

A historical perspective of Pauls ministry

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I've two provisos. I've been asked to give a historical perspective, so I'm going to be quoting from some writings outside of the Holy Scripture, and I just want to make it absolutely clear to everyone that these have no authority whatsoever. They're purely by way of illustration. The second proviso is, we've only time to give a summary, I haven't time to stop to give the proofs of some of the things that we advance. It's just an outline, hopefully they'll come before us in detail as the meeting proceeds. Now I'd like to turn first of all to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, some well-known verses concerning the gospel. [00:01:07] 1 Corinthians 15 verse 3, I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Verse 6, that he was seen of above five hundred brethren. Verse 8, last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of season. And then with me please to Colossians chapter 1, end of verse 24, where he says, [00:02:16] for his body's sake, which is the church, and then verse 25, for of I made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God. Now, our subject is the relevance of Paul's ministry, a historical perspective. The relevance of Paul's ministry, in plain words, why is it important to study Paul? Well, A, if we take [00:03:06] our New Testament, out of the 27 books, 14 of those books are by the Apostle Paul. That should already tell us something. If we exclude the historical books, that is to say the Gospels and Acts and the Book of Prophecy at the end, Revelation, out of those 21 epistles, two-thirds, 14, were written by the Apostle Paul. Given that some of them, such as 2nd and 3rd John and Jude, were very brief epistles, it shows therefore that there is a preponderance of teaching in the New Testament which comes to us through the Apostle Paul. Surely it should be important for us today. Point being, if we take the Book of Acts, which is virtually the history of Christianity, so far as the inspired [00:04:06] faith goes, essentially it divides itself into three, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 2 to chapter 12 and chapter 13 to 20. After the inception of the Church in the day of Pentecost, we have ministry, particularly Peter amongst the Jews in Jerusalem, but from chapter 13 right through to the end, to Paul's imprisonment, it's the history of the mission of the Apostle Paul. Once again, very important. Point being, most of us belong to Western Christendom, some have come a little bit further, I think the furthest one comes from but we belong to the West. In the advance of the Gospel West, from Jerusalem to Samaria, we heard Antioch, [00:05:05] Cappadocia into Asia Minor, Paul was the instrument. We take our maps, the back of our Bibles and look at Paul's voyages, we see the way in which the Gospel is moving. Galatia into Asia Minor, modern day Turkey, Ephesus, the Macedonian call, Gospel coming to Europe, come over and help us. We're in Europe, the Gospel was brought to us through Paul, it's important to us, and onward to Rome, and as we heard, his desire to go to Spain. But more than that, and this is point B, he had a particular ministry to the nations, he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, he was taken out from the

people, that is the Jewish people, he was taken out from the nations, that is he had a church standing, and then he was sent to the nations. And in 1 Timothy 1, Romans 11-13, he says, I speak to you Gentiles [00:06:05] in so much as I am Apostle of the Gentiles. He had the Gospel of the circumcision, just as the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to the people. So Paul, therefore, has something particular to say to us as belonging to Western Christendom and as Gentile believers. And then the next scripture, 1 Timothy 1-16, point B. He's a patron, he says, for this cause I obtain mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering. For a patron, or a delineation, of them that should afterwards believe. He was a patron for us. And the manner of his conversion, and he was turned right round, he was turned upside down, he was turned inside out. He was revolutionized by sight of Christ in glory. [00:07:03] I wonder, dear young brother, dear young sister, has Christ had that effect in your life? You know, we're given a historical perspective, and one of the Puritans, Thomas Sturgeon, he went to hear a preacher, Rogers of Dedham on one occasion, there were 500 auditors listening, all powerfully affected by the preaching. And he says, he recounted to someone afterwards, for a quarter of an hour after the meeting, he had to hold on to the bridle of the horse, holding the naked horse weeping, not even having strength or power to mount the horse. Such was the effect of the preaching. Dear brother, we need impressions like that today, we need preaching like that today, we need the experience of Paul for ourselves today. He was a patron apostle, his experience was a delineation for the rest. But we've only really touched the surface here. We need to come to what Paul's teaching actually was. [00:08:09] The first point I read in Corinthians, the Gospel, are five things that are said there. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, he was raised again, he was seen of many witnesses, but when we come to the fifth one, it introduces something special, it introduces a Christ in exaltation and heavenly glory. That was the starting point with the Apostle Paul. It opens heaven, it opens Christianity in its heavenly character too. As is the heavenly scepter, they also utter heavenly. It's Paul that tells us that we're seated in heavenly places in Christ, it's Paul that was caught up into the third heaven, caught up into paradise. And the full body, heavenly truth of Christianity is mediated to us through the writings of the Apostle Paul.

