

## THE FORMATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

Taught by Bruce Bickel

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Gracious and merciful heavenly Father, it's with a tremendous sense of awe that we gather to sit at your feet once again, trusting humbly that your Holy Spirit will fulfill his job description and guide us into all truth. Father, we pray that you would remove all the frustrations and the consternations of our daily lives that we might focus upon you this day. Once again, Father, as you so faithfully and mercifully do every Friday, we pray that you would open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

Brothers, last week I mentioned something that many of you had a very positive response to for which I'm grateful and that was the idea of understanding the confessions of our church. I mentioned a book that I thought was a tremendous work for us to have in the body of Christ, and I'm very, very grateful that we have the author with us today, and he's Bishop John Rogers. Here is the book. Bishop Rogers, would you mind just telling us the genesis of this and how it came about and anything you want to add to it. If you're an Anglican and you worship at this church, then this is something that I would insist that you read because this is going to give you the basis of the historical confessions of the church of which you are now worshipping, and that's important for us to understand our history so that we cannot violate our present. Bishop Rogers, would you give us a little intro into the book?

**Bishop Rogers:** Quickly. One advantage of this book is its cheap. {LAUGHTER} You can get a paperback for \$24.95; hardback is \$49.50, so it's \$25 or \$50. I got with the Reformed Episcopal Church's Press. It's kind of a little small outfit, that they would produce it inexpensively. It was written for lay people, for clergy and for people in, particularly the 2/3 world. There are good and many godly Anglicans in the 2/3 world, and they're going to get all of our skepticism, all of our Western cultural collapse hype at, and they don't really know, I think, they don't have the resources that they need, to think their way through it. We've had to work our way through it here. So I wrote it simply so they could understand it as well. Hopefully it'll be helpful. The ignorance of our traditions is tremendous. It's abysmal, I mean, it's a depth that we just weren't instructed that way, so this is written so, to help us. Particularly Bruce was telling me that he had taught us that the task of us is to keep, to be submissive to our leaders, but also to hold them accountable. How are you going to hold them accountable if you don't know the truth?

Amen.

**Bishop Rogers:** *This is an attempt to take the essential matters. The articles really are rather simple and they're beautiful. It's hard to write good theology in brief terms, and they've done a remarkable job. It's in Victorian English, so we had to unpack it a little bit, but it's, I think, a book that's very readable and useable, and I hope it'll be helpful.*

Great. Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

**Bishop Rogers:** *Just published. Just new.*

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**Ted:** [UNCLEAR]...

**Audience Member:** Do you have a bunch of them?

**Ted:** Yes and they're \$75. {LAUGHTER} [UNCLEAR]... I don't have them...I think if we ask the bookstore, they'll get them for us.

**Audience Member:** We're a non-denominational church with the tradition of Anglican, and the by-laws of our church should be on the Internet, should be on our website, so we can hold our people accountable. This would be a good [UNCLEAR].

There's a difference to holding leadership accountable to by-laws as it is to holding elders accountable to the Scripture law. There's a difference. By-laws are created by humans for the sake of organization. Scripture laws were given to us to be obedient to glorify God, and there's a difference. So yes, we need to hold our leadership accountable to the by-laws of the church so that we are functioning well. But really more critically, we need to hold them to the essential truths of the Scripture. That's what these 39 Articles do for those of you who have the Anglican tradition. It's a marvelous study of theology that will give you the sound basis to be able to know is this what my church represents? Or are we going the way of the world? Remember, the real issue is who do you believe? Do you believe what the world says about you? Or do you believe what God says about you in the Scripture? These 39 articles are going to give you a clear understanding of who God says you are, who God wants you to be and who God's going to make you into as a body of Christ.

I encourage you, those of you who are of the Anglican tradition, get a hold of that work, begin to read it. In my view, when I was pasturing a reformed Baptist church, we used the London Baptist Confession, and that was part of our inquirer's class. Anybody who joined the church had to read that, had to discuss it with me, and we asked them questions before they joined the church because we took that seriously. We basically said, "Look, folks, the church is organized, and you have a responsibility two-fold. One is to be submissive to the leadership of this church, and secondly, to hold the leadership of this church accountable to the Scripture." Now if you don't know what that is, you're going to fail in your church membership responsibilities.

