

10 Questions About Anabaptism

by Dean Taylor

Dean Taylor's sermon explores the essence of Anabaptism, addressing key questions and emphasizing the importance of living out Jesus' teachings in today's world.

Duration: 57:16

Scripture: Psalm 67:1

Topics: "Anabaptist Theology", "Christian Sanctification"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of understanding and living out the core principles of Anabaptism, emphasizing the need to focus on Jesus Christ as the center of salvation and to be a separated, sanctified people to bring glory to God on earth. It addresses questions about preserving culture without equating it to the gospel, meshing the vision of younger and older generations, and the responsibility of being among the world's riches. The sermon encourages a clear vision rooted in biblical foundations and the empowerment of the church to fulfill its purpose in spreading God's glory.

Transcript

Read from Psalm 67. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, and let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. You may be seated. Amen.

Thank you very much, brother. And thank you all. It's been a blessing to be here, and it was a blessing the entire week that we were having, studying the Muslim impact training.

And thank you for your, just your blessing. It seems like that God has really put a, I don't know, a special anointing upon the Mennonite people right now in working with the Muslims. And as I've been networking with the different people in the different churches, I've just been extremely blessed.

Like it was said, I do send greetings from Altona Christian Community. And also, as we talk about getting back to Lesvos Island, our church community in Minnesota has released me to network with you brothers

as far as trying to minister to these Muslims that are coming to Christ. So I've also been very blessed with the hospitality and all the talks that we've had with your different ministry boards that are here.

And it's been very humbling that you've been so generous to me. And as we've just tried to be good stewards of what God is doing over there on this island, it truly is a miracle. This place is particularly fond to me.

It was my really first encounter head on with the Muslim people. If I don't know if any of you were here about 10 or 11 years ago, we had the group from Saudi Arabia. The building was much smaller then, I think.

And we had the group from Saudi Arabia. Anybody was there during that time? Okay, great. And then from there, we went over to Chris's dad's house.

And that was sort of like my first real taste of getting... And there was a scene in there in Steve's house in the basement that really made an impact on me. And it was when Brother Chris was ministering and began to share the gospel with the Muslims that were there when we asked each to share how we would get to heaven. And the look on that man's face after Chris described to him the blood of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice for our sins was something I've never been able to forget.

It was incredible. And I've been blessed with that ever since. And so now to see the leadership that your church is taking in this ministry to Muslims.

I've also been speaking with Brother Leroy, who's getting into Iraq and very excited about what's happening there. It truly is an amazing time to be an Anabaptist, to be working in this world. So I thank you for your patience, your hospitality, and your wisdom that you've been giving to me.

The work over there, it's one of those things that as you see it... I gave the analogy to someone. It's kind of like if you were going to a yard sale and you picked up a Stradivarius violin, you know, like a really nice violin. And it's not something you would just want to take home and give to your children to play with, you know, as a toy.

It's a precious thing. And so as we talk about going back over to Greece, I tremble. I truly tremble and pray for the wisdom of God that we can really take this opportunity and plant godly, disciplined churches throughout Europe from what's happening with this refugee crisis.

It's amazing. So the message I have today, it came from you. Interesting.

Well, not necessarily this particular, but Lancaster County. I won't give the exact church name. So in case now that I'm local, it's a church in Lancaster County, a Beechiamus Church in Lancaster County, youth group came together and asked some really solid questions to their ministry, referring to anabaptism.

And the ministers from this church, as we've been working together now, said, hey, we're interested in what your perspective would be. And as I read over the questions, and I read them to my minister in Minnesota, and he said, well, we need to hear that here more than they do. So I preached it out there in Minnesota.

But it really talks about some things that I think are very important on the idea of anabaptism. So it's 10 questions asked of a Beechiamus youth group to their ministers. That's the name of it.

And I'm gonna go through these 10 questions because I really think that they reveal some very important distinctions that I think that God has preserved the anabaptist people, and particularly are wanting to use us for the future of ministry coming up. So here's the question. I'll read the 10 questions, and then I'll begin to go through them here.

The first one is, what is real anabaptism? That's a loaded question. Number two, is it practical in today's world? Okay. Number three, has anabaptism created our culture? Number four, is anabaptism the gospel? All right.

Number five, where is the line between culture and gospel? Okay. Number six, how can we preserve our culture without teaching it as gospel? You see there's a, you can see these questions coming out. They're kind of very similar.

