

Christian Heritage Under Fire #3 - Where Are the Preachers?

by Ian Goligher

Ian Goligher's sermon critiques the current state of evangelicalism in Canada, emphasizing the need for deeper biblical training and the historical significance of Prairie Bible Institute under L.E. Maxwell's leadership.

Duration: 48:57

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Faithful Preaching", "Gospel Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prayer and the need for passionate preachers who are on fire for God. He also highlights the role of studying and rightly dividing the word of truth in ministry. The preacher warns against compromising the gospel message for the sake of not offending others and discusses the rise of worldly influences and the demand for accreditation in Bible schools. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the fear of God, confidence in the truth, and the importance of staying faithful to the word of God in preaching.

Transcript

I want to go to this text in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15. 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The goal of gospel and Bible ministry is to divide the word of God. Now, in one way that is easy, because it's not our job to go and find the truth. The truth is given to us.

It is in the word. On the other hand, it is an exceedingly difficult task to divide it aright, every time we speak, that we handle it honestly and faithfully. Now, in this series of the Canadian Christian Heritage Under Fire, we learn that Canada is very much a mosaic, a nation of nations.

And as we look at the evangelical movements inside this nation, we find another mosaic. And I will call it a nation of notions, a nation of ideas and experiments, all or many of which are under the banner of evangelicalism. And I think you'd have to agree, if you even survey the small number of churches and ministries today, that evangelicalism is in a state of flux.

It is going from pillar to post. It is trying this and trying that, and it is experimenting with anything that sounds like a good idea to use means to reach men with the gospel. Now, one of the biggest problems in

evangelical churches is to acquire pastors and keep them.

And there are so many churches that either don't have pastors or cannot find the men of the caliber that they would really desire. There is a church in this community that is without a senior pastor for about two years now, and they are continually searching for a man that will come and preach to them. Also, the average tenure of pastors in any one pulpit today is somewhere between two and three years.

Not very long. Things don't often work out. And either the preacher is a bad fit for the people, or the people are a bad fit for the preacher, and there is tension and struggle and resignations along the way.

That seems to be the thrill of so many churches and so many ministries. We must ask, therefore, what are the Bible schools doing as they prepare men for ministry? Because, after all, in any church's search for a man to come and preach the word and to be the shepherd of the flock, it is to some Bible school or other that they will most likely look to find such a man. And the result is that in most cases there is a tremendous shallowness.

And you find that Bible colleges today are providing pastors for these churches that I described as doctrinally a mile wide and an inch deep. And men are trained for all manner of things, but very shallow when it comes to the ministry of the word. Now, before we look into that very serious problem in our nation, and it's a problem that goes outside the boundaries of Canada in many parts of the world, that Bible schools are failing to produce men who will have the stamp of God and ministries that make a difference in various communities.

But I want us firstly to take a look at a particular Bible school, and I've been mentioning this for a few weeks now, of a school that in its heyday reached a thousand students within a thousand miles of this lower mainland. And I'm speaking of the Three Hills Bible School, now known as Prairie Bible Institute. In 1921, a young man of 26 years of age was invited to Three Hills to consider setting up further Bible education for families in the area.

When he arrived at Three Hills, he discovered that they weren't really hills at all, they were just little bumps. And if you were in Three Hills, Alberta, you might be asking, well where are these three hills? In British Columbia terms, they are just little bumps on the landscape. And as he arrived, there was no promise of salary, no promise of a large future ministry.

There were but eight teenage students. And when classes began a year later, he had those eight teenage students and two bald farmers who sat in on the classes, and they met in a disused farmhouse. A farmhouse that became a campus of 130 acres, and one day an auditorium to seat over 3,000 at one time.

For over 50 years, this young man, L.E. Maxwell from Kansas, he was an American. And you're going to find that in many of the leading Bible schools in Canada, Americans have had very big input. After all, the Bible school movement was very much an American idea, much sooner than it was a British idea from old time colonialism in this nation of Canada.

Now when he started the first year of his Bible program, there are no records of the program that was set up. But in the second year, the numbers doubled, went from eight students to 16 or 20 if the others are included. L.E. Maxwell was a young man built like a tank.

It was said that he looked more like a middleweight boxer than a preacher. And in his days of youth and good health, he was often found in the farmer's field helping with the harvest. And he could keep up with

any farmer pitching beetles in the work of harvesting.

