

St Paul & Einstein

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] Our God and Father, we ask that you will open our hearts to your word and your word to our hearts.

For Christ's sake, amen. It was suggested that singing that hymn just before the sermon might result in all the sailors in the congregation being drawn to the sea and would have left by the end of the hymn to go down to the shore.

What I want you to do this morning is to turn to the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, to chapter 2 and verse 6.

And it's on page 157 in the New Testament section of your pew Bible. All those numbers again.

1 Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 6, page 157 in the New Testament section.

[1 : 39] Paul writes, God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

Well, keep your finger in that place and we're coming back to it. Now, the following statement, which I will read to you, comes to me from no less a prestigious periodical than the Manchester Guardian, which says that on October the 4th, 1971, a commercial jet airliner began a scheduled round-the-world flight eastward from the United States.

The jet carried four of the most accurate clocks available, caesium atomic clocks.

The next week, on October 13th, a similar cargo was carried on a westward flight around the world.

In each case, the clocks were compared with reference clocks at the U.S. Naval Observatory. Those carried on the eastward flight lost 59 nanoseconds.

[4 : 07] And those on the westward flight gained 273 nanoseconds, compared with the clocks which remained on the Earth.

Now, if you don't understand why that happened, it simply means that you don't understand the theory of relativity.

And therefore, you should be going off to university to find out. And I recommend that you go to the university, and please don't come and ask me.

I'm just reading what I read in the Manchester Guardian. But I wanted to talk about the man who formulated the theory by which we suppose that we can understand what that difference was.

And he was a man who, at the age of 16, imagined himself to be riding through space on a light wave with a mirror in his hand.

[5 : 23] Now, that takes a certain amount of imagination. And he realized that he wouldn't be able to see his own image in the mirror.

Somehow, those two problems are connected.

And the answer is involved in the theory of relativity. The man was Albert Einstein. And it was this same man who formulated the equation that E equals mc^2 , which fundamentally means that a tiny little bit of matter contains an astronomical amount of energy.

And having established that theory, it was then discovered that it could be applied to a bomb, and the history of the world was changed.

Because he was a Jew, he was forced to leave Germany, and before the war, came and became a professor in North America at Princeton University.

[6 : 50] And he wrote to President Roosevelt in 1939 to tell him that Germany would take this formula and try and build a bomb that would convert mass into energy, resulting in an unbelievable explosion.

And the future of the world at that time seemed to depend on who was first able to engineer such an explosion.

In fact, the whole history of our lifetime is, in one very real way, the story of great competing economic and ideological foes forced to talk to each other because of their mutual ability to annihilate each other by a simple application of that formula, E equals mc^2 .

One of the facts of life is that in the time it would take us to sing the next hymn, one of at least two world powers could precipitate such an explosion in this city that would mean none of us would get home to lunch.

That's how real and how present this has become. Now, Einstein was asked at one time what were the religious implications of his theory of relativity.

[8 : 39] And he wrote this letter. Now, I've quoted you a letter from a very famous Jew by the name of Paul of Tarsus. This is another famous Jew of our own century.

And he wrote in reply to that this answer, which I want to read slowly because it's important. He wrote, I do not believe that the fundamental thoughts of the theory of relativity have any other relationship to the religious sphere than scientific knowledge does as such.

I see this relationship in that deep interdependence of objective realities which can be grasped through logically simple thoughts.

This, to be sure, he said, is particularly applicable to the theory of relativity, which means that he thinks that you can understand the story of the airplanes by a series of simple, logical thoughts.

But it's probably a longer series than most of us have time for. He goes on in his letter and says, The sense of the religious which is released through the experience of potentially nearing a logical grasp of these deep-lying world relations is of a somewhat different kind than the sense usually described as religious.

[10 : 24] It is more a feeling of awe and reverence for the manifest reason which appears in reality, which does not lead to the assumption of divine personality, a person, that is, who makes demands of us and takes an interest in our individual being.

In this, he says, there is no will, nor aim, nor an ought, but only being.

Well, there's a lot packed into that statement by Einstein. But on another occasion, he was asked to describe his own religious experience.

