

Life of William Tyndale

by Ian Murray

This sermon explores the life and impact of William Tyndale, emphasizing his role in translating the Bible into English and his influence on the Puritan movement.

Duration: 58:23

Scripture: Matthew 5:9, Hebrews 11:32 - 12:2

Topics: "Faith Examples", "Perseverance In Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of faith and the examples of faith found in the Bible. He mentions various biblical figures such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who through their faith, achieved great things and overcame challenges. The preacher emphasizes that these individuals were able to subdue kingdoms, perform miracles, and endure persecution because of their unwavering faith in God. He also highlights the suffering and trials faced by some of these faithful individuals, including torture, imprisonment, and even death, but they remained steadfast in their faith, knowing that God had a better promise for them. The sermon concludes with an exhortation to the listeners to lay aside their burdens and sins, and to run the race of faith with patience, looking to Jesus as the ultimate example of faith and endurance.

Transcript

Let us read in the word of God from the epistle to the Hebrews, the eleventh chapter, and from the thirty-second verse, Hebrews chapter eleven and verse thirty-two. And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword. Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens.

When in received their dead, raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourging, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sworn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame that is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. In the blessing which God has given to us in the British Isles, in the measure in which the Calvinistic faith has been rediscovered, there have been two influences which working side by side have contributed above everything else to that movement which God has granted to us.

The first influence is the exposition of the word of God. Through a very long period in England, there were very few who seriously and accurately expounded scripture. But through the ministry of certain older men, and one in particular, there was a witness to expository preaching.

And I would say that our main emphasis in our work now is that the word of God should be expounded. We don't believe in topical preaching, we don't really believe in just extracting text, we believe in expository preaching. But secondly, the influence which has played a great part in what has taken place is that influence of which we have been reminded in those closing verses of Hebrews 11.

It is the influence of historical truth, the awareness of that which God has done and wrought in ages past. It may well be that it was this second influence that had almost a primary place in the beginning of the change of direction which has taken place in many of our lives. But through a rediscovery of historical truth, there has been a new searching of the word of God.

Now, as I have just the opportunity this week to speak twice, I determined that what I must do would be to take one address on a more expository line, and the second must be on a historical line. So that I stand before you this evening to seek to draw your attention to some of the mighty things which have moved us greatly in these last years. I want to take you back to the county of England where we were this morning, to the county of Gloucestershire in the southwest of England, and I want you to stand with me on top of a hill that is exactly 15 miles south of Gloucester.

That hill is called Stinchcombe Hill, and on top of that hill, in the year 1522, there stood a young man in his middle twenties, short-statured. This was his native county, and he had come home to Gloucester. You may not know it, but if you have an authorized version on your lap now, 90 percent of that translation in the English tongue you owe to that man.

Or if you have a revised version before you, 75 percent of the English of that translation you owe to that man. He was the first, the peer of all English Bible translators, but he was more than that. He was the first English Puritan of the 16th century.

His life and his ministry represents the true fountainhead of the whole Puritan movement, and his name, of course, was William Tyndale. William Tyndale. Now, before we come back to Stinchcombe Hill and the year 1522, let's turn back for a moment to his previous history.

I said at that date he was in his middle twenties. Tyndale was born about the year 1495. We know practically nothing of his child, except that he was born in western Gloucestershire, in that area which we call the Cotswolds.

John Fox, the Protestant historian, in his first edition of his Book of Martyrs, which was published in 1563, some years later, in his first edition, John Fox says that William Tyndale was converted at Oxford through the influence of Luther's books, and that means that Tyndale must have been converted about the year 1520. But, in the second edition of John Fox's Book of Martyrs, in the meanwhile, somebody had written to Fox, evidently, and put him right, and John Fox omitted that statement, and instead he tells us that as a child in the University of Oxford, William Tyndale was brought to a knowledge of the gospel. Now, that's a very interesting thing.

