

Second Visit to Second Timothy

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Date: 06 December 2015

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- [0 : 00] Well, thank you, Alexandra, for that truly formidable introduction. Everything now will be anti-climax, won't it?
- We know that before it happens. However, there are certain certainties that one can live with, like, for instance, the certainty that one or two of us have forgotten to bring the outline of 2 Timothy, which I gave you when I talked about the epistle before.
- And, well, I think it's morally certain that three or four of you have forgotten to bring Bibles. Pause for effect. Well, anyway, we can manage. I think we can manage. I hope we can. And this is my second visit to 2 Timothy.
- And for me, the word visit has been important. It was important last time I spoke on the letter, and it's important today. You know how it is when you visit a home.
- [1 : 31] You look around, and you are struck by some things. When you've left the house, you remember them, and you can describe them to anybody who asks.
- And that is the sort of Bible study on 2 Timothy that we did before and are now going to do again. Enter the letter.
- Look around. Some things will strike you. Some things will strike you. And I'm going to share what it is that has struck me. And I hope that this will prove fruitful for all of us.
- It's the word of God. And who is adequate to expand the word of God? I don't feel that I am.
- So will you join me, please, in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we lift our hearts to you. Amen.
- [2 : 38] The word came from you. And we pray that the Holy Spirit may now come from you to us to throw light on the word and give us understanding.
- And then may we live by the truth that you show us. And may all the glory be yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Now, this is the point at which we begin. Paul is writing a personal letter to Timothy with whom he hasn't been in contact for six or seven or eight years.
- Nobody can be quite sure of the length of the interval. But more commentaries than not will tell you that 1 Timothy was probably written in 62 A.D.
- And that 2 Timothy was probably written in 68. And the letter, whatever its date, does two things together.
- [4 : 01] Indeed, they're linked with each other. Paul is renewing his affection for Timothy. And he's also reminding Timothy of the priorities in ministry which have been committed to Timothy.
- So, it's both a personal and, you might say, an official letter. And it's very warm as a personal letter and very weighty as an official letter.
- Well, it's our privilege to listen both to Paul dictating it. That's one use of imagination which we may lawfully make today.

And also, to read it over Timothy's shoulder as he receives it, broods on it, digests it.

And that, actually, is the sort of Bible study that we should regularly do with all the New Testament letters. None of them were addressed to us.

[5 : 17] But they, all of them, have wisdom, tremendous amount of wisdom for us. And so, it's for us, as I said, to listen to Paul and to read the letters over the shoulders of those to whom they were addressed.

Read 2 Timothy this way. And six principles, it seems to me, stand out.

Six features of the letter which one will relay to folk who ask, well, what kind of a letter was it? What was it about?

What points was it making? And here those principles are. And in order to illustrate them and establish them, I shall hop to and fro through the letter.

You will understand why I'm doing that. And I hope that it will bring clarity rather than confusion when I do it. Let's see how we get on.

[6 : 33] Six principles, then, run through the letter. And here is number one. The centrality of our Lord Jesus Christ as the focus of all Christian thinking.

And what stands behind that, let me tell you straight away, is Paul's understanding of where the Lord Jesus fits in to the Father's plan.

We evangelicals tend to stop short at focusing the redemptive center of God's plan.

The Father sending the Father's plan.

And then, I'll see you next time. That's all. That's all. And then, I'll see you next time. And then, I'll see you next time. After Christ's death and burial. And ascension and enthronement following the resurrection.

[8 : 12] And then, I'll see you next time. And then, I'll see you next time. The word that I used before, but with a special sense now.

But then, the centrality of the Lord Jesus as the Lord of the cosmos. The one who, at the Father's will, manages everything that has been made.

And the one whom, in due course, the Father will send to renew the cosmos, which at the moment is in a state of grievous disorder, by reason fundamentally, of Satan's revolt and the moral and spiritual disorder and ruin that Satan has caused.

Everything is going to be made new. Everything is going to be restored to order, moral order, physical order.

