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[0:00] But you'll forgive me if I begin with a complaint. I don't often do this. In fact, I'm not sure I've ever done it before.! Dark-covered chocolate biscuit.

But I thought, well, it's like being back in Cambridge. But after 17 years in Cambridge, I had managed almost to teach my congregation to have a supply of biscuits when I came to visit.
I will know you have become real Presbyterians when you provide a decent fare. It is a great privilege to be here with you this morning.
I'd like to read, first of all, in Ephesians chapter 4, first six verses. And we will be dipping in and out of other passages in the Bible.
Paul's letter to the Ephesians is structured very significantly.
[1:32] If I were to ask you how many imperative verbs are there in the first three chapters, I wonder if you'd have any immediate idea.

Anyone willing to hazard an educated guess? How many imperative verbs does Paul use? You know what an imperative verb is? Pardon? Zero. Zero. No?
One. One. But in the next three chapters, there's about 30. And Paul is reminding us, grammatically as well as theologically, that the gospel is first about God.
It's about who God is and what God has done. I say that for this particular reason. If I were to ask you this morning, why does the Lord raise up elders and deacons in his church?
What would your instinctive answer be? It's not a rhetorical question, so I'd like this to be a little interactive if possible. So if someone said, why do you have elders and deacons in Ealing and Lys or Brentford or Ilford?
[2:47] Why do you have them? The answer would be? To equip God's people. Good answer. B answer. B answer.

A good answer. Trigger. Good, but B. Another answer. God's gift. Yeah, God's gift to the church. Good answer. B. The answer.
Service. Good answer. B minus. I just said that because it's Graham. To guard the faithful preaching of scripture.
To guard the faithful preaching of scripture. Very good answer. B slightly plus. Because it's in scripture. Pardon? Because it's in scripture. Because it's in scripture.
Yeah, that's sine qua non. So another B. B. Because Christ has risen. Because Christ has risen. These are all helpful answers.
[3:45] But they are not ultimate answers. You see, all of those answers deal with God's proximate purpose for the church.

Which is its order, its edification. God's ultimate purpose for the church is its beautification. God is preparing a bride for his son.
The church is not first about us. It's about our savior, Jesus Christ. God has predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of his son.
In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. The gospel is ultimately about Jesus Christ. He is God's ultimate purpose.
We are God's proximate purpose. So when we're thinking about elders and deacons and their relationship to the church, we need to keep in mind the ultimate purpose.
[4:46] God is preparing a bride fit for its king. God wants order in his church. He wants reverence. But God wants a people to reflect in a creaturely, analogical way the glory of his son.

In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. So with that in mind, let me read Ephesians 4, 1 through 6.
I therefore a prisoner for the Lord. Paul is in prison in Rome. Urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

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With all humility and gentleness. With patience. Bearing with one another in love. Eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.
There is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. One Lord.
[6:00] One faith. One baptism. One God and Father of all. Who is over all. And through all.

And in all. Let me tell you a little bit about myself. So that I can segue into what I'd like to be saying this morning.
I'm a convinced Calvinist. I'm a Westminster Confession fellow. From the top of my head to the soles of my feet. I'm an unembarrassed, creedal, confessional Christian.
But before any of that. I'm a blood-bought sinner. That's my default. That's my default.
I'm not a shepherd who's a sheep. I'm a blood-redeemed sheep. Who by the mercy and good purpose of God. Has become a shepherd in the flock of Christ.
[7:04] I was recently reading some words of John Owen. If you're interested. Volume 13. Page 95. Where he says.

I would rather. Much rather. Spend all my days. Healing the breaches and schisms. In the church of Christ.
Than spend one hour. Defending my positions. Though I could defend them. With a fair defense. I would rather.
Much rather. Spend all my days. Healing the breaches and schisms. In the church of Jesus Christ.
Than spend one hour.
Defending my positions. Though I could. Make a fair defense. Of them. I say that. Because.
[8:04] Owen is reflecting. What I think. Lies at the heart. Of the pristine reform tradition. That our. Principial concern.