Tyndale had gone up to Oxford as a boy of eight or so years old, about the year 1506. He became a Bachelor of Arts in the year 1512, but evidently, by about the year 1510, he was already a Christian. As a child, Fox says, in the second edition of his Book of Martyrs.

Now, when Erasmus went to Oxford a few years later, he said that in Oxford theology was dumb, poor, and in rags. There was certainly no truth there, and we may well suppose how Tyndale came to a knowledge of the truth, and the answer to that question we do not know. In all probability, it was that under the conviction of sin, he searched the Latin Vulgate, and through the text of Scripture alone in the Latin tongue, he was brought to a knowledge of the truth.

He went to Cambridge about 1516, and he was gradually in the process of throwing off the trammels of medieval scholasticism. He went to Cambridge to study Greek. He left Cambridge about the year 1521, and he came home to Gloucester to work as the tutor in the home of Sir John Walsh, and here he is.

The year is 1522. Tyndale has come home as a Christian, as a man who now believes the word of God. I want you to try and get into his mind as he stood on that hilltop on that year.

From the top of Stinchcombe Hill, you can see seven counties of England. If you ever go to England, you must go to Stinchcombe Hill. England was then a very wooded country from one side of the land to another.

It was forested, but amongst all the forests of Gloucestershire, there were innumerable churches. It was a local proverb, a sure as God in Gloucester, and yet when Tyndale stood there in that year, he knew that Gloucester, with all its abbeys and great cathedrals, was as dark as though there was no church there at all. Tyndale says that he comments in one place on the 28th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, where God speaks of making the heavens as brass and the earth like iron.

He says it would make a Christian man's heart bleed to read of it, and Tyndale's heart did bleed, because that was the situation in which he then was living. The heavens were brass and the earth under it like iron, and Tyndale knew that beyond the horizon which he could see from that vantage point, there were about three million people in England, almost the whole population, who had no other knowledge, said Tyndale, no other knowledge except that the oil savours them unto their damnation and denying of Christ's blood. The oil, of course, the anointing oil used in the ritual of the Roman church.

To the west of Stinchcombe Hill, there runs the River Severn. It's a river that begins in the midlands of England, and it flows down south westward till it comes out in a great estuary. Across the other side of that river, which Tyndale could see every day, were the mountains of Wales.

Wales was a dark and utterly pagan land. Sir Thomas Moore, who was one of Tyndale's great opponents in later years, he joked about the ignorance of the Welsh, and Tyndale was later to rebuke Sir Thomas

Moore. He said, I wonder that Moore can laugh at it and not rather weep for compassion to see the souls for which Christ shed his blood to perish.

We can well imagine if Tyndale looked across to Wales how those thoughts would be. And then as he looked down into the River Severn, he no doubt remembered how less than a hundred years before, in 1428, the body of John Wycliffe had been dug out of the ground and burnt at Lutterworth, and Wycliffe's ashes had been thrown into one of the upper tributaries of this River Severn. Tyndale knew that.

He also knew that only two years before, seven Lollards had been burnt to death in Coventry, and yet here he was alone as a Christian man in such a situation. He had evidently decided that he could not enter the active ministry of the church as it then was. To put it in his own words, he could not be nozzled by the bishops in long matins, long evensongs, long masses, long dirges.

And instead he chose then to teach the six-year-old son of Sir John Walsh in the little manor house at Sudbury. You can see that house, you can see today the room where Tyndale worked and prayed. John Fox tells us how Tyndale, although he was no parish priest, how he began to preach.

He began at the dinner table in Sir John Walsh's home. Sir John Walsh was a well-to-do man. The local clergy used to gather in the evenings at his hospitable table, and Fox tells us how William Tyndale began with open scripture to confront the abbots, deans, archdeacons, and other diverse doctors.