[00:09:12] Then in Colossians chapter 1, we read, it says something else, it says that his ministry was to complete the word of God. Now, that's not to complete in historical order as much as to say that he was the last to write and whenever he wrote his writings, the canon of scripture, the scripture writings were completed because we know that historically there were later writers, but he was to fulfill, in the old sense of filling full, he was to complete the word of God. Paul's teaching brings a certain dimension of truth, a certain element, it brings a something of Christianity which is not found in the other writings.

[00:10:03] He fulfilled the word of God, so for that reason also, we need to look at his writings. Thirdly, the gospel was committed to Paul in a very special way. He refers to it in twice in Romans as my gospel, we've had it before us in previous years. What a wonderful truth the gospel is of setting us all in liberty before God. Justification, sins dealt with, sin dealt with, our standing, our state, man in Christ. Wonderful truth associated with God. But there's a fourth point I think is very important with Paul and that is his starting point. It doesn't start at the end of man's knee, it starts with God's glory and he opens up the conscience and the thoughts and the plans of God, eternal counsel, in a way that no other does.

[00:11:06] It's Paul that tells us that we're chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It's Paul which tells us of that purpose which God has purposed in himself, of that mystery which was hidden from generations, which is now revealed. The end of his prayer in Ephesians 3 says, Now unto him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of the ages. He carries us

right through into proper eternity. The sweet breath of Paul, the depth of Paul, the profundity of Paul is from eternity to eternity. God's purposes centering in Christ, all the promises of God, yea and amen in him. We had it on the previous evening a little bit, foreknowledge, predestination, vessels of mercy aforeprepared unto glory. [00:12:02] Wonderful, exalted teaching that's found in Paul.

We could go on. He was a minister of the assembly. We want to learn about the church or the assembly according to the counsels of God. In time, this present time or in the future, we look to Paul.

We want exalted views of Christ, the person we look to Paul. God over all will bless us forever. The Son of God, the Christ, the Son, the Messiah.

His person, his work, full understanding of what he accomplished for God's glory.

His offices, his head, his Lord, he's the anointed, he's priest over the house of God.

[00:13:10] The many, many truths concerning Christ, many truths concerning the Holy Spirit as the seal, as the earnest, the one anoint. In the individual Christian or collectively in the assembly in the matter of gifts, linking us to the head in heaven, all this is found in Paul. Another thing too, which sometimes we don't take for granted, Paul gives us an appreciation of all the scriptures. It's Paul that tells us that every scripture, all scripture is given by inspiration of God. It's Paul that tells us that we need to cut in a straight line, that we need to rightly divide the word of truth. It's Paul that sets the church in its proper place, helps us in our understanding of God's dealings with Israel, past, present and future. [00:14:02] It's Paul that opens out to us dispensational truth. It's Paul that helps us in the understanding of the times. We talked in the previous evening about the mercy seat, the propitiatory. That's a typical attitude. It's Paul that tells us that the Passover speaks of Christ, Christ our Passover sacrifice for us. It's Paul that tells us that Adam was a figure and that was to come. And so, in so many ways, Paul opens out to us other scriptures as well so that we can fully appreciate what the other writers, both of the Old Testament and the New Testament have to set before us. It's said a good Roman can go anywhere and go back into the Gospels and learn more of the person of Christ. And of course, last of all, I think in this brief summary, he brings before us in a particular way the future of the Lord's coming, the rapture of the church. He declared unto us by the word of the Lord, the ensuing events, the day of the Lord, dispensational burial of scripture. [00:15:06] All this is indeed brought before us by the Apostle Paul.

So, there we have the relevance of Paul's ministry.

We would think, wouldn't we, with such truth as this, that once Paul was off the scene, things would be going from strength to strength. Sadly, alas, that was not the case.

Instead, we find that all this range of pivotal truth was lost.

Next. Within a very short space of time, a known salvation, an assured salvation, had disappeared.

[00:16:09] The church's living power linked to heaven had been replaced by a hierarchical system, had been replaced by clergy. We're warned of this in the New Testament.

Paul said that after his death, that men would arise from amongst them, teaching perverse things.