Seven, how can we be sure we are not using our anabaptist heritage as a mask? Okay, good questions. Number eight, why is there so much emphasis on conservative practices and applications in our churches rather than a focus on biblical foundations? Okay. And number nine, number nine, how can the church mesh the vision of the younger generation with the wisdom of the older generation? And number 10 asked from the youth group is, what is a godly response to the fact that we are among the 2% of the world's riches? Ouch.

Okay, so those are some good questions, and I really appreciate it. I appreciate the youth group coming and asking these questions, and it's very good. But I realize when I'm reading through these, coming from an evangelical background into anabaptism, it's loaded this paradigm through every question, through every question.

And I want to say something. I'm as much not an evangelical as I am not a Catholic. And I'll say this about anabaptism.

Anabaptism is not a denomination. You don't go to the Anabaptist church. It's not, as far as I know of, there's not anybody that calls himself the Anabaptist church or something.

But it is a hermeneutic. It's a biblical worldview. It's a biblical view of how you read the scriptures.

And in my opinion, it's as different as evangelicalism, and it's as different as Catholicism, that there are fundamentals of being an anabaptist that these questions reveal a losing of that identity. And I'm afraid that many times what we end up being in the Anabaptist world is basically Protestants with tacked on a few conservative things, non-resistance, some modest dress, but we really don't know why. We don't know why we do these things.

And so these things seem like extras or something that's not important. But what I would like to show today is that Anabaptism, I would like you to think of it as a biblical view, a worldview, and that I would say that it's quite different than Protestantism and Catholicism. And I pray that the Lord can give his mercy on this as we go through this.

So if you'll ask me, I'll just take a moment and we'll pray. If you'd like to stand, and I'll just ask the Lord to give wisdom to these good, solid questions. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for these honest questions.

And Lord, we realize these questions are in our hearts more than we want to admit. And so God, I pray that you would let this vision be clear of why you have preserved this church for so many centuries. And when we come to this generation and to this age, Lord, I know that you have a special purpose and calling for the Anabaptists to light a candle and a torch through the Muslim world and through the different places.

Father, there is a message for this generation, oh God, that I know you have preserved these people for this purpose. So God, I pray, give me wisdom when we answer these questions. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

All right. Okay, so first question, what is real Anabaptism? That's a great question. I say this without apology that I believe that Anabaptism is a focus on the very person of Jesus Christ.

It really is. And I know everyone says, well, yeah, doesn't everybody say that? Well, yes, but I've asked this question to my Protestant friends, and I've asked this question frequently. Can a person be a follower of Christ without following Christ? And in my background and the evangelical mind, the answer to that is, well, yeah, but it's nonsense.

A person cannot be a follower of Christ unless you're following Christ. And so an emphasis on Jesus Christ as the person, instead of explaining away the passages that refer to Jesus Christ, instead of explaining away his teachings, we embrace these teachings, we embrace the person of Jesus Christ, we embrace the atonement and the blood of Jesus for our salvation, and we embrace what he did to plant this church on this earth, the kingdom of God. And this is why there's a difference there.

But to quote the very earliest, probably one of the very earliest, at least, Anabaptist is Conrad Grebel. How many of you know who Conrad Grebel is? Raise your hand. Let's see.

All right, that's good. Okay. Conrad Grebel was one of the first leaders, young men leaders that were studying with Zwingli in Zurich.

And Conrad Grebel wrote a letter to his scholar friend named Vadian. And Vadian, he was starting to be with the movement. He started getting suspicious.

Why are you guys pulling away from the Protestants? What's going on? And he wrote in this last letter to Vadian two things that he says that he thinks that distinguish Anabaptism. And I think these two things are profound, and I'm going to give them to you. The first thing that were in the letter, there's two things that I noted in the letter that he said to him.

And the first thing that really stood out to me was this, explaining what's the difference. What's the difference with you young zealots that are not continuing to go on with the Protestant state church? Why? And he said this, I believe the word of God without a complicated interpretation. And out of that, I speak.

It's simple and profound, but so profound. I believe the word of God without a complicated interpretation. And out of that, I speak.

I don't really need to dig into the 13 tenths of the Greek to do something or whatever. It's really very easy to understand. So I've kind of made the joke before, you know, if you had an Anabaptist study Bible, you know, if it says love your enemies, you'd have a line and underneath it, it would say what this really means is to you should love your enemies.

