

To God Be Glory in the Church

by Art Katz

The church must return to the apostolic model, producing teachers and prophets, and being willing to sacrifice and be transformed to achieve this.

Duration: 1:06:24

Scripture: Isaiah 28:17, Isaiah 55:8-9, Matthew 6:33, Acts 11:26, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 3:10, Ephesians 4:11-12

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon entitled 'To God Be Glory In The Church,' Arthur Katz emphasizes the importance of aligning ourselves with the perfect standard that comes from heaven. He encourages listeners to discard anything that does not conform to this standard. Katz also highlights the significance of prayer and fasting, sharing personal experiences of how his fellowship's prayers have protected and guided individuals in dangerous situations. He emphasizes the need for a fervent desire to see the glory of God in the earth, stating that it can only be seen through the church.

Transcript

This is tape number K040, entitled, To God Be Glory in the Church, spoken by Arthur Katz. A plumb line will fall down from heaven. If you have any other standard of measure, it stinks.

There's only one standard, that which drops down from heaven. It's perfect. Would you have a heart to discard and scrap and alter and adjust everything that is not in perfect conformity with the perfect standard? I'm quoting so much Shakespeare these days, but you know a line just came to me? How weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable seem to me all the things of this world.

That was the cry that went up in the spirit of our brother earlier in this night. It's God's cry also. There's something about the drive that I had today to get down here, past the walnut stands and the gas stations and the hot dog joints and all of the drab, gray, utilitarian joints that pockmark America, that just makes my spirit crumble.

To think that men spend entire lifetimes in merchandise, making a living, so-called. There's something so pathetic about unredeemed living. And out of all that grayness, there should be one glory conspicuous.

It's the church of Christ Jesus. I want that plumb line to be dropped, okay? Shall we pray for that? You're not mad at me, are you? No? Okay. Precious God, Lord from heaven, by the operation of your own spirit

and life, out of your own mouth, words, out of your own heart, out of your own book, by the anointing of your own spirit, brand something in our hearts tonight, a divine discontent for this people, for anything less than that which comes down from heaven.

Mighty God, give this people a blueprint and a pattern by which to measure their life together, so that at the end result, Lord, there shall be a glory to God, shining brightly and bringing out of dens and coves and little two-bit joints and all of the cheap paraphernalia of the world, desperate souls who will find life because they've seen the light. Bless this night, Lord, and make it historic for this people, a signal night in their walk with you, and we'll thank you and praise you for it now, as we ask it together in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you didn't say amen, you didn't agree with the prayer. Okay, you can be seated. My text tonight is Acts, the 13th chapter.

I think the full title of the book of Acts is the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. And I want to tell you while you're turning that one of my very favorite words is apostolic. I'm liable to spit it out at you tonight so many times you'll get sprayed.

Apostolic. It's my opinion that the apostolic church described in the book of Acts is the heavenly standard. It is the plumb line of God.

And more than this being an hour of renewal, a word so popular among charismatics, I would much rather say it's an hour of restoration. God is not renewing tired, fagged-out denominations and jazzing up their services to make it a little bit more interesting for the saints. He's restoring us to the apostolic model.

How many of you love the book of Acts? Do you love the book of Acts? How many of you would desire to live in the glory of the apostolic age? How many of you, if you had the opportunity and it were possible, would turn the clock back and you'd much rather live in the first century when the church was besieged and oppressed and persecuted, harrowed and pursued, but lived in the fullness of the glory of God with signs and wonders and demonstrations and great grace was upon them all and with power gave they testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? I'll just make that a rhetorical question. That means I ask it, but you're not required to answer it now. You just file it in your think box and chew it over.

Because if we ain't going to be honest with each other tonight, I'm prepared to sit down now. I'm not here to entertain. And if this is just going to be another night's diversion, a visiting speaker, keep it.

Now, here's my question. How many of you would give up your present security, comfort and well-being, nicely accompanied by church services, dutiful attendance, participation in the choir, visiting the jails and the elderly, and give all that up to face the rigors, the trials, the hounding, the persecution, the living by faith, the want, that is the accompaniment of the apostolic age? Did I say to you the last time? If I did, it's worth repeating. The absence of persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ in America is a scandal.

Something is grievously wrong that the world has not found sufficient offense with us to hound us, harass us, to reproach us, rebuke us and to persecute us, let alone to slay us. I'll be far more comfortable and heave a great sigh of relief when persecution returns to the Church, for I will know by that symptom that the Church has returned to God. Are we together so far? Oh, dear children, let us not impede God one iota tonight by any stiffening of our spirits or tightening up or reacting adversely to the personality of the speaker or any such thing.

