

# Anabaptist History (Day 11) the Birth of the Amish

by Dean Taylor

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*Dean Taylor explores the historical roots of the Amish movement, highlighting key figures, events, and the impact of persecution on their development.*

**Duration:** 1:26:41

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:30-32

**Topics:** "Church Discipline", "Anabaptist History"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the historical context of the Anabaptist movement in Emmental Valley, focusing on the division that led to the Amish community's formation. It explores the challenges faced by the Amish Brethren, their excommunication, and the subsequent Bern Revival that resulted in mass exiling of families. The sermon also addresses the topic of dealing with sin within the church, particularly the concept of shunning for gross sins and the importance of learning from past mistakes to be vessels of the Holy Spirit in today's world.

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## Transcript

OK, now take your Emmental Valley map. And this is Bern there, so you can kind of take it over there. And in this valley, as it was called by the authorities in their time, was an Anabaptist nest, as they called it, probably referring to a rat's nest.

And so you can see a lot of the areas that we're going to be talking about today. If you can take down here into Bern, go over about midway down a little bit, you see Bowville, B-O-W-I-L. You see that? You see that? OK.

And a little bit there towards that other little F city there, about right in there, was Moser's Barn, where they finally met and where the Amish division happened. That's where it happened there. And around this area is where the different meetings they had and all that types of things.

The Amish Brethren came from this point over in, if you look at your cup and the cross, way over into what's now France, the border of France, the Alsace area, and St. Marie-Amis over in that area. And they came into here to settle their disputes. This scene that I took this picture from, if you see now from that Bowville, go up straight, and you see over there Langnau.

And then right above it is, have a Texas boy say this, Druce Rudy, however you say that. That's this scene setting on that mountain right there, looking down. And this here is the Emmental River that you will see going there right in front of Druce Rudy, however you say that.

It's right up there. And that's setting on top of that mountain, looking down. So that gives you an idea.

Truly one of the most beautiful places on Earth. So here you go, Jacob. If you have yesterday's, pack it.

And we're going to finish that. Otherwise, it's right here. And then here's a map of our area here in the Emmental.

So you can, in this area, it's a nice map. This is from the Mennonite Encyclopedia. And several places that come up in early Anabaptist history, you'll see these cities right here.

So you can keep that as kind of a nice resource. I think it's a good one. OK, let's start with prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, we look today to some troubling times that happen to brothers that wanted to give their all for you. And when we do that, Father, we find as passionate people, oftentimes, we disagree. Dear God, I do pray in our age that you can teach us the right way to be able to work things out, the way to be brothers with each other, and be able to put you first in the kingdom of heaven above all of our own personal ideas.

Dear Father, I pray that you bring this history to life to us today and apply it to this generation. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen. OK, so to recall yesterday, what we did was we came up and started looking at some of the growth and persecution of the Swiss Brother. And I wanted to try to get to here, but it was good we had nice conversations and things that we didn't, so that's OK.

So what I'm going to do now is to get into the seeds that started this new revival movement that led to the Amish. There's been a particular good, interesting book just recently written, a two-volume set on Amish history by Leroy Beachy. Anybody know Leroy Beachy? I guess maybe a lot of you all do.

And it's very nice. This was recently done. Very nice.

He's an older man in the 80s. He did all these illustrations on his own, did his own in-design and everything, and I was impressed with him. Actually, I'm intimidated by him.

So it's a very good work. And this is the first time in Amish history was written from an Amish person. Leroy Beachy coming from, what is the New Order Amish now? Or do you know, Esther? Or just a conservative Beachy? Is he a conservative Beachy? OK.

Very charming man. I was able to go to Germany with him, and I had him on the tour to show me all these nice places. It was kind of fun to have him.

I'm going to be quoting from, or reading from that, and some of the things I took in your paper I gave you came from that. He tries to present a little bit of a different slant on the Amish story. He feels a bit jilted from the Amish heritage that, and if you read any kind of encyclopedias or things like that, it seems like Jacob Allman always gets the black eye.

And the heritage of Amish people today, or Beachy Amish today, kind of walk around with a bit of an intimidation. Oh, you're the guys that caused all this problem. Feel.

In general, I'll say this, and then we'll get into it. Leroy Beachy's view is that this was a revival movement. This was, although he wouldn't use that term, this was a renewal movement.

It was a new group of brothers on fire for the Lord that were scattering through all this area, preaching the gospel, and a whole new group of people came into existence, which then faced a church that's a generation or two old, and the conflicts that that has. It's the conflicts that we have today, is it not? And so he presents it from a different light. When I was preparing for this study, I'd called John D. Roth, who is the author of this Letters of the Amish Division.

He's also the editor of the Midnight Quarterly View. And he's done a lot of studies in this. And I said, just help me get a balance between these different views.

And I appreciate his thoughts on it, was that he believes that Leroy Beachy is bringing up a lot of great points and great illustrations about the Amish Division, just perhaps stressing it a little too far the other way as well. So we can find our thoughts in that. The nice thing about this that John D. Roth gave us, these are the primary sources.

This little book are the letters that went back and forth between the Mennonites and the Amish. And so from this, we can get a nice idea. I tried to take from this for this lecture.

So coming after Hans Landis, we ended yesterday with the death of Hans Landis. And after that, there was, again, remember how they almost felt a little guilty, it seemed, in even the court records. They even said, we put to death this godly man, the head of a leader in the Church of God.

So after that, that was, what, 1614? You got your packets? Yeah, 1614. In the year 1618, everybody got a really big distraction. I'm going to go over this a little bit more when we get into the Hutterites, because they graphically record some of this big distraction.

But the distraction is called the 30-year war, starting in 1618. And the 30-year war was absolutely brutal to Europe. And the terrible thing about it, or the terrible thing about it, and the terrible thing of shame upon Christians, is that this was a brutal war between so-called Christians.

The Catholics and the Protestants now duking it out and fighting it out. And it literally ripped Europe apart. And unfortunately, many times, the Anabaptists are caught right in the middle, either the raids of the Protestants come in, and they'll raid them, and the raids of the Catholics come in, and they'll raid them.

And I'll read some of the details from the Hutterian Chronicles that actually diary some of these raids. And it's terrible. But during that time, there was an obvious distraction with what was happening in Europe.

And OK, so I ask the question now. Number 12, were there any significant conversion stories from this time period? And we get to this person called, one of my favorites, as you can imagine why, Lieutenant Heinrich Frick. And Leroy Beachy sees him as kind of a domino that starts chipping away to this new movement of the Amish that started to come out, Lieutenant Heinrich Frick.

Lieutenant Heinrich Frick was a well-to-do notable citizen of Zurich, Switzerland, who had been converted and become a Mennonite in 1625. And when he did, he refused to come one day to muster the troops, to

bring the troops out. He refused to come to the assembly.

And he was not just a lieutenant, but he was a standard bearer. Now, I got to say a little something about what it means in the military to be a standard bearer. You are the representation of the pride and the glory and the honor of your unit.

You are the, inside your breast needs to hold out what's true for your country and for your people. Heinrich Frick was the standard bearer. There's even a story, I remember, I don't suggest this book, but in War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, there's a time when Napoleon's coming over and fighting on the Russians and starting to take over the Russians, a standard bearer of the enemy is laying there dead, and he gathers all his people to look at him, the standard bearer holding the flag.

He brings his people, there dies an honorable man. So I'm just bringing that up to you to say that the idea of a standard bearer would have been a pretty big and very patriotic position for Lieutenant Heinrich Frick. But he found the Bible, and apparently some of the remnants there, even in Zurich, he got ahold of the word of God, and he got ahold of the words of Jesus, I assume.

