

# OpenTheo

## Evangelism, with William Taylor

November 18, 2021



### Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

From the 2021 Faithful Conference, Kevin interviews keynote speaker William Taylor. Taylor is the rector of St. Helen's Church in Bishopsgate, London. There is a lot of fun banter, book recommendations, and a wealth of advice about evangelism, but what shines through most clearly is William Taylor's firm faith in the Word of God to accomplish the mission of the church.

Life and Books and Everything is sponsored by Crossway, publisher of *The Death of Porn*, by Ray Ortlund.

In *The Death of Porn*, Ray Ortlund writes six personal letters, as from a father to his son. Ideal for individuals and small groups, it will give hope to men who have been misled by porn into devaluing themselves and others.

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Books and Everything:

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The Word: One to One

Revolutionary Work: What's the point of the 9 to 5?

Read, Mark, Learn series

On Evangelism:

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, by J.I. Packer

Knowing God, by J.I. Packer

Questioning Evangelism, Second Edition: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did, by Randy Newman

Know and Tell the Gospel, by John Chapman

Evangelism As a Lifestyle: Reaching Into Your World With the Gospel, by Jim Petersen

True Devotion: In Search of Authentic Spirituality, by Allan Chapple

Funny:

The Jeeves & Wooster books by P.G. Wodehouse

## **Transcript**

Greetings and salutations, welcome to Life and Books and Everything. I'm Kevin Young, glad to have you with us. We are thankful for Crossway and their sponsorship of this podcast and want to mention the new book just released from Ray Ortlund in the past.

We have a special podcast episode. We recently at our church, Christ Christ, Covenant held a faithful conference, which is our annual conference. In this year, our guest speaker was William Taylor, who is the senior pastor at St. Helens Church in the financial district of London.

I've known William for many years and have been over. He and his wife Janet have wonderful gifts of hospitality and I've stayed there along with many others. About five

years ago, my whole family, we had six kids at the time.

Stayed there for the better part of two months. When you're living in a flat in London with another family and a gaggle of children safe to say that you have some bonding. We are very fond of the tailors and had wanted them to come over to the states for some time.

They were supposed to come over last year, but of course they couldn't with COVID and in the Lord's kindness, the very day of their flights turned out to be the very day of their flight. They turned out to be the very first day that the US was allowing British citizens into the country. They arrived recently and as a part of our conference, I conducted an interview with William and we want to play that for you.

Hopefully you will be edified to hear about the work of the gospel in London and in the UK. William is a key leader and encourager there among conservative Anglicans and not just among the Anglicans, but gospel men and women in gospel churches of various denominations in the UK. So hope that you benefit from this interview and this conversation with William Taylor.

This is always great fun for me. I don't know if it's fun for the person I'm interviewing or for the rest of you, but it's at least great fun for me to get to interview people that I know, like and respect and can learn from. And so we're going to spend about 830.

That's okay. Asking questions. I say we, but I guess actually I'm the only one asking the questions.

And we will have some life, some ministry. We have time. We'll talk a little bit about books.

Some will be serious. Some will be less serious. So William, thank you for being with us.

Let me ask you a less important question to start out. Could you explain England, Great Britain, the United Kingdom? What's going on there? Are you three countries? Are you one country? What is happening there? You missed out the British Isles. Oh, then the British Isles and the Commonwealth.

Yeah, no, no, we tend to go to the Commonwealth. England is England. It's just one country.

Great Britain is England, Scotland and Wales. But sometimes in some sporting events. United Kingdom includes Northern Ireland is a political thing.

And the British Isles is the whole island of Ireland, including the Republic. So in the World Cup, it's just England. In football.

Yes, right. And in rugby. Yeah.

And in cricket. It's just England. In Scotland has a team.

Yes. Yeah, of course. Yes.

But what about the Olympics? Then it's Great Britain. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, yeah.

Well, we don't think we can beat the world in everything. No. On our own.

On our own. So you need, then you need as many countries. Many countries.

Many people as we can. Many of them were born in the Commonwealth and I've decided to take up. Boris who said after the London Olympics, you were winning cycling, you were winning rowing, you were winning.

He said, anything that we can do while we're sitting down, we're really quite good at. It's very good. So, very good.