Let us be wide open to God, not to find offense in a comma or a punctuation or a manner of speaking and miss God's great point. I just have a sense in my spirit that God has a divine destiny for this Church and if it were not so, we would not be here. I don't want you to miss that destiny and I think it has everything to do with God restoring the apostolic model with you.

It far eclipses anything that you presently now understand as Church. It might take and will take the most radical revision of your present practices. It'll scare you stiff.

It'll mortify you and humiliate you. It'll be extravagantly expensive in every way. Maybe half the people who are presently in this room will not be able to take it.

You'll cop out and cut out and you'll find another place that is more comfy. But the glory, the prospect for the glory that remains for those who remain is unspeakable. Let's take a look at a Church that was a glory to God and is a model that came down from heaven in Antioch.

Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers as Bonibus and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Menaeus which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Bonibus and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed unto Seleucia and from thence they sailed to Cyprus and when they were at Salamis they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. Period. You say, what's so hot about that? That sounds commonplace and dull.

Oh yeah? Let's take a look at what is disarmingly described in those few verses. Because I tell you that in those few verses is all of the pattern of the true Church of God which is a glory. Now there were in the church, it doesn't say there were those that attended the church and it doesn't say there were those who were registered or there were in the church is more than men who attended.

It's a description of men and women who are organically joined and knit by the Spirit of God who themselves are the church at Antioch. And what kind of men were they? They were prophets and teachers. That's not a picture of a way station where prophets and teachers happen to stop off for refreshment.

I believe it's a picture of a church so in the keeping of the pattern of God that it produces teachers and prophets. And I want to suggest that if you want a standard of measure by which to examine yourself to ask how close are we to the apostolic model you can ask it in this way. Are we producing teachers and prophets? True church of a people knit with each other and with God will produce apostolic ministers.

You say big deal. So what's a teacher or a prophet? Everything. You know the world is dying for the want of hearing the words of God and the earth.

You know how desperately needed the prophetic cry is? Where are the prophets of our generation that will shake a slumbering nation? Where are the men who will cry out to the people of God how long do you hold between two opinions? If God be God, follow him. Where are the men who are passionate and consumed with the things of God who see by the eye of God right through the haze and the mist to the true and the eternal realities and can speak them by the power of God that will shake people awake. The prophetic ministry is desperately and urgently needed in this particular generation.

Where are such men being produced? Where is the environment that is conducive to the bringing forth of men of apostolic stature? That's the point, guys. Such men are not produced in a day and they're not made by magical wands being waved. They need to be born in an environment that is hospitable and be nurtured and be brought to maturity in a congregation that loves them.

You say what has love got to do with it? Because prophets are obnoxious. They're hard to live with and they're ungainly. And they don't worry too much about their politeness.

And they're abrasive and they come on hard. And they're strange ducks and they jostle you and it's better not to have such in the midst. And it's tough enough when they've come to maturity but when they're in the process of growing they're even worse.

Then it's a mishmash of both flesh and spirit. It's an ungainly bird flapping its wings and squawking with a hoarse voice. But unless you give such birds an opportunity to squawk they'll never be able to bellow for God in due season.

Where is the environment that will encourage the birth and the nurture and the coming to maturity of men of this kind? True church is such an environment and it cannot be produced by mere Sundays alone. It takes a people who have come together in a certain quality of relationship that is hospitable to the Holy Ghost and are willing to pay the price of sacrifice that such relationship entails. The first thing that'll have to go is your seating arrangement.

You're not going to produce apostles, prophets, and teachers looking at the backs of each other's heads. It's going to be by the dynamic interplay of a people who meet each other and God face to face. Because this kind of arrangement encourages passivity and not participation.

There might well be potential prophets in this audience right now. But you're not likely to hear from them in the present structure of things. But you turn the chairs around and make it a kind of spiritual free-for-all in the sense that the Holy Spirit has sway through whatever vessel He pleases to speak and touch and sound.

And you'll begin to notice certain men coming forth in a certain way and you'll recognize the prophet's mantle. It's much more convenient to remain seated as we are and look up and let somebody else do it on the platform. Oh my God, you might well be the prophet.

And you know what the usual fate of those men are. There were certain prophets and teachers and scholars and God even names them. Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Manana which has been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

Why does God take the pains to enumerate them by name? Because He reveals the diversity of these men. Barnabas was a Hebrew, an Israelite. Simeon that was called Niger was likely according to most biblical scholars to be a black man.

Lucius of Cyrene is yet another nationality, Gentile. Manana which has been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch was a Roman and Saul we know was a Jew. You say what has that got to do with anything? And my answer is everything.

