

Apostolic Foundations (9 of 12)

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the church's critical role in demonstrating God's wisdom against spiritual powers through the centrality of the Cross and authentic faith.

Duration: 57:57

Scripture: Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "Apostolic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes the struggles and problems faced by the Ben Yerio community. However, as they engage in authentic intercession and corporate prayer, a shift occurs. The speaker witnesses a transformation in the atmosphere as a sense of fear replaces the smirk on the face of an opposing force. The community presses in and pursues this force in the spiritual realm, resulting in a breakthrough. The sermon emphasizes the importance of deep intercession and the power of God to redeem and transform His people.

Transcript

And this is the final speaking tonight on the subject of the Principalities and Powers of the Air, so enormously important and central to any consideration of a people who are determined to be true church in the end times. So don't think that in free speakings we've exhausted the subject, we've only gotten into it, and I just encourage you to study further on your own, and I mention the names of the books that have been inspirations to me. If you want to hear what I did I'll see you afterwards and encourage you to do that kind of reading also.

So let's pray for tonight's message, being reminded that I think there are two more sessions after this, and to be in prayer for them that the Lord who was the Alpha of our beginning will also be the Omega of our conclusion and lead us to a perfect and final word on that last one. Precious God we just bow before you yet once again loving you my God and praising you for the God that you are who has been so faithful to us my God in these weeks, has sent us on such a journey and has opened such things to us my God, and has spoken to us as sons and daughters, you've given it to us straight my God, you've treated us like mature saints, we appreciate that, you've given us heavy content and you've repeated it and built it up in such a way that we can assimilate and take it into our spirit and understanding, and you've encouraged us even tonight to be heedful about your word and to be prepared to act upon it, to walk it out and to do it. Lord bless the speaking now, by your spirit anoint the mouth of the speaker, the ears of the hearers, our

hearts all together, give us an occasion in you where your word is event and that it may be consequential my God for all the days ahead and eternally.

We'll thank you and praise you now in Jesus name, God's people say amen. Okay, I think I began on the first speaking with a scripture from Ephesians, the third chapter which I want to share again. Yeah, yeah he's in the back room, so I think we're safe, just come in to tell me when to close down.

Chapter three of Ephesians where Paul tells the church at Ephesus that he who is the least of all the saints in verse eight, that a grace was given that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ to the intent, I think King James says in order that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. So the issue of the principalities and the powers has a practical immediate daily application and concern for us, but it also needs to be seen in the context of eternity.

That not only is it of eternal importance, but God has created all things in order that through the church a certain demonstration might be made by it to the powers of the air. And this is absolutely bewildering. This is beyond the scope of our normative even Christian understanding.

It has nothing to do with anything practical that we can understand. It's an eternal demonstration. It's an invisible spirit realm, and we hardly even understand what it is that God wants demonstrated.

But this we know that it must come through the church, no other agency. And for that purpose, God has created all things in order that through the church. So if we don't know anything else, we know this, that if we have tolerated a kind of corporate inferiority complex or regarded the church in a mean and low way or have seen it only in terms of its value to us or the programs that it provides or any other thing on that level, we have missed the greatest point of all.

It behooves us to have an eternal, that is to say, apostolic perspective about the church, not only because it must come true in eternity, but because the thing that we are anticipating for eternity has reverberations and consequences now. In fact, unless the church is seen in its eternal purpose and in its eternal context, we are robbed from the dynamic that makes the church the viable and significant present that God intends for in time. So if you're a person who has been given to compartmentalizing sacred and secular, the holy and the profane, the temple, which means in time, and the eternal, I want just to rebuke it in Jesus' name, because God doesn't know these kinds of categories and compartmentalizations.

These are conveniences for worldlings, but God is imminently present in the eternal now, and he wants us to come into his perspective and his eternal sense of things. To be charged with the weight of eternity will have the profoundest consequence for our daily acting. So bless the Lord that he has an eternal purpose, that he has created all things.

I mean, this is mind-boggling. We're so impressed with civilization and its appurtenances, and with history and with nations and politics, that we think that these things are ends unto themselves, that they're the real reasons for being, and our lives are just so much matchwood. We're just the grist by which the world's machinery is activated.

We've got it all wrong, and the world has done a number on us. Those things are incidental. Those things are secondary.