Church membership is a responsibility, not a right. It's a responsibility you have. We want to make sure that you fulfill those responsibilities because that's the way the church was functioned, and that's the way the church was formed, and that's the way the church does function under that wonderful principle of submission. Submission to the elders, submission to the authority, but also holding them accountable to the Scripture. Remember we talked about 1 Peter last week. Jesus entrusted himself to God, but he was submissive to men. He submitted himself to man, but he entrusted himself to God. Nowhere in the Scripture are we ever taught to entrust ourselves to each other. We are told to submit to one another, but we take that act of obedient submission and we entrust that to God and trust that in his sovereign grace, he will use that for his glory because in all things God works for good.

We need to understand the difference between submission and entrusting. It's just the Scripture says that a wife is to submit to her husband. Now that's very unpopular in our culture today. But a wife is never told to entrust herself to her husband; she submits to her husband and she takes that act, that act of obedience, and entrusts that to God knowing that God is bigger than her husband, so therefore, she entrusts that act of submission to her husband. It's the same thing in the church. We submit to one another, but we take that act of submission and entrust it to God. That was the model that Jesus gave us. We saw it in 1 Peter, where he submitted to men, did not revile when he was offended, and when he was persecuted, he did not revile, but he took the form of a servant and entrusted himself to God, the one who really managed his life. That's what we need to understand as we talk about this duality of submission, about how we hold each other accountable.

Bishop Rogers, we're honored you're here with us, sir, and thank you for your work for the body of Christ. I think it's going to be a marvelous addition to helping people understand the absolute

sufficiency of Scripture, as well as the authority.

I do need to make one comment about Marines. {LAUGHTER}

**Bishop Rogers:** *We get equal time.* {LAUGHTER}

With all due respect... {LAUGHTER} ...I like the Marines.

**Bishop Rogers:** *Good.*

I think everybody [UNCLEAR] own one like the Navy does. {LAUGHTER}

**Bishop Rogers:** *Gotta get transport somewhere.* {LAUGHTER}

We began to talk last week about the, that the church is a theocracy, not a democracy. We began to talk about that. We began to talk about we get orders from him, not from us, and that the three elements of government flowing from Christ, or this Kingdom authority, that it all starts with that. We need to understand that in the church, it is a Kingdom authority. That's where we came up with the M8. We are mission minded members of a movement (the Kingdom of God) motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace.

The marketplace is wherever you and I are. I'm just not talking about the professional world; I'm talking about our homes, our churches, the whole world in general. We are mission minded members of a movement motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace, and that is because we understand this, that we are under Kingdom authority. That's why we've used the term that we need to have a warrior mentality. Not war-like activity. There's a difference. We need to have a warrior mentality in the sense that we understand that our battle cry is this—Thy Kingdom come. That is our battle cry of our spiritual warfare efforts.

We come under that banner of Thy Kingdom come and we never lose sight of that because we understand that the church was organized as a Kingdom authority venture. We take our instructions from the sufficiency of Scripture. The real battleground in the church today, in my mind, brothers, is this—it's the sufficiency of Scripture, not authority. People say, "Yes, it's my authority for faith and action and all that stuff," and they're nice words, but really, do you believe that it's sufficient. Peter tells us in his precious promises he's given us everything we need for life and godliness. Now do you really believe that? Does the church really believe that the Scripture is sufficient for all the things that were going to be confronted with?

Let me give you a illustration of what I mean. Turn to 2 Timothy 3:16. You're very familiar with this. 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is breathed out (or inspired) by God and profitable"—for four things. First of all teaching—that's the word doctrine. That means to reveal a standard. The first thing that happens when you're studying the Scripture is it's design is to be profitable in your life, personally, and us collectively, by teaching us the standard. That's what the book that Dr. Rogers has done on the 39 Articles. It helps us understand the standard of the theocracy, not a democracy, of the local church based upon the Anglican tradition. That's where we find our standards. The very first thing that you read the Scripture for, is it's going to reveal to you a standard that you may not have know. That's the idea of the word teaching or doctrine.

The next thing is we see that it's profitable for reproof. That means to reveal an error. The first part of it is this—it reveals a standard. The second thing that it might be beneficial to you is it's going to reveal the error of your standard. You might have a faulty error in your standard understanding.

The third thing is this—for correction. That means it's going to reveal the stages to correct the error in the standard. You go with the doctrine, then you go to reveal the error, and now you reveal the correction of the error that you had in the standard. The fourth thing is training in righteousness. That's a prevention of making the same error again. You're trained in righteousness.

