

Guard the Good Deposit: Remembering Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] not. This is going to be an introduction and then a bit of, I'll call it a bit of a wild history ride, and then we're going to look just briefly together at some words that Paul wrote to Timothy and then followed up by a postscript, four parts but none too long.

So again, that's a picture of where we're going today, this last Learners' Exchange of the season. Learners' Exchange is about, Jim was talking about the vision of the ministry that Harry had and passed on to the Chandlers that they've done so well over the years. I can't believe 30 is the number or thereabouts. Learners' Exchange is about, very broadly speaking, it's obviously about learning, it's about knowing. Knowing, of course, is a very human thing, a very human thing to do. It's worth pondering, I'm sure, I hope so. Doing it well, as we all know, is not easy. But even more precisely than that, I think you'll agree, we can say that we are, we don't just do, we are knowers. It is, if you will, the very structure of us. We are knowers. The famous Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, you'll know by name, one of the Church's greatest knowers, that's for sure, pondered the wonder of man, man the knower, if you will, created in God's image. Further, Augustine thought about this a lot. It may have been kind of unique in this, man created in the image of God, the Trinity. So this amazing thinker, wouldn't it have been nice, Bill, if you'd manage to get the Bishop of Hippo to address us? Maybe in heaven we'll hear from him, I hope so.

[2 : 11] This amazing thinker asks us, I'm going to do this with you today as introduction, to think of ourselves in just this way, following this way. Augustine thought like this, I always found this, I always find this very moving. Augustine says he's thinking about himself, about his self created in God's image again. So he says, well, I exist. We may all say that for sure, I exist. But of course, when you say that simultaneously, says the Bishop, you're also saying, I know that I exist. A rock or a piano exists, but they never say, I know I exist. But then the Bishop of Hippo, the famous Bishop says, and I think this is a bit surprising. He says, again, I exist, I know I exist. And then he says this, I love my existence. I exist. I know I exist. I love my existence. That's a human created in God's image speaking. So thinks the famous Bishop of Hippo. The existing and the knowing and this existing and knowing in love are all one in me. This is, thinks the Bishop, and he thinks this is instructive.

He sat in front of his congregation there in North Africa and taught this kind of thing. This is who we are. We are an echo. Think of it today. You are an echo. You are a reflection. You are a picture. Better, you are an icon visible in the world of the invisible Trinity. That's who you were speaking with this morning over a bit of coffee or tea. Icons of the Trinity, each of you are, says the Bishop. It is a profound thing. It is a profound thing to be a human being. The Trinity in which Father eternally knows himself in his Son, the Son eternally knows himself in his Father, and eternally they live in the perfect unity of Spirit, in perfect love. And each of these is person.

[4 : 55] One in three. God, said our Lord, is love. The Trinity is a symphony, a fugue, a society of love.

You see, knowing, therefore we can say we have this capacity in ourselves as it is in infinitely in the Trinity. Knowing is precisely a mystery. We are mysteries. The intro draws to a close.

John Turner, a former going from the sublime to the ridiculous, I mean that with deep respect. John Turner, you'll know him as one of our former prime ministers, was asked recently in an interview why he had given so much of his life over to public service. Such a gifted man. For sure he was. And he answered by quoting the aforementioned bishop. I was impressed by this. Let the one who has received a gift, said Augustine, quoted by John Turner.

Let the one who has received a gift, give it back, says the Bishop of Hippo. If you have some gift of gospel knowledge in your Christian community, well then give it back.

[6 : 17] May we offer it to our Creator and offer it in love. Which, may that stand for our prayer this morning as we begin.

I offer that up as our prayer to the God that we believe in. To God the Trinity. Hear us, Lord. Accept our meager gift of knowledge.

May we grow in knowledge of the gospel this morning. The very purpose for the ministry of learners exchange. Do not neglect the gift which is in you, Paul says to Timothy.

Let's not do that today. Let's share in knowledge of the gospel. Amen. End of introduction. As Dr. Packer was saying, this is our last session for a while for the season.

And it is our last session under the auspices of, may I say it again, our last session under the official auspices of Bill and Betty Chandler.

[7 : 22] You might wonder how many Bill and Betty Chandlers there have been in the church's past. Probably, I would think, quite a good number.