The true church is not a country club where people of the same economic and social status have a little cozy thing going together. The true church is the expression of the local believers in a given locality. If

they're black, they're white, they're Jewish, they're Gentile, they're older, they're younger, they're poor, they're skinny, they're fat, they're every shape and size and description but they are God's people together.

This was a remarkable church. It was diverse men as one and the fact that they had different racial origins, different nationalities and even different callings of God did not separate them but they were a brilliant church together. You say how do you know Art? Are you just assuming that? The very next verse indicates it.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted. I want you to know that that is not any light accomplishment. When men of that diversity can minister unto the Lord and fast together you have a measure of a church that has touched the glory of God.

It's interesting how discreet God is and he doesn't give us all the particulars. We know what fasting means. Have you ever fasted together with others? Can you suffer the rumbling of each other's stomachs? You know how stale your breath becomes when you fast? And if you get breathed on, would you be offended? But what does it mean they ministered unto the Lord? Did they sing charismatic choruses? My own suspicion is that they had come to the highest pitch of true worship which is silence before God.

You ain't seen nothing yet. You know it's easier to sing than to be silent? I'm only speaking from the sparsest personal experience but sufficient to give me a little clue and an insight of what God did to us in Minnesota up there in the woods when he brought us to a certain impasse in our lives when we came to a terrible dead end where we didn't know how to go any further. We were beyond our own knowledge, our own expertise, our own ability.

We confessed, we prayed, and God's answer did not yet come. We were suffering terrible poverty, financial distress, debts, and we didn't know why. The place was loaded with suspicion and jealousy and irritation and resentment.

That's what we had come to. We were at a dead end and if God did not break through, we would have perished. And the last thing that we did was call a fast.

And toward the end of that fast, the Lord had us on the floor in one room together for 13 hours. And all you could hear is an occasional sob or a whimper. You say, wasn't it boring? No, it was not.

I can't describe to you the profound engagement between the Spirit of God and men. Something was taking place in the heavenlies that we could not identify. Something was being transacted for which we did not see the result that day.

It was a kind of worship unto God. How many people know what the root meaning of the word worship is? It is utter prostration and bowing before God in abject and total dependency upon Him. Have you ever been that flat out where you can't even whimper or groan, let alone have anything clever to say or to pray? You are finished and you are finished together.

And if God doesn't answer, you've had it. It's a form of worship of which few saints know anything. But I have a sense that these men at Antioch, different though they were in race and background, at a time when for a Jew to associate with a Gentile was considered unthinkable, these men were so knit as the family of God.

They were so much true church that they could fast and minister unto the Lord together. We've got to come again to that place. And we shall not attain it in our present conventional structure.

I wonder if you're listening intently tonight. I wonder what this is sounding like in your ears. Is this some kind of harebrained thing or you're just listening to some eccentric guy sounding off? Or can you believe that God is crying out for the restoration of true church? And I want to ask you a question, guys.

You're at a crossroad right now. What would you rather have? A successful church or an apostolic glory? What is the extent of your ambition in God? You want to have a snazzy program and multiply the congregation and have all kinds of youth work and retreats and nice things going and prison ministries and the elderly and all that stuff and have your budget balanced and have a good staff and a happy congregation and every service will be a delight? How many people think that what I've just described is the ultimate end of what a church could be? It's good. And few churches have attained that.

But I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy for something more than that which is good but that which is perfect and is the heavenly and apostolic model. For these men that were separated by the Holy Ghost by name and were sent forth by the laying on of hands shook the earth and turned cities upside down. Don't tell me about successful ministries.

They can't compare to the apostolic splendor and the glory of what happened from those who were sent forth out of Antioch. For God's sake, wake up and become discontent with things that are merely good and successful. Two such men turned cities upside down.

These are they which turned the cities upside down was said of these apostolic giants who brought with them the reality of God that was nurtured in the assembly of the saints which was true church or a peace of the kingdom of heaven on earth. But I'll tell you, it doesn't come easy to be able to minister unto the Lord and fast together with a black man or a Jew or a Roman or a Cyrene. Oh, I'll tell you, there's a grading.

There's a dealing. There are things that'll rise up to the surface that will disgust you. You'll be amazed at the revelation of your prejudices.

You didn't even know they were there. And you'll never see it so long as your religious life is reduced to services and potluck suppers. Anybody can be cordial for an hour but let me see you stretched out 13 hours on the floor with men who are different.

