

(The Recovery of the Apostolic) 2. Gelassenheit - the Way of the Cross

by Dale Heisey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living out one's faith in daily life, as exemplified by the Anabaptist and Apostolic views of the cross.

Duration: 1:03:48

Scripture: Matthew 18:15-20, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 10:17

Topics: "The Cross", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the cost of following Jesus. He references biblical examples such as Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the persecution faced by the early Christians in Acts. The speaker also asks the audience if they believe in the authority and infallibility of the Bible. He then poses questions about confessing a good conscience before God and man, and being willing to accept brotherly discipline. The sermon concludes with a powerful illustration of a town in ruins and the need for Christians to actively participate in the restoration process.

Transcript

It is our purpose here this afternoon to explain to you, as best we can, the Anabaptist and the Apostolic view of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that stood, their thinking there and their understanding there, stood in sharp contrast to that of those around them. It made them a distinctive people.

It caused the fires to light the stakes all across Europe. It so caused that many sons were never raised where their fathers lived for generations following each other because persecution drove them onward. Before we enter into this lesson, I'd like to call attention to the cover of your program that you may have received.

There's a verse there that I feel so very well explains what we are trying to do in these two classes that we have together. And I want you to know that the Brethren who have assumed responsibility for this work are not impressed with crowds. We're not impressed with auditoriums packed with people.

We're certainly glad for those that come. But we happen to know that when Christ's word is brought into the heart of a man, it brings with it a sword that pierces deep and divides asunder. And so we're not impressed with crowds.

Any one of us here this afternoon would spend equal time with anyone on an individual basis, one or two at a time, as well as with a group. I appreciate so very well that introduction concerning Philip's ministry. It's to the soul that we're concerned.

It's to the soul that we look to help and not to the crowd. And I'm aware with you that no one has ever let anybody save one of his friends to Christ. And so it should be our responsibility to meet men on a one-to-one basis.

And that is my purpose here this afternoon to help you be better equipped to do that one-to-one work, for there is where the kingdom is built. And they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. We desire to see what's in our hearts, a recovery of apostolic truth, a recovery of apostolic vision.

And this four-part outline given in chapter 2, verse 42 of Acts explains, as I can best understand it, what true apostolicity was. It was that place, any place, where saints were gathered together under the sound of apostolic truth. They that know God hear us, we said last week.

Those that know the Lord, they hear apostolic doctrine. And so where truth comes forth from God's word, that is requisite number one. But there is something else.

These people that enjoy such a harmony of doctrine and such scriptural truth are bound together in fellowship. And they commit themselves one to another. They are no longer their own, but they are part of each other.

They are part of a brotherhood, a living body that seeks not its own, but its brother's welfare. It looks not upon its own things, but every man also upon the things of others. And so there is fellowship.

And now we have not only a vertical relationship between us and God, but there is a horizontal union between brethren on this earth. And so no man, we believe, comes to God by himself. No man, the Anabaptist thought, comes to the Lord apart from his brother.

And so we are one together, one in heart, one in mind, one in soul. This is followed then. This fellowship, this oneness, this unity is actualized in the periodic and very regular breakings of bread, one with another, from house to house, from service to service.

The bread of the Lord's body is broken and souls express their unity, express their oneness, express their fellowship, express their love one for another in this manner. And then there is that culminating power that the saints have on earth as this one heart and one mind of God's children bows on their knees together in prayer. I am of a firm persuasion this afternoon that although my prayers in my private closet have an effect upon God, the answers to the needs of the world are found when saints bind themselves together in prayer.

And for it is when we pray our fathers, which are in heaven, that we have that perfect pattern that Christ gave us to fulfill. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. And if ye, plural, shall ask anything in my name, it shall be done unto you, plural.

It's plural in German and in Spanish and in the King James Version of the Bible. It's one of the things that we lose when we move from the older English that's in our KJVs here to the English that we have nowadays. We have no distinct pronouns.

There's no difference between a plural you and a singular you. Spanish has a difference. It's stated for plural and it's said for singular.

And in this Bible of ours, it makes it very clear that these prayers, these united prayers with the plurality of God's children together of one heart and mind, have tremendous strength with God. And so I'm of the firm persuasion that true apostolicity, the apostolic doctrine, finds culmination in prayer when saints are gathered together and with one heart they lift their voice to God. You will discover, as you study God's Word in the New Testament, that the outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon God's people always occurred when there was a group of saints together, when there was unity of heart and mind, when there was first a oneness of soul and spirit.

There God comes upon his people where souls are one. And isn't that the very place that we must bring ourselves to? And is that why we are as anemic, possibly, as we many times we are? We're unable to get our large congregation into one heart and one mind condition so that God's Spirit can be effectively moving upon us. And so we hold before you this afternoon this somewhat simple outline of what we are looking for and what we appreciate and what we desire to experience in our own hearts and what God's Word would teach us to enjoy and to anticipate.

And so just to review and renew what we are about here. We're not interested, for those of you who were not here before, to build upon another man's foundation. We're not interested in returning to some former or some illustrative period of time when the Church seemed for a while to have regained some vision and strength.