I hasten to add few of such quality. I'm sure you'll agree with me. Here beginneth the wild history ride.

In 16th century France, for instance, more mid to late 16th century France, there were a very large number of reformed Christians.

Historians are apparently finding out that there were a lot more of them than they ever imagined in France. Reformed as in much shaped by the Reformation as it unfolded, specifically in places like Geneva, Zurich, Bern.

Shaped by great works like Calvin's Institutes. That kind of thought. Historians emphasize this. Lay persons.

[8 : 26] It was the initiative of lay people that drove this movement. For sure. People like Bill and Betty Chandler. In eternity, Bill and Betty may meet some 16th century saints from places like Burgundy or Provence and discuss a ministry which had much in common.

Hopefully, the French will provide the wine at that. I've been reading Paul to Timothy recently, and Paul did say to him, you know, a little wine for your stomach's sake.

Teaching, teaching, teaching was the main driver of this movement, apparently. Lay preaching. And, of course, the printed word was very important.

It is interesting to note that Dermon McCullough, the great Oxford historian, notes this with some amazement. These people carried on their persons psalters with music.

These 16th century French saints. They sang the Psalms. They sang the scriptures in singing the Psalter. In singing the Psalter, of course, is rehearsed the story of Israel, which is the story of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 42] They sang the scriptures. This movement, does it not, knew that intentional learning needs to be organized and encouraged, which the Chandlers have done for us over 30 years, I'm always going to say it in amazement.

Intentional learning needs to be organized in the church, and it needs to be encouraged. And so it has been, and Bill and Betty have done this work amongst us so well, and for which we have so much appreciation.

The church has always asked, this is obvious, isn't it, what shall we teach? What shall we teach? What needs to be learned? And then, what is of first importance?

What do we need to learn, and what heads up the line, if you will? And this question has been more intensely asked, obviously, at times of crisis in the church's life.

We may be in one of those times of crisis now as Christians. I think we are in the Western world.

The early church, the church in its first, broadly understood early, the church in its first five centuries, is foundational in this.

[11 : 04] Here the church was formed by Scripture, and the Spirit led the church to recognize and define what is Scripture. What a time of learning that was for the early Christians.

The church was formed by Scripture, and the early Christians. Creeds were formulated in the early centuries. Creeds which set forth the narrative of Jesus Christ. From eternity he came, the creeds tell us.

He was born uniquely. He taught, he died, he rose, he ascended, he reigns, and he is returning. He is the Lord of all. The church articulated this in creeds which were to be taught.

So the church has always taught the creeds. We've learned about the creeds in Learner's Exchange. The Lord's Prayer has always been taught in the church. The Ten Commandments were always, have always been taught in the church. And these central things were of course elaborated.

[12:07] Oh, how they've been elaborated in the church. And this unfolding has been variously, and still is, variously received.

A learner of the faith must get this one straight, it seems to me. Some, especially in the Roman communion, receives this elaboration of the gospel as possessing, to put it mildly, great authority. They call it holy tradition. Others read it, we're in our community much more in this tradition, others read it as the church's treasured conversation about scripture.

But always hear it as having less authority than scripture. That's, in broad terms, why the Christian message is so elaborated.

Why places like Regent College exist, where you can talk about the faith 24-7 if you want. That issue about scripture and tradition, that issue, that conversation was ever so important, wasn't it, at the time of the Reformation.

[13:23] We just might take a little step back here and remember that the Latin church and the Eastern Byzantine church split over other issues, really, which generally perplex modern Christians, but they're probably going to become more thought about in the near future by Christians.

They split over issues of how to worship, how to define church authority. And these are issues which have not gone away, but they weren't specifically the issues that were dealt with at the Reformation.

We always have more to learn about these things. It's interesting to note that a Christian scholar who's had dealings with St. John's over the years like Edith Humphrey has recently joined the Orthodox Church, a church which is so rich in its story of worship and prayer.

So much to know, so much to learn about the Christian story. But again, especially at the Reformation, when all those French Reformed Christians, those Huguenots as they're usually called, when they were singing the Psalms together, learning the faith that way, the church engaged in a most intense way at the time of the Reformation, as we all know, in teaching.