Order, which from every standpoint will prompt us, when eventually we see it, appreciate it, to raise our hands in prayer and praise and to marvel, quite literally, to marvel at not only the complexity of what God has made, but the reordering, the fantastically skillful reordering and reshaping of everything, so that the cosmos is shot through with the glory of God.

[10 : 05] And we, who, by God's grace, beyond this life, are part of that life, we shall appreciate it, and we shall be praising for it, praising God for it, praising Christ for it, to all eternity.

That's the complete plan.

And therefore, all brothers and sisters of each other on a worldwide basis. Well, that's the agenda, if I may put it that way.

And we have been caught up into the middle of that agenda. And for us, the Lord Jesus, who is fulfilling that agenda, as I've described it, the Lord Jesus is the center and the focus of Christian thinking about everything, because he sustains in being everything that God has made, despite its intrinsic disorder, now that Satan has got at it.

And he will, as I say, finally, publicly reorder the cosmos.

[12 : 00] And as Tom Wright is constantly saying, we'll put everything to rights. We've got that phrase in the English language, put things to rights.

It's a phrase that Tom loves and uses constantly for the final glory that's going to be imparted to the cosmos, and all through the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

Well, that's the first principle. And one can miss it in 2 Timothy, but if one looks twice, one realizes.

If you look at chapter 1 of the letter, first two verses in which Paul announces himself as the writer and addresses Timothy directly, there are three references to the Lord Jesus Christ in this very greeting.

Let me read it. And you'll see the references to Jesus Christ are almost like the tolling of a bell, again and again and again.

[13 : 26] It stands out. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, there we are, number one, by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.

There's reference to Timothy, my beloved child. Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

There's a third reference. And if one carries on through the opening verses of the chapter, as far as, well, all the way through the chapter to the end, one finds that there are altogether six more references to the Lord Jesus Christ, four of them to him as the Lord.

If you look at the final paragraph, you will see him, see Paul again and again speaking of Jesus as the Lord.

Well, like any of us, Paul will go off on a word at the drop of a hat, so to speak.

[14 : 50] A significant word, and this is a significant word. It's the name of the Son of God, who is the Savior. He goes off on the name, or the title, I should say, of Jesus as the Lord.

That title, of course, says it all. I've been unpacking the thought of Jesus as the Lord in what I've said already.

And we're back with it now. All in Asia, says Paul, verse 15, turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, who refreshed me and wasn't ashamed of my chains. Verse 18, may the Lord, there we are again, may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord.

In that day, the day when the Lord comes to judgment, of course, that's the day that Paul is talking about. Well, that's further references to Christ, and there have been two more.

[16 : 14] Both in major statements, statements of great weight. The first one in chapter 1, verse 9, Paul is talking about the gospel.

No, sorry, he's talking about the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

And then again, when you look on to verse 13, this is what you find. Timothy is being admonished at this point, and Paul says, follow the pattern of sound words that you've heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Now, one could say, and of course, from one standpoint it's true, that these are all incidental references, only incidental.

To which, however, the proper response is, yes, but they're fundamental in every case. They are basic to Paul's understanding of the reality that surrounds him, and with which he's involved.

[17 : 37] And they are references which remind him, and remind Timothy, will remind Timothy, remind all the readers of the letter, that the Lord Jesus is already in charge of everything, because the Father has put him on the throne of the cosmos.

He hasn't fully established his kingdom yet, in terms, I mean, of the state of the cosmos, but his position is already established.

He is the Lord. The background here is something that was familiar in the ancient world, and which, actually, you could illustrate from the modern university.

The chancellor of the university is too grand and busy a person to run the university. Being chancellor is as much an honor, an honorific appointment, as an executive one.

The executive side of running the university is remitted to the vice-chancellor. He's the guy who's really in charge, and the vice-chancellor corresponds to the grand vizier in the Persian court back in the centuries BC.

[19 : 06] The thought there was that the king is too grand to do all the detailed administration of his kingdom.

So, he has a deputy, the grand vizier, who runs his kingdom for him. The same pattern, you see.

And this is the pattern that's operating here. When it says, and when we say in the creed, that the father has set the son at his right hand, that phrase, at his right hand, points to the fact that all the management and upholding of things, is indeed, in Colossians chapter 1, Paul says of the Lord Jesus, he upholds all things by the word of his power.

