by its wisdom, by its content by his will to live through him and for him and unto him to whom be glory forever is the definitive and normative intention of God for all saints but it requires fellowship with the life unity with that one spirit that is in Christ and if there's anything of any kind that is contrary to his holiness that fellowship is severed, he withdraws, he recoils that means there's an imperative to walk in such a way that's God honoring to watch our mouths, to watch our prattle, to watch our casual speech to watch the disposition of our hearts that even if we hear that a man of God has fallen, whom we could never even earlier acknowledge to be the oracle of the hour that we should not secretly and maliciously enjoy his fall can you understand that?

The human heart the deceitfulness of the heart that needs to be guarded against lest we lapse into something contrary to the holiness of God that would injure the fellowship that is so urgent by which we derive his life it takes a constant vigilance and a diligence which we cannot even accomplish by ourselves independently of others with whom we're joined as brothers in fellowship who will be quick to tell us if they see some disposition in us that is contrary to God and his holiness and his way so that means we need to be in a kind of relationship in which we can be observed in which even the subtlety of differences will be quick to be detected and known and that we love one another even having observed that difference to speak it in love, but you run the risk of being successful there are too many of you for the kind of intimacy that this reality requires so you have to find some way in the midst of your success and numbers to have that face-to-face kind of relationship in a frequency in which when there's any deviation in character in life, it's quick to be seen and acknowledged and communicated, for we're in something together of an ultimate kind that is more than happy services, that requires time and diligence and relationship that is authentic for if we will not have it with each other to what degree will we have it with God and I'll tell you what, a church that is as earnest as that cannot be performed on the basis of human well-meaning intention and natural energy it requires itself the life of God, for a true church which is ultimate demand against the flesh requires a kind of gospel heroism and courage and a love for truth and reality that is God and so there's a rest that remains to the people of God which is the ultimate hallmark of biblical faith to which few have come, this is that spoken by Jesus, if any man come to me and hate not his father, mother, wife, children, brother and sisters yea, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple you've got to hate your own life also you've got not to trust it you've got to despise its subtlety that wants to run the show wants to operate through your intellect or your singing ability or whatever proficiency that you have and have a place of dominance above that of the spirit of God in your spirit you've got to hate that intellect and put it in its proper place subservient to the spirit of God in your spirit as a servant and as an employment and not as something that runs the show and you preachers must sell all that you have this is really a message for preachers the rest of you can listen in you preachers must sell all that you have, your impressive soulful verve did you learn that in English 1A?

V-E-R-V-E that stylistic kind of flourish that we charismatic ministers are especially adept to perform and which the people love we know how to raise our voices we know how to manipulate we know how to touch the heart strings this is our baggage this is our technique, our methodology our picturesque affectation, our style our calculated stylisms that comprise our riches and if we are to follow him in the same totality by which he followed the father taking up the cross we have to forfeit those things as riches that we cannot enjoy let alone think to serve God by that means we're stripped that means unless the Lord gives a

flourish, unless the Lord gives a holy ghost verve we ourselves will not draw from our own ability to be entertaining or compelling or anything like that if the word of

God itself will not command the attention of God's people then we're dead ducks he doesn't need our help to liven it up by some kind of dimension we're going to bring that's personable that issues out of our energy and out of our life the word alone which is his and comes out of the wisdom of his life in the moment of his choosing will serve its own ends and perform its own purposes we ministers don't I had to caution men at our recent conference don't beat the rock just speak to it the waters will gush out the waters of life it doesn't need your assistance your additional personality and ability and charismatic style in order to bring it forth be the simple unadorned saint be what you are that you are by the grace of God come crumpled from the back of a car come without rest come in

whatsoever condition because your weakness his strength is made perfect be willing to be weak be willing to be foolish don't put your confidence in your own capability and that you're flushed with strength and know how you make yourself weak you make yourself poor you choose apostolic poverty merely because you have a are able to enjoy a BMW doesn't mean that you're driving one you void the kinds of things which you are able to possess because you know their subtlety and you know the inroads and the elevation that comes in the enjoyment of a luxurious vehicle and the various other kinds of things that make up the life that are contrary to the apostolic character of the true faith of men who lived in apostolic poverty there's a reason why the great prophet wore a camel's hair skin and ate

locust and honey and was out from the establishment in the wilderness place he could not have been for the people nor for God what he must if he mingled with and drew from and was part of the status quo and the things that are not in themselves necessarily sinful but the enjoyment of them does bring a certain erosion of reality and truth and therefore it's not masochistic this is not some psyching yourself out to voluntarily make yourself poor you don't have to live to the limit of your income you can live beneath it and modestly if it will ensure a greater casting upon the Lord for dependency, for life, for wisdom for speaking, for utterance got the idea? and so Andrew Murray says meditate on this until your soul bows to worship in the presence of this mystery you have to meditate on

this awkward on the spot interpolation putting something together from a newsletter article that is being presented tonight that probably is more significant than I myself know you need to meditate upon it this is a word for successful church this is word for an abounding Christianity in an affluent Singapore that strikes at the very unspoken premise and wisdom by which the whole society lives its life including the Christian segment of it we need to meditate and bow and worship what God is saying the very act of bowing breaks the soulish powers that have had too long sway you should have been with us this morning get the tapes where we talked about the difference between soul and spirit that the church in its condition is so abysmal it can't even discern the difference between soul and

