

# Anabaptist History - Part 5

by Walter Beachy

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*Walter Beachy explores the four basic issues in Anabaptism, emphasizing the importance of scripture as the ultimate authority for faith and ethics.*

**Duration:** 1:17:30

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:34

**Topics:** "Anabaptist History"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man named John who was a slave. John's master, Mr. Robinson, bought him with the intention of setting him free and educating him. Over the course of two years, John worked for his master and learned various skills. Mr. Robinson had a program where he would buy slaves, set them free, and educate them before sending them off to work for someone else. The speaker emphasizes that what Mr. Robinson did for John to set him free from slavery was significant, but it pales in comparison to what the Lord has done for believers in setting them free from sin and offering them eternal life.

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## Transcript

Well, greetings to all of you again and bless you for being here. You will probably have the distinction as a congregation and hear from last night's experience of having a better reason to remember this father-son trial and the beheading of the father than most groups because I told you the stories in the Reader's Digest. I have no idea how that got out.

You know, Freud said, and even Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart to mouth speakest, but I don't even read the Reader's Digest, but rarely. I occasionally will say, when I reinterpret in street language the passage of scripture, I'll say the Reader's Digest version, you know, or something like that. But the Reader's Digest and the Martyr's Mirror are certainly of a very different genre, different kind of publication, so in any case, it should have been.

It's in the Martyr's Mirror. Many of you caught that, but some of you didn't, maybe right off. But be assured that it's not in the Reader's Digest.

It's in the Martyr's Mirror. And I have just wondered how in the world that got out there, and to this moment I don't recall saying it. Somehow it just didn't register.

Well more seriously, tonight we want to look at the four basic issues, and I would say they are still issues. And they are especially issues in present day American Mennonitism. And in my lifetime, we've seen the kinds of changes that would have been unbelievable.

In fact, when I was ordained in 1965, if someone would have told me then, that by the year 2000 even, there would be Mennonites who believe what I now know some do believe or don't believe, I would have said no way. That will not happen. But it has happened.

Look with me on your outline, on the top of the page, on page 5 in your outline. Some of the first ones didn't have the numbers on very clearly, but it's at the top of the page where it has four basic issues in Anabaptism. And I list the four there in a phrase, but I also at the end of each list note what you would call the theological term that applies to that particular position.

Like in the first case, Simple Literal Biblicism, that has to do with our epistemology. Now don't be afraid of learning new words. It's a bit like expanding the program on your computer, you know.

And epistemology is simply the study of or one's position regarding how we know truth or how we gain knowledge. It comes from the Latin. I'm not sure the form of that word that actually means knowledge.

But epistemology is the study of or it can be one's position regarding how we come to knowledge. And that can apply to any study, any field of study. But when we're talking about Christianity and how we know truth, we're talking about how do we know biblical truth or how do we know spiritual truth? Or you could even say, how do we know true truth? That's borrowing from the late Francis Schaeffer, as if there were untrue truth.

There really isn't. But things are paraded as and sold as truth that aren't. And how do we really know truth? Then in the case of the second point that we'll talk about yet tonight, that the very essence, the substance of Christianity, the core issue in Christianity is discipleship.

When you study theology in the section where they talk about salvation and the biblical teachings on salvation, and even the liberals who digress from that, that particular study of salvation is called soteriology. Now, that's easy to understand if you pick up on the fact that soter, that's mispronounced, but in the English, soter, the first five letters, S-O-T-E-R, pronounced soter in Latin. Soter is the word for savior.

So it's basically saviorology. It's the study of salvation. And then, of course, you recognize the word ecclesia, or ecclesiology, as referring to the church.

So the third point there has to do with our beliefs about the church based on scripture. And then the last one has to do with how we relate, or the ethics of human relationships, which is a sociological study. So it has to do with our sociology.

Now having said that, let me get right to discussion of what our forefathers believed and what the scriptures say. In the Old Testament, in Psalm 119, verse 85, 86, it's in there somewhere. It says, Forever, O Lord, your word is established, or settled, is the King James English, in heaven.

Forever, your word is settled. The Hebrew word there is primarily meaning established. It won't move.

It's there. It just is. It doesn't evolve.

It doesn't change. Because if God were to change his word, now he changes relationships from the Old to the New Testament and so on, in different covenant relationships. But if God were to change truth, it would mean that at one point he didn't share truth, or he shared untruth, or he changed himself.

And change would imply that he either gets better or worse, which means he's not perfect to begin with. You have all these kinds of logical problems unless you accept the fact that all truth is one. All truth is a unity.

And you don't have contrary truths. You have two sides of a coin. For instance, within three or four verses in Galatians, we're told to bear our own burdens and we're also told to bear each other's burdens.