And he said, wow, what if Jesus really meant that? Same thing happened to me, but much more dramatic with Heinrich Frick. So they would do this at times. You didn't have everyday military in those times.

You'd do kind of like the reserves we had. And they would call up the troops, and Heinrich Frick one day didn't come. And it started to cause a problem.

They tried to work with him, tried to explain to them, and finally they realized he was sticking, and nothing was going to change. And that's a significant thing. I can remember when I was going through my own personal decisions to become a conscientious objector, and I remember at 5 o'clock on all the bases around the world, at 5 o'clock they sound these trumpets from a loudspeaker.

And no matter what you're supposed to do, either driving or something, you're supposed to get out of the car and salute to the direction of where you hear this national anthem being played, or at the close of the day, your taps. And so I remember I was always trying to avoid that when I started going through these convictions. But when that happened, one time I remember being caught in the car, and I was just reading the Daniel stories about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and about how they didn't bow.

And I said, all right, Tonya, we're going to stay in the car. And the guy in front of me, he got out of his car, and he was like, he kept looking back like, what are you doing? And so to bring you to a totally different world, these things have lots of meaning attached to them. I even saw him jot down my license number as he got back in his car.

I mean, there's serious offenses to people in those kind of a setting. So Lieutenant Heinrich Frick did not show up when they mustered the troops. Frick's refusal caused a new wave of persecution in Zurich.

There had been some silence, but now, well, for a little bit. And now they brought it back. During his trial, it was said in the records, it is because of your bad example that the government has compelled to make a new strenuous effort to extinguish the movement.

A record of the Anabaptist activities known as the Teufel Commission, the Anabaptist committee, was actually created to dig out these new groups of people. And one of those records, they have a testimony of a lady that comes from his town. And this lady from his town had this to say in the records.

The pastor's sister of the local reformed church in the area reported, quote, as an Anabaptist would be prone to do, he is occasionally seen on neighboring farms at nearby Mauschweden. He had formerly led an honorable conduct, had regularly attended preaching service, had as a child learned to read and practice the art of fencing. You know what fencing is, it's fencing with a sword.

And had been diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures. But now he is an Anabaptist, is disobedient, and has a large following. Many local people admire him and are overtaken with, quote, the Anabaptist fantasy.

I love that. When questioned, why are you giving up these things? Why are you giving up all this? He answered, lack of church discipline. Interesting.

Infant baptism, militarism, and the oath. When asked where these meetings were held, he said, first of all, only at night, usually in the forest, never during the day or on Sunday. Anabaptists only preach.

They do not pressure one further. But one must repent, for preaching in itself does not make a person better. Good thought.

All right. Frick, after all that, was thrown in prison. There in prison, they tortured him.

They abused him. Or whatever they did for him, Heinrich Frick recanted. Oh, can you believe it? But he got out, and now what does he do? This is a man of honor.

It pricked his heart. I can't take it. Kind of like remember Hovemeyer we talked about.

So he turned himself in and said that he recanting from his recanting, and he turned himself in back into the authorities, and of course was arrested again. This time, Frick was actually the owner of two very nice farms and had a considerable amount of money. You can go see some of his farms still to this day, and his initials are written in one of the stones of the farm that he built in this area here.

After this arrest, everything was confiscated. After his prison sentence was done, he ended up just had nothing to go back to, and he just started to become, I guess, a traveling missionary. In this area, at least, a local traveling missionary.

Despite these warnings, he continued his Anabaptist activity and was once again put back in prison in 1641, this time in the Attenbach prison. Now, I have a little picture of what's left of the Attenbach prison there today. That's the Lamont River.

Right upstream there or right downstream there is where Felix Mons was drowned. And if you're looking now from the Grossmunster side, looking across the river, that's what's left of the Attenbach prison. I'm just going to take a little side note to tell you a little something about the Attenbach prison.

The Attenbach prison is a place where lots of Anabaptist martyrs were there. Actually, in the Ausbund, how many of you have ever sung from the Ausbund? All right, very good. A lot of you.

All right. From the Ausbund, over 50 of the martyr songs come, were written from this prison. And so it was a particular interest to people who were suffering for the faith at that time.

As a matter of fact, there's an interesting story. I'll just break in real quick here. When you got into that prison, things were pretty bad.

There was even one story, I'm just going to give you a quick synopsis of it, that's here in Leroy Beachy's account here, he gives the account, where one young man, they really wanted to break his faith. And so he was there and they worked on him and tortured him and made him go hungry, and finally he recanted, he was a young man. He got back out, he again said, I can't believe I did that.

He repented, went to his ministers, turned his life around and started living a life again for Christ. And they arrested him again and put him back in the prison. This time, the prison guards were just out and out cruel to him, made him suffer, didn't feed him, it was basically starving him to death.

And there's an account where some of the hardened criminals are criminals from, imagine this kind of cheap stone and all that around here in the prison. And knowing that this poor young man was starving to death, one of the prisoners was taking his soup and through the straw of his bed was shooting the soup through the crack in the wall so that this young man could have soup to lick up to be able to survive. Finally, he gave some impression that he might recant, so they started working with him, but he wouldn't recant, so they kept giving him just a little bit of bread.

They finally started giving him more bread and water, but his stomach, when you get to this point of starvation, you can't just start eating. And even though they started feeding him again, it was too late and he starved to death there in that prison. So to understand some of these people recanted, I'm not gonna throw any stones, you know what I'm saying? There were some pretty hard conditions that they received, and that's where now Heinrich Frick found himself.

But this time, there was a prison break, a very well-planned prison break. During a well-planned prison break, in the escape, a boat floated up to the riverside, you can see the river there, floated up the riverside wall of the prison. There in the wall, they received the prisoners who actually chipped away on the riverside, and then climbed into the boat and escaped.

Interestingly enough, in the records, they seemed not that concerned about it. They didn't send a bunch of people after them. Sometimes they're just glad to get rid of people, because it costs them to have prisoners.

And the records say there wasn't a lot of investigation to go look for these people. So Heinrich Frick was at large again. Years later though, betrayed by a trusted friend who seized him, dragged him back to the court, and there he was finally put in a prison again, as the Attenbach prison.

He was finally released again at 1656, and then headed for the Alsace, there in that eastern France area, and became a preacher around this area. So, it was an impressive time there, with all this that was going on. With all these persecutions and all these things, it was very hard.

A historian, John D. Roth, who I mentioned earlier, mentions about this general whole area, to sum up this whole time period of the 1500s. That if you're to sum up the people that were officially executed during that time, he comes up with a figure that he says, the repression and persecution, not only in Switzerland, but in South Central Germany, Austria, and throughout the Netherlands, as well, was often brutal. By the end of the 16th century, that's the 1500s, an estimated 4,000 Anabaptists suffered martyrdom for their convictions.

Incredible. All right, so now we have Heinrich Frick there in eastern France, St. Marie in the Alsace, and now we're coming in to say, okay, what's it like now? Everybody pretty much is scattered. Okay, so again,

there's Switzerland, and pretty much everybody is scattered to the areas here.

This is in Germany, they call it the Palatinate. It's interesting, when I was over there, I did not know this when I was becoming a conscientious objector. That a lot of these people who they went at this time and settled when they hear about the Palatinate, I live in the town of Kaiserslautern.

And down the street from me was an early Amish church, I didn't know at the time. And I had a friend of mine, who you see in my book, was also a conscientious objector. He lived in a little town of Tripstadt, which was a very place where a Mennonite refugee was working there to fix up barns and stuff.

And all this was around this area that I lived. Makes me wonder sometimes about principalities and stuff, but I don't know. Who knows, it was just interesting.