So, tell us a little bit about yourself. Where are you from? How did you become a Christian? So I was born on a small working farm right down in the west of England. You sometimes see detective series on Cornwall is the place that I was born and it was a family farm.

So we did all the work and everything. So that's where I was born. My family were Christian, but very much formally so in a very kind of English way.

The church was, Church of England was poor. I don't mean impoverished. It was a poor church.

Didn't really get much gospel there. But in that part of the world, they went to the local church. I became a Christian.

My grandfather was in those days in England, a well known evangelist. And I was staying with him for a period when I was at boarding school. I was encouraged to spend a little bit of time away from the boarding school for reasons which we needn't go into.

The sea. When you were naughty boy. I think it was both the naughtiness and a desire to ensure that I graduated without being removed.

So I spent a time away and then came back for a day in order to graduate. So, but when I was with my grandfather who had been praying for me all my life, he took me over the course of the thrift for days. And finally on that Saturday evening to John 524 and that's where I surrendered to the Lord Jesus.

They then began a phenomenal battle because I didn't realize the gospel was Jesus Christ is Lord. So I really responded to, I'll talk about this tomorrow morning, but I really responded to Jesus died on the cross and loves me. But I didn't respond to the lordship of

Christ.

And so my first two years at university was massive, massive battle. Were you going to surrender everything and take up your cross and follow? And so, and you know, praise God, he had hold of me. And if you go to in the States, if you go to Harvard or Princeton or Yale, you just kind of never, you sort of leave that out.

You don't want to seem pretentious. So you went to a little school called Cambridge. You won't say it, but I'll say it for you.

Is that where you met Janet? No, I met Janet. Janet, this is a shocking reality. Janet does not remember this.

But the first time I met her was at the back of St. Helens. But she, that didn't feature in any of her memories. Where it was a big in my mind.

And then we didn't get married. I sort of had always thought I would like to marry Janet one day, but it didn't happen to, you know. So where did you get married? In 1990.

1990. Tell us about your three kids. Well, Emily is 27, married.

Her husband works in one of the church plants from St. Helens. They're very independent. The church is.

So he works there. Emily teaches. Digby is our next son.

He is married. And he lives just around the corner. They both live just around the corner.

And Digby and Naomi. Digby works in the field sports industry. He shoots things.

He, he and fishes. He's a passionate fisherman. And then prays the Lord all three of them.

A clear and committed Christians. And then Archie is currently in a regiment called the Irish Guards. He's in the British Army.

And you served in the army? I did. How did you get there? What did you do? I was in an infantry regiment that was formed in the American War of Independence, called the 60th. Who won? I think we let you win, didn't we? I mean, it's one of those ones where you weren't.

Perhaps it was only England. Perhaps it was only England. Maybe we should have been.

You were spread a bit thin. You were spread horribly. The Empire, yes.

Yeah, anyway. So it was a terrible time. No, but you didn't fight in that war.

I was not part of that. But the 60th American Rifles became, you know, the 60th and then the Royal Greenjackets. So I was an infantry officer in the British Army.

And you served toward the end of the troubles in Northern Ireland? Yeah, we had, I was in for five years and we did a tour of Belfast and, you know, so all of that. Was it still quite dangerous in parts? It was. It was quite dangerous.

I mean, we had a very, in those days, the intelligence was very, very good. And so you would always know when there was about to be something to happen. And they would actually, in those days, take everybody off the streets.

Our group worked both across the whole of West Belfast. So we did the whole piece. And we would often be the first people afterwards.

And it was, I mean, you look back on it now. If there was something about to happen, the Catholics would cross themselves as they passed you. And that was always a little bit unnerving.

A little bit of a tell. A little bit unnerving. But we had a quiet tour, which was, okay.

I've been to Belfast a few times. Maybe I even went once with you. You set up with some group over there.

That's right. Yes. And they say, oh, by that we're putting you in the most bombed hotel in your house.

But it hasn't been bombed recently. I know. And the troubles have been, there's still stuff going on, but it's a lot quieter.

And my old thought that we stayed in has been turned into a supermarket. Oh, for very good. That's something, isn't it? It's good.

So we mentioned earlier in the introduction that you had us stay with you. Thank you for that. I've had many, many people.

