

Anabaptist History (Day 2) the Early Church

by Dean Taylor

The sermon explores the importance of Kingdom Theology in understanding Jesus' teachings and the early church's mission and purpose.

Duration: 1:19:31

Scripture: Matthew 5:6

Topics: "Kingdom Theology", "Early Church"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings and practices of the early church, emphasizing Kingdom Theology as a central concept dear to early Christianity. The importance of embracing the Kingdom understanding, as highlighted by Jesus' teachings on the kingdom, is discussed, urging believers to align their worldview with this paradigm shift. The sermon explores the radical nature of the early church's commitment to Kingdom Theology, impacting their lifestyle, relationships, and faith in Jesus Christ. It also touches on the early church's views on separation from the world, modesty of dress, non-resistance, sharing possessions, and the controversial topic of infant baptism.

Transcript

All right, so now we're going to talk about the early church. To begin our discussion about the early church, one of the things that I have to talk about is Kingdom Theology. Now, you've probably heard that a lot around here.

You see a whole class dedicated to Kingdom Theology. You've probably seen it, I'm sure, in Brother Steve Brubaker's class with Anabaptist worldview. But the concept of the Kingdom understanding or Kingdom Theology is very dear to early Christianity.

It was to the people through the Dark Ages, the radical churches, and it is to Anabaptists today. And I think it should be to you today. And do you know why I think it's so important? Going back to my paradigm, because it was important to who? To Jesus.

There was nothing he talked about more than the kingdom, nothing. And I guarantee you, if you let these seeds of this concept of a kingdom come out, it will change your entire worldview, guaranteed. I remember even years ago, David Rousseau wrote a book, *The Kingdom Turned the World Upside Down*, and I was actually a little perturbed that he was harping on the kingdom thing too much.

And I remember reading the book saying, he's a great, he's like a father figure to me. So I said, I took his challenge in the book and I said, okay, and I reread the New Testament with that theme in my mind. And suddenly I did realize just how important it is to Jesus, which makes it very important to us.

The concept of the idea of God wanting to bring about a kingdom that glorifies his name here on earth. He talked about, if you stacked up the passages that Jesus spoke of the kingdom, it's more than he spoke on faith and heaven and hell all combined, Jesus' words on the kingdom. And here's the thing, even if today you get an understanding of kingdom theology, I encourage you to reread Matthew 13.

And in Matthew 13, in each one of those parables that Jesus gives us, he talks about the kingdom being something very small, like a mustard seed, a pinch of leaven, a little bitty coin that grows interest, but each thing is something that grows. And when you begin to understand that Jesus came to do something completely incredible on this earth, that kingdom theology will begin to grow as Jesus gives us that analogy in 13, Matthew 13. So what is kingdom theology? I have a definition on your handout.

I use David Brousseau's definition and he says this, it defines kingdom Christians as quote, Christians who focus on the lifestyle teachings of Jesus, recognizing that God's kingdom is in no way connected to the kingdoms of this world. Such Christians realize that the kingdom of God is a present reality. And they recognize that the essence of Christianity is an obedient, love, faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

That passage there, or that section there, Christian is an obedient, love, faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Although living in this world, kingdom Christians live as citizens of Christ's kingdom. And I believe, and we're going to see this paradigm and this frame, I like to use that word frame, if you want to mean by that, how we frame our arguments, how we frame the way we look at things.

I believe losing this frame of the teachings of Christ and the emphasis, what Jesus's emphasis is what has hurt us through every century. And it's hurting us today, losing this. So kingdom.

So I'm going to give a little bit background from the scriptures. The scriptures. But first there was Caesar Augustus.

And in Luke chapter two, Luke gives us this little brief word that says, Luke chapter two, in those days, chapter two, verse one, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire world. He gives us the idea that Caesar Augustus was in power. Now it's interesting that Caesar Augustus, the whole name Augustus means the venerated one or the worshipable one.

It was a title given to him that he was one that was thought to be known as God. And the language that they use to discuss Caesar, when you hear that language, it makes the words that Jesus gave really come out in a strangely even political way. Political, not like we would think in today political, but political of a kingdom of God, indifferent to the kingdom of this world.

Listen to something that was written in nine BC, right before the coming of Jesus. This is speaking of Caesar Augustus. The most divine Caesar, we should consider equal to the beginning of all things.

For when everything was falling into disorder and tending toward desolation, he restored it once more and gave to the whole world, a new aura. Caesar, the common good, fortune of all, the beginning of life and vitality. All the cities unanimously adopt the birthday of the divine Caesar as the new beginning of the year.

Whereas Providence, which has regulated our whole existence, has brought our life to the climax of perfection and giving to us the emperor Augustus, whom Providence filled with strength for the welfare of men. And who being sent to us and our descendants as savior, who put an end to war and has set all things in order. And whereas having become God manifest, having become God manifest, Caesar has fulfilled all the hopes of earlier times in surpassing all the benefactors who preceded him.

And whereas finally the birthday of the God Augustus has been for the whole world, the beginning of the good news, the Evangeline. Concerning him, therefore let a new era begin from his birth. 9 BC.

Now with that kind of language circulating around, imagine what it meant to say, Jesus is Lord. Jesus is our Caesar. Jesus is, it's his way and it's his kingdom that we are here to establish.

Suddenly that becomes a very radical statement, a very politically radical statement. And when they said that, you can understand why they got themselves into so much trouble. But here I'm going to go into some of the questions you have in your handout there.

I'm going to look at some, just touch on some of the scriptures that talk about, well, where did this whole kingdom idea come from? If you have your Bible, if you don't, you can hear me. If you have your Bible, I'd like to open up to Isaiah. A lot of Jesus' teachings and the teachings of the kingdom pour out from this beautiful prophecies of Isaiah.

