

(Apostolic Vision) Pietism vs. Biblicism

by Dale Heisey

Dale Heisey contrasts Pietism and Biblicism, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to faith that includes both personal piety and community engagement.

Topics: "Christian Living", "Biblical Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of focusing on the message of Jesus rather than our own feelings and emotions. He uses the example of Martin Beams, who became depressed when he based his actions on his emotions rather than the teachings of Jesus. The preacher then highlights the four stages of the Christian journey: hearing and believing the word of God, experiencing a life change, forming a committed community, and being a light in the world. He also emphasizes the difference between the church and the world, stating that it is not determined by physical buildings or membership, but by the transformative work of God in individuals' lives. The sermon concludes with references to biblical passages, urging believers to speak, exhort, and rebuke with authority and to adhere to the wholesome words of Jesus.

Transcript

Again this evening I do want to greet you in the precious name of Jesus. It is a joy to see that on a Monday night this number of people has interest in being in the house of worship. Usually Monday night is a low attendance night and meetings of this kind and it's a joy to see this kind of interest here on this Monday evening.

And I want to say early on these meetings that I have deeply appreciated the few contacts that I've been able to have among you. I am aware that this meeting is especially prepared and planned for the congregation here at Tangent, but I am deeply blessed with the participation and support of other congregations from the surrounding community that are also visiting these services. And I do feel impressed to say this evening in a public way that on my part, and I trust I'm speaking for all of us that are here, but on my part I sincerely welcome to this meeting people from this community who maybe do not normally attend our churches and who maybe do not even fully understand some of the practice and teaching that we have in these churches.

But I sincerely welcome these dear neighbors and friends we have to these services and I want them to be encouraged to be here and I want them to learn and worship God with us here and meet the Lord in our presence. And so feel free as a congregation to invite your neighbors here and we certainly welcome

them. And in our services where I live it is a very understood thing that in the services we have people visiting, people searching, people interested, people attending who maybe are not part of our congregation or part of any congregation anywhere, but they're welcome to come.

And I think it should always be that way and there should be a word of welcome for those that choose to come and I want everyone to know how I feel about that. This service is for everyone and you don't have to be a Mennonite to be here. We want you to worship and know the God of the Bible.

Now I would like us to take our church hymnals here and open them to number 365. 365. We'd like to stand and sing this hymn tonight.

Those that can comparably stand, we'd like to stand and sing 365 tonight. Church hymnal is probably my favorite hymnal and has been for many, many years. And I learned to sing from this book when I was a small boy and I could not sing very well.

And so I sat beside an older, near an older man who could sing tenor. And I tried to figure out what he was singing when he was singing tenor. And so I tried to follow what he was doing and learn to sing tenor by listening to him.

And that man was a, our son was a song leader and he was a real inspiration to me. This page to which you're open in your hymn book has probably the four deepest hymns in your book. Oh love that casts out fear, for hearts are praised by God, eternal source of joy divine, and for a closer walk with God.

These are hymns of aspiration. They should be, they should be the hymns that are dearest to our hearts, hymns of aspiration. And this hymn book has a very, very deep and meaningful hymns of aspiration.

And this page is a focal page in the center of this hymn book. And it should be a page that almost naturally opens up because of its frequent use. And so I will give that word of encouragement to the congregation of Tangent.

Now, but the song is 365. Let us sing that hymn together. And I did not want to scare you with this title tonight, nor lead you to think that we're going to go on some kind of deep subterranean excursion tonight with this title and with this theme.

But I do feel responsible in at least every series of meetings where I speak to bring at least one message in every series that reinforces to those who are hearing what I have chosen to call the doctrine of the Pilgrim Church. And I choose to belong to the Pilgrim Church. And it was a choice that I had to voluntarily make.

I want to be part of the Pilgrim Church. I want my children and grandchildren to be part of the Pilgrim Church. I want the people in this Willamette Valley of Oregon to be part of the Pilgrim Church.

And if you're not part of the Pilgrim Church tonight, I want you to open your heart to the teaching that we hear. And so we could speak many, many nights on this subject. I have only ever written one book in my life.

And that is the theme of that book. It is the story of the doctrine of the Pilgrim Church. And it is printed in Spanish, but not available in English.

But here this evening, I'm going to take all that we could say about this large subject and reduce it down to just one aspect of the doctrine of the Pilgrim Church. And then as I open this subject to us tonight, we could preach for the rest of the week on just this aspect of it, which I think we will not choose to do. But I want to speak about Pietism versus Biblicism.

I want to look at these two words, Pietism versus Biblicism. And as we just hear that title, we know right away that the title suggests a contrast. Pietism versus Biblicism.

One is contrasted with the other. Or perhaps this word, Pietism versus Biblicism, means that one is in conflict with the other. Or at least, it must be either a choice of one or the other.

Either Pietism or Biblicism. Now, Pietism is only one of a whole series of concepts, or methods of thinking, or manners of thinking. Thinking about the Christian life.

It is one of a whole series. And if I would put this whole series before you on a blackboard this morning, and start over this wall over here, and go across this wall over here, we'd find Pietism someplace a little bit to that side of center. And we would probably start off with what happened very, very early on in the Christian church.

Very, very early on. Something that was called Spiritualism. And that was followed, and I'm not going into all these words tonight, that was followed by Mysticism.

And that was followed by Pietism. Which was followed by Revivalism. And if that is not enough of isms, then we could come into the more modern times and come closer to the doctrine of eradication.

