

Wanted: Men of God

by Alan Cairns

The sermon emphasizes the need for men of God who are passionate about scripture and willing to live in the present, not in the past.

Duration: 1:22:26

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, Matthew 28:19-20, John 5:39, Acts 20:21, 1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for men of God in today's society. He highlights the importance of preachers who are not influenced by the world, but rather have a deep understanding of the Word of God and are transformed by its power. The preacher calls for individuals to seek God's guidance and to be willing to do whatever He asks of them. He also emphasizes the need for men who have knowledge of the times and can discern what actions are necessary in the present, rather than dwelling in the past.

Transcript

Dr. Barrett likes to make a lot of mileage out of the fact that he allegedly makes very brief announcements. He does. He leaves the half of them out.

And then when I have to make up for his deficiency, he blames me for making long announcements. Humility, of course, stops him from admitting that. However, there are a few things that we do need to add.

Some good news, some not so good news, and I leave them with you. First of all, the good news. We rejoiced with John and Rachel Matsko this week in the very encouraging doctor's report that Rachel received.

Her cancer is in remission. John and Rachel understand this is not, at this stage, medically stated as a cure. But it is in remission.

Doctors cannot pronounce cancer cured in that amount of time. But, as John reminded us in the email that he sent out, one year ago, Rachel was told she had an inoperable cancerous tumor. Then they were able to shrink that.

And then the surgery took place and she's been bombarded with radiation and with chemotherapy. And I must say we have all been very, very encouraged at the fortitude with which she has approached that. We

have remembered her in prayer over these last months.

And so I think it is good that we thank the Lord for a gracious answer to prayer thus far. But do continue to pray for her and pray for John, pray for the family. That the Lord will continue his good hand upon her and raise her up to the fullness of health and strength.

But Rachel, we do rejoice with you in all that the Lord has done thus far. So that's some good news. There's a little further good news of a different kind.

Mike mentioned Dr. Finozian's meeting here. And we want you to make sure to keep that night clear on your calendar. Make sure you come along.

In fact, you know, I shouldn't have to say that because Wednesday evening should be the best attended meeting of the week. It's the most important. It's the prayer meeting usually.

And I know that you can get busy. I've noticed a few Wednesdays that there have been people missing and we have missed you. And so we want you to be here every Wednesday.

It's important that you come and don't just leave it to other people to pray. It's very important that you come to pray. But that Wednesday evening with Dr. Finozian, we'd love to have you along.

And afterwards, we're going to have a light reception. You're not going to have a five-course meal, but you'll have time for fellowship and something to drink if coffee doesn't keep you awake. Somebody, no doubt, will have coffee.

If it does, you can have water or something else. But whatever it is there, Mrs. Gresham is looking after that. And we thank her for her willingness to do that.

But we do look forward to that after Dr. Finozian's meeting on that final Wednesday evening of the month. I shouldn't say Dr. Finozian's meeting. When Hugh Latimer comes, that most attractive of English reformers, plain Hugh Latimer, you'll learn something about church history and you'll be blessed at the stand of a great man of God.

I have some of Latimer's sermons in my possession. I wasn't around when he preached them. I might look that old, but I wasn't around when he preached them.

But I have some of Latimer's sermons. He was one of England's foremost preachers and a great man of God who sealed his testimony with his blood. So that's another bit of good news.

A couple of items of not so good news for us. Our brother Jeff Bannister's mother died this past week. And we'd like you to keep Jeff and his family in your prayers at this time.

Many of you who have been here over many years will remember how in the prayer meetings, Jeff would labor in prayer for his mother. That God would have mercy upon her soul. And I trust that God has answered prayer.

But certainly she has gone into eternity. And this is a burden obviously on the family at this time because though she had, I think it was hip surgery, knee surgery, sorry. Though she had that, she was doing very well.

And this death came very suddenly and unexpectedly to pray for Jeff and his family at this time. And then Dr. and Mrs. Graff are leaving town to, have they left yet? They have left to go and take up residence in Tennessee. We trust that you will pray for them and keep them before the Lord.

They want to remain part of our fellowship as much as they can be at such a distance. But we trust you'll keep them in your prayers for health and strength. And for the Lord's blessing upon them in the everyday things of life.

And also most important at any time in life, but certainly as you're getting older, is the view of Christ that is essential to the faith and power of the gospel in our lives. So do remember Dr. Graff and his wife at this time. Now those are the announcements and I'm not going to say anything more about that very humble book that Mike is turning out.