Interestingly enough, the Dead Sea Scrolls, you've heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, these ancient documents that they found of the Old Testament, which kind of gave a lot of credence to the antiquity or the oldness of the Old Testament. They found all kinds of scraps. You know, as a matter of fact, years ago for a wedding anniversary, we stood in this huge line to see a piece of the Dead Sea Scroll in Dallas once.

And we got there, I paid a lot of money and we waited in line. And all of a sudden I got to there and there was this little thing that, to me, looked like beef jerky. But they said that was a piece of the Dead Sea Scroll.

And they even had the interpretation and that was what they called it. But of all the books that they've been able to find, Isaiah, interestingly enough, is a book that they have almost the whole thing of. And they say there's a museum in Jerusalem that's like a circle.

And you go in there and they have the whole scrolls of Isaiah right there. And I think it's a testimony of saying your Messiah has come and it's Jesus Christ. But if you look at Isaiah chapter 1, and I'm just kind of touching on some of these prophecies.

If you look at Isaiah chapter 1, you get some of this anticipation of what God was wanting to do with his son, Jesus Christ. Beginning at chapter 1, beginning at verse 10. Hear the words of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom.

Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of the fed beast. And I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats.

When ye come and appear before me, who hath required to set your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination to me. The new moons and the Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with.

I can't stand it. It is iniquity. Even your solemn meetings, your new moons and your appointed feast, my soul hates.

They are a trouble unto me. I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you.

Yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Then he says, wash you, make you clean.

Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well.

Seek judgment. Relieve the oppressed. Judge the fatherless.

Plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. It begins to see this anticipation of what God was wanting to do. It goes on and on.

I'm just having to skip through here. Look at chapter two now. And it shall come to pass, verse two, in that last days at the mountain of the Lord's house, shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it.

People are going to come from everywhere, Gentiles and everything. And in many people shall go and say, come ye and let us come into the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. And he will teach us his ways.

On this mountain, they will come and they will teach us his ways. And he will walk in the paths for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And, you know, interesting, Jonathan Edwards frequently spoke of this passage as the end time revivals that he was thinking was coming during the great awakening.

He didn't usually quote the next passage, though, which goes with it. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore. That's what it's like to be a kingdom person in the new covenant.

OK, go on again. I'm just skipping through here. Chapter nine, Isaiah, continuing with this anticipation.

And this one we pick up in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as it 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 ways of the sea beyond Jordan and Galilee of the nations. And then here it is.

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 shined. Thou hath multiplied the nation and not increased the joy, the joy before thee according to the joy and harvest.

And as men rejoice when they divide the oil for, excuse me, for thou hath broken the yoke of his burden and the staff off his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. And look at verse five for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and their garments rolled in blood. But this their garments shall be with burning and fuel for fire.

Why? For unto us, a child is born unto us. A son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder. He has a government and his name shall be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace.

Listen to this first and 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 justice and with justice, fairness from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Wow. We get into Isaiah 60 and we, and we see the spirit of 61. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings into the meek and has sent me.

And he goes on to the passage that we remember from Jesus. And so this idea of that would come the early Christians. And the way I read Jesus Christ, it came, it came.

And the increase of that government, there was no end. And this paradigm, this understanding that God was wanting to do something like this among the people so that he would receive glory is a paradigm that you cannot lose. Because I believe it was obviously the most important thing or the most talked about thing that Jesus spoke up to lose.

This concept is to completely change the way you understand the scriptures from the beginning to the end. Now you get into Matthew. Well, then did that really get fulfilled? Look at Matthew chapter four and Matthew chapter four, picking up it at verse 13.

Matthew gives us this. Now having, now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee, verse 13 and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast and the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim. That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet saying, the land of Zebulun, the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee and the Gentiles, the people which set in darkness saw a great light.

And to them, which set in the region in the shadow of death, the light is sprung up. Now listen. And from that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, repent, change the whole way you're living and thinking why for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That concept is the early Christian concept. It's the early Anabaptist concept. And I think it was Jesus' concept.

And then Luke four, the powerful passage there, when Jesus came into the synagogue, I love, this is one of my favorite scenes as I imagine Jesus there. And we know he's having his, he's beginning his ministry and all these things. And in Luke four, verse 16, he says, and he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up.

And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.

And then he's in the spirit of the Lord. Imagine Jesus reading this, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and to recover the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, the Jubilee.

And he closed the book and he gave it again to the minister and sat down. Imagine the scene now. I love this.

And the eyes of all of them that were in the synagogues were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Wow.

What a moment. It's like all of what these prophets were speaking of this coming, this incredible new kingdom, this setting things back in order, like the beginning of creation. This is all that God wanted to do.

He now wanted to do amongst a people so that he would receive glory. It was like all these Sabbaths and the anticipation had finally been fulfilled. I do this.

And if you could bear with my singing. I'll try to give you an analogy that I sometimes use. All right.

Imagine it like this, all the Old Testament unto the day. It goes like this. I'll have a drink of water.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Sabbath day after Sabbath day, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 into the temple every year. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Thinking about the prophets talking about the day that it would finally come. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and you're hearing the scripture is fulfilled.

And Jesus came and wanted to do this incredible thing of bringing in this kingdom. And this kingdom, the old kingdom, the old world is still existing and going on. But it's like he said, we are ambassadors.

We are like an embassy, if you would, of a kingdom that's somewhere else. And he spoke of this kingdom over and over again and wants us to represent that, wants us to be that in this world. Do you remember some of his passages that Jesus gave us? Seek first, what? Seek first the kingdom of God.

Well, does that mean just when we get to heaven? Well, he prayed, pray like this. Our father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom, what? Come, keep going. Where? On earth, as it is in heaven.

His desire to manifest this kingdom here on earth encompassed his teachings. And it encompassed the teachings of the early church. And it encompassed the teachings of radical Christians that opened up the Bible throughout all generations and said, I think he wants us to do these things.

I think he'll get glory out of things like this. And it's, it's powerful. It's beautiful.