The Scripture is going to have one of four applications in your life—reveal a standard, reveal an error, reveal a correction, and reveal the prevention—so that you come back to the standard. Now notice the next phrase. There's a cause and effect relationship here. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that—there's a cause and effect. The cause is all Scripture is breathed and the effect is so that, “the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

Now notice, the sufficiency of Scripture is what reveals to us every good work. Where are you going to find out what a good work is? You're going to find it in the Scripture. It's not something you make up yourself. If you want to know what a good work is, study the Scripture because that's the whole process. It is designed to give you an understanding of where every good work is.

Now there's many dimensions of how that's going to shape. You're to love one another. Take a look at 58 One Another commands. The Greek word, *allelon*, which means one another. We are to love one another. We're to rebuke one another. We're to serve one another. We're to encourage one another. All those things are the expressions of potential good works. Remember, as we've been saying for years, only believers can do good works.

You see, the best that a non-believer can do is a good bad work. It's good in the eyes of world, but it's bad in the eyes of God because it doesn't meet the standard of Scripture. Where are you going to find your good works? Every good work is listed in the Scripture. You don't go outside the Scripture to look for good works; you find it in the Scripture. The Holy Spirit is going to guide us into all truth. He's going to guide you into what good works are.

We understand Biblically, because of the sufficiency of Scripture, that a good work is defined by three things. First of all, it's consistent with Scripture. We just saw that. Every good work is going to be defined and identified for you and me in the Scripture. The reason of that is because it is the all sufficiency of Scripture.

If Paul were writing to Timothy and said, “You could find a good work elsewhere,” he wouldn't have made that statement. Paul would have been liar. He's saying, “Timothy, every good work that you're ever going to find is going to be revealed in the Scripture,” because as you understand it, all of Scripture is God breathed. It's inspired for four reasons. That's why when you study the Scripture, friends, you don't want to ask yourself the question, “What does it mean to me?” It doesn't make any difference what it means to you. The only one to whom it makes any difference is the author. A far better question when you're doing Bible study is, “What am I going to do about what I just learned?” Not what does it mean to me. If you ask that question, you're going to have people just sharing their ignorance, “Well this is what it means to me,” “This is what it means to me,” “Oh, that's your interpretation,” “Oh, that's okay.” Then you just have a nice pity party of people comparing themselves with each other.

You see, when you understand that the Scripture is sufficient, the better question is this, “What am I going to do about my just now realizing that my standard was wrong? What am I going to do about that?” What am I going to do about realizing I have an error in my understanding of the standard of Biblical authority? What am I going to do about understanding how do I correct the mistake of my understanding of Biblical authority? And what am I going to do to prevent it the next time? You see,

that's the value of Scripture. Ask yourself this question guys. What am I going to do about what I've just learned? You see, I hope that's the question you'll ask yourself when you walk out of this door every Friday; not what does it mean to me or that was a good session. Make it what am I going to do?

***Audience Member:** What were the three items that [UNCLEAR] good works?*

The first one is this, its consistent with Scripture; secondly, it's done for the glory of God; and thirdly, it has the right motive. It's not about you or me, it's about him. Consistent with the Scripture, done for the glory of God, and you have the right motive. That would mean this. Let's just say, hypothetically, that a person gave a million dollars to build a wing on a hospital, and the person is not a believer. Now, let's take it up against that test of every good work. It might be consistent with Scripture because it's meeting the needs of others, so we'll give him credit for that. Now is it done for the glory of God? No. What is it? It's a good bad work. Does it have the right motive? No. It's a good bad work. You see, the best thing that a non-believer can do is a good bad work. Who are the only ones who potentially can do good works? It's believers. It's those of us who have been regenerated by the saving grace of God and we've entered into a saving relationship with God the Father through God the Son, and the result is there the times when you and I really do a good work that is consistent with the Scripture and we do it for the glory of God and we have the right motive.

Now give me a little bit of leeway here. When I stand before the Lord in glory, I'm going to say, "Hey, what about that, remember that thing I did down there?" He'll say, "Yeah, but that didn't, you didn't have the right motive, Bruce," and he'll say, "Let me show you why." I say, "But nobody saw that." He says, "Yeah, but that's the point. I did. Nobody else needed to see it." You see, that one had the right motive.

You see, guys, you and I have the potential to be the only kind of people who can do good works because we have a Kingdom authority. That's the role of the church. You see, where is the world going to see good works that meet the Biblical standard? They're only going to see that in the church. We need to be the harbinger of that. We need to be the demonstrator of that. We need to be manifesters of what are truly Biblically good works, because we're doing it for the glory of God and we do it with the right motive.

Dale made a very interesting comment before the session—we were talking about it—he says, "You know, wonderful things happen when you don't worry who gets the credit." You see, that's a good work. That's a good work.

