

The Biblical Evangelism of the Westminster Confession #1

by Ernest C. Reisinger

Biblical evangelism is God-centered evangelism that is consistent with biblical theology, with a focus on the message, method, and motive of evangelism.

Duration: 59:37

Scripture: Isaiah 42:21, Acts 13:16, Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:24

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God with power and sincerity, rather than being hypocritical. He mentions quotes from theologians such as Calvin and Charles Bridges to support his points. The speaker also mentions the fear expressed by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones about the generation's tendency to idolize Jesus without fully understanding the purpose of his coming, which is to reconcile humanity with God. Additionally, the speaker criticizes the focus on psychological gimmicks and laws in evangelism, highlighting the significance of the law of God in the work of spreading the gospel.

Transcript

I trust that when Mr. Clowney was speaking, you were reflecting some on your own conversion. At least I was. And I thought how accurate that was, how very accurate.

The first thing I noticed about a man was he was holy. There was a lot of church members on that construction job, where the Lord in his mercy saved me, but there was one that was holy. And the thing that drew me to him was the fact that he was holy and he was different.

And I say amen to that first fundamental principle of evangelism. Tonight, I suppose by my announced subject, I could just about say anything or do anything. Biblical evangelism, because everybody claims their evangelism is biblical.

But tonight I want to speak on biblical evangelism and tell you what I mean. First of all, by that phrase, I mean God-centered evangelism. Somebody might say reformed evangelism, but I mean evangelism in which the message and the motives and the methods are consistent with biblical theology as it's expressed in those great confessions, such as the London Confession, the Westminster Confession, or

the Heidelberg Catechism.

I think when I say that, I'm talking about an evangelism that's consistent in message, method, and motive with those great expressions of what the Bible teaches. Now, in these two sessions, don't expect some new program or system or technique in methodology. I'm not going to talk about methodology either.

We have most all the conferences. They have symposiums. They have conventions.

They have congresses on evangelism, and most all the time it's on some new gimmick or something that worked in this fellow's church or something that worked here. Well, that's not it. And I think about so many of these evangelistic conferences, and I'm glad for this one.

But it's like if I were to go down to the golf club every day for 20 years and I learn all about the different balls and the different centers, the magnetic center and the liquid center, and all about covers, and I'd spend about 10 years studying golf balls, and then I'd take another five years and I'd study the one iron, and I'd take another three years and I'd study the two iron, and I'd take another four years and I'd study the five irons, and finally I'd start to study the different kind of golf bags, the canvas bags and the leather bags and the different kind of straps, and then I'd make great inquiry into all the different kind of shoes you can buy, and I'd soon impress you that I knew an awful lot about golf. And then suppose someday you say to me, well, what do you shoot when you play golf? And I say, well, I never played. And sometimes I feel like that's about the way it is with evangelism.

We're always after these details, so don't expect some, I don't have a book on how or five easy steps to win a soul. I don't even have a book. I have an old book, and I read it now and again, and there's an awful lot of light on all these books that I've read and studied over the last 25 years because I'm interested in evangelism.

And speaking to the subject of evangelism, I don't want to deal, I want, I do want to deal with principles and not personalities, and I want to say this at the outset because by virtue of my title, and because it is, because it has some distinctives, biblical evangelism as I defined it has some distinctives, you will undoubtedly be able to connect and apply some of the things I have to say to persons and programs, but please keep in mind I'm not after people but biblical principles. I thank God tonight for everyone in this world that takes Christ seriously about taking the gospel to lost people. And you have a world, and I hope you take it seriously.

The man that pointed me to Jesus Christ, his world was not Africa or China or Asia or some other, Korea or some place like that. His world was a construction job, and there I was, and that was his world where he took the gospel and it reached my heart, and God in his mercy saved me. I hope there's a glass of water here.

Excuse me, my lips are very dry. So I'm not talking about people. Don't accuse me of that.

It's going to reflect on some people, but I have no intentions of doing anything to stop any kind of evangelism but to increase it in you. And I do pray that God his Spirit will assist me to speak and assist you to hear and give you discernment by his word and by his Spirit that you may receive that which is of heaven and forget that which is of man whose breath is in his nostrils. I'd be happy to speak privately on any things that we cover where I may not be clear or where I'm cloudy, discuss it point by point if necessary, and be corrected in any statements that I make.

Wisdom didn't end with me in this subject, even though I'm vitally interested in it and have been for over 25 years. In fact, it's because I love it so deeply and my deep concern for evangelism. I always have some fears in a situation like this, namely about two or three.