That's not what you'd call a dichotomy. It's simply two different admonitions depending on the circumstance or context. And as I was parenting, or we were parenting our children when they were younger, I would sometimes tell them to hush it.

That does sound better than shut up, right? Hush it. Or sometimes I said, speak up. I don't think they ever thought I'm dichotomous, you know, or contradicting myself.

It depends on the context in which it's spoken and so on. But forever, O Lord, thy word is established in heaven. And Jesus said that heaven and earth will pass, but my words will never pass away.

And he said, he that rejects me and receives not my word has one that judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day. And in Hebrews 1, it says, God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

Now others wrote the record of his teaching and his coming and his death, his resurrection and so on. And then the apostles wrote after him. And some would have us believe that, well, the apostles' word is just no better than our word.

You know, and I've had a Mennonite educated to the master's degree level say to me that he believes that if a group of Christians committed to each other and committed to the Lord decide on some issue, it has as much authority and validity as the scriptures. That's just not true. And he said, that's Anabaptism.

I said, no, it's not Anabaptism. He was reading the wrong Anabaptists. In fact, I've never read one, even the crackpot ones that would have said that kind of thing.

And we had a few crackpot Anabaptists, like I said before. But the point is that the word is the standard of authority. In fact, I think that Peter, Paul, others who wrote in the New Testament were aware that they were writing more than just their own thoughts.

Peter says of Paul that he writes some things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned twist as they do also the other scriptures. He recognized that Paul's writings were scripture, and that's a good translation. That's not a mistranslation.

That's what he wrote. And Peter says of himself that as long as he is in this body, he feels responsible to keep telling us, writing and so on, about the truths that the Lord has shown to him. Now let me share with you about four quotes from first generation Anabaptists on the scriptures.

We believe, for instance, that the Bible is inspired, that is God breathed. God is the one who inspired the writers to write without error. And that the Bible is authentic, meaning from Genesis to Revelation, it is the Word of God.

And it is the ultimate authority for faith, what we believe, and ethics, how we should live. Right and wrong, having to do with ethics. Our forefathers believed that very strongly.

And we were called by others, and especially in America, we were called by others the people of the book sometimes. And we took it on, and maybe even prided ourselves in it. I don't know about that generation ahead of me.

But we claim to be the people of the book. And yet today we have become so liberal theologically that I would fear, in fact, I go beyond fear and say I cannot see how some of our leaders, including some of our ministers who are educators, whose positions I know, how they can even be Christian. I ask the question, can you be Christian if you believe that Jesus did not pre-exist Bethlehem? I don't think so.

Can you be Christian if you do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus and his literal return to earth? I don't think so. Can you be Christian if you believe that the blood of Jesus meant more to us coursing through his veins than when it was spilt at Calvary? I don't think so. But those are positions espoused by Mennonite educators.

And all three of those positions I know persons who are ordained ministers and educators who espouse those positions. Here is what our forefathers believed. Here is one by Conrad Grebel who only lived actively as an Anabaptist about a year and a quarter.

He said, act in all things only according to the word and bring forth and establish by the word the practice of the apostles. That's what Conrad Grebel felt and those who started the movement with him. Menno Simons said, the doctrine of the regenerate is the unadulterated word of God upon which they build their faith.

Very emphatic. Simons also said, we seek nothing on this earth but that we may obey the clear word, the clear and printed word of the Lord by which everything in the church must be regulated. That's a commitment to the Bible as the ultimate authority of the believer's life.

Dietrich Phillips said like this, God's word is unto us a sure and all sufficient and an unwavering solid foundation of truth. That's our heritage of what we believed about the scriptures as a people in the past. Or you could say that is our original epistemological stance.

That's what we believed about how we know truth and right and so on. But things have changed dramatically. Let me give you four points that are not in your outline if you want to do a little further study.

I'll try to keep them brief. But this is what we call Anabaptist interpretation or if you want the big words it's hermeneutics. Anabaptist hermeneutics.

And that I would date from 1525 to today for Bible believing Mennonites. But across the board in Mennonite circles even though in America I think we lost a lot and for a good long while were not evangelistic or mission minded which was a serious error. But our view of scripture still was and the way we interpreted was consistent with these four points.

And I think it is one of the stronger easily defended biblical hermeneutics or how we interpret scripture. How we look at scripture. Number one.

Scripture all scripture is inspired. That's foundational. Meaning it is more than the words of man.

It is the words of man. But it's more than the words of man. It is the word of God.

Secondly scripture is Christ centered. Or in theological studies they use the term Christo centric. That's again from Latin influence Christo centric.

That simply means that scripture is Christ centered. If you do consistent as a preacher or teacher if you do consistent exposition meaning explaining of or exposing of the words of scripture like if you preach through a book of the Bible and do so consistently you will be revealing Christ all the time as it were. He keeps popping up you know it's Christ centered.