That obviously knit his heart to the prairie community, and he was a man that was loved and liked, and his influence began to grow. Now alongside his spiritual stature, or his physical stature, there is also his spiritual stature. And by 1970, Three Hills Bible School, or later known as Prairie Bible Institute, were to see 1600 missionaries on the field who had trained in that Bible school.

Now if you say, well if there were up to a thousand at any one time, that's still not very many. But think about it, 1600 missionaries trained in one particular school. That is an accomplishment that really staggers the mind and boggles the imagination.

Now the mission of the school was purely missions, nothing else. That's how it started out. And during the 55 year tenure of Mr. Maxwell, president of the school all those years, that was its continual focus.

Missions and evangelism. Everything else was secondary. Now its motto was to know Christ and make him known.

And that's a motto that has been used by others since then. At that time there were no vocational studies. If you wanted to be a businessman, no point in going to that college.

If you wanted to get into some other discipline, there were no classes provided. It was purely a Bible mission school. And that's the way it was up until the 1990s.

It offered at first a two year program in Bible history and literature. And then a third year was added on to provide some form of diploma. Now in this document, which Mr. Maxwell drew up in the second year of the school, he set out some of the principles for study in that college.

Principles that we do well to look at because of the obvious success of training young men and women for, particularly for the mission field. Now it was a system that he implemented at the school called Stephen's Search Question Method and Instruction. And the school instructors provided for the various portions of Scripture a series of questions.

And the student went to work on answering those questions from the text of Scripture. That is known as the inductive method of Bible study. And it was borrowed from a man who was more commonly known as Daddy Stephens.

And he was actually made an honorary faculty member of Three Hills Bible Institute. Now the discipline of the school was very tough. And the attitude of Mr. Maxwell and other members of the faculty in those early years was we are called of God to train missionaries of the cross.

We are not called to train men who are weak and wimpy, but men and women who have the grit and the determination and the discipline to serve God, separate from the affairs of this world. What I want to do is to run through a typical day in the life of Prairie Bible Institute. At six o'clock in the morning, your alarm clock rattles.

And being eighty miles north of Calgary, you shiver to dress in the morning. If you're a young lady, you dress with sleeves below the elbow, with a dress that is below the knees, even when you're seated. Not standing up, but when you're seated.

Your neckline is truly right to the neck. For the first thirty minutes of the morning, you are free to attend to those personal items. At 6.30, students were expected to be on their knees in Bible reading and prayer.

Fifteen minutes of Bible reading, fifteen minutes of prayer. Each student was expected to keep a personal journal of the things that they learned in their personal studies, and prayer requests, and missionary information for whom they prayed, and results that they received from their requests from the Lord. At 7 a.m., the students would be seen coming from their dormitories to the large kitchen.

The girls may only use the girls' door, and the girls may only seat at the girls' section in the dining hall. There is no integration at Freehills Bible Institute. Some have been up since five in the morning.

This is also students called to do this work, fixing food for the whole student body and for faculty members. 8 a.m., Bible study begins, and this Stevens question and answer method is begun in earnest with instructors laying out the questions for that particular day. The school catalog explains that this method of Bible study, that the questions are especially selected and are designed to enable the student to sound the depths of God's Word as an organic body of revelation.

The teacher refrains from coming between the student and the subject. Now, that may be today looked upon as a very limited method of studying the Bible, not very systematic, but certainly it is instilling in the mind of the student a very high value for the Word of God. That God speaks through His Word to the individual, that it is not the lecturer or the teacher that is the medium for truth, but the Bible itself.

And you can understand after two or three years of such a course of study and searching and answering the questions that come up from God's Word, that any student with any brain would be given a solid, broad Bible knowledge that would stand to him and her for life. In mid-morning, students, many of them would assemble for music. Voice training was very, very heavy as a part of the course.

Instruments were not so much in the early years utilized as the training of the voice. Before lunch, the students would assemble for chapel and Mr. Maxwell himself would come forward to the microphone to speak to the whole student body. When he preached in the early years, he preached nearly every day to the students.

When he preached, he hit on the great issues, the glory of Christ, the burden for souls, and the world that is in need. His favorite text was Galatians 2.20. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. I used to have a little book of his sermons.

I tried to dig it up, but I could not lay my hands on it. It must be the price of moving house recently. I could not lay my hands on that little booklet, but I remember reading through and seeing the emphasis upon the cross and self-denial.

And one of Maxwell's statements is that the cross puts the knife into the word I. It crosses out the I of self. And as he preached to those students, he preached to them that because of Calvary, we are slaves to the cross, we are debtors to the cross, and we are not our own. And he would preach self-denial, consecration, and yielding of self to the will of God.