But anyway, they went into this area in Germany, now in France, and also, of course, in the Emmental Valley. You could hide up in these mountains and regions and all that kind of a thing. So what was it like to be a refugee at this time, and how did the community start to grow? Weary from the persecution, I have number 14 here.

Weary from all persecution, the faithful continued to find other places. Fortunately, after the mass devastation of the 30 year war, after the 30 year war, the lords and the things said, hey, this is great. I'll take anybody who'll come in and fix up my castles, and fix up my gardens, and fix up my land.

I mean, it was just devastated. And that was a great opportunity for these refugees who said, there would be, let's say, a lord here who has a destroyed castle. And so there'd be a group of them that would come there and get some works and would come here.

Particularly in Saint-Marie-Ami, they also had lost their silver mining, and they were devastated by the 30 year war, so it was a very nice place for some of these to go. And so here's just a little quote here from a church record in this Alsace region of France, and they have this to say from the church record. When this sect sneaked into the village, the lordship of Rappelstein took in a number of them for three years, which he installed in the abandoned upper castle, where they were to clean up the gardens, which were completely grown up with brush and trees, to restore the living quarters into satisfactory condition, and to bring the grounds back to cultivation.

These soon drew in others from Switzerland, so that in a short time, there was a great swarm of Anabaptists, which relocated here and there, but assembled in great numbers at the castle for their worship service. When this was forbidden them, and they no longer let them worship at the castle, when this was forbidden them, they began holding their meetings outside of the village in hedges, gardens, and fields. May God impress the officials to uproot this weed and restore them to the pure church.

Interesting quote, huh? That quote gives you kind of an idea of how it happened. How the immigration in this area, around here, and how they came in there, they'd get an opportunity, and then, hey, hey, guess what? It looks like our little lords here are gonna let us grow, and they grew, and so that began to happen. And so one of the big areas, like I mentioned, was an area of St. Maria Me, which is there in Alsace.

Again, looking on our map on page 79, okay? So just take that right over into the Alsace region there, and you can see where a lot of them went right there, northwest of Switzerland. Okay, once their numbers grew, what effect did this have on the church? And here's a significant point to bring in that leads to our birth of the Amish. Of this little community of refugees, Anabaptists came into France.

They started to organize, and on April 2nd, 1660, they held a meeting in which they officially accepted the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. Now, at this time, remember, I'm just following the Swiss Brotherhood. Holland is now pretty much gone and had 75 years of peace, and have developed.

They're, matter of fact, getting into dealing with worldly things, and by that time, they're already pretty much compromising in a lot of places. Okay, so that's all been going on in Holland. They did produce this Dortrecht Confession of Faith.

It was printed in German around 1650, and now this new group of revised people got a hold of this and said, oh, this is what we're gonna say, this is our statement of faith, and they embraced it, the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. And that was over there in this, again, Alsace area of France. But the brothers that were in the Emmental area, this area, were still surviving in this area outside of Bern, and also some of these here in the Palatinate and around here.

They never quite received the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. They had the Scheidheim Confession, and so, but there was an assuming that these people, you're all from the same thing, haven't we all accepted that? And it's one of the church problems that end up where you better make sure your fundamentals are clearly established. Because people start to assume things, you get into crisis, you end up with some problems, and we do here in a minute.

The Dortrecht Confession spells out some of the things that the Scheidheim Confession does not. I think the Dortrecht Confession is a very nice confession. It gives some nice things, some nice guidelines.

I think you can abuse it, and I think people have abused it. Nevertheless, it does a nice confession. One of my favorite parts of it, we'll talk about this when we get to Holland.

You know the whole doctrine about, did Jesus receive the flesh of Mary, or did she receive it from celestial flesh from God? The Dortrecht Confession just basically says, we don't know. I love confessions that on deep things like that can just settle things, and I appreciate that kind of a spirit. Okay, so pressing on, that was something that happened during that time.

Also now, in this area, okay, quickly, I mean within a matter of 20-year period and all that, a lot of things started happening and developing. You started to have a little bit more freedom, a little bit more free time to talk about doctrine and to establish your business. In 1670, there was a great purge of people being kicked out of Bern.

That's a great picture, huh? Being kicked out of Bern, and then when they got into this area and started finding areas in the Palatinate and this thing, again, a little bit more freedom from persecution, a little bit more time to study and to decide where you disagree with people, too, all right? They didn't continue that Marine Corps spirit of, some of them at least, of spreading the kingdom of God, and so sometimes they got into places that were theological problems. One particular incident, for instance, the bishop, by 1692, here in Saint-Marie-Amis, was actually put on the tax roll of the bourgeois class, which means the well-to-do. So they were actually able to be able to collect enough money to have this kind of a feeling.

So things a little bit quickly started to seem a little bit different. Hans Reis, okay, next page 12, was one of those Swiss brethren that was taken out during the 1670 purge, which about 700 families came from. When you read some of those accounts, Leroy Beachy gives them to us in his book.

They're going on and on. About today, 30 families came. Over here, 60 families.

In this farm, 20 families. They'd be coming up the river as refugees, and Hans Reis was one of those people. Hans Reis, also, I get the impression when you read about Hans Reis, he was a very intelligent man, a very witty man, and a very capable man.

And a very intelligent man. And so he was a great organizer, and he became the leader of the Swiss brethren. He looks like he probably made promises not to return to Switzerland, although he did return to Switzerland and ended up coming back into the Emmental area where he lived and pastored his churches in that area.

So he's one guy. Don't forget Hans Reis. You gotta know for the test, Hans Reis.

Gotta know him. Cuz he becomes the leader, the Mennonite side of the split. The other one that Leroy Beachy gives a lot of attention to is a man by the name of Ulrich Mueller.

Ulrich Mueller came from the hometown that Lieutenant Heinrich Frick came from. And he got converted and began to share all over the place. You find court records of him all over this Emmental Valley, all over the different things.

People arrested, like that he stayed in this house. And this man would lose his farm as a penalty just for letting Ulrich Mueller stay at his house and preach that evening. And so he became a very big evangelist.

There seems to have been some sort of a revival at this time in the Emmental Valley to which 200 new names came into the Anabaptist world. And this is one of the reasons that Leroy Beachy gives for that he doesn't call it a split, he calls it a group that never joined. Semantics, I kinda lean more towards it's a split personally, but I appreciate the emphasis that Leroy is making.

But he says this, that okay, even to the day, if I were to give you your surnames, I think most of y'all would be able to say, he comes from an Amish side or he comes from a Mennonite side, right? When you hear, if I was to say Stolfus, what side am I on? If I was to say, give me a Mennonite name, yeah, exactly, perfect. Let's say Martin, you would say, okay, if I was to say Waldner, you'd say what? All right, exactly, okay, so you see that these families represent something. And he claims, his thought is, if it would have been a split, an official split, those names would have been on both sides.

But still to this day, Amish have Amish names, Mennonites have Mennonite names, and so they never quite came together. He brings up this interesting thing, and just skipping through to that, in page 13, you see that big plaque there? That plaque is an interesting thing they found in the church in this area, in this Emmental area. This church, that huge plaque was actually, it's huge, that picture doesn't give justice, I mean, you couldn't even hold it here, it's gigantic.

And what it was, was a proclamation of people that gave money to the church, to the building of the church, sounding your trumpet. And all those names, I think, what does he say? There's 26 names on there, 26 names on there, and only two are not known Amish names. So this area was a huge Amish area, and it was from that very place that the, from that very particular place was especially where the Amish came from.