But there's only one way to build a solid Church of Lord Jesus Christ, and that is to return to the foundation laid in apostolic times, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone of that. Manus Simons himself said of the foundation, can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And so to that we desire to return.

And so although we use at times some references from Anabaptism as a model of what we feel God's Word would teach us, yet that model must be put into sheer leather in 1982. And we cannot simply return to a medieval concept of Church life. I'd like to write a few words to the board to make a connection between our lesson last week and this one this week.

Would you follow along as we write these words? We said last week that the basic issue facing the Anabaptists in the time of their sojourn in this world and their confrontation with the Reformers was, what is the definition of a Christian? Who is a Christian? These terms, of course, are Latin, as you see on the board there, but you can easily understand what they mean. Corpus is body. It's where we get our word corpus.

Corpus Christianum means Christian body. Corpus Christianum was a view held by the Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, in which the union, which the state, which the geographic or political area, which the socio-political area, if I've used that term, those two words mean the society and the political boundary of this particular area was all part of the Church that I am governing and I'm controlling. And since we have a Catholic government, we have a Catholic Church.

Since we have a Lutheran government, we have a Lutheran Church. Since we have a Reformed government and a Reformed political system, we have a Reformed Church. And since the rulers are Christian, the state is Christian, then all the people that live here are Christian.

And, of course, this brings to light, then, the reason why everyone born into this geographic area, born into these towns, born into these cantons, must be baptized immediately upon birth, so they are also part of this Christian body. It's a Christian union. Of course, this concept began politically with Theodosius.

It began theologically with Augustine. But the Anabaptists, of course, rejected that. For how can a person merely having been born into a political area, born into a certain geographic confinement, how can that person be a child of God? In whose life has faith taken hold? And where is the word bringing forth the fruits of righteousness? Who has experienced metanoia? Who has experienced repentance? Who has moved his heart and mind from a one-world view to another kingdom view? When has that transition taken place? And so, they recognized that the Lord Jesus taught a corpus Christi, the body of Christ composed of those in whom his spirit has called together into one body.

And so, the corpus Christi and the corpus Christianum immediately found themselves at odds. And we have the beginning of what we're talking about today, a two-world view of Anabaptism. The brothers said the word might be difficult to pronounce.

I agree with him. And I am not German either, but it is a German term. As I understand it, Golosanheit would be possibly a pronunciation of the term.

What is Golosanheit? It's a term that they ascribe to their Christian life when they realize that he who is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ must follow him totally in this life. I will say it another way. Golosanheit is an untranslatable term into our English language.

Now, those of you that know a foreign language know that that is often the case. Terms in one language cannot be translatable into others. I just met some Spanish folks here before the service began, and unable to give a literal translation from one language to the next.

And by the way, for those of you that have an interest in Bible translations or in versions of the Bible, whoever would try to translate from Greek into English, for instance, has that problem continuously. And that is why translators do not always agree on the exact rendering of a passage, because there is no, for instance, there are no words in English or such terms in Greek as baptizo, for instance. Now, we have no word in English such as golosanheit.

And so I can say discipleship comes close to it, but really doesn't. And we could possibly think of some other terms, commitment or consecration, possibly. But golosanheit, as we would understand it, would speak of an attitude of heart.

It's such an attitude where I totally realize, in totality, I realize that all of myself I must abandon to a cause that is greater than myself. I yield myself. The Dianabetics call it simplicity of heart.

My heart is so simple, I give up easily. I just turn my life over to Christ. And when it comes to my way and His way, it's always His way.

When it comes to my way and the way of the cross, the way of the Word, I bow down. My heart is broken. I abandon myself.

I have no right. I am no self-defense. I have no cause to promote, save that of the glory of the cross, of which we've already sung this afternoon.

That is golosanheit, eternal yieldingness, nothing to stand up for, nothing to draw attention to here, only Christ. Golosanheit. And, of course, you must realize that this view was a dangerous view in a period of time, brethren, when to live an irreproachable life was to be suspicioned as an Anabaptist.

And that meant arrest. That meant possible torture. And you know the end of the story from there.

And yet one of you, this golosanheit is not the kind of thing that stays in my heart. If there are any pious here today, I'm satisfied to take issue with you. I'm satisfied to challenge you.

If you feel that this way of life is a hard experience only, and I have it in here, dear brother, sister, golosanheit means that not only have I yielded myself in my heart, but my life will be an expression of that which I believe. And here is the difference between Anabaptism and the Reformation theology, where there was a split, there was a rift between faith and life. The Anabaptists knew no such split between faith and life.

They called such people, and I can't give it in German. I wish I could. They said these people have a split heart.

Their heart was cut in half. The one half of them had a sound theology and had a sound faith and had a sound position. The other half of the heart was just like the world.

There is no split heart in Anabaptism. There is no split heart in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no split heart in Philip.

There was no split heart in Paul. There was a split heart in Peter. Yes, there was.

But after he was converted, he strengthened his brethren. May I introduce you to another German term? The Anabaptists did not spend much time talking about faith like the Reformers up there in Wittenberg did. I guess you know who was up in Wittenberg, Martin Luther and Thomas Munster and Karl Stack and some of those of his cohorts up there.

They spent very little time talking about faith, for they were not theologians. The word that they used was following. Following.