He was also very fond of preaching being filled, personally filled, with the Holy Spirit. That was a common theme that he hit upon. And students in the years of training would be reminded again and again and again that there is no way that they are fit for ministry unless they are personally filled with the Holy Spirit.

After lunch at midday, the afternoon class is on what they called false cults. I don't know why they called it false cults. I thought all cults were false.

But the Latin term for cult is really worshippers. So, technically it could mean false worshippers. You'll notice that it did not call it alternative religions.

In some Bible colleges today, the subject of cults is alternate religions. But they called it cults and named it and exposed the errors of the cults very, very strongly to those students. At 5.30, it was supper time, after which they were free to do their homework, use the library.

But by 9.30, curfew was in. And every student was supposed to be in their dorm. At which time they would have carpet prayer meeting.

When certainly the ladies would be in their pajamas and they would meet in a circle in the dormitory for prayer and singing. At 10 o'clock, they would retire to their own rooms and they would be allowed a time for personal devotions with lights out at 10.30. Of course, if you're going to get up at 6 in the morning, that would make very good sense. And you can understand that the life of a student at Three Hills College was that of discipline.

And the intent was to train students that would maximize the use of their time. And that they would come forth as in disciplined lives to serve the Lord in the rigors in the mission field. Now, the course may appear to be very simple, very far short of the demands of university life as it is today.

However, we must realize there is no denying the effectiveness of that Bible college education in the lives of thousands of young people that pass through Three Hills Bible College. And as I said before, 1600 in the mission field by 1970 is certainly an accomplishment that no one should scoff at even for a moment. Now, Mr. Maxwell, who undoubtedly put his personal stamp upon that school, was two things.

He was a fundamentalist and he was a separatist. They would not get involved in the accreditation programs that were available. And there was an American Association of Bible Schools that offered an accreditation program for which they would have to upgrade their library and bring in faculty from other sources with higher education and raise the whole academic standard of the college.

Mr. Maxwell was against that. And right to the years of his completion, when he resigned and retired in 1977, there was no accreditation for Three Hills Bible College. They also disallowed tongue speaking on campus.

There was an absolute drawing of the line that tongue speaking was not the will of God to know the personal infilling of the Holy Spirit. In the 1960s in particular, with the charismatic revival and renewal and even the Roman Catholic renewal of tongue speaking, Bible colleges were faced with this issue in a very big way. And students would apply and even faculty would apply and they would seek to have positions or to have opportunity to study at the school with these ideas or with these experiences of tongue speaking.

In fact, Mr. Maxwell was such a separatist that he said no to accreditation for higher academic reasons only. He said no to tongue speaking. He said no to the social gospel of a man called William Eberhardt.

And if you know anything about Alberta, William Eberhardt was a very big name. He was a Calgary school teacher who became a Bible teacher. He held evening classes in Calgary that mushroomed in number.

He became a radio preacher, but also he held to a social gospel. And then came E.C. Manning, Preston Manning's father. And E.C. Manning was a rank dispensationalist.

L.E. Maxwell would not have him speak at his college because of the fragmented approach of interpreting the Bible that Mr. Manning held. And so you will see that L.E. Maxwell was a separatist on principle. Not only against modernism, charismatics, but against those that were off center in evangelical Bible truth.

Now after Mr. Maxwell resigned in the 1980s, Prairie Bible Institute began to offer degree programs. And they did go on to hire faculty from other sources, to hire education outside their own college. And they began to offer degrees.

In the 1990s, Prairie Bible Institute went on to accept accreditation from the American Association of Baptists. And they were also made a very significant shift that it was no longer just a Bible college, that they would offer vocational courses as well in various disciplines of study. And so when Mr. Maxwell retired at the age of 82, after 55 years of personal input as the founder and director of that institute, the course of that seminary changed quite dramatically.

Now the tragedy is that the vast majority of evangelical Bible schools, of which Prairie Bible Institute is fairly typical, the vast majority have rewritten their mission statements. Cease to be purely Bible colleges in the old sense, and they have begun to offer a smorgasbord of religious offerings to their students. And I call this the new evangelical mosaic.

A little bit of this, and a little bit of that. A little bit of old traditional orthodox Christianity. A little bit of charismatic thinking, tongue speaking, pluralistic worldview outlook.