If you want to use that word. And we could keep on coming down through this thing, the Holiness Movement, and come into Pentecostalism. And come a little further down the wall, and we'd have down there, more recently, the Charismatic Movement.

And we could probably add a few to that. And all these are a manner of thinking, or a way of thinking about the Christian life. And there's something about this way of thinking that is somewhat off of center.

And although I'm going to try to explain to you tonight, that there are some very right emphases in Pietism. There's something very wrong about it. And if we can understand the right about it, it will not do us any harm to know what is good about it.

But we should also know where it goes wrong. And at that point where it goes wrong, we should choose to go straight. Where Pietism tends to go wrong, we should go straight on.

On the straight and narrow way. And so we do no good in looking at a movement to just discredit it. And say it is no good.

And we will learn nothing from it. We will do best if we give credit to its strength. And appreciate the reason why it exists.

Because every ism, every false teaching, or every variant view of the Christian life was born for a reason. And Pietism is here for a reason. It was born out of a reason.

And it's in this world today because of a reason. And we are not going to get rid of Pietism by decrying it, or denouncing it, or anathematizing it. But we're going to deal with Pietism by meeting the lack that it

supplies in our own churches.

Now I hope that that was understood. We're not able to simply eliminate the bad around us by pointing our fingers and decrying it and condemning it. All that does many times is simply arouse curiosity of our youth.

And they turn more to that than listen to it and buy tapes about it, listen to CDs about it, look it up on the internet and check it out. More than what we ever thought they were going to do. So we should try to supply in our churches the lack that Pietism is trying to fill.

And regardless of what name you want to put to these various teachings that I named, suffice it to say that every one of these things is an attempt to deal with the inter-man, with the person, the interior of us, the spiritual part of us, the faith in here, what we have in our hearts. It's a focus on the heart. It's a focus on the feelings.

It's a focus on a relationship. An exercise of piety, of inner piety, without an equal emphasis on practical living, on the practical life. It's a clear focus, a strong focus on the interior and at the expense of what happens on the outside.

And I realize that there is in Pietism a strong absence, a serious absence, a notable absence of emphasis on brotherhood. And if you want me to prove that, I can give you the names of Pietistic authors who promote Pietism, but they admit that their weakness is brotherhood. And wherever you have a Pietistic emphasis, you can have cell groups, you can have a degree of fellowship, you can have people gathered together excited about God, you can have people gathered together encouraging each other to examine their hearts and grow in piety, but you cannot establish a church.

I don't know of any Pietistic group that has established a church. And when E.H. Broadbent wrote his book titled *The Pilgrim Church*, he asked a question at the end of his book, Is it possible for us today to have, to teach, to practice, to maintain the doctrine of the early church in the Bible? And he said there are six answers to that question. And when he sought to give the six answers to that question, he said that the Pietists answered no.

They answered no. They said it is not possible, as far as they're concerned, to take the church of the New Testament and live it and practice its doctrine and teaching today. They do not even try to do it.

It's not possible with Pietism to establish a church. You can have cell groups, class meetings, you can have all kinds of Pietistic cells and interviews, but having a church you cannot have. That is if you're only and completely Pietistic.

Now I realize it's hard for me tonight to draw a line and say, now look here, brothers and sisters, here's a line. Pietism is on this side of the line, and Biblicalism is on this side of the line. It's hard to put a line down here and say everything over there is a false emphasis.

From here on, it's correct. It's hard to do that. Because Pietism comes from a very, very beautiful word that's very, very Biblical, piety.

Every one of us should be pious. Every one of us should have holiness in our hearts. Every one of us should have an interest in that subject.

Every one of us, in that sense, the word should be Pietistic, in that sense of the word. To be holy is to be Biblical. But I want to look tonight at the doctrine of Pietism in its somewhat extreme form, and I'm being honest tonight to say that I'm going to talk about Pietism in its somewhat extreme form in order to be able to focus upon it, and then I'm going to admit to you that there are shades of this.

There are shades of this extreme form of Pietism that have affected many, many groups, including the groups that are sitting in this service tonight, because Pietism has greatly affected the Mennonite Church. In fact, the Pietists are proud to tell you that in colonial America, the Mennonite Church was one of the adherents to and one of the promoters of Pietism in America, along with the Quakers, the Church of the Brethren, and the Moravians. And we don't like to hear that, but for quick proof of it, for very quick proof of it for anyone that knows anything about history, when the Mennonite Church became the stillium lundt, the quiet in the land, it was the result of Pietism affecting their churches.

And where the cross was let go, and evangelism was left for somebody else to carry out, and the Mennonites were enjoying their farming and their other industries, and losing their children to the world. That's what was going on. And so we should be aware of this.

How much has it affected us here in this valley in Oregon? Pietism. Now, Pietism is not like a counterfeit dollar bill, or a counterfeit \$20 bill. I can't hold this up to you and say, whenever you find this, it's a false one.

This is a true one. Because it has these shades of meaning. And I'm going to try to be as honest with you as I can tonight.

I realize I'm taking upon myself a difficult assignment, and I'd like to be balanced. I know that it's hard to be. Let me start with an illustration.

Martin Bohm was a Mennonite preacher. And he found himself responsible to stand before a congregation and preach the Word of God. And he was appreciated as a preacher.

And I say this because Martin Bohm has been used in modern day conservative writings, writing and teaching against Pietism. His testament has been used to discredit Pietism. But I want to be careful in how I use this illustration, because it seems like some of our historians don't understand what happened with Martin Bohm.