After several such experiences, Fox says, these great benefic doctors waxed weary and bear a secret grudge in their heart against Master Tyndale. The lady of the house, Lady John Walsh, said to Tyndale one day, she said, were it reason that we should believe you before so great and so learned benefic men? And although I can't tell you exactly what Tyndale said in reply, I can tell you in his own words his testimony in another place. He said, well I know, speaking of his knowledge of the truth, well I know I never deserved it, nor prepared myself unto it, but ran another way, clean contrary in my blindness, and sought not that way.

But he sought me, and found me out, and showed it me, and therewith drew me to him, and I bow the knees of my heart unto God, night and day, that he will show it unto all other men. And we can picture Tyndale in that little manor house at Sobre, exercised in prayer for these men whom he daily met. He was a man who at this period in his life was being filled by the Holy Spirit, and filled with the power of the truth.

Tyndale says, whom God chooseth to reign everlastingly with Christ, him sealethe he with his mighty spirit, and poureth strength into his heart to suffer afflictions with Christ, forbearing witness unto the truth. You may well remember the story how Tyndale, very soon after this, was warned by one of the local doctors of the church. Do you not know, said the man quietly to Tyndale one day, do you not know that the Pope is the very Antichrist of which the scripture speaks? But be careful what you say, he said, for if it is known that you be of that opinion, it will cost you your life.

And shortly after that, Tyndale was called by the ecclesiastical authorities to an ecclesiastical court at Chipping Sobre. A man by the name of Webb was his accuser, and Tyndale, we read as he walked that day to that court meeting, he in going thitherwards prayed in his mind heartily to God to strengthen him to stand fast in the truth of his word. And then we read when he came to this court meeting that the Chancellor of the court, he rated him like a dog.

You bear yourself boldly, the Chancellor said to Tyndale, you bear yourself boldly with the gentlemen here in this county that you will be otherwise dealt with. Tyndale pleaded that he might have liberty to go anywhere in England, and if he were only paid, he said, ten pounds a year, so that he could only teach children and preach. But as he left that courtroom, he must well have known that his time was speedily drawing to a close in Gloucestershire.

It was perceived that he had drawing influence. More than once, Tyndale had gone down right into Bristol, and there on St. Austin's Green, where Whitfield was to preach 200 years later, there Tyndale had preached in the open air the word of life. But Tyndale was now acutely aware of the tremendous opposition against which the truth was being opposed, or with which the truth was being opposed.

There was custom, custom as thick as the old solid wall of that manor house. There was prejudice. Better be without God's laws than the Pope.

Sorry, the other way around. No, that is the right way around. Men said to Tyndale, better be without God's laws than the Pope's laws.

Prejudice, superstition, and appalling ignorance, Tyndale said. He said, we have above 20,000 clergy that know no scripture except that which is written in their quartetes, that is their liturgical manual, and we have many other testimonies to the same truth. John Hooper, for example, John Hooper, who was later martyred in the city of Gloucester itself, Hooper wrote in the year 1546, he said, he that had sought all the churches in England before 16 years ago should not have found one bible, but in every church such abomination and idolatry as the like was not since the time of Josiah.

Everywhere idols with all abomination. This is what Tyndale saw, ignorance. And he also saw that he had only one short and mortal life, and that even though he were able in some other part of England to hide himself and to do a little work for the gospel, it would be very small.

And so God formed in his mind and heart the vision of a power that could be unloosed, that could sweep through the land, and that power would be the word of God in the English tongue. Tyndale's vision then was that that Latin bible in which the truth had been locked up for so many centuries, that that bible should be so open that the plow boy on the hillside, the man working in the village, the people in Bristol, that they should have it in their mother tongue. He went then, and we might think it's strange, he went to Cuthbert Tunstall, who was the Bishop of London, the year was 1523.