Number three in our interpretation now the New Testament is our rule of faith and life. That does not mean that the Old Testament is not inspired but it does mean it is the Old Testament. It's a different testament than what we're living in.

And Jesus said repeatedly on the Sermon on the Mount that the it used to be said it was said in old time. He's quoting the law when he says but I say unto you and he brings a greater depth to the very thing that he referred to as spoken in the law. And yet we have evangelicals today who discredit the Sermon on the Mount.

Those who are strongly dispensational. And let me add here you can be a Bible believing premillennialist if you have a position. Far more Mennonites now are panmillennialists.

They think everything's going to pan out all right. Well that's true. But you can be a premillennialist without being a dispensationalist in the extreme sense anyway.

Extreme or hyper dispensationalism says and I quote now that Jesus came intending. I'm talking about the first coming Bethlehem. Jesus came intending to set up the millennial kingdom and then the Jews refused him rejected him and killed him.

So God went to plan B and when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount early in his three years he was he was exposing the millennial ethic and someone like Pat Robertson has said on television and in writing he has said the Sermon on the Mount the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be lived in a fallen world. It's like a young man who at one point was thinking about teaching at Rosedale and so we had him visit the campus and he was telling us he studied at an evangelical seminary a good conservative theological seminary however it was not Anabaptist which frankly I don't know of an Anabaptist seminary I would recommend today. But he was studying at this seminary and he said he had a lot of good teaching most of what he heard he agreed with.

However they did a study of the Sermon on the Mount in one of the classes having to do with the life and ministry of Jesus and he said a very devout godly teacher when they came to that section you've heard it said swear not by so and so I don't have time to go into all but Jesus said swear not at all and that's exactly what he said it's a good translation. And he spent about 20 minutes to explain how Jesus could not have meant that you can't swear of an oath of veracity and I'll tell the truth like in court raise your hand and say I'll tell the truth nothing but the truth so help me God you could do that and we have to have the oath

he said in a fallen world you've got to have the oath you cannot live without the oath in a fallen culture. Finally he said I couldn't take it anymore and I raised my hand and I said I think I am ninth generation means my father and my grandfather's before me eight generations back lived with the conviction that Christians ought not to swear an oath and the last time I checked they lived and died in a fallen world and the prophet said yeah I know some of you Mennonites are so biblicistic that you're not practical yeah non-resistance isn't always practical either you know.

And now the fourth thing then that I was giving you these four points every regenerate believer can substantially understand scripture that is a rejection of the elevated educated ministry clergy as the only ones who can really understand the scriptures I remember going to mass with a friend of mine from grade school who was Catholic and after I was saved I had a concern for John and told him about my experience and he listened politely but he would not hear his need for the Lord and he was already we were both about 16 at the time and he was already living in sin he was a bit older than I and running around with girls and so on and I finally persuaded him that he might come to our church sometime but he said you'll have to come to my church first so I went to Catholic mass in Plain City

and you know there is something about there's something refreshing I still appreciate the enthusiasm of youth I actually was praying that enough of the Catholics in Plain City would get saved that the church would actually close its doors but it's still there and I was 16 then and I'm 75 now so I didn't succeed in fact I didn't succeed in persuading John to become a Christian but I learned there at the Catholic Church the beginnings of my interest in history including Catholic theology and dogma and so on and I at times I was probably there at least a half a dozen times that late summer early fall in 1950 and I would actually engage the priest in conversation afterward and well at one point when he couldn't answer what I said he said with some disgust what I asked he said with some

disgust I don't know why I talk about these kinds of things with you because I don't understand Scripture and I went to school for eight years I trust the bishops and archbishops and cardinals and the Pope to understand the Scriptures and from there on he let me know he's not going to be discussing Scripture with me but he had the belief that at least the other clergy besides him well he was an alcoholic womanizing priest so there's probably good reason why he couldn't understand Scripture but those four things are earmarks of what we believed as Anabaptists now one more big term I want you to get a hold of whether you forget the term is not important but don't forget what it stands for Mennonite colleges back in the 50s some of the profs who were already educated then at the doctorate

level the late 50s early 60s had gotten their education at mainline seminaries where there was already a lot of liberal thinking a liberal theology a lot of German theology theological influence and German theology of all things was at the forefront of Western theological thinking and yet the German people for the most part are terribly irreligious and how we could fit those two and still to this day if you go to an Anabaptist pardon me to a Mennonite seminary they are going to require that you read those prominent dominant brilliant German theologians I've read some of them and a lot about them and they did not believe the Bible really they think they believe it in a better way than you and I do we're so simple-minded that the but we're stooped by the Bible or duped they would say duped