And along with that, a little bit of modernism, a little bit of higher criticism when it comes to the inerrancy of Scripture. A little bit of psychology replacing the theology. And as you would investigate anyone, let me rephrase that, as you would investigate the vast majority of evangelical Bible schools today, you will find a smorgasbord of offerings under the banner of evangelical Christianity.

To the point where young men, who either for the mission field or for the pastoral ministry, go through that training, they come out, and what have you got? A walking mosaic of ideas. He goes into the pulpit in some new ministry, and he tries to put those ideas into practice. And you have a church, doctrine a mile wide and an inch deep.

I have seven or eight points that I want, I'm not going to develop them. Take a book to really investigate all of these thoroughly. But I want to give eight pointers to show you how this mosaic is displayed.

First of all, in the evangelical world, the mainline churches apostatized. They sold out the truth. The pressure came on evangelicals to train their own pastors.

That in turn demanded that they needed Bible schools that would do more than Prairie Bible Institute would do. You have a little diploma for a few years of inductive Bible study. They wanted pastors who were academics.

They wanted men who had exposure to the learning centers of North America. And the pressure came on the evangelical movement to provide that kind of training. And so a new kind of Bible school was born.

Such as Trinity Western University, founded in 1960. And such as Regent College, founded in the 1970s. And these would seek to have university standing.

And indeed as Regent was right on location. And for many years Trinity Western has lobbied and successfully acquired university status. So they didn't just want to be a Bible college off in the corner for the evangelical community alone.

They wanted to be in the bigger picture. In the university circles. And these work together in their aspirations to be successful in academics and still be evangelical.

Now the marks of these schools is full cooperation and full participation with each other. Regent College and Trinity Western are for all intents and purposes two separate schools. Separate histories.

Yet as evangelicals they work together. This is the strange anomaly. This is the thing that just to anyone with conviction on truth and doctrine say well how can you possibly do that? Trinity Western University professors for example served as external examiners for the Regent College extension program.

And Trinity Western held annual Regent College days on their own campus. To acquaint their own students with the training available at Regent College. Now you can see that very high degree of cooperation in these evangelical institutions.

Now the results of that kind of accommodating first of all into the university stratosphere. Cooperation in various levels amongst these schools. The result is no clear distinction of doctrine.

What do you believe? It's your opinion. There is the Canadian individualism coming out. The spirit of humanism.

Albeit in a new form with a new wrapper on it. With the label evangelical. But doctrine now is not emphasized because it divides.

Then another result of this is no clear position against modernism. Now we learned about Dr. T.T. Shields last week. He tooth and nail fought modernism.

So did L.E. Maxwell. He was a fundamentalist. He would not for a moment allow anyone to teach his students or be a member of his faculty.

Unless they signed on on the inerrancy of scripture. You look at the mission statements of the new type of evangelical school today. That is no longer an absolute essential.

The liberal. And I mean this. The liberal can teach in that school as well as the biblical inerrant fundamentalist Christian.

Another result of this new kind of school is a toleration on ecumenism. Dr. J.I. Packer of Regent College involved in ACTS. Evangelicals and Catholics together.

E-C-T-S whatever it is. Evangelicals and Catholics together. And it makes no sense.

Great theologian. Great teacher. Anyways I wish I had his brain.

Yet sitting down to hammer out an agreement on the doctrine of justification. And very near if not actually selling out the stand of justification by faith alone. A toleration on ecumenism.

A toleration on the charismatic gifts. Trinity Western University draws many of its students from the charismatic circles today. They have no limitation on student enrollment as to their view of gifts and tongue speaking and so on.

There is an absolute toleration on that level. There is a shift in the new type of evangelical school on the standard of holiness. And I think the evidence of that is in contemporary Christian music.

If you were to go to some of these schools and listen in the dormitories. To what these students listen for relaxation music. It would grieve your soul.

And there is no longer a standard against that very thing. Second major issue. The transdenominational nature of evangelical schools.

They do not train students for any particular ministry. You go to Trinity Western University. You go to Regent College.

You tell them look I'm from the Free Presbyterian Church. I need to learn the Free Presbyterian Doctrine. Or more realistic.

If you were to say I'm from the Baptist Church. I only want to learn a good solid traditional Baptist doctrine. You would have to eat from the smorgasbord of educational offerings that are provided in those schools.

And therefore they have to provide a spectrum of teachings to draw students. They are going to draw students from charismatic circles, baptist circles, evangelical circles, evangelical free. They have to be a smorgasbord to attract that broad spectrum of students.