Tunstall was one of the new humanists. Now, of course, that word doesn't mean what it means now, but Tunstall was a man with a reputation for literature, for the learning of the Renaissance, a man who applauded Erasmus, who believed in reviving the Greek tongue. Tunstall was a learned, scholarly, polite gentleman, and Tyndale hoped that with his learning and with his knowledge he would be ready to countenance the first translation of the bible from the Greek into the English tongue.

But when Tyndale came to the palace of the Bishop of London, he had a cold, polite, very evasive reply. Tunstall regretted that he had no room in his palace, and that he was not able to help Tyndale in what he wanted to do. And, of course, Tyndale came to learn, and no doubt this event helped him greatly.

He came to learn, just as Luther learned with Erasmus, what a tremendous gulf there is between the learning and the scholarship of this world, and that truth which God has revealed. When I think of Tyndale walking away from the palace of the Bishop of London, I invariably think of another man, a couple of

centuries later, Andrew Fuller, the particular Baptist who joined hands with William Carey and John Ryland to begin that first great missionary work. Andrew Fuller, in the late 1780s, he went down to London to stir up the Christians of the city of London to give their money for the advancement of the gospel amongst the heathens.

And Andrew Fuller tells us that as he saw the reception which he got in London, that often he had to turn aside down some alleyway and stand and quietly weep at the indifference of the church. You may remember that when William Carey finally went out to India in 1793, he went with only the sum of about 13 pounds, having been originally subscribed to that mission. Tyndale then was rebuffed, but he was absolutely persuaded of the necessity of doing this work.

This is what he said with regard to the need of the translation of God's word. He said, I had perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, the order, the meaning of the text. Or else, he says, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again, resting the scripture unto their own purpose, clean contrary to the context, and the process, and the meaning of the text.

And so Tyndale made that great decision. In 1524, he sailed from London, never to return, with 10 pounds in money with him, given by Sir Humphrey Monmouth, a Christian merchant, and he went to Flanders, to the continent of Europe, there to live for 11 years as a fugitive in hiding on the run, but in order to get the word of God to his native land. It's a tremendous and amazing story.

Nobody really knows often where Tyndale was in those 11 years. He was hunted in every place. Sir Thomas More, one of his greatest enemies, speaks in 1532, and he says, speaking of Tyndale, he says, the heretic of England, who is both nowhere and everywhere, that Tyndale's influence, More said, seemed to be everywhere, and yet he's a big man in nowhere.

He moved from place to place in hiding, working under conditions of extraordinary difficulty, and yet let's just take a little time to say what he did. First of all, he seems to have gone to Wittenberg, and he arrived in Wittenberg the same year that Martin Luther published his Bondage of Will. I don't know that there's any particular connection there, but he was of kindred spirit with the German reformers.

Can't you imagine them sitting down to supper in Wittenberg, and speaking of the work of God, and how that kingdom could be advanced in the earth? And Tyndale began to learn German. Before his death, before his death, it was said that he could speak seven languages as his native tongue. He was working now on the text of the New Testament from the Greek, and by the end of 1525, he had prepared to the end of the New Testament, and he took to the city of Cologne, and by the end of 1525, he had prepared to the end of the New Testament, and he took to the city of Cologne that first New Testament to be printed in the English tongue, but it wasn't printed at Cologne.

Mark's gospel was printed, they had just begun to print Matthew's gospel, when one of the printers went out one evening and becoming drunk, he began to speak to some of the people about the strange thing that was being printed. Six thousand copies, he said, of this New Testament we're printing. It wasn't long before the word had reached the ears of the priests, and Tyndale simply had the time to rush to this printer's shop, and collecting what he could of these fragments of manuscripts, he took them by ship up the Rhine to Worms, and there that fragment, the first bit of the New Testament ever to be printed in the English tongue, it was printed, and began to be shipped into England in the year 1526.

If you want to know the first date of English Puritanism, this is the date, 1525-1526. I wish I could start to read to you some of Tyndale's burning language in his preface to this New Testament. He talks about what the gospel is, about what the blood of Christ is.