Imagine how central teaching became in the 16th century. everything turned on teaching, teaching, teaching. Catechisms.

[15:00] We've heard a lot at Learners' Exchange over the last little while. Catechisms became so central. Lutherans issued catechisms. The Reformed issued catechisms.

The free churches, as they came to be known, re-evaluated church practice and formed their own teaching distinctives, teaching, teaching, teaching.

It's amazing to just note how learned the Reformers were, the leaders of the Reformation, leaning so much on the great scholarship of a man like Erasmus.

He never joined the Reform, but all learnedness became central in driving the Gospel. Learning. People like Melancthon and Calvin and Luther and Zwingli were enormously learned people.

The church needs to learn the Gospel in such depth. And of course, with all this elaboration, with this detail, with more and more definition, alas, as we all know, it often happens came division.

[16:07] Learning can be dangerous, as we all know. Sometimes, this learning happened again with great scholarly precision. Sometimes it happened in, alas, again, confusion.

And sometimes, as we know in human history, learning can take place in an atmosphere of fury. And sometimes, as it did at the time of the Reformation, overlapping with regional and linguistic and racial animosities of all kinds, bad historical memories, you know the story.

It became dangerous in the 16th century and into the 17th century. It became dangerous and perhaps you can say exciting to be a learner. Learning and knowing are not little things.

They're not just, oh yeah, it's a nice extra in my life. It can be dangerous to know. I once attended an Anglican church that burnt down.

I have been myself connected, excuse a little anecdote here. I've been connected with two Anglican parishes, both over long periods of time. One was destroyed by fire and the other I was kicked out of.

[17:22] I hear some of you people have been kicked out of your people. And I hope this isn't ghoulish. When I wrote this, I thought, my goodness, this is a bit ghoulish. The prayer books which survived that fire, this is literally true, I remember having this experience, held them up when we

first met at another building.

I'm happy to say the building was rebuilt, an old classic Anglican church. The prayer books had a smoky fragrance about them, literally. And again, I hope it's not ghoulish to think that it was, I found it a strange reminder that certain people died to keep, I wish I had one in my hands to hold up before you now.

Pretend this is a prayer book. I always, I need to be reminded on occasion, people died horrible deaths so that we could read the words in the prayer book.

They died so that those words that are being said across the way there that I heard this morning at 7.30, some people learned and gained knowledge and said, I will die to put this knowledge in front of the church and the world.

Cranmer died a horrible death along with many others so that some people could read about the gospel of Jesus Christ that way and not another.

[18:48] They died. Learning is no little thing. I love Cranmer in all of his strange complexity.

He's a very strange man, Cranmer. The gospel often makes people strange. But I like to remember, Cranmer was a teacher. Cranmer taught. Cranmer would approve of learners' exchange.

He'd approve of what Bill and Betty have been doing. Keep the gospel taught. Don't just be casual about it. Teach, teach, teach. Very important.

We must also remember, alas, that people we admire from that time often accepted the legitimacy of judicial extremity.

Did they ever? Regarding what a realm received as revealed truth and what they would tolerate as revealed truth. Learning can be dangerous.

[19:49] Christendom. This is more of a wild history ride. Christendom, Europe, whatever they're called, learn through much painful conflict to allow eternity to make final judgments.

So, and this pertains to learners' exchange, surely, let difference, and there is inevitably difference in the church, let difference talk, let it argue, let it fiercely disagree, and let us learn to love as we do it, and practice courtesy.

Deep and lovely courtesy. This is a kind of ministry, a style of, which I like to think learners' exchange has attempted over the years.

To learn, but not in anger, with courtesy, with patience. The gospel deserves that of us, doesn't it? The history ride draws to a close. I hope it is helpful to note a couple of things, and I think this always pertains specifically to all learning, and especially to history.

[21:02] History is so important for our study of the gospel. History is two things, isn't it? History is what really happened back there in all of its complexity, and secondly, history is what rememberers, or historians as they're usually called, write about that back there.

And you must never simply equate these things. You must never say, well, I've got this thing, this thing of knowledge about the past, and it is the past.

It's never that complicated. It's like reading scripture. Your reading of it is one thing, it is something always just another step out there. So, again, this is by just simply saying that learning and teaching must always be patient and humble and very much, I think, wary of idolatry.