As we understand the Scripture, it's really important for us to understand that, do you really believe the Scripture is sufficient. It's sufficient for everything that we need for life and godliness. Now it's not going to tell you what house to buy. That's not what we're talking about. Or what color car you should buy. We're not talking about that. The word "life" there means quality of life. It means the Scripture gives us everything the we need to know to how to live life at its highest quality. Then secondly, it teaches how to worship God correctly. It's what the word godliness means. It means worship rightly directed. The Scripture is sufficient to teach us two things: how to live life at its highest quality, and secondly, how do you worship God correctly.

***Audience Member:** [UNCLEAR] actually do a good work because even when you're motivated right you feel good. It's almost like a self-gratification. Do you know what I'm saying? If you do something it's like you feel good, so how do you know if you're not motivated [UNCLEAR]?*

I can't answer that. Only you can answer that.

**Audience Member:** *That means anybody [UNCLEAR]...you're always twisting it.*

Well, I don't know that. We're all fallen human beings, but we're also, remember, we're redeemed fallen human beings. I'm a sinner, but I'm a sinner saved by grace.

Several years ago, I was invited to come on a national TV show, for some reason. They sent me this thing to fill out. They wanted to know, "How many books have you written? How many TV shows have you been on?"—all these things—"How many tracts have you published? How many mission trips? What's your testimony?" All I wrote was this, "I'm a sinner saved by grace." {LAUGHTER} That was all I submitted. Nothing else. They wrote me back and said, "We don't think you're qualified to be on the show." {LAUGHTER} "Because it's not exciting enough," is what they said. "Your testimony isn't exciting enough." Because you see, all I said was, "I'm just a sinner, a fallen human being, saved by grace." That's all I can say. They said, "It's not exciting enough."

I can't answer that Craig. You see, brothers, you have to look at yourself in the mirror and analyze your own heart. I can't do that. We have never been placed with the authority in the Scripture to judge another person's motives. The only motive you can examine is your own. But you've never been given two things. It is not the ministry of the individual person to proclaim to somebody else, the doctrine of having assurance of your salvation. That's a work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can do that. I can't tell you that you're a believer. You can't tell me that I'm one. The Holy Spirit is the only one that can do that. And yet, in our evangelism, what do we do? After they've said the sinner's prayer, where's Jesus? He's in your heart; you're a Christian. That takes ten seconds. Now that's certainly not the standard of how we see it in the Scripture. There's got to be some fruit in that person's life. You may not see that after ten seconds and offering a prayer.

Now my point is, you see, there's got to be some evidence in true saving faith. The real issue here is we've never been given the authority to proclaim somebody else to be a Christian. All we can do is take them to the Scripture and let the evidence of Scripture, the seven tests of a true believer (from 1<sup>st</sup> John), take them up against the authority of Scripture, and let that be the evaluator.

The second thing is we've never been given the authority to judge somebody else's motive. All we can do is check our own. So Smitty, all I would say, buddy, is that you have to examine yourself and say, "Lord, if I've tainted this act that I've done because I've been thinking about me, would you graciously forgive me." I think you just have to examine yourself.

**Ted:** *Smitty, are you asking is it possible for a person outside Christ to do a good work? [UNCLEAR]...?*

No, I didn't, I think that's what he said.

**Smitty:** *No, I'm saying a believer because we're in that humanness where, if nothing else, you get the pleasure of doing something good, and that's kind of selfish.*

**Ted:** *I really strongly believe in the, that when we're in Christ, he's the one that's doing the action. So, I mean, I'm always going to be clouded by my flesh. My flesh is always going to be there saying you're compromised, you're not right, there's something wrong. I don't trust in my flesh. I trust in what Christ is doing. The difference between me and an unbeliever, an unregenerate person, is they do not have the spirit of Christ. They do not have Christ. And therefore, they are incapable of doing a good work because it's Christ that's doing the good work.*

**Don:** *From the Westminster Confession, I think it's interesting, in its section on good works, it says that*

*our works are so [UNCLEAR] by sin and could never withstand a severity of God's [UNCLEAR], and yet it says because there's, you know, he sees his Son and they're done in his Son, God is pleased to reward that which is sincere, although accompanied by many imperfections. So I think that that's [UNCLEAR]...*

Excellent. That's excellent.