If there's something about the permanence of marriage, it's the permanence of marriage. It's about the head covering. It's about the head covering.

The Bible is easy to understand. And out of that, I speak. And I think that this has been a profound difference.

With Anabaptist understanding of coming to the Bible from the very beginning, I remember when I was a soldier and I was struggling with these thoughts and I began to read some Mennonite literature and I was an armor in the army. And that means I was the man who was taking care of machine guns and that type of a thing. That's one of my jobs.

And the Persian Gulf War was just warming up. And one of my jobs was to install this grenade launcher onto the M16 machine gun. And as I began to do this, I was reading these Mennonite books recently.

And as I remember literally holding that M203 grenade launcher and attaching it to the M16 and then asking the question, what would Jesus do? But you know what I did? Oh, it's so confusing. Oh, it's so confusing. And I'm ashamed to say that I put that on there.

So somewhere there's four M16s with M203 grenade launchers unless they're retired by now. But it's not confusing. We pretend to say that it's confusing so that we don't face the obvious words of Jesus Christ.

I believe that one of the hallmarks of Anabaptism is simply that, taking the Bible for what the Bible says. And I believe it's a strong point. I believe any radical movement that's been turned the world upside down throughout the time has simply been a group of men and women who have just taken the word of God and said, let's do it.

And it's changed the world. The second thing is also profound. He also said in the letter, and this is the way he ended the letter.

And this is simple, but it's profound. The words of our Lord are meant to be put into practice. Well, the words of our Lord are meant to be put into practice.

That may seem simple to you, but do you realize I come from a background that when I began to read the New Testament and read the words of Jesus and just realized he meant what he said, I asked the question, what if Jesus really meant every word he said? Because if he meant every word he said, everything in my life has got to change. The day I read to Tanya in our bed and I said, honey, I need to read this to you. And I began to read to her from the Sermon on the Mount.

And I said, what do you do with that? She said, it sounds pretty simple. I said, I know it's very simple, but we're in the army. So what do you do with these things? I looked through the Sermon on the Mount and as I noticed it, if you look through the Sermon on the Mount and I challenge you to do this sometime, take Matthew five, six, and seven and everything that Jesus commanded us to do in your mind, don't really do it, in your mind, create for yourself a church that goes out of its way to do everything Jesus said exactly opposite.

So in other words, if he has this clear teaching on divorce and remarriage, you're gonna have, let's say, I don't know, divorce, remarriage, counseling and things in the church and have maybe even dating things where people can get remarried in the church. If he's gonna have oaths, you would reject that. If he's gonna have non-resistance, I don't know, you'd have something like Christians in the military or maybe

even a chaplain.

These different things that you go through that his radical views of sharing is the different things on Phariseeism and all these different things on pride. If you did for that and create a church that's exactly opposite, you end up with a modern American church. And as I realized that in the army, I was like, this is a problem.

This is a problem. The other thing that I say there's a difference between, a major difference in the worldview, and this is an important one. It's the concept of the church.

The church. And I don't know if y'all have ever read Little's book wrote in the 1960s or something called *The Anabaptist View of the Church*. And he mentions that in the Reformation, some of the biggest difference was not so much in its theology, but in the idea of the church.

And here's the way I can explain the difference. Let's go to Burger King. Let's go like, especially you ever seen those new ones that are right off the turnpike coming up here.

They're real fancy. It's part of that turnpike thing, and it's got a fancy roof and everything in there. And we go into the turnpike, Burger King, and we sit in there and we're having our hamburger that we paid what, like \$7 for or something.

And you're there and you're looking around and everybody's in there and it's nice. It's stone building. It's got a high roof and it kind of feels like church.

You know, there you all are. Everybody's there and you're visiting. But here's the difference.

It's a profound difference. The gathering is an accident. The gathering is an accident at Burger King, right? I mean, next week, there's no real thought that I'm going to go there and that guy's going to be there at Burger King.

He's going to be gone. He's going this way. He's going that.

But then let's say we're sitting there at Burger King and this tour bus comes in and everybody comes in. You know, they've got all matching t-shirts and they come in and they order a hamburger and they come together and they leave together. And you see that they're on purpose and they're going somewhere.

And I believe that's the Anabaptist view of the church. It is a purposeful gathering of the saints, a purposeful gathering of the saints as an embassy of what heaven is to be like to show the whole earth, as John Dioda always said, what the whole earth should be if they would follow the words of Jesus, if they'd follow the king. So the concept of the church, a called out, separated people to manifest these teachings of Jesus Christ to the whole earth on purpose is a big difference in an Anabaptist view and the view of the church.

