

(The Recovery of the Apostolic) 6. Anabaptism in Practice

by Dale Heisey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of love, unity, and humility in the church, and challenges listeners to examine their own hearts and lives in light of God's word.

Duration: 1:03:16

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

Topics: "Christian Living", "Persecution Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of not relying solely on outward conformity to validate one's Christian experience. He warns against dividing over differences in standards and emphasizes the need to listen to others who may have something to say from the Lord on a matter. The speaker also highlights the perseverance and love of believers in the face of persecution, using the example of Dirk Willems. Lastly, he addresses four areas where love should be practiced: in our covenant with fellow believers, in our economic life, in answering the call to evangelism, and in being willing to bear the cross of persecution.

Transcript

We find it a wonderful experience to be together under the blessing of God. I wonder how many of you this afternoon sense God's blessing on your life. How many of you feel the power of Almighty Spirit of the Lord working in your heart? You feel at rest with the circumstances of life.

You feel at peace with your brethren. You have the joy of the Lord in your heart. You have oil to pour upon the knees and around us.

You're not in a hospital. You're not being cared for in your infirmity and in your weakness. Rather that you as a physician are able to move from person to person and from heart to heart and from bed to bed, imparting some spiritual gift, some word of wisdom, some knowledge, some exhortation, some edification.

You have God's blessing upon your life. He is an Anabaptist indeed. He is a child of God indeed.

Who can do as Jesus did? In such a simple way it was stated in chapter 10 of Acts, He went about doing good. Is that your testimony and mine? Are we able to go from place to place, from heart to heart, and do good here and do good there? This is Anabaptism in practice. This is our Lord Jesus in practice.

This is our Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh and dwelt among men, showing forth the glory of God. How? By what He did for the needs of mankind around Him and where He went, a blessing followed in the wake of His service. So it would be my desire this afternoon that we would challenge each of us to that kind of life.

It just so happens that this way, if we have this in our hearts, it cannot be hidden, it cannot be denied. And forth it will come, because this city set on a hill cannot be hid. Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light unto all that are in the house.

But at the same time, it is very possible to do as five women once did, and carry lanterns that have no lights in them, and that also cannot be hid, that also is clearly seen. There is no oil in the vessel. And so let us not love in tongue, neither in word, but in deed and in truth.

I want to share a couple of thoughts of an introductory nature, and while I'm doing this, would you open your Bible to 1 John 3, if you will? The question has surfaced time and again throughout the last six weeks. What do you, brethren, plan to do? I'm not quite sure who is meant by the you, brethren, in the question, but I'm going to put myself in there and just talk to you for a while. You're going to start a new church? You're going to divide? I'm going to tell you something about church division.

You contemplate this and see how it fits into your understanding. I live in a setting where people are taught quite frequently that church division is the way to revival. That every revival that ever occurred was the result of a church division.

The way God keeps the church pure is He ever divides, He ever splits and divides. In every church division that has ever occurred, in every instance where you ever knew of one person that came from one church or one fellowship or one group and joined another, whether a whole group of people did that or a couple of families or whether it was an individual, this is something you always found, and that is this, that I, in dividing, considered myself to be superior over the rest. I had a superior understanding, a superior knowledge, a superior input, a superior view, a superior spiritual life.

I somehow was the master of my brethren. I was superior over them, and I would hasten to tell you that I doubt if that's the case. I doubt if that's true.

I doubt if we really are superior over the others. I'm going to take this position this morning, this afternoon, that such a view is contrary to the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, who in John 17, as you see Him in practice, before His Father in prayer, said that the manifest glory of God is not seen in divisions and in splitting and in schism and in me against you and you against me, but it is seen when brethren work together as one united whole. I'll tell you what happens when churches divide.

I'll tell you what happens when brethren divide. There is an issue ever so puny, ever infinitesimal, ever so small, and this thing gets magnified. It gets loomed up into a magnanimous proportion.

There it is. We view this thing, and I'm on one side of it, and these people on the other side, and so I divide. And I will tell you what will happen within five to twenty years, if the Lord grants that much time, if the thing lasts that long, you will find me in error in that area that caused my division, and I will tell you why.

Because, as Brother Daniel has already said this afternoon, since I stand here and he stands here and I know he's wrong, I must be right, and so I find all the support and strength I can to muster together

evidence and validity for my position, and I stand here and promote that and challenge that and champion that at the expense of what benefit I could have received from others who also had something to say from the Lord on that matter. But I cut myself off. I've seen quite a few church divisions just in the last ten years, and I'll tell you one thing that I've seen in every one of them, that when the lines were drawn, all communication and interchange between those two groups was cut off.

And, brethren, that is error, and that is not of God, and we did not promote that in this meeting or in our own hearts. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not promote that, and we are not promoters of that. I stand here and you stand here, and you mind your business and I'll mind mine.

You teach your people how you will teach them, and we'll teach our people as we will teach ours. And the wall is here erected, and the life flow does not interchange between us. We cut ourselves off one from another.

That cannot be the Church of Jesus Christ, nor will it ever be. I urge you to consider that. Are we so superior in our thinking? Now I'll challenge you further.

Do you place yourself in such an ascendancy, having so much superior understanding? Do you and I place ourselves in such a superiority? Fine. Prove it. Prove your superiority.

