

Lessons From the Martyrs' Mirror

by Mose Stoltzfus

The Martyr's Mirror is a historical account of the defenseless Christians through the ages, and it highlights the importance of defenseless Christianity and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine.

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Scripture: Matthew 5:11, Hebrews 11:36

Topics: "Church History", "Persecution Faith"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny discusses the importance of studying church history, specifically focusing on the Martyr's Mirror. He emphasizes the value of understanding the struggles and sacrifices of the early Christians and how their faith has been passed down through the ages. Brother Denny highlights the persecution faced by these defenseless Christians and the impact it had on their lives. He encourages the audience to appreciate and learn from the lessons taught by the Martyr's Mirror, recognizing the faithfulness and endurance of those who came before us.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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I, likewise, am glad to be here this morning. I've been greatly blessed in these past few evenings that I've been allowed to be here. I was away last weekend and only came home late Tuesday night, so I got in on a late start.

But we have been very blessed by the spirit and content and messages of these meetings. We rejoice that something like that can take place in our time and especially for such a need as this. Let's stand together for prayer, get a little change of position, and once again call upon God for his direction.

Father in heaven, we want to thank you and bless you again for the opportunity that we have to preach the gospel, the truth, to look at the history of Christianity, and the faith, the true faith that has been handed down through the ages. We thank you for them. Like the Hebrew writer says, that they without us, we need together to go into heaven together, the Christians of the past and also those of the present, that we be brethren and we speak basically the same truth and the same gospel.

Thank you, Father, for the Holy Spirit. We pray that you truly give us the power of God, which is not from ourselves to speak the things that need to be spoken and that truth can prevail and our minds and hearts can be illuminated today with these things. And thank you again, Lord, for touching the hearts of these people and bringing revival to Lancaster County in part.

We know it is not near what we would like to see, but we are so thankful. Many big things have small beginnings, and we thank God for that. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. The title of my message this morning is Lessons from the Martyr's Mirror. I do thank the brethren for giving me that title.

At first I thought that may be a little mundane for some of you, but as we notice the expressions Brother Melvin made on the ignorance of history, many times among the plain people we recognize that this is a subject that should not be mundane. It brought a fresh and new appreciation for that piece of literature, which I believe to be a masterpiece of literature spanning virtually 1,670 years or at least over 1,600 years of church history from the time of the apostles until about 1670 and giving a very accurate and detailed account of the defenseless Christians through the ages written by Thielmann van Bracht in that time in the late 1600s or mid-1600s when he wrote it. And it is known, as I mentioned before, as the history of the defenseless Christians through the centuries.

Now the reason I thank the brethren for that subject is because I had taken a course in that in Bible school when I was about 18 years of age at Carbon Hill Bible School in Ohio for six weeks and that was a blessing, but I have never, I don't believe since that, read so much as I did again in the last two weeks in my spare time to just get the heartbeat of the book and the accounts that are given there which once again deeply, deeply influenced my life and challenged me. And I was thankful for that. Now one of the reasons this is precious to me likewise is because our beginnings 25 years ago at Charity Christian Fellowship when we began there, actually I should say the Bible study that led up to the church which was some months prior to that, three of us brethren which were both of, all three of us of Anabaptist background got together and began a Bible study on a Saturday afternoon on the recovery of the Anabaptist vision.

Some of those tapes are still available today taught by Brother Dale Heisey and the reason that we chose that subject is because we recognized, well all three of us were descendants, direct descendants of the Anabaptists and also because of where we were at in time and history, we saw a tremendous departure from the truth that we had read and studied. A couple of us had studied quite extensively on Anabaptist history through the years prior to that, 1982 and in January we sat together of that year. We thought it good to reminisce and to read and study that subject for what we hoped would be the beginning of a revival movement of which many in this tent have become, got to be a part of and also the fact of where we lived.

We lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and that was at that time I think according to one of the local historians here, a river brethren man who had charted all of the Anabaptist type churches and I believe there were at that time 17 different groups divided to such a degree that basically had nothing to do with

each other that would all have claimed a historical foundation in the Anabaptist church. I think there are now 30 some, I think he's still living and still keeping that history up and I believe there are now 30 some groups that basically have again so divided from the Dorotrek Confession of Faith which had united them in 1632 that there is so much division in this county and so much animosity and shunning of one another as is very, very serious I would say at the least. A departure of faith and doctrine was one of the burdens of our heart.

Now we recognize, we look around ourselves in this county that there are fragments that have remained. One of the major ones has been to still hold on to the not going to war or to being defenseless in the sense of non-resistance. We recognize that that has still held on to a number of groups but nevertheless is eroding tremendously in the more liberal groups and men are again enlisting in the army, taking up the machine gun and going out to fight which is a sad, sad commentary of the Anabaptist heritage and movement here in Lancaster County.

But in general we saw rather a great drift into worldliness and legalism. We often say that we warn young Christians who come out of our settings that there is a ditch on either side of the road and it is very important that we understand that because we have seen literally countless hundreds of people getting caught in one ditch or the other. And we actually felt 25 years ago that we had a pronounced big ditch on one side and a big ditch on the other and we were trying to revive somewhat of a true middle road so to speak between those two who again had the Bible as the soul of scripture meaning that it was the authority of the word of God which again was the principle by which we believed and lived.

We had, like I said, worldliness on one side or legalistic dead formal religion with little life or reality. And I also want to underscore that there is no way that I would like to lift up any book above the word of God but only as a history book I do recommend it very highly for you to get a hold of one and to sit down and read it extensively at times in order to understand the history of the Christian church through the ages. And I believe this especially would help us to be in stark contrast today of the ease in which men are swallowed up by Protestantism and the charismatic movement especially those who come out of Anabaptist background.

So we recommend a study of true historical Christianity in that sense. And we do this also in direct contrast of evangelical easy-believism that we have today and the empty emotionalism on the other side also in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements of our time. A man by the name of Nicholas Stoltzfus out of Indiana wrote a book some years ago called Faith Worth Dying For written on the basis of the Waldensians and a very interesting book, very challenging book to me maybe again 35 years ago when he wrote that was indeed a challenge to me and I will also be speaking some I would like to give a scope a little bit.