In fact, rare is the time, I think, when you don't have someone staying in your flat. Is this something that you and Janet talked about before you were married? Did you both come? How are you both so hospitable? Is it something cultivated or just comes easily to you? I think Janet is a great hostess. That's true.

I think the church were very brilliant in managing to get hold of a house that is on five floors. The top floor is a flat permanently lived in by a ministry couple in the church. The next floor is a flat where when children were growing up, there was a bedroom for our daughter.

But there was always a place there. I started at St Helens, which was a big church at the

time, age 37, and very, very raw. I wasn't like somebody like you who had had a lot of experience.

I was very raw in gospel work. And I am so thankful that we had been able to have people. And it has so enriched St Helens.

And I think things in the United Kingdom, because we've been able to say to people, come, stay for seven weeks with your six children. What was it you said? It was a great test for us all. For us all.

That's what you said. I mean, I thought primarily the test was in this direction. But it was a great... It was absolutely one of the happiest periods of the last 20 years.

I mean, we looked back when it was such a... Well, the matter... I just said there must be thick walls. You didn't hear it. They were all up on the fourth floor.

And whenever we were in in the evening, we'd have all this family down and they'd sit round our table in the kitchen. We'd feed them hot chocolate and I'd spike their chocolate with endless spoons of sugar. It was just such... I can't think of how any of you slept at all, but it was great fun.

But it's been very enriching, because these kind of what I call them gospel triangulations, you know, we've had very strong relationships with Sydney, a very strong relationship with South Africa, people in Singapore. Many... I mean, here now in America, that's developed a lot more. We've had people like Mark to stay, who's coming next to you and stuff.

And it's just been very rich for us as a church and for the English evangelical scene to be exposed to people who are on the same page, doing ministry, and it just is very enriching. And it's been good for us, because I say I was clueless and I used to have these people down for supper and I just, you know, just grill them. What do you do? And what do you do? You know, because it was very all very new for me.

Well, it was delightful to stay with you. Just one more thing about your house. So how many of you have... I'm going to out where he lives, everyone can go find his place.

Now, any of you have seen the movie Christopher Robin, and even the Winnie the Pooh movie? That's where William lives. Tell us about that. It really is.

Yeah, it is. So I can't remember the guy who was the act. I mean, Janet... That's the chap.

Yeah, yeah. We passed him in the street. Janet was like, "That's you, McGregor." I didn't know which one.

He was with three or four people. I ain't got a clue he was. But anyway, there we go.

It was done. They closed the whole street off. They put, you know, like they do in their filming.

So those white row houses, very English-looking. It's filmed. It's in quite a number of films.

And so it's St. Helens. So outside St. Helens is Leadenhall Market, which is the opening scene of the Harry Potter film. So he gets the ones.

Where he gets the owl and the magic and all that sort of stuff. Oh, you just have it all over there. What's the built-more did you just think? And we have castles.

It was really very impressive. We have pretty trees. It was new.

It was absolutely true. I thought the art inside was amazing. The garden was great.

I just thought it was wonderful. It was a great treat. Well, so glad you could go.

A couple more things about yourself. You're obviously busy hosting people from all over the world and preaching and doing things. You must do something for fun.

What do you do to let your hair down such as it is? We still have the farm down in the West Country. My mother lives there. My father died five years ago.

And we have, we built a house. In fact, I said to Janet after we came back from built-more. We woke up the next one.

I said, I'm so sorry, darling. I didn't build you a house with 63 rooms. But we did build a house on the farm.

Do you know the bathrooms don't work in built-more? She said, quick as a flash, but our bathrooms work. Well, that's very good. So we get on there.

I fish and, you know, join Digby and the sort of things he does. But I also, I go down there and that's where, you know, we do a lot of our relaxation on the farm. That's good.

What is the most interesting and the most boring American sport to you? I enjoy watching American football. I mean, it is great. And how those guys, in fact, on the plane on the way over, I don't know if you've seen the Mike Yorphins, the 12 Orphans.

I mean, it's a great. Just American football. Yeah, American football.

It was, I said, I enjoy watching. I mean, baseball. Yeah, just goes on forever.

But then I enjoy watching cricket and that last five days. So I can't really. Baseball, you don't know what's happening.