Prove your improved and increased virtuality by being a blessing and a healer and a helper in a difficult situation. Think about that for a while. Another question.

If we're rising in understanding and gaining in spiritual power and strength, I wonder if we have reached this height as of yet that we're able to submit ourselves and reduce ourselves to such a point that I fall out of the way and constitute no hindrance for healing to take place. I want to give you an illustration that happened within the last year and a half. Two brethren, two ordained ministers--these were preachers, ordained to the office of what they call preacher--were serving together in a congregation.

There was an elder and a younger. The younger was about my age, the elder considerably older than that. And the elder, for one reason or another, I do not know why, felt somewhat threatened or hindered in his ministry and felt to leave the church and go to another group.

The younger man, approximately my age, was burdened about this and being--note this--the superior of the two in spirituality, in spiritual understanding, in spiritual wisdom, in containing spiritual equipment in the mind of Christ. He went to the other brother with this proposition. He said, that although I've been ordained to serve here with you, I am willing to give up my office and let you serve here alone, unhindered by my ministry, if that's what it takes to heal the situation.

I think he knew what the result of that was. The older brother saw his error, came back to the congregation, wanted to be reinstated. They lovingly received him in.

Forgiveness took place, the healing waters flowed, the oil was poured, and the spiritual strength of the one who was willing to take the moral position won the day for that union. That's the thing I'm talking about. Are we saying that we are too weak to work with the problem, and for that reason we cut ourselves off, and I don't hear you, and you won't hear me, and I won't be bothered by your input, and I won't be bothered by the threat that you make to me? I'll go off.

Are we saying we are too weak to meet the issue? The brother got the impression that we somehow can, I'll say this cautiously, the brother gets the impression that we can somehow run the church better than anybody else that has ever done it. I want you to know that I don't feel that I have that ability, and I don't believe there's anybody here that does, and I would urge you to reduce yourself from that thinking if you think you have it. And so, with that sobriety and that careful thinking, let's move forward into this discussion.

Now, I realize that there's a time when the Spirit of God moving the heart of a man, standing at a very difficult place, is considered by others to be a radical. John Wesley defined a radical one day like this. He said, a radical is simply a person standing in the chasm between what the church is and what it ought to be.

And brethren, I wonder if in these meetings we've stimulated anyone's heart to the place where they say, I'm willing to be called that, to stand there in that chasm between what things are and what they ought to be. And here I will stand, and I will be a dazed man. God, give me grace to put my hand upon them both.

Here is where we are. By God's grace, we are in this position. We are less than we ought to be.

Identify like Daniel chapter 9, myself with a problem that's here, and there is what we ought to be. Here is where we ought to move, brethren. Can we somehow move together onto light and glory and blessing in Christ Jesus? And having the hands placed, standing there in that gap, there is where the man of God will stand in this hour of time.

I will say that faith, which worketh by love, is the length, is the breadth, is the depth, is the height of Christian perfection. I say faith, faith in what God can do and faith in what God's Word says, and faith in what His strength is able to perform, is the epitome of Christian experience. And who has that and will join us on that ground? I will stand there for the truth, for the healing of the difficult and sad conditions that exist in the churches around us.

I will stand there. I will be willing to say this afternoon that churches as I know them are sick, and sickly, and weak, and many sleep, just as you have it in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians. You and I know that.

Now, what do we do about it? What we do is this. O Physician, O Holy Father, grant through some vessel Thy healing oil. And so, if you are a child of God and represent some Christian communion here this afternoon, some Christian brotherhood, call your name whatever you will.

If you're part of the household of faith and one of the family of God, you will find in my heart nothing that will divide from you. I have no interest in that. I don't care if you are with one kind of communion or fellowship or another.

If you're anchors in Christ Jesus, if you have been born by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you, if your heart has been sprinkled from an evil conscience to serve the living God, then you are my brother indeed and one with me in the household of faith. And I want nothing in my heart to be divided from you, and in no way do I want you divided from me. And all the barriers and barricades that are erected between us, you will have to build.

I will not build them. God helping me, God helping us, our spirit is to contribute, our spirit is to identify, our goal and desire is to heal and to help anyone that's here or anywhere else in this world. You and Gentile alike, I ask for no other privilege than for simply to brother this afternoon for the opportunity to help my

fellow men find God.

And if we have any other purpose for being here, if we have any other purpose for setting up our congregations or establishing our districts or our conferences or call it what you will, all that will become part of the chant which the wind shall drive away. And so I want to bring the emphasis of this meeting this afternoon into sharp focus. Just in case someone has been misunderstanding what we've been trying to stand for.

Sola Scriptura, we talked about it by the grace of God last Friday night. Sola Scriptura, brothers and sisters, is not a position, it's not an understanding, and it's not a mentality where I am free to walk around my Bible and I just need no one else's guidance. I need no one else's instruction.

I have my Bible here. It is more than that. Sola Scriptura, my dear brothers and sisters, and sense this responsibility with me, places you accountable to obey every word of God.

And you just compare those two concepts and you'll see a world of difference. It's not a matter that I'm free to run around and I've got my Bible in my pocket and so that's enough for me. But rather it's a responsibility to hear and obey every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

I wonder who it is that'd be willing to stand before the Lord this afternoon in judgment and have him open the pages of this book and start examining the inner recesses of your heart. That is Sola Scriptura. This Bible will stand there.