Those things are just the framework and the enablements for the purpose of one thing for which God has created all things, that he might through the church make an eternal demonstration to the powers of the air of the manifold wisdom of God. So I want to address tonight in our final speaking on this subject, what is that manifold wisdom? And I've already hinted at it by comparing it with the wisdom of the powers themselves. That is to say, the values, the construct, the perception of things that are real, forces that the powers employ and that they're seeking to have entire mankind subscribe to.

Lust, ambition, vanity, pride, fear, threat, intimidation, and all these things are aspects of the wisdom of the powers of the air, the world rulers of this darkness. And we see those values throughout the entire aspects of our civilization and our society. And because they're so pronounced, because they've had such long tenure, men tend to think them normal, and that we ourselves subscribe to them, not recognizing that not only they are different from God's wisdom, they are altogether different and contrary in every point and particular.

So we need to see a struggle between two wisdoms, two value systems, the powers of the air and that of God. It's a cosmic struggle. It's beyond the issue even of ourselves or even of the earth.

It's eternal, and it has to do with the whole of creation and the mastery over it, because these powers are fallen angels, spirit beings, invisible, out of order, have left their first estate, as we're told, I think in Jude, and not content to serve the purpose for which they were created, to bring a kind of organizing sense to the things that would establish rule in the world. They are the rulers of this world's darkness. God intended them to rule to avoid chaos and disorder, that men might have a structure by which they might seek God and be found with him.

And so these powers influence society, its structures, its institutions, its agencies, nations themselves. But because they're rebellious and because they have gone beyond the intention of God, because they tend to usurp, they seek not just to influence but to win the allegiance and even the loyalty of men and to be worshipped as very gods themselves. They are the gods of this world.

So lust, force, power, threat, seduction, intimidation, fear, these are the characteristics of the wisdom of the powers of the air by which they have ruled and jerked and manipulated an entire mankind until the advent of the cross. And at the cross, another kind of wisdom was displayed. There was a confrontation, a heads-on encounter between these two wisdoms, that Jesus, who came in weakness and in humiliation and in patient resignation to suffering in obedience to his father, had to meet the fury of the wisdom that was opposed to God, that majors on violence, threat, force, and so on, by which mankind has been coerced up until now.

Jesus submitted himself to those powers, and it says that had they known they would not have allowed the Son of Glory so to be crucified, because in that they were dealt an enormous blow, they were rendered disarmed, they were fatally stopped in their tracks, and yet they continue in that disarmed condition without authority, which was broken at the cross, and yet because mankind is ignorant about their existence and about their influence, they still continue to, by fear and by bluff and by threat and so on, to influence the activity and the conduct of men and of nations. Only a church that knows of their existence, that knows of their broken power, that knows that their authority was shattered at the cross, can reveal them for the bluff that they are and encourage people in civilization, society itself, to be free from their

oppressive influence. But the church itself that is still jerked and manipulated, and the church itself that still employs the wisdom of these powers through manipulation, through worldly devices, is rendered absolutely without authority to reveal and to show them forth.

Okay, so there's something at stake in the cross, something performed at the cross, that is greater than the issue of atonement, however great that is, in the work of Jesus. And the cross, every time that it is proclaimed or demonstrated by the church, is another unveiling or revealing of the forces that were made in open spoil by Jesus at that cross. Little wonder that they're so, that the preaching of the cross is rare.

You don't hear it that often. You hear it, you hear it only lightly in passing. We don't hear men who seem to major in the cross, and in a like manner, just as the cross is neglected in preaching, the cross has been neglected in our experience and in the manifestation of a cross life.

Wherever there's a church that proclaims or demonstrates the centrality and the power of the cross there, and in that location, the principalities are moved out of their orbit and are pushed aside, and they're influence broken from those who have been subject to their influence and to their rule. So the cross is enormously central in this whole thing. To quote one of my sources, the Dutch theologian Burckhoff, the powers are limited by the very presence of those who will no longer let themselves be enslaved, led astray and intimidated.

In such reasons, another power is working more powerfully than that which rules other men. Power strives against power. Wherever the power of the cross is operative in the church, that power is striving against the powers.

It's another power and has an effect on that which would otherwise be unmoved in the areas where we are. The principalities of the earth over every city, over every nation, over every locality in the character somehow in keeping with the history of that locality, with its wars, with its bloodshed, with its violence, with its sin. Somehow a particular kind of demonic structure has been established because of the opportunities that have been open to it in the history of nations.