And this is important. Turn your Bibles, Ezekiel 36. Now, we strongly believe as Anabaptists that every single word of God is true.

Every jot, every tittle, every single word of God is true. We strongly believe that we cannot earn our salvations by works. We cannot.

That we believe the blood of Jesus Christ saves us from our sins. I'm an evangelist preacher. I like preaching revival I'm very strong on the need for that.

But there is a bigger purpose in the concept of what Jesus came to the earth that our Anabaptist view represents. It's more than just getting saved and waiting to go to heaven. And this is the difference.

Our focus is upon Jesus Christ and what he came to do, not on just getting saved. Do not in the slightest bit belittle getting saved. But the purpose of those getting saved is to be what Christ has told us to be on this earth.

And here, look at this chapter 36 of Ezekiel. It's very profound. And if you get a hold of this chapter this morning, this very chapter will change your view.

Could very much change your view of the purpose of what God is doing and wanted to do on this earth. It's very profound. OK, so in Ezekiel chapter 36, verse, oh, let's say 19.

We see it seems to be like a prophetic time of coming into the time of the New Testament. We're going to see salvation coming in this chapter. But then I want you to notice some of the root fundamental purposes of the salvation that God gives us.

Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 19. And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries according to their way and according to their doing. I judged them.

And when they entered into the heathen, everywhere they went, they profaned my holy name when they said to them, these are the people of the Lord and are gone forth out of his land. But I watch now verse 21. But I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel has profaned among the heathen, whether they went everywhere they went.

Therefore, saying to the house of Israel, now check this point out. Therefore, say into the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, what he's about to do, he's about to bring in salvation. But watch the purpose, the essential purpose.

Tell them this. I do not this. I don't do this for your sakes, oh, house of Israel.

But for my holy namesake, which you have profaned among the heathen, everywhere you went. Now listen to this. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them.

And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. Do you catch that point? He's doing this salvation because of his holy name. It's all about him.

And this holy name is fulfilled when he takes a people, gathers a people, and sanctifies them in a world that's going to hell and going to all those things. And he takes a people and sanctifies that people in the midst of an evil world and all the world will know that God has done this. This is an important point.

This is the cause point. It says, for I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, verse 24, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

I'll cleanse you. I'll take your heart of stone out and I'll put in a heart of flesh. It's a beautiful concept.

It's a beautiful idea of what he's wanting to do here. So as we look at this idea of this people, let me take you to a few more scriptures. Turn your Bibles now to Isaiah chapter 9. Our churches should not be an accident.

They should not just be a place where we gather together and get encouraged. They're not even a place where we just gather and hear the word of God and get encouraged. It's a place that is to be gathered by God, a disciplined, separated people of God that glorifies him representing his kingdom as an embassy.

You get it? Like a little embassy of heaven on this earth. Listen to this importance of the way Jesus put it in. I'm going to take you to the gospel, but first the prophecy of it in Isaiah chapter 9. Let's pick it up here.

Verse 1. Nevertheless, the dimness... Isaiah chapter 9, verse 1. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan and Galilee of the nations. Then verse 2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shine.

Jump down to verse 5 for time. For every battle of the warrior, every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and their garments, or rather their uniforms, are rolled in blood. But their garments, this, shall be with burning and fuel for fire.

All these wars and all their uniforms and all these things is rolled in blood. It's noise, and we're going to use it for fire for this reason. For unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Look at verse 7. Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Hallelujah. Amen. Now take that.

This is what was prophesied. We obviously know this child was born. This prophecy was fulfilled.

And then let's see how it's the writers of the, the writers of the Gospels wanted us to make extra careful that we understood that it's coming. Look at Matthew chapter 4. Matthew chapter 4. In Matthew chapter 4, as he begins to talk about this, look at verse, down to verse 12. Now Matthew 4 verse 12.

Now when Jesus has heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast of the borders of Zebulun and of Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and then which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up. From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In the beginning, this kingdom was a garden.

It was prophesied through all the Old Testament, the prophets, it'll come, the day will come. And the day will eventually come from the rising of the sun till it's going down, the whole earth will be praising and giving glory to God. But in this interim time, this kingdom has begun as seeds of this kingdom, as little

embassies of what will be to come.