Upholds all things is Paul's statement. And so, that's what we're to focus on. As we answer the question, well, what is the Lord Jesus' position right now?

The answer is, he's in charge of everything. He has his hand on everything. And everything that we think out and plan and envisage, all of that is not fully understood until we bring the Lord Jesus into it and say, all of this, of course, is under the hand of Jesus Christ.

[20 : 51] All of this is part of his kingdom being worked out his way. He is the hidden hand behind everything that happens.

And as we think out the details of our own life, and we do this, of course, as disciples of Jesus, well, we have to bring that fact into the picture and put it at the center of the picture.

Whatever it is that we're thinking about, whatever it is that we're planning, whatever it is that we're seeking to understand of what has already happened and what is going on around us, the hand of the Lord Jesus is on the situation, hidden from the world, yes, but recognized by faithful Christians.

And if you read Paul's letter, Paul's letters, I should say, all of them, in light of what I've just said, you will discover that Paul again and again uses the phrase in Christ Jesus or through Christ Jesus to indicate that a great realm or part of the realm of reality is under the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ right now.

That's as true of this situation in this classroom where I am giving a talk, as it's true of anything else that happens in this building on the Lord's Day and anything else that happens in the world around us.

[22 : 44] And we need to cultivate that Christ-centered way of looking at everything. And it's the first general principle, it seems to me, that we need to learn, or we can learn, anyway, from 2 Timothy.

And then there's more on the centrality of Christ. If you have your Bible with you, and, well, if you don't, if you follow me on the contents of chapter 2, verses 1 through 13, you find that this perspective, this Christ-centered perspective continues.

You then, says Paul to Timothy in chapter 2, verse 1, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and so forth.

Transmission of the faith is a matter of operating in Christ Jesus, as what verse 3 of chapter 2 calls, a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Then in chapter 2, verse 8, remember Christ Jesus, risen from the dead, offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.

[24 : 20] That's what Paul says. May I pause there, just to tell you something that happened to me two weeks ago. Yes, I was walking to the bus from home, and I found myself waiting alongside a young lady to cross Southwest Marine, when the traffic allowed it, and we had a whole block then, in which to walk together and talk, before we got to the bus stop.

Perhaps you know the area. Well, we got as far as her telling me, when she discovered that I taught theology, she telling me that she was very interested in religion, and was reading up on Gnosticism.

Christianity is what she ought to be looking at.

She says, why? And I was able to say, well, because God raised Jesus from the dead. Your understanding starts there, with the fact of the resurrection, and the historical, the historical way of looking at what led to the resurrection, what follows from the resurrection, what the future holds, and so on.

That's reality. You ought to have seen the look she gave me. Yes, all right.

[26 : 13] I leave it to your imagination. And just at that moment, we got to the point where we crossed 40, where I crossed 41st, to get my bus to Regent, and she walked along to the stop opposite, the stop on Crown, which was going to take her into, where the bus was going to take her into Carysdale.

And so we parted. Reflecting on that event, I saw weight and force in chapter 2, verse 8 of 2 Timothy that I'd never seen before.

Remember, Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Start there, if you want to understand. If you want to understand the faith.

If you want to understand, well, life from beginning to end. If you want to understand what's going on in the world. Remember, Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

And, this is not the place to go into apologetics. But, you know, I think that one is always off track if one tries to do apologetics, that is, to establish the truth of the faith philosophically.

[27 : 40] And, one should always go straight to history. Quite specifically, to the historical fact, the unshakable historical fact that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Had Jesus not risen from the dead, there'd be no gospel, there'd be no Christianity. But, he was raised from the dead. And so, Christianity exists, so does the gospel, and we are called to proclaim a risen, living Christ as our hope, the focus of our faith, and the Savior that everybody needs, not only to know about, but to know.

Well, I can't go any further into that, but, that's the weight that I now see in chapter 2, verse 8, of 2 Timothy.

And I seek, as Paul summoned, as Paul summoned Timothy to do, to remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

Basic. Okay, I've spent a long time on that, and must hurry on. Second principle, the centrality of gospel proclamation, in Christian strategy.