By the way, that's a very good term to use, because Jesus used it too. Would you turn to Matthew chapter 16? Verse 24. Jesus said 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 a man's profit if he shall 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 shall be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Jesus said, When it's all said and done, you can have any kind of theology you want to have, and you can do anything to make yourself believe that you're part of the church of Jesus Christ, or part of some fellowship or communion somewhere, but unless you have your cross and are following me, you are not a disciple of mine. And so the term that comes to us in German expressing this experience is the term nachfolge Christi, following Christ, or being followers of Christ. Nachfolge became for them the earmark of

who were truly disciples, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nachfolge. Now, may I express it in this manner? We had said last week, if you recall this, that the Catholics, Reformers, and Anabaptists had three different ways of deciding or defining what a Christian was. The Catholics, if I could just refresh your memory, took this position that a Christian was he who received the grace of God through the sacrament.

As oil was poured, the wafer put on the tongue, the spritzings of water, if I may use that term, including, may I say it in a public meeting, spit from the mouth of the priest upon the forehead of a child, and then wiped across his forehead with his finger in the shape of a cross. It parts grace to a child, and that person's a Christian now because grace has moved through this priesthood, through the somehow miraculous body of this priest, and has anointed this child with faith. The Reformers came along and recognized that a Christian was he who has experienced this understanding or concept of justification.

He realizes that Christ has died, and he realizes he was sinner and absolutely unable to do a thing about it. As long as he holds his eye, somehow catches a glimpse of faith, he sees that Christ did this thing, and now I'm saved because of faith. In fact, Luther was so determined to convince men there was faith, and all faith, and nothing but faith, that he actually put the word only behind the verse, by faith only.

A word that is not found in the Bible, Greek or German or anything else. But the Anabaptists were those who felt that a Christian was he who, having received the word of God in his heart, lived it out in his daily life. And you and I believe, I think you and I are convinced this afternoon, that we definitely must have a synthesis, and I appreciate the way our meeting ended last week, a synthesis of those two thoughts.

Truly, we realize our sinful condition. Apart from God, we can do nothing. And all good for all our righteousness is a filthy rag.

But dear brothers and sisters, to have a faith and a heart that does not give expression in daily life is not to take up a cross and follow him. I can be a Schwenkenfelder. I don't need to face the cross.

I can just love God in my heart, you know. I remember the evangelist Tom Skinner. He's a Negro man.

He said he doesn't understand what people mean when they walk up to him, and they're white and he's black, and they say to him, I love you in my heart, brother. I love you in my heart. Listen, if your love doesn't get out of your heart, if your love does not leave your heart, if my love does not leave my heart, I have no love to leave.

That's why it stays there. Until the love gets out of my heart, I have no love. Until my faith leaves my heart, there is no faith.

Until my faith gets expressed in the way I'm walking and following Christ, I have no faith to express, for faith is living and not dead. Now, we want a person then. Can we draw together from these last two points? They were on the board last week.

We want someone who's not only spiritually motivated, but also externally patterned, after the New Testament. Can you think about that thought for a while? Or may we rise to a somewhat higher explanation and say it another way? Someone who is spiritually driven, and at the same time externally disciplined by the living Word of God. Christ's Word in my heart, and so I am driven by that Word.

The Bible tells me when Jesus was, before he was tempted to the devil in the wilderness for 40 days, I'm not sure if the temptation lasted that long, but he was there for 40 days. The Bible says that he was driven of the Spirit into that experience. Spirit driven.

In chapter 8 of Romans, where we are told that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, the word in Greek is the same. As many as are driven by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And it's interesting for me to note and share with you this afternoon, as also appears in this program, near the bottom by the page there.

Master Ulrich, you have not the right to leave this decision, the decision of this question to the Council. The matter is already decided. The Spirit of God decides it.

I call your attention to that quotation because the Anabaptists made no distinction between that which the Word of God will teach a man and that which the Spirit of God will teach a man. The two are one. Perfect harmony in the triune Godhead.

And so, being spirit driven and being then disciplined, allowing this life to be disciplined by that same Word, we have the synthesis that Anabaptism stood for and which we believe we want to stand for today. Following Christ, not Bogdi. Turn, would you, to Luke 14.

I'd like to read verses 25 through 33 here. There went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

For which of you intending to build a tower, sit not down first, and count the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it. Let haply, if he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. For what king going to make war against another king, sit not down first, and consolest, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsakeneth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Do we believe that? How many times have you noticed the concept of cost in that passage I read from chapter 16 and this passage from Luke 14? There is a cost involved with being a disciple.

And our responsibility, if we're going to return to any kind of apostolic position, is to recover and redefine and come to experience just what is that cost that comes along with carrying the cross to the Lord Jesus Christ today. And we will offer to you some suggestions along that line as you bear with us in prayer throughout the afternoon. What is this cost? This is the issue from which we must search.

Now, I would like to give a definition for discipleship that is not original to me. I copied it from a book earlier today, and may you just contemplate this thought. Discipleship, a burning passion to seek and to serve the kingdom of God, to follow Christ into suffering, to allow the cross, to explain the difference between myself and the world in which I live.