Can you understand that relationship is the key, guys? That a kingdom is a social entity, a kind of society, a reality of men and women of diverse backgrounds coming together in an unusual kind of relationship that can only be described as the kingdom of heaven. Can you see why it will take the power of the Holy Ghost? Can you see why we wouldn't be able to do this out of our own natural aptitude or well-meaning intention? It will take very God and great grace was upon them all. You better believe it, it'll take great grace.

And God will extend great grace when he is blessed and pleased with people who are walking in the way and whose church life is not structured by the world but by the apostolic model that came down from heaven as the plumb line of God. I'll tell you some of those that were sent forth by the Holy Ghost never returned. They found themselves stoned to death, imprisoned, burned at the stake, sawn asunder.

They wandered naked and destitute. They lived in caves and holes. And you want to know something tonight? You can bet your life on it.

We are surrounded this night by a cloud of invisible witnesses of the very men that I'm describing are watching this service tonight. I'm getting a chill, goosebumps, half inch high. This service is being watched by a cloud of invisible witnesses who will not be perfect without you.

They're wondering if you're going to get with it. They're wondering if you're going to be satisfied with the status quo and be just another groovy and successful church or you're going to break through into the kind of realities that will again shake the earth and turn cities upside down for Christ's sake, though it's going to cost you and though there'll be casualties. How many of you have the faith to believe, Pentecostals though you are, that the Holy Ghost can actually speak into a congregation and separate actual individuals by name? When have you heard such a thing last? And how many of us would be willing to wait until the Holy Ghost calls the shots and we don't determine who's going where by some committee arrangement or we think it'll be a good thing if this one did that and that we're just as content to minister unto the Lord as to go? Have you come to that? That is high priestly service of which few saints know anything.

Turn back to the book of Leviticus. See what it took for the ordination of priests. See men who had blood dripping from fingernails to elbows in sacrifices and heave offerings and splattered with oil and splattered with blood and washed in water and dressed in linen and publicly humiliated in all of these things before the congregation who stood at the door of the tent of the meeting to watch it.

When the whole bloody business was finished, men who knew what sacrifice meant because you could no longer distinguish them from the sacrifice. They were so full of the blood and the gore of it, wearied. There was nothing left of them which is God's perfect beginning.

No hot shot bravado. No men are going to do things for God. Wiped out and exhausted by the foolish requirement of sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice till they were steeped in the blood of sacrifice and they were not yet ordained for service.

They still had to wait seven days in the door of the tent of the meeting. How many of you have an itch to do for God? To run and go and be seen and perform? Shot through with human ambition, wanting to justify yourself. Wanting to be seen doing.

You'll never have apostolic glory from such vessels as that. Only men who are utterly dead unto themselves, steeped in blood, and who have been burned out at the door of the tent of the meeting. On the eighth day, the day of new beginnings, the glory of God fell for the priests who gave themselves to that kind of ordination.

Where is the family Zadok, the priests who have the charge of the sanctuary, who have not trafficked in the outer court and accommodated the people with man-pleasing sermons, but have kept the charge of the inner place and have ministered unto him? Who can wait on the Lord until they hear the call of the Holy Ghost, and if it doesn't come, they're just as content waiting as going. I remember I made one of my overseas trips to talk about apostolic glory. I don't have a word to describe how God has saved congregations and entire denominations in four nights in Yugoslavia going to the meeting every night not knowing what to speak.

And to be driven to the airport when it was all over and to be told by the men taking you that in the middle of our crisis, when we were helpless and at the point of complete extinction, God sent the living word. That's because I had people 5,000 miles away in Minnesota on their faces, praying and fasting for three days while I was on the firing line. Apostolic glory, day after day and week after week.

And so I was going to take a 21-year-old brother with from our fellowship, precious young disciple, full of sap, wanting to do. And I said to him as we came close to the day of departure, I said, Brother, supposing at this late moment I decided not to take you but to take another, what would you do? He said, Art, it's all the same to me whether I go or I remain. I said, Great, now it's safe for you to go.

Have you come to that? Dear children, the world has not seen priestly service unto God. And I want to say with the authority of God, if it's not service unto God first, it's not service unto men either. How many of us have that priestly sense of waiting on the Lord and ministering unto Him in the inner place, in the sanctuary? What does the word say? As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

You think it's coincidence? Or was God waiting and brooding for the moment that men would be found ministering unto Him? Then the call of the Holy Ghost came. And so when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. I guess that the call was so explicit, it was so heard by the entire congregation that there was no question whatsoever that God had called these two particular men.

But before they would let them go, they fasted and prayed again and laid their hands upon them and sent them forth. That's the way I came from Minnesota to California on this trip. And I wouldn't dare dream to leave except that I was sent forth in that way.