One is I fear that I'll shoot it so much that I'll miss everything, and the other thing is I'm afraid that a lot of zeal and a little learning may be spread over too thin a territory or too thin an area. In fact, as I feel like that passage in Job where he, where he, where, what's that fellow's name? Elihu. This is the way I feel about evangelism, like Elihu felt.

This is what he said. He says, I am full of matter. The spirit within me constrains me.

Behold, my belly is as wine which has no vent. It is ready to burst like new bottles. Well, that's the way I feel when I think of evangelism and when I think about coming here.

So the other fear is, is that. I have just one request, please. I just now told you that I welcome questions, I welcome private discussions, but there's one request I have concerning, in respect to the discussions or the questions.

Please don't try to prove anything to me while I'm on this campus by some system because it worked. If you want to prove anything to me, the question I want you to come with me, is it true? I suppose I have in my study at least 10 full-length programs that have worked for someone in some church or some group, and their little programs have worked. And I'm sorry to have to announce that every one of them is rotten at the foundation theologically.

So don't ask me, does it work? Southern Baptists have a program and it works. If the test is statistics, I remember in 54 they had the slogan, a million more in 54, and I suppose they got them too. Seventh-day Adventists have a program and it works.

The Mormons have a program and it works. The Roman Catholic Church has a program and it works. They all have statistics.

They all have converts, but they're not biblical converts, because they have not a biblical message in each case. I would remind you tonight that our Lord Jesus Christ condemned evangelism. If you don't believe it, you read Matthew 23, verse 15, because they had the wrong message, and they had the wrong motive, and they had, they encompassed land and sea to make one convert.

So just because there are some exceptions, I believe God does save people in evangelism that I couldn't call biblical by any stretch of the imagination. I'm well aware of these exceptions. I'm quite aware of it, but we cannot let the exceptions make the rule for truth.

We must be governed by the light that God puts on our paths in respect to these things. God spoke very successfully once by a donkey, but we don't go around and form Donkey Evangelism Incorporated just because God spoke by a donkey. So I just say that at the outset.

Evangelism surely is a good work, and it's a God-appointed work. What determines a good work, of course, is it must be done by a right rule, and that's the Word of God. And a good work must also have a proper end in view, and that's the glory of God.

And a good work must have right motive, and that's love to God and love to man. And so we must ask these three questions about evangelism. Is it done by a right rule? Is it done for a right purpose? And does it have a right motive? Certainly there are three questions that we need to ask about everything we do, but more especially evangelism.

Now I think I was going to read a definition from evangelism so that you know what I'm talking about. You know, I don't tell anybody I'm a Calvinist anymore when they ask me. I used to, when I first became a Calvinist, they'd say, are you a Calvinist? And I'd say, oh yes.

And then I made a great discovery that I was saying yes to their definition. And so any time anybody else asks me, am I a Calvinist? I say, you tell me what that is, and then I'll say yes or no. And ever since then I've had to say, no, I'm not that.

But I do think in Dr. Packer's little book, *Sovereignty of Evangelism*, if you haven't read it, I say to you, every one of you here, I feel it's one of the greatest little books on evangelism that I have ever put my hands on. In fact, I think so keenly about it that I've personally given out over 3,000 copies to students and preachers and Sunday school teachers and people who take Christ seriously about his commands. But his definition of evangelism is this.

He said, it's a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God's message of mercy to sinners. Anyone who faithfully delivers that message under whatever circumstances, in a large meeting, in a small meeting, from a pulpit, or in private conversation, is evangelizing, since the divine message finds its climax in a plea from the creator to a rebel would turn and put their faith in Christ. And the delivering of it involves the summons of one's hearers to conversion.

So that's the goal. And I believe that's what it is. And when I speak of it tonight, or I make any reference to evangelism, that's what I'm talking about, what I just read, that act of communication.

And then, of course, we have the message. And I think I'll give you a definition of that tonight that I found. It's not original with me.

But so when I say gospel, you'll know what I mean, gospel. The best definition for the gospel I've ever found was by Dr. John Brown, who was senior minister of the United Presbyterian Church of Edinburgh. He was a professor of exegetical theology of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

And I found this definition in one of his books. And I like it very much. I think it's comprehensive.

And when we say gospel, it's a very comprehensive word, to say the least. Dr. Brown says this, the Saxon word gospel, like the Greek word of which it is a literal translation, signifies agreeable intelligence, a joyful announcement, good news, glad tidings, that is, in the New Testament, ordinarily employed as a descriptive designation of the revelation of divine mercy to a lost world. Now, here it is.