So in the point that, let's say if we could imagine on judgment day, it should be that on judgment day, when they finally see the kingdoms of the whole earth and the whole world is proclaiming him, on judgment day, they should be able to say, ah, so that's what they were talking about. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, in my background, we said that the words of Jesus were for a different age, a different millennium.

It's for the millennial reign. It's for a heaven. Honestly, I ask the question, how hard is it to love your enemies in heaven? These teachings, yes, some of them are hard.

These teachings are meant for us today. They are the cure for humanity. And this is the point.

We have the cure for humanity. We have the cure for humanity. It's Jesus, entirely Jesus.

His salvation, his blood, his words and his ways is the way of salvation. It's a cure for humanity. All right, so that's relented baptism, I hope.

May God give us grace to live up to it. The next question, well, is it practical in today's world? It's a good question. If what I just described to you, why would it not be practical in today's world? But if your understanding, it's like my understanding was when I was an evangelical.

If your understanding is that, okay, the whole purpose of the Bible, the whole purpose of life is to get saved and then go to heaven, then really, why are we going through all this trouble? I mean, it's, you know, I mean, we're kind of going through an awful lot of excess. Isn't this thing kind of extra that we're doing? And that's why that's that wrong mindset and it's not anabaptism and it's not Bible is the whole point. So let's look at it.

I believe that it's never been more. It's never been more pertinent. You know, when I was, I was member setting in a refugee tent just a few months ago on the island of Lesbos and some people had just come out from Syria and I began to show them the teachings of Jesus.

And after ISIS had gone through many different wars and different things and all the chaos and everything that ensued, I was explaining the teachings of Jesus and talking about this answer for humanity. And I remember this young Syrian Muslim lady and she just started crying. This older man who was there listening to it said, see, I knew there was a better way.

If there's ever a time, if there is ever a time that I believe that the words of Jesus are pertinent, that this anabaptism is pertinent for today, it's today. When I watched in the refugee camps that the godly young ladies with their modest dress and their covered heads and as they were there, that the refugees paid attention to that and said, okay, there's something different here. And this was cracking.

I had one refugee actually write a letter and says that this very godly, if I could quote him exactly, the godly demeanor of inside and outside holiness of the Mennonite sisters in Lesbos is cracking the prejudice that the Muslims have to American Christianity. He wrote me a letter and said that. The very thing that some girls are quickly wanting to give away is the very thing that's now the key to cracking this iron curtain of the Muslim world.

Oh, if there's ever been a time, it's now. There's never been a more time. Don't lose these things.

These are the things, these are the answers, these are the answers that we need today. These are the answers. All right, I'm gonna have to go a little faster here.

The point in it, even in the psalm that we just read there, the mission psalm that we read this right before I began preaching, the concept is that we are co-laborers with God. You see, from the very beginning, God blessed Abraham that through Abraham, the whole world would be blessed. When I studied with the refugees, there was two themes that I would take through.

There was a theme of the blood atonement, that we need this blood atonement for the salvation of our sins, and I would take the refugees through this blood atonement and the teaching from all the way from Adam all the way to Christ. But there was also the concept of the people of God. And this is there just as much.

Through Abraham, he had a people that through those people, he would bless the whole earth. When we get to the kingdoms of this whole period, and then when we get to the church, and we get to Jesus Christ establishing these teachings in this, and he created the church, he wanted to gather a people that through those people, you would bring blessings to the whole earth. And this is a theme that I also bring so that the refugees aren't just wanting to be saved and set their independent, but that God created the church.

And when I sanctify you before their eyes, they will know that I am the Lord. And we are co-laborers with God. We're not just to sit and be thankful.

We're to take this and to bring this salvation, to bring this joy of God throughout our whole earth. All right, real quick, verse number three. Has Anabaptism created our culture? Well, I hope so.

I think it's created perhaps your father's cultures. When you, some of the things that the, when you read through the martyr's mirror, when you read through the different ancient writings, I mean, it was an unstoppable force. I'm afraid now today with our modern media and the different things that attacks us from every angle, I'm beginning to wonder who is creating our culture for this generation.

There's an interesting quote by G.K. Chesterton. He was, he said that he was speaking of the creed. This is from a Catholic view of the creed.

He said, I didn't make the creed. The creed is making me. What he meant by that, the creed was forming him.