by the Bible here's the term I want you to know about we began at least as early as the 60s to teach in some cases in our colleges and seminaries what is called historical critical hermeneutics historical critical hermeneutics hermeneutics again is interpretation historical meaning you have to look at the context in which it was written and it has some validity historical critical means that you critique what is written in the

context in which it was written and look for the truth in what is written because people but writing back there would not have known what we now know today now let me tell you where that went we had a student come to us at Rosedale from non-Mennonite background he had gotten saved sought out a Mennonite Church in Oklahoma wound up in Canada in VS under MCC only to

discover that most of his fellow MCC staff weren't even born again and so he decided he's going to go to a Mennonite seminary he already had his BA degree in some other field he decided he's going to go to a Mennonite seminary and become a Mennonite pastor his first course on the first day of the course on Old Testament survey at Eastern Mennonite seminary back in the mid 1980s the teacher said that was the early 1980s about 1983 the teacher said like this and I quote now we are going to study the Old Testament in light of modern understanding and scholarship for instance he says we now know that Moses did not write any of the Old Testament we know that there was no universal flood we know that there was that that there that a man can't live in the belly of a fish three days and he said

we know that iron doesn't float and when people are thoroughly dead they cannot be resuscitated he said I sat there in total shock and I thought I've got to say something but before he got his hand up someone else raised his hand and said the professor's name and then ask him what do you do with the fact that Jesus referred at least twice and maybe three times to the fact that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth and he smiled so benignly and said you must remember Jesus was a man of his generation and that's what he had been taught what does that do with the deity of Jesus destroys it he's not God he's merely a man I saw him at a churchwide meeting where educators and ministers were invited to come to a

conversations on faith thing and I asked him at a break if we could have supper together I have a few questions I'd like to run by him and I told him when we were had our meal and were sitting there I said I know that students don't always get what we say in class tests reveal that but I said this student do you remember him I named him oh yeah I remember him he was only there one semester and I said yeah and he dropped out of the classes then didn't take any classes and partly because of what you said on the opening day and then I ran that by him I said is that what you said and he looked at me for a bit and he didn't say yes or no all he said was does that trouble you and being a prophet I said that not only troubles me it makes me angry that churches and parents and sometimes the

individuals themselves give good money to EMS to pay your salary to teach heresy got interesting after that and we talked for a while but that's where he really was which means that he looked at the scriptures and said okay you know that was written in such and such a time let me give you another example very very sneaky one to start with but then so obvious I was at a they have to have big names for people with doctorates and so because I was involved at Rosedale I was invited to a consortium on Christology which simply means a discussion on Christology on the nature of Christ and we were together for an evening and a day and about 200 of us and we would break up into groups of about 30 with a leader in each case and someone would present a paper and then we discuss the paper and then

the leader would bring back reports well about the second paper was on the on the exclusivity of Jesus meaning is Jesus the only way the title was the exclusivity of Jesus but the paper said that he is not the only way and that was that was a staff person from the Eastern Mennonite seminary as well I've known him for years he's my generation and he has his doctorate and he's brilliant he's well educated but he was educated by liberals and in that discussion he made this observation he said Jesus made few if any claims to deity and that just rocks you when you hear that and then his very next statement was some Bible

scholars will object to that statement based on the I am's in the book of John before Abraham was I am and then there was a number eight so I went to the footnotes number

eight and this is what he said this is historical critical hermeneutics at its zenith what it leads to he said we must remember John wrote his gospel late in the first century that parts historically defensible after Gnosticism had raised its head and Gnosticism did I interrupt now Gnosticism did challenge the deity of Jesus they claimed he was not God excuse me so he said since that's the case we cannot be sure that Jesus said these things because maybe John put them on the lips of Jesus to counter Gnosticism which makes a liar out of the Apostle John and just negates all the claims that Jesus made to deity and he was teaching young people to be the next pastors including guys and girls unbelievable I objected in the small group and there were only three of us out of about 25 who

objected and sitting right next to me was a young man with his doctorate who actually was a roommate of the writer and he said I take offense that you are so hard on him he is a fine mouse that I know him too he's a fine man but he's wrong and what he's saying is heretical and we had a good time at break I said to him look you and I are the same generation if you were in college with him because I'm the same generation he is so you were in the Korean War era he said yeah I said were you drafted no he said I was in college so I got a deferment I said okay let's go back to a real live actual situation I'm a Baptist you're a Mennonite and we're both drafted and I tell you as a Baptist I'm gonna go into the army and kill as many communists as I can because my pastor tells me that's doing