Is not to be. Ultimately. With our. Little. Expression. Of the reform tradition. But with the cause. With the cause. Of Jesus Christ.
In its. Catholicity. Some of you. Will know. John Calvin's. Very famous. And rightly famous. Letter. To Archbishop. Thomas Cranmer.
In 1553. Where he writes. Just at the beginning. Of the Marian persecutions. He said. I would willingly cross. Ten seas.
To help heal. The bleeding body. Of Christ. Now crossing. Ten seas. In 1553. Is a little different. From crossing. Ten seas. In 2017.
[8:59] Calvin. Had a passion. For. Protestant. Unity. And. That seems. So foreign.

To the reformed church. Generally speaking. Today. We're so infected. By 300 years. Of post. Enlightenment. Atomized thinking.
That. We are hardly moved. Never mind. Scandalized. By the dividedness. Of. The church. Of Jesus Christ.
Maybe I could ask you. When. When did you last. Grieve over. Weep over. Plead over. The dividedness.
Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. It's almost as if. The Lord Jesus Christ. Never prayed. Father.
[9:55] That they may be one. That the world might see. See. Because the only church. With which we have to do. Is the visible church. God alone knows.

Those who are his. We have no access. To the. To the hearts. Of men and women. God alone knows. Those who are his. The only church. With which we have to do.
Is the visible church. The church. Of credible. Gospel. Faithful. Profession. And I say that. Because. I do believe.
That how we think. About the church. In a myriad of ways. Impacts. And influences. Without us knowing it. How we think. About our local churches.
I have a. Fear. I've got one or two. Minor fears. But I've got a big fear. As a Christian. And one of. My big fear is this.
[10:53] That I will ever speak. Ill. Of anyone. Bought with the blood. Of Jesus Christ. Chosen in times eternal.

By the heavenly father. And indwelled. By the holy spirit. I don't mean. I should never. Seek to. Confront. Or correct.
Such a brother. Or sister. And be open to their. Confronting. And corrections. I don't mean. That I should never. Passionately. Or animatedly. Seek to. Bring them.

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To. Embed. Their lives. In the theology. And spirituality. Of the Westminster standards. I don't mean that. But I have this fear.
And I. Honestly. Is a fear. Of speaking. Ill. Of a brother. Or sister. Bought. With the precious.
[11:49] Blood. Of the God. Man. Jesus Christ. So when we think. About. Leadership. In the church. I do believe.

We need to. Cultivate. That. Spirit. Of expansiveness. And catholicity. That has marked. The best. Of the church's.
Leaders. Throughout the ages. John. John. no one was not noted for being a vacillator. He wasn't noted for being a mealy-mouthed compromiser.
But he was passionate in his concern to pursue, as much as he was able, unity in the faith. He didn't see it as tangential.
Like Calvin, he didn't think it was something that he could turn to when the times allowed or when the opportunity allowed.
[12:50] It was something that was a divine calling upon his life. And I would hope that Presbyterian churches, in these confused times, would be noted for steadfastness, faithfulness, unyielding resolve, to be faithful even unto death, if it pleases the Lord, for the cause of Jesus Christ and his gospel.

But I hope in all of that, we might also be noted as being the most generous, the most open-hearted, the most embracive of men and women.
You have a little handout. It might seem a little daunting. We won't be here all day. I'm not going to go through the 15. The first session will focus on the first two, the 15 points, and then there's actually eight in the second. You've got five.
I just want to touch on them. I won't touch on all of them. But if we're going to think about leadership and what it means to be a shepherd, a pastor, and a servant in the cause of God, his church and kingdom, we need to remember, above all, of course, that Jesus Christ is the true chief shepherd of the sheep, 1 Peter 5.
We are to shepherd in such a way that people know that Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd. If you're interested, John Calvin has a wonderful exposition of 1 Peter 5.4 and Acts 20.20.
[14:45] If you've got Calvin's commentaries, they're absolutely fabulous on those two passages. We are to shepherd knowing that Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd and shepherd in such a way that the congregation knows that Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd and also that Jesus Christ is the great deacon of the church.