And so I'm afraid I asked you what exactly is forming us? But one thing can I say about these forefathers that some people feel, ah, you know, you hear so much about this and that. And I remember one time I was speaking at a place and I was speaking about all these, I was focusing on the mission of the early Anabaptists instead of just the martyrs. And this young man came to me and said, hey, this is great.

I never knew we did anything but actually died good. So much emphasis on the martyrdom that he was this emphasis on preaching and what they did to get martyred really struck him. But here's one thing I wanna say, if I can give a plug for those saints that have gone before us.

Turn your Bibles real quick to Matthew, to Mark 20, Mark chapter 12. You know, you hear about, in your history, about Menno Simons, about Conrad Grebel, of Felix Mons, Peter Ritteman, all these types of guys. And as you look at these people, you know, it seems this or that.

But here's the point that I wanna say. These men and women are alive. They're still alive.

And we can't just discount them so quickly. And so as we look at this, we look at chapter 12, verse 26. And touching the dead, that they rise.

Chapter 12, Mark chapter 12, verse 26. This is about the resurrection of the dead. Have you not read in the book of Moses how in the bush God spoken to him saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

He's not God of the dead, but God of the living. You therefore do greatly err. And Grant, I don't wanna in any light try to glorify them in any way that's not suited.

But the Hebrews does say that they are like a, how's it worded? A great army, cloud of witnesses rushing and encouraging us on. These saints before us are alive. They've believed the gospel and they've followed the gospel and they've keep going in the gospel.

And so has Anabaptism created our culture? I'm afraid that sometimes we don't understand it enough to even get there. So number four, is Anabaptism gospel? All right, now we're getting serious. Okay, it's a loaded question and a good question.

But what the question is implying is that, okay, all this hangups that you're making us do and all these types of things, is that the gospel? I mean, let's get on with the gospel and not be, that's what's implied in those questions, right? And my answer to that is, again, I want to come back on a lot of these questions are a little bit related. If we go back to remembering the purpose of why the gospel is being presented to the earth, you realize that our salvation is a person, not just a creed. It's not just believing in the facts of a creed.

Our salvation is the very person of Jesus Christ. Everything that he is, everything that he taught, everything that he represented, everything that he commanded is what we hold on to. And that's what all of our salvation is, is Jesus.

Granted, we'll turn to John chapter three, to the famous salvation passage there. John 3, 16. You know the story, of course.

Nicodemus is coming to Jesus, and he's coming to him to ask some questions in the night. And as he asked him these questions, there's one of the most quoted. I can't talk and turn at the same time, so, okay.

But watch this now, because sometimes we miss this. John chapter three, verse three. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say to you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

So make no mistake. You're not gonna get it unless you're born again. Your carnal mind is not gonna come to this.

You can't just be a good person and work your way to salvation. But do please understand this. His whole point is, unless you're born again, you're not gonna understand the kingdom.

You're not gonna understand the kingdom. You're not gonna see. You're not gonna understand the kingdom.

So the purpose of getting born again is to present to the, that the whole earth would come to salvation. That this would be the kingdom would be presented. So am I saying that, you know, buttoned up collars is the gospel? Of course not.

But the concept of being a separated people, when I sanctify them before their eyes, they will glorify me. This is about what Jesus is trying to do on this earth. All right, keep going here.

All right, well then where is the line between culture and the gospel? Culture and the gospel. And again, it's kind of related to the other one. You know, James chapter two, verse 18, you know that passage.

James chapter two, verse 18, talks about faith and works. And in this faith and works passage, yeah, verse 18, yeah, a man may say thou hath faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works and I will show you my faith by my works.

Again, we can't do works to earn our salvation. But if salvation is the totality of the person becoming Christ within us, then it comes out, it has to come out. We can't do a work to earn our salvation.

But if we're saved, generally God inside of us, it causes us to live this way. Interesting, in the Sleighthime Confession, in the cover letter to the Sleighthime Confession. First of all, let me just, when was Sleighthime Confession written? I'll ask you.

Anybody know? Thank you, 1527. All right, they're throwing my, okay. In 1527, the Sleighthime Confession was written.

On the cover letter, it mentions this phrase, walking in the resurrection. I love that little phrase. It means that we don't just have a belief about the resurrection, we walk in the resurrection.

It's permeated us, it's about our life. It's about who we are. And so again, this concept that we have here of giving this life to the world is something I think that is important.

