

George Herbert

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Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0 : 00] I wanted to, going from George's sublimity to my ordinariness, I wanted to call this talk today, Mamie, how about George Herbert studies in how Christendom became private religion.

It could go with that, but no, I don't think so. Or George Herbert, the opposite extreme here for title, George Herbert, a sweet singer in Israel.

I think he is that. I think both of those kind of titles would be kind of appropriate for a certain kind of look at George Herbert, but long titles are not in fashion, I think that's probably a good thing, and are often pretentious.

So today we just are going with George Herbert. George Herbert. Though I did zip through a book for this talk, which has the title, Picturing Religious Experience.

Then the subtitle is George Herbert, John Calvin, and the Scriptures. But I like the title, Picturing Religious Experience.

[1 : 18] I think that's what George Herbert does. Picturing Religious Experience. What a gift if you can do that with integrity.

I think George does. But just George Herbert, as I say, will more than do, I hope, this morning. I do read him as both, as I said above.

As he's a poet, I think he's a poet witnessing in his own way to a church undergoing a massive shift in her life. I think that's undeniable.

There is, after all, always, it's safe to say, a societal context for the Christian life. We live out our lives in a society which is in a certain shape.

And the church, as we know, has shaped, and it has been shaped, by what is around it, stating the obvious. There once was Christendom.

[2 : 21] It wasn't there. We have a dim memory of it in our world, and even in the church. There once was a place called Christendom, and it was largely to say, it has largely, to say the least, disappeared.

Shadows remain of Christendom, but we no longer live, as a Supreme Court justice said it a couple of years back.

You'll remember Audrey McLaughlin. She of much fame on our highest court. She said quite bluntly, didn't she, once, that we no longer live in a Christian society.

And I think Audrey was pleased with that fact. Yes, alas. Our poet lived when the church was trying to find her balance at a time of great change.

We live, of course, in a greatly changed world, and the church is, again, trying to find her way in the world. Would that be right or wrong, do you think?

[3 : 26] I think that the church right now, especially in the West, is trying to find her way. Who are we? Where do we come from again? Let's rehearse that. Where should we be going?

I think churches in other parts of the world right now are going through a time of such growth that they don't have the luxury. They're just growing and doing well, in a sense, the church in Africa.

These aspects of it apparently are. Again, our poet lived at a time of great change. We live, of course, again, in our time. We can't just go back and be George Herbert, but he has lots to teach us, I think.

And at such a time, a voice of comfort, our time of change and challenge, a voice of comfort in the faith. Comfort's a weak word, isn't it?

I would call it rather weighty, strengthening comfort, is good to hear again. And I find George Herbert such a voice. I have for many, many years.

[4 : 27] A voice of Israel indeed. I think he would want to be called that. He'd be very honored to be called a voice of the faith in that deep way. He's a voice of Israel, a singer in Israel like David.

A singer who has wrestled with God mightily and has found that God grants victory to those who live out their lives in his presence. As George Herbert tried to do throughout his life.

Mr. Herbert witnesses to a life lived in the gospel, for sure, evangelical, in the church, for sure, a church which he loved, a very visible place.

He loved the church. With his eyes wide open to what life's really like. George always comes across as a realist, I think.

There's nothing anti-realistic about his poetry. I never find him off in spicy lands of religious dreaming. He's real.

[5 : 36] He talks about the faith the way it really is. Here is indeed a man of God. I'm paraphrasing here a brief description of his life because we need that background.

Some of us maybe aren't up to date just now on George Herbert's stuff. He wrote a prose treatise on the duties and hardships of a pastor's life and a collection of poems called The Temple.

That's what has made him most famous. I forget the number. It's over 100 poems in the Temple drama. His big work called The Temple, composed of many different poems.

And in these remarkable poems is revealed the literary genius, it's often said, of a humble priest whose spirituality, I am quoting here now, was a synthesis, see I didn't just make this stuff up, of evangelical and Catholic piety.

There's George Herbert. If you need a sort of big picture, big horizon word on who George is. So this intro must end.

[6 : 44] This is an introduction. And why not with a most characteristic Herbert poem? I want to get his voice today. I mentioned just a moment ago, I always find him a poet of Christian realism.