I've come not to be served, but to serve, to give my life a ransom for the many. He is the great deacon. He's the prototypical deacon of the church.
But we need to understand that in its widest context. What exactly is the church? What is it that we're seeking to build? When Jesus said, I will build my church, he is the great church builder. What was he actually saying? Well, these are just 15. They're not plucked out of the air. They're plucked out of my head, but out of the Bible, I hope.
They have a kind of order, at least in my disconnected head. Let me just run through them. The spiritual nature of the church.
[16:03] The church is a fellowship of the twice-born. We are a supernaturally founded community of faith.

The church is founded on the Holy Trinity. The early church and our Reformation forebears would be mystified and appalled in equal measure at the crystal monism that seems to dominate so much of the evangelical church.
Some of you will know the phrase Calvin in Book 1, 1317 of the Institutes. He says, these words of Gregory, meaning Gregory Nazianzen, vastly delight me.
Now, Calvin wasn't noted for overstatement. And when Calvin says something vastly delighted him, you stop and you think, well, let me go and find out what that is.
And he quotes a few words of Gregory from his baptismal oration 40, section 41. If you haven't read it, it's just a fabulous read. I read it recently to Joan and one of my boys, and it takes about five minutes.
[17:17] He's catechizing a young man, preparing him for baptism. And I read this baptismal oration 40, section 41. And I just stopped and I looked at Joan.

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And she didn't know what to say. And I looked at Jonathan and he just went, wow. Here's someone saturated with the Holy Trinity.
And Calvin says, these words vastly delight me. And Gregory, he quotes Gregory, when I think of the one, I must think of the three. But when I think of the three, I must think of the one.
They are one undivided torch. And when I do, my mind is overwhelmed. My heart is filled. I must turn aside and with tears worship.
Now, when did you last, as you pondered God's revelation of himself as a Holy Trinity, when did you last find your heart overwhelmed, your mind filled?
[18:25] When were you last, tearfully, bowing down in adoration? Well, to my shame, I can hardly think of the last time. The early church fathers didn't get everything right.

Some things they got spectacularly wrong. Augustine didn't know any Greek. That's why he was so wonky on justification. But they got some things spectacularly right.
And we need to recover and be at the forefront of recovering this glorious Trinitarian heritage that, of course, is embedded in Scripture and is seen in the life, the worship, the liturgy, the service of the church throughout the ages.
People need to come into our worship services and discover themselves confronted by the God who is three and who is one.
And yet, in the midst of that Trinitarian foundation, there is a Christo-centric note. And Luther heralds this at the Reformation when he talked about Crook's probat omnia, the cross is the test of everything.
[19:44] Now, Luther was prone to exaggeration. If you know anything about Luther, he takes language to the ultimate hyperbole. But here, he doesn't.

He's saying the test of everything is the cross. The cross promised. The cross revealed.
The cross explicated. The cross applied. Everything in Holy Scripture focuses upon the one, the God-man who, at the behest of the Father and indwelled by the Holy Spirit, comes to offer himself without spot or blemish in our place and for our sake.
People, as they are confronted by who God is in his triunity, will at the same time be confronted by the supreme revelation of the triune God in the cross of Jesus Christ.
It wasn't the Father who died. It wasn't the Spirit who died. But Jesus Christ died as the sent one of the Father and upheld by the Spirit. Hebrews 9.14.
[21:02] And then there's the Catholic character of the church. I've touched on that. Read Westminster Confession 26.4.

It's a fabulous, one of the finest statements on gospel Catholicity you'll find anywhere. And number five, the preaching ministry of the church.
It's significant, isn't it, that as Paul faces the execution of sword, 2 Timothy 4, He tells Timothy, In season and out of season, You kairos, eikairos, In good times and in bad times, Preach the word. Herald the word. Let nothing distract you from this principal calling that God has given to you. Preach the word.
I was quite struck many years ago reading something in Calvin that initially surprised me. He said the church can exist without the sacraments, but it cannot exist without the word.
[22:10] And our congregations need to be places where the preaching, the explication of the word of God in Jesus Christ is made known.