But he was a Mennonite preacher. And after he had his first Pietistic experiences, he was so appreciated in his church that he was ordained to the bishop office after he had the experience that I'm going to tell you about this evening. And it was not until later on that he was expelled from the church because of the excesses that he went to with his teaching.

But he was in the field plowing. And his heart was burdened by his lack of contact with God, lack of power in his life, lack of power in the pulpit, lack of the strength in the church. He was concerned about himself.

He was concerned about his people. And he was plowing. He got to the end of the row.

He dropped his plow and he knelt down to pray. And got back behind the horses and followed the plow to the other end. And he was plowing.

And as he was plowing, he was praying. And I don't know if this is true or not, but someone said that the next time he went down through the furrow, he didn't even wait until he got to the end. He stopped the horses in the middle of the furrow and started to pray right there.

He just was too burdened to go on with his work. When he felt an inflooding and an infilling of God's presence and spirit in his life, and he felt that his burdens were gone, he felt like he had a relationship with God that he was missing all this time. And his preaching took on the effectiveness of his newfound experience.

This man, later on, was part of a special meeting in Long's Barn, in Landis Valley there, in Leixler County, Pennsylvania. And a lot of people came to these meetings. And he was teaching in these meetings this new experience that he found.

And a brother, a gentleman came out of the audience, came up on the stage where he was, the platform there, and greeted him and said, We are brethren. And the result of that thing was the formation of the United Brethren Church, now called the Evangelical United Brethren Church. And a new denomination was born as a result of that.

And Martin Beam became a full-fledged pietist, worked closely with Francis Asbury, the Methodist circuit riding preacher in this country. I'm not sure about this, but I think Francis Asbury preached his funeral sermon. A new denomination was born, and the Mennonite Church lost one of its bishops, a man that they probably should not have lost.

But it was a result of a pietistic experience. And so he began to emphasize that experience. And I want to show you what that does as we go through this lesson tonight.

But I want you to take your Bibles. I want to read several verses, starting in Matthew chapter 3. And so before we read these verses, I want you to know that I'm not afraid of piety. I think we should be afraid of unholiness.

I don't think we should be afraid of holiness. I think we should be afraid of unholiness in your life and in mine. I'm not against piety.

Pietism has a false emphasis. Yes, I think should concern us. But we're in chapter 3 of Matthew.

And I look at verse 2 where John the Baptist says, Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In verse 8 he says, Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. I want you to notice this word repentance and what it accomplishes in your life.

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. Fruits of repentance. Fruits that match the profession.

Fruits that match the decision. Fruits that are evidence of what's going on inside. There's something out here that proves what is going on internally.

Fruits of repentance. Now Jesus had a similar message in chapter 4 in verse 17. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

In chapter 5 he began to explain to us what that repentance should do in our lives. He started in verse 3 by saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. And he expected that this repentance was going to affect your life.

He expected that this repentance was going to affect what you were. And in all of the Beatitudes he does not stress there so much what we do. But he stresses what we are.

And you are different. You are a different creature. You are a different being.

You are not what you were. You were not a peacemaker. You are a peacemaker.

You were not poor in spirit. You are poor in spirit. You are not pure in heart.

You are pure in heart. And this is what Jesus expected to be the result of repentance in the life. You were not merciful.

No one by nature is merciful. You kick the cow. You hit the cow and she puts her foot in your bucket.

You shouldn't do that. But by nature you're not merciful. But Christ comes and there's a work running raw in your heart.

And this work affects you and changes what you are. And when you are different, you do differently. Your life is different because you are different.

And if you try to be different without being different, that is a gold ring in a pig's snout. That is detestable. That is terrible.

That is bad testimony. That is legalism. That is hypocrisy.

That turns our children away from the church. That turns our children to the world when we try to do what we cannot do because we are not what we're trying to do. But it starts in here.

Up to this time, up to now, baptism is doing all right. Up until now. Are you following up to here? I don't know if you're understanding or not.

And not in America, I wouldn't know where I am, but people are responding. I can tell where they are. You people are very polite and very orderly and I can't tell.

And so that's what happens with this changing like verse 10 of the same chapter of Matthew 5. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Look at the result of this thing. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

That's something also the Mennonites don't know very much about. And the new tribe's mission people are being martyred year after year. And the Southern Baptists are being martyred year after year on the mission field.

And we're not experiencing as much of that. As what we probably ought to be. And there has to be a reason for that.

And if we're separate from the world as we claim to be, there's something about our relationship with the world that is maybe in too many cases, too acceptable. There should be a more resounding conflict with the world. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, verse 11, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. First he did the prophets which were before you. And Jesus expected that this change in your life would possibly bring you to this result.

And then you look at verses 21 through 48 in this chapter, and you see six graphic distinctions, six graphic conflicts, six graphic distinctives that are going to characterize those who've had this repentance worked in their hearts and they had this new fruit coming forth. And so they're loving their brothers, and they are not hating, and they're not murdering or hating either. And they're not only not committing adultery, but they are not desires to look upon and to lust after.

They are changed within and changed without. And there's none of this divorcing going on. And we notice here that this swearing has stopped, and this performing of oaths does not take place.

And there is a loving of the enemy here. And how does that happen? It's a great change that took place within the heart and in the life. Chapter 7, verse 21 through 23.

This is Jesus teaching. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, children of the kingdom of heaven, can either do it the will of my Father which is in heaven. And now we have a doing coming out of this thing.