Yeah. So last question, we'll get to ministry. What's the, you know, in America we like to hear what other people think.

Is it still, when people hear you're going to America, they say, that's great or watch out. You're going to get shot up or I was on a plane one time and there was a woman from Germany there next to me and just making small talk. And she just said, and I was in the States or she knew I was from the States and she just said, you want to know the two things that's wrong with your country? Well, of course I do.

That's what I was hoping. She said you have too many guns and you don't have enough trains. So.

Oh, fair enough. Yeah, fair enough. I reckon we do have more guns than trains.

But what's the general sentiment? Don't talk about either of those things. No, I'm not going to. I'm going there.

I'm not going there. No, I think we admire the American. I mean, the Americans are remarkable.

I mean, and it's, and so generous. We have a lot of Americans come to St. Helens. So it's not an unusual thing.

Yeah, right. We got several Americans on the staff, you know, so we're, we're at ease. And you think the accent is interesting? American accent? I think it's very interesting.

People say to me, you all, and I'm looking around going, who else is here? Or, you know, you use guys from the bathroom and I'm thinking, you know, I think I'm, you know, I don't need to take a bath. I don't need to take a bath. So, so, but no, generally speaking, we love coming.

It's Janet's first visit to America and I love coming here and people are so generous and so friendly. Yes. In England, they wear, well, sweater, sweaters over, but you call them jumpers, right? So that's, that's unusual.

Jumper is what little kids wear with, have little footsees. So when I would say the, you know, meet the, the vicar and he's in a jumper. I'm just picturing something different.

I don't wear that. Yeah, I don't wear a jump. And the word pants is different.

Do you have onesies here? Yes. No, I don't wear that. Yes.

Very good. Okay. Jumpers.

Jumpers. All right. St. Helens.

This was the parish church of William Shakespeare. How old is St. Helens? 12th century.

12th century.

Yeah, the oldest bits the 12th century. So it is quite old. I say so.

The, we're celebrating our 40th anniversary. It's very good. Yeah, well, that's wonderful.

No, I mean, that's great. But I mean, there are lots of problems with an old building. You know, there, there are big problems with it.

Although it was bombed in 1992 by the IRA and again in 1993, or was it 91 and 93? And so we were able to do a lot then before I came. Thankfully, I used to go to St. Helens in the 1980s. But, and then came back as, to on the staff and then as the, as the director there.

But that enabled us to do a lot. So the floor is completely flat. We raised it up five foot each few centuries depending on where the church is at.

The theology impacts the architecture. And you can see that in England. You see when a church has been Anglo-Catholic or if a church has been, you know, gospel-centered.

You have a very high pulpit. You don't always preach from that one. Not always, but often because we have a balcony and you can actually address people in the balcony much better from the pulpit.

But that, there are, there are a number of things. So we were able to change the layout of the church very substantially, which makes it much more flexible. The church is 12th century.

There have been some remarkable times at St. Helens down through the century. You look at the monuments. You can see when they believe the gospel from what they said about their death, which is rather lovely.

In the 17th century, Thomas Horton preached, what is it, 57 sermons on Romans 8? You know, and it's really, I mean, it's not the kind of preaching I would do, but it's good, it's good solid. It's very solid. Yeah.

But it's good stuff. And it's right there. Some, I don't know, some people have been to London.

It's right there in the financial district. So next to the Gherkin, the one that looks like a big pickle. That's right.

So there are tool buildings all around us. And it's called the Gherkin. And it's, they all have weird names.

They have, you know, the scalpel, the walkie talkie. But they're all there. It's less banks

now.

It's mostly insurance, a lot of lawyers, things connected with insurance, a few banks. They're all there. And, you know, pre-pandemic, there would be 500,000 people within less than a square mile of St. Helens.

So it was among the most densely populated areas in the world, in the working day. And so you can imagine the evangelistic opportunity of that is huge, huge. Yeah.

So back up a little bit to your predecessor. Yes. Many people here would know of some of the great post-war leaders in Evangelicalism in England.

Martin Lloyd Jones was in London from Wales, but was in London, Westminster Chapel. And people would have read some of his books. Certainly John Stott and his commentary is also in London.

But the third, really, of the three giants, probably less known to us, but his predecessor, Dick Lucas. So tell us about Dick. He's 96 years old.