It's either some kind of shabby ceremony or it is one of the most profound kinds of requirements of God, which has been completely ignored in modern times. Whose hands do you want laid on you if you're going forth into an apostolic journey where you may not return? You want some guy who was at the pool hall the night before or masturbating or twiddling with his TV set or playing through the sport pages? Or do you want a man whose hands were raised before God? Do you want to be sent forth by a people whom you know and trust and who are in this together with you? Or just a bunch of strangers who happen to share a seat in the pew in the church and are sending you forth as just a kind of matter of ceremony? We're talking about life and death things. That was not any little mock gesture.

It was an act of the profoundest identification between those who go and those who stay. A commitment that though you are from us, yet shall we uphold you in prayer and in fastings oft. Yet do we give God the opportunity to wake us at any hour of day and night and bring us on our faces prostrate, crying out for you wherever you may be.

How many times has my fellowship told me that we don't know where you were at but at a certain day we felt that you were in some kind of danger. You were somewhere in Yugoslavia or some such place and we just prayed. And I said, gee, nothing happened to me.

I don't recall anything. But what would have happened had they not hearken to the Holy Ghost. So they fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them and they sent them away.

And the fourth verse says, So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. There must be a typographical error. Didn't the verse before say that they laid hands on them? So what is this verse saying? So they

being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.

Because when they laid hands on them it was tantamount to and equivalent to being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. You couldn't tell where men ended and God began. It was all the same.

It was the church that was at Antioch. No one was confused that it was the voice of the Holy Ghost calling men by name. Whether it came as prophecy, whether it came as tongues or interpretation, I don't know.

But the gifts of the Spirit were so tested in that congregation and they knew so well the integrity and the character of the vessels being used that there was no doubt that God was calling these men. How many of us are playing with the gifts of the Spirit? And in how many Pentecostal assemblies are those gifts rarely expressed? What God has been teaching us is that it's love that really sustains. You remember back in Israel's history when three Gentile uncircumcised armies stood on the borders of Judah threatening to inundate and invade and crush the life out of that people in the time of King Jehoshaphat? And He came and He stood on the steps of the temple and He looked up to God and He spoke to the people and He said, Lord, we have no might in ourselves.

Neither know we what to do but our eyes are turned to Thee. And He proclaimed the fast in all the land and they came from all the cities of Judah and assembled together with their wives and with their children. Boy, I'll tell you it was an earnest moment.

It was life or death for an entire people. And if they had been destroyed in Judah there would have been no Messiah. You wouldn't be sitting here.

It's not a little idle episode in history. It was a crisis of unspeakable proportions and men were earnest to the uttermost. And it says in that moment that the Spirit of God spoke into the congregation through the prophet Jehoshaphat the battle is not yours saith the Lord it is mine but go ye out against them tomorrow.

You know what they did? They fell on their faces and they worshipped. Nobody scratched their head and said well I don't know about that guy who gave that prophecy. Sometimes he's on sometimes he's off and they worshipped.

They knew the priest he's mentioned by name Jehoshaphat. They knew his integrity in God. They knew he was a tested vessel.

They knew they were hearing the voice of God because they went forth the next morning to do battle. Supposing it were not the voice of God speaking. Supposing it was some kind of fleshy believer who was half on half off and you never know when and that was not God.

You know what would have happened that day? They would have gotten smashed. Dear children we are coming again to an hour when the gifts of the Spirit are going to be crucial life giving life and death instrumentalities of God operated by love in a people who are in it together with their wives and their children. When are we going to wake up and start getting serious with God and stop playing at church because it is convenient and doesn't require much of us but a few hours in the week and a small portion of our substance.

Unto God be glory in the church. Paul said he was a bond slave to Jesus that he might make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. He was passionate for the church.

Are we? I love the first word of this 13th chapter now. Now there was at the church that was at Antioch now. God is waiting for a now.

He is waiting for a people who will get it together apostolically who can fast and minister unto the Lord. A fellowship that produces apostolic men of stature prophets and teachers matured that God can call them forth for ministry in the world because there is an environment that is hospitable to their birth to their nurture and to their growth. Now priestly men who can wait and minister unto the Lord and it's all the same to them whether they go or whether they remain.

Not an organization an organism organic growing up together by the spirit of the Lord a local body diverse but one tested gifts of the spirit submitted to the head of the church separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work I have called them. It might be a little different from the work that you would have chosen but it was true church under the headship of the Lord through the government of men in a people who can minister unto the Lord together. It was a society.

It was apostolic and the results were apostolic. They shook the earth. They were a people who were diverse but they were a people who were together.

Those that believed were together. Neither thought any of them that the things which he had were his own. They had all things common.