On that day, according to John chapter 8, that book will be opened and there we will be judged according to how our life lines up here. That is Sola Scriptura. It is no escape route.

It is no easy life. I would urge any of you to get a copy of the book written by Leonard Robinhill titled Sodom Had No Bible and read the chapter he has written in there titled No, It's Not an Easy Road. When you're finished with that chapter, you'll understand what I just got done talking about.

Yeah, about this said Sola Scriptura. They felt themselves under a tremendous obligation, brothers. Number two, we talk about liberty of conscience.

We're not talking about the kind of freedom that allows you to run around town and run around the church, run around the countryside and follow your own conscience. And I need no other direction or guidance. I have my own conscience to follow.

Liberty of conscience is the Bible teaches it. And as we taught it, and again, if I just believe it was this rather, get this clear. It is maintaining before God a clear conscience, void of offense, obeying all that God has laid on your heart to obey.

Listen, liberty of conscience places upon you and I a more serious responsibility and obligation than what those people are willing to assume for themselves who are simply out in life to follow a few dictates and regulations imposed upon them by carnal command. Some people would sooner be free from the necessity of seeking the face of God and searching the word for themselves and finding out how God would impart some spiritual truth to their heart and free themselves from that. They put themselves under an umbrella and false security apply to your pretense that they're under divine guidance.

The liberty of conscience requires me to search this word and then stand strong enough to face whatever tide go against whatever wind and tide is necessary to maintain a clear conscience before God and man. If you check your notes and listen to your tapes closely, you'll observe that that's exactly what we believe and have been teaching. And then number three, that about this view of disregard for all established churches around us, but it is once again, that responsibility to make sure that in this cell of God's children, in this community of God's people, in this gathering, in this divine shop, there is truly a lantern of righteousness burning.

You know, it's one thing I've done about this. They said that the reformers were poor carpenters. They said that because they somehow succeeded in tearing down the remedies church, but did not succeed in building a holy one.

It's not a matter. And yet about this view of the church of disregarding anything established before us. It's a matter of examining my own heart to see if the lantern of righteousness is burning.

And if men are drawn here to where the light is shining, and if there's an answer here for the needs of man, then we suggest that we look at first John three, the whole manner of love, the father's bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore, the world knows us not because of new hit, not beloved. Now we're the sons of God.

And it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, but we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself. And if he, even as he is pure, this over committed sin transgresses also the law or sin is the transgression of the law.

And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins and in him is no statement. Whosoever bideth in him, sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For this purpose, the son of God is manifested. He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him.

And he cannot sin because he's born of God. There's the practice of that baptism. In this, the children of God are manifest in the children of the devil.

Whosoever does not righteousness is not of God. Neither he that loves not his brother. I don't care how plain you are.

I don't care what church you belong to. It doesn't matter to me how many ordinances you keep. I don't care if you believe there are two or just seven, 10 or 25.

I don't care how many standards you have or hope for your life. I don't care how rich and disciplined your life is. I don't care how much money you give to the poor.

I don't care if you take your shoes off and wash your feet or if you do not. The point is, if you do not love your brother, and there is a visible and a clear evidence of that from your heart day by day, that you love all men, that you fear God, that you love the brotherhood and you honor the king. If that is not part of your experience in mind, then we are not of God.

I don't care how broad the hat is, how big the covering is, whether you have beard, mustache and all or none. If we don't have love in our hearts towards our fellow men, we are not of God. And we build these walls between us to divide us and set me up as a superior position.

And I don't need you. And I hope you realize that you don't need me. And now we're finished with each other.

And you go your way and I'll go my way. We have no evidence there that we have the love of God in our heart for our brother, unless you're willing to say that person is not a child of God. He's a child of the devil.

And because of his apostasy, I must cut myself off from him. They are going to hell. And I want you to know something that there you've taken upon yourself a position that Jesus Christ did not take.

For he said, I came not in this world to condemn the world, but the world through me might be saved. And the word condemned there means to commit a person's soul to destruction. Well, this is the message that you heard from the beginning that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was a wicked one and slew his brother.

And wherefore slew he him because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. Marvel not my brethren, the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brother.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby, see we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Listen, I don't give you one ounce of right to have your church division until you can prove to me that you'll lay down your life and die for the person that is opposing you. You don't have the least bit of indication that the move of your heart and the move of your direction is born of God. If you don't have that confirmation within your heart.

I could tell you a rather emotional story here. I know it's hard to leave a church fellowship. It was one of the saddest days of my life.

I would prefer if it never has to happen again. But I'm not saying it'll never happen again, because the same thing could happen to me once more as happened on that occasion. The God's word had taken hold of us, and we felt responsible in our congregation at Tettsville, Vermont, to teach as limited as what we understood the whole counsel of God to people who felt that they were living in a neo-orthodoxy and a neo-evangelism of the Richard D. Hines and the Billy Grahams and I can name a good many more, the C.I. Schofields and more besides.

Calvinism had won the day in that congregation, and so our sisters were disregarding the teaching of a Christian woman's veiling. They were cutting their hair, they were wearing makeup, coming to this church bunch of softball beings wearing a pair of shorts, and such things as that. And we tolerated that as long as we could and tried to work with that as long as we could and try to offer the people a better way, a holier standard.