The Mars Mirror does bring in, like I said, beginning at the time of the Apostles and showed the end of the twelve and how they died, where they died, and how they were crucified many of them upside down or burned in an oven or beheaded or put in exile. John, incidentally, is the only one who died a natural death and he was an old man and suffered much, I believe, in loneliness in the Isle of Patmos where he got the revelation of Jesus Christ that we have before us or in the Bible. And so all the rest of them died before their time in times of persecution that rose up there in Jerusalem of which James and Stephen and some of them were the early ones the first ones to be killed for their faith and that began a process of which, first of all, pagan Rome and the Jews killed a number of our brethren in the early church and then, of course, we have the great disappointment and catastrophe, I believe, of Constantine claiming conversion and

bringing an end to pagan persecution.

And a lot of people look back today and rejoice at that and I'm sure it was a great relief to the brethren temporarily. But that gave birth to the Holy Roman Catholic Church which then became a persecutor far worse than what the Roman pagans ever were and plunged this world into the Dark Ages of which the Anabaptist movement and the Valdention movement came out of and I don't know if many of you realize that but most good revival movements in history come out of Dark Ages. They come out of incredible darkness, religious darkness and spiritual darkness prior to it.

And we notice that especially with the Valdentions and the Anabaptists and we notice it today in the revival among the old colony Mennonites, the Old Amish, the Hutterites and other groups similar to that that they are coming out of a couple of hundreds of years of incredible darkness and bondage and deception, religious deception and that is one of the great thrills about revival in our time and it seems to mostly come out of those backgrounds. And also there's some of it in the acute apostasy among the evangelical world that has also produced a revival which we often talk about the remnant road or the remnant movement that has united with many of us Anabaptists and are finding common ground. And that's a great joy likewise.

Now, I would like to speak first of all a little bit on some of the maybe it was good that Brother Melvin didn't go into the Dortrecht Confession of Faith because I do want to look a bit at some of the spiritual and doctrinal beliefs of many of these people in the martyr's mirror. The first thing I would like to read some scripture in Hebrews chapter 11 and just give you a little bit of a synopsis of what the concept was in the word of God concerning persecution. It started in the Sermon on the Mount or in the teachings of Jesus early on in his three and a half year old ministry when he began to warn the people as he sat them down and taught them that blessed are you when men shall persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake we are blessed and our joy will be great if that's the case.

And then he further taught the fact that men and women would have to be willing to deny themselves and take up the cross and follow the Lord Jesus and that would be a willingness to depart your houses and lands and husbands and wives and children and lands for my sake and the gospel. And so that was taught throughout his three and a half year ministry and then by example he went the way before and suffered that terrible torment and reproach and persecution both physically, mentally and in every way and died on a cruel cross outside of Jerusalem. But in that time of his earthly ministry he had told the people that the servant is not greater than his Lord that if they have done this to me they are going to do it to you also.

And he had laid out in clear tones throughout his preaching ministry there to the twelve and also to others that a time of persecution would definitely come. You remember the time when they wanted to follow the Lord in such a way and sit on his right hand and sit on his left and all that and began to say that they were willing to follow him whatever he might have to go through. And he had to tell Peter how that indeed that he would suffer likewise as he has suffered for his faith and he kept trying to bring that point up.

But in Hebrews chapter 11 we have the account of the Old Testament saints and in the account of the Old Testament saints we have words like in verse 34, Quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword. Out of weakness were made strong, wax valiant in fight. Turn to flight the armies of the aliens and there are some of that that belongs to the Old Covenant and the Old Testament and is not applicable to the New Testament church because they are defenseless Christians.

But then he goes on in 35 and says women received their dead raised to life again and others were tortured not accepting deliverance. That became an earmark of the defenseless Christians that there were many times that the doors were open in the prison and individuals would not escape simply because they were so anxious and ready to die for their faith. Because they believed, as it says here, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

And then in verse 36 he describes what has come in the New Testament church much more. Others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with a sword.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and in caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Now I would just like to say that I believe that many of the doctrines upheld by the Valdentians and the Anabaptists are very, very important doctrines of the faith. I do not believe that those who ignore them in evangelical Christianity today are giving a clear gospel, a full gospel. If they do not believe, and it's interesting also to recognize that in the early days of Zwingli and Luther, they actually embraced defenseless Christianity for a short time.

Until they looked around themselves and saw the reality of what they'd have to face and the public being willing to support them and protect them, they succumbed to that and therefore gave a partial gospel and to such a deterioration of their own faith that they turned out and became murderers and abusers of Christians and killed them likewise and burned them at the stake and various other things like that. John Calvin himself, though revered by many evangelicals today, gave his full consent to the burning at the stake of Serratus or one of the men or brethren in Switzerland who was a defenseless Christian. And therefore, I do believe that great carefulness should be given today with any compromise that we should make with typical Protestant Christianity because it is preaching a partial gospel and needs to be, as I call him Priscilla, taken aside and explained the way of God more perfectly.

It is not that none of those have not been born again and not made a beginning in their Christian life through ignorance. And we must understand that and not give them too cold a heart in rejection at the beginning because they may just have never heard like we had heard Brother Melvin say is also true of our old order people. They have no idea what the Vorheit is.

They don't understand the Dorthrecht Confession. They don't know what it taught. And I hear that many of our young plain girls in Lancaster County give an incredible answer when the tourists ask them why they have that thing on their head.

They don't have a clue that it's in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 taught in the word of God. But the only answer they have is the church tells us to do it. And so I believe, yes, carefulness should be given because ignorance is ignorance.

And many times people need to be brought along to understand the full faith and the full understanding of the Scriptures. A faith worth dying for. And I was so impressed in reading that book by Nicholas Stoltz years ago as he described the Valdensians being their properties confiscated and because of their faith in Christ chased out of their houses and they took a trek across the Alps mountains in winter burying their

little babies in the snow by the side of the road and suffering incredible tortures and discomforts in their flight to try to find somebody who would accept them and allow them to live in peace in their faith.

A faith worth dying for. And that mirrors the entire martyr's mirror from the beginning of the time of the apostles giving an account of each century. It is very, very important student reading for all young people that are born again and that have an early beginning in their Christian life that they take that to heart and understand the faith that has come through the ages.

Now, like I say, and I've said this many times before in some of your presence, I also believe that it is a right thing for us to understand by interpretation of Scripture how the Scripture is interpreted to begin to view how the church through the ages interpreted the Scripture. And therefore, if we follow the historical account of the defenseless Christians, we have a general view of how these Scriptures were understood in all of these, what is now, we can say for us, 1,900 years of Christianity. It is a good understanding of that.