George wouldn't let you get away with too much religious again. What's the right word without being harsh? Religious dreaming.

Religious escapism. A lot of people out there who aren't at church today think in here we do a lot of escaping. Religion is sort of unreal. It's for people who don't want to face up to things.

It's a good escape. Marx called it a good drug for the poor. Their lives are rather unhappy and so they take some religion to get them over life's troubles.

George writes like this about the Christian life. And I hope some of you are familiar with this. All my dear angry Lord Since thou dost love yet strike Cast down yet help afford Sure I will do the like I will complain yet praise I will bewail, approve And all my sour sweet days I will lament And love George Herbert Poem called Bittersweet I think the whole Christian life Maturely lived out Could be summarized as I will lament And love That's the whole Christian life There's whole stretches of the church's life

[8 : 41] In our time I think That would drop the first bit No I don't want to lament I like this soft stuff I will love I'll be high on my religion And lament disappears But it's unreal That's the unreality of religion sometimes I will lament Says the poet I will lament and love That'll be my whole life The whole texture of me I will lament and love George knows What dispensation we're in A church militant He talks about that a lot In his whole output But I won't end there Since it's Lent One more word from the poet Before we move into other stuff He says this About what we're now starting today Welcome dear feast of Lent Who loves not thee He loves not temperance Or authority But is composed of passion

The scriptures bid us fast The church says Now Give to thy mother What thou wouldst allow To every corporation I love his endings Give Give What thou wouldst allow To every corporation To every group that you belong to You do kind of what it says You go along with it The church says Now Lent Get on with it George Loves the gospel The scriptures Bid us fast And he listens to the church The church Says now See he's a catholic And he's an evangelical The church Says And George takes that voice Very seriously The church Is an authority For George Herbert The community Of the gospel Is an authority The community He won't be an individual guy Running around Having religious experiences Yes So welcome Welcome dear

Feast Feast of Lent There you go That's what we're in And George has Will get us going Oh man There's the end Of the introduction Alexander Richmond If she ever comes up to you And says I'm thinking about You know Something in the church Calendar Beware If you Maybe Get away Because she's about To ask you to do something But you see This Friday It's the She talked to me About Herbert This Friday The 27th of February Is the day When we remember George Herbert Poet And pastor In the church calendar That's why we're talking About George today He's a great poet But Alexander Ritzman Is You know Knows how to pull this off So that's why We're sort of

thinking George Herbert thoughts Today Again The 27th That's this Friday When you wake up In the morning Say to yourself Ah George Herbert Pastor and poet And he passed away In 1633 The church calendar Reminds us Of this poet Clergyman George Herbert He was ordained His dates I want to really Look at his dates They're up here His dates are 1593 To 1633 A short life 40 years George Pascal had a short life Kierkegaard Had a short life A number of Significant Christians Had short Very short lives George lived 40 years 1593 To 1633 His family Was sufficiently Prominent That he might have Lived a comfortable Court life Of some kind He was born Into sort of Downton Abbey Circumstances The equivalent In that day Let's hope the family Got along better Than that bunch You know There Yeah Again He could have Had a comfort He was on A trajectory Towards A pretty high Powered High positioned Kind of life But He missed This life For all sorts Of reasons And he took To the life Of a clergyman He took As they then Said I think they then Said Holy orders And ministered At a place Called Bemerton Near Salisbury I bet some People in the room Have been there T.S. Eliot Made The whole Life Environment Of George Herbert Famous But I'm going To talk about That today A life story Is told like That isn't it There's sort Of a picture Of George All of us Have some sort Of life story Like that And that's Reasonable enough Mr.