It will be on the book of Daniel. It will be about all those charts and all the rest of it that you've always seen on Daniel. Only this will be different.

And it will be the best book on Daniel that you have yet had opportunity to read. So I can't be nicer than that. But I will expect payment in the morning.

Do keep those things before the Lord. Now as we continue in our Reformation month studies, we're going to read in Ezekiel chapter 22. Ezekiel chapter 22, reading from verse 23 to the end of the chapter.

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey. They have devoured souls.

They have taken the treasure and precious things. They have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law and have profaned my holy things.

They have put no difference between the holy and profane. Neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths. And I am profaned among them.

Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood and to destroy souls and to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have dobed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery and have vexed the poor and needy.

Yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them.

I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. Their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God. Amen.

The Lord will add His blessing to this reading from His Word for His namesake. Tonight I want us to take as what Bob Jones Jr. would have called a pretext rather than a text. A text is for exposition.

A pretext is for launching from a particular platform a much wider ranging discourse. And that's what we're going to do tonight. The words of verse 30.

At the beginning of the verse, I sought for a man. I sought for a man. Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian, spoke of a class of preachers whom he described as world controllers.

He was speaking of men who had peculiar power with God and who consequently had peculiar power with men. He was describing men who molded the age in which they lived and were not molded by it. In giving this description of this peculiar class of preachers and spiritual leaders, Hodge was admitting that most preachers are to their shame the product of their age.

A reflection to a greater or lesser degree, according to their spirituality, of the society that spawned them. Whereas the world controllers were people who refused the stamp of the age in which they lived and rather by dint of spiritual power and energy placed their own God-given stamp on their generation and indeed upon the generations to come. When we come to the period in church history known as the Reformation period, we stand amazed at the number of great men, good men, who stood forward to take up the cause of Christ and His gospel.

We look from country to country, whether it's Germany or Switzerland or Scotland or England or Scandinavia or even for a while in France, although to a much lesser degree there. But we look at those nations and we are amazed at the race of preachers that God raised up. Men whose ministry stamped their country forever.

Men who by the preaching of the Word of God shook an entire continent and changed the course of the history of the world. In that Reformation period, when the Lord sought for a man, He found many of them and used them mightily. We can only admire the sovereign purpose that worked so widely and so wisely in raising up such men as the Protestant Reformers.

J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, my favorite historian of the Reformation, for the simple reason that he writes with passion. He does not write with cool detachment. I think his scholarship is as good as anyone else's.

But scholarship without fire is a dead thing. He writes with passion as one who was converted in Geneva during a period of revival under the ministry of Robert Haldane a Scottish lay theologian and preacher. Merle d'Aubigné describes the quick distribution of Reformed truth and principles as being of heavenly origin.

It was not the result of human collusion. For example, you read of Luther working in Germany. You would imagine that he somehow had an influence on Zwingli and the early Swiss Reformers and the work moved from Germany over the border to Switzerland and from Switzerland on and so forth.

But the facts do not support such a theory. Merle d'Aubigné likens the spread of the Gospel to the spread of light as the sun rises. The light disseminates its brilliance from one place to another distributing its benefits. Certainly the sun of righteousness in those days arose with healing in its wings.

Thus it is that before the name of Martin Luther had even been mentioned within the bounds of Switzerland as early as 1516. Remember Luther, though he started lecturing in the University of Wittenberg before this. Luther did not gain notoriety until 1517 when in the 31st of October he knelt his thesis to the church door. That's when he started gaining notoriety.

That's when his writing started getting carted all over Europe. But in 1516, according to his own testimony Zwingli was already preaching the evangelical doctrines already pointing people to Christ already he was sounding out the peculiar and special notes of the Protestant Reformation though it would be an

anachronism to call it Protestantism at that time since the name Protestant did not really arise until 1529. We will not go into that one tonight.

Nor was he alone.