They'd given the name Oberland, which means the higher land. So if you look at here, this is the lower land, but if you get more up in the mountains, okay, in the mountainous region, that would be called the Oberlanders. So these are the Emmmentalers along the Emmental River, and the Oberlanders are those that are more in the mountain people, okay? This revival of people seemed to have happened in the

mountainous people, so they're called the Oberlanders, which are, becomes the, birth themselves into the Amish.

If you see there, I tried to give the pictures, that actually is the Yoder seal of arms and the Gingrich seal of arms. And if you look down at the bottom of that plaque, there's several of the seal of arms, the coat of arms, excuse me, I'm saying coat seal of arms, the coat of arms for these names, and it's interesting to see those for typical Anabaptist names. It's strange when you're there.

I mean, today, even to this day, when you're walking through the cemetery, you think you're walking through an Amish cemetery. It's Kaufman, it's all these different things, and it's kind of impressive to see that, even to the day. That's obviously where a lot of you have come from.

All right. So Ulrich Müller becomes Miller in our English. He keeps this evangelism going, and finally, he doesn't, for some reason we don't know, he stops doing this, whether he was getting tired or wanted to pass on, or maybe he was one of the few leaders who knows how to pass on the torch to the next generation early enough.

But he replaced and ordained a couple brothers here, by the name of Jacob Ammann, Isaac Kaufman, Nicholas Augsburg, and Joost Yoder. Interestingly, I'll bring this for the Yoder's sake, the Joost Yoder, he was a... There's a document of his where he was working for some in the church records, and they said he was an honorable, modest, wise man, and then he became an Anabaptist, that's all scratched out in the record. Well, not anymore.

So, that was Joost Yoder. These became elders in the church, and particularly, then when that great purge happened, when more and more persecution happened, these brothers ended up in St. Marie-Amie, in the Alsace. They think Jacob Ammann was actually born in St. Marie-Amie.

Alright, let's find myself where I'm on these notes. 19, considering the fact that the Oberlander Amish were a new group of revised Anabaptists, Leroy Beachy suggests that he does not consider it a split. One of the points that Leroy used to support this claim is their surnames.

I gave you that. So now, we have the forming of the... Okay, let's read here the division from the source book. In the summer of 1693, the Mennonite congregations in the settlement of Alsace commissioned Jacob Ammann and several other ministers to make an investigative journey to the Emmental, an attempt to clarify the position of the Swiss brother ministers on several questions regarding church discipline.

There were repeated reports of the Emmentaler Mennonites attending public state church services in different accounts and the lack of church discipline. Alright, so we're gonna change gears now. Bring out your next packet.

So now, this church is growing, these zealous brothers are there, and the first thing that happens is, you know how it is when you're a... I hope you do, you know how it is, I do. When you're this radical, on fire for the Lord, you wanna do everything you can, and they were even concerned that those ladies were having babies so much that if you only had communion one time a day, excuse me, one time a year, it'd be nice if we had it two times a year, then we could make sure they could come to communion. Why they couldn't come to communion otherwise, I don't know, but that's the first problem.

But nevertheless, they were using that as a reason, and plus, they just wanted more. Yes, sir? I have an answer to that, brother. Alright.

You're right, brother. They didn't show up. You're right.

You're right, I've been in trouble myself even in Lancaster County of using the pregnant word myself in different vocabularies, so you're right, even to this day. So, thank you for bringing that up. So it was, it was, I don't, anyway, that's why.

Okay, thank you. Alright, so they told the Emmentalers. Well, again, Hans Reis then comes down to discuss this and says, okay, and he starts, we start to see some of the wit of Hans Reis, but also, I don't know, this is me, it almost seems a little slippery.

Jacob Allman is one of these direct guys. He's a prophet, you know, he's a zeal, give me an answer. And so he asked the Emmentaler brothers, well, how do you feel? Should there be communion twice a year or just once a year? And let me find my place here.

And to that answer, Hans Reis says this. Jacob wanting a straight answer, Hans Reis saying, if a person was worthy and could prepare himself properly and well, then one time would not be too much. But if a person could prepare himself properly and well, then one time would not be too few.

Excuse me, did I say one time? If a person was worthy and could prepare himself properly and well, then two times, excuse me, you need to change that, it's a big error, then two time would not be too much. In other words, if you could prepare yourself for communion, if you could go through that much self introspection and prepare yourself for communion, then two times wouldn't be too much. But if you can do that, well, then one time is not too few.

Okay, well, just give me a direct answer. Okay, that was the answer. He also then gave the analogy of the priest going into only going one time into the sacrifice to offer a high sacrifice once a year.

Yes, sir? How'd they get on earlier on when they first, at the first part of the meeting, you read how they would have communion nearly every time they were together. Good question, Andrew. Andrew's saying, early we're reading in those sparks of the Swiss brethren there around Zurich.

We see a different feel. And here now, it is 150 years later from those days. We've traveled 150 years through all that persecution.

And somewhere, and we're gonna talk about this particularly when we get to the Moravian Anabaptists, somewhere the view of church as a community of brothers living for progressing and giving out the kingdom of God, sometimes, we fight this constantly in our life, turns into church, kirk, where you are there and you live your life and you come to church. And I don't know, there seems to be a balance that we have to find if we think that these people are too excessive in the early days and then what they came to in this day. But you are right, in the early days, the idea was something that they were with each other all the time and had that kind of communion in that way.

It's a good point you bring up. And we can bring that up later this week as well. Okay, two elders, Hans Reis and Bindig Schneider, opposed his innovation, although it was decided to permit it.

Amund and Reis thus became the leader of opposing factions on the issue. But then quickly, and I don't know, I have to wonder, was there some offense here? Did you get offended? I don't know. But all of a sudden, the debate got turned off of communion to the start of saying, well, what about the Dortrich Confession of Faith? And so, when asked directly about how he felt about communion, that's what Hans

Reis said, shortly after the main issue, the controversy between the two men shifted rapidly to shunning.

And how would y'all say that in your background? Meidung? That's what you'd say it? Okay, Meidung. Was it? Meidung. Meidung, you'd say it in the Hutterish there.

Okay, Amund asked two preachers, Nicholas Moser and Peter Geiger, who were called by Hans Reis to help settle the communion controversy in his own congregation, to ask Reis what he believed concerning the shunning. Learning that Reis opposed it, Jacob Allman became very concerned. And then he also asked him how, okay, so let's change the subject about communion.

Let's start asking, how do you feel about the Dortrich Confession? And we heard this story. I started hearing a story. And you know how it is, when you get into those church debates, I mean, have you been there? Usually, there's a story attached to it.

Well, we heard that in your congregation, there was a lady, and this lady outwardly lied, this is the true story, outwardly lied to the congregation, we don't know what the lie was, and then she denied it. And then she was actually found out by the deacons, and then when she was found out, she still fought against it until it was proven, then she finally admitted that she was a liar. And you didn't do anything about it.

Is that church discipline? He's asking Hans Reis. Do you confess the Dortrich Confession of faith, or do you not? Hmm, so what does Hans Reis, the intelligent, witty man, say? If I say yes to this, if I say yes to that, there's a little bit of a trap in there, so he avoids the question entirely. So, do you believe in church discipline? He avoids the question.

Do you confess the Dortrich Confession of faith? He won't give a direct answer. Okay, learning that Reis deposed it, Jacob Amund became very concerned. They had all received the Dortrich Confession of faith, he thought.

So in Jacob's mind, by not saying yes, of course I confess the Dortrich Confession of faith. If you at least threw him that bone, it might have gone far, but he wouldn't quite even say that. So without saying that he doesn't confess the Dortrich Confession of faith, and particularly the article on shunning, he felt that Hans Reis was apostatizing from the faith.