He still lives next door to you. What was the church like when he came and what has been his impact on St. Helens in abroad? Massive. I mean, the church was effectively derelict when he came.

There were six in the congregation. And this is what? 1961. There was 61 in the congregation.

One was Christian. There was a choir paid. Right.

And that was it. But there were praying business men in those days in the city who were wanting to evangelize their friends. And so they'd been asking Dick to come and do occasional talks for them.

And that increased. And then St. Helens came up and they applied. And Dick just, he said, "Well, I'll fill in the application." He really didn't expect to get it.

He got it. And then, you know, the work grew. And at its height, there would have been sort of 450, 500 business people on a Tuesday lunchtime coming to hear the gospel.

Now, a lot more people went to church in those days, but that's, they would be coming in. And he is an absolutely brilliant expositor of scripture. So, Dick would say that John Stott and a guy called Alan Stibbs really modeled expository preaching.

That is where your preaching comes out of the text rather than using the text as a springboard, what I call trampoline preaching. Using the text as a springboard to teach whatever you want to teach, whether it's your doctrine or the point you think the congregation needs to know. So, Dick really developed expository preaching and really

focused on England initially.

And, you know, the growth amongst evangelicals in England, he was profoundly influential in which is why I guess he's slightly less well known globally, because he focused very substantially. And maybe he didn't write the... Didn't write commentary as like Starters. He is not a writer.

I mean, he's... He's like Lloyd Jones. He's not a writer and he will write a script, then think, I've changed my mind and scrap it. Or then think it's not good enough.

And anyway, somebody else, he's very humble. And then he just... he's not a writer. But you can find his sermons on the website.

I popped in to see him. I mean, he is still recording material. He still works, you know, three hours a day, four hours a day.

Single, never married. And he... I said to him, because he very... he won't talk about himself. He's just impossibly difficult to talk to, because he always wants to know what you're doing and tell us how Kevin is, because, you know, he's very fond of you, Kevin.

And so forth. So, I said to him, "What are you working on?" He's... he's doing a recording on Matthew 11. Come to me, all who are weary.

And the stuff is, you know, riveting. So he gave me a like 20 minute exposition as I sat there. I wish I had a notebook.

With Stott and Dick Lucas, both single, of course, starts with the Lord. Was that something of an ideal for that generation that they thought to really serve the Lord? We were going to be single? Or is that making too much out of just two anecdotes? I think there was in the ministries from which they came. And I was part of that for a period.

If you want to be really very keen, you know, the highest is to be single for the Lord. And though it may not have been taught explicitly, I think the great models were. And I don't think that was healthy.

Right. And I don't think it was healthy for me, and I don't think it was healthy for a lot of people. But, you know, that is to, you know, I don't want to speak ill of that work because so much good came out of it.

Dick, actually, so I've interviewed Dick. I've done eight one and a half hour interviews. And in one of the interviews, he says, you know, I come from a long line of bachelor's.

And bachelor's, bachelor's, I mean, not that long, obviously otherwise, there would have been a... That's true. It's hard to come from a long line. There are many Batcha Ka family has many Batchas.

This is why you enjoy asking the question. Yes. Very good.

Thank you. So anyway, he comes from a family where there are many Batchas. His brother was a bachelor.

You know, and I don't think... I think he is some... You know, he didn't want to get married, so... Yeah. And you're preaching here tonight, and it was wonderful. Thank you.

And preaching and speaking about the realities of eternal punishment that you do at St. Helens. And we know that you've written a book about biblical sexuality, so you're very clear and winsome, but firm on that issue. And you're also... the church is complementarian, and it's view of men leading in the home and leading the church.

Does this make you very unpopular with Londoners, or even more so perhaps with some in your own Anglican communion? What do people think of when they think of this retrograde movement going on at St. Helens? And what is interesting is that the churches that are growing in England, there are other churches that are growing, but the churches who are from normal, classic evangelical position are growing and planting new churches. Now, I don't think the world has noticed. When the world notices is it will get very, very uncomfortable, but I don't think the world has particularly... I mean, they do know in the city, city establishment.