When you read the history of the movings of God in Switzerland in those early times you find that when Zwingli started being moved of God to preach evangelical doctrine there were parish priests who themselves were being stirred here and there throughout the Swiss cantons and it appeared that for no reason now there was a reason but certainly it was not because of any human collusion here and there men's eyes were opened their minds were stirred to study scripture their hearts were moved to preach Christ and as early as that before Luther even became notorious the Vatican began to get very frightened at what was happening in Switzerland and for reasons that do not bother us tonight their first response was not the usual one of fire and sword their first response was money they thought

they could buy Zwingli off and of course if they had bought him off being the most scholarly, the most brilliant, the most popular of all the Swiss preachers then obviously they could have stemmed the whole movement at its beginning so in due time according to the will of God the Lord combined the efforts of able men not only in the Swiss cantons but also in Saxony and then spreading through Luther's works as they began to spread through other parts of Europe even to the outposts of England and Scotland and in those days believe me they were outposts they were in the very edge of civilization the Lord began to put in able men to advance the movement of the preaching of the word of God and such was their power that the effects of their labors are with us until this present time I sought

for a man and he did not seek in vain when God sought for a man he found in an Augustinian monastery a monk who had so neglected his body as to bring himself to the point of death seeking salvation by his self-righteousness and God sought for a man he found a priest in Switzerland who had lived for a time at least like all the other priests quickened him by the power of the gospel transformed him by the grace of God and burned in his heart a desire to preach Jesus Christ and so it went on he sought for a man and he found him on every hand tonight I want us to take that text and think very simply upon the subject wanted men of God men of God men for the hour men who are like the men of Issachar described so long ago as men who had knowledge of the times and knew what Israel ought to do men

who know what it is to live in the present not in the past that may sound strange to you when I'm preaching on something that's historical like the Protestant Reformation but I am not inviting you to come and live in the past men who are living in the past are of no earthly use to the present we have had far too much of that in the Christian church where we're forever harking back to the good old days and we're forever harking back to what happened then and trying to recreate what happened then we want tonight to learn from the reformers and see the men that God always needs men who manifest the best features of the Protestant Reformation men who will be able to live in the present men who will put their stamp upon this day and age men who will put the impress of divine grace upon America

men who will have power with God wanted men of God men not wimps men not apologies for men not what C.T.

Studd once called a chocolate soldier I'll maybe lay hands on his fairly lengthy poem, well that's giving it high praise indeed C.T.

Studd was a great man, a poet he wasn't Doggerall would be more like it but I'll try if I can remember to lay hands on his Doggerall, the chocolate soldier in which he likened people who dressed themselves up as soldiers in the cause of Christ but being made of chocolate when the heat goes on they melt they're useless men that's what we want men of God men of God who will epitomize the greatest features of the Protestant Reformation may I say first and foremost that such men will be men of one book God's book I've made reference to this in the past studies dealing with the reformers but I'm unashamedly going over this again tonight they were men of one book now don't misunderstand me they were not anti-intellectual the reformers had studied scholastic theology and that's saying something

they had mastered the intricacies of the various schools they could pit one against the other they had studied scholastic theology many of them were experts on the patristic literature the writings of the early church fathers many of them also were experts on the ancient classical Greek scholars these were men of immense study and learning they were men of a liberal education not in the sense of liberal equals apostate but liberal equals broad ranging they were products of the Renaissance they had studied widely they had drunk deeply at the fountain of human knowledge but having done all that they turned away ultimately dissatisfied from the writings of men even those with whom they agreed to the writings of the word of God the thing that marks the protestant reformers is this that they

were men with an all consuming passion for scripture they were in this book every single day of their lives now you've got to remember that back in the early 16th century the study of Hebrew was still in its infant stages the study of Hebrew was just becoming known the study of Greek was still in its infant stages Erasmus was the one who first gave us a printed edition of the Greek New Testament and suddenly all over Europe you found young men some of them like Luther from very very poor surroundings others like Patrick Hamilton of Scotland one of the royal household at least of the royal family these young men gave themselves to the study of Hebrew with such brilliance that Luther could turn out a translation of the scriptures that to this day demands attention and indeed is credited

with the creation of the modern German language you think of William Tyndale when you take the authorized version of the scriptures in your hand and I hope that you will have the wit to stick with it but when you take this in your hand never forget that probably a full 60% of what is written are the actual words of William Tyndale the man who vowed that through the scriptures being translated into English he would put the word of God in the hands of a plow boy make him no more than his priest these men gave themselves to the study of the original languages of scripture they gave themselves to the study of the surrounding literature the expositions of scripture from the earliest times onward most of all they gave themselves to the intense study of the word of God you see for the Protestant