Now there will be, of course, gospel application. Wasn't it Richard Baxter who said many sermons die for lack of application? But we live in a day when people in evangelical churches, our kinds of churches, don't really understand that Jesus Christ himself is the great incentive for godly living. He is the great application of the gospel. In his, I don't know if any of you have read volume one of O, and some of you have had it, on the glory of Christ.
He has this, I think, beautiful, lyrically beautiful passage which is just so rich in theology. And he's really saying if people are suffering and struggling with obedience in the Christian life, preach the glory of Christ to them.
That would be so foreign, I think, to many of our churches. If people are languishing, if people are struggling in any way, if temptation is pressing hard upon them, preach the glory of Christ.
[23:28] A few years ago, a young fellow in the congregation, a very fine Christian, came to me and said, I'm struggling badly with internet pornography.

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I was so full of admiration for him. He came and he said, with shame, I want to tell you. And we would meet together regularly and I thought, you know, I don't quite know what to do.
I've not read any books about this. It's quite neat. Do you see, when a sin doesn't trouble you, and that has never troubled me, other sins trouble me, they're actually worse than that.
You might think, is that possible? Yes. That sin's never bothered me. When a sin doesn't bother you, I don't know, I think psychologically you tend not to dwell upon how you might pastorally respond to it.
But every time we met, I would choose passages that focused on the glory of Jesus Christ. And it struck me that when the Lord restores Peter, John 21, Peter has failed horribly, remember?
[24:40] Before a servant girl, he denies the Lord with curses. And when Jesus restores her, he doesn't say to Peter, Peter, do you promise from now on to be courageous and bold?

Do you promise no longer to be pusillanimous and weak-willed and faltered? Do you promise to be resolute? He says, Peter, do you love me? Do you love me?
You see, Peter's failure was not that he lacked courage. Peter's failure was he didn't love Jesus as much as he thought he did. And it's when you love someone that your affections have taken up with them.
And you are the better armoured against temptation. And so in our preaching ministry, we're to proclaim Jesus Christ.
When we pastor people, people will come to you and they'll say, I've got this problem and that problem. And you'll say, well, let's think about the Lord Jesus.
[25:44] Well, yeah, I'm happy to do that later, but please, will you address the problem? Now, one or two who might be medics and you know about referred pain. You know, you go to the doctor and you say, I've got a really bad knee.

The doctor examines you and says, yeah, you've got a problem with your right shoulder. And you say, what a numpty. My shoulder's fine. It's my knee. He says, yeah, your shoulder's actually not fine.
Your knee isn't the problem. It's coming out there that the problem's actually somewhere else. And Jesus does that in the upper room in John 14 through 17.
He begins, you'll remember, let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. The disciples are besides themselves with anxiety. They're worried.
They're fearful. Jesus is going to leave them. How are they going to cope? Life seems to be falling apart around them. What does Jesus actually do in John 14 to 17?
[26:45] Well, he does many things, but if you run, if you read through, if you stand far enough back and look at the terrain of the chapters, you discover something very striking.

Jesus is saying to them, I know you're troubled. Let me tell you about the Holy Trinity. Imagine someone comes to your door tonight, some fellow member or dealing or whatever, and they say, I'm in great distress that this has happened.
Can you help me? And you give them a cup of tea with a biscuit. And you say, well, let's think about what?
Well, let's think about the Holy Trinity. I would guess most people would think, well, that's nice, but that's really not what I need.
And Jesus is saying to his disciples, this is what you need. You need your lives sunk into who God is. Number six, the covenantal, sacramental, sealing signs of the church are called the drama of identity.
[27:59] The evangelical world today, in all its forms, I think, plays down the significance of the sacraments. And yet, in the Bible, Old and New Testaments, sometimes the language of the Bible collapses the sign into the reality.