We can so easily equate my knowledge with the truth. The subtle air, that's idolatry. Heaven knows all things, heaven does.

We don't. not even people who come to Learner's Exchange every Sunday in case we need that reminder. Now, we see in a glass darkly.

[22:24] Then, face to face, Paul says. Oh, you cannot be too humble in loving and adoring and getting to know gospel certainties.

They are certainties, but they are to make us humble, patient inquirers. As in history, so in theology. Theology for the Christian is, in the presence of Dr.

Packer, here I am defining theology. They get burnt at the stake here. Theology is knowing what God has told us to know. He's revealed about himself.

And then we are to grow into further understanding. I always like to call it an adoring understanding of it. It is both simple, isn't it, and subtle and it can be very complex.

So, we must always be students of the gospel together. Here ends the wild history lesson. We'll come back to a bit of history, but the history stuff's over.

[23:29] I want to look with you at Paul to Timothy very briefly together, and just rehearse what he says to Timothy on certain matters, and then, as I mentioned in the overview, then just the final last

comment.

Here, what the apostle says here to Timothy, this is actually obviously a composite of words in his two pastoral letters to Timothy.

Let me just, if you're at the back, can you read that easily at the back? Here are just a medley of words that I think are relevant on the last session of Learner's Exchange for the season of, again, Paul to Timothy.

Paul says things to Timothy like, guard, guard, Timothy, the good deposit. Actually, in one place he says, guard the deposit, and in another place he calls it the good deposit.

So I'm putting those together. Guard the good deposit. He does say, remember Jesus Christ, descended from David, risen from the dead.

[24 : 42] In one place, interestingly, it seems to be, Paul says to Timothy, think over what I say. Think over what I say. God will give you understanding. Words from Paul to Timothy.

So I just want to run through these and just say some obvious things about them and in the discussion time you can tell me what I left out. Guard the good deposit.

Again, remember Jesus Christ, descended from David, risen from the dead. Straightforward stuff, I hope. Guard. Isn't it interesting that Paul says just to Timothy, guard the deposit, the good deposit. Guard. So, what does he mean by guard? I take it he means protect the gospel. How about watch over the gospel or do not be indifferent to the gospel.

Guard it. Heaven expects, more expansively obviously, but heaven expects a body of people called the church to take responsibility, if you will, for the gospel.

[25 : 54] Don't be indifferent to it. Don't let it just happen in your midst. Guard it. Guard. Excuse me, guard the deposit, he calls it here.

Deposit is obviously something given. We don't make it up, the faith. It's a something, again, given. I delivered to you, do you recall Paul said to the Corinthians, I delivered to you that which I received. Paul received the gospel. He didn't make it up. Our faith, in a certain sense, has a genealogy, and we are to learn that genealogy if we're reflective Christians.

We must know it, as we try to do at Learner's Exchange. The gospel is knowable. That's why, again, creeds have been found to be good in the life of the church, and I think we can say inevitable.

The church needs to summarize the gospel, get to know it, memorize it in different forms, if you will. Paul also says, it's interesting to note, that it is a good thing, this deposit.

[27 : 15] He needs a good sense. I think Paul wants to say that. Paul never says anything casually. The King James, the authorized version, translates words of Paul to Timothy, that good thing which was committed to you.

Why does, this may seem kind of obvious, and perhaps it is, why does Paul call it good? I would think because, well, it is good. Have you thought about how good a thing the gospel is?

How good it is? What would you do in your life if you didn't have it in your life? It is good. The gospel, Paul says to Timothy elsewhere, the gospel brings, imagine if someone came up to you in the street today and told you this for the first time.

I've got a message for you. Oh, yeah? What will it do for me? Paul says it brings life and immortality to light. Think of it.

something has happened in the world that brings life and immortality to light? That's what the gospel does. We should be excited about it on occasion, not to.

[28 : 31] They do that in other churches. After all, people love, as Augustine said, Augustine didn't imagine that stuff. People love life.

It's just in us to love life. life. And therefore, life without thread of end, immortality, is joyously good. So, guard the good deposit. Timothy, it's so good. This is worth guarding. This is no little thing. The way we defend the good should, of course, be good.