reformers this was the word of God that wasn't just jargon for them this was God's word God's inspired word God's sufficient revelation God's authoritative revelation they believed it they studied it just to show you the dedication when he was still a young priest Zwingli wanted to be able to carry the New Testament or at least a large part of it with him given what was available that was not possible so he sat down laboriously and he copied out by hand the entire epistles of Paul and then having copied them out by hand he memorized every one of them when men like that talk about sola scriptura it wasn't just a slogan this was the expression of their hearts the reformers submerged their souls in scripture that I believe was a major, major reason for their greatness it is not coincidental

that another man whom the Calvinist Charles Hodge named as a world controller was the Arminian John Wesley of whom it was said he was a man of one book Wesley's theology left a lot to be desired again I

have to make a lot of excuses for him I don't find him attractive as a character to be quite honest great as a man I suppose those two things don't often go together attractive characters and great leadership but whether I find him attractive or not is beside the point I make a lot of excuses for his background what he was struggling out of but I have to say this he was a man who stamped the world with the stamp of his message because he was a man submerged in that book in the actual words of scripture in the theology of scripture I am more than that in the spirit of scripture that's the

urgent need of today wanted men of God men who are going to give themselves body, soul and spirit to the study of that book men who believe that book and they don't care what upstart scientist comes along to contradict it they judge him by the Bible they do not judge the Bible by his theory men who are not going to be blown off course by the fads of the age the theories of men men who are so given to the word of God that it for them is the absolute rock of certainty there was a time you know when that was because of the protestant reformation and the things that followed in its train that was the mark of protestantism it was said though some have tried to say that it is not an accurate statement historically or theologically I think they're wrong taking it as the statement was originally

intended the Bible, the Bible only the religion of protestants that used to be our starting point that used to be our finishing point that used to be everything about protestantism it was biblical through and through preachers did not get up to discuss the vain theories of men they did not get up to apologize for the word of God they did not get up to spout about the doubts of men I remember reading as a young fellow one of Spurgeon's sermons in which he was speaking about Scripture the inspiration of Scripture and he said I am not here to discuss the doubts of men I am here to preach the certainties of the word of God that's where the reformers came from that's the need of today men of one book there are people who say they're called to preach well I'll have to leave them to God but I

want to tell you and I'm going to be very blunt here it's very difficult for me to be blunt people usually come to me and ask me could you not make your meaning rather more clear but I'm going to be blunt on this occasion if your medical doctors read as little medicine and knew as little medicine as the average preacher reads biblical truth and biblical theology you wouldn't trust your dog to them never mind your life and yet people are trusting their souls their souls their whole eternity to preachers who are as ignorant of the things of God because a preacher can spout an odd text or two and say this is what he calls the Romans Road and by the way I have absolutely no controversy with the texts in the Romans Road none whatsoever but because a preacher has learned a few pet verses off by

heart don't ever kid yourself that he knows the Bible men given that's the first need of the hour they knew it from that flows the second thing that we see in the reformers we need to see in men of God today that is men who feel the power of the word of God in their own soul men of genuine spiritual experience I've said that the reformers were scholars for the most part they were academics John Calvin Luther also in his early days Luther was training to be a lawyer I see Tim smiling but then he got right with God and became a theologian John Calvin his first printed work not a roaring success like a few other books I know as far as sales went John Calvin his first work was a work on law a commentary on an ancient Greek classic these men were academics university professors people who

wanted to sit in the study people who wanted to spend their times in academia they were academics but they were not theorists you see the word of God entered into their soul it was for them the inner source of certainty and of courage in a word they not only got to know the word of God they got to know the God of the word man what a difference there is what a difference there is Daniel tells us in chapter 11 32 that the

people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits if ever you needed an example of that after the times of the apostles you get it in the days of the protestant reformers the people knew their God and therefore they did exploits now let me voice a concern that I have about the days in which we live especially in this internet age when you've got a bunch of

people who need to start learning English before they start pontificating on the meaning of Hebrew and Greek and they go onto the internet and they read some internet theologian and especially of the Calvinistic variety we're infected and infested with them and they're coming up with every crazy stupid notion under the sun we have Presbyterians out there and they are now part of a new perspective on Paul I'll maybe get to that later it's intended to overturn everything that the protestant reformation ever established about Paul what it's intended to do is to rewrite the doctrine of justification we have Presbyterians out there teaching as a result of this the doctrine of baptismal regeneration we have people out there who having espoused the notion that it's right for them to sprinkle

their children and call it baptism that then it's right because they're baptized to feed them the bread and the wine at the Lord's table not warning the people that the Bible says that if you eat and drink and you're not discerning the Lord's body you're eating and drinking the condemnation of God we have academics or professed academics out there I've read, I don't read too much of it because you would never think to listen to me but it gets me angry at them theorists, theorists I have said it before and I'll say it again I read them and I read them again and I've never read one single sentence that would ever humble my heart and lead me to cry at the feet of Jesus there's something wrong with theology like that something radically wrong with it God save us from theorists we need men of