In preparation for this class, I learned a concept that was brand new to me. If I could somehow communicate it to you, then I'm satisfied the afternoon would not be in vain if only one of you people here today captures this concept. The Anabaptists had, the apostles had, an ethic, a teaching, a view, a

concept that they could apply to life that was completely foreign to the people around them.

Here it was. How is it that somebody can walk up to an Anabaptist brother or sister and smite them on one side of the face, and they could turn the other side without calling for revenge, without returning evil? What's the difference? The difference for them was easily explained. It was the cross.

The cross was the difference. Why is it that I get down here and bless the man who cursed me? Or we do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who wish to use us and persecute us. How impressive it would have been if you kneeled there in the forest floor and heard those brothers praying for their tormentors, even as they're encroached around the scenery there in shrubbery, waiting to pounce it upon them as wolves upon sheep.

And there is prayer for those who are persecuting them. How impressive that would be. The difference is the cross, brothers and sisters.

They explained that all in the cross. You see, once a person has died on the cross, once we have been crucified with Christ and the life we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. We need no other explanation.

Let's get further. We expect a life like that. And so I repeat, we allow the cross to explain the difference between ourselves and this world in which we live.

I must share with you at this point another note about this concept. It's a Bible concept. But I don't need to depend upon that cross to sever me from this world alone.

That cross separates my brotherhood from this world. And so, I never faced that cross experience apart from the same experience being shared by my brethren. I could not understand the kind of letters that were written for prison to home congregations such as Michael Sattler wrote back to Harp before I understood this thought.

He realized that instead of him taking time to explain all the brutality done to him, all the tortures he suffered. And by the way, if you read your martyrs' mere, you'll find it awfully difficult to find those brethren in their letters explaining what they endured. Note that with keen interest.

Instead of that, encouraging the brethren back home and don't try to, don't be too worried about me. Don't be too concerned about myself. I'm doing all right.

We're just glad for your love and for your fellowship. And realizing the fact there in the cell that was still remaining, there was strong support and sharing of the suffering that they were enduring right there in the cell. Did Jesus say the same thing on the way to the cross? I'd like to define this discipleship of his brother by saying that, first of all, it's to the Anabaptists meant a response to the Great Commission.

Do you, therefore, and teach all nations is found time and time again in Anabaptist literature. May I try to explain a difficult concept to you? Here they took upon themselves to do a very unethical thing. They allowed a break, a rift to form between themselves and the natural or accepted social order.

May I explain it? Natural order would dictate that a man has a job. Natural order would dictate that a man has and takes care of and provides for his family. Natural order dictates that a man has an education.

Natural order dictates that a man has some responsibility in his political system where he lives. Possibly the magistrate. Nonetheless, he's at least helping to maintain the political union where he is.

For the Anabaptists, if to obey the revenge of Christ to go into all the world and preach the gospel meant that I must break with one of those institutions of the natural order, he would do so. Conrad Grebel had three children when he died of the plague. Lived very little of his time with them.

His wife, Barbara, never united with him in the faith. I cannot comprehend that. I can hardly comprehend that, I should say.

How did that man was able to face the challenges he faced without support of his wife? My wife knows how difficult it is for me to bear up under pressure sometimes with her total support. How would it be with none? Martin Luther taught just the opposite about discipleship. If you're a Lutheran here today, I don't want you to be upset or offended at this presentation, but we feel responsible by the grace of God to take our eyes off of man and bring it back to the word of God here.

It just seems the Lord teaches us about discipleship. He saw the Bible taught discipleship too and must make application to it in modern times, in his own time. It surrounds the discipleship meaning a break from the social and normal order.

He said that a person is a disciple as he does an effective job at home in his family, in his occupation, in his magistrate. And so if he was a constable, he should now be a Christian constable and be a better constable than the man was before. He'll be a better farmer now.

He'll be a better artisan now. He'll be a better craftsman now because he's a Christian. Thus, Christian discipleship was conceived largely in terms of what makes for a stable social order rather than, as in the case of Anabaptist, that which advances a new and different order called the Kingdom of God.

As between staying at home and being a good Christian father or mother within a settled religious social system and going from village to village to preach the gospel of repentance, Luther's concerted and social responsibility to emphasize the former. Stay at home, be effective at home, take care of things at home, build a home, increase the size of the farm, add to the business. The latter was interpreted to mean social revolution, whereas Luther's real interests lay in reinforcing traditional patterns of the broadest conceivable diffusion of Christian grace.

Take this Christian grace all you people have and just make a whole community Christian. To Luther, the divine calling was to station in which one finds himself. He considered no occupation wrong if it is integral to civil life.

This included even the magistrate and the military. I wonder what you're thinking. If you're with me this afternoon, you are aware that by and large, the fellowships that we are acquainted with to stand for conservative doctrine are Lutheran this afternoon and not Anabaptist.

That should ring as clear to you as the sound of its voice. The purpose is, the issue is, to somehow be a source of the earth by remaining at home and accumulating and working at home. That's that thing that you've been doing.

Somehow be a good Christian at home. In this way, the gospel will be diffused. Maintain the social order.

Maintain the traditional pattern. Somehow Christianize it. I want you to know there is a Corpus Christianum view is exactly what that is.