We have a doing the will of God. Many will say to me that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied thy name, and thy name hath cast out devils, and thy name hath done many wonderful works? And while I profess unto them, I never knew ye, depart from me ye that work iniquity, because it was not my work, it was not my will that was being done. There was too much that I said that you ignored.

You said to me, Lord, Lord, but did not do the things which I said. How can you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do what I taught you? And here we begin to part company with pietism. Chapter 10 of the same Matthew, verse 34.

Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. And he that findeth his life shall lose it. And he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

It's interesting if we go into the 13th chapter of Matthew and look at the seven parables that Jesus puts for us there. We see a clear distinction in those parables between the church and the world. And the church and the world is different for only one reason.

See, the only reason why the world and the church is different, the only reason why is because the people in the church are different from the people in the world. It is because of what happened to those people. It's because of what happened in their hearts.

You are a new creation. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. And so this church is in this world.

It's like a light in the world, Jesus said. Bible 516 in Matthew. And this light shines in this darkness.

Next time you're on the beach, I don't know where your beaches are around here, your waterfront. All I know is that you go there. I don't know where it is.

It's a river. It's an ocean. I don't know where it is.

But you go there. The next time that you go there, I want to ask you a question. Are you a distinct light on that beach? If you're not, if you're not in the trumpet sounds, what do you plan to do? If you're in the Walmart, are you a distinct light in that Walmart? If you're not a distinct light in that Walmart, what are you going to do at the trumpet sound? You're on the airplane.

The video is playing in that airplane. Are you a light in the darkness of that airplane? And if you're not a light in the darkness of that airplane, what are you going to do if the date is 9-11? I'd just like to ask you a couple questions. And you see a distinction between the world and the church.

And that difference is not made by building a building out of brick and putting a sign in front of it and filling that with members. That does not make the difference. That does not make the difference between the church and the world.

The difference is what God has done in here. And that work must be done in your life and my life. And Peter made a great confession in the 16th chapter.

He said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, verse 16. But then something happened in verse 23. But he turned and said unto Peter, that's Jesus speaking, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offense unto me.

For thou sayest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. And then notice what Jesus says in verse 24 and following. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is the man's profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

But there is a day coming, there is a time coming, when if we're confused today, if we're unsure today of how this thing stands, God is sure the Lord knoweth them that are his, and that everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure having this seal is how that verse begins. Take up your cross and follow Jesus.

And that is something that pietism has sought to avoid. Chapter 18, verse 15. And here are results of it.

This new life that we have, this new group of people united together in love and true union. Heart changes, pours in spirit. Broken hearted, merciful people living in the truth, living in light, living in separation from this world, living with love in their hearts, living without perversity and without pervertedness.

And now these people have gathered together into a body. Here we have two or three gathered together in his name. And look what they do, verse 15.

Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he will hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more.

Then the mouth of two or three witnesses everywhere may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man or an republican.

And then we have this binding and loosening responsibility that the church has in verse 18. And verse 19 tells us that if two of us or more agree on the earth, God in heaven hears that and upholds that. And then it says in verse 20, where two or three are gathered together in my name, they are mine in the midst of them.

This is Christ's plan for the church. I would like to take you yet to chapter 28 of Matthew. And show you this thing now on a worldwide universal scale.

When Jesus says in verse 18, all power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, congregation at tangent. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Teaching them to observe all things, teaching them to observe all things. Whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And so we have maybe four stages here that I have read to you. We have, first of all, the message of our Lord Jesus. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Jesus taught. We hear this message and faith comes by hearing this message. It starts there.

And then we have, as a result of hearing that message and believing that message, we have lives changed. We have changed lives as a result of hearing the word of God taught and preached. We believed it and it changed our lives.

And this changing of life results in a new society. A society of people who have this change of heart and they bind themselves together. They unite themselves together in a committed and responsible relationship.

And shall I say, into an accountable relationship. They bind themselves together. And then you have a church with authority and responsibility.

And you have in that church true communion, true love. And as the cafe sign says, koinonia, true koinonia. There's power among the brethren.

There's power in the church. And that's exactly how the early church was formed. What I just said is exactly the outline of how the early church was formed.

Now I have several questions I want to answer tonight. And I hope that I can do this as quickly as possible. The first question I want to answer is, what is pietism? Pietism is not a church.

It's not a denomination. Because it does not even have a defined doctrine as such. We're going to try to look at some of his teaching.

But it never tried to outline a doctrinal position. It is not a church. It is a movement within established churches.

Much like the charismatic movement. You can find that among Mennonites. You can find that among Catholics.

You can find the charismatic movement among almost all kinds of groups. Lutherans. The charismatic movement affects the Catholics in our town of Pital.

Right next to the closest town to where we live. There's a charismatic movement there among the Catholic church in that town. It's a movement within established churches.

It's not an attempt to establish a church. It's an emphasis on piety. It looks at the condition of your heart and tries to get you to examine that.

It is the practice of piety. It has exercises that are designed to condition your heart towards God. And I don't know if you've ever thought about that.

What can I do to make my heart more godly? To think more thoughts about God? Well, what can I actually do to see just how my heart is leading to God right now? And they think about questions like that. And that in itself is not bad. But as we saw in the case of Martin Beam.

This man was depressed. He was under a terrible load. And he based a lot of what he did there on his feelings.

His feelings were different. He had an emotional response to his experience that he's not had before. As soon as I begin to focus on my feelings and on my emotions.