Alright, the first point that was very predominant in the martyr's mirror was the concept of the two kingdoms. That there was a kingdom of this world and there was a kingdom that God ruled with the rulers of this world in a political sense, setting up the kingdoms of this world as He would, but that was in stark separation from the kingdom of God in the church and in the believers. And that those two should not have communion together.

That God has a kingdom politically and a kingdom socially that rules over the affairs of this world, but that He has a kingdom of God where He communes with people on a moral basis. They are born again and are members of that kingdom and therefore should be separated from the kingdom of this world and not have any parts with the political and patriotic things in this world. They believed in the two kingdoms and much more could and should be said on that subject, but also in that there is a separation of church and state.

And maybe I'll get to speak a little bit about the ecumenical movement at the end, but I'd just like to show you how that is being eroded in our very midst. The two kingdoms, that there is a political kingdom, Romans 13, and there is a spiritual kingdom, John chapter 3, the new birth, being born of the Spirit. And those two are contrary one to the other.

And even though God rules over them both, yet the one, they don't know He's ruling over it. They have rejected Him and nevertheless He, through His sovereign power, still sets up kings and takes down presidents and so forth according to His divine plan. And everything is overseen by Him.

But they are not in His will and they are not born again. And I don't believe it's possible for a ruler of this nation to be a born again Christian and still rule over the nation. I don't think that's possible.

The next one that is a cardinal doctrine, may I say, or a very important doctrine of the defenseless Christians through the ages is that of believer's baptism. That a man or a woman should be baptized upon confession of faith with full adult mentality and understanding and therefore enter into a covenant with God for the faith that He has found, for the faith that He has embraced, and seal that faith with holy baptism. And thousands upon thousands of people have died at the expense of that.

Now, that is a very interesting subject in our day and especially in the realm of my ministry, because I minister much to former Anabaptist people. And we have come, this is how far the apostasy has come, we

have come full circle. And we're knocking on the door of Catholicism today in our plain churches.

In the last two weeks, I think, well I should say about five or six weeks, I was in Bolivia a while ago, just here in, I came home in early July. And while there I found out that in Nova Scotia and in Bolivia, both comments have been made by Anabaptist descendant people, direct descendants of the Anabaptists, that if a baby has been baptized, they should not be baptized again. A direct refutation and contradiction of the entire defenseless Christian stance through the ages.

Men are deceived to that degree that they believe that if an infant is baptized, they should not, what has happened, they should not be baptized again. What has happened is they are so frightfully afraid of what they call re-baptism or adult baptism that they have brought themselves to that degree and that departure from the faith. But believer's baptism is precious and once again, I would say the same for the evangelical church who is baptizing five and six year olds a lot and giving them a frightful hell story while they are that young, in Bible camp or in Sunday school or in evangelistic message and trying to tell them that they'll go to hell if they don't respond and be baptized.

And so they get them into the water at those ages and they don't have a clue what the new birth is all about. And they are not able to comprehend that. That is heresy.

It's not right to do those things. But we need to wait to baptize young people until they understand faith in Christ Jesus and have been born again by the Spirit of God. They are not going to hell if they die at five, six years of age if they have not accepted Christ as their Savior.

They are safe in those ages until they come to the age of accountability and responsibility before God. And we don't have an age for that, but we know it's that more adult mindset where they can think through these things and understand them. And another one was the Catholic Church was the great whore and antichrist system spoken of in the book of Revelation.

The defenseless Christians believed that, especially from the Maldonians and the Anabaptists on, that the Catholic Church was the antichrist. And with great boldness did they speak that truth in their debates. All of them are declaring.

They usually declared the priests to be some kind of occultic witchcraft magicians to try to put the body and the blood of Jesus and cause it to be the actual body and blood as you take the wafer in the Catholic Church which the Catholics believed. Our brothers would tell them that that is witchcraft or is occultism to believe those kind of things. And they called those men the right kind of names in showing them very clearly that they are a total departure from truth by believing such things.

So they also believed that. Now let me just go. I'd like to give you a little bit of some of the tenets of the Anabaptist vision that became very predominant which again in some of the Maldonians I'm going to give here at this time.

They believed in a practical literal interpretation of scripture. Now one of the great differences between Zwingli and Luther and the Anabaptists was the fact that both of them would declare that they believed in sola scriptura, that the Bible is the only way of faith. But they did not believe in following Christ in life.

And that developed a weak mentality of a historical assent to believe that there was a Jesus and He died on the cross. But not a hard experience that so changed their life that they were willing to live as Jesus did and live a separated godly life. The Anabaptists were not known for their theological expertise.

They were not considered theologians. Knowledge came much by obedience and by doing and following Christ in His life and by understanding the scriptures. But nevertheless they were the greatest debaters and refuters of lies and untruth in the debates, in the trials.

If you read that in the martyr's mirror you will find out that some of those men could debate beyond anything that I've seen in our time. They were well versed in the scriptures and they understood them and they believed the scripture that it should be given them what to speak by the Holy Spirit when they are brought before authorities like that. And God manifested that very clearly.

That is a wonderful thing how though none of them had gone to Bible school, there were no theological institutions, there were no seminaries at that time. Well there were in the state church but not for them. That was taboo to all of them and they just simply took the word of God and believed it by faith, practiced it and from there on we have this great revival coming out.

Now I believe the Anabaptist revival was one of the greatest revivals in all time. I don't know how much you realize that the influence of Anabaptism had on the entire world in the time of its great day. But the reason that anybody today basically has freedom of religion or freedom of conscience, it started with the Anabaptists.

Before that, everybody in every local town was coerced into the religion of the town. If it was Catholic, everyone had to be Catholic. If it was Reformed, everyone had to be Reformed.

If it was Lutheran, everyone had to be Lutheran. And they had no clue or concept of freedom of religion or freedom to live your faith according to how you understand the word of God. And through Anabaptism, those governments, including the government that we have here, so powerfully influenced them that it has brought us the freedom that we know today.

And we question also how much that freedom is actually what is happening with that freedom today. But nevertheless, your church has enjoyed many, many centuries here, or a number of centuries of freedom of religion. Swearing.