spirit it has been so long taken up in the realm of soulishness that it thinks that to be spirit it has not guarded its treasure its inward integrity and is so open to be manipulated and moved by anything of a kind that excites emotion there's a purity a jealousy for that inward thing that has come from God that we dare not allow to be assaulted or penetrated because it appears to be because it seems to celebrate God there's a difference between soul and spirit not only must we recognize that difference but ruthlessly cleave to the one as against the other we're called to be sons and daughters of the resurrection we're a people of the spirit which is his life but you've got to sell all that you have in order to obtain it and to live continuously by it so I want to pray in conclusion that

you will pray rich young ruler that you are you came running in all kinds of excitement and enthusiasm ready to acknowledge and say the appropriate thing out of your own religiosity out of your own natural enthusiasm wanting something because you think you deserve it or can obtain it or earn it or merit it not realizing in man is no good thing at all without me you can do nothing nothing of eternal significance that is though you can perform services admirably let's pray lord you're ruthless tonight even you're close to being disrespectful and you're being very direct my god if I'm not mistaken if this is not just me if this is not just some petulant Jewish character who has his little bias against charismatica but this is your heart and out of your life that's being expressed and is

sounding a call of a kind that is so demanding so total that asks us to forfeit anything that has its origin and issuance and perpetuation in our humanity even in our well meaning humanity as being the very obstruction to the receiving and living by the life which is the life the eternal life of god so my god look over this people look at the rich young rulers who have obeyed the commandments done all the right things come my god and let them hear your call sell whatsoever you have forfeit anything in which you have a confidence and by which you're finding a measure of success through your ability give it up be willing to lose your voice and become hoarse and unable to sing a word in note and in tune unless the life of god gives you that grace you can't preach you can't teach you can't

oversee a congregation except you receive the ability the enablement the wisdom the care the love of the life that flows from god empty yourself forfeit relinquish give up the very thing that Singaporean society has encouraged you to obtain by your wit by your skill by the exercise of yourself would be the basis for success not only in the world but in the kingdom and god is asking a total refutation of that wisdom which is not of god but of the worlds which no one has called into question even in the congregation and has allowed us to succeed on that same basis come my god show us how jealous you are for yourself that you'll not share your glory with any flesh that there's nothing that we can perform or do that is admirable and deserves any acknowledgement to conserve your ultimate

purpose that only that which is of you and through you and for you has to do with the eternal praise of your glory so come my god and collect what these saints are now willing to forfeit and give up their treasure their riches their confidence what a requirement my god to make of Singaporean saints how cruel of you to make that demand and make it so ultimate and so total that unless it's done in totality your life is not available you'll not let it mingle with some mixed bag thing that is retained in ourselves we have to forfeit the one entirely in order to obtain the other you're asking a death lord you're bringing before us the cross give grace now especially to the young ones because they want to succeed on the basis of their life they've had hardly a chance to sow their oats and to

show themselves capable and you're asking that before they even get started to forfeit that kind of quest and give it over and even from the beginning to trust you for life and for everything and these ministers my god who have helped you along with their flourishes and other devices to give up those riches my god that have been so successful and are not in themselves necessarily sinful but they're our riches they're our treasures they're our possessions they're man's come saints talk to god sell all that you have in your heart let it go that if you find yourself with a voice tomorrow it's the grace of god and not some natural attribute that you possess as your own let's get serious the stakes are eternal the world is dying in its success it knows nothing about eternity because it has not

been commended to them by those who are living in that eternal life now so do we bless you lord break our hearts my god transact with us we can forfeit even tonight those things for which you have waited that

you might be all in all that you might have a christian community composed entirely of christ's fools who cannot put one foot before the other without walking into walls however accomplished they are by virtue of what society has taught them to do and to be they're utterly cast upon you come my god and let the life that raised you from the dead be our life let eternal life not be a future consideration but a present ability a present sustenance and all that adheres in your life and it's more than energy it's wisdom, it's love that's true it's not shabby affection that is prejudicial

and partial and is available to one but not to the other your love is unconditional your wisdom is sublime your integrity is beyond anything that we can attain by keeping our noses clean you alone my god are righteousness and life come my god and fill our vessels with yourself and let it have its expression however foolish it would seem to us however impolite however it would make us to be misunderstood and objects of reproach and derision because we ourselves can't even explain what your life is bidding us to speak and do that offends people rather than seems to bless them but we're your bond slaves my god we're dead unless your life gives us ability to move and live and have our being thank you my god we're cast upon you as dead men come and let your resurrection continually be the

great principle and genius of our life save us from mere charismatica however successful and bring us again to the apostolic verities that once shook the earth and turned the world upside down for the world is as desperately in need this night this Singaporean world this Asian world is as much in need of being turned upside down as was the ancient world into which the apostolic giants came so we bless you lord come precious god let the words of life that have come not fall to the ground but be taken up in the faith which is even the issue of your life and not our own to change us radically and to be that presence my god for which you yearn and for which you have given yourself in shameful suffering and death that we might enjoy and live by you to the eternal praise of your glory and not

the honoring of man and his ability and reputation thank you my god we bow, we surrender we relinquish we're dead we're hid with christ in god let your life be revealed to your own eternal satisfaction praise glory and honor for there is no other motive in Jesus name we pray amen

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