As soon as I begin to focus on my experience. I have left the North Star. And I'm beginning to follow a jack with a lantern.

Now, did you understand what I said? The North Star never moves. Right here it is. Today's star that shines in our hearts.

We have a more sure word of prophecy. For unto we do well to take heed. As unto a light that shines in the dark place.

The day star. The North Star. And it brought the slaves out of the South and took them to Canada.

Because they knew that thing was up there. And they looked at the end star at the end of the great drinking gourd. As they sang about it and wrote about it.

The great drinking gourd. The zippers. And they looked at that.

Those two line up and go to that North Star. And they follow that. And it was always that.

It didn't matter where you were. You could be in Alabama. You could be in Tennessee.

You could be in Texas. You could be in South Carolina. You could be in Virginia.

And it didn't matter where you were. It took you in the same direction. But when you start following your feelings.

And your experience. And your emotions. You're no longer following that sure word of prophecy.

You're following a jack with a lantern. He's now over here. And now he's over here.

And now where did he go? Down the street. And over there he is. And that light keeps on moving.

Keeps shifting. And then we have a problem with the planet. So this experience-oriented teaching.

Replaced discipleship. Replaced Bible obedience. Replaced clear, defined doctrines.

And to assure my experience. And share my experience with others. Becomes the practice of piety.

Becomes the focus of this Christian experience. Now I want to talk a little bit about it. Origin.

The origin of piety. Began sometime after the Reformation. But I'm going to start in the Reformation.

To give you just a little background. Men like Luther. Men like Calvin.

Promoted several errors. That have continued to this present day. I'm going to just mention two serious doctrinal errors.

Of both Luther and Calvin. Let's answer the question. How can a man be justified? And Luther answered that question.

How can a man be justified? He answered that question this way. By grace only. By the merits of Jesus only.

Received by faith only. And that is almost right. That is almost right.

How can a man be justified? By grace only. To the merits of Christ only. Received by faith only.

That is almost right. But that almost is the dangerous part. And then he asked another question.

How can we be sure. That we have received the mercy of God. And the answer.

By the scriptures only. And with those two answers. To those two very very important questions.

This gave two serious problems. Gave rise to two very very serious problems. Which have existed until today.

The first one was. The territorial church. That is the Christianization of the populace.

The Christianization. Of the citizenship. Who is a Christian then? Who is a Christian then? The one who has been Christianized.

It's by Christ alone. It's by hearing the word of God alone. And so we're going to get all the populace here.

Into this great big building. We're going to have a pulpit. About 12 feet high above the auditorium.

And we're going to climb up a stairway. And go up there in this little pulpit up here. And we're going to look down at these people.

And give them the word of God. And they all must be there. And they must hear it.

And as they hear this. And receive the sacrament. And are Christianized.

This whole territory is Christian. And the second mistake that this teaching gave. Was what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called.

Cheap grace. We can take regret. Everything's all right inside.

By Jesus only. By faith only. The scriptures say so.

I believe it. So I was once saved. I cannot be unsaved.

I'm a child of God. A cheap grace was the result of this kind of teaching. So now we have a territorial church.

All the citizens of this territory. Are part of this church. They're either Lutherans or Episcopalians.

Or whatever they are. Or Reformed. Or Catholic.

They're part of this territorial church. And what kind of Christianity do you have in there? You have formalism. You have traditionalism.

You have deadness. You have dry doctrine. You don't have the fear of God.

You don't have joy and power. You have a lamp without light. To cook the food.

And we asked the mothers. We asked the people. Just what good would that pile of firewood do.

That pile of dry wood. If it had no fire in it. Just what good would that wood do.

If it had no fire in it. But when you put fire to that firewood. You have something that draws people.

Now you can get something done with that fire. And this kind of teaching produces a church. That has a bunch of dead wood.

Without fire. You have combustible. You have fuel.

But you don't have fire. The only time fuel works without fire is in a diesel engine. But in the church.

The fuel must have fire. The Christian life must be set on fire. And so in that vacuum.

Philip Jacob Spanner came along. And wrote a book titled La Fia De Sedia. Which means the desire for piety in Latin.

The desire for piety. And this book affected the territorial churches. Like the Lutheran church.

The Reformed church. Episcopalian church. It affected separatist groups too.

Like the Moravians and the Quakers. And later on the Methodists. The Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren.

Was affected there. And I told you that the church soon lost its zeal. To confront the world with its message.

To change lives. And we became the quiet in the land. And now we're going to enjoy our salvation.

Now we're going to enjoy our walk with God. We're going to enjoy what God did for us. And now there's no cross.

And now there's no discipleship. And now there's no suffering. And now there's no persecution.

And now we are the blessed little quiet of the land. And that certainly has affected us today. That is where pietism was born.

An attempt to make up this vacuum. This doctrinal vacuum. This death.

This dryness. That the territorial church left in the world. Now we'll talk a little bit about the doctrine of pietism.

This is difficult to do. And I realize I'm talking about the extreme cases of this. But I'm doing this to help you see what pietism can do in a church.

Let's talk about first of all their doctrine of the Bible. They make a distinction, pietists do, between the Bible and the Word of God. You won't be around pietists too very long until you hear about that.

They make a distinction between the logos and the rhema. Or the rhema if you're speaking Greek. They make a distinction between those two things.

And logos is word. Word of God. In the beginning was the logos.

And the logos was with God and the logos was God. But the rhema is that word that God speaks to you. Not what was written down here.