They believed that swearing was wrong. And you needed to literally believe, as the Sermon on the Mount taught, that your yea was yea and your nay, nay. And whatsoever was more than these cometh of evil.

The Catholic inquisitors and examiners would swear and curse in front of the Anabaptists, but they would only answer with simple yes and no answers and affirm the things which they said from the Scripture. Divorce and remarriage. We have that as a major thing today being tolerated extensively in the evangelical world.

In the Catholic church, likewise, somewhat, is beginning to, or annulling the marriage is what they have done to get by their stance of not believing in divorce. They just have the marriage annulled. And that, of course, is allowing them to leave a wife and marry another.

But that also was a major issue through Anabaptism in its years, to believe against the divorce and remarriage. Another one we have is modest apparel or modest attire. Void of outward display.

That was also a major tenet of the Anabaptist movement down through the years, where they covered their bodies, they covered the nakedness of their body and would stand against the exposure that we know today, that is, again, has taken over extensively in much of the churches everywhere. Jewelry, rich

lifestyles and so forth were rejected. They covered their heads, according to a literal understanding of 1 Corinthians 11, as a display of submission under their authority, their husband, and also because of the angels and other reasons could be given there.

Separation from the world and non-resistance were also major doctrines among them. But they knew what they believed and they defended everything by Scripture. It was not empty standards or just futile things that have no basis and no foundation in the Word of God.

That's why you find the Confession of Faith in the Martyrs' Mirror so in contrast with the common standard books that are extant today in many of the Anabaptist churches that have come from them. You have the standard book, quite a thick book today and ever getting thicker, as men try to legislate holiness and rule over their people by rule, by standard rather than by spiritual life and by the power of the Holy Ghost and by revival and by repentance and so forth. They try to legislate holiness by rule and by standards and that the Anabaptist Confession of Faith have nothing of.

They do not have a detailed standard on exactly how a man should comb his hair or what color socks or shoes he should wear or how he should hold up his trousers or whether he should have a beard or not a beard and all those things, they are nonexistent in the Confessions of Faith of Anabaptism. And I only say that to remind you as to how far many of these groups have departed from that historical faith. And yet the issues were much the same as today in their refutation and separation from Catholicism and Lutheranism and the Reformed Church, a lot of the issues are the same because those churches would not take the Word of God literally because they would not, they just ignored many of those things.

As you know, there are many evangelicals today who question whether the Sermon on the Mount is even for our day and is basically being rejected to the thousand year reign or to some other age. The separation of church and state, already mentioned, but I'll just give you a few quotes here that I'd like to give. Luther said, Sin boldly, but believe in God's forgiveness.

Imagine how that easy believism gave the license to sin back and then coupled again with unconditional eternal security made a haven for people to live in sin and not depart from it. Hans Dink said, An Anabaptist said, No man can truly know Christ except he follow Him in his life. The Anabaptists believe in discipleship.

They believe that young men should be, young women should be taught and instructed. And though I believe that a lot of this responsibility should lie upon the Christian home, I do realize that it also lies upon the Christian church and there should be much instruction given concerning the way of Christ and discipleship of a godly life after the teaching and example of Christ. Christ was their hero.

They could not accept the Reformed view of total depravity. That is a marked difference, likewise, of the defenseless Christian in the martyr's mirror. They did not believe that a man was so depraved that he couldn't seek after God.

It was so beautiful again to hear some of the testimonies this week of how your searchings for God in a very primitive, in a very small way, began in some of your hearts and manifested and grew and increased until you were born again and God's mercy was upon you. But the belief of total depravity of Calvinism is of such that a man is so deprived that he can't do anything, so depraved that he can't do anything and he just has to sit there and wait on God to call him. And I remember years ago finding people that were in the worst of sins and bound by them and felt they had to sit on their rocking chair and wait till God would move

that there was nothing they could do to turn from their sin and repent and come to God.

God have mercy upon such a deception, such a lie given to the people and is taking millions to hell today. I actually believe that. They are going to hell because they do not believe that they can seek after God and read the Word of God and pray and cry out to God for His mercy upon their life and their sin and help them.

The Anabaptists believed that man was responsible for their actions. All of them. And that if they found themselves like many testimonies gave, that I can't do it.

I can't live the Christian life. I need help from God. And that opened the door and God's mercy came upon them.

The baptism of infants was a major issue in the debates in the martyrs' mirror. All the way back through, the infant baptism came on the scene shortly after some of the early church fathers began to depart somewhere around 200 A.D. They got the idea that baptism, the first flaw was baptismal regeneration. That it is actually baptism that saves you.

And then when they reasoned that, then they began to think if children die without being baptized, they'll go to hell. And so that brought about infant baptism. But it is because of the era of baptismal regeneration that the water washes away sins and baptism truly converts the individual.

And that is a false concept. That is not true. We need to have a spiritual experience, as the Bible says, of the Spirit.

And where the wind blows, you can't see where it comes or whether it goes. So are they. That must be born of the water and of the Spirit.

And not by some outward ceremony and there expect baptism to be your conversion. But like was said to us in one of the testimonies the other night, the individual was that ignorant of that, that he actually felt like baptism was the conversion point. And multitudes of people today, young people, wait for the change.

But nothing happens because at their baptism. Because they are waiting upon the baptism to do something to them. And they have never sought after God in a spiritual way.

They have never truly repented of their sins and cried out to God for mercy. Another tenet of the defenseless Christians, or Anabaptists, was the fact that we can overcome sin by the grace of God. Anabaptism was a positive belief, not a negative one.

They believed they could do something for you. And they gave you power over sin. They believed in that resurrection power Brother Daniel spoke of the other night.

That that would change you and you could call out upon God for that power in your life. And any and every sin that you were bound by, any wicked habit could be overcome. And they rejected the view of just being poor human beings and needing to pray every night before you go to bed.

That God would forgive you as was more extant among the Protestant people around them. They believed that life was an ongoing struggle against temptation. But man could resist it.

But there was always a possibility of backsliding, of recanting under persecution. And hundreds and hundreds of them did recant. I was reading an account yesterday again of a group of women that were threatened with being buried alive.

And I can't imagine that they did that quite a bit. There were times when they buried women alive and burned men at the stake or killed them with a sword. And upon hearing that, you know, a number of them recanted and went back.