God men into whose very heart and soul the Bible and its truth have come to reside men who are governed by this Word who are set on fire by this Word who have a passion for the glory of God a passion for the souls of men who are ablaze with the love that sent Christ to the cross as we were singing tonight Christ living in them and Christ living through them that's what we need that's what we need God give us men like that wanted men of God these men in the third place will have a real grasp of the gospel not only are they men of one book into whose soul that book, that message has come with life controlling power but they are men who have a grasp of the one message learned theologians dispute as to whether there is any integrating theme in the Bible again there's no greater blindness than

the blindness of an academic with a theory to defend how you can come to this book and even wonder is there an integrating theme you have to call Christ a liar even to question that there's an integrating theme He is the theme He said Moses wrote of me on the way to Emmaus what did he do? he took the scriptures and he started with Moses and went through the whole Hebrew canon of scripture and he expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning himself the integrating theme of scripture is the one message from Genesis to Revelation it's in the types of scripture it's in the prophecies of scripture it's in the didactic statements of scripture it's in the poetry of scripture it's in the prose of scripture it's in the Old Testament it's in the New Testament it is the one message and

that's the message that gripped the hearts of the protestant reformers they knew what was important at least for the most part there were times when like men they get carried away on things of lesser importance and allowed those things to cause needless division but as they battled for truth they grasped the significance of the great central theological issues of their day and can I say these ultimately haven't changed authority why do we believe what we believe merit how can a man be just with God on what ground can a sinner find acceptance with God merit faith what is it to believe how does a man enter into

life eternal then the soul sufficiency of Jesus Christ as mediator these were the great issues authority why do we believe what we believe because God has said it we live in a day

when the philosophy of the age is all against anything authoritative that's the philosophy of the day ultimately it doesn't matter what you call philosophy that or theology that rejects the bible it changes its name from generation to generation it changes its emphasis its approach but it doesn't change its essence whether you go way back to the fathers of the modernistic movement the rationalistic movement Friedrich Schleiermacher isn't that a lovely name I didn't learn German but it was a proficient German speaker who told me in German that means the maker of a veil very good name for a man who drew the cloth over many eyes or whether you come from him to rationalists modernists, liberals of a different little school they all had one thing in common and that is they rejected the

universal authority of that book and God's word we live in the age that's now called post-modernist been an awful lot said about that of course and it's not my idea to get into it tonight post-modernism there was a time you see when the western world attacked the bible from the basis of what was called the enlightenment enlightenment thinkers they were men who believed in the scientific method they believed in the empirical sciences prove it to me if you can't prove it empirically I don't believe it but now we've got beyond that because you see science itself might come up with some moral universals and modern man doesn't want that if you want to know what post-modernism is it's many things but reading wonderful the things that come into the hands of a preacher at times reading a book of

philosophy that dealt with this from the point of view of all things of an architect post-modernism finds one of its most outstanding expressions in architecture and the theory is that it stands for not for integration but for the opposite even in architecture now I'm going to get a wee bit worried I don't want any post-modernist designing the house I live in for I certainly want a better foundation than he would think of but anything that would form a universal standard is taboo now when you get it into the realm of morals to beliefs we're in an age when people and this is why it's so difficult to witness to people today you're not even talking the same language you talk about sin what do you mean by sin? who says it's wrong? it's alright for me works for me this is my truth, that's your

truth you see everything is broken off from any integrating authoritative or universal standard that's the day in which we live now people believe something it's always good to ask them why do you believe that? on what authority do you believe that?