The heavenly, this divinely inspired account of the only way in which guilty, depraved, and miserable men may be delivered from sin and its consequences, not only from its consequences, but from sin and its consequences, obtain divine approbation and favor, be raised to the true dignity and the excellency of their intellectual and moral nature in the knowledge of God, in conformity to his mind and will, and be made happy in all the variety and to the fullest extent of their capacity of enjoyment, and during the whole eternity of their being, by the free grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Quite a definition, isn't it? But it's comprehensive, and it's all there. It's not just kind of this gospel, it's a hell

insurance policy, or something like that.

I believe that biblical evangelism, and I say biblical, and I've already defined what I mean by that. If I use the term God-centered or Reformed evangelism, I want to use those terms interchangeably. These two days I'll be with you.

But I think biblical evangelism is that dynamic union of doctrinal strength of the Reformed faith with the warmth and the passion of heavenly zeal for the conversion of sinners. A combination of that doctrinal strength of the Reformed faith combined with a passion and heavenly zeal for the conversion of sinners. I believe that's biblical.

And the principal difference between biblical evangelism and all other evangelisms is not that one believes the Bible and the other doesn't. It's not even that one has believes certain doctrines and the other doesn't. The difference does not lie there.

The difference is in what we believe about certain doctrines. That's what distinguishes. All people, whether they're biblical evangelism, whether Arminian or Calvinist, they all believe in the Trinity, just for example.

They all believe in the Trinity. But the one believes they have a frustrated Trinity. They believe that what God has planned and the Son purchased and the Spirit supplying something else.

So they believe in the Trinity. But the true biblical evangelism, they believe in a Trinity where what God the Father planned, God the Son purchased, and God the Holy Ghost applies that. And there's no frustration in the Trinity at all.

So they all believe in the Trinity. The Christian life in evangelism, whether it's the Christian life or evangelism, there's a house, there's a foundation and a superstructure. And the foundation is doctrinal, and the superstructure is devotional or service.

And so is evangelism. It must have a foundation. The message, the motive, the methods of evangelism spring from a doctrinal foundation, what I believe.

And the fact is, Christian experience is nothing less than the great doctrinal truths of the Bible applied to the life by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's Christian experience. So with evangelism, the message and motive and methods have a doctrinal foundation.

It's a must. Bishop Breil said, you can talk about Christian experience all you like, but without doctrinal roots, it's like cut flowers stuck in the ground. They soon wither and die.

Now, evangelism is not running around pounding doctrine or certain doctrines into people's heads with no compassion and concern for their soul. I know some people who do that. They think evangelism is just getting people to believe a set of doctrines, and they miss the whole point.

The doctrines is the foundation on which we stand to worship. The doctrines is the foundation on which we stand to work. The doctrines is the foundation on which we stand to evangelize.

They are not an end in themselves, but they are what governs a man's methods and his message and his motive, those things that we believe. So I say it's important. Our doctrine is what determines our thinking in respect to God.

Our doctrines is what determines our feeling in respect to God. Our doctrines is what determines our actions in respect to God. And whatever else true religion is, it can't be less than that.

It can't be less than right thinking in relationship to God, right feeling in relationship to God, and right acting in relationship to God. Anything less than that's not true religion. And so I say we must consider further some of these differences.

It's not that one person believes certain things and other people don't believe it. I've already mentioned the Trinity. The difference lies in the fact of what we believe about these things.

For instance, not only is it about the Trinity, but there's other things. About the Atonement, what do we mean by the Atonement? Well, everybody believes in limited Atonement. Some believe that God limits it.

Others believe that man limits it. But they both believe in limited Atonement, unless they're universalists. So the question is not do somebody says, I believe in limited Atonement.

I say, so do you if you're Christian. Why, sure. So it's what we believe about these things, what we believe about the Atonement.

It's what we believe about certain passages of Scripture. For instance, John 6, 44, what I believe about that. Now my Armenian friend who's interested in evangelism, he kind of skips over that verse.

No man cometh to me except the Father draw him. And he looks at that verse and it looks to him like it's closing all the doors. And he's scared.

He says, oh, no man cometh unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. And he's all scared. And I look at that verse and I say, you know, there's one word in there.

If it weren't for that word, I'd be in hell. No man cometh unto me except. And I underline that except.

I say, that's hopeful. That's why I'm not in hell tonight. Except.

So instead of closing all the doors, like somebody may think when they look at the passage, it shows me where the door is. Oh, what the Father has given me. Well, we both believe the passage.