Now, praise God, some of the men likewise did through those years. But there's certainly a number of them that after they came to their senses, they realized how great they had sinned and repented again. And went right back and told the authorities that I was wrong to recant.

I'm sorry for it. The authorities grabbed them again, stuck them in the jail, and took them out to the stake and burned them shortly after. And they went to heaven rejoicing and singing as they went.

I'm going to give you some other things here. I have also too much material, I'm sure. I have a book with over 1,600 pages to go through.

And you can imagine if Melvin had a problem with 18 articles, what kind of a problem I might have. But I would like to now go to the divine manifestations of God in their lives. That gripped my heart.

That some of the divine manifestations, you know, when things get black and white, and things get real, real clear, many times we will again have God vindicating His truth by divine manifestations. Brother Daniel said last night again how in the Amazon, how the star broke up and came down upon people as tongues of fire or whatever. And that God can do anything that He wants to do.

And that comes so clear in the Anadaprist movement. Let me give you the account of that here. If I can get my proper notes here.

I'd like to talk about Augustine the baker who lived in A.D. 1556. And somewhere thereabouts he was a baker by trade who had forsaken the world and been baptized upon his faith according to the ordinance of Christ, which the papists could not endure. Now that word papists is the word for popes or the Catholic authorities, which the papists could not endure.

There was at that time a burgomeister who was very bitter and filled with perverted zeal who sometimes said that he would furnish the peat and the wood to burn Augustine. That's Augustine the baker. The bailiff had said that he should not apprehend Augustine without previously warning him.

But he didn't keep his word. And he came and he found Augustine at work and kneading his dough in the bake shop there. And Augustine quickly tried to flee out the back door, I believe, but he was instantly seized by his pursuers and cast into prison.

And as he was a man who was much beloved, he greatly grieved the bailiff's wife who said to her husband, Oh, you murderers, what have you done? But all in vain. He had to follow his Lord Jesus as the lamb is led to the slaughter. As he steadfastly adhered to his faith, they passed a cruel sentence on him, namely that he should be tied to a ladder and thus cast alive into the fire and burnt.

On his way to his death, he saw one of his acquaintances to whom he said farewell, Cornelison. And he says, I hope that we shall hereafter be together forever. I think it was a Christian friend there.

Whereupon the burgomeister replied out of a heart, judging with partiality, he will not get to the place where you will go, but he goes from this fire into the eternal. Thereupon Augustine said to the burgomeister, I cite you to appear within three days before the judgment seat of God. As soon as the execution was over, the burgomeister was instantly smitten with a raging sickness and continually cried with a guilty conscience, peat and wood, peat and wood, so that it was terrible to hear.

And before the three days had expired, he died, which was a great sign to the all-seeing eye of God, who would not suffer such cruelty to go unpunished, but an example to those who were looking on and those of the community, I believe. Divine Manifestation In 1553 there was one called Simon the shopkeeper. When he freely confessed, rejecting all self-invented infant baptism together with all human commandments, holding fast only to the testimony of the Word of God, hence he was sent to death by the enemies of the truth and was thus led without the city and burnt for the testimony of Jesus.

Many of the people were greatly astonished where they beheld the great boldness and steadfastness of this pious witness of God. The bailiff who had him executed on returning home from his deed was laid upon a bed of severe sickness and constantly screamed with sorrow and remorse, O Simon, Simon! And all the priests and monks sought to absolve him and were nevertheless not able to give him the least comfort. He soon died in despair as instructive and memorial example to all tyrants and persecutors.

George Libich and Ursula Hellringling About the year 1544, George Libich was imprisoned for the faith and divine truth near Innsbruck, that's in Austria, and as this is a place of particular danger because of evil spirits, as it is well known, this brother therefore had much to resist and was greatly tempted by the evil one who tempted him in visible form. He especially tried him in various ways during the first year. Once he came to him in the form of a maiden and wanted to embrace him.

When the brother knelt down and prayed, he put something into his way of preventing his praying. He also tried to take him off with him, but was not able to affect it. His father came to him in the form of a youth and also of a soldier, thus trying many and various means, but when he could not accomplish anything, he went out of the tower at the top.

Later on, they actually put this, a beautiful young girl, a believing girl, who was also apprehended for her faith, they put her into his cell with him. A sister by the name of Ursula Hellringling, a beautiful young woman who had also been apprehended for the faith, was put to him in prison, placed at the feet of George, and much of the time left with him. It is easy to imagine what the devil in his seed would have liked to see, but these two pious witnesses of Christ were valiant and God-fearing and could not by the allurements be moved or caused to fall.

Philip of Lagenslandheim in 1529, when the executioner struck off his head, when they took him out to kill him, something flew into the face, so as he put up his hands to it, which was well noticed by the people, however they knew not what it was and why he did it. Then the saying went abroad that something like a black hen had fluttered before his face so that he fended himself with his hands. Some said that the blood had squirted into his face, and though he himself knew best what it was, it was nevertheless seen afterward what it must have been, for the executioner's nose dropped off close to his face.

Thus God punished and visited him. Because of the innocent blood with which he had stained his hands in so large an extent, the Paul's grave was also was terrified and troubled in various ways so that afterwards he had no longer a desire to wash his hands in innocent blood and would have given much if it would have never taken place. Another account here is given here of a man, there was a judge called Sir Lewis who

greatly hated the brethren as was manifest in the imprisonment of these brothers and sisters.

With stern words he asked the council what they intended to do with the Anabaptist heretics since they had a royal command and mandate and yet did not have them executed. He said he would go himself, he would himself go to the king and inform them of their disobedience, but if they would have them executed he would draw wood to burn them with his own horses. This Lewis actuated by the hatred and envy of the old serpent was not yet satisfied with the blood of the pious and innocent sheep of the Lord and had to fill up his measure in his judgment.

He commanded money to be given to those who should tell him where the brethren assembled. A house having been pointed to him, he took bailiffs and watchmen and went with them to the place. There Judge Lewis stepped unawares into an opening before the house used to let down wine and sprain his foot.

He fell down and cried piteously that they should lift him up and let the rascals go. The brethren heard the noise and escaped from the house. After this, Lewis took sick unto death and as he lay there in agony and severe sickness he suddenly began to exclaim, Oh the Baptists, the Baptists.

He spoke nothing else but repeated this cry innumerable times. Finally he roared like an ox and like a wild beast and bit his own tongue and foam and blood ran out of his mouth so that his wife and children could not stay with him. Only his servant woman who was attached to him remained with him until he was strangled in his own blood.