And it's interesting the way, again, these paradigms would get switched. The famous passage you see, uh, hopefully you don't see it, but you and, and football games or people put up John three 16, even our favorite passages have been kind of tainted by this mental concept of faith. Just being a bunch of, uh, like I grew up with, uh, except the Lord type of South, uh, salvation, not a grace filled living life salvation.

But you remember even the John chapter three passages when Nicodemus came to Jesus and he said, uh, uh, verse two, the same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God for no man can do these miracles that thou do it, except God be with him. And

Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, watch now, except a man be born again. He cannot see the kingdom.

In other words, you're not going to get it. It means the same word. You're not going to understand it unless you are born from above, born of godly seed, not born of man.

You're just not going to understand what I'm trying to do here. And he goes on, he says, and Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily. Okay.

Cannot see the kingdom. Verse four, Nicodemus said unto him, well, how can a man be born when he's old? Can he entered again into the mother's womb and be born? And Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. So this is something that comes from God.

It's the word there in Greek means to be born again. Both means to be born again. And it's also a play on word that means to be born from above, born of God's seed, not of man.

And when you allow God to completely change your life, you get it. And then like reading Matthew 13, you get it. And you're willing, like he goes on in Matthew 13 to say, I'll give everything I have to own this pearl of great price to, to give God the glory and to exalt him.

And that kingdom kind of, um, theology finds itself out through throughout the early church. Let me read you one more passage that I think puts it in a nice perspective. It's another prophet, uh, Ezekiel and Ezekiel gets here.

Ezekiel 37, 36, excuse me. It's another prophecy about the kingdom age, uh, or the, uh, not about the coming of Christ and him giving us all, it says this, this is a time when they were just the, the Jews were Israelites and we're just making mockery of, of the name of God. And listen to the emphasis here of where God puts his salvation.

Watch this Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 21. And what's for a difference that from American modern evangelicalism, um, verse 20. And when they entered into the heathen, when you went into the heathen areas, wherever you went, they profaned my holy name.

When they said to them, these are the people of the Lord and are gone forth of, of his land. Oh, these are the Jehovah people. And look at them.

These are God's people. And boy, they're terrible. They blaspheme God with their lifestyle.

But he says this verse 21, but I had pity. What what's what he had pity for. But I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel hath profaned among the heathen, whether they went therefore saying to the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, watch what he's about to do.

And watch why don't miss why I do this. I'm going to do this for yours. I excuse me.

I do not this for your sake. What I'm about to do. I'm not going to do.

It's not about you. I do not this for your sakes, oh, house of Israel. But for my holy namesake, which you have profaned among the heathen, whether you went and I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you 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 your midst. When I shall be sanctified in your, in you before their eyes, for I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries and will bring you into my own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Will I cleanse you? A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, watch this, and cause you to walk in my statutes and you shall keep my judgments and do them. Why, what was the emphasis? Why did God, I'll ask you, why did God give his salvation there? What was the reason? What was he, what was he, it's about his holy name.

It was about God. In other words, I hate to break it to you. It's not about you.

It's not about you. It's not about me. Our life is about God and our salvation is about God.

You see, God didn't give us the kingdom and it doesn't say in John 3 that God gave us the kingdom so that we can have our personal salvation. It says it just the opposite. He gives us salvation so that we can glorify him in the kingdom.

You see how it can be interpreted differently and very scarily. Results can happen from looking at it the wrong way. It's about God.

It's about him and it's about his holy name. So this kingdom concept, you can't miss because it's what makes the, it's what makes the, what makes things tick to the early church. It makes the, it makes a move in the persecuted area and it's what made the early Anabaptists the same way.

And you know where it comes from? Just picking up the scriptures and reading it. When you get into these theological wranglings, all the thing, it just kind of, it happens to all of us. It moves the frame out of, away from Christ and what he dreamt of doing and gave us a vision of doing.

All right, so let's go into the early Christians now and see how they put this stuff into practice. We're going to be looking at a period called the anti-Nicene. As this is A-N-T-E, Nicene.

Anybody know what this means? Anybody know what that means? It simply means anti, like the anti-room of the room here. This means before. Okay, and this means Nicaea.

So it's everything that was written by the early church that we have before the council of Nicaea in 325. And so that classification of Christians is called the anti-Nicene, not anti, it's kind of like everybody messes up Anabaptist. No, it's not anti-Baptist, you know, and I try not to be, but it's, it's Anabaptist.

Well, this is the same way. Anti-Nicene just means everything before, before Nicaea. Okay, and this is a, it was a milestone from the time of Acts to, to the time of, you know, came with, with the coming of Constantine.

We're not going to get into Constantine today. I thought, but I thought I want to give you, make sure I give you enough of an idea from the early Christians. As we go through the book of Acts, we see the same kind of thing talked about in a very beautiful way that from the very beginning, they, they say they're, they're meeting together and wanting to, to anticipate this coming of this kingdom.

Throughout, Paul says, when he's called in the trial that he's been here to testify of bringing up the kingdom. At the very last passage, chapter 28 in the book of Acts, he talks about people visiting him in his rented house, giving people and telling them the things of the kingdom. And so this beautiful concept goes out even in Paul.

A lot of times people want to point or try to, to, to separate Paul from Jesus, you know, and people say, are you Pauline or are you a Jesus? Well, I'm a Jesus follower. Okay, but I don't, I believe the whole word of God is true. Every single word of God is true.

But I do interpret everything through Jesus. It all comes back to him. The old Testament, I think is fulfilled in Jesus.

And I read everything that Paul says, because he's trying to make us look at Jesus. And so everything brings us to Christ. And I say, okay, what do you have for me? What do you want? And when I realized that I can't get to some of those things, then that's one of those beautiful passages of Paul saying, Paul, I can't do this.

I need grace. I'm a sinner. And I need for you to, uh, these teachings that he gives me of how, while God, as we read in Ezekiel 36, puts that spirit within us and causes us to walk out this beautiful life that Jesus wants us to live.