**Audience Member:** *What I was going to say, I guess, is part of that [UNCLEAR], and that is we don't have to worry about who gets the credit. We know who gets the credit. It's Jesus Christ. Based on both of these comments, I wonder if that's why Christians aren't sometimes received as [UNCLEAR] about doing this. I would say that it's a joy to serve the Lord and to do things and to do them well for other people. It's not for you. It's for him. You can smile about it. You can still be happy knowing that you've served the Lord by serving somebody else and walk away smiling and feeling good about serving the Lord rather than feeling good about just doing the work.*

**Audience Member:** That goes along with Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." If the work that you're doing is a joy, we're abiding in the Lord, you don't need to feel guilty about enjoying the work that you're doing unto God's glory, if we're living in the purpose [UNCLEAR]...

Let's go to Ephesians 2:10 for a minute. That's a very good point about...there's nothing wrong with having joy in serving the Lord. There ought to be joy. We have to be very, very careful of what I'm going to call a false sense of humility, a false sense of pride. When somebody comes up and says, "Oh, thank you for that wonderful job," and you say, "Oh, it wasn't me, it was Jesus." {LAUGHTER} Now we've got to be careful about having this false sense of pride. I think the best thing you can say is say fewer words. Just say thank you very much. Just say thank you. Don't get into some theological dissertation that I'm in Christ and all of this stuff. Just say thank you, because you've got to be careful. The more we talk about it, the more we get ourselves in trouble by having what I'm calling a "false sense of pride." "I'm not proud," but then I just took pride in the fact that you recognize it.

When somebody comes up to you and says, "You know, that was really wonderful what you did, Smitty," just say, "Well thank you very much. That's kind of you to recognize it," or whatever you want to say. Just be gracious and just say thanks.

Now notice, in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Now that's Ted's point. We are in Christ. Remember Paul uses that phrase, "in Christ," 129 times to describe a person who has a saving relationship with God the Father through God the Son. He doesn't use the word "Christian," he uses the word "in Christ." That's significant because that means everything that you and I do is in Christ, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." You see, one of the great joys of serving Christ is the recognition, at that moment in time, that was something that God has foreordained before the foundation of the world, that you're the only person in the world who could do that at that moment in the history of the world. Now that doesn't give us a sense of pride. It ought to give us a tremendous sense of humility, realizing that often times, brothers, you don't recognize what a good work until after it's over. Many times something happens and I'm, "Oh, that was one of them?"

Now, you can take great joy in the realization that that was prepared for you beforehand, and just take great joy in that. That's what it means to be in Christ. There's not a sense of a dourness of about that. There's a great sense of joy of realizing, you know that, "Lord, you really are sovereign, because honestly, you prepared this for me to do right now? I'm the only one that could have done it? Thank you!" You see, that's what breeds humility. What gives us our tremendous sense of confidence, is not

our experience, our training or our skills. It's humility. It's our humility that gives us confidence because we recognize what it means to be in Christ.

You see, he's prepared these things beforehand, that you and I might walk in them. That means that the direction of our life is in these good works that God has prepared before us. Where do you find those good works? You find them in the all sufficiency of Scripture. See?

***Audience Member:** Bob Smith, in his last email to us about what his wife Linda is going through with her cancer, has now migrated into her brain, and he said, or she said actually that they are at peace being a part of...they're at peace knowing that they are a part of God's sovereign plan. That just choked me and made me stop and think I wish I could say that.*

Amen! You see, that...the sovereignty of God means this, that he has a right to rule. He has a right to rule. That's where we need to understand that side of submission is we take our act of submission but we entrust that to God. We trust it to the sovereignty of God. As you and I are mission minded members of a movement motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace, we just go into the world and trust the Holy Spirit that he will guide us into all truth. As those opportunities come up for us to serve him, to do good works, remember, those have been prepared beforehand for you, individually. Individually. And where's the world going to see that? They're going to see that in the church. They're not going to see that at PNC or Mellon or CMU or Pitt or Highmark. They're going to see that in the body of Christ, which is alive, it's real, because people there are in Christ, and they're functioning with that. In that mass of people known as the assembly, ecclesia, the body, the gathering, there's just millions of different expressions of good works that have been foreordained. They're just waiting to be given away. That's what the church does.

You see, that's where we have our salt and light impact upon society, is when we recognize the magnificence of being under Kingdom authority, and that all that God has designed for his church has been prepared beforehand to be lived out in a physical body known as the assembly, the local church. We just live that away and give it away.

As we've been saying now for 16 years, ministry is giving away to somebody else what God has given you. The question is do I really know what God has given me. You see, when you understand that, you give that away. That's a good work, because it does have the Scriptural authority, it does have the right motive, and it's done for the glory of God.