Many other things could be referred to in this great book to show you that this was not a fly-by-night religion that these people had, but it was genuine and it was authenticated by God over and over again. And for that reason I recommend that faith to you likewise as the Scripture would say follow me as I follow Christ. We say those words, all of us, and recommend it very highly that you consider that in contrast to what we face today.

The Anabaptists believed in salvation from sin rather than from hell. They did not believe in just trying to save themselves from hell. They believed in saving themselves from sin.

A process to the end. They saw salvation as ending the salvation of the body. So it was a process of sanctification and holiness through your entire life.

And yet, with great assurance of salvation. They believed to be delivered from this present evil world, not just getting to heaven. It was a regeneration, a rebirth, a new creature, not the old one going to heaven and somehow his sins dropping off on the way up.

Or God not being able to see through the blood and all that stuff that men have concocted today. Salvation was not an end, but a beginning of a new life. An experience of love worked with others.

Christian Brotherhood, a church corporately, of which Melvin spoke of. The Reformed people went to church. The Anabaptists were part of a church.

They were a member of it. And they were not afraid of that word. To belong to something in an intimate way.

Love was relational. Someone says it's like the Protestants today are playing ball without becoming a member of the team. But we all know that a good ball team is someone who becomes a part of the team

and pulls together as a whole, as a body.

And the same is true. They didn't have much for the clergy-laity relationship, but they believe in the priesthood of all believers. And that true brothers were extremely valuable to the sustenance and maintenance of the church, not just good preachers.

Zwingli once made the statement that it seems their lives are unrepachable, pious, unassuming, attractive, motivated by divine motives. Bollinger once said they denounce pride, covetousness, profanity, lewd conversation, drinking and gluttony. In short, their hypocrisy is great and manifold, he said.

And the other thing, of course, they believed is the discipline, church discipline. And even though that the groups that are direct descendants of that have greatly, greatly misunderstood that, nevertheless, they did believe in church discipline. They felt that the field was the world.

They believed the Scripture in Matthew that the field was not the church. It's amazing how you hear plain people say, well, the field is the church, you know, and you can't uproot the tares unless you uproot the wheat. But they believed the field was the world.

And the church was to be a pure body. And there needs to be discipline to keep it pure, to purge out the old leaven and to make a new lump. That's what they believed and exercised themselves in it.

Another one was evangelism. They didn't have any mission conferences. They didn't have any mission organizations or boards.

But every man was an evangelist and spread the Gospel. And it has the history of some of the greatest expansion of faith known in time led by the Spirit of God. They believed in gloss and height, which simply means the total yieldness of self.

What's mine is able also to be used by others. They did not believe in selfish possession of goods. Well, where do we begin? Where do we end? Let me just say some of the moral precepts left by the Valentians.

We must not love the world. We must shun evil company. We must, if possible, live in peace with all men.

We must not go to law. We must not avenge ourselves. We must love our enemies.

Now, these are tenets of faith that have basically eroded from the professing Christian church. Look how quick that somebody is willing to go get their lawyer when they have been wronged today. We must willingly bear labor, threats, rejection, shame, injuries, and all kinds of torment for the true sake.

And that's why they interpreted those Scriptures concerning Christ. That if they've treated me this way, they're going to treat you that way too. And all that live godly shall suffer persecution.

They believed those words literally. And so they were willing to bear those things. We must possess our souls in patience.

We must not be yoked together with unbelievers, not only in marriage, but they were very careful whether they were yoked themselves in business or other things with unbelieving people. We must not have fellowship with evil works, especially with such as savor of idolatry and all services which tend in that direction. And thus, we are to judge in like manner.

And here are some other things that are so good too. They shall not serve the deadly lusts of the flesh. They shall keep their members that they do not become the instruments of wickedness.

They shall govern well their thoughts. They shall keep the body in subjection to the Spirit. They shall mortify their members.

They shall shun idleness. They shall observe temperance and sobriety in eating and drinking as well as in their words and in the cares of this world. They shall practice works of mercy.

They shall live in faith and morality. They shall fight against youthful lusts or against lusts. They shall mortify the works of the flesh.

They shall at the proper time attend divine worship. And I would like to underscore with the heavy drift to go for camping pleasures on the Lord's Day. In my youth, that was looked down upon as a worldly thing.

And I remember in Bible school, we were admonished not even to travel much on Sunday. But especially not Sunday morning, but to be in church somewhere in worship of the Lord. They shall diligently examine their consciences.

They shall purify, improve, and compose the spirit and mind. Now, I'd like to say a little yet about the apostasy of American Anabaptism. That is said, I don't believe a lot of people realize, but what happened, you'll find it in the end chapters, the end pages of the Martyr's Mirror, that the Anabaptists had escaped Switzerland.

Switzerland was the last stronghold for persecution. Germany and Holland had already pretty well quit and became to a point of toleration. And many strong letters were written by the authorities of Holland to the authorities of Switzerland to let up on this and not confiscate their goods.

They used to take everything they had and banish them at the border, escort them to the border and banish them without any money or any of their goods. And they had to make it on their own. And some of them died due to overexposure and sickness and so on.

And so a lot of pressure was given by the government of Holland there to the governments of Switzerland to ease up on their persecution. But from 1670, when the last chapter was written in the Martyr's Mirror, until 1730s, 20s and 30s, when the first Anabaptist minister came to this world, we have approximately 60 years. But not only that, many years before 1670, when the Martyr's Mirror ended, there was already lethargy and apostasy taking place in Holland and in Europe.

We have many of the Swiss brethren coming up from the Platinate, up the Rhine River, getting ready to get in their ships to go to the United States that were grieved at the worldliness, even in dress and in conduct by the Holland churches at that time. But something drastically happened in Alsace. A lot of the Anabaptists, due to the persecution in Switzerland, immigrated in the 1600s, late 1500s and 1600s to Alsace and lived there for a hundred years before they immigrated to the United States.

And something drastically happened there. Because by the time the Anabaptists immigrated to the United States, there was a tremendous loss of the Anabaptist vision. As you see their behavior in the United States when they got here, the first thing we notice is that they lived peaceably among the Indians without any desire to evangelize them.