Genesis 17, circumcision is called the covenant. Now, is it not the sealing sign of the covenant? Yes, it is. But it's actually called the covenant.
1 Peter 3, Peter says, baptism now saves you. It's a great question to ask an ordination of elders and pastors. Do you believe baptism saves? No.
The Bible says it does. Peter says, in the day of Pentecost, people say, what must we do? He says, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
The drama of covenantal identity belongs to the very nature of the church. And there are times in order to accent the significance of the sealing covenant signs, the language, if not the reality,

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collapses the sign into the rays, into the things signifying, into the reality.
[29:27] That's why when you read John Calvin in the Institutes, at times you're scratching your head. Because he puts things in ways that I don't think Calvin would be invited to a reform conference anywhere.

I help organize banner conferences. We wouldn't invite Calvin. He would be suspect on any number of levels. He mixes with Lutherans. Not good.
He talks to Roman Catholics. Not good. He's willing to accommodate even convictions, cherish convictions.
He doesn't fit into the monochrome reductions view of the reformed faith that we unhappily have in the churches today. But when you read Calvin, he can be very perplexing because he talks about the duplex loquendi modus, the twofold way of speaking.
He writes sometimes as if the sign and the things signified are one. At other times, he writes as if they're miles apart.
[30:40] The church can exist without the sacraments, can't exist without the work. And Calvin would say, well, here's the thing. When I'm talking to Roman Catholics who collapse the sign into the reality, I separate the sign and the reality to show them that the sacraments do not work ex operae operato by their own internal power.

they work by the power and grace of God through faith, which is why Calvin called the sacraments means of grace, sacramenta conferut gratia, the sacraments confer grace by the will and purpose of God through the Holy Spirit received by faith.
But when he's talking to Zwinglians, a bit broad brushless, who separate the sign and the reality, Calvin brings them together.
he wants the church to realize that God has given us these drama identifiers to placard that we are the people of God united in Jesus Christ to the triune God.
And that's why the sacraments should not be downplayed in any sense. And that's why Calvin wanted the Lord's Supper every Lord's day. He said that's surely what the Bible teaches.
[32:11] We preach the word and then the word is made visible. He didn't get his way. Much more to be said.

Number seven, the holy identity of the church. I think that means that church discipline belongs to the wrong spelling here, the notes of the church, the marks of the church.
Church discipline, the Scottish Reformation, I think Calvin actually teaches it but doesn't particularise it. John Knox particularises it.
Not only is a church, a true church where the word is faithfully preached and the sacraments rightly administered, the true church also has godly discipline because God is a holy God and the church is to reflect the family likeness.
And then allied to that is the counter cultural holiness of the church. Don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
[33:15] The church is called to live counter culturally. And I've used the phrase sola scriptura not nuda scriptura. You know it's the year of the Reformation.

And many Christians dismiss tradition in a way that would appall our Reformation forbears.
Because when they spoke of sola scriptura they didn't mean sola scriptura removed and isolated from the history of tradition in the church.
They embraced tradition insofar as it could be established from holy scripture. Nuda scriptura is what the Jehovah's witnesses and the Mormons.
If you took a hundred passages from the Bible, a hundred key verses that you think are evangelical and reformed, gave it to a JW, do you believe that? They'd say absolutely. Because they believe in verbal inerrancy.
[34:13] So they say. Mormon would say the exact same thing. But if you were to say now tell me do you understand this verse to mean oh no?

So the life of the church is never to be dislocated from the flow of its history or tradition.
Calvin, I'm just using Calvin as an example, he quotes Augustine 403 times the Institute I once counted. He quotes Bernard of Clairvaux.
He quotes all kinds of people to show that the reformed church is not de novo. it didn't just come out of the air.

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It belongs to the true tradition of the church. And the counter-cultural holiness of the church is not to be lived out irrespective of the church's history and tradition.
[35:15] Ultimately we take everything back to the word of God, to the law and the testimony. If they speak not according to this word they have no light of dawn. Isaiah 8.20 Number nine, the familial membership of the church.