Give diligence, reader, I exhort thee, that thou come with a pure mind, and as the scripture says, with a single eye to these words of health and of eternal life, by the which, if we repent and believe them, we are born anew, created afresh, and enjoy the fruits of the blood of Christ, which blood crieth not for vengeance as the blood of Abel, but hath purchased life, love, favour, grace, blessing, and whatsoever is promised in the scripture to them that believe and obey God, and standeth between us, and wrath, vengeance, curse, and whatsoever the scripture threateneth against the unbeliever. Now it's hard for us to realize what Tyndale did in that translation. We sometimes hear, do we not, from the Wycliffe translators today of their difficulty in coining new terms in strange languages where there doesn't exist the vocabulary to put these things into writing.

But you know that many of the words that we now use continually, they didn't exist before Tyndale coined these words. The mercy seat, Tyndale coined that word. The scapegoat, the tender mercies of God, the long suffering of God, these are all Tyndale's words.

Words that did not exist before Tyndale wrote them down, the Passover, that's Tyndale's words. I said at the beginning that 90% of our authorized version is the language of William Tyndale. Very few Christians realize that.

1526 then, Tyndale's New Testament, needless to say after that fragment was printed, the whole New Testament soon followed and was printed at Cologne. But Tyndale was far more than a translator. He was a great preacher.

You can see that in his writing. In the same year, 1526, he wrote a little book, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon. Now I just want to give you this statement on justification.

Faith, Tyndale says, unites us to Christ, so that Christ is thine and all his deeds are thy deeds. Christ is in thee and thou in him, knit together inseparably. Neither canst thou be damned, except Christ be damned with thee.

Neither can Christ be saved, except thou be saved with him. Tyndale's next book was a book, The Obedience of the Christian Man, which he published in 1528. That's a very interesting and a very important book, because in that book, Tyndale anticipated that one of the great problems in the Reformation era would be the relationship of believers to the powers that be.

The civil powers, for example, and also the church powers. You know that those powers were dovetailed together. And Tyndale, in that book, The Obedience of the Christian Man, he had to show the Christian doctrine of submission to magistrates and those in authority, and at the same time he had to show that submission to the powers that be in the church, instead of being a biblical duty, was something which every Christian should repudiate.

So that when Tyndale wrote The Obedience of the Christian Man, he knew that he was advising Christians to do something that would lead them straight to martyrdom and to suffering. He knew that, and therefore he wrote in the preface to that book, he said, let us be bold in the Lord and comfort our souls. Christ is with us unto the world's end.

Let his little flock be bold therefore, for if God be on our side, what matter is it who be against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes, or whatsoever names they will. We are called not to dispute, as the pope's disciples do, but to die with Christ, that we may live with him, and to suffer with him, that we may reign with him. In that year 1528, or thereabout, Tyndale's thinking went through quite a serious change.

When he first printed the New Testament, he had practically no marginal notes that were derogatory to the church. He made no comment on the corruption or the unbelief of the clergy. He simply let the scripture go out without comment.

But in those two years, Tyndale had seen a great deal. For one thing, he saw Cuthbert Tunstall ordering the burning of his New Testament in the streets of London. He heard of Cardinal Woodley persecuting the few believers in Cambridge.

He heard of four Christians dying in the dungeons under Christchurch in Oxford. He heard of a printer who had been tortured for handling Tyndale's books. And as Tyndale heard of these things, he began to realize that this ecclesiastical institution was not just a body that was ignorant and poor, but it was a body that was anti-Christian.

It was a body, therefore, that had to be opposed. And from about the year 1528, we find Tyndale beginning to speak to the church issue, beginning to apply the scripture to the contemporary condition of the church in that day. He says, the Jews look still for Christ, though he is come 1500 years ago, and they are not aware of it.

We also have looked for Antichrist, and he has reigned as long, and we not aware. And that because either we looked carnally for him, and not in the place where we ought to have sought the Antichrist. Tyndale has a sentence which has always struck me.