There would be worlds amongst the sheep. Even in his lifetime, all Asia had turned away from him. John wrote to Ephesus, it was a fallen church. The mystery of iniquity was already working. So we see, once we leave the page of scripture and get into early ecclesiastical history, there was a plunge, there was a shoot, there was a complete fall. [00:17:01] Now I know some modern day pundits, they would produce a Brian Rabbit and they would say, well there must have been something wrong with Paul's teaching, all this ministry, and look what's become of it. There were two clergymen in Canada in the 1500s, Robert Grant and his brother Frederick Grant.

They got hold of some of the pamphlets by the brethren, and later when J.M.B. went to Canada, they met him and they identified with the brethren. But one of those pamphlets was this little one called Christianity Not Christendom. And in it we read, as to the historical church, we see it at any time as the subject of ecclesiastical history.

In other words, when we look at the church outside of the New Testament, the writer says, I say it never was, as a system, the institution of God, or what God established.

[00:18:06] But at all times, from its first appearance in ecclesiastical history, it was the departure as a system from what God established. And nothing else, primitive church and all. The more it was formally established, the more it was corrupt. And the proofs are given in this pamphlet, and obviously it made an impression on F.W. Grant because he quoted it later on.

So we see that the ruin of the church, just like other matters committed to the hands of man in responsibility, man fails in it. Man had a very precious charge from God, and sadly he didn't keep it. Just let me say, in Roman Catholicism, the present pope follows a succession, and they claim a chain of apostolic succession. [00:19:03] There are a few links in the chain that are highly dubious, of course, but they trace it right back to the Apostle Peter. The idea that there's been a succession of apostles, or those in authority, right back to Peter. First of all, we know this. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. The truth he received, he tells us, it was not of man, it was not by man. There was no succession of order. It came direct from God. It came direct from Christ. It came direct from heaven. So we see that man has introduced something completely contrary. And such a thing, for many succeeding centuries, the picture got blacker and blacker, and the church more and more grounded.

If we wanted to signal in some individuals, we might perhaps refer to St. Augustine, but he had very confused views. [00:20:07] It's been said that the Reformation was a triumph of his doctrine and praise over his doctrine of the church. But there was some measure of light there, and there were other groups that may have been regarded as heretical, who may have held to some false teaching.

We've got the revival of John Wycliffe and the Lollards in England, and John Haas in Bohemia, but not a lot to show. In the 600s, in the 7th century, there was a heretical group that sprang up, and they were called the Poliscians. And one of the features of the Poliscians, they only recognized the Gospels and Paul's writings as valid. They only attached importance to the writings of the Apostle Paul. Well, that was an extreme position. Of course, it was wrong, but it certainly suggests to me that it was trying to swing the pendulum, to correct an imbalance. [00:21:03] So, darkness continued, until the time of Martin Luther, a monk who was concerned about his own salvation, about his own standing before God. He feared the judgment of God, and he was searching. And he'd gone into a monastery, and he'd done everything in terms of works that were suggested to him to try to work out his salvation. To no avail. He was conscious, had no peace, and his superiors sent him to study Paul's writings.

And he tells us about his experience. He says, Although I was a holy and blameless monk, my conscience was nevertheless filled with trouble and anguish. I could not endure those words, the righteousness of God. I had no love for that holy and just God who punished sinners. [00:22:01] I was filled with secret anger against him. I hated him. But when, by the Spirit of God, I understood those words, when I learned how the justification of the sinner proceeds from the free mercy of our Lord through Him, then I felt born again like a new man.

I entered through the open doors into the very paradise of God. Henceforward also, I saw the beloved and holy scriptures with other eyes. I perused the Bible. I brought together a great number of passages that taught me the nature of God's work. And as previously I had to test it with all my heart, these words, the righteousness of God, I began from that hour to value them and to love them as the sweetest and most consoling words in the Bible. In very truth, this language of St. Paul was to me the true gift of paradise.

[00:23:01] Well, he didn't keep that truth to himself. He started to spread it. He was a university professor. And he was greatly troubled by this idea of an indulgent seller. Texels came selling pardons. You paid a certain amount of money. As soon as the coin in the copper spring, the soul from purgatory springs. An idea that you could pay your way into heaven, an idea that you could work your way into God's salvation. It greatly offended Luther's sensibilities. And he posted, as you know, his 95 pieces in the church door. It's the equivalent of calling a press conference. And so the truth spread. The Pope said, oh, it's a German monk who's drunk too much beer to be alright when he's sober. But no spiritual discernment.