We worked with that as hard as we could work with it. I don't say I did everything I should have done. God knows how weak we were.

So the time came when they decided they will hear this kind of teaching no more, and sent us a letter telling us that we were dismissed from all of our responsibilities. And even there, if I had the mentality that I have today, I believe I would have stayed there without the responsibilities, without the office in the church, and tried harder to work there longer. When I finally was young yet, we could have stood it, but we left.

But before I left, I wanted to make sure that there was something in my heart that was causing this problem. So I went into the study one day, and before the Lord, I asked him, I told him that if he would feel satisfied to take my life to save this congregation, I would be happy if he would do it. Now, I just started wearing plain clothing right before that time.

I never dressed plain in my younger life. And about two years prior to this, we had begun regular services in the jail there, and I enjoyed that work. I don't think there was any advantages I was ever involved in that I enjoyed more than I did in jail work.

I think it was a brother sitting here this afternoon who was president of some of those jail services already. And so it was that the last weekend that we were there, we had a jail service scheduled for that Sunday evening, and the chairman of our church council came to me and asked if I would speak for one last time at this jail. For I enjoyed that kind of work immensely, and so they asked if I would speak once more.

And I told the Lord that if on this occasion I can surrender my life for the glory of this cause, which is his and most holy, I'd be glad to do it. And I had a strange feeling that my position would be tested tonight at that jail. Now, there were murderers in that jail.

We had a woman in that jail that murdered her own husband. That jail was a crude place, and I remember how it was that evening. I had a New Testament in my pocket here under my coat, in my shirt, the same way there's one there right now.

And there stood forth to speak, and there were hardly any men there. We were right locked inside the block, and there were individual cells then going out through halls on both sides. Most of the men were down in the alleys there and were not out in the open.

There were very few men there. I just had a sneaking feeling that somebody in that jail would have to put an end to what we were doing there, preaching the gospel to these people. And I felt that tonight is going to be a time for you to prove whether you're willing to sacrifice your life for these behind you, whether you're not.

Bring this to an end. I saw a man back here that stuck his head around the corner, and I saw the look on his face, and I saw the sarcasm and the hatred and the bitterness that was in his mind as he looked at me. I thought to myself, right there is a person that would do it, if anybody would.

And about that time, he disappeared, right behind the bars there again. And I brought this New Testament out of my pocket, and there was an old barrel there, and I laid this New Testament in the barrel, and I was going to speak from that, and then I changed my mind. He told one of the men standing near me that I understood there was a deck of cards up here on this steel curb and above my head.

I asked if he'd give me that deck of cards. And so instead of preaching the Bible that evening, I took his deck of cards and gave him a gospel message on the biggest gamble of your life. In a very short time, the place was crowded with people.

Men came from all kinds of places. I don't know where they came from in that jail, but it was packed full of people that night. Before we were done, the place was filled.

With men listening to what we were saying there, I felt the blessing and presence of God upon all those who were present. When the service was dismissed, we walked out the door. This man who had signed the letter dismissing us from our responsibilities walked up to me and put his hand upon my shoulder and said, Thank you for showing us how to make the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant to our time.

But that was the very reason why they were dismissing us from the congregation. I ask you, are you willing to lay down your life for your brethren? And those attitudes, and that bitterness, and that against us, and those harsh words. And then we get on the telephone with the person who agrees with us.

You know, there are a couple of people of mine in movement, so I go on the phone with them. When we talk together, why, we can just simply slam and cut down somebody on the other side, just so clearly, just so clearly. I tell you, there is neither life in you nor love, my fine friend, here this afternoon.

If that is your attitude, there is neither life nor love in you. Forgiveness, ask forgiveness for that. Repent of that.

Call God to cleanse you from that. For whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother of need, and shut up his vows of compassion from him, how doth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but indeed in truth. And hereby we know that we are the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

For if our hearts condemn us, I am asking you, does your heart condemn you this afternoon on this point? Who is it that you know, if you follow the spirit of God, you get up out of this place, and walk to their home, and knock at the door, and get down before them, and ask forgiveness, and reconcile yourself to that brother. Who is it today? You, and don't do it. You know there is bitterness there.

And were you to follow the spirit of God, with compassion to the Lord upon your heart, you would make reconciliation for your own sins, and then call upon God to heal the disease, and the rift that is existing between you. For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

I don't want to be the mack truck on the way home this afternoon, and as the ambulance is coming, and as the life flow is pouring out of the body, to have any name in my heart, any person, any church group that I have defied, or slammed, or spoken bitterly against, to have my conscience wracked on that occasion. I want a pure heart before God in that hour. I will tell you that many a man can boil hope that God does not snatch his life away over the time of a church division.

Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments. I'll ask you something. Anyone sitting here with a church-devising spirit, is God answering your prayers? Do you have authority from God to call upon Him in prayer, and have Him answer the need of your heart? Do you know what it is to speak to God in a loving and peaceful way, with perfect trust and rest, and see Him answer according to the great counsels of His will, and meet the needs of your life, and meet the needs of those you hold before Him? Are you able to usher divine strength into the soul of someone you love through your prayer ministry? If it's one of the evidences that God has His approval upon your life, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing to His sight.