Which is why men like Derek Prince and others talk about and pray for the revealing of the name of the principality, being able to deal with that specific entity and to unseat him through the corporate intercession of the church in that place. Again, this theologian writes, all resistance and every attack against the gods of this age will be unfruitful unless the church herself is resistance and attack. Until she demonstrates in her life and fellowship how men can live freed from the powers.

Praise God this is going on tape so you can hear it again and I'll probably repeat it again. Just in the conversation today at the cafeteria at the seminary with some students, coming away from the daily chapel a little bit singed, a little bit deflated, a little bit disappointed. Sensing so much the ceremonialness of religion, the verbalness, the phraseology, the saying of the correct things without an appropriate power, without a reality.

And somehow being satisfied with that, that if we invoke and say the correct things, that that stands for and constitutes and is the reality that it describes. Something more is so urgently needed and we have been content without that something more, content with going through the phraseological forms. This writer is saying the church itself needs not only to proclaim something, but to be something.

It needs to be a demonstration in the life of the fellowship itself, how others can live free from the powers. One of the significances of the fact that you gave over a thousand dollars for Zaire, a fellowship that you've never met in a part of the world, you may never likely be. The generosity that you did was exactly that demonstration.

If there was a fear that came upon you when you wrote your check, how will this affect the monthly budget and doesn't this threaten something that is so needful for the family and something that we've been waiting for and you had a bit of a palpitation in the writing of that check for the body of Christ, black and ignorant and abjectly poor, thousands of miles from yourself, something more was affected than the issue of help. The thing that was affected was a breaking in, a loosing from the sense of restriction, fear, intimidation, that what's the word, stinginess, that the carefulness that has characterized our lives too much for now. Though we say that the Lord has the cattle on a thousand hills, how we have lived and acted is more in keeping with the temerity and the fearfulness of the world and its insecurity than those who believe that indeed he does own all things.

So we have to demonstrate and this opportunity was given us and I pray we're on from demonstration to demonstration until the last vestige and hangover of being jerked and manipulated by these spirit forces has been so decisively dealt with that we constitute a presence and a demonstration to the community around us that one can be freed from these bedeviling and fearful intimidating influences. To be free in Christ is to be free indeed. So something needs not only to be proclaimed but to be demonstrated in the very life of the church that it itself lives freed from manipulation.

But what if the church itself manipulates? What if we did a song and a dance to take the offering for Zaire? What if we made an emotional appeal? What if we encouraged you in some false way? What if we sent out four color lithograph appeals in the mailboxes of the kind that mass mailing systems that are statistically mathematically guaranteed to bring certain response? Well we might have gotten the money but we would have lost the battle. We would have been playing upon you in a spirit of manipulation as is too often the case now in Christendom that is exactly in keeping with the wisdom of the powers of the air. Therefore a simple appeal, just making the need known, trusting the spirit of God to work in the heart of the believer, being grateful for what is provided, asking the Lord to multiply is a whole different mentality and lifestyle in keeping with God's own wisdom.

So we need to recognize that in every issue there is something more than the issue. There is something more than the issue of money. There is something more than the issue of security.

There is the issue of a wisdom which God wants to inculcate the church. Because how are we going to be the eternal demonstration? After we leave the earth? When do we learn it? When do we come into that wisdom that we are going to eternally demonstrate if we don't obtain it here in the issues of life that are before us now both personally and corporately. That's why the church is so monumentally important.

That's why it deserves so much more than mere Sunday attendance. There are issues before us that only come to us corporately in the church and to break through and to be loosed from these intimidating powers we need one another. One another's example, one another's prayer, one another's encouragement that we might all come.

This is the demonstration. That's eternal. God took a people who were nothing.

He took us in our condition of sin, in our arrogance, in our conceit, in our rebellion, in our money-grubbing, in our lusting. He saved us. He turned us.

He redeemed us. He imputed righteousness. He shapes our character and life.

And he sets us forth to the eternal praise of his glory as a demonstration of those mocking powers whom we will one day replace when we rule and reign within. We're being prepared for something and we need consciously to know it and to receive every episode that comes into our life as being from the hand of God for that preparation. Doesn't that charge our life with so much more meaning? We alone have significance.