God's service because the communists are the enemies of God I'm quoting a Baptist radio preacher what are you gonna say to me he said well I would quote Jesus to you and I said wait a minute how do you know Jesus said that or maybe Matthew had an axe to grind and place those words on the lips of Jesus he thought just a little bit I saw the lights go on he said I get your point but I don't like your illustration he said and it was the end of the conversation I said you have a Bible the writer of that paper has a Bible that basically is according to my book I have no belief of what Jesus actually said because I can critique it and say well back then people believed that like the Mennonite I'm referring to that said that the lips that the blood of Jesus was as valuable when it coursed

through his veins as when he shed it on Calvary he says the idea of a blood atonement goes way back in human antiquity but he said we certainly don't have a bloodthirsty God who has to be assuaged with blood human reasoning rejecting biblical teaching again I ask the question can such a one be a Christian I don't think so I don't know how but we've lost that that badly in my lifetime within the Mennonite church it's very very sad do you have any questions or comments there would be more I could say but we really don't have time to talk about it maybe just a few things though if you have a question I'll take in just a moment one of the reasons I think that we as Mennonites have this kind of problem with education with higher education are you aware that we had hardly anyone in the

Mennonite church in America with a graduate degree until the 1940s and then in the 1950s it really took off and by 1985 take the early date 1940 we get the first Mennonite with either a master's degree and I'm quite sure there were no doctorates so if you have a master's degree called a graduate degree beyond the BA if you have a master's degree or several in 1940 it's 45 years to 1985 and in 1985 the Mennonite church in North America US and Canada had the highest per capita incidence of graduate degrees of any evangelical group in one and one-third generation we went from having hardly anyone with graduate degrees to having more than any other evangelical group and most of our educators had their training in liberal schools do you know why because the liberal schools were more open to

pacifism non-resistance the evangelical schools during World War II the Korean War the Vietnam War today's war with the terrorists evangelicals are very militaristic and think we ought to take up arms and defend ourselves and Mennonites liberal Mennonites are down on evangelicals for that big reason in the liberal schools they could spin their yarns on humanistic pacifism and their profs thought they were brilliant so that's where they got their education and they got all that liberal garbage thrown in with an acceptance of pacifism the other thing is Germans are noted remember I said that German theology then yet then and now is at the forefront of theological thinking still is today Germans are thought to be by anthropologists people who study man and civilizations Germans are

considered a very cranial people there are only two other ethnic groups that they think succeed us the most cranial are the Japanese we don't like that and the next most cranial are the Jews and the third are the Germans and let's face it some of the Amish with a great education are clever inventors and can put things together like you wouldn't believe you know it's because we tend as Germans to think through to solutions and so when we get educated I think we got drunk on higher education as a church and we got it at the wrong places and we became a very liberal church and today a high percentage of preachers who have been educated in the last thirty years in the last generation are theologically liberal and you may not detect it in their preaching unless you sit down and probe and find

out what they really believe any questions we'll have to leave this for want of time I can spend a couple hours on this subject with a good bit of passion if you haven't noticed any questions anyone alright let's stand and just shift gears a bit and make sure you're wide awake and although I didn't see anybody about ready to fall off the chair but make sure you're awake and if you want to greet a few people around you and then we'll go to the essence of Christianity or what we call soteriology ok alright you can be seated whenever you want to or stand a while longer if you'd like and let's go on and talk now about the essence of Christianity is discipleship don't let that word essence throw you it simply means the stuff of what Christianity really is like the essence of a cake you women

know what that is the essence of Christianity the disciples of the Anabaptist said is discipleship let me put it simply to start with when Jesus said in in Luke 24 and that happened in no it wasn't Luke 24 it was Luke 14:25 Luke 14:25 there we go but that was the beginning of the third year of his public ministry at that point the crowds began to thin in the first year he was building up crowds in the second year often called the year of popularity he had huge crowds and it even says in verse 25 of Luke 14 that great multitudes followed him and he turned and said to them and then I'll quote some of that what he did he turned and he thinned that crowd and it says that people many people quit following him he said if a man hates not his father and mother and houses and land wife and children

houses and lands and his own life also now was he really saying we hate our parents that was what is called as hyperbolic statement or an over emphasis an overstatement for effect and Jesus did use hyperbole I think he used hyperbole when he said it's easier for a man to go through the eye of the needle for a camel to go to the eye of a needle and for a rich man to enter heaven he also used hyperbole and a figure of speech I'm not sure which one you'd call it when he referred to Herod as that Fox Herod didn't have a bushy tail and red hair and beady eyes and fangs he wasn't a fox but when Jesus was talking about hating our parents and including our own life also he was saying I must be first does that that isn't hard to understand is it when I proposed to Mary Jane or now let's say 10 years

after we're married I happen to think of one of my old flames well it was puppy love I didn't have flames I just had puppy loves and if I would say to her honey how about if I live with some other woman for a month