I'll ask you another question. Are brothers and sisters, people in need, people in your community, unsafe people, are they coming to you and asking you for your prayers? Are they? And this is the commandment, that we should believe in the name of the Son, on His, of His Son, excuse me, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave His commandment. He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in Him.

And hereby we know that He abides in us by the Spirit which He hath given us. Do you feel it working in your heart this afternoon? I want to just speak about four areas briefly, if I may, and then I'm finished. Concerning Anabaptism practice.

This love spoken of in this chapter will reach our hearts and find a practical working in many areas of life, to be sure. But I'm going to talk about four of them this afternoon. The first one is the covenant that we make with our brethren.

The second one is in our economic life. The third one is in our recognition of and answering the call to evangelism. And the fourth one is in our willingness to bear the cost of persecution.

I want to say just a little bit about brotherly covenant. Someone informed me this week that that's a worldly idea. The modern people nowadays are coming up with this idea of having a covenant instead of having a standard.

This is worldly talk among liberal churches. I don't know. I don't have much contact with that.

What I know, I learned from the Bible, I learned from history. I don't know what's going on really in modern church life. There was a time I could have told you Billy Graham was teaching, and I would have known what's going on with Jerry Falwell, but today I can't.

I don't follow that kind of thing. I read books less and less in the Bible, more and more, and I think that's what you're going to be doing as a result of these meetings. I would urge you to do that.

Put your newspapers aside. Put the U.S. News and World Report on the shelf. Read the Martyrs' Burial and God's Holy Word.

But I'm hearing this kind of teaching coming from some brethren, and I believe they're well-meaning. They're saying that nobody can conform to external standards, nobody can conform to rules and regulations unless they are submissive. And so one of the evidences we have, the Holy Spirit is working in the life of a person, is because we've seen them submit to this regulation that we've imposed upon them.

Because you can't submit apart from the Spirit of God, and these things are hard to submit to, and so when we see if the person is willing to submit, we will then know that they have the Spirit of God working in their hearts. That is fallacy. That is a serious error.

We are very used to working with people who have not committed themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And so we mistakenly suppose that submission to us and to our regulation or to our standard, call it what you will, and the very few things where we give external direction, we mistakenly suppose that we're looking now at a surrendered life because it has submitted itself to these few things. This is wrong.

I want you to know that many people will keep the few rules and regulations we can impose upon them simply because it very well suits them to do it. They'll drive a black car because they like black cars, buy

that black car and tell the other person, I like black cars, and say, my car is black. They don't wear a necktie.

They wouldn't know how to tie one anyhow. They'll never eat that way. They won't go to the dance and dance.

They don't know how to dance. How would you dance? I would get a joint out of that. I never knew how.

I'd be like a wallflower. I'd be worth nothing to dance. And you go down the line.

And so there are people that will submit themselves to some kind of externalism and give you the impression that they've surrendered their life to Christ simply because it fits their lifestyle to do it. But you bring to them a Bible teaching from an area of God's Word that crosses their materialistic grain, that crosses their carnal thoughts, and then see how much submission you have. And because of that error and because, brethren, I believe in sincerity, I believe in a true desire to do God's will, regulate and administrate with this false concept in mind, you have in our churches such monstrosities, such miscarriages as this.

A woman with veiled head who is the boss and the head of the home. And that kind of thing exists in about every conservative congregation that I know of. And you know it sitting here just as well as I do.

Where did that monstrosity come from? It came from someone's faulty thinking when they supposed, when I imposed some kind of external standard on somebody, I proved that they submitted. But isn't there that hardest chafing against everything holy and noble and right? Yet we are seemingly happy with the idea that somebody has submitted, on this point they're submitted. God is not impressed, nor am I. In Mark chapter 7, we have a group of people there that, you talk about submitting to a difficult situation, talk about submitting to a difficult standard, those men did it.

In the marketplace, no matter where they were, it was time to eat. They got out the basin and poured water over. This water, they could not put their hand in the basin, the water would be poured.

They washed these things. They took the factories where they called and rolled them up to their elbow and washed these things harmoniously. The cup before they drank from it, they washed it.

The plate before they ate from it, they washed it. The table before they ate from it, they washed it. And you talk about going through all those rules and regulations and submitting themselves to the ordinances they imposed upon themselves for Sabbath day observance and all of that.

And then you're going to try and tell me that if you compare yourself with the regimentation and the disparities he's had, that following some rules is an evidence of submission. I don't believe a word of it. Jesus said, you have laid aside the commandment of God and made it of none effect because of your tradition.

Now, don't be afraid of such a position as that. So I want to tell you that I do not look at that as a Bible position, but because I was able to do a couple of external things that, for that reason, I have submitted myself. For further information, just check out Simon the Sorcerer in chapter 8 of Acts and many other such places you could go.

He submitted himself to that thing which is outside, but his heart was not surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I'm going to make four statements about standards and show you something to think about on it. We did never suppose, never give our children the impression, never give our converts the impression that conformity to what we have outwardly will validate their Christian experience.

That is, it will be synonymous with our accepting their spiritual life. Just because you match this thing, that's evidence to us that you're Christian, we take you in now because of that. We've got to see further.