No wonder the world is freaking out in its boredom and looking for its entertainments and finding more and more bizarre expressions until when the smoke clears at the end of the age, it'll be a Sodom and Gomorrah. But we who are engaged with God in eternal purposes that are having consequence in time and in eternity together in relationship and the things that are authentic, my God, where's the place for boredom? What comes to us that is not charged with significance? A sniffle, a cold, a headache, a sickness is an issue of prayer, of faith, of relationship, of character, of life. Everything.

So long as we are unconscious of this and are moving in the wisdom of the powers themselves, we constitute no witness against them. We need to display that not only are we free from the fear of insecurity, but we are joyfully free. There are certain things that can't be imitated.

They can't be fabricated. Either you have them or you have them not. Meekness, humility, joy.

And to have them not just when you're well fed and prospering and sailing along gladly, but to have them in adversity, to have them in affliction, to have them in suffering, to have them in a cell bound hand and foot with your back hanging in ribs and strips and Philippi is the ultimate expression of overcoming faith, of a joy of such a kind that when the enemy hears and sees that expression, he's finished. He recoils, he shrinks, he flees in horror from the demonstration of that kind of authenticity that cannot be faked. The scriptures speak about love unfaked, faith unfaked, love one another with a pure heart fervently unto unfaked love of the brethren.

No more taxi full gospel bear hugs and little chucks under the cheek. That's a no-no. It was okay in an earlier time, but it's not okay apostolically and it'll never serve eternally.

You know what you're going to find to go from the bear hug to unfaked love? You may find yourself plunged into an unspeakable darkness. I hope you can follow me in this. You were sailing along beautifully.

You were the epitome of the charismatic saint. You were sweetness and light and you glad-handed back bear hug to everyone. And then because God is wanting to bring you into the authentic and the transcendent place, somehow it's not just a graduation of a continuing on, but somehow coming into a darkness and a wretchedness and a revelation of, my God, I'm incapable of real affection.

I really don't even care. I'm shocked at what I see in myself and the indifference. And I got a feeling that to go from the charismatic to the apostolic, that somehow we're not going to miss this experience in darkness before we come into the thing that is authentic.

And are we willing to give up the thing that is frothy, specious, superficial, that serves for our purposes? It made our fellowship warmer and blessed our days, but will it stand eternally? Is it impressive to the

powers who know Paul and know Jesus, but who are only required to recognize that which is unmistakably authentic, like joy, like true praise, like unfeigned love, like a faith that will give for Zaire even to the point where you threaten your own security and well-being. That kind of authenticity the powers recognize. To come to that is not without struggle and not without suffering.

It's the very cross itself. There's no cheap and easy route to authenticity. Even the willingness to see the charismatic substitute, if I could put it that way, sacrificed, let go for the thing that is real, is painful.

The cross is the issue of suffering and there's no circumventing it because that is where the wisdom of God was demonstrated by Jesus and that's where it is that the ultimate wisdom of God is to be demonstrated, made manifest by the church. When our praise swells up to heaven, when it's more than the product of choruses, when it's a true celebration of God who has freed us because of what he has done at the cross and brought us into a triumphant place with him, despite the powers, free from fear where we can confront the mafia as we thought before and not tremble because you know that the issue of life or death or violence and harm is not with men but with God, you could do nothing against me except that we're giving you from above and really believe it and if it is given you're just as willing to receive that as to go on in bodily well-being. Someone asked me tonight about cancer before the meeting and what do I do and how do I pray and the opportunities seem to be coming increasingly frequently even among the saints.

I said sometimes I find myself getting mad and crushing the filthy thing and commanding it to perish and see miraculous recovery or other times as we're doing right now with a brother in our encouraging him to fight the good faith. It's a slow process of regaining cell by cell out of the clutches of death and being restored by the life of God through praise and through actual faith and taking the land a cell at a time and there are other times when I told him that the Lord impressed me to ask a woman who was an impeccable saint whose husband was a rat. He's the one who should have been languishing in death and disease.