And he wrote and said that it is rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that compared with it, all the systematic thinking and activity of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.

he, as I said, was a Jew. He was even asked to be president of Israel back in 1952.

[11 : 57] He was born in Germany, educated in a Catholic school, and was serving as a customs clerk in Bern, Switzerland, when he wrote the original papers on which his life work and these theories were developed.

He failed university entrance one year. That's a word of comfort to anybody who wanted to hear about it. And he was subsequently, even after he'd graduated, refused a teaching post at another university.

But Sir Bernard Lovell describes him as one of the greatest scientists of all time. Well, compare him, if you will, with that other Jew who wrote another letter with which I began this sermon.

And since I am seeking to address particularly university students who this week begin another year and another term, I would say to you that you may regard your university education as acquiring what Einstein called scientific knowledge as such.

And that would include, at least potentially, the discovery of an intelligence of ultimate superiority, the discovery through the exercise of logically simple thoughts of the objective realities and their deep interdependence.

[14 : 03] And it also could mean that you would experience with awe and reverence the manifest reason which appears in the total of reality.

humanity. Well, that's human wisdom. And that you can get a degree in at any university.

And in this scientific age, that is about as far as lots of good, careful, reasonably religious people are prepared to go.

And the experience of God, which most people would subscribe to, they would at their best moments describe in the same terms that Einstein used.

He also stated some of the shortcomings of this position when he said of his own religious experience, that this does, of his own thought life really, that this does not lead to the assumption of a divine personality, a person who makes demands on you and takes an interest in your individual being.

[15 : 35] He said, in this there is no ought. O-U-G-H-T. there is no will, there is no aim.

Now take that statement and go quickly back to where we started from, where Paul writes, among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

That is, it's not a wisdom which is derived from the creation itself, and by the study and examination of a creation which is ultimately doomed to pass away, and which modern scientists very often terrify us by calculating how soon it is doomed to pass away.

But Paul says, we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.

So he says that there is another kind of wisdom, and you have, if you want the contrast between these two men.

[17 : 13] Let me tell you what is characteristic of the kind of wisdom that Paul makes us aware of. He says it's a totally different kind of wisdom, which is imparted to us in our maturity, and it's not based on the discovery, as Einstein said, of the deep interdependence of objective realities, but rather on the gracious activity of that superior intelligence making himself known to us in a personal way.

That's the phenomenal claim that Paul is making, that that superior intelligence has chosen to make himself known to us.

Now, this creates a difficulty, and the difficulty that it creates is that lots of people whose minds are not able to grasp the objective realities underlying our world are able to receive the self-disclosure of God.

And this is where Paul got into trouble, because the wisdom that he was talking about was available to everybody.

the wisdom that Einstein talked about is available to only a few brilliant minds after long years of study.

[19 : 05] Now, this creates a problem because the best minds can know that and not know God. And that's one of the contradictions that we find in our world that distresses us.

But Paul says that the reason that that is true is because the whole system of wisdom which belongs to this world and the system of wisdom which God imparts to us are different things.

Well, then he goes on from there to say that the essential content of the wisdom that Paul tells us about is something which lies beyond what the eye can see.

Even if the eye is enhanced by superpower telescopes or microscopes, the mystery that God reveals to us is beyond their capacity.

It's beyond what the ear can hear, even if it has radio telescopes that can reach into the deepest caverns of space.

[20 : 25] It is beyond the range of imagination. If you've been to The Empire Strikes Back, you've got to admit that there's a great deal of imagination goes into that that keeps your eyes popping as you see how far scientific fiction imagination can carry.

But Paul says way beyond anything that they could even conceive of, God has revealed, and he describes it as the depths of God are revealed.

the difficulty, and in a sense the crunch between these two systems of wisdom, Paul says was this, that the world system of wisdom found it expedient to crucify the Lord of glory.

faith. That is, they didn't understand Jesus Christ. They didn't and they don't.

And that's one of the hard facts of our world. Because the understanding of who Jesus Christ is does not belong to the superior intelligence of atomic scientists, but belongs in the wisdom which is called the foolishness of God.