We've got to see more than that. Number two, we must recognize ever and forever the cultural limitations of our standards. I don't believe it's right to ask an Indian woman, whether she's from the land of India or whether she's from the land of Guatemala, who wears a dress down to her ankles, to shorten that dress in order to fit in with our culture.

A woman in India, for instance, I'm talking about continental India, who wears a far larger veil than our women wear, and covers far more of her head or her hair than our coverings cover, to ask her to stop wearing that in order to wear something else to conform to our standard is, I don't know how I could do that in light of the scriptures. I've seen such things as this already. Excuse me, I'll stay at that point.

This very thing we're talking about is the reason why the Bible is a principle-oriented text in the first place. Can we receive others who have a valid application of God's truth, of scriptural principles, who differ from us in possibly one way or another? Can we do it? I'd say if you're a child of God, you can do it. I'd say if you're not a Baptist, you can do it.

I would say if you're biblical, you can do it. You can consider for yourself how that affects communion. We talked about that a couple weeks ago.

Number three, the standard that we have, dare never cause a saint of God to violate their conscience. What am I talking about? I know of a sister who was told that before she could teach school in a certain school, she must make her coverings smaller. Can you imagine that? Telling a sister she must reduce the size of her bailing before she could teach school at a Christian day school.

I know where that school is very, very well. I'm very acquainted with it. I can tell you what happened to that girl's life.

I can tell you the frustrations that made for her when she was asked the first time to violate her conscience. And that very means, we talked about two weeks ago, that God intended to convey to her his confirmation of faith was shattered. Or her brother asked to shave.

Or another sister told that she must raise her skirt. Or another person told that they must be baptized by pouring to replace the immersion that they had. When they were perfectly satisfied and rest in heart that God had honored their attempt to be baptized.

These are some of the monstrosities that occur when people want their standard adhered to and cannot understand what the scriptures are teaching on these matters. And then number four, there's a danger of having a standard, listening closely, create a distinction between being part of the body of Christ on one hand and being part of local brotherhood on the other. I would like to ask you to think about that.

How can that be prevented? This distinction being erected allows me to call you part of the body of Christ, yes. But you do not be part of my brotherhood, no. I'm concerned about anything that we do standard-wise

that causes that breach of New Testament position.

I'd like to read from Roland Armour's book here, *Anabaptist Baptism*, just a few lines. The covenant, that's the covenant between brotherhoods, thereby became the Anabaptist tool for gathering the redeemed society as a society separate from the unregenerate world. Hubmeyer's dictum that where there is no proper baptism, there is no church is therefore revealed as no idle statement.

Rather, it was the heart of the problem, for the church of the Anabaptist had in mind could exist only as a brotherhood of regenerated believers, covenant together and mutual responsibility for living the life of the Spirit. I get this important thought, then I'll enumerate on it. The action, therefore, was more than a form, that is, the baptismal action.

It was the testimony of the very people of God, which people would give the signs of Christ only to those in whom they recognized His Spirit. One seals an envelope only when he knows the contents. Thus, the baptism, that is, gave a testimony as he witnessed to his faith through the sign of baptism, but he received a testimony.

Specifically, he received from the church the sign of their belief that they recognized the gift of the Spirit within him. That is the kind of covenant we're talking about. We presented to you a few weeks ago a paper on which there was outlined there a five-point brotherly covenant, and I happen to have a copy of it before me here this afternoon.

When I make that covenant before brothers, two things are happening. I am saying that my conscience is clear before God, and I desire your help, your spiritual guidance. I ask you to use Christ's rule, Matthew 18, in my life.

I promise to use that same rule in others. I will not go from place to place, from church member to church member, from minister to minister, and issue my complaints about the brothers. I will go to them in love and meekness, considering myself, realizing that I might be the one wrong, and try to work it out between us.

And you can discipline me if you see that my life does not come into accordance with God's word, and with the principles of our union together. Discipline me, then. I offer you that chance, that privilege, as a brother in Christ.

Not only is that person making such a testimony, but we, the brethren who receive them in, are also saying this. We looked at your life. We see God at work in you.

We see the Spirit of the Lord using you, brother or sister. We want your gift. We know that God has given you for us, and a gift to profit us all.

Join with us. We receive you. We accept you.

That's the covenant we're talking about. It's as simple as that. I would urge you to do as I did just again this morning.

I went through every baptism in the New Testament, and noticed there how the third is responsible to receive these people into the visible church through water baptism, into the brotherhood through water baptism. We're convinced that the evidences of faith were clearly exhibited before they did so. In their

cases, there's more evidence than the case of Cornelius.

For him, Peter, along with six brethren from Jerusalem, observed the work of God in their hearts. And then Peter said, Well, who can forfeit this thing? The answer was negative. No one could.

As far as economics are concerned, I want to bring this to a close. I want to say a little about the last three points. The Anabaptists made a distinction between earning a living and earning a profit.

I could read all this to you if you have further information on it, or about any of these things we've taught these last six weeks. I will be able to document for you everything we've said, and if in anything we've been in error, we do want to be corrected. So if anyone has come to us and shared with us, you might find it's hard to believe, has shared with us one doctrinal error, or one scripture we misinterpreted so far in this series, but I'm not saying it didn't happen.

But I would urge you to come to do it, because I know it takes love. Here's the distinction they made. I have a family, and I must provide for that family.