[29 : 12] One asks, what are Christians in the world for? There are a number of very basic answers that can be given, and they're all on parallel with each other, but certainly the first of them is, Christians are in the world for gospel proclamation.

mission. Mission, in other words, making Christ known. That, of course, isn't news to us, but it is a thought that is anchored deep in 2 Timothy, just as it's anchored deep in other places in the New Testament.

And I'd like you to see it where it's anchored in Paul's text. chapter 2, beginning once again.

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that's in Christ Jesus, and what you've heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful folk who will be able to teach others also.

this is Paul envisaging and requiring a constant pattern of generation by generation instruction so that the true faith of the gospel may be preserved, heresy and all forms of error may be challenged and beaten back, and the heart of the people of God on earth, at the heart of the people of God on earth, may, may always be going on teaching the gospel in the terms that Paul teaches us.

[31 : 20] and Paul talks about proclamation according to his gospel, that's a summons to us as much as it's a summons to anyone.

We receive the gospel transmitted to us, we thank God for it, it's the word of light and life to our souls, and now it's for us to pass it on.

That isn't, of course, news to us, but it's striking that Paul, before he gives any other advice to Timothy, urges him to set up a pattern of constant instruction, I would conceive it in Paul's mind as all age instruction, you instruct the gospel, you, sorry, you instruct faithful men, faithful persons, to transmit the gospel to the next generation.

There's constant, to use the technical word, catechesis going on within the church. I personally have beaten the drum for this for, oh, 40 years really, and I continue to beat it, because here you have Paul making clear that he regards this as absolutely vital, and therefore top priority.

So, commit what I have taught, says Paul, to faithful folk who will be able to teach others also, and so keep what we've come to call orthodoxy going.

[33 : 06] orthodoxy is in essence and substance, the gospel, and the gospel is the word through which the living Christ, crucified, risen, coming again, comes to be known by his disciples, that means folk like you and me.

okay, centrality of gospel proclamation in Christian strategy, and if you still doubted it, the beginning of 2nd Timothy chapter 4 hammers away at the same thought in relation to Timothy personally.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, living Lord, Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with unfailing patience and teaching.

Well, you could hardly be more categorical than that, could you? That's what Paul calls on his long-term second-in-command to do.

Charge you in the presence of God, Christ Jesus, to preach the word. The word is there, is kerugma, and the other word, I'm sorry, I'm saying it backward, the word there in Greek is logos, the message, and the word kerugma is the other word that Paul uses for the proclamation, that is, the message, and there it is, in his understanding, a given reality, and it's up to the people of God, like Timothy, to proclaim it, publish it, make it known, share it, if as far as possible, with everybody.

[35 : 28] Well, can't spend more time on that. Centrality of gospel proclamation in Christian strategy. and it's very interesting in this connection to see how Paul, right at the end of the letter, writes to Timothy about his first appearance in court, to be tried, for whatever it was that they finally decided to try him for, and actually we don't know that.

My guess is that they tried him in the end for disloyalty to the emperor, that we're not told that here, what we are told, well, let me read it to you as Paul says it, at my first defense, no one came to stand by me, everyone deserted me, may it not be charged against them, but the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, so that through me, the message, the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles might hear it.

So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. See what Paul is saying? After the first hearing, they didn't release me, but for the time being, they let me go.

But the important thing about that first hearing was that in the providence of God, I was able to present the Christian message to them.

That's what really mattered. My personal fate is a matter of secondary importance, but the proclamation of the message is the matter of primary importance, and that's the way that in God's providence it worked out.

[37 : 28] Understand that, Timothy, and rejoice with me in it. that's the implication of Paul's words. Well, again, I must move on. Yes, I must.

Third principle, the centrality of the church's soundness for Christian credibility.

A very simple point which I can make very quickly, I think. if the gospel is to be believed, it must be clearly stated.

If God is going to bring people to faith, well, the substance of faith must be clearly presented to their minds. And that's implicit all the way through.

Timothy, as a minister, has a special responsibility in maintaining orthodoxy. Sound doctrine. In the pastoral epistles, both of them, sound is a key word.