and then I'll live with you a month just back and forth she wouldn't do it I hope none of you would do it of either gender we set another person of the opposite sex above all others when we commit to marriage that's basically all Jesus is saying that we must set him above even our spouse and houses and lands and they're not very huggable I used to as a little Amish boy think the ultimate thing to own would be an airplane and sure enough back in 1974 it's too long a story to go into but I really feel like the Lord did provide that I could have a share of an airplane and we had

it on the farm we had a strip there it needed a good bit of work on the panel and inside and so being busy with a family and as a pastor and going to know I was out of school but I was teaching then already I was busy so the only time to work was after the children were in bed but I'd go out and work on the airplane and one time it got a little later than I thought it was about two o'clock when I went to bed and I tried to sneak in without waking her but she woke up turned over kind of sleepy eyed and said it's you I thought you might sleep with it I still like airplanes but they don't take the place of a wife nothing does and so for Jesus to say I must be first is not illogical and we understand that in other other relationships in life especially in marriage and so what he was saying

was I must be first many of those in the Protestant circles then in the 16th century far too many now and including some Mennonites would say you can be a Christian but not a disciple our forefathers said no you can't you're either a disciple or you aren't a Christian now of course when I got saved as a 15 nearly 16 year old it was like letting the door letting Christ into the front door but I did not consciously knowingly say no to God in any area of my life as I remember but I did not know what all he would claim over the years so there's a difference in our maturity and the level of our commitments and all of that but to deliberately think in terms of being saved because I've made a commitment and prayed a certain prayer which is pretty common in Evangelical circles just doesn't cut it

Menno Simon said it well when he said well ist kein Kreuz ist kein Christ translated where there is no cross there is no Christian the cross brings subjective death in your outline you will notice there that I just run a few things by none of the Anabaptists have all of these in a list but these are things that they wrote about that would define a disciple it's one who identifies with another you know in this case Jesus first Corinthians 10 however is a reference to those who were baptized unto Moses the Israelites followers of Moses if I would study psychology after a while let's say I'd have my master's in psychology and I'd love to have a master's in psychology but I don't if I would study psychology at that level then after a while if I started talking about psychology with

someone they could ask me are you Freudian are you Rogerian or are you Kriberian or are you Thomist these are all men who had psychological positions you know Freud like someone might say that thing about the Reader's Digest last night was a Freudian slip I don't know but here's the point if you follow the thinking of another man you are disciple of that man in that area of study the same thing applies when we become Christians we are followers of Jesus that's basically what discipleship means and then following means we follow after or one who learns from is also there but one who follows after in cross bearing and self-denial in love that brings up the issue of non-resistance in obedience that means radical discipleship in fruit bearing that has to do both with the graces and gifts the

character of Jesus and in winning others for the Lord and of course subjective death to carnal self and something we don't know much about and that is the objective tension in an alien world and that's where in 2nd Timothy 3:12 I referred to last night all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution this whole thing of discipleship has been played down so much that you can pray a sinner's prayer without

repentance in fact forget now which one of the groups it was but anyway in in John MacArthur's book I don't know if you're familiar with John MacArthur who's a writer and a preacher I was in a one-day pastor seminar under John MacArthur in Mobile Alabama when I was doing extension teaching in the prison down there from Rosedale for six weeks and one Saturday MacArthur had a

seminar there in 1991 so it's about 19 years ago he had just written the book the gospel according to Jesus and he is a moderate Calvinist but he gave one of the best answers to the Calvinist Arminian argument that I've heard but that's another story but what I'm getting at here is he said in that seminar that day that even though he believes in election he believes in predestination and I do too understanding him I think the way it's supposed to be understood but anyway he said I believe in those two doctrines but he said I have come as a pastor and about and a student of scripture I've come to the conviction that I cannot I dare not give someone assurance of their salvation based on a prayer they've prayed or what that kind of thing unless their salvation experience has led to a changed

life and then he made explanation he said if someone as a youngster keeps making commitments and maybe can't recall when they never did whatever was the time they didn't love Jesus and may not have a clear dramatic experience yet if they're honest about their temptations the potential wickedness of our hearts and then we know while we're living it means that we are radically changed from what we would be without Jesus and there again Mary Jane got me one time when we were getting late and I hate to be late going a long distance and I had not given enough time and we were coming behind every grandparent that was out joyriding and every light that we approached blushed you know that kind of thing and I started kind of muttering under my breath and all of a sudden I was brought back to

reality when she said you really would be an angry old man if you weren't a Christian and that's true I really would be because of my temper and my impatience and my Germanness you might share that with me but in any case we if we're honest about what we are like on the inside apart from Christ then we can even without having a more traumatic kind of experience I thank God I had that I was already a very conscious sinner and a big liar and all that kind of thing and had already stolen several times just little things but and I lied a lot so when I got saved it was a very clear break a change in my life but it was interesting to hear a Calvinist say that he cannot assure persons that they're saved unless they have a life-changing experience and I say amen to that the next year now with 93