[13:32] For instance Mr. Herbert Studied at Cambridge He had Four or five Brothers Big family One brother Became quite Prominent Lord Herbert Of Cherbury He had some Sisters His father Died early You know Again There's the way You can sort Of sum up A life In the What do they Call it In the UK The dictionary Of national Biography Or whatever It is Would tell you All that kind Of George Herbert Stuff But What's more To the point I'm sure You'll agree Is to inquire About How do you Say this Inquire about Try to Discern Well maybe His soul That's a bit Much How about His spirit In our time We would rather Talk maybe About his Prevailing Sensibility What was he Really like George If you met Him What kind Of a guy Was he George 1593 To 1633 I keep Thinking I keep

What is Possible To be At such A time People Have Possibilities Depending on Where they're Born What strata Of society What time In the History of the World They're born Again Pointing out The obvious What are the Possibilities For a human Sensibility At 1593 To 1633 A lot of People I Think I say this In a friendly Manner Think about The past Maybe like Downton Abbey People who Lived They're just Like us Except they Used to Wear funny Clothes That's not The way it Was in The past People were Really quite Distinctively Different We can Safely say There may Have been An underlying Core Of Humanness Dealing with The deepest Same issues But people Surely do Change Or are Different Depending on When they Happen in

The world If you Will And I Think the Answer here Crucially about What are George's Possibilities Is that we Can say about George is That many Possibilities Were opening Up just At the time When George Herbert flourished In the world If George Had been born Three or Four hundred Years before I think you Might say On the whole Risking big Generalizations Fewer Possibilities Were possible Fewer Fewer Fewer Fewer The great The wonderful Philosopher Charles Taylor I think In his Magisterial Big book A Secular Age Talks about I think this is Very helpful It's what his Whole big It's now becoming A famous book I think it's a Classic I think it's the Best book ever Written by a Canadian A Secular Age By Charles Taylor He says Look folks At the year 1500 It was really Difficult not to

Believe in God And at the year 2500 years later It's quite Thinkable not to Believe in God Quite thinkable Go to some University campuses And most people Take it for granted There's no God And Charles Taylor's big book A Secular Age Is answering the Question how did That happen How did we get To a secular Age How did that Happen But that's not What I want to Talk about today You see George Is 93 years When he's a Baby Past the year 1500 And things Are changing In the world Many different Kinds of Possibilities Were just in Their infancy But they were Starting to open Up In German Universities And I'm sure This is true In other places For teaching Purposes The middle ages Are very decisively Called Okay young man Young woman You want to Study the middle

Ages Okay They start At the year 500 And they end At 1500 Those Germans Those Germans They're self Confident People December 31st 1499 At midnight The middle Ages Are over After that Early Modernity Begins As we We can Call it Of course All such Periodization What a word Is arbitrary Potentially misleading But it means Something It helps you To get a Picture About what's Been going On in the World And historians Are supposed To help us With this Task Mr. Herbert

After all Saw the World Habitually In some Way It was Shaped of Course by All of The complicated Past All of The complicated Past has Produced All of The complicated Present George Herbert
George Butterfield

[18 : 36] Herbert Butterfield Said that It's a Wonderful Statement By a Historian All of The complicated Past Produced All of The complicated Present George Herbert Comes into The world At 1593 And a lot Of stuff Has been Happening In the World He's on The far Side Of the Great Revolutionary Moment Obviously Which is Called in Our history The Reformation Luther's Great Challenge Began You remember That door In Wittenberg In 1517 And Mr.

Herbert's Time Is a Time When a Reordered Christendom Was sort Of taking Shape Wasn't It George Herbert Was born On the Far Side Of that Drama It was He was Born Into That Drama 1593 1593 He's Born And the Purpose Of Reading And for Excuse me For the Purpose Of reading George Herbert's Poetry With some Clarity I think And some It will Become more Helpful For us We might Say That what Was in Place In Herbert's Local English World On the Far Side Of that Great Revolution Called The Reformation Was what Some Historians Would Call The Calvinist Settlement That's Why I Boldly Put up Here Calvinist George Herbert He would Self Identify As a Calvinist On the Whole Some People Would Contest That