He says, Antichrist will always be the best Christian man. The best Christian man. He began then to deal with the corruption of the church.

Now I can't, despite the liberty I've been given this evening, I can't pause on that, except I just want to state one thing which is perhaps most important of all. It was William Tyndale who first laid down the great Puritan principle that everything in the church is to be measured by the word of God. It is to have the warrant of scripture.

Now Tyndale used this principle as a mighty lever in dealing with the abuses of his day. Just listen to him dealing with 1 Timothy chapter 3, dealing with these marks of a true minister and elder in the church. He says, bishops and priests that preach not, or that preach ought, are none of Christ, nor of his anointing, but servants of the beast, whose mark they bear, whose word they preach, whose law they maintain, clean against God's law.

Behold these monsters, how they are disguised with mitres, clothiers, and hats, with crosses, pillars, and poleaxes, and with three crowns. What names have they? My Lord Prior, my Lord Abbot, my Lord Bishop, my Lord Archbishop, Cardinal, Legates. If it please your fatherhood, if it please your lordship, and so on.

If they minister their offices truly, Tyndale says, it is a sign that Christ's spirit is in them, if not that the devil is in them. Well, you'll readily understand that when that kind of thing was being read in England, in the palace of Henry VIII, and in the palace of Cardinal Wolsey, there was great indignation. John Fox says that Tyndale's book had the same effect in England, that our Lord's coming had upon Herod, and upon

Jerusalem, there was great disturbance.

And in 1529, the ring of men who were being paid to hunt Tyndale down, this ring closed very tightly on Tyndale. By God's providence, he escaped from Antwerp, where he was at that time, and he took a ship northwards along the coast of the Netherlands to Hamburg. Now, on that sea journey, Tyndale had the most precious thing that he could have with him.

He had now finished, from the Hebrew language, a translation of the whole of the Pentateuch. Think of that. In those years, there was no Hebrew taught at either Oxford or Cambridge, but Tyndale, by God's grace and God's strength, had so mastered that language that we are still reading his translation of the Pentateuch.

He took it with him, but he'd never got to Hamburg. The ship was wrecked. Tyndale's life was spared, but he lost all his manuscripts, his books, and his writing, and had to begin again in Hamburg.

That set him back a year or two. Mr. Darling Morgan knows something of the discouragement that that would have been to be set back like that. In 1530, he published his *Just Genesis*.

That was followed by the Pentateuch. I must pass on from all that, except to say there that Tyndale has been criticized for not continuing with his translation work more quickly, because after he had finished the Pentateuch, he proceeded to write two more books. One was the *Practice of Prelates*.

The other was *His Answer to Sir Thomas More*. Those are great books. Those books really give you the pattern, the beginnings of English Puritanism.

In the *Practice of Prelates*, Tyndale gives us his convictions with regard to the ordering of the church. In *His Answer to Sir Thomas More*, he gives us the theology which was later to be written in documents of the Westminster Confession. They're two great books, and people who regret that Tyndale spent time on those books show that they don't realize what Tyndale was.

He was more than a translator. He was a leader. He was a man who was setting down a policy which he knew that others would follow, even after he was dead and martyred.

And those martyrdoms were now coming thick and fast. Tyndale had a little group of men around him. One of those men was John Frith.

John Frith escaped from the dungeons of Oxford in 1528, and he crossed over to Antwerp and joined with Tyndale. There was also John Lambert. There was Richard Byfield, who carried these New Testaments across the English Channel.

There were other men who I could mention, but in a space of two or three years, nearly all these men were burnt to death. In 1530, Thomas Hitton, a friend of Tyndale's, was burnt to death at Maidstone. In 1531, Thomas Bilney was burnt to death at Norwich.

He had given a copy of Tyndale's New Testament to a nun. For that, he died in the flames in August 1531. Richard Byfield, the book carrier, was burnt to death the same year.