[38 : 39] It's a Greek participle meaning healthy. Healthy in the sense of expressing and inducing spiritual health.

And I said I'd make the point quickly, so I will. for us today, healthy doctrine is vital and it's not time, energy, and interest wasted in laboring within the church to ensure that the doctrine which the church publicly professes will be sound doctrine.

I was able to say a bit about this earlier on in this session or semester when I talked about the creed and how important the creed was as a kind of benchmark soundness in the life, the ongoing life of the church.

And where you end up without that, well, that's modeled for us by liberalism, as we've the last hundred years.

Liberalism shows you what happens, how truth gets corrupted, how firmness of faith is simply dissolved away in the church where there isn't a firm commitment to the sound doctrine.

[40 : 24] For Paul, the church's soundness of doctrine is vital for its credibility, as I said. There are many places in the epistle where Paul hammers away at that thought.

For instance, let's go right back to chapter one. Paul says, he speaks of himself as the guy appointed a preacher and apostle and a teacher of the gospel.

And I'm not ashamed, though I have to suffer for it, for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day, day of final accounting, he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

that is, I think, the likely translation rather than the translation that's equally possible, but which looks at the matter the other way round, and which you perhaps used to because it's in the King James, which reads, I'm convinced that he's able to keep that which I have committed to him well, that's possible, but to guard, that is, to enable me to hold faithfully to what has been entrusted to me, the gospel, namely, which I am charged to proclaim right, left, and center every way that I can.

Then, he goes on, next sentence, follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

[42 : 37] That's 2 Timothy chapter 1 verses 12 and 13. There are more texts relevant here, but time marches on, so must I.

Fourth principle, the centrality of Christian courage for Christian communication. In the Acts of the Apostles, there recurs, over and over, a Greek word which never had prominence in any Greek literature until Luke wrote Acts.

it's a word which Luke needs to describe the temper and the spirit of the Christians proclaiming their faith.

It's the word *parasia*, which is usually translated freedom or boldness.

both translations are good. It's a way of talking without inhibitions, without restrictions, without any sort of dithering or uncertainty.

[44 : 00] It's a way of expressing certainty. You speak with *parasia*. And actually, Luke knows what he's doing.

the very last words of the gospel, sorry, of the acts, I should be saying, tell us that Paul is in Rome and he's under house arrest, he's awaiting trial, but he's in the providence of God, he is able to continue for a couple of years preaching the word with *parasia*, there it is, Greek word that is third from the end of Acts, preaching the word with *parasia*, that is, with uninhibited force, no one forbidding him.

And that is actually a single word in the Greek without any inhibition or restriction. well, this is something striking as a quality of confidence that ought to mark all the church's witness in every age.

And Christian courage is the phrase I use to express its nature. *Parasia*, Christian courage of speech. And it's opposed to, or contrasted with, shall I say, the reality of shame.

And that contrast is actually expressed in chapter one of second Timothy. In verse seven of chapter one, Paul says, God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

[46 : 12] When a person speaks in expression of the spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and self-control, it's really the spirit of God operating in that person, as you can see.

Well, when a person speaks that way, that person is speaking without shame. The next verse makes that explicit. Verse eight.

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner. Shame shame is a state of mind which grows out of fear, that is, fear of the consequences of saying what it is that you're planning to say.

When there is fear, well, there's inhibition, uncertainty, you feel unsure of yourself, you feel anxiety about what your words are going to provoke in the way of response, and so the bottom line tends to be, over and over, embarrassment.

You say what you have to say, yes, perhaps, but you dither as you say it. You sound uncertain, and the person to whom you're talking sees in you only anxiety about the effect which your speech is going to have.

[48 : 03] Well, what Paul calls Timothy to, remember, Timothy is still a youngish man, and he was always apparently a somewhat nervous, timid man, and what Paul is saying here is, Timothy, don't let that natural feeling of yours, for which shame, embarrassment is the proper name, truth of the truth of God.