I think He Would The Public Life Of the World According To this Settlement That Herbert Was Born Into And it Articulates In his Poetry The Public Life Of the World Was to Be in Principle Church And Bible Saturated Because of The Reformation And the Kind of Drama That George Herbert Was Part Of It's Very Much Why Our Liturgy Is the Way It Is Today We Are Bible Saturated And Church Saturated The Medieval Catholic Consensus Remember 500 To Roughly 1500 Was a Different Consensus Wasn't It The Church In the Middle Ages Mediated Salvation Through the Mass And all The Sacraments Sacramentals As they Were Called Were Very Prominent They're Still Called That In The Catholic Church You Know We Talked A Couple Of Weeks Back About Relics Here To Have a Sympathetic Look At Them Middle Ages They Were Quite Common Relics And Pilgrimage And Rosaries And Times Of Adoration Around The Blessed Sacrament All These Disciplines Were Part Of The Christian's Life And Mediated Grace And Salvation To The Believer In The Church Very Much So Some Were Religious They Had A Real System In Those Days Didn't They Somewhere In Quotation Marks The Formerly Religious Priests Monks Nuns They Were Kind Of The Leading Elite Christians And The Rest A Laity That Be Folks Like Us They Found Salvation In A Kind Of Slower Gradualism C.S.

Lewis Described Christendom I Think Quite Beautifully Lewis Can Be A Bit Funny At Times But He Called It Well A Few Received Honor Degrees And The Rest Were Just Given Passes That's The Way The Medieval Christian System Kind Of Worked Priests Nuns Monks They Were The Feisty Christians The Rest Of Us Followed Along And Received Obediently What The Church Would Give Us And The Road Was To Heaven That Was The Medieval Worldview I Find It Very Attractive The Medieval Worldview I Find Christendom Very Attractive I Think George Herbert Found It Very Attractive And I Think He Absorbed It Into His Calvinist Evangelical Self And Found A New Way For The Church To Be On The Far Side Of The Reformation And I Think He Might Be A Bit Of A Picture For Where The Church May Go In The

[23 : 12] Future I Find His Consensus Sensibility Which We're Trying To Discern Today To Be Very Attractive And I Wonder If The Church Is Yeah That's A Possibility For Us Catholic Evangelical Calvinist I'm Not It's Hard To Convince A Catholic To Become A Calvinist But That That Calvinist Saturated That Geneva Passion For Scripture George Herbert Regarded The Catholic Church As Sort Of What Poets Are Supposed To Be Good At Metaphors The Catholics Were Overdressed That Was Their Major Problem But He Said In The Valley Geneva Is In A Big Valley Apparently They Hardly Know How To Put Any Clothes On In The Morning They Were Naked He Wanted A Middle Way Catholic Evangelical Yes Calvinist

Yes That Was His Struggle He Was Trying To Find A New Way That Is Maybe A Guide For Us In Finding A New Way The Settlement Of Course Was Quite I Guess We Could Call It It Was Forming It Was Real Enough But Politically And Socially That Is To Say Most Publicly It Was Very Uncertain It Was In Certain Hearts Like The Heart Of George Herbert But Publicly It Was Still A Big Struggle Herbert Did Not Live Long Enough To Witness The Civil War In His Beloved Homeland It's A Blessing For Him I Think He Would Have Been I Think Devastated By The Civil War In England Still In This Man's World Truth Was Never Less

Than Public Truth This Is Part Of Understanding Herbert's Religious Sensibility To In Those Days Truth Was Still Public Truth I've Learned So Much On This Issue From People Like Charles Taylor God We Don't Understand Our Ancestors If We Don't Really Take That On Board For Them Truth Was In The Heart But It Was More Than That Or It Was Nothing It Was Public And That Cause Causes Trouble That Truth Was Never Less Than Powerful And Shaping Of Your Public Self That Is Why I Heard Charles Taylor Say This In An Interview Once I Thought It Was Very Helpful It May Have Been On The CBC It Doesn't Matter He Said Yes Our Ancestors Always Appear Intolerant Don't They Our Ancestors Always Appear Intolerant For instance An Obvious Small Example Herbert And We Mentioned This Earlier Went To Cambridge I Just Read I Was Reminded Of This The Dana Magazine Article For The Longest Time And It Would Have Overlapped With Herbert's Time Surely There Were Test Laws At A Place Like Cambridge If You Were A Roman Catholic Or An Anabaptist You Couldn't Go To Cambridge You Were Excluded You Were Excluded From The Official World Of Public Truth Anabaptists And Roman Catholics Need Not Apply Now Why Is That Well They Are Intolerant Intolerant Of What Deviations From What Is Now The Consensus About Public Truth They Took Public Truth Very Seriously George Herbert Certainly Certainly Did Those Dates 1593