I think that's one of the reasons Paul says that to Timothy. It is good, and therefore defend it as if it's good. All through the pastorals, especially in Timothy, I think.

I read them both last night again, just to confirm these little suspicions. Paul commends, if you notice this, Paul commends gentleness. He commends courtesy.

[29 : 32] He insists on getting rid of a quarrelsome spirit. Thank goodness that's never been at Learner's Exchange. Get rid of quarrelsomeness.

The gospel is too important to quarrel about. Defend it, yes, defend it, but be gentle, be loving, be patient, because it's so good. Don't defend it in an ugly manner.

It's a contradiction in terms. How the church has sinned against this over the years. The mindlessness of some disputes in the church are just shocking.

Some disputes we must learn to avoid. All good stuff, and you can expand on that much better than me. And then Paul says, remember Jesus Christ.

I've got to watch the time here. Remember Jesus Christ. Isn't that obvious, Paul? Do you think that's going to be forgotten in the church? Aha! A banner bearing these words might be raised at some Anglican synods.

[30 : 33] I wouldn't dare think of mentioning which synods in which diocese, because I don't want to be quarrelsome, but I've been at Anglican synods where Jesus Christ is never mentioned.

You need to stand and say, remember Jesus Christ. That's what we're here for. Amazing. This is, of course, intentional remembering.

That's why Paul says this, right? It's intentional remembering. My intuition tells me that Paul is here just maybe thinking about the Lord's table.

I can't prove that, but I think he is. Holy communion. The Lord's table. Some call it the mass. See what church division does?

We've got different names for it, because there are different ideas about what it all means. The Eucharist. The Lord said, do this in remembrance of me.

[31 : 32] Learning helps us to remember. The Lord wants us to cultivate remembering. we must gather and learn the gospel and intentionally remember it as we guard the good deposit.

Learning helps us to remember. Who is remembered? Out of order, I did this for a reason. Who is remembered? Well, a man descended from David.

Remember Jesus Christ, Paul says to Timothy. Remember that he was descended from David. Amazing. Those 16th century Reformed Christians, who I can't keep from thinking about these days, they sang the Psalms, as mentioned earlier, and therefore they remembered Jesus Christ in his living, real context, which is the mystery of Israel.

Never divorce Jesus from Israel, otherwise you're talking about an imaginary Jesus. Some churches that don't teach and teach and teach will pretty well invent a brand new Jesus whose Jewishness means nothing.

That's a fantasy Jesus. Our Lord was of Israel. Paul says, remember that he was descended from David. He wasn't a Gentile.

[32 : 52] Not one of us. He was of them. And that's crucial in understanding his mystery. He came in a Jewish line, and it begins to feed into the gospel.

We've been hearing about this recently, haven't we? Our Lord came from a particular Jewish line, and what a family they were. Our Samuel preaching has been reminding us of this.

I'm tempted to say they make the Windsors look like a normal bunch. The saying is sure, Paul says to Timothy.

The saying is sure. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sinners like David even. You know, the adulterer, the murderer, the guy who provoked.

His family has rape and rebellion and horror in it. It's just violence abounding and unfaithfulness. These are the kind of people that Jesus came to save.

[33 : 56] He came to save sinners like his ancestor David. Amazing. Augustine said, I'm thinking a lot about this man these days, that the Bible, I'm paraphrasing him, the Bible portrays sin without blinking because we then see the depths of the grace which saves.

He didn't come to save fairly respectable middle class people in Vancouver. He came to save adulterers and murderers and all of the vicious sinners who are out there and apparently we were included.

He came to save sinners. I'm glad that Cranmer's prayer book puts that right in front of us as we head up to the holy table. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

If you're righteous, don't come to the table. He only came to save sinners. sinners like us. And of course, he's risen from the dead.

It's 10 to 10. He is risen from the dead. This is obviously, by the way, a kind of credal moment. Paul has early forms of creeds in his writings.

[35 : 15] Remember Jesus Christ descended from David, risen from the dead. These are the sure words. Get these in circulation, Timothy. Churches should have sure words that they know, they've memorized, they ponder, they unpack.