I take that as a given here. The promise is to you and to your children and to all who are far on. Children belong by the will and purpose of God to his church.
densdensdensdens If someone asks me why are you a predo baptist, I tell them I'm not a predo baptist, I'm a baptist. Who happens to baptize children?
Because God commands it. Children belong. They're not by their baptism them junior members of the church in one sense, they are members of the church of Jesus Christ by the goodwill and purpose of God. God places his name upon them. It's the most remarkable thing. I can't think how many children are baptized in 38 years as a minister. I moved beyond anything I could tell you every time I baptized a child. That the triune God who's from everlasting to everlasting stoops down in undeserved kindness and grace and mercy to a judgment deserving little sinner and says, I will be your God and you will be my child.
I just think it's breathtaking. And if people press me, I say, I baptize children because I'm a Calvinist and not an Arminia. Because the great movement of the gospel is not from faith upwards, it's from grace downwards.
[37:22] Number 10, the Presbyterian polity of the church. Acts 9.31, we'll come to develop that later. The pilgrim faith of the church. Again, you can read the passages. The scriptural worship of the church. I find it bemusing that evangelicals will argue so passionately for what the Bible teaches about justification and have the scripture absolutely shape and style and inform all their view of justification but never think that worship, which is more important than justification, you can't divide the two, but in terms of essential priority, that the doctrine of worship should not be contended for as eagerly, as passionately as the doctrine of justification. I think it's part of the anthropologizing of the gospel. God is to be worshipped according to his word. God is to be believed according to his word. Worship isn't something that God has left us to. Remember what happened to Nadab and

Abihu, Leviticus 10? They offered up strange, unauthorized fire. God killed them. You think, oh, goodness me. Uzzah, he was simply trying to help the ark and he was struck down. Well, okay, that's the old covenant.
Well, you come to 1 Corinthians 11. And Paul said, you know the reason why some of you have died early? Because you're abusing the Lord's supper. Christians were treating other Christians with disdain.
God says, I take my worship seriously. And our worship is to be shaped and styled by what God has declared. It's what's called the regulative principle. Although we must never interpret it woodenly. That's why the reference to Calvin, hopefully you'll find helpful. David Fyfe has probably heard me say this 101 times. Calvin deals with worship about the context that should you kneel to receive the supper, all that sort of stuff. And Calvin's written to the English exiles in Frankfurt and said, well, yeah, it's not good, but bear with tolerable foolishnesses.
Don't get hung up on smaller things. Remember the big thing. But then at the end of his exposition in Book 4, Chapter 10, he says, let love be our guide and all will be safe. Because cultures change, times change, history advances, he writes. Therefore, don't treat the regulative principle woodenly. Allow for change and development all within the absolute scrutiny of Holy Scripture.
[40:22] 13, the multinational, multicultural expression of the church. You can look at that. The evangelistic mission of the church. Some years ago, I read a little sentence in J.I. Packer. I can't remember where I read it. But he said, evangelism is a Christian living as a Christian in the world. And I just was absolutely struck by that. Evangelism is essentially a Christian living as a Christian in the world. He's not saying we are not to engage in evangelistic activity.

He is saying what I think the whole Bible tells us, is that the heart of evangelism is Christian living as Christians. That's why the early church made such a profound impact. They live so differently. And to my shame, it's because I don't live so differently. I don't mean oddly.
I don't mean we have to get out of our way and behave bizarrely, as I think some Christians do. But to live distinctively different lives. So that people, I was converted through a boy at school who lived a different life. I'd never heard the gospel. Although he told me in later years he would always share the gospel with me. I remember him never doing that. Absolutely, I've got no recollection of ever

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speaking one word about Jesus to me. But I remember first encountering his life. He was the year ahead of me. School, he was very different from me.
I was in the academic stream. He wasn't so much. I was into sport. He wasn't so much. I was into girls. He wasn't too bothered. He played in a gospel band. I did clubbing Saturday nights on Sunday nights. We didn't call it clubbing. We called it discos. I remember his life.
And at first I thought, he should be odd. He's called Albert Bogle with a name like that. But then after a few months, I think, I thought, he's not odd. He's just a bit of a name.
[42:40] And then a few more months, I thought, there's something about him that I would like to have. I didn't know what it was. I would remember in my later teens coming home from an evening out in Glasgow, lying in my bed and thinking, is this it? Is this life? You get through your studies. You blow off steam Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night, back Monday. Is that it?