It was a different kind of society. Those that had properties and incomes and other things sold them and laid them at the feet of the apostles who made distribution for the saints in need. There was a koinonia there that the modern world has not seen in two thousand years.

There was a quality of fellowship and life and joyful giving to the point of sacrifice that has not been seen in modern times that makes our dollar and our collection plate and even our tithes look anemic and sick. They were people who more likely lived from the tithe than they lived from their income. They gave the ninety percent and lived on the ten.

They were people who lived in the expectation of the soon return of the Lord. They weren't laying up treasure for themselves on earth. They could be moved at the will of the Holy Spirit.

Now had come to Antioch. Great grace was upon them all. Maybe we can just see some of the verses in the third chapter of the book of Ephesians where Paul gets utterly carried away by the church.

Have you fallen in love yet with the church? How many of you really think that the church is a peripheral matter and not the main business of your life? That the main business of your life is making a living and getting it together for your family and seeing to your security and then of course whatever time is left over to attend the services and to be faithful in your church attendance. May I say something flat out? By the authority of Jesus Christ you've got it all wrong. The purpose for your being is that unto God might be glory in the church.

Your jobs, your income, your security are only the secondary things that enables your physical life to continue that you might give yourself to the masterpiece of God throughout all the ages. He shall not do anything in the earth outside of his church. And I'm not talking about a building.

I'm talking about an apostolic reality. The last verse of the third chapter says unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen.

Look at that verse. You think that this is biblical rhetoric? You think that these are fanciful phrases? What does God say in that that this church is going to be not only a glory but an eternal glory. Listen guys, you need to repent from a mindset that doesn't understand what eternity means and sees only things in terms of five years, ten years or you expect to be transient and moving and going.

You're too American and have not a notion of things that are built to last. Everything here is chintzy. If we have a building fifty years old we think it's old and we'll knock it down.

You need to go to Europe and see buildings that were built in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries still occupied because they were built with such craftsmanship in another kind of culture where men spent years in apprenticeship before they were allowed to touch anything that when they built they built to last. What then shall we say of the master builder whose supreme masterpiece is the church throughout all ages? World without end. Amen.

Are you working with him? Are you willing to give yourself to being shaped and formed at his hand? I'll tell you, if you had my experience just recently in England of going through the Royal Porcelain Factory you'd be stunned. You cannot believe what men will do to produce fine porcelain in China. You can't believe the exactitude and the detail and the concentration the impeccableness of what they'll do to get the finest ingredients and mix them in exact proportion at the right temperatures to use as clay.

And how they'll press it into molds and how they'll reject anything that's even slightly defective. Because why send it through the whole process if it has a defect and a mar in the beginning? And how those things go through the fire again and again and again. When I went on that tour the man showed us exquisite pieces of China and porcelain and he said the more exquisite the piece the more times it goes through the kiln.

Baked in extreme heat. And how it's joined together. The most complex pieces and the handwork and the detail they brewed over it with love.

It's not a new... I met employees that worked in that factory for 50 years in a company that is 300 years old. Serving lengthy apprenticeships before they're even allowed to touch any kind of costly piece. Exquisite.

But it can't even stand comparison to the church of Jesus Christ. It's only what men can do. What then shall God do world without end? Throughout all the ages unto God be glory in the church.

Oh I want to shake you. I really want to shake you. If I could give you an inoculation, a shot the hype, I would do it in one thing only.

A fervent, almost fanatical desire to see glory to God in the earth. Do you understand? Can't you squint your eyes and say that the world is deprived and is grey and stunted for the want of glory in the earth? That there's something substandard and wrong for which reason men lose their lives in merchandise and pumping gas and have no better use because they have not glimpsed any alternative, because they've not seen the glory of God, because the glory of God will not be seen except to be seen in the church. Unto Him be glory in the church.

Oh dear children, how it lies with you and how far you're willing to go. We who have been schooled and watching to see if the service will get out on time, feeling a little irritated if it runs beyond the hour or so. We need a wholly different perspective that comes from heaven.

We who have hidden in our families, concealing our selfishness, hiding in our privacy. We who have been stingy in the giving of our time and our substance. How we need to see that the whole purpose of our being is that unto God be glory in the church.

An apostolic reality, men and women of apostolic stature, true teachers and prophets, a people in authentic relationship and loving the Spirit of God moving through the gifts in love. God at will calling this one for that and that, sent forth by the laying on of hands and they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. No wonder Paul's passion was to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now, there's that word again, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Does that verse bore you? Does that verse mystify you? Is it a verse that just doesn't say anything to you? Let me spell it out to you that God is the author of faith and he who commanded us to live by faith himself lives by faith. And you know what his faith is? That by the church unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known the manifold wisdom of God. He's going to make a declaration to his eternal enemies, the satanic host that has made mankind captive.