That was the crisis going through Jacob Amund and the Amish brothers' minds. Amund took three ministers, Uli Amund, we think his younger brother, one of my favorites of this period, Christian Blank and Nicholas Augsburg, with him on a tour of the churches to find out what the ministers in Switzerland believed about shunning. And then some interesting thing came out.

Some of the brothers and the Emmental brothers said, I think we should have the brotherhood here to decide these things. Good question. You know, I always think if I could break in here, Acts 15 doesn't leave you with just the elders for a reason.

It was the entire multitude that finally came in and had to agree to the decision. And some of the Emmental brothers were saying, I think we should bring in the brotherhood. To add to the crisis, add to the pressure, you see that little picture I have from Leroy Beachy's drawing? There was a warrant out for Jacob Amund's arrest.

They wanted him, they knew he was a traveling missionary, they wanted him, and so while you're there having these little meetings, you have to sneak around because you could be thrown in prison anytime. So

to add that to the dynamic. Amund, so after he went around and found out that nobody would say, I confess the torture confession, he became more and more concerned.

Discovering that only a few of them agreed with him, Amund decided to call a meeting of all the Swiss ministers at Nicholas Moser's barn near Friedersmatt. And that's where I showed you at the beginning there where that is now a little south east of Bern in this Emmental Valley, not far down the road from this picture. However, even though letters were sent out beforehand and to gather all the ministers there, particularly Hans Reis, a lot of the ministers didn't show up and particularly Bishop Hans Reis didn't bother to show.

Since the meeting was inconclusive, a second meeting was called. The first, I think they wanted like eight weeks and he said, I can't wait eight weeks. Not to mention there's people trying to kill him.

So he convinced him down to two weeks and they called for another meeting. This time, again, Hans Reis didn't show, but he gave a reason. He was raking his hay.

Ouch. So, and he circulated a letter during this two week period to all of his ministers saying, don't pay attention to the young ministers. Hmm, the stage is set for a big problem, right? So they go ahead and have the meeting anyway.

When he hears that Hans Reis is not coming, he pulls out of his pocket, he pulls out of his pocket against reasons that, against Hans Reis. Oh, and one of the reasons when he did ask specifically, what was Hans Reis answer? Again, do you confess the torture confession of faith on shunning or not? Give me an answer. Here's the answer.

What goeth into the mouth does not defile the person, but what cometh out of the mouth, that defiles the man. See, he's a witty man, but he's a witty man, but he's not direct, and that really bothered Jacob Almond. Okay, and so, I wrote in here, stop, take a breath.

And then I write, there is never any situation bad enough that you can't make it worse. And this was one of those. Yeah, and in particular here, since they're talking about eating, they're saying that it's defiling to eat with a disciplined brother.

So if I'm eating with Caleb and he's disciplined, then I'm defiling myself. And they're using that argument, not what comes into you defiles you, but what proceeds out of you. He says, that's not the point, you're missing it.

And then they get themselves into a little trap. And the future Mennonite brethren start to go to 1 Corinthians chapter five and say, no, that's not even talking about shunning. That's talking about communion.

That only means that we don't eat and drink with people that in communion, but we can do that outside of the communion setting. Jacob Almond jumped on that, obviously, and decided that that was ridiculous. And that's one of the things we can talk about now in our discussion here in a minute.

So they went on and it got worse. And yes, it got worse. There's never any situation bad enough that you can't make it worse.

I heard that analogy once at work, some lady gave it as a kind of a little sentence sermon. And I heard him say that. And the analogy she gave was, he heard about someone's daughter who was at someone's house and they were at a party where they shouldn't have been, and they were drinking and they shouldn't have been.

That was bad. But then the police came. So instead of just turning herself in, getting home and getting in trouble, she jumped out of the window.

And jumped out of the window, she broke an ankle. It got worse. Then she got in her car and drove drunk.

And then got arrested with a DUI. Okay. There's nothing bad, nothing you can do bad enough that you can't make it worse.

And this got worse. All right. After this point of the controversy headed to a climax, Amund put before him a meeting, a letter with six charges against Hans Reis.

And when he had heard the charges, he declared that Hans Reis is to be excommunicated. All right. After further controversial discussion, Amund then, then he started asking, what about you, Nicholas Moser? Do you confess it? What about you, Peter Geiger? Do you confess it? Well, I'd like to confer with my brother.

So he said, I would, excommunicated. Excommunicated. And they end up excommunicating a lot of these brothers.

Now, again, they're not giving him direct answers. Okay. But granted, we're gonna see that even the Amunds felt that this got too passionate too quick.

Okay. But nevertheless, you can see how just, things can get this way. And being in church life, oh, let's learn some lessons from this, brothers.

I wrote to stop, take a deep breath. All right. Finally, the meeting broke up.

Jacob Amund, Peter Geiger said, he said, wait. And so after, wait, wait. When Jacob Amund then gave him his excommunication, he gave him his reasons why he excommunicated him, he got up to leave.

And Peter Geiger grabbed his shirt and said, wait, let me tell you my side of the story. And he ripped his shoulder away and walked out of the door. The rest is history.

And so that is what became of it. A little later, the Amish had a meeting nearby, which some would view, not Leroy Beachy, as the first Amish gathering. I think you could clearly say, I would kind of see it more as the people there of the movement there in St. Marie, I mean.

So it's interesting that this happened. So he went back home, and he began to get into the different controversies, and they began to now write some different letters. So just in a brief summary, John D. Roth gives us these explanations on the issues that come back and forth with the letters.

I won't go into great details with them, of the letters that was the dividing line between the two, but I think it'd be good for us, for historical purposes for us to look at this, and for us to learn some lessons in it as well. The first one, obviously we knew, came up with the frequency of communion, started to come into play there. The next thing that actually played at the beginning, and Uli Amund said, you're not being fair when it got brought in at the end, was actually the issue of foot washing.

Interestingly enough, the Swiss Brethren, and the Hutterites, all those that originated from the original Swiss Brethren, never actually picked up foot washing until later, until much later after this. When the newly revised people from the Emmental area got to Alsace, and to St. Marie-Amie, and started looking at the Dortrich Confession, they got excited about this foot washing thing, and received it as a statement of faith. It is in the Dortrich Confession.

And that became, early on, a part of the division, because they said, y'all are even washing feet, and we've never done that. And then later, when the Amish were apologizing, and trying to come back into the Mennonites, the Mennonites said, we're not gonna take you because you wash feet. It actually became that kind of a thing.

And Uli Amund calls them on it. But it's interesting just to keep note that that did finally come into, I think all the Mennonite churches, I would say these days, would practice foot washing, and that's become more common, okay? Again, that's why we don't see it in the Hutterites as well. You never practiced foot washing, yeah.

The original Swiss Brethren never had that practice. I like it. I think it's a very neat time.

We do it, the way we used to do it, is we would have a time, like the Church of the Brethren does it, where we do it before the communion, and it has a nice time of preparing, and that type of thing. I've always been blessed with it. I do recognize, though, even in the early church, you don't see any wording of them actually doing it through the Antonicing Fathers as well, just for your historic information.

The only mentioned quote on it is Origen, who mentions that it's washing feet is the humble acts you do for your brethren, but I like it. I like it, and it's in scripture, and I do. I'm in that.

Okay, the procedure of church discipline, number three, Roth gives us. And in this question, who has the final say in the excommunication? Is it the brotherhood, or is it a minister? Can a minister say, I excommunicate you, or does it take the brotherhood to agree to that? That became an issue. The Amish, actually, this was a Bible school for them, and they actually repented of this very act and said, we were wrong.