We see that through Acts. Um, but I'm going to, uh, and we see that through the New Testament and the different struggles they went through the New Testament. I thought I would just jump right into the Antonine scene since you probably had, um, Bible studies on the New Testament a lot.

I'm going to hit to the Antonine scene. Here's a passage. I don't think I put this one in there, uh, from Irenaeus.

Irenaeus was a Bishop of Lyons, France and, uh, around the year 150, 120. So, uh, and he says this, the new covenant that brings peace and the law that gives life have gone forth over the whole earth. As the prophet said, for out of Zion will go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem and he will rebuke many people and they will break their sword into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and they will look and they will no longer learn to fight.

The, the Romans, as you picked up in that, um, Caesar passage, um, they believe this Roman peace was because of this God Caesar came. The Christians argued, you know, it's not Caesar why we have this period of peace. It's because the Christians are praying for the government, um, and praying for you and our saints among you.

They gave a lot of those analogies. He goes on, these people, the Christians form their swords and war lances into plowshares that is into instruments used for peaceful purposes. So now they are unaccustomed to fighting when they are struck.

They offer also the other cheek. So, so what I thought I would do now, I have a series of quotes and I wrote some questions in your, in your, um, your, your thing here to, to, to look, to give you some things to think about, uh, of, of what was this piety? What was it like to be in the early Christians? Because really any renewal group like the Waldensians, the, uh, you know, the, certainly the Anabaptists, it was not so much let's try to just fix up the church. It was an idea to go radically back to the early Christians.

So I'm going to go through some of these quotes with you. And if you have some questions or some, wow, comments or anything or whatever, you know, um, but what I want you to do is to see what would it have been like if we had, you know, dropped into a church in the early Christian period. Like one of my favorite writers is Justin Martyr.

Um, and he gave, uh, some, some beautiful things, but well, the thing that I want you to get a hold of is if you were to ask an early Christian, so tell me, what does it mean to be a Christian? You know, what would have come out of their mouth? And surprisingly, what you see is Jesus. They talk about what Jesus wanted to do here on earth. Um, and I wrote, I gave you this quote and it's on page 167 of volume one of the Antonine scenes.

And I'm going to read you, I'm going to skip around and read some of it for you. I gave you the quote in your handout there. This is from a, uh, what's called a dialogue with the, uh, well, I'll just read from my handout too.

I, I wrote the wrong page number. Uh, this is from a, oh, one 66, 66. Yeah, here we go.

Okay. Okay. He's giving, this is an apology, which means he's explaining to an emperor or somebody what it means to be a Christian.

And it's, it's impressive. The, the, the things that he feels, uh, are, are interesting to note. Um, Oh, where do I pick it up? Uh, I'll just read from here.

Okay. He goes and he says, for, we forewarn you to be on guard guests on your guard. Lest the demons whom we have been accusing should be deceived, should be deceived you.

Let me see where I found here. Okay. Yeah.

This is under the topic. The demons misrepresent Christian doctrine. Interesting topic.

The demons misrepresent Christian doctrine for, we forewarn you to be on guard. Lest those demons whom we have been accused, who we have been accusing should deceive you and quite divert you from reading and misunderstanding what we say. Make it very clear to you what we're about for.

They strive to hold you, their slaves and servants, the demons do. And sometimes by appearances and dreams, and sometimes by magical impositions, they subdue all who make no strong opposing efforts for their own salvation. And thus we do also, since our persuasion by the word stands aloof from them, the demons and follow the only unbegotten God through his son, we who formerly delighted in fornication, but now embrace chastity.

Now he's about to just start going into this explanation. Chastity alone. We who formerly use magical arts, dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God.

We who valued above all things, the accusation of wealth and possessions now bring what we have into a common stock and communicate to everyone in need. We who hated and destroyed one another on account of their different manners would not live when men of a would not live with men of a different tribe. Now, since the coming of Christ, Christ live familiar familiarly with them and pray for our enemies and endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly.

To live comfortably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of reward from God, the ruler of all. In other words, we don't go to war because we hope that we can convert them. But lest we should seem to be reasoning sophistically of the sophist, we consider it right before you the promise explanation to cite a few precepts given by Christ himself and be it yours as powerful rulers to inquire whether we have been taught and do these things truly.

And he goes on and he says here concerning chastity. He just he utters such sentiments as these. Whoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart before God.

And if the right eye offend thee, cut it out. For it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into everlasting fire. And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband commits adultery.

And there are some who have been made eunuchs of men and some who have been eunuchs and some who have been made themselves units for the kingdom of heaven sake. But all cannot receive the same so that all he notice how he ties it together so that all who by human law are twice married are in the eyes of our in the eyes of our master sinners and those who look upon a woman to lust after her. For not only he who not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by him but also he who desires to commit adultery.

So it's not only our works but also our thoughts are open before God and many both men and women who have been Christ's disciples from 70 years. And I boast that I could produce such from every race of men. And he goes on and on.

He keeps talking about the different things of the Sermon on the Mount. But just notice some of those things. Would that be the way normal Americans would explain Christianity? But isn't it just so simple? What if Jesus really meant every word he said? Think of the divorce.

Think of the war. Think of the different things that have occurred through human history. Just if we would have just you know kept it to this kind of simplicity.

I was at work once and I was talking to someone about non-resistance. It usually comes up particularly around voting time. It will come up a lot next just come up for voting.

And somebody asked me about it. I said you know I don't know I just wish it was more clear. Let's go back to that Soren Kierkegaard quote.

We pretend not to understand because we know the moment we do it demands our response. I don't understand. I wish I wish she had said something more clear she said to me in the operating room.

Oh so something like love your enemies is not clear. Or the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty. You're looking for something more clear than that.

You know the words of Jesus are simple. But we know that they demand utter obedience of our life. And that's the kind of thing that you see coming out of the simplicity of the early church.