Somehow this thing will just spread across the whole thing and that's why the whole world will become converted. You can call it post-liberalism if you want to. It's the same thing.

You can call it modernism if you want to. It's the same thing. Sooner or later with this kind of salt and sprinkling light going across the earth, the whole world will be converted after a while.

We'll have an utopia here. It is a false view, brothers and sisters. I want to go further and emphasize another point here.

We, like Martin Luther, who draw oftentimes from the Pauline epistles and Augustine theology rather than drawing from the very origins of the apostolic faith, the Sermon on the Mass, the gospel, the very origins of life's love. Here's what we have done. Instead of taking Jesus' words, except the man hates father and mother and wife and brother and sister more than myself.

He's not worthy of me. Instead of taking that passage straight from the words of our Christ and holding it before our people as a challenge and as an ethic and as the way of the cross, we go back to a corrective letter and we pick up this. Except the man provides for his own.

He has denied the faith and is worse than infidel. You decide for yourself which of those two emphases you are hearing where you are. Do we hear the one? There's a sore divide between fathers and mothers, and this is cut right down to your family line.

Are we hearing that teaching or are we hearing this? Fathers, let's be stable. Let's provide. I want to tell you something.

I am convinced that we have moved from the place where the waters flow clearest and purest. We have moved from the source and we have gone back to try to build our congregations and try to build our personal lives upon the patterns of those who continually needed corrective letters, letters from those who still maintain the pure apostolic vision. Are you aware that, brothers and sisters, at the cost of your heart, we're trying to build upon a Christian church pattern, a church that needed one correction after the next.

If only they would have returned to pure apostolicity, the corrections would not have been needed. Yet we're saying that we should draw our life and our pattern from the work of those epistles rather than from the first streams of the word of God where it flows the purest. I say return.

I say return to the Sermon on the Mount. I say return to the words of Jesus Christ. I say return to an apostolic foundation and not build our hearts and our homes and our congregations upon congregations who were established and already deteriorating and degenerating to the tune of needing correction in one matter after the next after the next.

And so we need to regain this concept of the Great Commission as part of discipleship. It's a cost that we're not paying today. And you know what we're doing instead of it.

If I could somehow pass out tracts on a Saturday night or wherever it is, if I could somehow fit into the singing at the old people's homes some evening and still maintain all I've got here, that's fine. I'll do it. And I go about as far as what my father will allow me to go.

And there's where it stops. And brethren, that is not the apostolic position. Point number two on the discipleship.

That globe represents the world in which you and I live. That world is somehow a battlefield, a battlefield between two kingdoms. There is the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

And there is the kingdom and the powers of darkness and desire to rule this sphere. And there we are on this world with these two kingdoms of clash, birth claiming territory, birth claiming oneness here, birth claiming possession and right. This is why the child of God faces the injustice.

This is why the child of God faces the sword. This is why he suffers wrong. This is why he is martyred.

This is why he has no right to defend. Because he shares a view of this kingdom here rather than be part of that kingdom there. He knows there's a time coming when that whole kingdom will be destroyed.

It's not a matter of a kingdom within a kingdom. Calvin was wrong. So was Luther.

It's not a little pure church in the midst of the Corpus Christianum. Luther was hoping that somehow he could get a little cell together of true Christians, somehow on this big machine, somehow on this big program. No, it's not one within the other.

There are two kingdoms in power. You're either part of the one or part of the other. And so there dare be no connection between them.

Brother Daniel last week called our attention to the Lutheran and Reformed position of the cross, which they called the theology of the cross. And I gave a few thoughts about that then in the open discussion. And we'll just share a few more things about that and how it relates to this kingdom here.

For a reformer, the theology of the cross meant this. Here's my heart. Here's my conscience.

And here's the pure word of God. And the two don't quite agree. My conscience is guilty.

My conscience is dismissive. There's the pure word. There's apostolic truth.

And here's my life. And so I must bear somehow this guilt of conscience. And there's a struggle between what I am and what I know I ought to be.

There it is continually. I'm continually oppressed by this cross of truth, which bears down upon my heart, my conscience, being guilty and defiled. Sin answered them as a sinner.

And sin he always has. Sin always remains with him. But somehow it's the cross that I must bear.

Whereas for the Anabaptists, the concept was quite different. They saw a theology of martyrdom. They expected because the cross stood between them and these two kingdoms, there was nothing but suffering to anticipate here.

That didn't matter to them. That didn't matter. It was only the means of entrance into a greater and more important life.

May I share with you three views of the cross at this hour? I could write these down possibly. But for the Catholics and the Reformers, their view of the cross was this. Here is sin.

Man is sinful. Man is a creature of sin. That's why you need to second it.

To somehow try to overcome this sin that's in his life. And the cross stands here. And the cross is the only way to take care of sin.

Wear it around my neck, you know. Have it hanging on the wall. The cross.

Put it on the church building. Have it in front of me in the car dashboard. The cross.

Wherever that cross is, as long as I have that cross, as long as I'm carrying that cross, somehow there's hope for my sin problem. You say, that sounds all right. I want you to do something.

It doesn't ever get them over their sin problem. There's a pietistic view. And this one scares me because this one comes pretty close to home.