Missions was gone, was lost by the time virtually any of them came to the United States and seemed to have very, very little burden for missions for almost 150, 200 years until a revival came, and that revival came through other groups, not out of their own bowels many times. But I would expect there was some discontent and dissatisfaction, but not enough. The other one is the bringing along of their books of witchcraft.

They had lost discernment to such a degree that they brought the most ranked books of witchcraft called the 6th and 7th Book of Moses, which was the Devil's Bible or the Egyptian Sorcery, the Book of Egyptian Sorcery. You can go to the Mennonite Historical Society down the road here in Lancaster at their book sales and they will sell those books to this day that comes out of older Anabaptistite people donating their books to the Historical Society and they having a book sale. And you can find that 6th and 7th Book of Moses over and over and over again in their lists of books.

I saw that myself when I used to get that list of their book sales and had attended a few of them years ago when I was doing a lot of reading and searching in literature, in ancient literature. The other thing is the excommunication and shunning of Christians. That is probably alone been one of the greatest detriments to Anabaptist history in Lancaster County and across the United States and is still extant today all over the place.

That started primarily in about 1870 when a young man, son of a preacher, left the Amish Church and joined the Mennonites. And it was decided by one man, one minister alone, that we have to put up a fence to keep our people in. We can't just let them go to other Anabaptistite churches.

And so they put up the fence in the form of the ban and shunning. And instead of it becoming primarily a form of discipline to those fallen in the sin, it became what I consider a diabolical practice of rejecting born again people and shunning God's children. And for that, the loss of blessing and an awful deterioration settled upon the church from 1870 until now.

And every revival group that existed from that time until now had to come out. There was never a revival of the group. And I want to tell you that you will never get one across until you deal with the excommunication and shunning and that gets laid aside.

Then there might be some hope for revival within. But for the most part, until that is dealt with, I believe that is a one God-forsaken belief in their midst. And never will they be able to find their way to the truth until they deal with that issue.

And it's interesting to find in our time here how other groups, not specifically of the old order, Amish groups, but now also Mennonite groups are picking this thing up left and right. We're dealing with it in Manitoba among conservative groups. We're dealing with it in Bolivia, in Mexico and Canada, across Canada.

The idea of believer's baptism. I nearly got a fist in my face by a father when I baptized his son up in Vienna. He was livid and out of his mind virtually that his son should be baptized upon his confession of faith.

If he wouldn't have been restrained by another son, I'm sure I would have got it. Unless God would have stopped him somehow. He was within a couple feet when he did get stopped.

So, that is really a sad thing. And you know, there are a lot of people who aren't very concerned about this reforming, trying to reform the churches. Be they who they were, all of these Anabaptist churches that there is just a gradual reformation is sought for without clear return to biblical premise, doctrine.

That's not going to work. To just get some better morals and just some better youth groups. I honor every evil that is, to put away evil.

That is a good thing and I honor those things. But to build a New Testament church, we must get back to New Testament principle. And abandon these things that have happened in the last 150 years that have come down and become a tradition.

They must go in order for a New Testament church to again rise. The whole concept of mission, can you imagine? Someone said the other day that one of the former Anabaptists or the old order type groups have mentioned. And I find this very broadly in my travels.

It's not exclusive to one group. But they actually believe that we are God's special people preserved through the ages from 500 years ago for His glory. And if that were true, you should go everywhere telling people about it.

And the public is not even invited or welcome in the services. I was in Alberta some years ago when an old lady was trying to tell us that there's absolutely no hope for anybody in California. The young man who was with me was challenging her.

What do you mean? Colony life is the only life. You know, what shall the man in California do that seeks after God? She said there's no hope for anybody out there like that. Unless you live in a colony, there was no way that you'd ever be saved.

That was her persuasion. And you can imagine the falseness, the incredible lies these people have believed and absorbed into their tradition. And manifold, widely, it is accepted and believed by some of these groups.

That they are a special people preserved by God because they are still praying and the rest have gone worldly. And I know that's a sad commentary also. And I'd like to speak a little bit about that in closing here.

But that is sad. And of course, the other thing is the ongoing practice of witchcraft. I've been in communities across the land where they have said, I'm sure not in accuracy, but there's one on every fence corner.

You know, a practitioner every half mile or every mile across this community. And I find out that it is so, so abundant in many of these places. And they have no discernment that they are joining hands with the devil openly and practicing witchcraft.

And yet claiming to be direct descendants and to be Anabaptists. One of the things, another thing that is a burden on my heart is how the Anabaptist confession of faith has been replaced by the standard system. That is a burden on my heart likewise.

The Anabaptist confession of faith is in stark contrast to the standard system. And a lot of people do not see that difference. But that difference is great.

I mean, can you imagine reading a confession of faith like the Schleitheim or the Dortrecht confession? And then at the bottom it would say, you know, that you should only ride grey donkeys or you should only wear black shoes or something like that. It doesn't fit by any stretch of the imagination, does it? And yet the standard system is bringing those kind of details to bear upon people. And they think they have the keys of the kingdom to do it.

And they don't have. I do not believe that they have the keys of the kingdom to put anything in there they want. And bring it to bear upon the people and make it equal to the Word of God.

And that's how it's treated. The standard system is basically treated as the Word of God and held in equality to it. And in some cases much higher.

Because it's like Jesus said, they reject the Scriptures and make the commandments of man much greater and higher. And much deception has come. Instead, as a preservation of God's Word, the love of the truth, resurrection, power, revival and such like to maintain the Christian church.

I hope I have the grace that if I ever get into a church setting when life has ebbed away basically. And people have become worldly and carnal to not resort to outward rules to try to shape the people back into form. I hope I have the grace to keep doing that.

One other thought that I would like to give. And I believe this is an important one too. Is the matter of identificational repentance.

That has come in upon us in the last five, six years here in Lancaster County and also across the United States somewhat. If you understand that term, I'll explain it a bit. But identificational repentance.

What it means is we need to go back to the American Indian and apologize for taking their land. And try to make amends with them. YWAM, one of the great mission organizations, Evangelical Mission Organization of the United States and the world, across the world.

Has sent thousands of young people to take the track of the Crusades from Europe to the Muslim lands. Apologizing for what the Crusaders did a thousand years ago. And then of course we have the same thing here with the Swiss Reformed Church.

Trying to get forgiveness for persecuting the Anabaptists. And what is really behind it is an ecumenical bond in time. I got a call myself from a local bishop.