Don't be ashamed of the testimony, don't be ashamed of me, the Lord's prisoner, and you get the thought again in verse 16, when Paul's referring to Onesiphorus, Onesiphorus, who, at the time of his imprisonment, Paul's imprisonment of me, refreshed me and wasn't ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me and found me.

In other words, Onesiphorus was prepared for everybody to know that he was linked with Paul the prisoner, who was under whatever threat of indictment they had planned for Paul.

I stand with Paul, says Onesiphorus. I want you to know that. Paul, if he's known at all, is notorious for preaching and teaching some sort of cult which doesn't acknowledge the authority of the emperor, which, in other words, is implicitly treasonable in the Roman Empire.

Well, you see the point. And I hope you see what is very obvious to me, that a lot of Christian people do get embarrassed about sharing their faith.

[50 : 42] And when you're embarrassed, you don't know quite what to say, and the moment goes, and the opportunity is lost. here is the fourth principle, the principle of boldness, the centrality of Christian courage for Christian communication.

Christian The next two principles I can only state, just state without exposition because time has gone. Principle number five, the centrality of Christian character in Christian ministry.

Because of the sort of thing we say about the Lord Jesus and how he transforms life, it's dollars to donuts that any time we testify to the Savior and the new life that we have, people will start looking at us to see whether they can spot the change that we are affirming has taken place.

Whether they spot a supernatural Christ-likeness in us, an overflow of love and goodwill and patience and empathy and so forth, and it will make a big difference if they do or if they don't.

Well, Paul makes that point in fact at the end of chapter two of 2nd Timothy where he talks about the fact that some utensils are made for honorable use and some for dishonorable use, which doesn't glorify anything or anybody.

[52 : 41] And he says, if anyone cleanses himself from what's dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

implication, people who are going to testify to the gospel, to Christ, orally, must back it up by a godly pattern of life.

life. In that sense, Christian character is central for Christian ministry. I haven't time to say more about that, though frankly, I'd like to.

And then principle number six, the centrality of the Christian scriptures for Christian advance, all forms of Christian advance, personal growth in grace, public proclamation of the faith, and everything in between.

You know the passage at the end of 2 Timothy chapter three, in which Paul speaks at length and very fully and forcefully about scripture being inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and so forth, that the man of God, in the letter, of course, that phrase man of God is intended to apply to Timothy, and Timothy is intended to understand that he is the man of God whom Paul especially has in mind.

[54 : 29] All right, that the man of God may be competent, that's the N-I, sorry, that's the ESV, and I think it's a good translation, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Well, I'm overrunning, and I'm sorry that I'm overrunning. Let me finish, then, like this. learn, then, this is how we apply the six principles, learn to focus on Christ in all your living and thinking, learn to spread, learn to mark the spread of the gospel, sorry, the spread of the gospel, to make, I'm sorry, make the spread of the gospel the central concern of your life, practice church centered discipleship, practice openness in witness, display

Christ's likeness in relationships, and soak yourself in the scriptures for truth and wisdom and a model for behavior and a proclamation to make known.

that's a bit garbled, sorry about that, I'm trying to say it as quickly as I can because I know I'm overrunning and I apologize for that, but now, these are the big principles which I discern in 2nd Timothy as there for all of us.

And that was what I had to say, I've said it, thank you so much for listening. Thank you. We can discuss, we can debate.

[56 : 52] Yeah, thank you. You know, with the Christians and evangelizing it, sometimes we're feeling embarrassed to do so, but some, I've bumped into, I've found one of the well-evangelized persons in the world, but some of these people think that I'm the evangelist, you're the evangelist, and they're not thinking at all where I might be at.

Like, I'm raised in the United Church of Canada, somebody comes across these cold-clone evangelicals, that's one hell of a shock. And, you know, these people that evangelize, they've got to take the time to see where the person's at.

Oh, yes. But with the liberal stuff, I think with Schleiermacher, didn't that start in about the 1850s in Europe? Yes, he did.

And then in Canada, we've had liberal Christianity from about the late 1800s up to about 1950 with the United Church. And the United Church is a year to be first woman minister.

Now I see it's more common. So some of the things in the United Church, you see even in the evangelical churches, because there are women ministers in the evangelical churches, while the other things, the liberal stuff, it seems to have, is not as popular nowadays as it used to be.