It takes a certain amount of money to do that. The Anabaptists called that making a living. And every dollar bill that I earned or accumulated that was more than necessary for my living, they called a profit.

And they said that as soon as I start accumulating a profit to my assets, I'm robbing from the poor. Because then I'm taking to myself that which others out there in the community would need. If you know anything about economics, I don't care if you're in a free world enterprise like we have in the United States, or where you are, if you know anything about economics, the law of economics dictates that when I'm making a profit, somebody else is hurting.

Unless you have a mutation of economics like sometimes has occurred in our country, where people print money without any financial security and put it in the economic system so somebody can make a profit, but it's a very false profit. But in a true economic system, when I'm making money that I do not need, and using it for myself, that is always at someone else's expense. The Anabaptists fought against that.

Yes, but I have the ability to earn money. What about that? Fine, go ahead and earn it. It's wonderful.

The first time you get sick, they'll tell you what to do with it. Just keep on earning it. But as far as your living standard is concerned, 2 Corinthians 8 and 2 Corinthians 9, and I don't have time to teach you this afternoon, the Anabaptists use those verses a lot, will tell you what to do with the actions you have.

There shall be equality in the brotherhood. I don't care what you believe about community of goods, or what you believe about free enterprise, or what you believe about individual ownership of property, but I will say this. You are not a lord of your money.

You're not a lord of your property. You are but a steward of it. And God holds you responsible for how you're going to discharge it.

And I am near right, as a Christian brother, to see someone of need, and here I sit and shut up with my vows of compassion towards him. The Bible tells me there is no love in me. It's as simple as that.

And why is it that I have some fancy kitchen cupboards in my home, and here's a sister who has no cupboards in her kitchen at all, and she has some cardboard boxes with some curtains in the front of the boxes, and some of the dishes that she has room for go in those boxes, and some are stacked from the

floor because there are no cupboards in the house. And I'm about ready to tear out the cupboards in mine and put in a set of new ones because I want a new kitchen put in here. How do I love God and you? It's just not there.

This thing gets real practical. I had a brother from a rather wealthy area of the church, called me up long ago. He said, Brother Dale, I was real happy to see you get another automobile.

Listen closely. He said there were some of us who felt that we ought to have a little better transportation than what we had, and we could not reason doing it with the scriptures realizing what you were driving. So now that you've got something else, we feel free to go ahead.

You just give that consideration to what you think it's worth. One more note about economics, and I'm finished with it. The Anabaptists put a real close connection between the Lord's Supper and economics.

We look at the Lord's Supper and we say, that's commemorating the death of Christ. But I tried to set that straight a couple weeks ago. The Anabaptists looked at it not as Christ's body that died, that was being broken in that bread, and was being shared in that wine, but this living body of Christ which is here and now on this earth.

And we are of one grain. We are of one bread. We are one together.

And if you want documentation for that, study closely 1 Corinthians chapter 10. I don't have time to show it to you. Because of equality, and oneness, and living for each other, and committing ourselves in love to one another, which the Lord's Supper teaches and symbolizes, how can I then live in a superiority above or over my brethren? Eliminates then not only social distinctions as far as economics are concerned, but also for the Anabaptists, eliminate all the distinction between what we call today ministry and laity, terms that the Anabaptists hardly knew what they meant.

As far as evangelism is concerned, I suppose you know why the Reformers did not evangelize. They felt that the Great Commission was given to the apostles only. You might think it's strange to know this, that 100 years ago in this country, the Mennonites thought the same thing before what was called the Great Awakening of the Mennonite Church.

We believe the Great Commission to be binding for all people for all times. In tying together the thought of evangelism and persecution, I'm going to give you a few thoughts. Are you ready for it? I will tell you that if you're not involved in the sharing of the gospel message with the needy hearts that are in our world, starting at Jerusalem and going on, if you're not doing that, you're not involved in it, there is one reason why you or myself, we do not have the life and light to give.

It is not a matter of must I evangelize? Must I speak to souls? Will I speak to souls? It'll be this, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. David said, I believe, therefore have I spoken, while quoting the same verse from Psalms in chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians said, we also believe and therefore speak. And so if God has committed to us a word of reconciliation, then we will be ambassadors for him and we will be sharing a message.

I covet for a reenactment of August 20, 1527, when in Augsburg, 60 brethren gathered together. Before then they placed a map of Europe. They'd come together from Austria, from Switzerland, from Germany.

They placed before them a map of Europe and took the 60 brethren present and divided them up into groups of twos and threes and sent them in a planned manner across the face of that map, preaching the gospel. And I will tell you a few things about that service. When that thing was over, those brethren were that convinced that they had the gospel truth that would save men's souls and make them wise unto salvation.

And having entered the town, sometimes it only took two or three hours of preaching and a congregation was already committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They told these brethren there must be a separation from sin. There must be a holiness of life.

They told them if anybody here needs aid, they should speak among the brethren, share with those who need here. If anybody errs, he should be admonished and disciplined according to Matthew 18. Establish a congregation, let them know they'll be back to give further ministry to the Word and move on someplace else.

And that's how these little packets of gospel truth started burning all across Europe. But that little group that met together on that occasion that I named was called the Mount Martyrs Synod because almost every one of the 60 brethren present died a martyr's death, and some of them in the most terrible ways. One of the men who was partly responsible for the formation of that Synod, name was Hans Hutt.