Okay, how can we preserve, number six, how can we preserve culture without teaching it as gospel? Okay, there is a serious danger, and it would be naive to just to say that there's not a serious danger about when you have a very strong culture, to that culture then be replaced, a saving faith of Jesus Christ. I think it would be ignorant to pretend like that doesn't exist in us. In any area where there's a strong culture, there's a tendency for that just to continue on without the Holy Spirit.

But if it's an honest question, how can we preserve culture without teaching it as gospel? The first thing I would say is understand it. Understand it, number one, and appreciate it. But understanding what even this, this is why I'm talking about these very essences of what we believe, is to understand it.

Habakkuk 2.2 says, have a vision, write it on the wall that those who run may run by it. We have to have a clear understanding of what we're trying to do and what we're wanting to be on this earth to be able to propagate this and to teach it. So appreciate your culture, understand your culture, evaluate it and engage it, and then make it applicable for this next generation.

Make it applicable. All right, how can we be sure, number seven, we are not using our Anabaptist heritage as a mask? How can we be sure we're not using our Anabaptist as a mask? It's a good question. I remember an early quote by Michael Sattler.

Michael Sattler had this very profound statement and he used this expression, beware the scribes of the Pharisees, in a very interesting way. Michael Sattler explained this when the very earliest of the Anabaptists and trying to find their way between the growing evangelical church there in Zurich and where the Anabaptists were coming out and where the Catholics are. And he said, beware the scribes and the Pharisees.

He said, and this is the way I'm going to explain it. He said, the Pharisees is like where we came out of the Catholic church. We tried to earn our salvation by our works, by going through pilgrimage, through doing different things.

This was, I would analogy to the Pharisees. He says, but we also must beware the scribes. The scribes write beautiful sermons.

They preach beautiful things, but their lives are not changed. He said, we must beware both the scribes and the Pharisees. It's Christ within us he talked about, a reality of who we are and where we're going.

And this is the focus, the focus upon these things. All right, number eight. Almost coming closer to the end here.

Number eight. All right, why is there so much emphasis on conservative practices and applications in our churches rather than a focus on biblical foundations? Okay, you can see the, it's good questions. They're coming out and you can see what's underneath that question.

And again, I do think number one, there does need to be a, there does need to be more emphasis on Christ and the teachings of Jesus. There needs to be this. And the more we are saturated with the life of Jesus Christ, his word, his dream, his passion, the way he think, the way he acted, the way he was, the more we can emulate our Lord Jesus Christ, the more things are gonna make sense and they're gonna go forward.

But on the other hand, again, if you understand that we are called to be a separated people, to give glory to God, it changes your view a little bit. It should change it a lot. I remember listening to a sermon by George Brunk II.

George Brunk II preaching at Eastern Mennonite College 1950, a recording, as I was doing my study on the Brunk Revivals here in Lancaster. Anybody here there for those? Okay, amen. I did a big study on the Brunk Revivals here in Lancaster a few years ago and I was listening to many of the old recordings and I ran across this one the year before the Brunk Revival, it's 1950, it's Eastern Mennonite College and he's preaching to student body and they're complaining about all this stuff about standards of dress and everything.

And he says, I know all of you are thinking, why are we always on the clothes line? Meaning the line of the clothes and George Brunk with a Southern Virginia accent saying that, but he said something very interesting there in 1950, Eastern Mennonite College. He said, I have a prediction. If there's ever a time that the Mennonite Church lose its distinctive dress, I have a prediction.

That we will become the most ungodly denomination in America, that's my prediction. George Brunk, 1950, Eastern Mennonite College. Turn your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 6. I'm gonna show you something that you thought I tricked you and stuck this in the New Testament because you thought it was in the Old Testament.

But let's look at 2 Corinthians chapter six. This concept of being the sanctified people of God is a New Testament, early church concept that we must understand this view of the church and it's essential for anabaptism. And please look at this, 2 Corinthians chapter six.

After going through this beautiful thing about being ambassadors of this embassy of the kingdom of God, chapter five is just incredibly filled with this concept of being an ambassador of an embassy, get it? We're an embassy. If you're an embassy in a different country, the whole country is living this way, but you're living this little American country in England or Saudi Arabia. We're a heavenly embassy setting in this world and we're ambassadors of that.

And then in that context of chapter five, he takes us now to this words in chapter six. Now, please pay attention, all right? I'm almost done. This is one of the most important points, young people.