And a pietist is concerned about rhema. He's concerned about the Word of God that he hears. He's concerned with the Word of God that comes to him.

And I too want to hear God speak. I asked God to speak to me today. Did you ask God to speak to you today? I asked God to speak to me today.

I wanted to hear God's voice today. I wanted to know what God was saying to me today. I wanted to walk with God today.

I wanted to do that. But when we want to hear God speak, what do we do? What do we do? And pietism makes a distinction between the Word of God and the Bible. And I want to give you one serious warning about this distinction between logos and rhema.

There is what I'm calling for a better choice of words. I'm calling the Light Doctrine. I'm going to call this the Light Doctrine.

And what is the Light Doctrine? The Light Doctrine is this. That we gather together in our little cell group. We gather together in our little fellowship.

We gather together in our conventicles and assemblies. And we all want to obey the light that we have. And you have light and I have light.

And your light might be different from my light because God told you something different from what he told me. But God gave you the covering. And so you follow that light.

And God gave me the long dress. We had one lady came to our church and she said, God gave me the long dress. It must be down to here.

If it's not down to here, it's not modest. And God gave me this long dress. And that's what I have.

That's my light that I have. I'm going to do that. And we were supposed to allow her to do that.

And she was going to allow the rest of us to do our light. And you hear this kind of expression. God did not give me that teaching.

Or God did not give me that doctrine. Or God did not say that to me. And so there are groups.

Pious groups that feel well. Then we won't take any positions on that. We won't be part of anybody because God has not yet given that to them.

And so we're going to be careful and wait and wait on God and not push this thing. And let the Holy Spirit do it when he's ready to do it. And that's why groups like that are afraid to take clear, concrete positions on matters and establish a clear doctrinal profession.

Because maybe God didn't give it to this dear brother. That's part of our... God gave them the wedding ring. God gave that to them.

God gave me this. God gave me the other thing. Light doctrine.

That's the light that I have. You follow your light. I'll follow mine.

Don't you condemn me or discredit me. I'm following the light that I have. You follow the light that you have.

We're walking in the light. We have fellowship one with another because we're walking in the light. This is dangerous teaching.

Yet it's based upon something so very, very beautiful. It could be so very right. But that light that they're talking about is not this light.

The light that they're talking about is what God said here. Apart from this, or in spite of this, or in spite of my willingness to obey this. That's the concern.

I want you to understand the concern. I'm talking about the doctrine of pietism. What they believe about the Bible.

What do they believe about the cross of Christ? The cross of Christ, a pietist, is the guilt that you feel because of mistakes that you've made. The guilt that you feel because you're not living up to what you wish you could be. It's the guilt that you feel.

That's your cross. It's the strain on your flesh. This flesh is weak.

This flesh is bothering me. This flesh is a struggle to me. That is your cross to a pietist.

That's not the cross of the Bible. The cross of the Bible is a place to die. The cross of the Bible is a place for the flesh to be crucified.

The cross of the Bible is an identifying point. It's a point where my flesh must be brought to a decision. And that flesh must be brought to a decision to die to what this world offers it.

And the world knows that I've died to what the world has offered it. And for this cause, the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world. Because that's what the cross is for in the Christian life.

And that's a different cross from the cross of pietism. It's a different cross altogether. The new birth.

The new birth of the pietist is what God did in my heart. Something God did down in here. It's true to a certain extent.

But does this shock you if I tell you there's only two times in the Bible when the term new birth is referred to. Or birth referred to as a Christian experience. In John and in... I think it's Ephesians.

Born again... Or is it Peter? I think it's in Peter. Other Gospels don't mention the new birth. Jesus did not talk about new birth in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

We don't have new birth referred to in Acts or in Romans. But what do you have there? You have the new birth illustrated in these concepts. It is a voluntary decision to follow Christ and live with Him.

On this new way, this straight and narrow way that He has chosen for us. And that voluntary decision to take up that cross and follow Him is the new beginning. Which is the same as our birth.

It's the same as being born again. It's the same as receiving a new life. Because that decision to deny this flesh, that decision to do what's right in the face of the alternative is the decision that God needs.

To grant us His life. To grant us His Spirit. To grant us His victory.

To grant us His grace to carry that out. It's not just a feeling in the heart. It's not just a change that took place in here.

But it's identifying with the Christ in a world that refuses to identify with Him. And there's something wrong if we are too comfortable in this world. There's something wrong if this world loves us too much.

There's something wrong if there's not a conflict between us and this world. There's something wrong. The church.

The doctrine of the Pagans. What does Pagans think about the church? Well, if you look at a territorial church and all the people here are members, or they're all Episcopalians, or they're all Catholics, or they're all Lutherans, or they're all Reformed in this territory. You know that's not a church.

You all here have been taught enough to know that you cannot make a church out of that. And pietists knew it too. And so they went into these territories and gathered together little cells, little clusters of people that wanted to seek the heart of God.

And they had what they called the little church within the big church. This little church didn't have authority, didn't have power. That was with the state.

That was with the territory. That was with the priests and the preachers and the rabbis. That was with those people.

But they had their little cells in here. And they were part of this larger church. Their membership was there.

Their piety, the practice of piety took place here. Their fellowship was here. And that's very, very different from a congregation of committed, accountable brothers that are responsible for each other, make decisions together, meet each other's needs, die for each other, if necessary, correct each other, disciple one another, discipline each other, admonish one another, provide for one another.