It was his life that intrigued me. And that eventually when I bumped into him one Saturday night, he'd been at a gospel something and I'd been, you don't need to know what I'd been.
Why don't you come to the Bible class I go to tomorrow? I said, yeah, yeah. Went along. Someone preached in John 3.16. Never heard of John 3.16. Didn't possess a Bible. And the Lord saved me. It was his life. And you say, well, that's your story. It is my story and we all have different stories. Evangelism is a Christian living as a Christian. And the weakness of the church is because we don't live the Christ-like lives that confronts society in the way I think the early church did. And then just look at the last thing before I quickly transition.
the scriptural foundation of the church. I've mentioned before I'm going to finish that little segment. It is written. The absolute, unbreakable authority of the Word of God.
when Jesus is tempted by the devil. Matthew 4. He plunders the book of Deuteronomy and three times replies, not with a Bible in his pocket, but from his own memory. Giga-rapti. It is written.
[44:48] And I think Jesus didn't, obviously he didn't have a conduit from his divine nature into his human nature so that he was excused. The rigor of reading and learning. Isaiah 50, third service song.

Morning by morning you awaken my ear to hear as one who is taught. Jesus had to learn the scriptures. I could well imagine he had memorized the whole of Deuteronomy.
I'm embarrassed. I hardly memorized any of them. I muddled through passages in major books. The Savior just knew exactly where to go. He had such confidence in the authority and power and truth of the Word of God that he was able to use it.
The church is to be shaped and styled and impregnated in all that it is by Holy Scripture.
[45:58] Now, that's the context for really what I want to say from now on. I wanted to say that because, at least for me, and I basically try and speak to myself and let everyone else listen in, I need always to be reminded that as a Dei Uri Divino Presbyterian, a divine right Presbyterian, that's what I am. That's what the Bible teaches.

We should all be Westminster Confession Presbyterians. I think. I try and persuade people of that. But as I said at the beginning, that's not my default.
Heaven will be populated, ultimately by quote to our Western circumcised refugees, that Heaven will be populated by blood-redeemed repentance sinners.
And if I forget that, woe unto me. I'll be like Jesus' disciples who came to him one day, Mark 9, and said, Lord, we saw a man casting out demons in your name.
We told him to stop because he wasn't one of us. And Jesus rebukes them. And in effect says, well, he may not have been one of yours, but he was one of mine.
[47:30] And if we have a well-rounded biblical doctrine of the church, we can passionately contend for what we believe the scriptures teach concerning how God wants his church to be ordered, how he wants it to be lived out and expressed, and how he wants worship to be done.

But we do it from the context of the Catholic faith of the church. And keep reminding ourselves, am I speaking ill of anyone but with the precious blood of Christ?
Right. Before we stop for a peeking, I have five or six minutes to tell you why I'm a Presbyterian. This is a personal testimony. I wasn't always a Presbyterian. I was baptized in a dispensational Baptist church when I was 18.
The first book of the Bible I was really taken through was Revelation. I had a chart up on my wall with the seven dispensations. I would go to university, just started university.

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I brought up my large housing scheme in Glasgow. First person in my family ever to go. I would work out scenarios, how to speak to people about the tribulation, the rapture.
[48:58] I just thought that was what Christians believed. There were two kinds of Christians. There were Protestants. There were Catholic. My mum was a Roman Catholic. I knew that. I was Baptist.

I'd never heard of that Presbyterian. I didn't know what that meant. Methodists. Who are they? So my background isn't Presbyterian. I was a Schofield dispensational Christian because I just thought that's what Christians believed.
That's what I was taught. So why did it change? Well, let me mention seven brief things.
Number one, because God is who he is. God is a unity and a diversity. He's a diversity and a unity.
Number two, because of the pattern of the old covenant church.
Unity and diversity. Twelve tribes. The one people of God. There was diversity. There was unity.
Number three, because the New Testament is absolutely clear that individual churches are to be served and led by presbyters and deacons.
[50:09] It should be Philippians 1.1. I don't know why it's 1 Timothy 1.1. Where you have a parity of responsibility and government. That doesn't mean there will not be a deferring. But it means there is a principal conviction that the church is ruled by a plurality of elders and deacons.