I mean if you're going to say I'm going to commit my life and if I have a soul I'm going to commit my soul to this theory on what authority do you believe it? the protestant theologians of the reformation had already answered we believe it on the authority of God's word we believe it because God has said it now let me tell you and this gets away beyond anything that I should be dealing with tonight if God hasn't said it then there's no such thing as truth it's only because there is a God of truth God is and God has spoken the true great I'm tempted to expand here but I'm not going to the two great starting points of all Christian theology God is and God has spoken unless that is true there is no such thing as truth there is no such thing as right there is no such thing as wrong there is

no such thing as something being better than another except that you may think it's so because it's more for your comfort for the moment we believe in God we believe in Christ who is the faithful and true witness we believe in him who said I am the truth we believe that he has spoken his word is authoritatively clear we believe that he has put his stamp upon the reality of his revelation by his own resurrection from the

dead that's where the apostles stood that's where the reformers stood sola scriptura that's what makes the issues facing the protestant churches today so overwhelmingly important there is a renewed attack upon the principle of the sole authority of scripture I haven't time tonight to trace that attack you have the academic attack you have the so called scientific attack

you have the philosophical attack these are all from identifiable enemies do you know in the reformation times do you know where one of the most potent attacks well let me take the two most potent attacks on the authority of scripture do you know where they came from first from the pope the church of Rome who said we agree that this is the word of God and we agree that it is authoritative but only as it is interpreted by Holy Mother Church according to Tradition with a capital T and ultimately it's Tradition that imposes itself on scripture not scripture imposing itself on Tradition that is still the position of the church of Rome and sadly, sadly in our evangelical churches along with other churches in the protestant side of the fence you have men who are willing to dialogue with Rome on

the very issue of the full and final authority of God's word and even when they say as the protestants and ECT evangelicals and catholics together even when they say we are upholding the authority of scripture in reality they are selling it down the river then there was another area and it came from people who are now called the radical reformers at least from some of them there were Anabaptists who called themselves spiritual Anabaptists these were people and they said God spoke to me God said this to me God said the other thing to me listen, I want to be very frank with you I get very worried when I hear people coming telling me God said this to me, God said the other thing to me why should I believe you? give me one reason why I should believe you can you show me it in this book? now

don't misunderstand me I believe that in my study of that word God can take that word and apply it with personal light and power to my soul but I tell you this I do not thereby have any right to bind anybody else or his conscience the Anabaptists who were spiritual Anabaptists they didn't need the Bible for God was speaking to them directly they were the charismatics of their age but let's not lay all the blame at the feet of the charismatics I listen to fundamentalists and they're for always saying what God is saying to me he's saying this, he's saying that he's saying the other thing and there's not a shred of scriptural evidence for it and in many cases, in many cases they are doing the very opposite to what the Bible says where's the authority of scripture now? where's the authority

of scripture? as I said to a Jehovah's Witness years ago when she wouldn't listen to a text of scripture wouldn't listen to anything establishing the deity of Jesus Christ I said, mom, you are afraid of what I show you in the Bible and I will take the position right now I am not afraid of anything anything that anybody can show me is the legitimate teaching of this book a priori I will accept what this book says now that doesn't mean to say I'm going to accept what you say it says but let's get to what the book says that's where the authority is if you have this book as your authority you'll be it you'll be it this is not just a theoretical thing we believe the Bible to be the word of God you obey this book we need preachers who not only learn how to expound the book we need preachers who

know how to obey the book that's what we need then use that part of the gospel, it's authority the reformers knew the doctrine of merit isn't this what got Luther all riled up? when John Tetzel came selling his indulgences similar things were happening in other places there were these outlandish claims being made as to how people could have their sins forgiven actually the history of indulgences is a very instructive thing as to show you how you get a little away from scripture and suddenly you'll go on down down until you end up in a morass at the beginning it's probable at least that indulgences were never

meant to be a means of purchasing pardon in the beginning it is probable that they were meant to be the expression of gratitude from souls that had been pardoned and especially who

had been pardoned by the intervention of a kind mother church through her priests so when the priests said I forgive you in gratitude then they gave money but as time went on that subtly changed until it became the purchasing of pardon when John Tetzel came around he said as soon as the money drops into the drum the soul that you're paying for will fly to purgatory you pay we'll give pardon and Luther was incensed at that why? because he was preaching the merit of Christ what is it that gets a man right with God the merit of Christ there is no merit in human works there is no merit in human religion there is no merit in human praying there is no merit in human giving there is no merit in anything that a man can do he cannot do anything to merit the favor of God it is sola gratia it is by