[22 : 11] It belongs to the faith of a humble believer. And our world finds that hard to tolerate and maintain the hierarchies socially and intellectually that we want to maintain.

and so Paul says in a sense anticipating what Einstein said when he said there is no will, there is no ought, there is no aim, there is no person, there is no one interested in your individual being.

Paul says that this belongs to another wisdom, that wisdom which God has imparted to us, not a wisdom which we have been able to grasp by ourselves.

And the ought, the will, the aim, and the being are derived from God's complete self-disclosure of himself in Jesus Christ.

And that this is communicated to us through the person of the Holy Spirit who indwells us and makes known to us not the depths of space which we are left to explore by ourselves, but makes known to us the depths of God.

[23 : 57] Now, that's, I think, the position that any responsible university student is in who is a baptized believing Christian, that he must acknowledge the immeasurable richness that is made available to the world by the mind of one of our greatest men, or in fact, by the minds of many of our greatest men in various fields of study.

and to be able to trace their thoughts and share their discoveries is a very important part of university life, and a very important part of your total involvement in the world in which you live.

But there belongs to your faith another wisdom, Paul says. And that wisdom is to be enabled by the activity of God the Holy Spirit in your life to come to a personal knowledge of God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

The kind of intellectual knowledge and wisdom which is available to you and which I trust you will acquire will never hold you responsible for anything.

the kind of encounter which God seeks to have with us through his self-disclosure in Jesus Christ to faith will bring you into a personal relationship out of which you will be expected to live the whole of your life.

[26 : 21] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Universities, I think, have a vested interest in dispensing one kind of wisdom and ignoring the other kind of wisdom.

And so I commend to you that you be willing to hear as God speaks to us through his word and makes this startling revelation of himself in Jesus Christ.

And to know that the full glory of your humanity which you may lose sight of at times involves you in that encounter with God which he has engineered in the giving of his son Jesus Christ to live to be crucified to rise again and to promise us his spirit to dwell in our hearts and that through the ministry of that Holy Spirit as it says in 1 Corinthians 2 10 God has revealed to us through the spirit the spirit searches everything even the depths of God that that's the wisdom that God desires all of us to have may God grant to you as you return to university and to all of us as we live our lives in this nuclear age the awareness of this other wisdom we sing hymn number 492 but it's not really a once upon a time story once upon a time there was a country that needed and longed for a king the king came to them and they didn't recognize him it was a country that was always at war and longed for peace but they didn't know what peace was and wouldn't recognize it when they saw it it was a country that hoped for a day when great opportunity would come to them they always lived in the glories of what had been in the past and the joys of what lay in the future but it was a country in which it was never today always the past they thought about the future they planned for but it was a country in which it was never today and it was a country that had at its heart a great city a city that was known throughout the world and at the heart of the city there was a great temple and at the heart of the temple there was meant to be the worship of

God and instead there were robbers and thieves robbing people not just trespassing their neighbors but robbing people in the name of God do you want to read about that story it's in Luke chapter 19 and verse 37 and if you look at it at page 79 in your pew bible you'll see the story laid out before you and I want to read it to you speaking of the Lord Jesus in Luke 19 verse 37 page 79 as he was now drawing near at the descent of the Mount of Olives the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for the mighty works that they had seen saying blessed is the king who comes in the name of the

Lord peace in heaven and glory in the highest and some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him teacher rebuke your disciples he answered I tell you if these were silent the very stones would cry out and when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it saying would that even today you knew the things that make for peace but now they are hid from your eyes for the day shall come upon you when your enemies will cast up a bank round about you and surround you and hem you in on every side and dash you to the ground and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation and he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold saying it is written my house shall be a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers

[32 : 47] I watched the eleven o'clock news last night and it was sad one of the saddest things about it was that what happened last night was predicted a week before on the same newscast I don't know whether and you never know whether the media creates the news or not but it sometimes feels like it but it would be sad if there was no king in a country but greed and selfishness and proud human ambition and it would be sad if there was no awareness of what belongs to peace Chuck Colson in his book Life Sentence talks about speaking with one of the great leaders of western