It takes a brotherhood to be able to excommunicate someone today, someone then, and still, technically, that's the way it would be practiced today, from my understanding, although if you disagree, things don't work out for you that well, but nevertheless, that's the idea, and that concept of God working amongst the brotherhood, for me, personally, I very much like that. Okay, and then the salvation of the true-hearted, like Lucas just brought up here. One of the issues that came up that was fighting back and forth was, well, how do you consider your people who are not Anabaptists? How do we think of them? Remember the Sleighthound Confession, how hard it was spoken of about them and what they should do, not go to their services and things.

Well, how much should you put on that? You know, and can you go to their service? There's even some records where a man gave a neighbor a bottle of wine as payment to take his child to the Reformed Church to get him baptized so that he could keep his farm and pass inheritance on to his children, and so, you know, all these compromises are starting to face that. Here in St. Marie-Amie, they were suffering with that, and quickly after they got back, even in that congregation, they started to split over this, and Jacob Amon and the brothers there excommunicated some people for, again, for this type of attending of different church services. That was a hot issue.

On the Emmental side of the coin, it was a little harder. A lot of these brothers were helping you. They were, you know, letting you preach in their barn and willing to get their barn, you know, taken, and so it was a little bit harder.

They had these more relationships that they had to deal with, where these first-generation brothers here didn't quite work, didn't have those times. So good or bad, that made the dynamic a little bit more difficult. And then, of course, the five offenses calling for church discipline, what kind of thing can you discipline with, and then finally, the ban and shunning, and then the, I gave you there, we won't read it all here today unless it comes up in our discussion, the shunning of the separated comes up there in the ban, which becomes, of course, the most contentious part of it.

I'm gonna summarize to the end, and then we'll get to our discussion on this. When they get back, time to cool off, time to think about it, you start some apologizing. Maybe the brotherhood meeting down there in St. Marie, I mean, he said, okay, you said what? And I don't know, but they, somehow, the brothers back, the Amish brothers started to say, okay, I think that we overstepped our bounds there.

And in the letters of Amish division, you start to see a series of letters written by even Jacob Amon, Uli Amon in particular, and some of the brothers from the Amish of apologizing, saying, okay, there was a problem here. But in that, oh, and one of the most beautiful things that I see, and that's why Uli Amon becomes one of my favorite figures during this time was, he said, look, I think it's fair to say there was fault on both sides. Oh, the voice of wisdom.

And in all the church disputes that I've ever seen, I have seen that over and over again. And I particularly think that some of the wisdom that we can see in this is a lot of the Imatol brothers were even asking for this. The Amish later saw this.

If this would have been brought to the whole brotherhood before you start an entire church split, I wonder how much of the whole church would have agreed for all these splitting to happen. You get a bunch of hot-headed, you know, things can happen more quickly. And so some of the wisdom is that they believed that they made some mistakes there.

And in those first apologies, though, it's not what I call an apology, and this is the next lesson. When you read through the letters, Uli Amun saying, and Jacob Amun and some of those brothers are saying, we were wrong, we were hasty, I should not have excommunicated without the brotherhood. And they even say, that was wrong.

An elder should not have excommunicated without the voice of the brotherhood, but you're doing that too, and you're not supposed to excommunicate without a brotherhood either. Uli Amun then, in his first apology, and I think it's Uli Amun, and their apologies are saying, we were wrong, but, and so we're sorry, we want to repent from you, but you do confess the Dortrich Confession, don't you? And so it's not an apology. When you've messed up, you really don't have a right to say, and it's bad, because sometimes there are some things you've got to deal with.

An analogy I've given before in the past with going through church problems is, let's say I get mad at my son, and I yell at him, okay? And he did something that was really bad, but I've lost my temper, and I yell at him, right? Now we've got a double problem, because my son did something that was wrong, but me as the father broke a bigger principle, because I did something that was wrong in dealing with his wrong. I have to apologize, and that makes it more difficult, and why the place of authority is so important, that it's

not much when I say, you made me yell at you. It doesn't get deep enough.

And I believe that some of the Amish here, when their first apologies were saying that we're sorry, we repent, we want to come back into the church, but you do confess the Dortrich Confession, don't you? And of course they, forget it. And finally towards the end, the Amish are so desperate in their apology, they say, we hereby excommunicate ourself, because we are sorry. Again, even that one first said, but you do confess the Dortrich Confession, and then the final, the last, they finally said, we excommunicate ourself, and there's a beautiful letter towards the end of his letters, which they just laid it out as an apology, and excommunicating themselves, and still, unfortunately, the Mennonites never received that apology.

And there was a rift that even went on, shortly right after this time, and coming in now, this is 1693, going into 1700s, the Bern Revival is all going, and they're cracking down to finally a gigantic exiling of all, hundreds and hundreds of families around Bern, and they put them on boats in Bern, and shipped them downriver to Holland, to hopefully from Holland, they would get sent to America, because they wanted them out of the continent. Fortunately, the brothers from, the Mennonites from Holland were writing letters to the embassy in Bern, and the people in Holland, they interceded this, and the government of Holland say, as soon as they set foot in Holland, they are free. And so that's how a lot of the Mennonites got into Holland, but even during that time, that happened just shortly after this, the Mennonites didn't wanna be on the same boat with the Amish, if they were sent down the river.

Ouch, and so, so that's the kind of thing that's happened, let's take a quick break, and then let's get back, and let's talk about some of the things, the theology of this discipline, and we'll go until either you run out of, if we run out of discussions, I'll tell some more stories about the Amish, some interesting ones, and then we'll keep going. So take a quick break, and we'll get back ready to talk about those issues. Okay, interesting.

All right, open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians, chapter five. Let's look at the issue. What is 1 Corinthians, chapter five, talking about? The Mennonites' side of the argument said that 1 Corinthians, chapter five, when they were in the middle of this heat of this debate, is talking about communion, we're not supposed to eat it, communion is what it's talking about.

Jacob said that's ridiculous, it's talking about everyday life. So let's read it, 1 Corinthians, chapter five. It is reported that the Amish, it is reported commonly that there is fornication among you and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

In other words, Paul's giving us a particular sin. Yet ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. Okay, so suddenly we're getting an application that you should have done something about this sin in your camp.

For I, verily, as absent in body but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present concerning him that hath done this deed. And then here's what you should do. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Strong words, yes? So however the sin is to be dealt with, they are to be given over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh, for redeeming purpose that they can be saved in the end. Your glory is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? He's applying that sin in the camp and in the

church can cause that.

Purge out therefore the old leaven that she may be a new lump. And ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Did he start talking about communion? That's the debate. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.

Okay, earlier we don't have this letter. I wrote unto you an epistle earlier not to have company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with fornicators of this world, but I'm not talking about just the worldly people you meet in the marketplace or whatever, or with the covetous or extortioners or with idolaters, for then must ye go out from the world.

But I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or covetous or an idolater or a railer or a drunkard or an extortioner, with such an one know not to eat. What's he talking about? For what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not you judge them that are within, but them that are without ye judge. Therefore put away from among you that wicked person.

1 Corinthians chapter five. All right, who thinks Hans Reis is right? That this whole thing that, no, no, no, no, no, no. You see, we can, he's only talking about shunning at the communion table and say the Midnight side and the Almighty side.

And what he's talking about, the shunning he's talking about is only shunning by not being able to come to communion. We're not supposed to do any of this, not shunning with people on the outside. Is that what he's talking about? Erasing the argument, is that what he's talking about? Yes, sir.

Maybe there's something else to throw in here. Because 1 Corinthians five, talking about a situation, let's say if it is applying to community, are we talking about communion once or twice a year or communion that would possibly be celebrated every Lord's Day as the early church may throw? Good point to bring into the equation, brother. Yeah, good point.