To 1633 Have A Real Story Attached To Them Don't They Conformity Met Peace Order And Good Government We'll Have Peace Order And Good Government If We Have Conformity It Was Thought You Know And So Exclusion Was Still Practiced Like Those Test Laws A Kind Of Workable Public Pluralism Was A Future Waiting To Happen And It Was Starting To Swirl The Idea Of It Wasn't It In Different Ways In European Civilization A Public Pluralism Was Beginning To Become A Possible Solution It Was One Of The Possibilities That People In George Herbert's Time Were Starting To Contemplate Can We Live With Different Religions Under One Order And Some Would Say Absolutely Not And Others Were Saying Maybe Maybe It's A Good Thing Or Maybe We Have

[28 : 14] To That Was Again Part Of The Drama Of George Herbert's Life You Don't Understand Herbert Would You Agree Some Of You Know So Much More About These Things Than I Do But In Herbert's Life In His Sensibility And This Comes Through Powerfully In His Poetry In Herbert You Know This Word It's A Bit Obscure Now In Our In Our Cultures That Right That Is R I T E Right Decorum Ceremonial Is Embodied Doctrine That's Why They Took The Public Life Of The Church How You Worship What A Liturgy Looks Like With Extreme Seriousness It Was Embodied Doctrine They Couldn't Be Casual The Kind Of Music You Present To God The Way Your Body Acts In Worship What You Do At The Church Door What You Do At A Pew What You Think

About The Windows Herbert Writes Poems About Church Floors And About What You Do With Water And What A Window Means And It's All In Herbert's Mind This Is Embodied Doctrine And Therefore They're Very Prone To Fighting About Things To Put it Mildly But For Them Fighting Was A Good Thing Charles Brad Gregory I Think Is Helpful On This Point Don't Don't Labor It Too Much Got To Move Along Here He Says That When You Look At The People In The Past The Great Names Later Than Aquinas Say Thomas Moore Calvin Luther Name Some More Founder Of The Juduates Tract Of People Loyola Very Ignatius He He Allows

Himself In His Story At The End Of His Book Salvation At Stake Which Is A Book About Burning People At The Stake He Says What Would These People Think Of Our Culture All Of Them Across That Big Spectrum A Lot Of Difference There He Concludes I Wonder If He's Right I Don't Know But He Says It Bluntly He Says They Would Hate Our Tolerance They Would Hate It They Would See Our Tolerance As Just Sloppy Indifference To Eternally Important Issues They Would Think Yeah You Might Put A Murderer In Jail If He Murders A Body But If A Heretic Is Murdering Souls For Eternity You Welcome Him Into Conversation See That Was Their Their Story Their Dilemma We Have Put Aside That Kind Of Question Anybody Can Talk Anybody Says Anything They Want And What That Guy's Teaching Over There May Damn People's Souls

But That's The Game You Play When You're A Pluralist For Them That Was The Battle They Weren't Intolerant Just Because They Were Bad Guys That's What Charles Taylor Would Try To Convince A Modern Person To See They Had A Coherent View Of The World That Made Intolerance Always A Strong Possibility They Should Have Overcome That Somehow With And Maintain A Deep Passion For Truth That's Something That We're Struggling With In Our Culture I Think We're We're Still In This Battle In A Different Way And Yet And Yet Again Choice Has Arrived Therefore In Herbert's World The Reformation Reformation Meant Perhaps Without Anyone's

Intention Simply Choice Choice Is Now In The World The Great Unity Of Christendom For Good Or For Ill Some People Say It's Much Good In This Other

People Find It Sad The Unity Of Christendom Is Over The Ideal Of A Unified Church And A Unified Civilization Under The Lordship Of Jesus Has Just Been Shattered And Again Choice Has Arrived In Herbert's World As We Know Puritans Chose Sometimes To Remain In The Church Other Puritans Became Separatists Romanists At Least In The English Speaking World They Went Underground Or They Escaped Back To Safer Places For Them In Europe The Whole Of Europe In Herbert's Time Was Beginning To Go Through All This Mammoth Change He Was Born Into It And He Was Dealing With It In His Own Way A Line From Herbert Which Is So Moving I Find At Least Which Captures So Much Of This I'm Quite Certain He Doesn't Mean To In This Line But It Does He Captures This World Historical Drama There's A Mouthful For You I