It's what we believe about it. One looks at John 6, 37, for instance. I remember I used to look at the, I used to use the second half of that verse in personal evangelism all the time.

Either cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And I was hoping the fellow wouldn't ask me much about the first half. I was always using the second half.

Well, you see, now I use both halves. Some people camp on the first half and they don't, they don't do much. You know, they camp on it.

Oh, what the Father gives me. And they never see that other part. Either cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

And then there's others say, well, we said we got to, we got to kind of be balanced in our ministry. So don't be too strong on, on this sovereignty business. And don't be too strong on responsibility.

Just kind of water it down and soft pedal on both. And then you wind up with nothing. Because you have something, you have a God that's less than sovereign, and you have a man that's less than responsibility.

So now when I read all that the Father gives me, I say sovereignty of God, a hundred percent. No man cometh unto me, either cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. I say human responsibility, a hundred percent.

And I leave the antinomy with God, as the Paul did when he wrote Romans. Oh, when I come to Romans the end of Romans 11, sometimes I could weep. He goes to Romans 9, where he wrings the changes on sovereignty.

Romans 10, Romans 11 again, he wrings the changes on sovereignty. And then he winds up like this. All the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.

That sounds like a Christian to me. Don't try to reconcile those things, leave them, leave them there. Now because some doctrinal convictions, because of some of these, we Calvinists, because of some of these convictions and what we believe about certain truths, we find ourselves quite at odds with a great deal that goes on in the name of evangelism in our day.

And I suppose the best thing to do is be quiet about it, but we can't participate in it from the heart. And why? Because we don't believe it's biblical. We've found things that we cannot live with in many of these areas.

And we've also found that the deeper the roots are, deeper than just some surface thing that we don't agree with this fellow because he does it this way, or we don't agree with because he does it that way. We've found that the roots of why he does it this way is much deeper than we can't from a conscience standpoint. Some people even think we're not even interested in evangelism because we don't jump on every bandwagon somebody's shouting John 3 16 all over the world.

Well there's man-centered and the other is God-centered. There's the two kind of evangelism. Man-centered evangelism is the preacher or the witness or whoever it is or the personal worker trying to get unable and unwilling sinners to do something with Jesus.

That's man-centered evangelism. God-centered evangelism is demanding a sinner to do something that he cannot do, thus humbling the sinner to such a degree that he humbly seeks God who is able and willing to do something for him that he can't do for himself. That's the difference.

I'm not running around here hockstern off Jesus. I've been in meetings where where my my theological stomach went through excruciating pain. This guy tried to run around trying to drum up votes for Jesus and I've never done it but believe me I've been tempted to say stand up in a kindest way I knew how and say sir sir you don't have to get any votes for Jesus he's already in office.

He doesn't need your vote. Evangelism is not drumming up votes. Biblical evangelism by virtue of the doctrine that undergirds it must stress must stress that man's faith and man must stress that the faith is man's duty but not within his ability.

But God gives what God commands and when he demands that which man is unable to do then God gives and we see then in a verse like I just mentioned a while ago that it's hopeful that's hopeful to the

sinner. This overthrows self-confidence. This shows sinners that unless God does something for them they're gone and that's hopeful to a sinner.

Shutting them up evangelism is boxing them up shutting them up both to the mercy and to the power of God that humble sinners when he's there and he makes a great discovery. Not this idea you run around and act like eternal life is at the end of an accepted proposition. Eternal life is not at the end of an accepted proposition and all the evangelism that has that flavor is not biblical because eternal life is not at the end of an accepted proposition.

Do you know where eternal life is? And this would make people mad or it'll humble them. They'll want to curse God and die or they'll get down on their knees and cry out. As the father has given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him.

Where is eternal life? In that text. It's in the hands of a sovereign Christ and if you believe that men would become beggars in his sight. What am I trying to say about evangelism? I'm trying to get across the posture the posture of the sinner and the savior and you have it in text like this.

Well a very good one is Luke. Let me just show you the posture that I'm talking about and this is what I'm pleading for in Luke chapter 5. This is the picture. Now get the picture and then you try to fit that into to some of the evangelism that I'm not in favor of.

Huckstring off Jesus. This is the picture. Luke chapter 5. And it came to pass when Jesus was in a certain city.

Behold a man full of leprosy who seeing Jesus fell on his face. He didn't try to strike a bargain with him. He fell on his face and listen to this.

He besought him saying Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me whole. Lord you can do something for me that I can't do for myself. Oh and there's just many pictures of that in the New Testament.

Here's another. And as they departed from Jericho a great multitude followed him. And behold two blind men standing by the wayside when they heard Jesus pass by cried out saying have mercy on us oh Lord thou son of David.