[58 : 13] the United Churches would be a huge, huge denomination of us, it's died down so badly. Well, it's true that liberalism kills churches. That's something which liberals don't recognize, but everybody else can see it.

It's so obvious. can I ask you to repeat those key points again that you just so quickly skipped over on?

Let me see if I can. I'll tell you what I've got if you want to fill in the blanks. No, I'll simply reel them off. Learn to focus on Christ in your thinking about everything.

Learn to make the spreading of the gospel the central concern of your life. Learn to practice church-centered discipleship.

I don't think I've said that well before. Learn to practice openness, freedom from shame. The Lord will enable us to be free from shame if we ask him.

[59 : 25] learn to practice openness in witness. Learn to display Christ-likeness in relationships, in all relationships, so that you won't be judged a phony.

And soak yourself in scripture, because scripture nourishes in unique and precious ways.

Did you get it this time? I know that didn't come across very well when I said it before.

I just see a whole new learners exchange talk again, expanding it again. I just, I'm a rock that needs to be. Okay, well, yes? Jim, what you think, I tend to think, I wonder if you do, I think Tom Wright, you mentioned Tom Wright.

Yes, I did. It sounds almost credo, doesn't it? Reasons from the dead. It's wonderful. Thank you for highlighting that. Descended from David. I think Tom Wright would say, would you agree that that second part has been less remembered by the church to its great, its wounded itself by forgetting that he's descended from David.

[60 : 46] He comes from the mystery of the Old Testament. He is no other Jesus. The United Church might have another Jesus. It has nothing to do with the Old Testament. He's sort of a cosmic, nice religion guy.

So that second part from Paul, I think, needs to be emphasized. I entirely agree. but I wasn't able to contemplate even pushing more material into the talk.

And I do think, as a matter of fact, that this theme, which Tom Wright has majored on, as I'm sure you know, perhaps I don't know if others know, in a number of large and heavy books, the theme being, that, well, let me say it this way, that Christ fulfills the Old Testament and Christianity fulfills the religion of the Old Testament.

And Christian discipleship, therefore, embraces the Old Testament faith and practice, and at every point vindicates itself by back reference to how God dealt with his people in the Old Testament, how he made himself known to them and blessed them in the Old Testament.

That's not left behind, just the reverse. fulfilled in a special sense of the word, fulfilled in the reality of Christian life, that is, life in Christ.

[62 : 40] And you see, it takes quite a time to say what Tom Wright is writing about. And you're absolutely right, Harvey, to say that we evangelicals, and the same would be true of Anglo-Catholics here, we haven't made anything like enough of our links with the Old Testament.

And Tom is blowing the whistle and telling us to fill this gap. Yeah.

Jim. When you were talking about Paracia, I was quite struck by the detail that you gave for Paul basically standing openly in a way against the emperor.

It strikes me that the church tends to focus on Paul as the author of Romans 13 and not the author of Revelation 13.

And of course, it wasn't the author of Revelation 13, but I think the church has a serious balance problem in adulating Romans 13 and ignoring Revelation 13.

[64 : 15] Would you comment? well, this is a fair point. I hope that you can all pick up the references because I haven't time to go into the points being made, except in single sentences.

Romans 13, be good citizens, faithful in the community, not challenging the state, but doing your bit in society.

Revelation 13, recognize the fact that the state will in due course be against you, and you must expect opposition, persecution, any amount of trouble.

Well, I can't say more, there is more, of course, in Revelation 13 than that. But, yes, my comment is that we have, if anything, overstressed the importance and the rightness of being faithful citizens, faithful, that is, to the public political order, all of that, and we haven't in, well, North America and in England before that, we haven't experienced the fullness of persecution in the way that some, in some places, have experienced it.

but we can't begin to go into that. I can understand that as a person with a Mennonite background, you are very conscious of the reality of persecution because the Mennonite principle prompted a great deal of political pressure, pressure to the point of persecution in the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, but for most of us, you see, we're not Mennonites by background and we haven't had to face that, nor have our fathers and grandfathers, and so the reality of imbalance is a fact, and you're perfectly right to call our attention to the fact that we are not as serious in facing the opposition between the church and

[67 : 08] I don't want to say the state, maybe I have to say the state. How about principalities in the government? That's a very good phrase for it, yes. the church and principalities and powers, yes, there is opposition, and the book of Revelation has a great deal to say about it, and we ought to recognize that that is standard Christianity, and we are blessed in an unusual way in not actually being exposed to the kind of persecution that the book of Revelation and its visions, well, and its letters too, talks about.