There's a big difference between those two concepts. In reference to the Doctrine and Covenants church, maybe I could sum it up with the words of John Wesley, who was a pietist. And I'm reading here in Spanish and translating to English, so I'm not sure if I will translate this as well as I should.

The strong emphasis on sanctification, assurance of salvation and Christian perfection results in a tolerance for diversity in doctrine so long as the heart is considered to be in order. That is to say, I'm not going to pay attention to your doctrine as long as I see that your heart is looking for perfection. I see that your heart is all right.

I see that you are sure of your salvation. I see that you have a testimony for Jesus. I'm not going to worry about doctrine then as long as your heart is okay.

And there are groups all around us that are struggling with this problem. They cannot take a position because this person has a wonderful testimony. Listen to what they say about God.

Why the people in that congregation over there, tangents don't even do what this person is doing. There was a Mennonite boy who became involved with a girl of the community and she was a pietist and she looked like the world and dressed like the world and lived like the world. And he said to me, if any of the Mennonite folk have any question about this young lady, whether she's a Christian or not, I will ask them one question.

During the past year, this girl has led 25 people to Christ. How many people have you led to Christ during the past year? And if you did not do what she did, then don't say anything about her Christian experience. What I'm trying to tell you is that the emphasis of pietism is upon the proof that your heart is okay.

The proof that you've got a testimony. The proof that you've got assurance of salvation. The proof that you're walking with God.

And if you can prove that, practice and doctrine is secondary. That comes straight from John Wesley. Now, I've seen this happen.

One year ago, I was not too very far from where I'm standing right now. State just a little bit east of here. And during the past year, something serious happened in that place where that someone took the

decision that as long as someone has a Christian testimony, they have to receive them as brethren in the church.

And there's no reason to exclude anybody that has a testimony for Jesus. That is the doctrine of pietism. And they maintain this pietism, this position, this experience with their cell groups.

They have what they call meetings of piety. Apart from the large church meeting of these little cell groups, they have a manual, a copy of it at home. Lamp trimming, a lamp trimming manual.

And it's filled with hundreds of questions. And you sit in this group with five to eight people in a group and you ask these questions. How is your heart feeling towards God tonight? Do you have any sense of guilt in any area? Do you think there's any area where you grieve the Lord today? And many, many questions like that.

And many of these questions are good questions. I review these questions myself. I go through that myself and ask myself how I'm doing in those areas.

But that is how this thing is done. And night after night, doing that kind of thing. Almost any message in a pietistic setting asks you to examine your heart.

And if that is not included in the message, it probably is not a pietistic message. It asks you to check your passions, check your attitudes, check your fervor, check your feelings. It asks you to check that out.

It asks you to check your devotion. And this kind of preaching, it tends to make you feel insecure, make you feel guilty, make you feel like you can't measure up. And that kind of preaching produces large offer calls.

That kind of producing that tears the people out of their seats and brings them forth during the invitation hymn. Because we take a certain Christian ideal and stress it and stress it and stress it way beyond anything that the human heart would come up with. But it's in the feelings, it's in the emotion.

And we stir on that until we've got a large crowd of people to respond. And I have been guilty of that. I know how that can be done.

I have been guilty of that. If there's anything we want to avoid in these meetings, it is that. We don't want that danger.

But you can make preaching so idealistic and get this thought so lofty that everyone in the church is condemned. And so people respond. They have literature and hymnology and many of the hymns in this book have come to us from the pietistic movement.

Now, the pietistic movement has made some contributions to us. I appreciate their revival emphasis on the reality and experience of salvation. I think it's important.

I appreciate their emphasis on sanctification in the heart, holiness in the heart, and the walk with God. It's good. And some pietists, especially the Moravians, were leaders in the field of evangelism.

And they were the first ones, as you know, went down there to the Caribbean Sea, there to those islands, the St. Thomas Islands, and began their work among the slaves there in the sugarcane fields. And they had a tremendous fervor for evangelism, long before many other groups did. Another thing they did that

was very, very wise, they went wherever they went and preached on the level of the people.

That's where the Methodists, circumcised preachers outshone everybody. They were experts at that. They got out there to the frontiers and taught these people on their very level.

They went where the people were. We should be doing that wherever we are. They were careful about their moral life.

I think we should be too. They had an interest in the social needs of men, and the unfortunate people, the deprived people of the world. I think that was good.

And yet the great danger was that it was an ecumenical movement. As long as all of us have our hearts right, we're all one, we're all brethren. We be brethren, he said in the German language, as he went up that pulpit there with Martin Beam.

All Christians united into one. I visited with the Moravian Bishop in Bonanza, Nicaragua, asking about his faith, asking about their church work, their mission work among the Miskito Indians in Bonanza. He said, well, Egenio, I don't know, but I've got a problem.

He said, we tried to have a meeting about evangelism, bring all the churches together, bring all the churches together, all the churches of Bonanza, and all to work together for this great effort. He said, the thing I couldn't understand was that Jehovah's Witnesses refused to come to our meeting. They didn't want anything to do with it.

And he was disappointed that they would not include themselves in this great effort to unite all of us together in this work we're doing. And the JWs refused to take part. And I guess I must say there that I would have been more like a JW.

I was on the JWs team on that particular issue. It was a mistake on his part, a great cost to doctrine, a great cost to the distinctiveness of our practice when we give way to this pietism. The world accepts who we are, and we accept the way the world is.

And we have a church without authority, without discipline when we go the pietistic route. I want to close this evening by reading two portions of scripture. The first one in Titus chapter 2, beginning at verse 11.