Let's look at some of the other things. I try to get a random sample just to kind of get an idea. Not random but just a little sample.

Try to get an idea of the different things of the early Christian. On your paper there I have number five. How did the early Christians feel about separation from the world? You know a lot of times people and I'm disappointed a lot of times even in Anabaptist people.

For some reason you get people talking like separation from the world is an Old Testament thing and it's astounding. Has anybody ever read Second Corinthians chapter six? I mean it's very clearly given to us from Jesus that he expects us to be separated from the world. As a matter of fact there's some beautiful promises based on that.

Let me give you Second Corinthians chapter six just briefly here. I guess I should have put this the Bible as a textbook. I've always been dyslexic you know.

I don't know why. I played with mercury when I was a little boy. All right here we go.

All right in chapter six he starts off and he starts to tell this beautiful thing about being ambassadors of God and the holiness of God being manifest by his righteousness. And he goes on he says this and I want you to kind of get the same drift. He says oh you Corinthians our mouth is open unto you our hearts enlarged.

He says you are not straightened in us. In other words you're not constricted. That word straight not like straight you know it's that type of spelling.

It means you're not constricted. Like brother don't don't give me your bondages. You're not bondage.

We're not straightening you. In other words the teachings that he was giving to them for some reason they were thinking you're restricting us. He says you are not straightened in us but you are straightened in your own bowels.

In other words it's your own passions that are constricting you. Now for a recompense in the same I speak unto you my children be you also enlarged. Open your mind.

It's kind of interesting because it's the opposite way we usually use those terminologies. Open your mind. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. Here he's speaking about the church. As God hath said and of course you can take it personally too obviously.

As God has said I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. There's that promise but now listen to this. Because of that come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing.

But don't miss this. And I will receive you. And will be a father unto you.

And you shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord almighty. Now there's no big seven in the Greek. It goes right on.

Having therefore these promises. Well which promises? That if you separate yourself from the world and draw unto God he's going to be a father to us. Having therefore these promises dearly beloved.

Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Yes both of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Separation from the world was part of the early Christian understanding.

It's part of the early Anabaptist understanding. It's funny when we get into the talks with the different Anabaptists. It's funny reading particularly this guy you'll get him and there's some other books that bring this out.

I say well where did you know where did the Anabaptist get this you know this this all this teachings about non-resistance and all this stuff about separation from the world and all this. Maybe it was from the influence of this group. Maybe it was become the monastics here.

And all that was probably true. But I wrote in my book. I don't know if it was this one or one of them.

How about from the Bible? They were people that just picked up the Bible and said hey. Let's do it. And they trusted God to make it happen.

All right. How did the early church shake that out? Well it was interesting. They talk about just like from 2 Corinthians 6 the two ways.

I said the answer the early Christians saw the world black and white. This is one of the criticisms of us Swiss brethren is so to speak is that they speak of the Swiss brethren as they were too. I forgot the exact word they use.

I'll give it to you later on when we get to Schleidheim confession. They were too dichotomous. They were too either black or white.

And where they get this. Well the early Christians were the same way. And interestingly the Schleidheim did not have access to the DDK.

The first German translation was in 1884. But here's the way the DDK says. I have it written there for you.

There are two ways. One of life and one of death. But a great difference between the two ways.

The way of life then is this. First you shall love God who made you. Love.

Second your neighbor as yourself. And all things whatsoever you would should not occur to you do not also do to another. End of these sayings the teaching is this.

Blessed those who curse you and pray for your enemies etc etc. And he goes through the Sermon on the Mount. That's the way of life.

The epistle of Barnabas. What some of the early Christians thought was actually from Barnabas. It's been later proved that it wasn't.

It came close to being part of our canon of scripture. And it says and again just a portion of it says. But let us pass on to another lesson in teaching.

There are two ways of teaching and of power. The one of light. The other of darkness.

And there is a great difference between the two ways. For on the one are stationed the light giving angels of God. And on the other the angels of Satan.

Very clear. It's black or white. Yes sir.

If you could find that ask Chris today. It'd be interesting. Yeah.

Yeah there are several. If we get time I'm gonna get to the Gnostics. There are several gospels that would have done that.

I didn't think Barnabas did that in this epistle. But I'd be interested to find out. Yeah that's interesting.

All right. So how did. So number six and please anybody like that have a question throw it out.

How did these two ways affect everyday life. Let's bring it down to practical. You got two ways black and light.

How did the early Christians shake this out for everyday life. How did the early Christians feel about let's say entertainment or war modesty of dress etc. And I just gave a little sampling of quotes here for you.

In there. How you like that little Coliseum picture. All right.

All right. The shows. They had their entertainments in those days.

We have our entertainments in these days. Well what should really a Christian put in front of themselves. Here's some quotes.

Do we have to ask. Do we have to ask the pagans themselves about this about this question. Let them tell us whether it is right for Christians to attend the shows.

Why the rejection of these amusements is the primary sign to them that a man has adopted the Christian faith. Oh the Christians don't go to those places. They don't do those things.

Interesting. The father who carefully protects and guards his virgin's daughter's ears from every polluting word then takes her to the theater himself exposing her to all its vile language and attitudes. How can it be right to look at the things that are wrong to do.

How can those things which defile a man when they go out of the mouth not defile them when going in through the eyes and the ears. There was an interesting. I think it was Tertullian.

It was an interesting quote once in Tertullian had come upon a man who was demon possessed or a woman. I can't remember. And as they were there and he was exercising this demon out of this possessed person.

The demon they record spoke and said well I had a right. They were in my domain. In other words they had come to the shows.

They'd come to one of these gladiator events and I had they were in my domain. Why couldn't I enter them. And that was the response they recorded there from that exorcism that Tertullian writes of.

And so this idea of entering and now you know we have lots of different ways to get to these shows except walking down the street. You'll now they don't see when the Christians click click their way into these these shows. But I think some of these things need to prick our hearts that this just explains the way of Christianity and it goes back to that second Corinthians six of separation.