And I could go on and on and multiply what I mean when I say the posture of the sinner and the savior. It's not drumming up votes. May I remind you dear young men who will be preaching the gospel.

In the days of our Lord Jesus Christ in the days of his humility men decided what they were going to do with him. They made a great decision and they decided to crucify him. But get this never never never again will anybody decide what they're going to do with Jesus because he's never going to be in the days of his humiliation again.

This is the day of his exaltation and he's on a throne not on a cross. He's on a throne and if you meet him and sinners that you preach to if they ever meet him they're going to meet him on a throne. He's the Lord of glory now.

That makes a difference in your evangelism. You will be hustling him off because he's not in the days of his humiliation again and never will be. Yes true enough men make a decision come to Christ.

We use the expression it's in the bible it's a good biblical expression come to Christ. But my dear friends when we say come to Christ we are not even thinking of men coming to Christ to do something with him. We're thinking of coming to Christ so that they may plead with him to do something for them.

Now you say I'm making too much of this. No it's a root problem. It's a root problem and what worries me most of all is to find men who come from this kind of institution which is probably the greatest seminary in the world.

Somehow they don't see and preach that exalted Christ and demand and command that men bow to him. Oh the hymn writer had it right when he said let not conscience make you linger nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness he requires is to feel your need of him.

The sinner needs Christ. God centered evangelism does not leave sinners with the idea that Christ is passively waiting for man's decision as the word is preached and witnessed. Christ is not standing idly by as your preacher preaches and as you preach and as you witness my dear.

Christ is not standing idly by waiting for man's decision. No no. But he is sovereignly working by and through the word to bring poor impotent sinners to himself.

There's power in the gospel not in the sinner. And when we preach to sinners we must preach as Mr. Clowney told us tonight. There's power in the gospel not in the sinners.

So therefore you can't be begging this great big strong mighty sovereign sinner to do something with this pathetic little impotent effeminate Jesus that people are hustling off. Quite different. It's different.

One's biblical the other's not. And then I hear somebody say oh yes but you know there's that certain cooperation that's necessary in evangelism. Yes I know about that cooperation.

Indeed I do. That woman over there at the well was cooperating all right. She is committing adultery with about six men.

He is cooperating all right. And old Paul he's cooperating all right killing Christians and locking up Christians. He is cooperating all right.

And that old thief Zack he is he is stealing everything that was loose he is cooperating all right. They were cooperating all right. Let me tell you something if anybody's going to save that horrid woman if anybody's going to save old Paul if anybody's going to save that crooked tax collector it'll have to be God that he doesn't get the cooperation from those wicked sinners either.

Don't you believe it. Don't you talk to me about cooperation. You see this whole process my dear friends and that's why I referred to this great document at the outset.

This whole process is set out in the most beautiful fashion in one of our catechism questions and it's question 31. May I just catechize you a bit tonight because this process that I'm talking about is set out here. It's under a great and important question what is effectual calling.

Doesn't sound like cooperation. Effectual calling is a work of God's spirit whereby now you've noticed three things in this answer whereby convincing us of our sin and misery one enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ to renewing our will. He does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel.

It doesn't sound like cooperation to me does it. Okay no that's it. Well tonight I want to deal with I had hoped this weekend to deal with some of those distinctive or some things that are important and vital to biblical evangelism and I suppose I'll only get one but I do want to touch one tonight and a few more tomorrow maybe.

Some of those things that are vital and understanding of them and their relationship are vital to evangelizing and I'll just give you a couple of things I had hoped to do but I'm sure that I won't get finished. One is the law of God in evangelism and then the nature of saving faith. That there is no saving faith apart from repentance.

No saving faith apart from repentance. I don't know if I'll get to that or not. And then this business of inviting men to Christ in a biblical way and a very important other aspect is especially for counseling and personal work and for pastoral counseling is the doctrine of assurance as is expressed in these great places.

Well let me first of all talk about a little while tonight because I suppose you're tired by now. At least I am. Not of you but I'm just tired.

First let's consider tonight a few moments when we think of God-centered or biblical evangelism and the law and evangelism. The foundation doctrines of biblical evangelism the two foundational doctrines is the character of God and the condition of man. Now that that's the basis that's the foundational doctrine of evangelism.

These are the two doctrines that make evangelism necessary. These are the two doctrines that make the evangel good news because of that awful breach between God the creator and the creature and that's what makes the evangel good news when there's some way to solve that breach. So the two basic doctrines of evangelism is are God's the character of God the kind of a God he is and the condition of sinners and this brings us immediately to the moral law.