So, teach, teach, teach. It's always happening in the church. Brad Gregory, a historian at Notre Dame, heard him speak recently out at UBC, Regent College specifically, has spent much of his time with his brilliant scholarly mind, trying to answer a simple question amongst others. This is a very interesting question that he poses, and it's not new, of course. How did it come about, he asks, this is from memory, but I know this is the question, one of the questions he's very interested in, how did it come about that religion in the West is defined as, this is his phrase, religion in the West is now defined as individually preferred private belief.

What do you believe? Well, this is what I believe, see you tomorrow. Individually preferred private belief, that's what religion is in the West, he thinks.

True enough, he thinks. Individually preferred private belief. The historian, I'll run through this very quickly because I think it's interesting, this historian thinks that the West simply won, grew exhausted by religious dispute, the kind of stupid, ugly religious dispute that the Reformation became, unfortunately.

[37 : 01] And then two, it came finally to tolerate confessional difference. You know. Then three, and here's the turning point in his thesis, there settled into our culture the idea that, well, undecidability about these things means that it's really something that I may regard as of secondary importance.

It's the kind of thing that can never be resolved. So you believe what you believe and I'll believe what I believe. It's all headed for individually preferred private belief.

Yes, indeed. So let religion disappear again into private preference. That's what a lot of people in Vancouver are apt.

They believe it so completely that they've never even thought about it. They've never thought it could be anything other than that. Religion is your private beliefs.

What do you believe? I think that the historian about this thesis is half right. It is very complex. But to confess, you see, as Paul tells Timothy to always put in front of the church, risen from the dead is the gospel's big claim to public truth.

[38 : 29] You see, risen from the dead. This is not your private belief. It's a fact out there. It's a fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

Here is a big claim. This is public truth. This is why when Paul spoke, they didn't receive him as, oh yeah, he's preaching a lovely private spirituality.

No, they got angry at him because they understood that what he was saying was a claim to public truth. That'll get people interested. Sometimes not friendly.

It will not be a friendly interest. Jesus Christ, the church of Jesus Christ says, has been raised up out of death. A fact.

A fact. It has nothing to do with my private beliefs. It's a fact. And by confessing this mystery in love, we begin apparently to disarm principalities and powers.

[39 : 30] The gospel is the liberation of all things. we understand learning best when we remember, is it not true, that we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Error in your neighbor's heart isn't the big problem. The big problem is that the evil one runs this world. People, your neighbor is to be loved.

Jesus loved people whose minds were filled with error. He just loved them. let God deal with the error. Just patiently love them.

Patently teach. There it is. We teach the gospel as public truth. Heaven will vindicate our confession. This guards, it seems to me, just the beginnings of addressing the issue.

This guards from a descent, however, into a mere private preference religion witness. That is the set aside the gospel if we allow that to happen.

[40 : 37] What does all this mean? It means that the church should be simply unafraid of presenting the gospel in humility, with joy, and with patience.

We need to learn places like Learner's Exchange, learn and grow into the full mystery of Christ. He is the Lord.

In his time, the world will be embracing this magnificent truth. There is, again, some history stuff, make of it what you will, and a look at some final words from an apostle, the great words.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David. Teach these things in courtesy and patience, Paul tells Timothy. Think over what I say.

The gospel invites thinking things over. Hope you do that in your Bible studies, in your own private life of study and inquiry, and at ministries like Learner's Exchange, as long as there are good people like Bill and Betty who make it happen in churches.

[41 : 45] The Lord will give us understanding in these things, so we must be a teaching and a learning people at all times. As mentioned earlier, part four now happens, the shortest of all, a PS.

Bring it to a close. Why is, I might say just to bring it to a close, why is Learner's Exchange about so many things? I was going to be bold and start mentioning names, I thought don't be bold and start mentioning names, because the crucial name you'll probably leave out.

But very wonderful people have given their time to discuss all of these things. Music, remember some music sessions we've had with Bill and Betty over the years? Art, painting, architecture, when computers work and we can see them.

We've talked about getting old, a man who's, talked about getting old whose mind is as young and alive, I wish my mind was as young and alive as his.

We've talked here about poetry, about the Bible, we've talked about famous people, we've talked about the creation and what we are doing to it, many, many things.