He's going to reveal his wisdom his manifold wisdom his genius, his plan his way and his glory through one instrument only the church. I feel like going around with a sign-up sheet tonight and see who how many will sign up and be recruited how many will choose a lesser thing that does not make such demand upon their life how many prefer conventional church experience that only requires mid-week and Sunday attendance than to this kind of thing to which one gives all. Well, I think I said my piece.

How many people think that I'm mad at you? Did I sound like that? Was I haranguing you? I don't know. How many people have the faith to believe that God was speaking tonight? Do you really believe that? And then we might ask for what intent and purpose was he speaking? Was it just like mildly shake us up a little bit or a little razzmatazz or what? Or was God dropping a plumb line from heaven and saying here, this is my model. You know what your question ought to be if you're really earnest in your hearts? Lord, where do we go from here? I love it when I hear that when some brother will come up to me trembling after service and say, Art, where do we go from here? Or another brother or an elder or a pastor will come and say, it's evident that we cannot go on as before.

Where do we go from here? And you know what? I don't have the answer for you. If I did, it would not be the church of Jesus Christ. He's got the answer for you.

When he'll see hearts that are determined to go for broke all the way with an utterness toward God willing to make every sacrifice of time, of privacy, of substance and means that unto God might be glory in the church. I would say it would not be a bad idea to fast and to pray. Let's see if you can put your fast where your mouth is.

As we used to say in Brooklyn, let's see you put your wallet where your mouth is. Did I ever tell you the time in Uppsala, Sweden, where we had a university encounter? This is one of the great intellectual centers of the Western world. It produces atheists by the carload.

And I was invited by Christian students to a debate. And I've had all kinds of debates at different university campuses, encounters, but I never had one like this. It was a debate with Christian communists who were going to bring about the kingdom of God by force and violence.

It was satanic, you can't believe it, but you should have seen God in action. Did He stop the mouths of His adversaries? And these Christian kids were so excited. Such a breakthrough, they couldn't believe it.

And we had one following meeting the next night. I said, you know, we stand at a place where God can turn this entire university, where He can thrust in a wedge and split something open and make that a center for godliness instead of Satanism? Let's fast for this last meeting. Hey, Art, yeah, great idea.

One day fast. I remember coming out of my room that evening and out into the kitchen where these brothers were waiting for me, and I stopped dead in my tracks. They were all eating.

One of the greatest scenes I've ever seen in films, I don't know how appropriate it is to share this, is a film called *On the Waterfront* with, what's that guy's name? Marlon Brando. It's a fantastic scene without dialogue. He's sitting in the back seat of a car.

He's an old pug. He's scarred. His nose has been broken.

At one time, he had some promise he might have gone on to the top and been a champion. And he's learning in that moment that his brother, who was like a waterfront gangster, had bet against him. And he was so utterly mortified and stupefied that he goes, Charlie! What was I saying just before this? That's the way I walked in on those guys.

What's this? You're eating! Could you not watch with me one hour, Jesus said, to sleeping disciples, that you fall not into temptation? You should have heard the excuses. Well, Art, I got up this morning and I was so unaccustomed to fasting that I just automatically had breakfast. Then it was too late.

Well, then I said, well, what about you? Well, Art, I really lasted till noon. But by noon, I was feeling so sick, I felt I ought to eat something to gain my strength. Well, then what about you? Well, Art, I had such a headache I couldn't think straight.

I know God couldn't use me in that condition, so I had to eat. You know what the Lord whispered to my heart in that moment? A miss is as good as a mile. Good intentions are not enough.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. But God is looking for a people with an utterness toward God that will deny themselves and take up a cross and follow him. Just let me end with this.

I've quoted Shakespeare. I've quoted modern films. Can I quote Muhammad Ali in something that I copied from *Sports Illustrated* as he prepared for his final heavyweight championship fight by which he regained the title of first man in history if you could take it three times? You know when that fight was won? It wasn't won in the ring.

It was won in the training. That man drove himself like a fury. Road work that was incessant.

35-year-old body, 36-year-old body. The pain must have been excruciating, but he wanted to win so bad. I'm quoting him now.

He said, I wanted to stop, but I can't. My chest burns. My throat is dry.

I feel like I'm going to faint. My body begs me to stop, but I make myself run another mile, two more miles up those hills. Pain all the time.

I'm in pain. I hurt all over. I hate it, but I'm taking it.

I'm making myself suffer. I have to suffer. I know this is my last fight.