Remember there's a promise. It's not just a negative thing. Open your mind Paul says.

There's a promise attached to it that he'll be our father's war. All right. War I could obviously talk a lot about.

It's been something that I had to deal with. But the idea of war again was very clear with the early Christians. And one of the things that got me when I began to look at it was everywhere.

It's not like just one quote. I mean you could go into the Syriac. You could go into the Latin writers.

You can go into the Greek writers. And all around they had this concept of that we don't go to war. But why? Why? What is war? A little funny doctrine about war.

Why? Because their paradigm was Jesus. And I'm afraid that even we'll get to this later in the weeks that when Christian doctrine even in amongst our Anabaptists is basically explained like in a fundamentalist frame with head coverings and nonresistance attached onto it. You begin to say things like well they're still great Christians.

They just divorce and go to war and you go through basically breaking everything that Jesus taught us. But they're still Christians. Again I ask the question can you be a follower of Christ and not follow Christ? You see the different frame? You see the different paradigm? I don't think nonresistance and these things that the early church talked about they saw as like a separate annex.

It's just well we're about Jesus and we're about putting into the world what Jesus gave us. It's not a doctrine. It's a whole way of life.

So here's some of the passages I just a sampling that I got last night together. And if there's misprints and things I'm sorry I threw this together last night so bear with me there. War.

The Lord will save them in that day even his people like sheep. Tertullian says no one gives the name sheep to those who fall in battle with arms in hand or those who are killed when repelling force with force. Rather it is given only to those who are slain yielding themselves up to their own place of duty and with patience rather than fighting in self-defense.

Another one from Athenagoras. We have learned not to return blow for blow nor to go to law with those who plunder and rob us. Not only that but to those who strike us on one side of the face we have learned to offer the other side also.

Another one here from Clement of Alexandria. Paul does not merely describe the spiritual as being characterized by suffering wrong rather than doing wrong. Rather Paul teaches that a Christian does not keep count of injuries.

You don't even count them. For Paul does not allow him even to pray against the man who has done wrong to him. So there's a challenge.

Somebody's go you know try that in a church. Somebody speaks against you and you want to go and start praying the Psalms you know Lord you know but the example of Christ is in Clemens. But you're not even allowed to do that you take the Stephen martyr approach and says forgive them they didn't know what they were doing and that's hard.

For he knows that the Lord expressly commands us to pray for our enemies. Tertullian again. Men of old were used to requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and to repay evil for evil with usury with interest.

But after Christ has supervened and has united the grace of faith with patience. Now it is no longer lawful to attack others even with words in the church not to merely say fool without danger of the judgment. Christ says love your enemies and bless those who curse and pray for your persecutors.

He goes on for what difference is there between the provoker and the provoked. The only difference is that the former was the first to do evil and the latter did evil afterwards. Now there's a concept that if you go somebody you know hits you and you hit him back you think oh I'm justified well not in the new covenant.

It's just that you've done your evil second each one stands condemned in the eyes of the Lord for hurting a man. For God both prohibits and condemns every wickedness and evil doing there is no account then taken of the order. The commandment is absolute evil is not to be repaid with evil.

And Clement of Alexandria again he who holds the sword must cast it away and that if one of the faithful becomes a soldier he must be rejected by the church for he has scorned God for even if soldiers came to John and received advice on how to act and even if a centurion became a believer the Lord has subsequently disarmed Peter he disarmed every soldier. It goes through there. So we see that that there's there's a way of that and a way a whole way of life there and the thing about that is if people say people sometimes get asked me that several times well if that happens you know what if you you can get killed or what if happens and perhaps we can get that towards the end here if I have time but there's a part of the early Christianity which was part of the early Anabaptist which were part of the persecuted church through every age and there's something called.

The theology the theology of martyrdom. We receive this evil we put an end to the evil by dying and we're warriors of God but we don't war in the way the world wars anymore we we put it into it by our lives and the cross you know the way of the cross does lead to a cross it's why they call it the way of the cross. All right let's go on to some some different ones here I want to try to give you a I'm going to park on non-resistance if I get started there I could go too far you know.

All right the next one is modesty of dress. We start thinking about okay you know you hear a lot about in our circles about you know modesty of dress and how many church discussions why should we get so concerned about these things well early Christians also saw themselves as as wanting to be represent humility shamefacedness and modesty before God and here's just a few passages that I got here. For these super furless and diaphanous materials useless materials are the proof of a weak mind covering as they do the shame of the body with a slender veil for luxury for luxurious clothing which cannot conceal the shape of the body he's concerned about concealing the shape of the body is no more a covering for such clothing failing close falling close to the body takes its form more easily and adheres as it were to the flesh receives its shape and marks out the woman's figure so that the whole make of the body is visible to spectators though not seeing the body itself.

So here we just see and again there's many of these quotes I just tried to give an example that even this shapeliness you know sometimes we even see our plain dresses are not that plain you know I mean there's are and particularly and I'm going to get to this I got some great quotes from Simon's to the men I'm disappointed how many of in our circles the men aren't leading in modesty we let our it's I think it's embarrassing it's kind of like the Muslims when you're at Walmart and you see this very modestly dressed

woman and the guys with the cat you know a Dallas Cowboy cap and his and his blue jeans and a t-shirt and he's be bopping around his wife sitting there looking like you know a Muslim you know the world seizes and I don't you maybe grew up in this world and it seems okay but when

you come from the outside you're thinking that's ridiculously discriminatory I think men should lead out in that and not just let our women be giving what is for modesty all right let's get another quote here let the woman observe this further let her be entirely covered unless she happens to be at home for that style of dress is great you know sober and protects from being gazed at and she will never fall who puts before her eyes modesty and her shawl nor will she invite others to fall into sin by uncovering her face for this is the wish of the word since it is becoming for her to pray veil all right keeping going here another one here by Cyprian you call yourself wealthy and rich but Paul meets your riches and with his own voice prescribes for you moderating of your dress and ornaments