But then fourthly following on from that because individual churches or congregations are not autonomous. Now I may return to this later, but take Acts 9.31.
Paul talks about the church singular. Singular throughout Galatia. Not the churches. There were individual churches.
That Paul could write there and in other places of the church singular. And so in Presbyterianism, you have this wonderful principle of the strong.
Helping the weak. First as a privilege and then as a requirement. And I think the imagery, Paul's imagery of the church as the body of Christ, highlights that and placards that to us.
[51:22] There is one body. There is only one body of Jesus Christ in this world. And there is diversity.

And infelously because in Acts 15, we read of the elders in Jerusalem and other appointed men taking decisions for the whole church. This is the rock on which independency is shattered.
There's other little rocks as well. But I think Acts 15 is the exegetical rock. The theology of the Bible, the theology of who God is, I think more than anything else, confronts and challenges independency.
But here we find the first general assembly of the church resolving a doctrinal matter and exercising a power of order by telling other churches to refrain from certain practices.
They didn't offer advice. They gave an instruction. And then sixthly, because children belong to the life and witness of the church.
[52:31] I studied divinity for over a year at U College in Edinburgh before I became a Presbyterian. I had finished university in Glasgow.

I felt strongly called to the ministry. But I was worshipping in a Presbyterian church. But I was still inwardly a Baptist. Everything else had fallen to the weight of the Paragraph.
I was now a Calvinist. I had a satiriology that was reformed. But baptism, baptism. I was sitting in a bus north of Aberdeen at late one Saturday night, travelling back to Aberdeen, when one moment I was a Baptist and the next I was a Presbyterian.
All the pieces of the jigsaw went boom in a second. I was pondering, I was thinking about Joshua's words at the end of Joshua 24. As for me in my house, we will serve the Lord.
And I thought, he didn't turn to his wife and say, Mrs. Joshua, what do you think? Didn't say to his children, would you like some input into this?
[53:55] I thought, he's acting as a covenant head. And in that instance, some of you got surprised by joy, C.S. Lewis. I'm sure most of you have.

The great week. And he has this epiphany on his way to Whipsnay Zoo, isn't it? That one moment, he's an agnostic, next minute he's a seer.
Well, it was like that for me. The dawning realisation that the weight of the paradigm had finally overwhelmed me. Romans 11, that we Gentiles are engrafted into Israel, the old stock, the church of God, the ecclesia, the kahal Yahweh, the congregation of God.

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We are grafted into that. And then Paul warns us, don't get high-minded. God is able to cut you off again. So watch it. And then, it struck me, Peter's words, the promise is to you and to your children. You know what he's saying? Hey, the Abrahamic covenant has not died. We are not preaching anything new. The gospels come out of the shadows.
[55:09] The types are being replaced by the reality. That's what Jeremiah 31 is about. The new covenant. What God promised to Abraham still stands.

And the last thing. Presbyterianism is, I think, essential to the well-being of the church. There's many essays, but not to its essay-to-be-being.
In other words, you can be a true church of Jesus Christ and not be Presbyterianism. But, you will not be the church, and I'm going to give you my conviction, you will not be the church God wants you to be.
Now, stellar figures in the history of the church would differ from that in our own day Dick Lucas, Jim Packer.
John Owen was persuaded to move from a form of Presbyterianism to a form of Congregationalism that still had synods and everything else.
[56:21] Thomas Goodwin became really an independent. So, stellar figures in the church. But, even pygmies can throw little stones at giants. And, you can be a church of Jesus Christ.

Absolutely. A communion with the saints in the wider church. And yet, not be the church God calls you to be in His Word.
So, that's all really back round to the next session. But, we're having a break. Is that right? Okay. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.
Let's go.

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