The truth spread through his pamphlets, through his writings. His commentary on the epistles of the Galatians. On the bondage of the human will, the Babylonian captivity of the church. [00:24:05] The truth was taken up by him. With blessings to thousands of souls, the gospel, the truth was taken up by him.

With blessings to thousands of souls, the gospel, the truth of justification by faith. One great pillar of Christianity was re-established at the time of the Reformation. Simultaneously, almost in Switzerland, Zwingli commenced a reform in Zurich. And a slightly later date, Calvin in Geneva.

John Knox referred to Geneva as the most perfect school of Christ on earth. He carried the Reformation back to Scotland. When he preached, the Mary Queen of Scots used to weep.

But she used to weep with rage and frustration. [00:25:05] The power of such preaching. She said she feared an army of 10,000 men more. She feared John Knox's preaching more than an army of 10,000 men. With Calvin, without looking at the downside and without looking at certain logical deductions and human reasoning based on truth of scriptures. Essentially, he laid an emphasis on the glory of God. And he laid an emphasis on God's counsel.

God's sovereignty.

Truth of election and subjects like this. And it gave a certain backbone. It gave a certain resilience to Christianity. Once the Huguenots, a minority in France, they suffered. They prayed to Christ and died. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's. And the Spanish Netherlands also. Tremendous suffering for the truth. But these believers, they had the consciousness that that which was of God was going to go through. [00:26:02] And despite whatever outward reversals of fortune there might be, God's counsel

triumphed in the end. So they set off to seek religious liberty from the shores of England and Holland. And the Pilgrim Fathers in the Mayflower and other settlements along the coast of North America where Christianity and particularly the reformed faith took strong root.

So we're very thankful then in terms of Paul's teaching that there was this revival of the 16th and 17th centuries. But again, essentially it was simply the recovery of the truth of the gospel, not the truth of the church. Church structures continued.

Clergy continued.

The idea that the law was the standard by which believers should live.

The idea that national churches existed.

That the German princes or the cantons in Switzerland decided, or the Queen in England decided, [00:27:05] what way religion should go. It was a recovery of truth, but it was not a recovery of all the truth.

I don't think we should undermine it. We mentioned the Canterbury Archbishop was burnt at the stake. Others were burnt within sight of us. Simply because they said justification by faith alone. They paid the price in blood that we might have our religious liberty today. But I want to go now to another occasion.

These are the words of J. Butler Stoney. Writing in the 1870s, he said that the first recovery of the truth, 60 years ago, was by a clergyman in a very isolated place, waking up one morning and saying, I have a head in heaven.

That was the beginning. [00:28:01] He says elsewhere, this clergyman, though not yet established in his soul as to the gospel, was so arrested by this light from God that he devoted himself to the study of the subject. And as soon as he was established in grace, he saw clearly this great addition that Christ was taking of his body the church. He sought the company of Christians in order to make known to them what had been shown to him. In places remote one from another, earnest and devoted men became interested as to this great light which had been given from God.

You see, we can view Christ in an essentially free position as suffering on the cross, in the matter of salvation.

That was recovered in the Reconvocation. But there's a great deal of truth connected with Christ's first place in the glorious head of the assembly and with his coming again. [00:29:02] And these were truths, in the mercy of God, that were recovered too early in the 1800s. And the effect of that on Christianity was immense.

And in Great Britain alone, 800 assemblies of believers who met together in the good of these truths, understanding Germany before persecution by Hitler and the Nazis, there were 800 assemblies also. So there were those who sought and measured to answer to Paul's doctrine and put it into practice.

And as well as that, of course, the truth was very widely distributed, spread amongst Christianity.

Today we have Bible schools in America that teach dispensationalism, which is essentially Paul's doctrine concerning future events. The teaching that was recovered, Paul's teaching was very influential in D.L. [00:30:03] Moody and his great evangelistic campaigns. And so we see the way in which Paul's doctrine was lost, was recovered to some extent in the Reformation, and more particularly, in a further way, the recovery with which, in some sense, we are associated.

So here's another statement, and with this I decide to bring my remarks to a close. Paul's gospel and Paul's doctrine are causative things for the last day.

We are walking and laboring in the midst of an immense network of systems in which Paul's ministry is totally unknown.

So we are privileged.

And we have a solemn responsibility in the midst of Christendom, and these truths are [00:31:01] not known how thoroughly we've answered in practice.