with a just limit let women says he adored himself with shame facelessness and sobriety not with broadened hair nor gold or pearls no costly array but as becomes women professing chastity with good conversation and Peter also consents to these same precepts and says let there be in the woman not the outward adorning of array nor gold or apparel but the adorning of the heart and draws the size of young men after you nourish the lust of concupiscence that's desire to sin and inflames the fuel of sights so that although you yourself perish not okay you as a woman you're not thrown into this sin yet you cause others to perish and offer yourself as it were a sword or poison to the spectators you cannot be excused on the pretense that you are a that you are chaste and modest in mind your shameful

dress and in modest ornament accuse you nor can you be counted now among Christ's maidens and virgins since you live in such a manner as to make yourself an object of desire ouch that's kind of strong but all right you know i'm letting you know what it was like to show up at church in the year you know 100 or 200 next one and she will never fall who puts before her oh that same same quote there uh nay next quote here nay rather banish quite away from you you're free head of the slavery of ornamentation in vain do you labor to seem adorned in vain do you call in the aid of the most skillful manufacturers of false air people wearing wigs god bids you be veiled i believe for fear the heads of some should be seen exclamation point tertullian has some pretty strong words to say on the the head

covering so you know they took these words and they and they they took these even these passages of Jesus who says they're looking upon people and in modesty very seriously very seriously it all comes back to a Christianity that is shaped by Christ and his design his plan for for the church and for people all right here's a hard one for today did Jesus take seriously uh even oh did they take Jesus seriously even about money and sharing of their possessions now this is a very controversial one but we're going to see something that i think with are within all the Anabaptist groups um Hutterites obviously but the Swiss Brethren and even the Dutch up in Holland uh they took the act these these aspects of this just three with what God was giving them in possessions and lived it radically and

it was part of part of just early Christianity and it was part of early Anabaptist as well again not to everyone interpret this the same way but in all parts Swiss Brethren Dutch you get something i don't know when you get out of your circles before i read these quotes i remember a guy called me up he was going church of Christ church and his mother was having some hospital bill and i said well can't you can't you just talk to the to the church i mean he said being you've been living in Lancaster County too long the church is not going to help my mom i said oh wow i'm sorry and i do think it's something very dear and when churches begin to depart i see this helping of one another goes away quickly and i think it's something that's part of

being a christian uh and here are some very strong

passages that would say this um from the barnabas again you shall communicate in all things with your neighbor you shall not call things your own for if you are partakers in common of things which are incorruptible how much more should you be of those things which are corruptible from the didache which is considered one of the earliest writings of the early church do not turn away from him who is in want rather share all things which your brother and do not say that they are your own for if you are partakers in that which is immortal how much more and things which are mortal polycart toil together one with another struggle together run together suffer together lie down together rise up together as god stewards and assessors uh ministers uh ministries and so uh giving you know i have that

little barn raising picture there there's a lot of people on that barn if you can see it on yours um in letter to the diagnosis talking about the christians he says they have their mills in common but not their wives i'll have to remember that in moonster um but whosoever takes upon himself the burden of his neighbor whosoever desires to benefit one that is worse off in that in which he himself is superior whosoever by supplying to those that are in want possess possessions which he receives from god becomes a god to those who receive them from him he is the imitator of god so i think i might have messed that up a little bit um he who valued above all things the accusation of wealth justin martyr says when we read and possession now brings what he has into a common stock and communicates

to everyone in need so we see this this beautiful sharing of uh of the things that they have and in this very concept we're going to see coming out in the persecuted church through uh the centuries is this concept of a people when they called each other brother brother and sister it wasn't just a title you become part of a family with a common god and you shared your lives together and with this thinking it's going to make some of the radical things that happen through the waldensians and the arabian anabaptists and all these different things and all the different churches and even to this day make a little more sense because you're radically living your life together all right i got to keep going here eight they had to have uh they had to have had some people who would not submit to the

teachings of christ like this you'd say surely surely not everybody in the church you know did this what did they do with people who were not willing to follow christ in this radical way all right it was a disciplined church you say that we are a most shameful throng and that we are utterly steeped in luxury wickedness and depravity we will not deny that this is true of someone who professes to be christians even the healthiest and purest body usually has a mole or ward or freckles on it sometimes i feel like a war freckle or maybe i'm a wart but even even the sky itself is not perfectly clear so as to not be flecked with some wispy cloud however any person who conducts themselves in a way you have described does not assemble with us do you hear that neither do they belong to our

communion by their delinquency they become yours once more you have no right to call those christians to whom we christians ourselves deny that name interesting you know real quickly there's a a lot to do about closed communion open communion i'll i'll say this the early church as you can see from this certainly wouldn't have had just a this anybody can show up for communion type of thing as a matter of fact you would show up with a letter well here my bishop you know shows i'm in good standing you know that type of thing when you went from church to church and i i appreciate some of that thing and here's the way i understand early anabaptist and early christian ideas of this communion is a way to express your intimacy it's not a way to make intimacy let me give you an example if i were

you know let's say i'm somewhere and i'm a single guy and i wanted to hold this girl's hand isn't it nice to hold hands i think it's a nice thing it makes makes it very nice to hold it so i go and i hold this girl's hand so that i can enjoy this intimacy with this girl that's not the way to do it all right you get in trouble that way but if i have this beautiful relationship with my wife and and i have this this understood relationship and i hold my hand i'm expressing my intimacy with the hand holding communion we don't it's not our job to make intimacy with communion oh let's get together let's just have communion it's a nice idea but the early church in the early anabaptist saw it more of it's an expression of an intimacy that we already have it's a way that we share our lives and say