He was abounding in health and she who was the epitome of sainthood was dying at the age of 35 of cancer and men were coming to her door saying that if you really had faith or if you're hidden sin you would need not suffer this thing but the word that the Lord gave me was are you willing as much to glorify God in your dying as you are in your living. If you're being taken by God prematurely by human reckoning at the age of 35 with young children and allowing them to be in the hands of an unsaved husband by the way who subsequently I believe was saved by the demonstration of his wife's patience in suffering and resignation unto death as coming from the hand of the Lord with sweetness without a murmur without indignation without even a scrooge of why or talking about the injustice of it or any such reckoning just as much submitting to that destiny for herself as Jesus did for the cross was such a demonstration to this man as well as to the powers it was a key to his conversion.

If the issue is celebrating God if the issue is his glory rather than our self-perpetuation what's the difference to us whether that is affected in 50 60 or 70 years or more on this earth or if the Lord is pleased to do it in one fell swoop by a martyrdom by an inexplicable suffering by whatever we'll always be subject to fear and second guessing if we live in a tremulous state that does not have an absolute confidence in the God in whose hands we are and that we have settled the issue that the purpose for our life and being is not our self-perpetuation or our comfort or our gratification but his glory and when the power see a church that believes that and live as if they believe that they're finished the final reactive consummated they are done in once and for all because what shall they

use to intimidate us or what shall we be afraid of their powers their script of their of whatever instrument they might employ we've shown them to be the open mock that they are so we need to make as our conscious intent true faith true praise true love authenticity in all things and it's not going to come lightly or easily but it needs to be consciously our purpose i wrote here well this is really the transcript of what was spoken extemporaneously you can understand that that's more than an institution that provides religious services a church of that kind it is a people who live without fear who are already in the realm of the eternal who are joyfully freed from the power of mammon who are walking in light and in righteousness and in truth this is a calling for a church that is more

than just a casual conglomerate of individuals this is a people who are really together because no one of us can make this by ourselves no one of us has such a spirituality such singular dedication that we can attain this without the encouragement and the exhortation or the rebuke if it's needed from one another either we're going to obtain this corporately or we're not going to have it at all we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers of the air so we need to come into a quality of relationship of corporateness of such a kind that has not been known since the early church there was not a one among them it said who had need they didn't go for the social security program or to the state office there was not one among them that had need for those that

had lands and houses sold and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles who made distribution that there was not one among them who had need the quality of their life the issues of their faith was expressed economically and socially as well as spiritually in fact really to say it truthfully what we expressed economically and what we express socially is spiritual and maybe the deepest expression of it so what happens when the a church getting earnest with that kind of determination think they're going to twiddle their thumbs and lean back and let us go at it without interruption and without the response we can expect repercussion oppression and persecution and that's been the history of the church in fact the absence of those things in modern times in the church in the west has been a

statement of our scandal that somehow a church should exist without experiencing some kind of retaliation some kind of reaction from these powers through men in society is a statement that we have not challenged them that's what happened to jesus that's what happened to the apostles that's what happened to the early church they invoked the retaliation of the powers by the very conduct and quality of their life and it will be so for us also right to the end of the age how did jesus and the apostle and the apostolic church act when those persecutions came upon them in meekness and in humility as did jesus in fact when these powers collide in the issue of persecution there's two great m's that i have devised that really show the issue the malignancy of the powers malign malicious evil vile

brutal meets the magnanimity of god gracious gentle patient and we know who won the thing that was weak and the thing that was despised the thing that was humiliating the thing that was suffered under death of a one who went as a lamb to the slaughter silently without complaint without protest without even such defense is the thing that triumphed the wisdom of god he bruised the head of the serpent by that demonstration but it is given to us to complete what he began so can you imagine a church of that in that character and that kind of authority did i did i mention to you the episode of uh the call from africa from an american consulate official not wanting to grant the visa to these two black to the two africans who are coming to us and how the lord inspired a letter to remind this

official that there's a thin line between what is official and what is officious that god has established the boundaries and that it's our function as the church and the knowledge of the scripture to remind

government what its limitations are and that when i heard that from those who were there that when he got that letter he was furious and enraged but he released them because his rage was only a reflection of the rage of the powers that operated through him that we're hearing a word under the anointing of god that says this far no further and you're precious edification one of those two men is the black brother jerry kafuna who went to the fellowship in zaire and brought them the message of salvation and the baptism of the holy spirit and revival and rejoicing see how how significant