***Audience Member:** When Paul talks about Scripture, is he talking about the Old Testament, I mean, it's hard for me to...*

All Scripture, that means old and New Testament.

***Audience Member:** So he...*

He understood...

***Audience Member:** Was he anticipating the New Testament when he wrote that or...?*

No, he had no idea that...anticipating the New Testament. He understood this. He was a man of the law. Remember, he was a Pharisee.

***Audience Member:** He based that on the law...*



He understood the Old Testament law. He understood that. Now, in this whole transition, coming into the new covenant, he understood the old covenant, what that meant, and that's why he said, "I was the Pharisee of Pharisees." He understood that, and so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who moved him to pen this, you see, he was speaking of something that was future that he didn't even know, which you and I now have the benefit of.

*Don: If I may [UNCLEAR]...*

Please

**Don:** He does regard the New Testament of Scripture. He quotes from Luke... I'm trying [UNCLEAR]... I believe it's somewhere in 1 Timothy where he said, "The Scripture says the laborer is worth his hire." I'm sorry, it's 1 Corinthians, I believe it's 1 Corinthians 9 where he says, he quotes an Old Testament Scripture and a Scripture from the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus said, "The laborer is worth his hire." I believe he meant both Old and New Testament.

Absolutely. We understand that, where all Scripture, meaning the entire Canon of Scripture, all of that.

*Audience Member: So Bruce, if I understand the process then, every good work will be prepared in advance for us, will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to do it, we'll be equipped to do it, and then we'll do it.*

Correct.

*Audience Member: Is that [UNCLEAR]...*

Yes. That's exactly right.

*Audience Member: Okay.*

Now guys, take joy in that! I mean, look what you're involved in. This is just not some whimsical plan. It's a sovereign God who created the universe. The King of kings, the Lord of lords, who has sovereignly ordained in leading each of us in Christ in the thing known as the assembly, the local church, and says there are just thousands and thousands beyond the numbers of the sand of good works that are available for the church now. Just go do them. That's where we have our obedience.

The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. Our point is not to figure out what they are, but to be obedient. Guys, just be sensitive. You see, you're being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as you go into life. Those opportunities are going to be there. Just trust the Holy Spirit to be the little nudge to say [UNCLEAR], and after it's over, you might say, "Oh, that was one of them. That was one of them, wasn't it?" And what does that do? That breeds humility because you realize this. I didn't create that. I just responded to it. And you and I become aggressive responders in life, not initiators. Jesus says in John 5 and John 8, "I initiate nothing on my own. I only do those things that I see the Father doing." What does that mean? It means that he didn't wake up one day and say, "I'd better go evangelize the Samaritans. Nobody's ever done it before. I'd better go start a program." He's walking through Samaria one day and he gets thirsty and he says what? "Can I have a glass of water?" And she says, "Why are you, a Jew, asking me, a Samaritan? We don't even talk culturally." And he says, "Ma'am, if you knew who I was, I would offer you springs of living water that have no end." Aggressive responder to what's going on around him.

You see, that's the way that Jesus related to his Heavenly Father. That's the way that he wants us to

relate to him, is to be an aggressive responder to what you see the Lord doing around you. Don't try to go create something and say, "Lord, bless it." What you want to do is say, "Lord, reveal to me. Give me the discernment to see what you're going to do around me today, and then I want to join that because I know that will already be blessed, because it came from you and not from me." Smitty, that's how we deal with the issue of taking credit for it, because you realize this—I had no credit because I didn't start it. I just was an aggressive responder and I just gave it away. And then you begin to realize, "Whoa! That one of those things that was prepared for me beforehand." Guys, that's what breeds humility in us. It is our humility that gives us our greatest confidence to take on the world.

It's not our knowledge, although knowledge is important. It's not our skills. Skills are important. It's not our background. It may be important. The real issue is this. I serve a sovereign God who is controlling my life, and that was just one of those things, a good work, that he had prepared beforehand. I had the privilege of just giving it away.

***Audience Member:** So what you're saying is we need to stop acting like mere men.*

Yeah, quit acting like mere men and act like who?

***Audience Member:** The Lord Jesus Christ.*

Act like followers of Christ. That's it. We just walk by faith. The righteous person lives by faith. Faith in what? Faith in the treasure in an earthen vessel. We have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the all-surpassing power comes from God and not from us. You see that. To show the all-surpassing power comes from him and not from us. That's why we're aggressive responders to what we sense the Holy Spirit doing. The way the Holy Spirit's going to guide is understand his job description. His job description is not to get you excited, although that may be a consequence. But that's not his role. Jesus makes it very clear that his job description is very simple. Call attention to Christ by leading you into all truth. His job description is to call attention to the person and work of Christ, not to you. He does that by guiding you into all truth. That's why, in my prayer, I say, "Lord, fulfill your job description in guiding us into all truth," because truth is what's going to set the basis for what we do inside the church.