So if we have a community that's around each other all the time and having this kind of community kind of changes the issue anyway and it goes to a different place. But do you think, reading, is the emphasis of Paul upon an official communion table or does it sound more like just an everyday lifestyle? Jacob Almond makes this argument. I think we're all scared, but we're realizing Jacob was right.

Okay. But here's the problem. Remember what I said about the early church? Sometimes you can have the right answer to the wrong question.

Yeah, okay. And the Mennonites started to get themselves, Hans Reisz got himself into a bit of a trap because they kept defending his position and then Jacob had a great point. Well, if you're saying that this is only about communion, well, then Paul said, oh, but you can have communion with fornicators and idolaters and people of the world.

If you play, if what Paul is saying, I only want you not to have communion with fornicators that call themselves brothers, well, that means you can have communion with fornicators that are of the world. And then he said, that's a ridiculous argument. The argument is obviously talking about shunning in everyday life as a form of church punishment.

Okay. So now we've got ourselves, and I've seen this happen in church life. You know, somebody says something and they begin to walk this theology out and they can't quite let it go.

And the problem is that Almond was technically right, but the way he was applying this was a little rough, even admittedly from himself, it was a little rough. And so that made the issue even more complex. Now, I wanna hear from you.

So what are some of your thoughts? And then we can also, I'd like to get to Matthew 18. And if somebody wants to take us to a different scripture, that's fine. Let's see what you have to say.

I just wanted Paul to give us the debate here and then bring it to life for us. What about it? What about with, let's bring Matthew 18 into it. How do you think this would apply in this? Well, I'm still not quite settled about it.

Okay, good. To be honest, you're right, because is it Matthew 18 where he says you count him as a heathen and a tax collector? Good, okay. So treat him like you would any other sinner.

Okay. The, I don't know, I think you're right, but this could be saying, no, no, don't eat with him on the level of communion. Now, I'm not saying you can't have business with people in the world.

You know, kind of talking to the community here, I don't know, I can't explain it very well. No, I'm following you. I could have meant it that way.

Okay. But it does seem like the more obvious. You see what he's saying? There's a possible way to interpret this, perhaps, where, okay, he's just making a differentiation there between the people of the world, but in particular, the communion is who you're supposed to be not having fellowship with.

I thought from. So he's saying, I'm not saying you don't have anything to do with sinners, because you have to have something to do with sinners, but you don't count them as your brothers and sisters. Yeah, yeah.

Okay, that's good. A different way to think about it. Perhaps it's not quite clear cut.

Anybody else? What are your thoughts on it? I see the, kind of the argument there of whether we can actually eat with any person like that. What does that mean? Does that mean only in the community or in general? And Jesus, you know, taking that same argument where Jesus says to count those as heathen or publican, but what did Jesus do? He went into their homes and ate with them. Okay, good.

And so we got this little argument going, well, but Jesus went to the sinner's house to eat with them. Does that allow me to eat with a person like that? Or does that, with this new, okay, we need to realize that Paul wrote this after Jesus said those things. And, you know, to what extent was he referring to that? Perfect.

I want to touch on Jacob's point that holds yours, Marcus. He's bringing a good point of semantics of the words that are being used here. And Lucas touched on this as well.

We're, if we're going to call those heathens and publicans or whatever, in Matthew 18, the end result of the church discipline as I'm given in Matthew 18, they're to be considered as that. Is Jesus now, is that a category? You are tax collect, or heathens, somebody can give me the exact words, or is that just an analogy of how we, how you Jewish people have typically treated those people? In my book, it seems that's what Jesus is saying. The question I'm bringing here is this, and they're bringing here, well, no,

they're not, they're much more nitpicky than this.

The question is this, is there ever a time, do you think, in the scriptures where gross, unrepentant sin, you should go to this level of shunning someone who's in this sin? What do you think? Well, yeah. Okay. I think it's pretty clear that, I mean, it was, you notice he's trying to say in the month of 11, I mean, you can't have somebody continue because it's a bad influence on the rest of the church.

Okay. The church, I think it needs to be dealt with. How to deal with it seems to be done.

Okay. What kind of severity levels, or should there be levels, seems to be the question. But the gross sin, I mean, it seems like that's pretty important.

What do you think? For gross sin, do we think there's a time to do something like this? If we're saying that, if we're to push the argument towards the exaggeration, there's at least a place for shunning for something, okay? To push it to the exaggeration, and this is an exaggeration, they would say, no, not really. Okay, that's exaggerating. That's not truly what they would say, I'm sure.

Okay, but you see the point. But like Marcus brought up, it's how you do that, and how it applies itself out that makes all the difference. Some other thoughts? I used to think this was pretty clear-cut, that there were like two levels of shunning, one for excommunication, one for gross sins, and one for dark ones, like personal sins.

But when I read these different scriptures, it just seems like it's pretty layered, like they're, the punishment should be equal to the offense, and it's not going to be just personal red blood. That's good, Robert. Yeah, I appreciate that, too.

And in your readings that I gave you, did you read the Pilgrim Marpeck article there, and his rebuke of some of this, the tight way that even the Swiss brothers were doing it, and the Peter Riddemann from the Hutterites view that gave this sort of, that the offense should be equal to the sin kind of thing that you're talking about there, and I appreciate those thoughts as well. And so it's an interesting thing. Let's look at Matthew 18.

Look at your Bibles there. First of all, the whole idea of what we're talking about, a church that practiced discipline. Now, a lot of you can just take that for granted.

You have to understand, from my background, absolutely unheard of. You went to church, you were preached, but the concept of being a community of brothers, I mean, seriously, you have to understand, it is a completely different mindset. And a lot of times I hear people, particularly from y'all that come from X backgrounds, what I mean by X Hutterite, X Amish, X this, but a lot of times I hear you saying things that are giving arguments that would put people right back into my camp, where I came from, and in American evangelicalism, and it's dangerous.

And yes, I realize that some of these things from your backgrounds need to be looked at, and yes, there was abuses and that types of things, but throw the baby out with the bathwater is a problem. And I think Matthew 18 is an extremely spiritual thing that Jesus gave it to us. Let's look at that.

This is what a church, a community of brothers, looks like. Okay, where do we start there? Let's pick it up at about 15 there, get the whole. Matthew 18, 15, moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

Step one, right? Step two. If he shall hear thee, thou have gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established.

Okay, two, you get some more brothers to discuss this thing. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let them be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

Okay, again, it seems to me that the language of Jesus is using that as an idiom for someone that you reject. It would be kind of counterproductive to say, to go through all this church discipline and say, but it's still a good point to bring in the vocabulary because you know why? Hogs riced it, so it's a good point. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall, now okay, before I give this verse, let me tell you why I think this is a very spiritual thing we do, if it's done spiritually.

God gave us this concept of this church, and if it's not just a place you meet on Sunday, if it's not an accidental gathering, but rather if it is a seed to the kingdom of God, a family of Christ that is supposed to be representing what one day will exist everywhere. If we're the embassy of the kingdom, and that group is gonna be together, God is planting a kingdom that has to have a way to govern itself. We don't use the sword to govern ourselves.

We don't use law and punishment. We have this, and Jesus backs up these words, and we usually use these words out of context with this. After he gave us that little church discipline, he goes on to say, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

That's in that context. It's a spiritual thing that's going on when we do this. Again, I say unto you that if two or three of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, then they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. Wow. Yeah.

Yeah, we've been given the ministry of reconciliation also. There's really not much a church can do. That's why we give them over into the world for their system to handle.