these issues are by by a church that will walk in this wisdom so that wisdom is reflected for example in the foolishness of preaching i'm a paper on that subject for one of my courses that had pleased god by the foolishness of preaching to save them that will believe if you don't understand that verse you've never stood in the open air or in the drizzle and in the rain or at the midget state university under those conditions and watch people go behind you to avoid you and you're speaking to the plain air or on broadway and 87th street new york city virtually on the soapbox and get kicked in the shins or have have jews and radicals curse you and call your names or walk by and spit on the sidewalk or talk about foolishness there's nothing more foolish than preaching and not always to the

unsafe even to the people of god you feel the foolishness of proclaiming the word i feel it every once in a while and every time i stand before god's people not knowing how it's going to come out not knowing whether it's going to be a dud having to run that risk knowing that that that the issue is with god the proclamation of the word of god itself is the reflection of the wisdom of god which is foolishness which is weakness which is humiliation and the reason that we have not seen much powerful preaching is because of men who consciously take the seek the assurances that will free them from the risk of humiliation that is to say completely written texts and even rehearsed before mirrors that the inflection will be proper so that they can be assured that no one will be offended they'll

have the applause both of their students and their colleagues and they'll have given a perfectly credible biblical and scriptural uh doctrinal word and yet without the power because the power is the demonstration of the cross the power is the sign of the weakness in which the ministry was performed we're called to foolishness we're called to a faith that is completely out of joint and out of tune and out of kilter with the world in which we have been set the world is practicing its halloween with its witches and and ditchy goo and all that stuff as if this is some kind of cutesy uh cultural thing and we're in the church talking with great earnestness about the reality of the invisible spirit realm knowing that these things would mock us in their sight as strange that indeed we will be

strangers pilgrims and sojourners in the earth something broke in paul when he saw a a waiter of tables what do you call that a bus boy die magnificently being stoned to death by inches heard the front of the stones and watched the blood trickle into his eyes and sent in his own flesh the pain of what this uh jewish man was experiencing and yet recognized that though he was supremely a privileged student and looking at only a bus boy that that bus boy was demonstrating something more glorious in his death than paul had ever known in his life and to hear this man it with his final breath saying to god lay not their sin to their charge i mean that that is so contradictory that every natural thing that wells up when your flesh is being started against by stones is to retaliate to get even to

get back to let them have it to at least curse them but to pray for those who despitefully wish you to be merciful to those who who exploit you to forgive those who are doing you in even while you're being done in is a demonstration of the wisdom of god and something has got to turn in the air and in those powers that has held men captive i think something happened right there with saul that released him for a

revelation that came only a short time later that was the beginning of his enormous apostolic career i could think of one instance with my own wife and not to get too biographical and there's been a lot of vexation and a lot of rubbing and irritation of a gentile and a jew and a new york sophisticate and a simple danish village girl it's been a saga and it's not over yet and how

often would before i recognized these things did i retaliate in kind did something involuntarily rise up out of me to get even to get my two cents in to let her know i remember on one occasion she was at her vexing best i often say that the anger is to me as the jews were to luther and indeed the issue is very much the same if we can rise above the test of being vexed at a place where someone reaches in and finds that area where we're most susceptible and trigger something and you just feel it rising up a moment's indignation and there's even a lust of the mind it's a lust to get that word in and get back at him with that word but for some reason by the grace of god in that moment instead of reacting in that way which would have provoked her even further and moved us into the wisdom of

the powers in which they would have rubbed their hands and glee and relished the situation that was being provoked i said to her with just i turned quietly i said something like you're a most unreasonable woman and all of a sudden inga's eyes blinked and i i'm sure i heard something and the heavenlies go click something snapped something turned and i saw the release right in front of me in this wife the argument went out of her something happened the powers were broken from affecting that moment and we turned to the thing that was good we're going to have opportunity under vexation under distress under great pressure as things come to tom to a tumultuous head in an age of increasing unrest right till the day of the lord's coming how are we going to respond how are we going to act what

wisdom will we demonstrate is the whole issue of what god wants eternally demonstrated but is going to be obtained by us with our inders and with that that one with in the office or the secretary or the guy at work or the foreman or wherever it is our own kids or the one in the congregation where these issues are being worked out that that established the whole issue of the eternal demonstration of the church so how shall we react is the issue which is before us now our little impatiences our critical spirit and disdain our irritation for one another or with one another is already an evidence of how little prepared we are for this how foolish we are that the very things that we have complained about in the church namely the trials and the irritations that come to us from other saints is