It's the view of the cross that, oh, I get a tremendous uplift. Oh, that cross would center me. Oh, here's my life.

Now I'm refreshed. Oh, this is glorious. And they get together in their conventicals and they just encourage each other with just what all this cross has done for me this week.

Oh, it was so wonderful to be under this cross. And it amounts to a little more of an emotionalism because it doesn't affect the life I live. The Anabaptist was something entirely different.

It was a necessary part of the present life, a part from which there was no explanation for this suffering. A necessary part of the present life. Suffering, then, moving on to the third point, is the answer here.

Would you turn to Romans chapter six? I want to show you a truth from this passage that impresses us on this point. For those of you that enjoy a little theological study, it'll challenge you a little. Verse one, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.

How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him in baptism unto death. The likeness Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

I'll stop reading there. The thought I want to get across to you is this. Are you aware when you submit yourself to water baptism, and I realize that sitting among us here this afternoon are those who would symbolize this experience in more than one way.

That is no problem to us here today. I am perfectly satisfied that if you understand what you're doing when you submit to water baptism, you'll come out of the same place we do in regards to this passage. You know, we take the person by the hand and raise them up, either out from the water or up from the floor of the church, wherever this baptism took place, and we say to them, as Christ was raised today, so should you also walk in newness of life.

But there was another part to that that we missed entirely. As many as were baptized, were baptized onto what? Onto death. And we failed to somehow realize that when I submit myself to baptism, when I allow this outward sign of water to baptize my life, to speak of the washing and cleansing that I've enjoyed in my heart, when I give myself over to this covenant and to this pledge and to this outward symbol of this inner spiritual experience, I am saying my life is offered.

I am surrendered. You may not take my life if you will, because I've been baptized unto death. I have followed Christ in this way that he walked.

And I am willing to drink of the baptism that he drank from and be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with. Jesus asked if it's possible for mortal man to do that. May I refer you again to the recovery of the message vision, a book that we've been looking at somewhat here throughout this series.

Here's a mother writing a death epistle to her son. She's on the way to martyrdom. It's happened in Rotterdam, Holland.

My son, hear the instruction of your mother. Open your ears to the words of my mouth. Behold, I go today the way of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and drink the cup they have drunk.

I go, I say, the way which Jesus Christ himself went. I follow him, in other words. And who had to drink of this cup? Even as he said, I have a cup to drink of and a baptism to baptize with.

And how am I straightened that he'll be accomplished? Having passed through, he calls his sheep, and his sheep hear his voice and follow him with us wherever he goes. This way was trodden by the dead under the altar. In this way walked also those who were marked by the Lord.

It's the way we go in baptism. And so I want to conclude this discussion this afternoon with a few thoughts about believers baptism. For the two, as you now have noticed, are closely connected together.

For he who is baptized is saying in heart, is saying publicly, I accept the disciplined life. I accept the way of the cross for me. I am being translated from one kingdom to the other.

I suffer now the report that comes because I am part of a kingdom that is not of this world. And so I ask this question, what then is the evidence that this truly has happened in a person's life? What then is the proof that this baptism has truly taken place? And before any water is poured or any person is put into the water, however you're doing it, this must be settled first. I search myself every day, but I find, I'm quoting here from Hans Claus Beldinger, but I find no error in my faith.

For I know that I stand in the grace of God. Do you have evidence of that? I want to ask you this question. Can you say that from your life there flows that which is only possible by the faith of Christ? You're aware that I'm aware of the many things you and I do, we can do without the faith of Christ at all.

Before anyone is eligible for baptism, qualified for baptism, we must behold, we must see. There must be evidence of that issued forth from his life which is only possible by the faith of Christ operative in his heart. I am concerned about calling a person to a position that flesh and blood and will of the heart is able to accomplish apart from the grace of God I work in my life.

And you and I could name this afternoon and list the things that long that we could require of a person and say, when this is all accomplished, we'll go to the stream, we'll go to the baptismal altar. But on this, is

there that which cannot be done apart from the faith of Christ in my heart? Oh, I want to give you an illustration. I certainly cannot do that which the grace of God alone can do.

Unless I have first of all, the seed of the living spirit of God operative in my heart. Unless I am first born of the spirit of God, unless that spirit is born in me, as John 1 John teaches us, and then that seed remains in me. Oh, I give you two illustrations.

I give you two seeds. The one is alive. The other is dead.

They are mustard seeds. Go with me outside. We shall dig two holes.

I will put the dead seed there and the live seed here. And now we cover that ground. And may I at this point explain my illustration.

Here is one in whom the living germ of the almighty spirit of God is at work, alive in that seed, in that heart, in that life. And here's one that is nothing but his own works and flesh and will, nothing but his own substance. And there he is.

And now in time, two things take place. This seed deteriorates, rots, and becomes forever a part of the earth in which it was planted. This seed here takes root and springs upward.

Out of the ground it grows. It never becomes part of the dirt, never becomes part of the earth, but draws its continual light from the overhead sun. And when, dear brothers and sisters, that spirit is born in my heart, that's going to be the result.

That's going to be the climate. I will rise above the conditions of this world and I will draw my light from him who reigns above me. I illustrate it another way.