A Mennonite bishop who was trying to get me on board for this thing about five years ago when it kicked off here in Lancaster County. And I told him this way. I said, the issues still remain, don't they? And he didn't want to talk about the issues.

I said, are they willing to forsake infant baptism and get baptized upon their confession of faith? Are they willing to separate church and state in Switzerland and recognize that that is wrong? Are they willing to put away their jewelry, their immodesty of dress and all these things and live a godly life? That's the issue. And those were the issues 500 years ago. And they are the issues today.

And I'm not willing to commune and wash feet when those are still the issues. Just on the basis of trying to get forgiveness for what was done 500 years ago. God help us.

Identificational repentance. It's a major theme that a book was written out of Pasadena, California by C. Peter Wagner on this subject. And it is going into foreign missions and all kinds of people are picking this thing up and are thinking all of us need to make all these things right.

Where our fathers and grandfathers and great, great, great grandfathers have done wrong. Well, I think it would be much better that we would take responsibility for our own sins and seek repentance for them. Now, we have the call of the remnant.

And I believe I'm speaking to a portion of that today. I believe it is not only here, but it is scattered across the world. And it is not only associated with charity Christian fellowship or effort or some other churches uniquely that way.

Even though I thank God for the amount of touching that we have been able to do with some of these groups and relate to them. I believe it is a greater movement than what we are. There is a remnant according, called according to God's people, God's word to come out from among them.

To identify the apostate church for what it is. And to basically start fresh and new by the word of God. And I rejoice over that and encourage all of you to be a part of that movement one way or another.

Now, I would like yet to close in Revelation chapter 3 and 13 with these words. Verse 10 of chapter 3 of Revelation. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell on the earth.

I believe that and also the scriptures in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 concerning great tribulation that shall come upon the face of the earth. That literal, physical persecution shall return to the earth. In ways it has already in Muslim countries and in many third world countries like that.

There are Christians dying for their faith. But I believe it will cover the earth. And let me read the other verse in Revelation 13 to show you how severe that will be.

In chapter 13 concerning the reign of the Antichrist, which I interpret literally to be yet be in the future. I believe in an Antichrist system that Martyrs Mirror speaks about, that the Catholic Church was the dominant player of through the years. But I also believe in a man of sin rising up, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself as God in 2 Thessalonians 2. But here in chapter 13 verse 7 it says, And it was given unto him, the Antichrist, to make war with the saints and to overcome them.

And power was given unto him, the Antichrist, over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. God will for time, time and a half of time, or three and a half years, give the Christian group, the Christian church, into the hands of the devil. And I believe that's what is spoken of in Revelation chapter 3 as a trial that shall come upon the earth to try all them that dwell on the earth.

And for that reason, and I say it must happen. Because we don't have any idea who's going to heaven and who's not. In today's world, yes, we have a little bit of an idea.

I shouldn't say we don't have any. But I read in the paper the other day, and you know they say there's about 62% of the people in the United States believe in being born again and believe in being Christian. Now they say that 10% of the born again ones believe in reincarnation, which is a Hindu or Buddhist religion, that we should come back in another form.

This is unthinkable. But nevertheless, that's the deterioration of churchianity as we know it today. But I believe that God will bring a trial upon the so-called church with enough of severity and enough of testing and trying that it will separate the professed from the true.

And I believe that to be nigh at hand. And therefore, I want to say in closing that I think it's good for us to prepare for that and to think about that and to consider what we would do and say when that trial comes upon us, because it may be just around the corner in some of the things that are happening today. We recognize that it is already at the doors.

But I believe that God must remove all this confusion and gray matter and finally again purge out and call out the true ones from the false and He'll do it by persecution. And I believe that we should prepare. And therefore, it's good for us to study the martyrs of the past and see how they answered those questions and see how they responded to those cruel mockings and jail times and burnings at the stake.

And the Bible speaks specifically in Revelation about beheadings. And to walk up to the guillotines of that day and lay ourselves calmly down at the table waiting for the knife to fall with joy. One man I read in Revelation in the martyrs' mirror that was so good, you know, he had about three boys, teenage boys, three or four, I think it was, and the burgomeister or one of the bailiffs came in to get him.

And he bound him up inside the house and was leading him out. His boys weren't home. And here his boys came home when he was just ready to leave.

And he said, Boys, do you want to go along to the New Jerusalem? And they joined in behind him and were killed for their faith likewise in a few days later. Do you want to go along to the New Jerusalem? Then prepare yourself likewise. Like our Master said, if they've done it unto me, they're going to do it to you.

And you should not be surprised when that day comes. May God give us grace and strength for that hour which shall yet come, I believe, upon the face of the earth. May God add His blessing.

Thank you. Thank you, Brother Mose. I'm challenged by that.

I'm always challenged by those accounts in the martyrs' mirror. Yet I'm also convinced that it's not something we should be fearful of or dread, but that if that time comes, as we walk with the Lord even now, He will give grace when that time comes, that we are physically persecuted for our faith. Mose made a little mention on the persecution around the world today, but I don't think too many of us, I wonder how many of us, realize the extent of that going on.

In fact, they say that there's more Christians that have died for their faith in the last century than ever died for their faith before that, almost 2,000 years before that. In China, in Korea, in Vietnam, places like that. I'm also challenged by, I don't know how many of you have read the book *The Heavenly Man*, by Brother Yan in China.

And how he, when he came after all his sufferings, physical beatings and imprisonments in China, he came over here to America and was some of the, well, basically the American Christians, a lot of them did not accept him too well. In fact, there was kind of a bad report put out about him. And he wrote in his book that that was actually more painful than all the physical beatings he received in China.

So, you know, I think it can be a little bit what we grow up in, what we're used to. And I really believe that as we walk with the Lord, God will give us the grace to faith. And I can testify of that in my own life.

I remember the first time we were called in front of the church for what we believed. And it was a fearful thing. I've never had that experience before.

It was, I know as the time was drawing near, I had a heavy heart and I was trembling. And I, but I still remember so clearly. When our name was called out and we were asked to come forward, I stood up and just like that, heavens opened up.

And there was like a burden just rolled off of my back and I could walk up there just in freedom and the fear was completely gone. It was such a blessing. It's such a wonderful experience just to know that God was there and just carried us through in a way that I could never imagine.

Praise God.

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