That's why I appreciate so much Bishop Roger's book. That is so critical for those of you of the Anglican tradition to read that because that's going to guide you into all truth in a way that you can understand it and give you a wonderful history of the legacy of the Anglican tradition and the power that you can have in this world. I would just be hopeful that Christ Church would understand the significance of having that book be part of every person who's a member of this flock. Begin to realize the significance of it, because that's the foundation of truth. It's just written in a way that you can understand it and make it applicable so that the people here at Christ Church can become aggressive responders while they're being lead to the truth.

***Audience Member:** This morning on Compassion radio, that was the subject. The guests, who wrote a book, I have to get all that, but I think it's CompassionRadio.org. He said the church has failed to show that we are followers, not leaders." He said, "All these conferences about being a leader, it shouldn't be that emphasis. It should be us as followers."*

Remember the study I shared with you a couple of a weeks about the study I did at the Naval Academy on leadership? The number one quality of a leader is to be a better follower than you are a leader. You're following something outside of yourself. Why in the world would somebody want to follow you if they don't see you following something bigger than yourself? Leadership is not about you and me. It's about who or what we represent. That's why we are mission minded members. What's our mission? Thy Kingdom come. That's our battle cry. In World War II is, "Remember Pearl Harbor." In the war with

Texas it was, “Remember the Alamo.” What’s the battle cry for the Kingdom? Thy Kingdom come. That’s our warrior mentality. We never lose sight of that.

*Audience Member:* [UNCLEAR]...you had the four reveals.

Yes.

*Audience Member:* Could you just do the four reveals and then [UNCLEAR]...

Okay.

*Audience Member:* Cause you went through that pretty quick [UNCLEAR] in my notes on that.

All Scripture is god-breathed or inspired by God and profitable for four things. For doctrine or teaching, depending on your translation. That means reveals the standard. Doctrine reveals the standard. Teaching is to reveal the standard. What is the role of teaching in the church? To make you feel good. No? The role of teaching in the church is to reveal the standard. The first thing is it profitable to reveal the standard. Secondly is to rebuke. That means to reveal an error; reveal an error in the standard. Third thing is for correction. That reveals the correction of the error in the standard. The fourth thing is training in righteousness. That reveals the prevention of revealing how you’re going to make the same error all over again; train you in righteousness. That’s what the Scripture does.

Whenever you’re reading a passage of Scripture, one of the applications is going to be one of those four things. Somebody might say, in a small group, “Oh, I never knew that.” Simple. “I didn’t know that we were saved by grace and not by works.” That would be revealing the standard. Somebody might say, “Oh I knew the standard, but I had an error in my understanding of that standard.” A third person might say, “I understand the standard. I understand my error. Now I know how to correct it.” The other person might say, “I know the standard. I know the error I had. I know the steps of correction, now here are the things I need to do the prevent me from doing it all over again.” You see, that’s the significance of the sufficiency of Scripture. That’s what produces us to be in a position to do every good work that’s been prepared beforehand.

*Audience Member:* Where we’re screwing up, Bruce, we should be, turn around and looking, okay, which one of these four am I shallow in.

Yes. Now when I asked the question, “What am I going to do about what I just learned?” it’s going to be one of those four things, because that’s what the Scripture says “all of Scripture,” it’s sufficiency, is sufficient for four things. One of those four is the application in your life or my life. Now I have errors in my theology. I just don’t know where they are yet. As I uncover them, I say, “Oh, I didn’t know that. I thought it was this.” Now that’s why, when I came to understand the doctrines of grace, it was because in the tradition in which I was raised, I didn’t understand that. As I began to read the Scripture, I began to say, “Wait a minute. I’m sensing from the Scripture something different than my tradition of being a Methodist.” All of a sudden I realized, “Whoa! That’s a new standard,” and so I began to understand this—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, revealed in the Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone. That was different than my tradition.

You see, when I studied the Scripture, people say, “Where did you understand the doctrine of election?” I learned it from two people—Jesus and Paul. That’s where I learned it. That wasn’t my tradition, because I thought it was my choice. That was my tradition—it’s my choice. All of a sudden I began to realize, when I read John 17 and John 14 and Romans, began to realize, “Wait a minute. Paul and Jesus are saying something different than what I thought.” That’s reveal the standard. It’s one of those four

applications, guys.