But Paul's ministry is extremely relevant, dear brethren, for us today. We come together, we assemble in Christ's name. Why do we do that?

It's in Paul's letters.

There's the recognition of headship, God's curatorial order, sisters cover their heads. Where do we learn about that?

From Paul.

It used to be said about the brethren, you know, it used to say that some of the opponents used to say, well anyone who tries us can take part. I'm not sure if that statement should have to be revised today, but what essentially they were saying was that the men take part in the meeting. The men pray and everything else. The sisters keep silent. They're not suffering to teach. This is something that Paul has laid down also in his letters. [00:32:02] The practical order in the assembly. When we come together in a locality, we don't have a clergyman. We come together, waiting on the Lord. We come together on the Lord's Day morning. We have one loaf on the table. It's every fourth of one body. We've been many, one loaf, one body. We do it often because Paul told us to do it often. We know that he tarried seven days at Troas in order that he could be with the disciples to break bread on the first day of the week, which was their custom. In regard to discipline, we have instructions from Paul. In regard to relations between assemblies in the different localities, we go somewhere, we seek out those of like mind, we take a letter of commendation, we find that they're practicing the same truth, they're owning the same board and the same head. It's all there in Paul. So, our position today, our distinguishing position, that really which characterizes us is Paul's doctrine and what's taught.

[00:33:02] Paul's teaching. And I would submit that this is something which is most important in keeping us together and helping us in the practice of the truth. There are a number of dangers. We can do it as it was referred to in Christ. There's the danger of intellectualism. Kindly note when we looked at Luther and we looked at JND, they were looking for peace in their own souls.

It was something that touched their whole moral being. It wasn't just something in the head, not

something in the senses. It was something in the heart as well. So, we need to have the faith and live in reality in the heart. Otherwise, it's useless. There's a danger that we can let slip these distinctive teachings. And if we let them slip, it's not a leveling up, it's a leveling down. And we find ourselves then on the same level as other groups, as evangelical Christians, as that which is practiced commonly around us. [00:34:03] But we've been robbed of our treasure.

Robbed of our strength, perhaps like Samson. We don't even see it.

The other danger, of course, is that we are indifferent to these truths. We've been brought up with them. We pay little service to them. And we continue with them. But we're not holding them and living reality in our own personal lives. That's a danger to us who maybe have been familiar with these things from a young age. And so, sometimes coming from outside and grasping these truths for impressions for the first time, are very resolute in regard to them. And value them much more, perhaps, than we're supposed to say we do. So, there's been this great tide of blessing at the Reformation. The tides come in, the tides come out. In the 1800s, there's another tide of blessing crested the way. But the tide started to go out again. [00:35:03] As the tide ebbs and flows around us, we need to stand. And, of course, it's hard to stand against the current. You go up to some of the streams, some of the rivers at the foothills of the Himalayas, and you're standing and you're nearly swept away by the current. So, we need to stand there, brothers and sisters. And the only thing, the truth alone will not enable us to stand. We need divine power as well, and Paul spoke of that. He spoke of the danger of the last days, a form of godliness but denying power. And he said to Timothy that he'd receive, not the spirit of fear or cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. We need to be strengthened from the inner man. We need the power of God to enable us to stand for the truth of God in these last days and through mercy, perhaps, be a help to others. May God enable us.

[00:36:02] A verse in Isaiah says, Except the Lord who preserved to us a remnant, we would have been as sodden and demotivated.

It's good to remember that God does preserve a remnant in a day of departure.

Thankful we are.

When we look at history, I would just like to mention four in my horizon who stood against decline and were used of God in a very remarkable way.

Sometimes I find exemplification of history in individuals helpful in regard to understanding the general truth. I'll mention these four.

[00:37:03] The first one has already been referred to, Aurelius Augustine. Sometimes I say, is Augustine a hippo? A man who had an unconverted father but a very good mother to moniker and doubtless she laid a framework of teaching in his mind. He was a bright student but he had problems with youthful lusts.

At the age of 18, he was father to an illegitimate son.

His studies proceeded in Carthage and then he went to Rome to a school of rhetoric.

He was so disgusted with the behavior of the fellow students that he moved to Milan and he came under the power of preaching of Ambrose of Milan. He still had this problem of youthful lusts. [00:38:01] But his attention was drawn to the closing verse in Romans 13 which I can quote to you. Put thee on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. It came like a sharp light from heaven.