[42 : 59] This next sentence I wrote after one too many cups of coffee, but I'll let it stand. I think I know the answer to this question, why learners exchange is about many things.

I think I know, and I know that a man named Jens Zimmerman, a scholar of the Renaissance humanism, he thinks he knows and I think he does know.

Sorry, that sentence was, you get the gist. Renaissance humanists are sometimes presented to us, you know, those guys like in Italy and Michelangelo and all those wondrous, famous names.

Renaissance humanists are sometimes presented as early moderns just waiting to throw off the Christian faith, waiting for guys like Freud and Marx and Darwin to show up and explain to us all that the world, explain the world to us minus Christian truth claims.

But Professor Zimmerman, he's a bit of a troublemaker, he's a Christian, he has actually spent time discovering what these folks actually said and did.

[44 : 08] And as always, facts complicate the modern humanist narrative that we all live under.

We're under its authority. If you don't know that you don't know much. We live under the authority of their telling of the story of the world.

His conclusion, Professor Zimmerman's conclusions, is this. These creative and thoughtful people were discovering again the message. Can you believe it?

They were rediscovering the message of the church fathers. How may we say in a very concentrated word as we draw to a close here, what the church fathers taught?

Those first generation of thinkers and ponderers, the kind of folks who would like learners exchange, how they took in and thought about the gospel. How would you summarize what they said?

They did summarize it all in one beautiful simple way and it goes like this. And it seems to me that if you're in the right frame of mind and you hear this and it doesn't thrill you, you need more coffee or something to wake you up.

[45 : 12] These lovers of scripture and like Augustine and earlier ones, these lovers of scripture and people of prayer said that God became a man.

They're thinking about the incarnation and the Lord's life and death, his resurrection, his ascension, the fact that he's the Lord. And they said with joy to the ancient world, God became a man so that man, that's all of us, male and female.

God became a man so that man might become like God. That's salvation. You know, that's what salvation is. God wants us with him and he wants us to be like him.

You know, so salvation, alas, it happily is about going to heaven when I die, yes, but it's also about the mind, that the thing that we're addressing at Learner's Exchange.

It's about music, the gospel. Salvation is to make you joyous. How could you be joyous without music? God likes music. They even sang as he created the world, we're told in Job.

[46 : 21] The gospel is about music and poetry and architecture and painting and it's about dance and about every good human thing. It's about humans becoming, as one of the church fathers said, humans fully alive.

So Learner's Exchange has to be about many things. It isn't about, oh good, when I die I'm going to heaven. Well God wants us there because he wants us to have a rich life.

Salvation is fullness. Jesus came to give, he said it, fullness of life. So Learner's Exchange has to be about all those things, music and poetry and everything.

And so Bill and Betty have had speaker after speaker unfolding these things because it fills in the blanks, if you will, about the fullness of what a word like salvation means.

God became a man so that we could become like God. God is rich and infinity and wealth and glory. He likes these things.

[47 : 20] So salvation is about all good things and so Christian learning likewise is about finally all good things. He is risen from the dead indeed.

So we want to gather at Learner's Exchange and learn all that we can because salvation is about so many good things.

And Bill and Betty again, thank you very much for facilitating it and doing this Christian ministry over years. And you can't retire as Jim Packer reminded you last week.

Sorry. There's other things for you to do. so you're not to rest too much. There's work to be done.

Since you've done this so well, you have to do other things. So, and I know Bill and Betty would want to say that it's all, of course, I mean, dare to speak for them, it's all to the glory of God for bringing us salvation and what a salvation it is.

[48 : 26] We've just touched upon it at Learner's Exchange over the years. Imagine something like Learner's Exchange may be in eternity. We'll be learners there.

Will we not? How the inexhaustible God is for us to learn about and to love. It's all wonderful. So, there's many things that you need to, there's another tradition at Learner's Exchange is to denounce the speaker when he's finished.

So, I'm going to say a prayer that you will remember gentleness and then we'll have some conversation. Lord, we thank you for the gospel that it's such a wonderful and happy thing to inquire into.

It tells us hard truths, but only so that we can enter into great, the great glory of the salvation you've brought to us in the person of Jesus Christ. And we, we pray in his name.

Amen. Amen.