How many of us know that this is our last fight? That these are the end times and that in the last days perilous times shall come. This is our last fight. How many of us know it as this boxer knew it and that he has to suffer because this is his last fight? I know this is my last fight and it's the last time I'll ever have to do it.

Amen. Just a few more weeks of pain and suffering to live good all the rest of my life to always be champion. Hallelujah.

To always wear the crown. To come up to the king of glory and have a crown to lay at his feet. And not to come bareheaded without anything to show for your whole earthly sojourn.

You mark my words. I can't find any scripture to back me up. If the crown of glory that a man has to lay before the feet of the Lord in the day that he ascends up to heaven when his earthly sojourn is finished is not in exact proportion to the crown of thorns he was willing to wear here on this earth.

Suffering is the name of the game. The cross is not a piece of church architecture and a plastic ditty to be stuck with suction cups on our dashboards. Christianity is the way of the cross.

The faith is to fill up the sufferings that remain. It's going to take suffering to come to the relationship by which we can fast and minister unto the Lord together. You think I'm kidding? How many will be willing? Because you'll love him.

And you'll choose not the path of convenience but the path of sacrifice and self-denial that unto God be glory in the church. I asked God for a historic word for this congregation. You heard me in my beginning prayer.

And I meant it. And I don't know whether you understand it or not. But God has answered that.

He's spoken a word to you tonight and laid something before you to choose. Whether you're going to have a good, groovy church, successful, admirable in many ways, or you're going to have an apostolic glory. Shall we bow our heads before God? Precious God, we admire your faith, Lord, that you've put all your eggs in one basket, the church.

But look at us. We're flabby. We're out of shape.

We're selfish. We're spoiled. We're indulged.

We're full of murmurings and complaint, resentments and irritations and jealousies and covetousness. We're indifferent. We're insincere.

And you're going to take us in our present condition and make of us a glory? We praise you for that. And we ask you to do it. We want to yield ourselves to such a working.

And mighty God, I pray for this congregation that it be more than mere church, as the world presently understands that word. That there might be a glory in this people and men and women coming to maturity and the raising up of apostolic teachers and prophets whom you shall call by name that shall be sent forth

by the Holy Ghost, who will shake the earth again before the end of the age. And in the name of Jesus, and as a minister of this gospel, I feel obliged to ask for a commitment from as many in this congregation who will resolve tonight to be part of that glory.

You don't have to know what it's going to cost you and when it's going to cost you and how, but you have resolved in your heart that whatever the cost, it's to this that you want to give your life. Do you dare stand before God and seal it before Him now? Do it. I ask you to stand before God.

How many of us can even think that there'd be such a thing as suffering in America? When that Jimmy Jones thing took place in Guyana, my spirit told me the eve of persecution, the shot heard around the world, just the excuse the world has been wanting to begin to vent its real hatred and spite against the people of God who cannot discern between some hokey sect and the true people of God. It's the beginning of reproach and worse. How many of us can believe that that could happen in America? How many of you will believe that there are people who because they stood just now are not going to die in bed? Think I'm getting melodramatic? Everything ought to be preparation for such eventualities as that.

I'm not saying that to scare you, but I'm saying it to sober you and that you should not come to such a place with your lips pursed, why do I have to suffer this? But counting it all glory that you were found worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ, to fill up that which remains for his body and for his namesake. Oh, dear children, this is the gospel. I'm going to seal everyone who has stood.

So precious God, do it, Lord. You've heard our cry, you've seen our prayers tonight, Lord. We ask that you would pour something out of this mouth that was from your own heart, Lord, that you would do something historic for this people.

And now you've got them on their feet in a most significant act of commitment. And I ask you, precious God, to observe this from heaven, every soul by name, and to seal those who have stood. And to undertake such a preparation in their lives, to use what circumstances you will, to measure out that thousand cubits more in that deep, pure river of life to those who have only till now been up to their ankles.

And bring them in, precious God, up to their knees, and let them feel the surge and the force of that holy water. And bring them in deeper by another thousand cubits up to their thighs, where they would wonder if they could even stand under the pressure of those circumstances. And then save for those whose hearts are uttermost toward you, that final measure of waters too deep to swim in, that cannot be passed over.

And those who'll be borne up by those waters of life shall bring healing and meat for the seasons, and life wheresoever they shall be brought by the waters of life that come out from under the throne of the temple. Hallelujah, Lord. Seal us that unto Him be glory in the church.

Bring us into the deep waters. Let the waters rise of circumstance, of distress, of perplexities, of city councils haranguing us. Whatever it takes that you might perfect our character and life together, that we might be the church of Jesus.

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