He was liberated and Ambrose of Milan, I've got a rather better view of him perhaps than Andrew. In fact, even the writer in the last issue of TNT likewise helpfully refers to him as being the first Christian writer to notice that Rebecca in Genesis 24 was an Augustine epitome.

So that he stands out in my horizon as being a very valuable stand and those who have looked into his writings Those who have looked into his writings know that his Confessions and the struggle he had for liberty [00:39:06] were very valuable in the Middle Ages in answering some of the heretics and of the ensembles in the Revelations. The second one is Martin Luther, a great friend of mine, but he's not so much a preacher.

I think the reason for that is I don't know.

But he was a man who, brought up in very humble circumstances, a hard school, was nevertheless the subject of God's work and in a thunderstorm as he was approaching Erfurt he was frightened out of his life and he entered as a result of that into the Augustine monastery. There the work of God proceeded and the verse that was brought home to him already three times was [00:40:04] that just shall live by faith.

Now he made a visit to Rome and he saw before his eyes those corruptions which existed in the Roman Church at the time of the Middle Ages. He returned to his hometown and he still battled with the epistles of the Romans, as I mentioned, as being important in regard to Luther.

He battled with the Roman Catholic Church in the 95 Theses that have been reminded of.

But he really set the world on fire in the winter of 1515 when he started his lunchtime lectures on the epistles of the Romans.

By the time he finished, then the news spread, as Andrew has mentioned, throughout Germany [00:41:06] and some historians say that he was the one who opened the door to the Reformation. Now I will conclude the third one and I didn't mention a very important one, I think, in England's history and that is John Wesley. The 15th son, the 15th child, sorry, of the godly family.

His brother Charles wrote him as the 18th son.

He was brought up in a godly atmosphere.

He was part of a hordy club in Oxford who earned the name of Methodists because of their rigid lifestyle.

As a result of his exercises, he and his brother went to America and he preached boldly against the slave trade and against rum and on trade. [00:42:02] He wasn't a very popular preacher and he came back to England. He came then under the influence of the Moravians and on the 24th of May 1738,

thank you, I'm getting some milk from Maria, he was in a room in Aldersgate, which you can see when you get to London, it's still marked by a brass plate, and at quarter past nine, someone's reading Luther's Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans and he said he felt like a new man.

The joy of the Lord streamed into his soul and from that time he became a powerful preacher.

Now this was very important in the history of England because, doubtless, the wave of gospel blessing with him and the group that he associated [00:43:05] was responsible for saving England from the French Revolution of 1789.

We owe a great deal to John Wesley.

The Andrews are correctly shown, the tide went out. Now the fourth one I divide into two parts because there was a recovery of the truth and if you're in university circles or in touch with the colleges for missionaries, you'll find the name of Karl Marx. He produced his dialogue on Romans in August 1918.

No doubt about it, he was a powerful voice.

Sometimes he said he dropped a bombshell in the theology colleges. [00:44:04] A very good thing.

And we in the northeast coast of Scotland felt something of a revival at that time. Now for us, Karl Marx was probably the most never even heard of, but for us we still value and value very highly the truth brought out by brethren.

Unquestionably, that was a recovery of the truth for which we should be very, very deeply thankful.

Now the solemn thing is, as Andrews has been saying, sometimes the truth that we've got in our books and the truth that is sold by our book shops is much more powerful than the lives that we're living in this embrace. And it's a very humbling thing that when those who value our ministry say, [00:45:03] where can we go in order to see these truths demonstrated?

We have to hang our heads in shame and say, what have we done with the truth that has been so powerfully recovered to us?

Andrews was quite right. For those of us who had to pay the price by coming out of system in order to be found amongst that despised company, everyone else spoke against him.

Those who prepared for the horn's nest to be liberated on them, those who prepared to suffer, they value increasingly the precious truth that's made available to all.

And those of those in our meetings now, many brought up as children of the saints who have never had to pay the price for the truth that we value, [00:46:04] when they see over the wall, they find the limitations of Paul's chain almost unacceptable and we lose brethren and sisters and brothers.

And I'm sure that's the exercise in these meetings, that we might get a fresh glimpse, not only of Paul, but of his ministry, and may God himself in the power of the Spirit bring these things to pass. Mere objective knowledge is not enough.

It needs to be written in our hearts by the power of God the Holy Spirit. And if we haven't got it, we give it up.

What a disaster that is.