And the greatest loss of all, John Frith, one of all the reformers, John Frith was burnt to death in 1533. John Frith was such an able man, and such an attractive personality, that Henry VIII offered a special pardon to Frith through Sir Thomas More, if he would desist from his preaching. And this is what John

Frith replied to Thomas More.

He said, I assure you that I neither will nor can cease to speak, for the word of God boileth in my body like a fervent fire, and will need have an issue. Two years later, Tyndale, still alive, was betrayed in the city of Antwerp. Rather like the assassination, if you know the story of the assassination of William of Orange, it's a similar kind of story.

A man of the character of Judas Iscariot came into Tyndale's friendship, was befriended by him, and then suddenly betrayed Tyndale. One lunchtime, as they were going out for a meal together, Tyndale was captured in the street of Antwerp, possessing literally nothing except the clothes in which he was standing. A few years before, when Tyndale was commenting on Genesis, he speaks about Joseph being put into prison, and this is what he says, that when Joseph was put into prison, those promises, that is the promises of God, accompanied him always, and went down with him even into the deep dungeon, and brought him up again, and never forsook him till all that was promised was fulfilled.

And I want to give you a quotation from Tyndale's exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. It's a quotation which seems to be so autobiographical, you can almost feel that when Tyndale wrote these words, he was anticipating his own death. Commenting on Matthew 5 verse 9, he says, Well, though iniquity so highly prevail, and the truth for which thou diest be so low kept under, and be not once known before the world, insomuch that it seemeth rather to be hindered by thy death than furthered, which is the greatest of all grief.

Yet let not thine heart fail thee, neither despair as though God had forsaken thee, or loved thee not, but comfort thyself with old examples, how God has suffered all his old friends to be so entreated, and also his only and dear son Jesus, whose example above all others set before thine eyes, because thou art sure he was well beloved above all others, that thou doubt not, but that thou art also beloved. You see, he's arguing, it's faith, arguing against reason, but though these men were so few, and though they were to die, and it seemed that the truth was going to perish from the earth, yet Tyndale says, remember God has dealt so with all his friends, and his dear and only beloved son, and therefore he says, realize that thou art loved also, and much more loved, the more thou art like to the image of Christ in his suffering. Now, how are you bearing up? Oh, I don't know, I don't know.

Five, six minutes. Well, really just what I wanted to do was to draw out some of the main lessons that Tyndale gives us. I have a number of quotations which I'll pass over, which were written in this century, which speak of Tyndale, as somebody says, dying for a doctrine which hardly anybody in England now holds.

The Times newspaper in 1536, on the anniversary of Tyndale's martyrdom, incidentally I forgot to tell you about his martyrdom, we'll come back to it, but speaking of Tyndale, the Times said, Tyndale, the controversialist, is a figure of pathos, whose acrimonious treatises are already forgotten, and then one of the bishops of the Church of England a few years ago, he said that Tyndale's books are little read, and these writings, which multitudes of readers ran desperate risks to obtain, fail to stir the faintest flicker of interest in our minds. Now, there's a proof of that fact. Just before the last war, there was a very fine life of Tyndale, published by J.F. Moseley, he was the author, by the SPCK, the publishers.

Do you know that after nearly 20 years, that book was still plodding on through a first edition? I think it was only last year that the edition was sold out. It's an example of the evangelical indifference to their great heritage. Now, I just have two points that I'll try and make very briefly.

Tyndale was the first reformer, the first English reformer, to recover what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be a Christian, and one could spend time with Tyndale on justification, Tyndale against free will, Tyndale on effectual calling, and these kindred doctrines. But I just want to give you a quote on not what it is to become a Christian, but listen to Tyndale on how a Christian lives. And here, Tyndale is really the Apostle John of the 16th century, the apostle of love.