[33 : 16] Think It's An Innocent Sounding Line But It Says So Much It's On By The Way Page Two On This Marvelous Handout Poems The One On The Left May I Read It To You Come My Way My Truth My Life I Hope Some Of You Know To Sing This It's Beautiful Come My Way My Truth My Life Such A Way As Gives Us Breath Such A Truth As Ends All Strife Such A Life As Killeth Death Just The First Line Did You I Wanted To Just Skip Over That Quickly Did You Notice That That Second Sort Of Assertion Here Such A Truth As Ends All Strife There's A Line In A Poem For You Such A Truth As Ends All Strife That Was The Ideal Of Christendom That

Was The Ideal In The Heart Of George Herbert There Is A Truth Which Ends All Strife And We Are To Know It And Worship It What Do You Do With Those Who Challenge The Truth That Ends All Strife You Say They Are Strife Instigators And Maybe You Just Have To Get Rid Of Them Sometimes Severely Other Times You Just Don't Let Them Go To Cambridge Or Oxford We Don't Want Your Strife Because We Have The Strife That Ends All The Truth Excuse Me That Ends All Strife Jesus Is The Truth That Ends All Strife Herbert Herbert Has Has A Mind Saturated In The Bible And Certainly In The Psalter Do You Wonder I Suspect You Get Used To This When You Read Herbert You Begin To Suspect That In Those Particular Words He Is Probably Consciously Echoing The Psalm Word Remember The Psalmist Who Says Hide Me In The Shelter Of Your Presence From The Strife Of Tongues Herbert Has The Psalter Just In His Mind In A Way That I I Know I Could Hardly Imagine I Think In His Community That He Famously Belonged To They Would Say The Psalter Once A Week Sometimes I Think They Would Just Read Masses Of It At One Time Maybe During Lent They Maybe Do 50 Psalms Today The Psalter Was Just There In Herbert's Time Did Not Christians Want A Publicly Acknowledged Truth That Ends All Strife They Did I Think It Obvious That They Did And Yet That Kind Of Order Of Things Was Becoming Impossible And We've Inherited The Impossibility Of It And So The Church Has To Find A New Way To Stand

For A Witness Which Is To A Truth That Ends All Strife In A Culture That Says No We Welcome Strife It's Called Pluralism We Don't Want The Truth That Ends All Strife We're Struggling With This I Wonder If A Saint Like Mr.

Herbert Would Tell Us To Embrace Our Time As A Kind Of Exile Time Because I Think In His Deepest Spirituality I Don't Like That Word Too Much But He Had One He Understood Life As A Time Of Exile He Really Took That On Board In His World View His Inwardness Never Seems Without A Deep Sense Of Our Exile Why Else Write A Line Like We've Heard Earlier Oh My Dear Angry Lord This Dispensation Is Under Judgment It's Under Discipline It's Under The Challenge Of Growth He's A Dear Lord But He Won't Let Us Stay Too Content In This Dispensation Will He Herbert's Christendom Such As It Was Possessed Both Public Affirmation Of This Exilic Lenten Godly Sadness

[37 : 38] But The Joy Of The Gospel As Well Didn't It All The Time That Was The Kind Of Christendom That Herbert Wanted To Live In I Don't Think Herbert Ever Really Figured Out Where It Was All Going To Go He Must Have Sent That The Big Shift Is Occurring Because All This Choice Was Now Swirling Around Him Choice Was Now A Real Possibility Again Do Do Do Do We Possess The First Again Public Affirmation I Think We Just Have To Say No I Never Feel My Faith Much Affirmed By The Public Life Of Canada Anymore And Audrey Big Loughlin Made It Official For Me A Few Years Ago By Saying Well We Don't Live In A Christian Society And I Think She Wanted To Say Hooray And I Wanted To Say No I Sad But She Thinks It's A Great Idea Sorry The Number The Supreme Quarter Girl What Did I Call Beverly Yes There You Go

But It Was Good To Have It Made Official But We Do Have We Do Possess An Opportunity For Godly Repentance And Sadness I Think Maybe More So Than Our Christian Ancestors But George Is A Master At A Lenten understanding of the faith.