When we think of those two basic things it brings us to the moral law. Why do I say that? Well let me catechize you again. That's the two foundational doctrines of evangelism.

Of what use is the moral law to all men? The moral law is of use to all men to inform them of the holy nature and will of God. Notice it says nature first because his will is expressed in the commandments and it stems from his nature. The moral law is of use to all men to inform them of the holy nature and will of God and their duty binding them to walk accordingly.

Now listen, to convince them of their disability to keep it and of the sinful pollutions of their hearts. Does that sound like evangelism? Nobody ever gets evangelized if he's not convinced of this. To convince them of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts and lives.

This is the moral law. To humble them in a sense of their sin and misery and thereby help them to a clear sight they have need of Christ. A clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and of the perfection of his obedience.

So you see when we talk about the character of God and the condition of man we say well where do we learn that? I learn my condition from the law. That's what tells me what I'm like. The law of God.

I learn the character of God at least in some degree, the great degree from the law of God because if his will is perfect certainly his nature is perfect. So you see it thrusts us right there. Biblical evangelism therefore is rooted in the biblical doctrine of God our creator and judge and only as the creator, as the creator, as the creator and judge is proclaimed will men see their sinful rebellion and impiety be exposed.

As that law is proclaimed we'll see the God's requirement and we'll see the exposure of sinful men and their rebellion and their impiety. That's what you have in Romans 12:1. Man in his sin refuses to glorify God his creator and thus he will not be thankful and thus he will not acknowledge his dependence upon God for every gift and this has to go before repentance.

That's why the law of God must be preached. It must precede repentance. Why do people repent? What are they to repent of? What's the use of thinking about repentance? The law of God brings us to that.

Now since evangelism is a work of communicating God's message of mercy to sinners it finds its climax in a plea from the creator to the rebel creature to turn from sin and to trust Christ for salvation. That's the aim. It's the aim of conversion to turn the rebel back to God and since the law has this particular biblical function then a right use of that law is vital to evangelism, to biblical evangelism.

It is the law that makes clear the creator. It's the law that makes clear the creature's condition and you see and this is a very important point. The creature-creator relationship must be established or the redeemer relationship makes no sense whatsoever.

In a day gone by I believe in Moody's day and some of the people who were who had a particular burden and ability to preach the love of God was needed but let me tell you something and I think you'll agree with me historically. In that particular day at least the church people had a theistic base. They knew what was right and what was wrong and every church that's why in the old confessions you'll find the commandments have a prominent place.

I just read recently of a great missionary John Elliott one of the first missionaries to the Indians. What do you suppose he taught the Indians? John 3:16? No sir. He taught them the commandment and when he first trained the interpreter the first thing he preached his first sermon was the commandments.

Why? Didn't he care about the gospel? Didn't he care about Jesus? Jesus wouldn't make any sense if anybody didn't see that breach in the creator-creator relationship. I don't even have a question. I picked up a young fellow from college some some time ago now it's quite a while and we were gone by a sign.

He was dirty and his clothes needed washed and he needed washed and I think he was a senior in college somewhere but anyhow that's beside the point. We came to this we came to this sign and this sign said Christ is the answer and I really believe he was serious. I don't think he was facetious.

I think he was serious and he said to me sir what's the question? I'll tell you. Had he ever known about that breach in the relationship of his creator and God? That breach between him as a creature and his creator and judge. If he knew about the creature that relationship then he would have a question.

How can we get it? And that's why the redeemer relationship comes in and so my dear friends tonight well let me put it this way. Where misery is not felt mercy is not regarded and the whole invention of a surety a redeemer and atonement was the effect of a divine determination to magnify the law and make it honorable. Isaiah 42:21.

He will magnify the law and make it honorable. Where did he magnify the law? Where did he make the law honorable? At the cross. I'll never forget I was preaching for Al Martin years ago and he let me in his study and he had a couple books I didn't have by McShane, Robert and Mary McShane.

Two big volumes and I saw that. So he let me in his study. I'm pulling down these volumes of McShane because I love McShane.

He had a warm heart. He cared for souls and he had a good doctrinal foundation but I'll never forget in one of those sermons that I got up there. I got those books now Al.

I didn't steal yours but I'll never forget one of those sermons. It was on this text. He shall magnify the law and make it honorable.

You see old Samuel Bolton, one of the west minister divines, he said it like this. He said it's the sharp needle of the law that makes way for the scarlet thread of the gospel. Isn't that a nice way to say it? It's the sharp needle of the law that makes way for the scarlet thread of the gospel.