exactly the provision of god for the shaping of his wisdom in us and what have we done we try to find another congregation or we flip to another place or or we move aside or not understanding that the church is the very laboratory it's the very matrix where god is working out the issue of his character and his wisdom by what we are to each other because isn't it a strange way that no one can do another in like one's husband or one's wife you can hear the same remark made by by a relative stranger it bounces off you without any effect but to hear your wife say it or your husband say it or someone in the church to snub you or to do you dirty or to forget you or whatever it so compounds the injury and the pain i would just say in my 22 year history as a believer there's no suffering that for

me has been more excruciating than what i have received in the church from the saints it's easier to face the outraged rabbis and the bobs of angry jews than to receive the particular kind of injury that can only come to us in a church where a brother raises a question about your dedication or someone for whom you have sacrificed and striven says you're an enemy of the gospel or you're completely misunderstood and misread these kinds of things are not only inevitable but intentional in of god for the shaping of our character in life we need to receive the church not as dreamers and idealists who want some kind of

fanciful and ideal fellowship that is always beautiful in its choruses but to recognize that what church is is the reality the grit the relationships the strain the differences

the vexations that promote the things that god wants for eternal demonstration and to give yourself to that not to ring your fingers say hunk why me why my fellowship but to recognize hey we must be course god is favoring us look at our problems what happens when we speak a soft word that expresses the wisdom of god rather than the anger and the vexation of the powers is that by some ability in ourselves by by what ability did jesus suffer the taunts and the years of men and the physical abuse and torture of the cross it says that he yielded his life by the eternal spirit the spirit of god was a grace given and even demonstrated in his willing suffering unto death and it will be demonstrated by us when we put aside the mind lust that wants to get even wants to get back what wants to

retaliate and suffer not indulging that and by another spirit express the wisdom of god that spirit is the eternal spirit of god that spirit is god and when that spirit is expressed god is expressed and where god is expressed there is authenticity and where that is expressed the powers recoil and i tell you about the time in the community when we did battle against the powers and felt an actual release in heaven in intercession two illustrations that i want to give before i close for all of the vexation and strain and stress that we experienced for years in community in northern minnesota and they're compounded when you live with the same people every day and you're sharing a common purse and the issues of finance are so vexing and how do you distribute the meager amount that you have and

this need is going to be neglected and someone's going to be offended if you address yourself to this these problems they can't be avoided and so there are strains and tensions you wonder if you'll ever make it through and yet you stay together where else shall you go he has the words of eternal life and god has brought you so far in a remote place that you can't go or many of us would have beat it and so you come every day to the prayer meeting and you come heavy-hearted and and the enemy is playing upon you so oppressively to get you to give up this vain undertaking of seeking to find your way back into some kind of biblical new testament christianity that can be called apostolic it's a struggle it would be much easier it'd be a relief to find a charismatic fellowship that makes not

these demands of these requirements and we came to one of our morning prayer meetings that day of heaviness was so unbearable we could barely lift our heads no song leader looking at each other the adults of the community sitting in a circle think of thinking of the unresolved tensions that yet remain between many of us and thinking that maybe it's just yourself suffering that heaviness and then someone finally says i think boy i'm really feeling bowed over and everyone says yeah i feel that too and before we know it we realize it's not just some individual idiosyncratic thing in us there are powers of the air actually exerting an oppressive spirit against our community and so i encourage them to pray you know there's praying and praying like there's faith and faith and praise and praise

and love and love there's the true thing and the faint and we began to pray but i tell you i had to stop them and say you think this is going to succeed put your gut into it and i know what else was said but if you walked in five minutes later you would have thought it was an insane asylum some were stretched out on their faces some were standing some were kneeling one brother was punching at the air flailing away every kind of posture of deep intercession by people who to give a give a rap how they look to each other because we have been in it too long to be concerned how we appear to each other we were beyond that kind of outward and fast style thing there was a battle going on and it was remarkable how how the momentum of that spiritual thing picked up in the prayer that deepened and