And numerically Trinity Western University has become a very large institution. And it draws its pool of students by a very broad offering of teachings even in its seminary. My third point would be the move to pluralism in missions.

To be politically correct in reaching various peoples. Now while this is different from the secular meaning of pluralism. It is the same spirit of toleration.

And it has within it a denial that there is one absolute truth. There is one absolute way to worship God. Now that doesn't mean that I have to go to Africa and make everybody dress in a collar and tie to be a Christian.

When Hudson Taylor went to China he wore Chinese dress. There is a great difference between winning a Chinese convert to the gospel and winning them to a style of life. Dress and so on.

There is only one savior. There is only one redeemer. There is only one gospel.

And in the mission endeavors of today I wouldn't say there is an outright advertisement. But there is a soft weak approach that I must not offend. And if I preach that there is only one savior to heaven I will offend.

It's a very subtle move. Fourthly, the rise of the charismatic influence. I've addressed that already so I'll move on.

Fifthly, the desire or the demand for accreditation. Schools that are not happy anymore to just be a bible school. Number six, worldliness made acceptable.

I had a talk with Ewan on this. I want to be fair in my mindset and perspective. And in university life what is the mindset? Well of course an education.

But also fun. And we talked about people that he knows that have come from these various bible colleges. And they went because they knew they'd have a good time.

Now in the carnal young person's mind the idea of a good time has many ideas. Contemporary Christian music is certainly one of them. But the worldliness, the easy attitude, the no discipline is a very big shift from the old school to the new.

Then seventhly, I'll make this the last major fact. The shift to leadership training. Now in our church office we get all manner of meal dropped in.

On programs, seminars, on leadership training. And this is the in thing in many of these schools. And young men and women go to these schools for leadership training.

And they come out very good at many things. And I don't despise nor decry what they have learned and the skills that they have adopted. But they can do anything but preach.

And that's the sad thing. And where we started tonight is the conundrum, the awful dilemma of churches that are crying out or at least used to cry out. Preacher, where can we find a man that will preach the word? And that's the question that we in our denomination have to ask.

Where are the preachers? And if there's any hope for this nation. If there's any hope for recovery in this nation that has losing grip with old fashioned Christianity in so many ways. The greatest need is God to raise up men who will preach the word.

They may be lousy organizers. They may be very poor at many things. But at least put them behind a pulpit.

Give them the Bible and say, Preach to us the word of God. And he's got a soul on fire. And he's got a mind that knows the book.

Where is the training of young men of that type and caliber at this time? Most training is on this emphasis of leadership. Does the church not know that the Bible has it all worked out already? Elders and deacons and their various responsibilities. The Bible has had it worked out 2,000 years ago.

And yet young people are going to these institutions to learn leadership. But they don't learn to preach as they should. Where are we going with this? Where should we be going with this? The true mission of the church is to preach the word.

I take you back to 2 Timothy 2.15. I'm not here to run down everybody else and say we're the best church that God ever sent to Canada. I want to be a realist tonight. I want to be fair in my evaluations.

I want to take responsibility where necessary. And I want to face you as a Christian with a responsibility in this area to pray, to plead with God that if God has mercy for this nation, that he will send us preachers. And as I say again, the greatest curse in Canada, our pastors and preachers, our ministers, that either won't preach or can't preach.

And the recent trend is to shut down the evening service. And I believe that's to a great degree the easy way out for many pastors. By noon on Sunday their work is done.

They can spend the rest of the day however they please. Not only a denial of the Lord's day, it's a shortcut of the ministry that God has given. What does it take? Look at this text of 2 Timothy 2.15 and you'll notice four qualities here.

Firstly, the fear of God. A workman, study to show thyself approved unto God. The preacher, first of all, is answerable to God, not to men.

And we need to tremble at God's Word. Now the modernist will not do so. The modernist will take the scissors to the Bible.

The modernist, like Robert Shuler, will turn the beatitudes into happy attitudes. They will work semantics to make pleasurable things out of the issues of the gospel. Preacher is to have the fear of God.

He also needs the confidence of the truth. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. To the world we are fools and we preach foolishness.

But we know that this Word is the power of God unto salvation. We ought not to have any sense that we are ashamed when we come to minister this Word. It's a fixed Word.

It's revealed from heaven. And then you'll notice the word dividing. Rightly dividing the Word of truth.

Expounding the Word of God. Now this word dividing is akin to the work of a surgeon. Who makes the incision with his scalpel with a very steady hand.