And so you see then the law is the servant of the gospel and you must not rob the blessed gospel of the servant and don't rob the sinner of his schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. Now to me this is a vital point in evangelism in our day. I believe there's a turning to more law preaching because you see we do not have theists anymore.

When Saint Paul went into the synagogue he didn't have to start with the law. He could preach the Messiah. He could talk about Israel's Messiah.

Why? Because they had a theistic base. But when he went to Mars Hill where they did not have a theistic base, I would call your attention to his sermon and he did not start out with the Messiah. How did he start that great sermon? One of the greatest sermons in the New Testament.

This is how he started. God that made the world. That's what I'm saying.

Now I don't like to read a lot of quotes but since I'm just a poor baptist I think I got to buttress my case a little bit. So I want to read some quotes from a few men that we respect, men who we all love that we're Christians, men who we should long to emulate. Not all of them but just a few.

And I'm doing it for this express purpose that you might to buttress my statement about the importance of a right understanding of the law in evangelism. John Newton the great hymn writer and Anglican preacher said this, quote, he said this in connection with the law and the gospel and the importance of the subject, quote, clearly to understand the distinction, the connection, and the harmony between the law and the gospel and their mutual subservience to illustrate and establish each other is a singular privilege and a happy means of preserving the soul from being entangled by errors on the right hand or the left. John Calvin in the institute said this, quote, we have already said in our first book, he's talking about the first book of instructions, that the true knowledge of God constrains us to worship him and that the true knowledge of self leads to genuine humility and abasement.

The law is the instrument which the Lord uses to bring about these results. By asserting therein his right to command, he calls us to pay him the reverence due to his majesty and by setting before us the standard of his righteousness, he shows us our unrighteousness and impotence. Moreover, the things which are taught in the tables of the law are also taught by the inward law which is written on the tables of man's

heart, for our conscience does not allow us to sleep an unbroken sleep, but inwardly testifies to us the claims of God and the difference between right and wrong.

But since this inward law is insufficient, badly marred by sin, that's not that part of the quote, but since this inward law is insufficient through our ignorance, pride and self-love, God has given us a plainer, sure testimony of his written law, Martin Luther, on the moral law. The law must be laid upon those who would be justified, that they may be shut up in the prison thereof until the righteousness of faith come, that when they are cast down and humbled by the law, they should fly to Christ. The Lord humbles them not to their destruction, but to their salvation, for God woundeth that he may heal again, he killeth that he may quicken again.

That's the function of the law. Saint Augustine said, quote, The conscience is not to be healed if it be not wounded. Thou preachest and pressest the law, the judgment to come, with much earnestness and importunity.

He which hears, if he be not terrified, if he be not troubled, is not to be comforted. Tyndale, quote, It becometh the preachers of Christ glad tidings, first through the opening of the law to prove all things sinned, that proceedeth not of the Spirit, and of faith in Christ, and thereby to bring them unto the knowledge of themselves, and of his misery and righteousness, that he might be delivered and helped, that he might derive help. Another quote from Tyndale, and this is a quote that I got, he was writing to John Firth, who was at that particular time in prison for passing out Christian literature, and John Firth in prison, Tyndale writes to him this, Expound the law truly to condemn all flesh, and to prove all men sinners, and all deeds under the law, before mercy hath taken away the condemnation thereof, to be sinned and damnable, and then, as a faithful minister, set abroad the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let the wounded conscience drink of the water of life, and thus shalt thou preach, thus shalt thou preaching be with power, and not as a hypocrite.

And the Spirit of God shall work with you, and all conscience shall bear record unto you that it is so. Just another short quote from Calvin. I have two more, three quotes, and I'm finished, just about.

Calvin, The law is nothing else but the preparation of the gospel. The faithful cannot profit in the gospel until they shall be first humbled, which cannot be until they come to a knowledge of their sins. It is the proper function of the law to call the conscience into God's judgment, and wound them with fear.

Father, quote, Men are ever prepared for the gospel by the preaching of the law. And I say to you tonight, biblical evangelism does not drive men to despair, only to despair in themselves. And the preaching of the law does not drive men to despair, only to despair in themselves.

One old saint put it like this, Run and work the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A sweeter sound the gospel brings, it bids me fly and gives me wings. One more quote from Charles Bridges out of the Christian ministry.

He said The mark of a minister approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, is he that rightly divides the word of truth. That's not like somebody else had said it, but he that rightly divides the word of truth. And this is what he said.