I want you to gather, all of us, listen to this. Okay, he begins to say verse 11. O Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter six, verse 11.

O you Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you. Our heart is enlarged. You are not straightened.

That straightened word there is like constricted. You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your own bowels or your own passion. In other words, you are not being constricted by the words that I'm telling you.

It's your passions that are binding you up, not my words. Now for a recompense, verse 13, in the same, I speak unto you as children, be enlarged, open your mind. And here's what he says when he wants you to open your mind.

So if you're here and you're struggling, like these honest questions were, I'm struggling. I feel so constricted. I feel so, you know, I just, all this stuff that you're putting on me, I don't like it.

Open your mind, he says. And he says this, verse 14. Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? And what part has he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them, church, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Because of this, wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things, promise now coming, and I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Then he goes on, one verse, the next chapter. Having therefore these promises, what promise? That if you come out from the world, be separate unto God, if you come like that, having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, note that, flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. The idea of being a separated people, sanctified to give glory to God on this earth is a New Testament, New Covenant principle that you can't live, you can't leave.

And so let me ask you, okay, so say in your lines or not where my lines are, do you have lines? Is the concept of separation in your heart, because it's a New Testament covenant based with a promise on it that if you do this, he will be a father to you. So the concept of being a disciplined, gathered, separated people from God, not aloof, it's another whole sermon, not aloof, we're supposed to be, we're not a village

in the valley, we're supposed to be a city on the hill, but yet separate from the world, and this concept of cleaning both flesh and spirit is part of it. So this is not a add-on, it's not a extra thing, it's based upon these promises that God is giving us to be that little embassy and be ambassadors of that embassy of heaven.

All right, almost done. Number nine, how can the church mesh the vision of the younger generation with the wisdom of the older generation? Great, great question. We'll look at real quick to Acts chapter two.

I love this passage, Acts chapter two, verse 14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, You men of Judea and all that dwell in Jerusalem, be ye known unto you and hearken unto my words. For these are not drunken as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. If the vision is clear, the purpose is like handing off the baton.

And hey, I just became a grandpa yesterday, praise God, Hudson Taylor, that's his name. Praise God, just yesterday, brand new baby, I wanted to be back in time. But okay, but as I'm now a grandpa, and I'm handing off the baton, if the vision is clear, I may dream about something, but I just don't have the energy to get to do it.

But the young men have vision to put it into practice. But if our vision is not clear, and we're just trying to live our life and yet tack on some conservative values, but we're not understanding this idea of God being a sanctified people and being co-laborers with God to spread this to the whole earth, then it's just one after another handing off that vision, one after another handing off that vision. And I think the more clear we have our vision, the more easier it will be for us to hand the generation the generation baton.

And the next one, I conveniently don't have time as much, is what is the godly response to the fact that we are among the 2% of the world's riches. Lancaster County, maybe that's even different. And I think there is a great responsibility in this, a great responsibility.

And the more we understand that vision, you don't tend to want to just give your money to something that's just, you know. But if we imbibe this idea, understand why we exist on this earth, we'll see the successful businessmen side by side with successful missionaries, side by side with those that are good pastors at home, side by side with the disciples and the church planners, and those things all about the vision of God of being the kingdom of God on earth. So those are great 10 questions.

Great 10 questions. So I want to encourage you, I want to encourage all of you, as I believe there is a mighty work that's opening up that you yourself, you yourself, this very church, is taking a leadership role in what I'm seeing and the refugee crisis amongst the Muslims. I see the Beachyamas people in particular.

I'm just seeing everywhere when it comes to the, this new Muslim work. And so I want to encourage you in that. I want to bless you in that.

But I'm telling you, as we go into these fields, we have some answers. And even the evangelicals now are beginning to see maybe we've done some things wrong. And I don't want you to lose these things.

I want to strengthen these things which remain that are about to die. And because I believe these answers are in the scriptures and they're important. So I'm gonna close with prayer.

Let's stand and I'm gonna hand it back over. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for your word, for your kingdom, for your church, for your salvation, for your promises, for your ways, for your cure for humanity. And dear God, I pray now, Lord, that you would put within us and empower us, Lord God, strengthen us and let us understand all of this is all for your glory, to be co-laborers with you, to spread that glory around the earth so that more and more can give glory to the name of Jesus Christ.

We don't want to lift up a man or a name or any kind of denomination. We want to lift you up. So we thank you, Father.

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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