Germany and saying that there were 40,000 east German spies in the country but all the people of the country wanted was money and cars and time off because they didn't know what was happening money and cars and time off are not the things that make for peace peace and prosperity we pray for but peace doesn't come essentially by prosperity that's not the only ingredient that's required and then if in that country nobody knew what time it was do you know what one person has described secularism as it's he says it's like having the clock taken off the wall so that everybody looks at their watch and for them it's a different time time and everybody is going by a different time and nobody has any idea of the official time signal there is no clock on the wall and everybody is left to live their life according to their own time that would be a sad condition and it would be a sad condition if in a country the worship of God was just another means of extorting money out of people because they had a bad conscience and I suppose in all the crooked ways of earning money in this easy money society there is none so crooked or tainted as those who make their money pretending to be the servants of God it's a very sobering thought that the worship of

God is so quickly replaced by people robbing people in the name of God it's very sad isn't it that that can so easily happen and that you can recognize that that can so easily happen well look at the picture because in a very wonderful way this picture that's in Luke chapter 19 says well can I just say this that the background of the failure of the talks on confederation this week could mean that with anger and bitter recrimination we point the finger at that group and at that group and at that group and at that man and that man and that man but there is undoubtedly in this story the awareness that when

Christ came as king he came to his own people and if others didn't recognize him it didn't matter too much to him but if his own people didn't recognize him that was the thing that brought him to tears so that in this great land there is a special responsibility for us who claim to be the people of God we have a responsibility and our responsibility is first in acknowledging the king do you know why a prime minister is a prime minister because he gets that name from Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 13 he is a minister of God and we know that kings and thrones may perish and rise and wane as onward Christian soldiers tells us but there is a king of kings and there is a lord of lords and

Christians are called to respect the constitutional authority of the land in which they live because they know that their leaders are responsible to that king and to that lord they are responsible to acknowledge before men the king of kings and lord of lords even when the authorities in the land come as they did to Jesus and say make your disciples be quiet please after all it's the Sabbath and we don't want anything to disturb the people of the land and Jesus said to them if these did not cry out the very stones would cry out and there is something about the creation that if men don't acknowledge the truth if men don't acknowledge

[39 : 49] God if men don't acknowledge Jesus Christ there comes a time when the very stones will cry out I think that's happening in parts of the world today I think in Poland the stones are crying out I think in Russia the stones are crying out and in part it's it's the responsibility of the people of God to stand up and say this is the truth and this is the king and not to let anybody silence them because we need a king and we need truth and secondly the people of God are responsible to know what makes for peace

Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers for they are the sons of God and Paul in his letter to the Romans says we're to pursue the things that make for peace and the people of God are to recognize the peace of God in their hearts and they are to declare a peace that has been established between a man and his neighbor between a man and his enemy between Jews and Greeks and Gentiles and heathens and whoever you want there is peace that's been established and we know about that peace and we're to declare that peace because we know the source of it all men long for peace but not very many men know the source of it and the people of

God are responsible to know the things that make for peace the truth and the justice and the relationship between parents and children between husbands and wives between neighbors and neighbors between nation and nation between peoples and peoples to know the things that make for peace peace and that is in Jesus Christ I came that you might have peace he is the prince of peace and that's that's at the heart of it isn't it and the people of God are responsible in a unique way to know what time it is that they are in touch in a sense with the time in which we live to know what's happening in our world and it would almost seem a deliberate and malevolent ploy of the powers of evil that all the clocks are taken off the wall and people are left in chaos and confusion about what time it is are we living at a time when a prosperity such as men have never known is about to break upon us as a land or are we like

Jerusalem in the last days of a decadence which within a generation was to mean that that city would be destroyed utterly so that not one stone was left on another who knows what time it is for us was George Grant right when in the 60s he wrote about Canada a book which he entitled Lament for a nation trying to tell Canadians what time it is we don't know what time it is but it's the special responsibility of the people of God to know what time it is to study and to pray and to work and to read and to be aware of the kingdom of

God in our world so that if somebody comes up and says have you got the time we can say yes we've got the time please set your watch accordingly that's the responsibility of the people of God to know what time it is you know no one knew what time it was in his day and everybody laughed him to scorn and when the Christ child was born the shepherds knew what time it was and when the Christ child was brought to the temple to be circumcised on the eighth day the old man Simeon knew what time it was and he knew that his time had come when he said Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people to be a light to lighten the