To Tyndale, the nature of the Christian life is the love of Christ constraining us to obedience and to service. If any man asks me, says Tyndale, seeing that faith justifies me, why do I work? I answer, love compels me, for as long as my soul feeleth what love God has showed me in Christ, I cannot but love God again and love his commands. Now, I've lost the other quotation that I was going to give you, so, oh no, here it is.

This is a beautiful quotation, I think I like it more than any of the others. He's speaking of the nature of the Christian life. He says, if we be in Christ, we work for no worldly purpose but of love, as Paul says, the love of Christ compels us.

We are otherwise minded than when Peter drew his sword to fight for Christ. We are ready to suffer with Christ and to lose life and all for our very enemies to bring them unto Christ. If we be in Christ, we are minded like unto Christ.

Christ is all to the Christian man. Christ is the cause why I love thee. Now, imagine this, here is some Englishman brought up in all the superstitions of Rome, and someone has given him this little book that has been hidden and brought in from the continent, and this is what he reads.

Christ is the cause why I love thee, why I am ready to do the uttermost of my power for thee, and why I pray for thee, and as long as the cause abideth, so long last the effect. Do therefore the worst thou canst unto me, take away my good, take away my good name, yet as long as Christ remains in my heart, so long do I love thee, not a bit the less, and so long thou art as dear unto me as my own soul. And so long am I ready to do thee good for thine evil, and so long I pray for thee with all my heart, for Christ desireth it of me, and hath deserved it of me.

Thine unkindness compared unto his kindness is nothing at all, yea, it is swallowed up as a little smoke of a mighty wind, and is no more seen or thought of. William Tyndale was the apostle of love. One of the articles for which Tyndale was condemned as a heretic by the Roman church, now this is a historical fact that is written on paper, Tyndale was condemned for, amongst other articles of belief, for the following statement that they took out of Tyndale's writing, I am bound, Tyndale said, I am bound to love the Turk with the very bottom of my heart.

John Fox gives us some beautiful stories of Tyndale's influence amongst the gentlemen of Gloucestershire, when he was put in prison, he was in prison for a little over a year, the jailer was converted, the jailer's daughter was converted in that prison at Beaubourg. Fox tells us that before Tyndale was imprisoned, that often he used to preach to a little group of believers secretly in Antwerp, and Fox says that he spoke so fruitfully, so sweetly, and so gently, that it was much like to the writing of John the Evangelist. My other point which I, oh I mustn't pass over this point, Tyndale's last word, he was burnt to death on the 6th of October, or thereabouts, 1536, alone in a foreign country, he was taken out of the prison at Beaubourg, to the south gate of the city, and there he was strangled and burnt.

Do you know the last word that Tyndale prayed? You ought to know them, they're often quoted, but it teaches us what the man was. Lord, he said, crying, John Fox says with a fervent voice, Lord open the king of England's eyes. That king who had hunted him and persecuted him, and at last had him trapped and burnt, Lord open the king of England's eyes.

That's William Tyndale. I would have spoken on his dependence upon God. How through all things, Tyndale never trimmed the truth, he never hid any truth, there wasn't the slightest shade of expediency in this man.

He stood, and he stood sometimes alone, and he said, God will take care of what comes to pass. He will only have us care to keep his commandments, and to leave the rest to him. All things are in his hand, and he can remedy all things, and he will, for his truth's sake, if we pray to him.

And then when John Frick lay in prison in London, Tyndale got a letter through to him, shortly before Frick was burned, and in that letter Tyndale says to Frick, his friend, he says, if you give yourself, cast yourself, yield yourself, commit yourself wholly to your loving father, then shall his power be in you, and make you strong. To look for no man's help brings the help of God to them who are overcome in the eyes of the hypocrite. Yea, it will make God to carry you through sick and sin, for his truth's sake.

Therefore, if not a hair of your head shall his hour become, and when his hour is come, necessity carryeth us then, though we do not will it.

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