A dear, angry Lord is something that he lives with all the time. This may be reflected in his Calvinism. I guess from this Christian poet we may learn a kind of mature, joyful sadness, I think. Not a bad stand for the Christian in the world, I suppose. And maybe the modern church will just have to learn this. A deep sadness.

A godly sadness. I find that in Herbert. That irony. And I find it always strikes me as he's way ahead of me about this stuff.

[39 : 38] He's way ahead of me in the Christian life. The godly heart feels the godly heart feels in itself writes a famous Christian The godly heart feels in itself a division because it is partly imbued with sweetness from its recognition of the divine goodness partly grieves in bitterness from an awareness of its calamity.

Calvin says that in the Institutes. It almost sounds like a paraphrase of a Herbert poem. God shows himself angry with us because he loves us.

Calvin says. Herbert has just absorbed the Calvinist worldview. He may have got it from other sources but there's lots of proof that he had lots of Calvin under his belt.

He absorbed the Calvinist consensus Calvin says. And he reveled in it. He loved the sovereignty of the god that we believe in. Yeah. Oh my dear angry lord.

Calvin would agree. He's angry with us because he loves us. He's not satisfied with us. He wants us to be perfect images of his son Jesus.

[41 : 06] And he can't put up with us the way we are now. Oh my dear angry lord. I'm getting on in time. I want, I need conversation with you. I want to give lots of time for discussion.

So I'll just add one more thing about this subject matter. Eugene Peterson sort of ended on a lighter note. Eugene Peterson a few years back. I wasn't there.

I was told this. It's a delightful anecdote. Addressed a, Regent has them all the time, Regent College, a pastor's conference. Bring in pastors again and teach them something about being better pastors.

Sounds like a good idea, doesn't it? And he began, Eugene Peterson, by asking them, the pastors, you can just picture in that big place at Regent and probably a big crowd of pastors want to hear the learned Eugene Peterson talk.

He asked them an innocent sounding question. He just read, hands up if you've read a volume of poetry recently. And there wasn't too much, too many hands in the air. And he said to them, well, you must really have a difficult time reading scripture, you pastors, because most of the Bible's in poetry, you may have noticed.

[42 : 16] And it's true, you know, lots of the Bible is poetry. The prophets. Our Lord's teaching is obviously a prose that seems to be coming poetry.

It's a lyrical prose. It's how they made things memorable. The Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, a kind of poetry. Paul, at his highest theological moments, Philippians 2, comes to mind, though he was in the form of God, yet he emptied himself.

He's a poet, Paul. He may be singing a Christian hymn there, or he's composing it himself. The scriptures are filled with poetry. We become better readers of Holy Scripture when we have a sound measure of sensitivity to the way poetry works, the way it concentrates without elimination.

To use T.S. Eliot's famous and brilliant description of what poetry is. Concentration without elimination. Put truth tightly together.

Scripture does it all the time. Bruce Waltz likes to point out that sometimes in the Old Testament you'll find a narrative of an event followed by the same event described in poetry.

[43 : 29] Why does God do that? Why does the breather of Scripture, the Spirit, give us so much poetry? He must love it. He wants us to be good readers of poetry. There you go.

You get lots of poetry in you at church every Sunday because you sing hymns. And they're poems, aren't they? So you are already lovers of poetry. We can learn the ways of faith.

It helps to love poetry. And that's what I wanted to say to you today about George Herbert. Catholic, evangelical, Calvinist, great poet.

Too short a life. But he's blessed my life a lot. I just love his stuff. Um, um, um, um, um, um, um, um, could we end by saying something from George?

Why don't we read number two together? And then, and then we'll have a conversation. Come, this, this is singable. Does it, many people in the room know how to sing Come My Way, My Truth?
[44 : 35] We won't try. We're not the choir, are we? But let's read together, shall we? One, two, three, go. Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life, such a way as gives us breath, such a truth as ends all strife, such a life as killeth death.

Come, My Light, My Feast, My Strength, such a light as shows a feast, such a feast as mends in length, such a strength as makes his guests.

Come, My Joy, My Love, My Heart, such a joy as none can move, such a love as none can part, such a heart as joy is in love.

Anybody here can write like that? Please do. Amen.