[46 : 02] Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel he was a man of God who knew what time it was and in our society we don't know what time it is as in West Germany money and autos and time off is the only thing we know and as the people of God we're responsible to know what time it is and finally we're responsible in this strange way that Christ came on that day to his father's house house and he knew that his father's house was to be primarily a house of prayer and when he got to it he found it bustling with commerce people selling things and buying things and exchanging money all in the name of

God and he said to his people you've made it a den of robbers so where do we go as the people of God we as this congregation in this church have this responsibility that it is our supreme business to acknowledge the king who is king of kings and lord of lords it is our supreme business to know the things that make for peace and to pursue the things that make for peace in our world and in our society and it is our business to know what time it is and it is our business that this house should be a house of prayer and to make it that and that in a very special way

I have to tell you that individually and personally that you need to know who is king and you need to know within the dimensions of your own life the things that make for peace and you need to know within the dimensions of your life what time it is nice to spend a few weeks in hospital to get to know what time it is for you or me and you need that at the center of our world and at the center of our life there is to be not a den of robbers but a house of prayer where we need to learn to pray and at the center of your life there needs to be the reality of prayer so let us pray

Lord Jesus as you came to your ancient people and found that only a handful of them knew that you were a king and only a handful knew the things that make for peace and only a handful knew what time it was and your father's house had become a den of robbers instead of a house of prayer Lord Jesus we are your people and we are bowed before you and we ask that you will spare us and have mercy on us and give us such grace that we may acknowledge from our hearts that you indeed are king and lord that you are truth and righteousness that we may know from you the things which make for peace because you are the prince of peace and the peace of christ is to be the arbiter in our hearts and make us to be a people who by your word know what time it is peace in the whole process of history and above all we ask that this house may be in a new way a house of prayer lord jesus grant us this mercy for us as a congregation and for us in our individual lives we ask in your holy name amen we're going to sing hymn 375 why

Thank you.

[53 : 27] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[56 : 17] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I still do good and in love I live with you. I'm so dead of my heart, I am in my own home.

[57 : 27] I am in my own home, I am in my own home, I am in my own home.

Let all I live with you, I shall hear protection, I am in my own home, All things come from thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.

Amen. Now would you please be seated for the announcements. Good morning, both nation all of us.

Our biggest thing to be my first party is tomorrow, and Diane Barrett, who is the editor for that wonderful activity.

They have nice coffee hour to go into the desk. Alex was pretty busy now, of course all the in terms of studies as well.

[58 : 51] As we have an application there, it will be a shot for questions. That's how I will go out and join would have another whole education of our community.

First, I am okay to remember the parents of the elders to be held to the meeting October 28th.

The service to be here now is the first service we shall not to the rest of the head of the law and the subsequent services to the month.

The service to be here is the first service we shall not be able to do. The service to be here is the first service we shall not be able to do.

The second service is the first service we shall not be able to do.

[60 : 14] The second service is the first service of the family. The second service is the second service of the community. Shopping and suggestions and throughout the thought and prayer.

The close over 5 o'clock this morning, we are a party to Joe Man■us and at the top of the hour, the changes about the wedding, Dr. Rhyshanger has been joined as jullie and invite them to five to that.

One daynow that every second and second, they are OK for revival. Dr. Rhyshanger encuentra as to thewehr of Michigan, I think there will be three of them and E guide■■, but nothing elsevery is it?

Certainly a wrecked workesp■, scooter, and hashed During these difficult times Molly Lewis, and uh seniors who are almost certain périrate they still fall off and livervous.

Two and 10, 15 couples. So, for I know the end of your involvement, please, for I know the end of your life.

[61 : 55] All let us pray together. Now, if you're dreaming, we are able to keep you from falling, and to present you before his glorious presence without hope and with great joy.

To the only God, our Savior, with glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all angels, now and forevermore.

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be amongst you, and remain with you now and always. Amen.

Now, closing in, number 407, Need Us, Heavenly Father, Need Us. And there you go.