When you walk out of here, ask yourself the question. The most important question you're going to ask today is this. What am I going to do about what I just learned? Because the Holy Spirit was guiding me into all truth. Which one of those four is it for me? Then ask the Holy Spirit to apply that into your life. And then just say, "Thank you. Thank you, Lord, that you are my teacher, that you're guiding me into all truth, and setting me free from my worldly expectations of what I think I need to be. Help me understand who God says I am."

It's a very, very powerful thing to understand the sufficiency of Scripture.

*Ted: Just getting back to Jim's question, Jim [UNCLEAR] question about whether the, where they speak, when they speak about Scripture, whether it's Old Testament or New Testament. [UNCLEAR] There's an interesting passage in 2 Peter 3:15 where Peter writes, "also wrote to you according to" Paul in his epistles, "also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters There are some things in them," that is Paul's epistles, "that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures." Clearly, by the time of 2 Peter, Peter's referencing here Paul's writings as part of the other Scriptures [UNCLEAR]...*

Right. Thanks, Ted. Excellent. Guys, we need to realize this—the ecclesia, the assembly, the gathering, is a live body of people who have been prepared for good works. The real issue is do I understand the standard of the sufficiency of Scripture that guides me into every good work. That's where we're going to find it. That's the power that we have in the body of Christ. You see, the most powerful thing we have is the sufficiency of Scripture. Paul says, "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power unto salvation to all who believe." What's the it? It's the message of the Gospel of Christ. It's the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the person and work of Christ in repentance and faith. It's not our technology. It doesn't mean we don't use technology. It's not our PowerPoint. It doesn't mean we don't use PowerPoint. The real question is this. What is the it? Is it methodology or is it a message? Brothers, we have the most powerful weapon in the world because all the other "isms" Islam and all the other "isms" can't deal with three things, and that is this—creation out of nothing, creation out of nothing, transformation—transforming a life, and translation—eternal life into heaven They can't deal with those three things. The Holy Spirit can do that because of the sufficiency of Scripture.

*Audience Member: [UNCLEAR]...*

All the other "isms." I'll have to tell you, I had a couple, this summer, I was with Ravi Zacharias, and I mentioned a book that he's writing on all the "isms." It's coming out in January. He basically said this, in one of his lectures, "All the "isms" cannot deal with three issues in life." First of all, creation—how they deal with creating out of nothing—Ex nihilo. In the beginning God created. Created our of nothing. They can't deal with that. They don't have an answer for it. Second thing is transformation. I once was blind, now I see. How do I deal with that? they can't deal with that transformation of a life of sin and now to a life that desires righteousness. A life of sin versus a life of holiness. They really can't deal with that because they have to work at it, and it fails. The third thing is translation, from this life to the next and all of eternity. You see, all the other "isms" can't deal with that. That's all wrapped up in the message of the Gospel of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the person of Christ, the work of Christ, and repentance and faith. Those are the ingredients of the Biblical Gospel message. And remember, guys, we have the power to communicate that.

*Audience Member: How does a Muslim deal with creation [UNCLEAR]...?*

They don't. They can't

*Audience Member: What do they say?*

They have no answer for it. They just say whatever they say. Read his book. He's coming out, and we'll talk about that. He's basically saying they don't have an answer for it. We have an answer.

*Audience Member: The Muslim answer is martyrdom.*

Well, that's probably right.

*Audience Member: No, it's not right. That's what they say, but it's wrong. {LAUGHTER}*

So anyway, I'm not a Muslim. I don't have those answers. All I know is that those are the three issues that Ravi says that the Muslims, the other "isms"—Communism, all the other "isms," Buddhism—they can't deal with those three major themes. We have that power in the Gospel of Christ.

**Audience Member:** And it's important to recognize that we really don't worship the same God that they do. It's a very different God. Triune God the others...[UNCLEAR]...

That's correct. That's right. Absolutely. No one come to the Father but by me. No can come. It doesn't say no one may come. May deals with permission; can deals with ability. No one can come. They don't have the ability. You see, the Muslims can't deal with that—inability. That's the transformation of a life of sin to a life of holiness, that only the Holy Spirit can deal with.

Brothers, this is all introduction to our next lesson. {LAUGHTER} We'll continue next week and look forward to, blessings to you, and remember this. May God give us the grace to bind our hearts in humble obedience to the cross for the benefit of a dark and perishing world, to the praise of the glory of his grace. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!