Yes, you do well to remind us of this, Joe. Thank you for it. Well, thank you for mentioning that in your treatment of Paracia I'm Paul.

If I could just two last quick questions before we close. I have Colleen. Yes. quick answers if I can. I was just thinking about evangelism that we're called to, and like probably many in the room who don't have more background, when you're putting a position where someone says something like, oh, you're a Christian?

Gee, you seem like such a happy person. Or, you know, oh, you're a Christian, isn't that a bit anachronistic now? We can pass all that.

You know, Paul is talking to Timothy, and you know, Paul shows my God, Timothy shows my Paul. You know, they're dealing with, you know, evangelism pretty close to the root there.

[68 : 58] We're in the 21st century, and we've got, you know, things being thrown in our face. I quite often just, I sort of say a little prayer, before going into a conversation like that, that I can either channel you or let you and not screw it up.

Don't let you're into this person, let me not screw this up for you. But then Paul himself says in another part of the scriptures, and I can't remember which one, I'm sorry, something about us being flawed vessels for the gospel, or people being flawed vessels for the gospel, but the gospel will shine through, and that, you know, you might be human and not be doing it quite right, but that God's Holy Spirit is going to reach this person somehow, and if you don't pick up the rule on that particular day, maybe somebody else's point.

I don't know, I'm just, it's feeling that one can be caught by that, or one is working within that, you know, that idea. you know, I'm just wondering what you would think about that.

Well, I think, first of all, that what you're saying is reality, and it's always tricky, not to use any stronger language, tricky, to fit the gospel affirmation into what the other guy has just said, and is obviously thinking about at this very moment.

Yes, and what you say is wisdom, it really is, and thank you for saying it, and if all of us formed a habit of firing off arrow prayers before we opened our mouth in this kind of situation, question, well, we might get further faster, and so might the gospel.

[70 : 51] I think that's true, and I thank you again then, Colleen, for saying that. Time is pressing, so another question. Dr.

Backer, you spoke, you mentioned briefly about apologetics, and maybe history has a place over philosophy. I just wonder if philosophy has some place, because I recall, I remember in the Screwtape letters where Screwtape candidly says there was a time in the past when people knew when a point was proven that they had to change their life accordingly, but now modern people seem to have six or seven incompatible ideas running around in their head.

And I remember a vivid example that R.C. Sproul gave. He says that 95% of people entering post-secondary education believe truth is relative, but they give up that theory when they're on the freeway and they look in the rearview mirror and there might be a Mack truck bearing down on them and it might not be at the same time.

And they realize that there can't be these incompatibilities. So I'm thinking about this woman that you're talking to and you're giving her history, but isn't it maybe there a place to say that incompatibility doesn't work in real life?

And so that's a little bit of philosophy that maybe you have to give the modern person in order for the history to make sense. I like that fine way in which you put it.

[72 : 22] Yes, philosophy is a matter of essentially a matter of being clear about things on which previously you were bewildered because muddled.

You must allow me to get away with that. I have taught philosophy in my time. And we do sometimes need philosophical speech in order to get beyond the muddle.

But I am going to stick to my guns with regard to the priority of history as the substance of what it is we have to tell people. And this is an alternative, you see, to thinking that until you prove the existence of God, you aren't allowed to speak the gospel at all.

And with this lady, like one of the fates in Greek legends, standing beside me, you know, and giving me the feeling that things cannot go on as they're going.

I don't think I can say any more. I close and thank you, Alexandra, for being you. Thank you, Dr.

[73 : 49] Patrick, for being you. Thank you so much. God bless you folks. Yeah.