grace alone that we are saved but if it is by grace alone then it is through faith alone now the reformers were not fools they understood quite well and the council of Trent which for political reasons was not able to meet until the middle of the 16th century my memory is right about 1545 and went on for about 15 years but the reformers knew what Trent made clear that the church of Rome believes in salvation by faith it will tell you it believes in salvation by grace through faith and we have some foolish people on Evangelicals and Catholics Together for example today who are saying this is a wonderful discovery this is a basis for renewed cooperation this is a basis for us pursuing getting together as Christians there is nothing new about this the reformers knew all about that but Rome

then and Rome today detests detests the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone sola fide by faith alone the promise keepers I mentioned them a long time back so I am not going to get into them again but remember this the promise keepers came up with a statement of faith which they subtly changed why did they change it? because Bill McCartney himself a Roman Catholic leader of the movement from the beginning wanted full Roman Catholic participation and when he found that the statement of salvation by faith alone was hindering Roman Catholics from coming in it was subtly changed oh faith is still in there but it is not faith alone let me tell you that is not just splitting hairs that goes to the heart of the gospel and it leads right into the very next thing that the reformers

were always pushing and that is the soul sufficiency of Jesus Christ Christ alone now these were the essentials these were the essentials and the reformers judged men according to these things and they judged movements in the light of these things let me tell you my friend when I say wanted men of God we need men who have a real grasp of the gospel we today live in an age when there is an abysmal ignorance of the gospel do you realize that most fundamentalist pulpits have never once had one single message expounding the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone do you realize that in most fundamentalist churches there has never been in its history one single, one single exposition of the impure righteousness of Jesus Christ then we wonder

what's wrong in our churches do you realize that in most of our churches fundamental, evangelical and even reform the people don't know what the ecumenical movement the movement for union with the church of Rome is and they certainly don't know why it is to be totally abominated and rejected why is this? it's because there is an abysmal ignorance of the gospel and preachers are ill equipped to deal with real issues now, the reasons for this differ from denomination or from group to group in fundamentalism and I'll start there, not because I'm anti-fundamentalist but because I am a fundamentalist in fundamentalism, for far too long there has been a fear of historic, systematic, reformed theology people are dead scared if we let get people into the study of theology they might become

Calvinists well sure they'll become Calvinists why? because there's only one form of systematic theology that makes a button of sense that's why I'm not going to say anything new here this is something I said years and years and years ago there was a very dear friend of mine and I'll not mention names because I wouldn't want to give a wrong impression a very dear friend of mine who was a great preacher and a Christian leader and a man of immense importance in the fundamentalist scene here in North America but he was very fond of talking about paradoxes and I remember saying to him look, there's something wrong here I'm tired of hearing fundamentals fundamentalist preachers talking about everything in the Bible as a paradox I'm tired of that he looked at me I said, why I'm tired of it and

why I suspect it is paradox is the theology of neo-orthodoxy when you dismiss everything as a paradox you're simply saying the Bible doesn't make sense God's a paradox because he's one and he's three God's not a paradox nor a contradiction election and free will a paradox no it's not it's not just let the Bible speak for itself let God be true and every man a liar as I talked to this very dear friend of mine about this I just shared my burden with him we have got to the stage where we're talking about the Bible being the word of God we're talking this and talking that and talking the other thing but at the end of the day we're really telling our people the Bible doesn't make any sense but it does make sense and the only reason why fundamentalism ever fell into that pit was not that it was

becoming neo-orthodox fundamentalism is the farthest thing from neo-orthodoxy but the only reason it fell into that pit was a fear of systematic theology you've heard it before doctrine bends if you get too much into this theology business you'll lose your passion for souls and my dear come off it let's talk a little bit of sense let's get a little bit of historical perspective who's the greatest revivalist this country ever produced I bet you, well I better not bet I'm not supposed to bet well the thing is if it's a sure thing who's the greatest revivalist this country has ever produced most Americans couldn't begin to tell you most of them would maybe mention Charles Finney the greatest plague on the Bible this country ever produced who is the greatest revivalist this country has ever