And this is a chapter that is concerned about doctrine. Speak thou of the things which become sound doctrine. This is the concern of the chapter.

Sound doctrine. Do not stress and emphasize feeling and emotion and experience at the expense of doctrine. Titus, be careful about doctrine out there in that isle in the creek.

Be careful about doctrine, Timothy. Paul is telling Timothy, be careful about the doctrine. Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine.

But now notice verse 11. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us. Teaching us what? What does the grace of God teach us? The grace of God is not cheap.

What does the grace of God teach us? That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. That's what the grace of God teaches us. The grace of God will teach a man to do that.

If it's the grace of God teaching, that's what he teaches. Looking for that blessed hope and the glory and superiority of the great God in our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. Why? Who gave himself for us.

Why? That he might redeem us from all iniquity. From what? From all iniquity. And purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good.

What? Read your Bible. Read your Bible of good works. These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.

Let no man despise thee. And I don't plan to be despised tonight. 1 Peter, 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 3 and 4. If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words.

Now notice what follows here. Here we have someone teaching otherwise and not consenting, not admitting, not believing, not emphasizing, not accepting wholesome words, comma, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. I think it was instead of Washington.

Right north of here, there's a preacher named Thomas Weaver. He wrote a book titled The Gospel Solution. How many of you have read that book? I've seen that book, The Gospel Solution.

Have you seen that book, advertised or bought it or read it? And his thesis is to explain why Jesus never intended for the church to observe what he calls the hard sayings of Jesus. And he makes a list of some maybe 20 hard sayings of Jesus that you find in Matthew, Mark and Luke and explains why these teachings are never intended for the church. And so doing, takes pietism to seed and teaches a doctrine that is as devilish as I know published on paper and ink in the name of evangelical Christianity.

And so what is he doing with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ that I read from Matthew? And I intentionally this evening read all those texts from Matthew because of Tom Weaver right here north of you or whichever way north is. I'm not sure which way north is. If any man teach you otherwise, he could set not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud knowing nothing. That's a serious indictment. I'm glad that I didn't have to say that.

The Holy Spirit of God did not move me to write that. Those words were not inspired through my pen. They were inspired through the apostle Paul as he wrote to Timothy.

And I'm concerned about the influence of pietism on our churches, the influence of pietism on our people. And there are some people sitting right here tonight that are concerned about the direction of the churches and the fervor of God in our churches and the zeal for the Lord in our churches and the testimony and the light that's in our churches and the evangelism of our churches. There are people sitting here tonight that are concerned about the fire that should be in our churches.

They're concerned about the fervor that should characterize our assemblies and our worship services and the fervor that should characterize our worship. There are people here tonight that are concerned about that. And I share with you, dear brothers and sisters, that concern that I want to warn you.

Pietism is not the answer to that problem. It is not the answer. The answer is that we read every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

And by this word we live. Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And it's an inspired word.

It's not the word that I think I hear. It's not the word that I think I feel. It's not the word that I think I'm sensing.

It's the authoritative lantern of righteousness. The North Star, the Day Star. And I read it and I study it and I believe it.

And I say, Lord, I'm not satisfied until it's a part of my life. I read this passage of Scripture. I read this holy promise.

I read this beautiful doctrine. I read about this beautiful virtue and grace. And I say, Lord, it is not part of my life like it needs to be part of my life.

That is the answer. And I want you to experience that answer. I probably should give you time for questions and answers.

So we have until 6 o'clock in the morning when you have to go to work and I'm available. So we can talk about it after the service. Or we can make an appointment and talk about it if you have questions.

But I do want you to understand. And dear ministers of the gospel that are sitting up here, if there's anything that was not left clear tonight, please feel free to ask about it or call for clarifications so that these dear people can understand what we try to say tonight. Thank you for your attention.

It's a late hour. Let's stand with our feet. Father in heaven, I ask that you would make us people of the word of God, people of the Bible, people that love the truth, people that want to hear the truth, people that want to be examined by the truth, people that want to be changed by the truth.

I know, God, if there is some area in our lives tonight that is not in harmony with the word of truth, then dear Father, in your faithfulness and in your mercy, as a brother read in Psalm 90, in your mercy, Father, teach us to number our days and to apply our hearts to your holy wisdom, the wisdom of your word, the wisdom of your truth, which is the only wisdom that there is. And teach us, Father, to hear your voice. And teach us, Father, to obey you.

And teach us, Father, when your spirit is grieved. And teach us, Father, when our lives are not reflecting the light that they should reflect in the Walmart, in the used car lot, at the waterfront, at the car or cattle or farm auction or wherever we are. Teach us to be concerned and teach us to be convicted when our life is not shining for God, when we are part of this world and laughing at its jokes and participating in its folly and observing its foolishness.

Teach us, O Father, to feel conviction from your Holy Spirit when we are not living in harmony with your word, O God. And teach us to look not only for experience but for a holy walk. And teach us by your grace, O God, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

And teach us, Father, to be cleansed from all iniquity and be purified and zealous of the good work that you wish to do in our lives. And teach us in this way to form churches, in this way to bring in new converts, in this way to add members, in this way to build up the brotherhood, in this way to add to your testimony here on the earth, in this way to add fuel to the fire, in this way to add candles to the lampstand, in this way

to bring glory to your name. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen. Thank you for your attention tonight and you are dismissed. The message that you have just listened to is available through livesacrifice.com. To download a copy of this message or additional messages that we've made available, go to www.livesacrifice.com and click on the messages link.

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