This implies a full and direct application of the gospel to the mass of his unconverted ears, combined with a body of spiritual instruction to the several classes of Christians. Still talking about the true minister. His

system will be marked by scriptural symmetry and comprehensiveness.

It will embrace the whole revelation of God in its doctrinal instructions, experimental privileges, and practical results. This revelation is divided into two parts, the law and the gospel, essentially distinct from each other, though so intimately connected that an accurate knowledge of neither can be obtained without the other. And I don't know 20 preachers.

In 25 years, I don't know 20 preachers. This revelation is divided into two parts, the law and the gospel, essentially distinct from each other, though so intimately connected that an accurate knowledge of neither can be obtained without the other. Biblical evangelism cannot overlook the three great truths of the Bible that stand or fall together.

And the three great truths of the Bible that stand or fall together is this. The law of God, the cross of Christ, and the righteous judgment of Almighty God. And if you touch one, you've touched them all.

Touch the law of God, who cares about Jesus? Because they don't know what sin is. Jesus Christ is a savior of sinners. So if you touch the law of God, we learn from the Bible, by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Touch the law, who cares about the cross? Touch the cross, and we have no answer to that broken law. We do away with the judgment of God, who cares about either. They fall stand or fall together.

Now I should say in closing, I recognize that God has different ways in calling men to himself. I say without question in my own soul, I believe God's most common way of calling men. Now get this, God's most common way of calling men is by prior work of the law in conviction.

Might vary in far as length of time, might vary in degree. I know that he calls people other way. I believe God called one from the womb, at least he called one from the womb, two, Jeremiah and John the Baptist.

I'm allowing for God to call men other way. I think there is such a thing as what I would call a sovereign gospel call. That is, you could come in this meeting tonight lost, and God in sovereign mercy could save you.

I don't think that's just normal, ordinary way of calling sinners. I believe there's a Bible example that would be in Zacchaeus. If there's anything that represents a sovereign gospel call, it would be Zacchaeus.

I also know that God called one man on his deathbed, only one. I'm glad he called one so that none would despair, but only one so that none would presume. So I'm not saying that this is God's only way of calling men.

I'm saying to you tonight that I believe that God's most common way of calling men is a work of the law of conviction, so that the gospel makes sense and that Jesus Christ makes sense. And this whole world of ours needs some law preachers. I'm surprised.

I was preaching in a Presbyterian church not 50 miles from here, and I was hacking away in carpenter fashion trying to preach the law, and the preacher said to me one evening, he said, Ernie, he said, you've been preaching on the law in a general way. He said, would you preach on the seventh commandment some night? And this is what he said, I never heard a sermon. Hard for me to conceive it.

He said, I've never heard a sermon on the seventh commandment. And he said, I've never preached one. And I looked back at his desk where he was sitting, and I saw his diploma, that he'd been out of seminary for 20 years, and never preached a sermon on the seventh commandment.

And you wonder why adultery and all other sorts of violations of the seventh commandment is rampant when the church is silent on the law of God? And that's why they're silent on repentance, because they're silent on the law of God. And if you do away with the law, you no need a repentance. There's nothing to repent of.

You just kind of trust this little fairy godmother kind of a Jesus. This kind of little Jesus that'll move your suitcase, celestial bellboy type of Jesus is what I call him. He'll move your little suitcase of troubles anywhere you want it.

All these psychological gimmicks and the laws put aside. My dear young men, the law of God has a large place in the work of evangelism. I remember Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones at the General Assembly of the OP Church.

It was a couple years ago now in Silver Springs, Maryland. I'll never forget what he said. He was talking not about the law particularly, but he said he had a fear.

And he said one of the fears he had for our generation is that we kind of have a Jesus-olatry. And then he went on to say what he meant. He said Jesus came to bring us to God.

Jesus came to reconcile us to God. We must see that creator-creature relationship and then the redeemer relationship. And the law is designed for that.

Question 95 in a larger catechism. Let us pray. Oh God our Father, forgive us for our ignorance in thy holy truth and in our work.

And oh Lord, look upon us in mercy in our impotence as we seek to do thy work. Lord, we thank you for this institution and her faculty and those who labor diligently. Those who labor unseen, unheard of by the world, but labor to train men.

We give thee thanks. And we pray that as men matriculate to these halls, that they will have a clear view of the law and the gospel, and their relationship to each other, and their mutual subservience to establish each other. Oh so be it Lord, that we might do the work of evangelism with a right rule, even thy truth, with a proper motive, love to thee and love to men.

Yea Lord, and with a proper goal in view to bring glory to thy name and good to the sons of men. Hear our prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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