Go with me to the Danking in China, China, following the Boer War there. And see the results of the bombings and the plundering of this town and see the rubble there and see the timbers all shattered and the plastered dirt down in the cellar holes. And there we stand as a group of relief workers, a group of Christians, we desire to somehow make some restoration out of this mess.

We want to start cleaning up activities. Where should we begin? Oh, I survey the scene. What a dirty and a devastating ruin.

And as we look, lo and behold, there in the cellars some timbers begin to shake and some dust and plastered dirt begins to move around and a man emerges up from the pile of dirt and the rubble and the timbers fall back into place as he emerges from that scene and arises a living human being. What is the thought? The thought is this. As long as there is life, true spiritual life in the heart of a man, there can be no mixture with the devastation and the sin and the error of this world.

I am concerned about any faith that you claim to have or that I claim to have that does not ever and continuously increase the distinction, increase the difference between me and this world, brothers and sisters. There can be no mixture as long as there's life in me. And as long as that tree's alive, he will ever, ever and ever and ever grow above and beyond the course of this world, ever deriving more and more of his life from that which is beyond the power of this world.

But as soon as that tree dies, I'll tell you what it becomes. It becomes a part of this world. And although it might be standing there ever so tall, oh, it's ever so dense.

And you and I know it's a matter of time until it crumbles and becomes a part of this earth to die. But when there's life in there, you certainly know the difference. Oh, brothers and sisters, it is impossible this afternoon to take a fruit tree and produce it in a factory.

We cannot start here with some twigs and some carbon and some hydrogen and some oxygen, put them together in such ways that we bring a fruit tree out the other end, and I'll have Brother James here, he'll put the leaves on, and then Joyce will come along and she'll hang the apples on. By the time he gets done, he'll have a fruit tree, and I will take a truck and go out and plant them. You know it's impossible.

Every tree that ever grew must be a divine creation. It must have the living word and life of God within its very bosom, within its being. And so it is with those that we bring by one faith into this one body.

They must be those in whom the Spirit of God has worked, and we cannot produce them in a factory. I can just tack this on and tack that on and tack that on, and when I'm done, I'll be a child of God. And I'll go to the other side and say this, why am I afraid? Why am I afraid to turn a man loose into this world with the word of God alive in his heart? I am satisfied that there will be no mixture as long as that person is truly one with God.

Now, I will hastily show you some conclusions that this brings us to concerning believers' baptisms. I've showed you this afternoon why the Reformers had to baptize the children at eight days of age as they came into this world as babies. But I would ask you, this being a false position, what is then truly the qualification for baptism? Who can be baptized? I have here a little copy of the Sleight of Hand Confession.

I brought a number of other copies along, and I'm going to make them available here. If you'd like to have a copy of that, you can have it. It costs somebody 75 cents.

If you have the 75 cents to give, that's fine. If you don't, it doesn't matter. You're certainly welcome to help yourself with this booklet.

If they get all, we'll try to get some more for you sometime before this series is over. Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life, who believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with him in death so that they might rise with him. To all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us, I have no time, may I say it humbly this afternoon, for a position or a policy where I come to some young person and say, baptism's coming up in three weeks, are you ready to go along? If I don't have that spiritual urgency and understanding within me to come and request that sign to seal my covenant with God and my brethren, I question how much life has yet to take root inside of me.

Believer's baptism is for committed disciples only, and we don't baptize until we have positive evidence that we have reached that point. What is baptism not? May I share something with you? Number one, it is not an individual matter. It is not this time that I'm saying, hey, I have faith in God and I'd like to express that by baptism.

Now, God has worked in my heart. It is a symbol of submission to the discipline of the brotherhood and a prerequisite to Lord's suffering. I am uniting with souls.

I am uniting with an organism. I am uniting with life. I am uniting with a body when I'm baptized.

What is baptism not? It is not adult versus infant. We don't know anything about adult baptism versus infant baptism. If that was the case, we could take this unconverted child with no faith at seven days of age or eight and wait until he's 80 years old and baptize him then.

And if he didn't get faith in his heart sometime before that, he is not a Christian yet. He is still a heathen. And so it's believer's baptism versus unbeliever's baptism and not infant baptism versus adult baptism.

Keep that thought in your mind. What is it then? It is a pledge. It is a covenant, a discipleship in which the candidate promises in the future to live according to the word and command of Christ.

Just so happens that I have here this afternoon a model of an Anabaptist covenant that believers make upon their baptism. I'm going to take time this afternoon to read this to you and possibly, if you request it, make it available to you in print at a later time. But imagine a soul making this pledge of discipleship and commitment to the Brethren in such terms as these.