wow this is great we have this deep rich relationship with each other and part of that comes from a difference between just an accidental fellowship that happens to meet here there or the people of god who are willing to represent the kingdom to the world it's a different mindset there so put that in your bag and think about it for a little bit there all right all right how number nine how would this teaching affect the way um oh you see open and closed community okay that's what i just talked about and then the theology of martyrdom um they again they just talked about the concept of being um totally sold to christ um i'm not going to be able to get into the gnostics and the martianite today we'll do that tomorrow um but i just wanted to give one thing a couple of the controversial the

things of uh on the early church and one in particular i wanted to get to infant baptism because what we're going to see is is uh a lot of people want to talk about the early christians and their their use of infant baptism and that was used against the anabaptists a lot so i wanted to give you these passages here and like i said i want to be totally honest with this history and just say hey if something crept in that i don't agree with you know it's christ and his scriptures that is the defining line okay it's not any man or a people but it's interesting a lot of people will say these things about the early church and i don't think that the i don't think it's so clearly stated uh as people want to make you think um people so people today apologists catholic apologists will say well the

early church had infant baptism and i will say well when what do you call the early church i mean anything before nicea i mean when you got to nicea the church just didn't fall overnight and accept this guy as emperor and did not even baptize guy made him the head of the church so to speak overnight the church had grown into corruption by the time they get there and hopefully i'll try to present that to you tomorrow so you see different things happening to the church but here's so when was the very first reference to baptism that could be used about infants well the very first thing that you could even kind of allude to could be used for children is from justin martyr and it's about the year 150 and he says this and for water baptism we have learned from the apostles this reason no

listen to this now since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice by our parents coming together and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of and of ignorance but may become the children of choice and knowledge and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed now seems to me the very earliest passage that talks about uh concerns a child and baptism talks about that you were born with ignorance but now you make a choice yes that's the earliest one okay the next one we come um is used and this one's the most that other one's not quoted it's interesting justin was from rome and so it's interesting even there you get that thing but here irenaeus is that you want to usually people

throw out as the first one he came to save all through means of himself all who through him are born again to god infants and children and boys and youth and old men and therefore pass through every age

becoming as infants for infants thus sanctifying infants children child for children thus sanctifying those who are of this age being at the same time made them an example of piety righteousness and submission no word on baptism and this is something that that irenaeus is talking about called a recapitulation theology where he goes to the same thing of mary that they went back in he's the new the new eve and and jesus went through all these different um ages and and so people try to say well there it is and a born a uh a baby can be born again i don't know uh it's not you can maybe stretch

that but it's it doesn't explicitly say so what is the very first one that definitely says something about infant baptism it's from tertullian and he doesn't like it let's read that according to the circumcision and disposition and even age of each individual the delay of baptism is preferable principally however in the case of little children you don't even say infant but little children the lord does indeed say do not forbid them to come to me let them come then while they are growing up let them come while they are learning while they are learning where to come to let them become christians when they have become able to know christ why does the innocent period of life hasten to the remission of sins let them know how to ask for salvation then you may seem to have given to him that ask

interesting huh so those are the very first um quotes that people sometimes try to use uh ignatius uh polycarp excuse me when he's in the coliseum says and i've been serving christ and i just i forgot how many 90 or so years he says he's been serving christ for that many years and he must have you know and try to come up with a infant baptism out of that but but these are the actual first passages that even can be hinted toward something with early christianity and it's interesting to me that justin certainly makes it where you wouldn't have the choice if you were an infant baptism tertullian explicitly states against it and irenaeus uh i'm not sure how far you can take his whole recapitulation theology um as for me i i uh i don't i don't buy it so there you have it what would it have

been like to go to church in the early church would it have been would it have been like your church is it the way you would have understood christianity i'm not saying it has to be they're not gods they're not uh anyone but it's just interesting as we ponder now christianity today everybody claims these early christians hablix do baptists do anabaptists do everybody nobody likes to admit because you know why these are the guys that gave us our scriptures and it's a little nervous to say they're all a bunch of heretics since they were the guys who were translating writing our scriptures for us so these church life and what does it come down to again is this i got two minutes all right jesus christ came and he gave us this beautiful kingdom so that he could be glorified and for a minute

close your eyes for just a second and imagine and let's say when it's all completely done and jesus fulfills everything that he wants to do we know that from the rising of the sun to its going down one day god will be praised everywhere imagine in your mind what his complete fulfillment would look like what would it be like how would you live how would you be how would you exist when if everything in that millennium or that place or however you have your eschatology and then this is what he wants us to do be yikes what is to become on earth as it is in heaven be what is to become and that that simplifies the message of early christianity the message of radical christianity the message of the anabaptist is putting to this earth now in a seed form which one day would be from the rising

of the sun to its going down but until now the kingdom of heaven is at hand so let's pray amen okay so remember those writing that those readings to do and the the paper that i'm going to have you be doing at the end of this week if you could start thinking about it is uh you can do a couple things you can either do a theme uh on something to do with this concept of the kingdom you can look through the old testament

through isaiah or whatever um if you're here though just for newness and you're auditing if you can do this or you don't have to do this um also if people who haven't been one of my bible classes or something like that else another idea i do sometimes is go through the sermon on the mount matthew 5 6 and 7 and i want you to create a church that does everything exactly the

opposite of what jesus is telling you to do in other words he says to love your enemy create a church that has armies he says to not divorce people will create a church that has i don't know christian divorce counseling um have one if he says not to store up treasures on earth have i don't know christian marketing account you know so i want you to think about it in a uh in a way just so that i'm afraid that what you get at the end is scarily it looks like the modern american church so that's another assignment you could do that for a quick 1500 word paper or if you want to do the story of your church if some of you are going to be here just for a little time you can do that as well but those are some of the things for the first paper something on a kingdom theme something looking at

matthew 5 6 and 7 and creating a church what it looks like uh to do something exactly opposite of what jesus would said or uh the history of your church we can look at too and then let's start to these readings and uh it's a blessing so have a good rest of the day and again i'll be here in the you know under the bridge so you know

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