in 93 I went to the moody pastors week for the first time I had known the president there for some years then Joe stole and had wanted to go heard good reports about their pastors week so I went for that and the second night at that point MacArthur had I think just come off of the board of trustees of moody Bible Institute so he was a connected with moody but a current trustee then who was teaching theology somewhere out in Oregon or Washington State I forget which I remember he was just a little guy with a goatee and when stole introduced him he said not only does he teach theology he has a goat farm and I thought to myself he even looks a little like a goat you know he was gray-haired and had this had this little goatee beard he was kind of funny and he was a funny speaker but he

thought he had to get MacArthur's error straightened out so I got a kind of an inside view as a Mennonite and there were several of us there numbers of us really but we got an inside view of the tensions within Calvinism because in the course of his preaching that night he made the statement and I quote now if you add anything to faith as the requirement for salvation even repentance you corrupt the gospel well John the Baptist came preaching repentance Jesus preached repentance on the day of Pentecost when they asked Peter what shall we do he didn't say confess Jesus or believe Jesus which they need to do of

course but he said repent I don't know where the man was coming from but he wanted to make sure that we understood that we are saved by grace through faith and nothing else and our

forefathers were accused of what they called proud faith in the German when they wrote some of their tracks in German so the common people would understand it they called it Stolze Glauben or proud faith and our Anabaptist forefathers answered back they called him proud faith because they said you say you're saved by grace but you're also saved by works they didn't say that they said saving faith includes repentance which leads to good works but the good works do not say we could be every bit as holy as any of us are now and even holier and it still would not save us it's the blood of Jesus that saves us that's what our forefathers said they wrote it I could read you a number of quotes from others from those first generation leaders who countered that accusation but we do believe that

James is right when he says faith without works is not saving faith I paraphrase now it's dead doesn't avail it's not saving faith I witnessed for a while with to a young man who came from an unfortunate background his father was an alcoholic and a chain smoker and so Pete never drank and never smoked but he did not know the Lord and had a very coarse tongue he helped me one time split one of our tractors when we had to work on on something on the inside and when we were putting it back together he pinched his finger and he swore badly and when the pain subsided he said sorry about that I said well you're really not offending me but the Lord hears everything I said I don't like it if if you I said what's your wife's name and he told me I forget it now but let's call her Mary I said

suppose when I'd hurt my finger I would real angrily say Mary would you like that because he was using the name of Jesus a lot and we got to talking seriously and he said you know I went to church with my wife his wife was a Christian so I went to church with my wife and it was a small country Baptist Church and he said I decided on the way home and I told my wife I guess according to the preacher I am a Christian I said well what did he preach he preached that you have to believe that Jesus is God that he was born of a virgin he died on the cross for our sins and God raised him from the dead and he's in heaven now and he's gonna come back someday he said I believe all that I said yeah but you know in your heart of hearts that it's a surface kind of intellectual belief because if you

really believed it then you would be afraid of meeting Jesus when he comes back or when you die and you would repent of your sins that's what the preacher missed he didn't preach repentance and that's the very thing that so many evangelicals have missed Luther missed it I read through Luther's theology Luther's very weak some have accused Luther of actually saying sin boldly now this is an English translation of what he said in German what he wrote in German some accusing of saying sin boldly because you can't out sin God's grace I don't think he quite said that or meant that and he didn't live impious life but he did like I told you the other night he did lament the fact that his followers lived worse as Lutherans than they did when they were Catholic because they were not taught

repentance and so they thought they were all right because they believed that doesn't cut it and our forefathers were very dramatic emphatic about them lastly and then I must close there the dynamic for discipleship means simply what gives us the what gives us the zest the ability the power to live as disciples that whole passage section from Romans 4 through Romans 8 where the first verse of Romans 8 says there is therefore now no condemnation isn't that awesome it really ought to make Mennonites shout occasionally at least no condemnation at least we can get goosebumps right goosebumps are quiet but in any case that's an awesome thing and if we get a hold of that it should give us the desire to please God a bit like the man who had a row of girls and one of the boys so bad and when his

wife was in labor again with another baby back before they did all the grams whatever they are forget now and anyway she had twins twin boys and the doctor came to the waiting room and said come here I want to show you something well he said has my wife had her baby said yeah and on the way to the window of the nursery said she had two babies and there they had set up these two little boys in bassinets to little boys and all of a sudden he looked at those boys and just grin from ear to ear and he turned and said to no one in particular he said I don't hate nobody you feel what we thought he was feeling he was just so happy it makes you think he might have hated somebody before you know but now he was so happy he said I don't hate nobody well it's that kind of inner appreciation and joy