as we're in the midst of it i had a vision of a faith as it began looking down upon us gloating from ear to ear with a smirk haha the bengal community they're full of problems they're riddled through that they can't find their way they're they're always struggling but as the crescendos of these authentic intercession corporate began to rise up i watched that smirk wipe off that face and a look of fear come into it and i watched this filthy thing begin to back up and i sensed that we were pressing in and there came a moment when that thing broke and began to flee and we pursued after it in the realm of spirit you don't know what i'm talking about we need to know something was taking place and we continued on till i saw a great fist break through and like pieces and fragments splattered and

flying out all the place and in that moment this one began to laugh that one began to giggle this one was hysterical that one was rolling on the floor no one said laugh but we we sensed in that moment such a triumphant victory such a rejoicing such a foolishness that was expressed in that way and something lifted something was moved away by the authenticity of that corporate intercession it took several years to come to that place and we only tasted it once but i know that it's there to be had one other and final illustration one of our friday night potluck community suppers we had a community room that we bought from the university of limigi for eleven hundred dollars metal building and moved it 18 miles a section at a time no plumbing no heating we got it wired insulated room that was

our meeting place in the winter friday night potluck what does that mean the women cook in their trailers wrap the dishes in quilts bundle their kids up put on their snow shoes and their galoshes it's a promotion it's a production they get them out time the food get there it's cold not everybody's on time you know the way it is all you know what the point it's only fellowship but we assembled do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together all the more as you see the end approaching and so we ate together breaking bread and sang a few choruses there's nothing to write home about nothing sensational and a couple that had just come back to us a mexican-american couple who had been down to texas and into mexico gave a little report of the blessing that they brought to these simple

peasant believers in and largely what they brought them was things that were worked out of our own guts out of our own travail out of our own struggle and it blessed them south of the border and when they finished that somehow we found ourselves on our feet somehow we're beginning to praise god somehow we're beginning to think that maybe it was worthwhile after all that there was something redemptive being corporately corporatively formed in this body that was having some little impact and effect in mexico or elsewhere that the struggle was worthwhile that something was being refined that there was something in this interplay of life with life that was consequential and that god was in it with all of the struggle all of the suffering of it and we began to lift our hands nobody prompted us

it was praise it was war it was out of the depths of the soul and as it was ascending up to heaven again i i sensed something moved in the heavenlies something recoiled could not stand to hear land with its fingers in its ears at the authentic praise that was coming up from the earth from the saints who have been experiencing the true redemptive work of god in the church we wrestle not the weapons of our warfare are not called the whole issue of the powers is the issue of the church both in time and eternity because god has created all things in order that through the church the eternal the wisdom of god the manifold wisdom of god might be demonstrated to the principalities and the powers of the air and this is the eternal purpose of god in christ jesus that's only for church that sees

that recognizes that rejoices for that devotes itself to that consciously desires its fulfillment a consecrated and a committed people who want to go beyond meetings beyond services and into these realities and

into this demonstration though they know it's going to be an issue of suffering i want to pray for eastern annual because god has appointed it that's why we're here that's why he's established these weeks that's why he has been speaking these words that's why he even told us tonight before the message ever came listen to what i'm saying hawk into my word resolve to take it to yourself to do it i'm sending you messages i'm preparing you for end time eventualities understand your sufferings understand your afflictions understand your problems don't look upon it as some kind of

capricious thing that makes no sense it's a being fitted being formed to express the manifold wisdom of god patience and suffering meekness humility yielding to the sovereignty of god's will rejoicing in our distress giving him praises no matter even in adversity so precious god we count ourselves privileged my god we would eternally rule we would spit out our guts eternally if we learned too late that our churchianity was a mock a play acting a going through motions a phraseological thing a mere sunday thing a slap on the back and that we had missed the true substantive eternal purposes for which you have created all things and we did not give ourselves to it with the earnestness that it deserves lord we're privileged that you have saved us out of death and into your eternal purpose and

we want to say tonight we received such a call we willingly embrace it my god we're willing for whatever is needful we acknowledge that we're soft and indulgent that we do indulge our mind lusts to speak back and to retaliate and to get even we want the last word but we want you to break the power of that we want you to form your character in us we want you to teach us how to speak a word in season or to be silent in our suffering and not answer back that no matter what the vexation no matter what the distress something shall go forth both in time and eternity to your eternal praise bless this people my god give them sober hearts and yet hearts of rejoicing we love you and we thank you that there's going to be such a church it's already on the way that something therefore is going to be

moved out of the way that has kept men in bondage in these things

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