Number one, do you believe in Almighty God, the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth and Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, through whose blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, and in the Holy Ghost, the abiding spirit, who sanctifies and empowers and comforts the believer, guiding him into all truth? Number two, do you believe that the Bible is the authoritative word of God, that it is inerrant in its original writings and that it is the only infallible rule of faith and practice? Number three, do you confess a good conscience before God and man? And forsaking the works of the flesh, promised by God's grace with the aid of the Holy Spirit, do you submit yourself to Christ, his word, and his faithful brethren? Number four, if you hereafter sin, will you accept the steps of brotherly discipline according to the rule of Christ, Matthew 18, verses 15 to 20? And will you, in Christian love and meekness, seek to restore any brother or sister whom you may know to have erred in faith or in practice? Number five, will you consecrate yourself in brotherly love to the peace and purity of the brotherhood, and your temporal possessions to the service of God and his people, so long as you are able to render aid? Such commitment the brethren made to each other in the time of which we speak, and such commitment we ought to be making to each other today. May I have you turn in closing to Mark, chapter 16, where we would like to read verses 15 and 16. And find here, if you will, a very simple apostolic pattern for baptism.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And I realize during these verses it would be very appropriate to read as well, but I want to draw a three-part outline from this simple passage.

The first place we preach, for we know that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God. And so the word of God is brought to the people. They are taught the living oracles of God's truth.

Second comes faith. They believe. They are satisfied that this which they have heard they desire for themselves.

And although it is the way of the cross which is taught, followed by and connected with the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And did you notice in Paul's pattern, in Romans 6, the perfect combination of those two truths? The baptism of death preceding the resurrection of life. And I must surrender myself and give myself to death and give myself to insubstantiality to surrender before that life will come forth from me.

Did you notice when you go to Acts chapter 2 and hear Peter preach and move on to the epistles and look at the message of the apostles, it was time again the combination of those two truths. Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified. Our Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

And so this was taught. This is taught to your people. And they know that if you're going to be a child of God, you must follow in those steps.

And then baptism upon confession of such a position, upon confession of faith. Then I've just taught the first John chapter 5 verse 6 explains three baptisms that must follow each other in that same order. I'm sorry, it's verse 8. First John 5, 8. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood.

These three agree in one. What am I saying? That first of all, the spirit of God baptizes me into one spiritual body. I have the baptism of spirit, number one.

Second, that is followed by the baptism of water, my urban sign, my urban pledge of my covenant with my brothers. And then number three, I expect following that water baptism, the baptism of blood. Look what it says here in verse 6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood.

And this is the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is true. Brother, we must return to that concept that where water baptizes a soul, that blood will baptize them next. Now, I have some questions to ask you in conclusion.

Question number one, do we have any right to baptize a person if we are not fully convinced that he is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? What is your answer? I say no. I say if you don't have the evidence there that that person has that life of Christ within and from the life issued forth of fruit that will come from the living tree, I am satisfied that we're not yet ready to baptize. But I have a second question that's a bit more searching.

Do we have the right to exclude such a one in whom the spirit of God is working? Do we have the right to exclude such a person in whom the evidences of fruit being brought forth are born upon the experience? Do we have the right to exclude such a one from our brotherhood, refusing them either baptism or membership when we are convinced that the spirit of God is at work in their lives? I ask you question number three. If you say yes, we do, where is your apostolic position to verify it? Where did you get the Bible teaching that taught you that's what you can do? Where did you find the description? What example could you give me from the apostles that that is the way they behave themselves? Now, what is the cost that we must maintain? What is the cost that this young believer, however old he is, young in the faith, must understand before he unites with us? There were numbers of things suggested this afternoon, but I want to, in closing, suggest one more. When John stood at the foot of the cross, dear people, and saw his Lord hanging there with a crown of thorns on his head, are you listening? And both water and blood pouring forth from his side as the sword went into his body, do you think he had any question about what the cost was of his uniting with such a cause as that? And when the brethren, after being beaten, chapter four of Acts, returned to their company, and there was that memorable prayer meeting when together they asked God for boldness to speak more clearly His word, do you think those souls that were united with the fellowship upon that occasion had any question about what the cost was going to be for them to identify with such a people as that? And when, dear brethren, those hateful creatures, if you want to call them that, stood in the forest floor and called souls with the power of darkness into this kingdom of God, and there

was a cry of alarm as the dogs came rushing forth and the burgomaster came to arrest, was there any question in their minds as to what the cost was as they united with such a brotherhood as that in that time? And, dear brethren, it is dying with your heart to see a return to apostolicity I lay before you this afternoon, this challenge.

Do you have, do you bear in your body the mark of the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ? Does it cost you, is it costing you something to take a stand for God's word and to stand to find truth? Is that cost clear? And will those who join with you and unite with you, do they see that cost that they must also bear? I say the challenge is with those who presently have the fruit. I must end by saying this, that I cannot into my children, I have four of them, instill any life at all. I would desire to give to them the spiritual truth that I enjoy.

I would desire to give to them the spiritual life that we maintain. The Bible says, it's not by blood, nor by the will of men, nor by the will of flesh, but of God. And that word, which has taken root in our lives, must take root in theirs.

And there's only one way that I know of, dear father and mother, here you are this afternoon to serve for your children. There's only one way I know of that you can instill life into those boys and girls of yours, and that is this, that every life that ever came forth was the result of another death. And so you and I must die, as our Lord Jesus Christ died, so that somehow life can come forth in our boys and girls.

But do they see, and this challenge strikes me this afternoon as I stand here, do our children see that father and mother have died? If they see it, they'll know what the cost is, brothers and sisters. And if they don't see it, we have not yet anything to offer them. Think about it throughout this week.

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