You may have read some strange things about Hans Hutt. He was guilty, for instance, of setting a date for Christ's return. He said Christ will come back in 1528.

He was wrong. But Hans Hutt was a Biblicist, and Hans Hutt loved his brethren, and Hans Hutt was not a divider. And so he sat down with Hans Hutt.

He sat down with Pilgrim Mark Peck, and his brethren were able to show him the error of his thinking, and they came to an agreement on eschatology, and they went away from that meeting convinced they were going to speak the same thing and become more Biblical in their understanding of that very important doctrine. And so whatever you want to say about Hans Hutt, remember he had that life in him. He had that evidence of love in his heart.

Hans Hutt was in a jail. He was in prison. How it happened, no one knows, but a fire was kindled, intentionally or not, we do not know, in the snow where he was, and he suffocated.

He died. The Catholic authorities in that land where he was could not take it, could not have it, but he died without them having pronounced judgment against him, and so they took his dead body and tied it to a chair, and brought his dead body, tied to a chair, into the courtroom and set up in front of the courtroom, and they held a trial for him. And guess what happened? Well, they found him guilty of heresy, believe it or not.

And they took his dead body, tied it to a chair, out to the center of town, and tied it to a chair, and tied it to a stake, and burned him to death. That is the kind of fervor that these people had to execute these Anabaptists. You talk about persecution, but they faced it with joy.

Fr. Simons tells us that he met a man, and talked with him, conversely and personally, who had his feet cut off for the gospel of Christ. He takes someone and burns a hole right through their cheek.

I don't know if you know anything about speech therapy. I don't know if you know anything about the mechanism God gives us for breathing, but you just think about what the implications are going to be if you have a hole burned in through your cheeks, when it comes to those two subjects in particular. Forget about trying to masticate food with holes burned through your cheeks.

Such gruesome things like that, to try to get someone persuaded to give up. I'm reminded of the words of Daniel when he talked about this beastly system that's rising that will seek to wear out the saints. And that's the only attempt to wear them out, to wear them down, to get them to give up, to weaken them so badly, to get them so exhausted through the tortures and the torments and the sleepless nights and lack of food, that they finally give up, they finally surrender.

But love kept them going. What is Anabaptism practice? Anabaptism practice is the Dirk Willems, who fleeing from his captors crosses a thin sheet of ice on a pond and rejoices and thanks God that he safely made it to the other side. And here's a cry that's flushed behind him as his pursuer, the thief-catcher, falls through.

Now what does Dirk Willems do? He does the same thing this afternoon that I, by the power of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I'm asking you to do. He turned around. You see, he had love in his heart.

The spirit of living God was burning in his breast. He turned around. He was saved.

He was alive. He was right with God. He had oil to pour.

He turned around. He could heal. He could drink.

He could forgive. He could save. He turned around and back there and pulled that drowning man out of the water and saved his life.

Now the fact that he died for it wouldn't be so bad, but they burned him to death. That wouldn't be so bad either, but it was a day like today. There was a strong wind blowing.

And since that wind was blowing so strong, the flames did not come up and encompass his body as often they were wont to do. And soon the heat, in catching a person's beard on fire or their hair, soon suffocates the person to ingest this fire and smoke into the lungs and suffocate. But the wind blew the fire away.

The wind blew the fire away. And two miles away, and I'm not giving you the name of the town this afternoon, he was heard to cry over 60 times, Oh, Jesus, Jesus, mercy, Lord, mercy, as he had to die in that condition, in that way. But his soul is under the altar and he is saved now.

And there is no heat there now, Romans, Revelation chapter seven. There is plenty of water there. There is no thirsting there.

There is no pain there, no sorrow, no death there. There are no tears there. He lived the life of Christ.

He died at the death of Christ. He shall share in the glory with Christ. His soul is safe under the altar.

I have many more things to share with you, but I cannot do it now. Would you turn to John 13, verse 34. This is a baptism in practice.

And your commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another. And while I make one or two closing comments, would you turn to Luke chapter one? Do you have it? Do you have this evidence, this strength, this power within you? Is it there to love, to serve, to covenant yourselves together, to pour oil, to be of strength, to put the hands of both sides? Is it in you, that love to stand up against the opposition? People have, yes, they have mistreated you.

I know they have. They said things that weren't right. Oh, I tell you, there's no one that said anything more wrong about you than what they said about us.

Sure, they misunderstood you. Sure, they have. But do you have enough love in your heart to pour your best into them, to pour your life into them? Let that power you have, if you have so much, let it be used to heal, to help, to revive, to save, to build.

But if you don't have it, if it isn't there, and you know it isn't there, then I want to show you how to get it before I close this afternoon. And the angel answered chapter one, verse thirty-five, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born in thee shall be called the Son of God.

I urge you, open your heart to the Holy Spirit, and let him overshadow you. Let the power of the highest come upon you, and let a holy thing be formed in you. Let the Holy Son of God be formed in you.

Let the Word of God take root in you. And then live to the glory of God, and to the benefit of all those around you. And meet the needs of mankind, wherever you go.

For this is anabaptism in practice, and this is the desire of our hearts.

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