that justification before holy God should create in us that we have impetus for and dynamic for discipleship and then the miracle of regeneration let me tell you in an abbreviated story a story I read when I was in grade school in public school going back to the early in the late nineteen fifties well our party eighteen fifties it would have started about the eighteen forties there was a plantation let's call it the Robinson plantation I forget the actual name of the family where there were several girls and one son and the plantation was right on the Mason Dixon line the buildings were in the south in Virginia and most of the land was there but some of the land was over into Maryland but the man had slaves he was a Christian man have this one son and his one son got caught up in the

abolition abolition movement and kept telling his dad we ought to set our slaves free now the dad was good to the slaves he had better living quarters than most and he had a black preacher there that was also a slave by the way and had built a little church for them he was good to them he even gave them pocket money and that sort of thing but he said to his son we could not compete if we paid them compete with the other plantation owners raising cotton and so on cotton and corn but anyway the man died the daddy died and soon after that the young man Mr.

Robinson called all the people together the slaves and told them I'm working on getting your papers and all of you are going to have free man papers where they could prove that they are free blacks and they were very happy about it he said I will hire you and he gave them an amount of the wages or you can go free about half of them left once they had their papers and half of them stayed so he needed some more slaves quotes he needed some more workers so what he would do is go to the slave auction a couple hours south by buggy in Virginia and buy slaves and fill up his quarters in the meantime well what had happened over a longer period of time is he would see some of his former slaves in town and they weren't making it they were illiterate they didn't know how to do math they couldn't read and write and they didn't have many skills so they weren't making it so he decided he had a blacksmith and he had the farm but he hired a tailor and what was on a furniture maker cabinet maker and so he would have four tracks that they could learn trades and then he hired tutors and began to teach these blacks how to read and write and it took about three years for them to have enough they could read and write and do basic math and have some history and geography so what he did was set up this whole learning process and he would buy slaves on the way home he would tell them you are free I did not buy you to own you and he would explain his program now to get to the the real part of that story one time when he needed to buy some more slaves to put through his program had some empty places he went to the slave auction the first slave one of the first slaves up was a young man of about 21 or 22 stripped to the waist his back raw with the whip marks with his wrists tied behind his back and the net the rope from his wrist was pulled up around his neck twice and then the master held on to it back there and he had hobbled his legs so he could only take small steps and he led him up on the auction block and John the slaves swore at the crowd and said I won't work for anybody he had also got an abolitionist fever and he was not gonna work for anybody and

the master said you can see he's a strong young man but I have not been able to break his will and mr.

Robinson decided I'm gonna buy him and he got him real cheap when he walked up to pay for him John saw him coming and when he got close enough he spit a big wad of spit right in his face and his master would have whipped him badly before but he already knew something was different when mr. Robinson made no response he just went around back of him wiped the spit off his face no response he paid for him he took a hold of the rope at the back of his neck and in a kindly voice he said John let's go home he decided he's not gonna buy any more than just this one and they walked away outside of the hearing range outside of hearing range from the crowd and he said stop here John I'd like to take these ropes off of you but you'll have to promise me you won't run if you run they'll lynch you but if you go home with me I will give you your free papers I did not buy you to be my slave you don't have to work for me but I'll tell you about my program on the way home John could not believe his ears to make a long story short he worked for his master for a little over two years he had a clever mind in two years the the teacher said he's ready to go the Smith he said he wanted to be a blacksmith he said he can make tools he can make horseshoes he can shoe horses he's ready to hire out to somebody he's ready to go so mr.

Robinson walked into the blacksmith shop one morning and he said John John was already at work he said John come here John looked up and said what's up NASA and he said it's time for you to move on and John dropped his tools and ran over to him dropped on his knees and grabbed his legs and said don't send me away I want to work for you the rest of my life now when I read that I did not connect it to being a Christian I might not have been more than 10 or 11 but I've often thought of John that was a true story by the way I've often thought of John what the master did for him to set him free from slavery in this life was an awesome thing but it was not as much by an infinite degree as what the Lord has done for us is that not enough of a dynamic to urge us to be disciples that's my my plea let's pray father we thank you for so great a salvation as you provided us in Jesus we thank you that you have declared us righteous because of the blood of Jesus and we've repented in grace Jesus for our righteousness help us to be followers disciples yes help us to be faithful even unto death and Lord I pray for every person here tonight and every family represented and every family of the congregation and pray that you would help us to be bearers of the truth and light clay pots though we are to but be bearers of the truth and light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to that end we pray for each other and commend each other to your grace in the name of Jesus amen God bless you good you are dismissed if you do have a question it's already late tonight so if you have a question bring it tomorrow night

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