I mean, we gave a sword to violence and to force in the way that the word is given for the world to do. So if this system of church being a repentance of, that way doesn't work, we hand them over to another way, which is something that we're commanded as non-resistance not to. Let's say there'd be somebody who'd be unrepentant, done some physical thing that then.

That's a good point. And Peter Rittman brings this in particular, talking about human governments, that human governments are a constant reminder of the rebuke of God. That through the Old Testament time, through different times, that God gave them government when they asked for it against God's wishes.

He wanted to be amongst his people and he wanted to govern them. And they wanted human government. So it says, Micah, I give it to you as a rebuke.

And so you're right. Then if you step out of the kingdom of heaven, if you have gone so far to break through these things, then you're no longer in this kingdom. You don't wanna be governed by brothers or by the spirit of God, then it's the way God has just ordained it that way that there's another just for them to

take care of.

That's good, that's good. Other thoughts? So how does this really flesh out? Like if you're someone in your congregation, committed to, let's say, a brotherhood, you know, as far as the shunning, you know, it's very tough for me to be someone who's like, you know, I wanna give him chance of mercy or maybe God's even with him. Is that, that's what this is teaching, right? You're asking a very good question, a very real question.

Whether I'm right or wrong, I'll tell you the way I've done it is. If somebody has gone to this level, and as a minister, I only did this once, and it was for a lady who openly refused to stop living in fornication. And even after several warnings, said, I'm sorry, this is what I'm gonna do.

That's the only time I've ever done that. At that level, then the, if I'm with that person, the point of me being with that person is going to be to talk about their life and to talk about, I'm not just gonna have a social time and, you know, it's gonna be, I need there to be this wall because I can't just pretend that their sin is not going on like that. They're hurting their soul and something needs to be done.

One scripture to bring up, though, Lucas talked about different levels of it. See what your thoughts are on this. Let's return.

So we have our different passages that talk about this. In 1 Corinthians 5, we have the passage there. And then let's also look at, let's also look at the concept in Luke 13, six.

I'll just give it to you. Luke 13, six is the parable of the fig tree that when the owner of the fig tree came by and said, it has no figs. It's been three years I've been coming here and there's no fruit.

Knock it down. And finally, the owner said, please, give it one more year. Give it one more year and we'll see what will happen.

And then the parable ends with, and Jesus said, the master gave him one more year as a probation. And there seems to be in some, in this concept of a probation, that there's times when you can wait and see how these things turn themselves out. And that can get gray.

You can end up doing things that you regret by letting that sin be in the cat, like Mark is proud of it. It does love him a whole lot. So what are your other thoughts on that? I can tell you how to huddle it.

Okay. All right. Because we were such a close-knit circle, putting somebody out was just something that we considered very serious.

Outside of leaving the culinary, that almost never happened. It all was based towards reconciliation, which is beautiful. But it was very severe in a sense, I feel like for my children, the worst punishment of them is just to sit still.

In the community, we went to church. There was a, when somebody was, it was about communion time when things got funneled out or whatever, like somewhere, you don't know where. And when a person got, I think he had to, he wasn't even in the same church, he was in the same church building, but there was a separate room where that person sat.

I mean, he came here, he sat there. And he was still hearing a message, but he was not a mom. Same thing for eating.

When he went over to the kitchen, it's horrible. He sat in a different room, not with all the rest of us. And then, I don't even think sometimes he went to work.

So it brought, because you were such a tight community, it brought a sense of shame, incredible sense of shame on what he'd done. And then there was reconciliation made, you know, I think it was probably somewhat of a public apology, not necessarily mentioning often what this was, but a public apology. But it was more so redeeming.

There was no quick way of just, but I guess if they would have continued resisting, they would have sent him away from the colony, which almost never happened. So it was always geared towards, hey, they realize that this person's gonna come back. Interesting, yeah.

And that's a good point that Marcus is bringing out. And the Hutterites can kind of give an example of a close-knit brotherhood, obviously, that even this Amish and the early Swiss brethren would have experienced. You know, like Andrew was saying, this thing that there would have been, you're there in that community, you're there amongst your brothers, there's always an awareness that's there.

You don't just see them every three weeks and then say, oh yeah, there is once his name. You know, yeah, that's an important point that we've lost a lot of that just with our mega-metropolises that we live in. Just one more quick verse, in the next couple more minutes, I do wanna bring out, and it makes me wonder about a bit of this probation time and levels that the Hutterites talked about.

And it's this one in 2 Thessalonians 3.15. In 2 Thessalonians 3.15, it says, and if any man obey not our word, by this epistle, note that man, in other words, mark that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. There's kind of like what Marcus was talking about there. You had to be around somebody to have experienced that New Testament conversation.

Yet, count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. They would hug him, but not edge him. Yeah, and what's interesting, Marcus, you'll hear this when we're talking about, we do that.

We've tried to have levels in this. Even at Living Hope, we did this, where, okay, we'd take away the greeting from somebody, and they would know that they're not a full, active member of the brotherhood, and they're struggling with things, but we've not quite had to excommunicate them. If that's right or wrong, I don't know, but trying to find a level that you are in that probation, loot idea, that you're waiting for the tree to bear fruit, trying to find our way through this is the way we try to work it out.

So, we did that, too. I still, there's somewhere in between a probation, in my mind, and flat shunning, and saying you're beyond the veil of faith. So, yeah, it's good.

Real quick, any other thoughts? We're out of time. Well, I was just thinking that excommunication isn't an exact science. You can't, every situation's gonna be different.

You were kind of talking about that, too. Yeah, you're absolutely right. They have to be looked at in a spirit of God, and only the Holy Spirit is gonna make us be able to do this right.

Just real quick, a quick story we've done. In Lancaster County, I've dealt with this. Many times, or several times, we would get an Amish convert that would come into the church.

Because I respect the Amish church, and the ministers there, me and the other minister used to go and speak to their bishops, and speak to their elders, and say, okay, you're about to turn this person over for the destruction of the flesh. Why? And one time, I got to one of them, and I said, okay. I said, I gave him my testimony.

I said, I've come from the world, and I've come to these things, and I've looked at the Anabaptists, and I told him, I said, do you know that I would have, I said this to the bishop, I would have died next to you at Shleithen, and because this brother is coming to our church with a different ordinum, I said, then, you know, you're gonna send him over to the destruction of his flesh? And I said that in two different times, one to a bishop, and one to the minister. And I said, which of the sins mentioned? I said, what you're doing is not Christian in my mind. It's not Anabaptist.

It's not according to the Doors of Confession, and it's not even Amish. And he said, but it's Lancaster County. And we're gonna see that when we get to America, hopefully the last week.

There was a document that was signed by the Lancaster County bishop, which differed them from even the Ohio bishops of having to shun people just for differences of doctrinal belief, even if they go to a different Anabaptist church. That is particular to Lancaster County, I found in my studies for this class. One of the bishops I said, I said, well, listen, if this man comes and gets baptized, or whatever he's doing to the church, I'm gonna let you know, but if you put a bounty on him, we're going to lose him.

And the bishop looked me straight in the eye and he said, I don't blame you. So a lot of us see this, you're given the traps, and again, we can have the right answer for the wrong question. I think, wasn't it Andrew that just said, these things have to be brought out with the Holy Spirit and God working with, especially when we're dealing with lives, we're dealing with people.

We gotta be careful, we gotta look and not get ourselves into some of these mistakes that the church has done over and over again. Good work. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for these examples.

We pray that you would teach us, Lord, to be able to be living vessels of the Holy Spirit. And that as you have wanted us to make an example in this world, I pray by your Holy Spirit that you would do it in our generation again. Let us learn the lessons from history and be able to make a difference today.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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