With the knowledge of what he's doing and where he's going. With every cut that he makes with his scalpel. Dividing the Word of right.

Now the preacher ought to be a man with competence. That when he takes this book in his hand. He knows that book.

He knows how to divide it, interpret it, expound it. With the highest degree of accuracy. We don't pretend to be infallible interpreters of an infallible Bible.

We are fallible interpreters. But we must endeavor with the fear of God. Take that Word to every heart.

Apply it to the consciences of men and women. In a spirit of grace and love. That we are truly dividing the Word of right.

Now I said at the beginning that's very easy. Very easy because we have the Word in our hands. I don't have to go to a library to get my next sermon.

I've got the Word of God in my hands. But it takes ten years to make a preacher. And in these days of short-circuiting, short-cutting everything.

Very few are willing for the long-term commitment to the ministry of the Word of God. We need to pray. God will send us men.

The fire of God in their souls like Jeremiah. Who may say from time to time, I'll never preach again. When the fire burns they can do nothing but preach.

That's the kind of passion that the ministry of the gospel in this country needs. Then fourthly, I would note in this text. That this student of the Bible, this preacher, is to be a workman.

A workman. I assure you sermons do not all come. I may have told you from time to time there's times when I can't sleep at night.

And the whole framework of a sermon just blows up in my mind. Glorious. And I've before made the mistake, I'll wait till the morning and I'll go and take a few notes on that.

And I get up in the morning and it's like a bad dream. I can't even remember what it was. I've learned if that glorious event happens, take it all down as much as possible.

Or I'll be like Mr. Spurgeon. Who on a Saturday he struggled all day in sermon preparation. And couldn't get anywhere with a certain text.

He just couldn't get it to divide up for him. He went to bed, fell asleep. And his wife heard him muttering in his sleep.

And she wrote down a few things of what he said. He got up in the morning with a measure of panic. I've got to preach and I don't have a message.

And his wife handed him the notes. Boy, if I could get sermons like that, I would love my wife to death every Sunday morning. That would be the easy way out.

But it doesn't always come that way. There's work involved. There's time involved.

There's labor involved. The reality is, pastors today don't want the work involved in preaching. What is the answer? Calling men to preach.

We ought to be very, very humbly thankful that we have in our denomination, North America, our own seminary. That we can send young men under the training of men like Dr. Barrett. And those that also teach alongside of him.

I know it's thousands of miles away and it seems somewhat unrelated to us. But it is our own denominational Bible seminary. Praise God for it.

Do not take it for granted. If there's any hope for the future of this denomination, there is the center of our hope. The work that they are doing at Geneva Reform Seminary now will make this church what it needs to be in ten years from now and beyond.

And it takes all those years. When Dr. Barrett moved from academics and another university to the work of our little church, he had hoped that in a few years he would have forty students and that he would see things mushroom. It hasn't happened that way that quickly.

Next week, Lord willing, there will be an interview of four students. Who, I think two or three of them are already in class. And they will be applying for the ministry in our denomination.

We have to thank God for these things. Thank God that we have a Bible school that will train men not to be a smorgasbord of a little bit of this and a little bit of that. But men who will preach the book from cover to cover.

That's why our seminary probably hasn't grown by leaps and bounds. Because students come in, they find out that this is serious business. They're not there for fun.

They're not there just to put in the time. It's hard work. Study to show thyself approved unto God.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Greatly dividing the work of the church. Parents, we need to pray that God will call the young people of our church.

It's his will, his ministry. We need to be willing to support and see our young people go praying for the work of God. That ought to be the weekly, continual prayer of this church.

If there's any mercy for this nation, God will raise up preachers. God will send men to preach the glorious gospel. I'm not sure what God's going to do with the new kind of evangelical school.

God is sovereign. He may take, in spite of some of the foolish nonsense that they learn there, set people straight. A young pastor that told me the story very recently.

He was involved in youth ministry in this area. He went along to Valley Gospel Mission Bookstore and he started to read the Puritans. And as he started to read the truths of the gospel from the Puritan era, he began to realize that he knew nothing.

And he resigned his pastorate, decided that he needed to give himself to study, and then in the meantime was called to assist in a church at this time. God can do those things. God is on the throne tonight.

And as we look over the landscape of this nation, we have many reasons to fear. Let's pray and plead with God to have mercy and visit this land with the power of His Spirit and raise up churches. Churches that are not a mile wide in doctrine and an inch deep, but churches that are solidly founded on the Word.

Let's pray together, please.

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