produced he just happens to be the greatest theologian this country ever produced the greatest thinker this country ever produced and I'm talking about the one and only Jonathan Edwards don't tell me that theology deadens your soul if your soul is deadened because of your theology let me tell you if your theology doesn't lead you to weep at the glory of God and weep at the damnation of sinners your theology is not right let's get it reformed theology doesn't do that unless it becomes deformed we have preachers who are not equipped to deal with the real issues because they are not equipped even to recognize them we're living in a day of a man-centered emphasis I was greatly challenged reading an article by a liberal a liberal seminary professor and I had to say I agreed with every word of

it except his own views on theology which were obviously off the wall but he wasn't dealing with his own views he was saying I have been looking can you not identify with this I have been looking for a church I'm wanting to hear a preacher who's going to speak of the greatness of God the glory of God who's going to be preaching a God-centered message I've gone to Baptist churches fundamental churches evangelical churches reformed churches he said recently in our town and he mentioned the town I heard there was a wonderful theological Presbyterian preacher when I went there I found the very same thing it's all man-centered feeling oriented you know a Jim will fix it well this is not Britain that was a television program they had over there years ago Jim will fix it if you had a wish or

something you needed done how to do this how to get that I don't know who Jim was but Jim fixed it and of course they showed it in television well that's the kind of preaching we have today Jim will fix it only we

have made almighty God into Jim Jim will fix it how to be happy how to live a fulfilled life how to do this how to do that how to do the other thing man-centered religion playing down the emphasis of justification by faith alone and the imputation of the righteous merits of Christ redefining the very essence of the gospel I talked about this new perspective on Paul I better close my Bible I haven't got half way through the message but I better close my Bible otherwise my wife is going to tell me didn't I tell you so listen a redefining of the very heart of the gospel I want to

bring everything to that book but I want to tell you this and I'll be honest about it right up front anything that is posited upon the belief that all the protestant reformers got it wrong on the doctrine of law and grace on the doctrine of justification and acceptance with God any theory that's posited on the basis that they got it all wrong is going to have a hard time with me and I trust it will have with you too these were the men who controlled the world isn't that a wonderful thought men of one book men into whose soul this book had come with light and power it made them what they were men who lived in the light of this word men of one book men into whom this book came with mighty mighty power men who had a grasp of the gospel men who would stand for it to the death we'll deal with

that as I finish this God willing next week these are the men we need today America needs men of God we need them in the pulpit the work of God is being choked for want of man some of you young men you get on your knees I'm not calling anybody to preach God forbid but I want you to go get alone with God I remember as a 17 year old going before God an 18 year old possibly getting before God getting on my knees and staying there day after day Lord what would you have me to do I will do anything go anywhere I want only the will of God I was not asking God to make me a preacher I never asked God to make me a preacher I never thought I ever could be a preacher but I wanted God's will sure I wanted to succeed in life sure I wanted to be able to get a job and make plenty of money and settle down

and travel the world I had all the views and visions and desires that any normal young person would have but all those had to be brought to the feet of Jesus that's what I want you young fellas to do because listen one of these days very very soon we're all going to stand before the Lord what's going to count in that day what's going to count do you remember the words of the little course only one life will soon be passed only what's done for Christ will last when I go out to meet God my only desire is that my life to some small extent will have done something for Christ if God calls you to be a preacher to do that then let God do the calling you do the obeying but whether you're in the pulpit or teaching in a school or serving in a shop or working in a factory floor or raising children

in the home wherever you are God says I sought for a man I sought for a man He's still seeking in every age in every generation I sought for a man I wonder when he comes to where you're sitting tonight will he find one let's bow our heads in prayer in a moment the meeting will be over I trust that the word of God will ring on in every heart I trust tonight that if you know Christ you will make very very very sure that when the Lord says I sought for a man you will honestly be able to say Lord here am I just whatever you want me to be here am I if you're here tonight and you've never known Christ the word of his grace has never entered into your heart the reality of saving power has never transformed your soul then the command of the gospel is repent and believe repent and believe that's

God's command the first sermon Jesus ever preached that's what he said if we can help you to Christ Mr.

Bream, Dr. Barrett and I are here to help you we invite you to remain let's open God's word to point you Christward Father in heaven find men of God in this meeting indeed we pray create men of God in this

meeting forgive us our backsliding our coldness of heart Lord we pray tonight make us men of God fill the towns and cities of America with men not molded by the society but who will mold the society in which they live placing upon it the impress of the gospel of divine grace Lord answer prayer and give fruit for this time together now part us with thy blessing keep us in thy fear both now and evermore we pray in Jesus name Amen

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