One of the old city boys came up to me the other day and he said, "Ah, I was doing some civic thing." He said, "You have a reputation, you know." I didn't ask him what it was, but you know, they know where we stand. And at the moment, the world is kind of slightly... But the London diocese... But it's not very fun. No, no, no, it's the Anglican liberal establishment really don't like us at all.

Having said that, they are pragmatists and they want life and they need money, you know, and they're dying. So, whole diocese are cutting. So, bishops have something called a diocese, you know, and that's an area.

And they're cutting clergy numbers by 25%, for example. And so, when we plant churches and we plant churches in other people's diocese, that's the best fun, is to do not just in something else is parish, but somebody else's diocese. So, you go into another bishop's diocese and you plant a church, that's good.

And we have done that and I have been met by not only the incumbent of the church, but also a lawyer to try and prevent us starting a new church. And then when the... These are church people trying to stop you from starting a church. The population of your parish is 10,000 people.

How many come to your church? 150. We're trying to reach the 9,000... Right, yeah. I can't do the math.

That's 1,850. Yeah, whatever it is. Yeah, yeah.

So, we're trying to reach those guys. So, we're not a threat to you, you know, wouldn't it never say... But then... But what's interesting is, as those churches grow, classic English establishment, they then come to you, the establishment, and say, "I wonder now if your church is..." Is it 10 years later, might like to join the diocese, you know, because they want the growth. So, say a bit more, what is the spiritual state? I know you don't know the whole... But you are very well connected in St. Helens's with the gospel partnerships and proclamation trust in a lot of, not just Anglicans, but broader evangelical movements.

Are you encouraged by the gospel work going on in England? I think we probably have a picture here of there's just hardly any good news to speak of. It's incredibly secular. And maybe both of those things are true.

I think both of those things are true. But I think there is a hidden work going on of faithful men in gospel churches with men and women serving the Lord, which would have been unthinkable 30 years ago. And you kind of think, what is the Lord doing in a Dr. Callen Brown wrote a book called "The Death of Christian Britain", you may have come across it, and he chanced the decline of the mainline denominations that are liberal and basically no longer gospel churches.

And of course, if you're a banker who doesn't believe in money, your bank is not going to do very well. And if you're a Christian who does not preach the gospel, you're going to go down the plug hole. Over time it takes a long time, but that is happening.

And in some ways I think, well thank God, because you're only doing people damage. And quietly there is, now the numbers are tiny, the numbers are tiny, but quietly. So I try and pray for the London pastors who I know on a Saturday.

And back in the day, when I was in the 1980s in the army coming into London, there would have been possibly three churches, one might have four, one might have gone to and think, well I'm going to hear, no I didn't know all the churches, but now they're 30 or 40 pastors, I'll be very happy to go and sit in their church and hear a really good sermon in London. So it's patchy, some parts of the country, alongside that the free independent churches, FIC independent churches, have grown again tremendously. And so the FIC, the independent evangelical churches have grown remarkably, and there's a guy called John Stevens who kind of heads up that.

We have great friends, we work very closely together, he's doing a fantastic job. And do you work with some of the Presbyterians, so we have... We try and make it. I know you try and make it.

We do have Ben Treanor from the IPC in Presbyterians. Matthew Roberts. Yes, it's very

small.

You've got to get Paul Levy out here. Yes, I know Paul. Yes, I've got to make it.

We do. And we have something called the Gospel Partnership. So we work within the Anglican, something called Renew, which I'm very involved in.

But we also set up the Gospel Partnerships. And the Gospel Partnerships is churches of all types. And you can FIC, the Presbyterian.

I'm so pleased to see you've got Mark Devere coming. You know, it's just wonderful so that we're all Gospel people. And we would say, okay, as a partnership, well, we will try and plant churches together.

And St. Helens, we would send people to an independent evangelical church if the guys are gospel man and have done. So we've helped people start churches from different dominance. And I think that is can only be good.

Yeah. You've been to America before, but you follow a lot of things. Does America strike you as very Christian, completely? Yeah, yeah, very.

Very, very. Yes. In what ways? How do you sense that? There are churches everywhere.

I mean, it's just unbelievable. You go around the corner and there's another church. And it's from what I understand is people actually turn up.

You know, if you do a leaf lip campaign or something like that, it must be changing. It must be changed. Right, it is, yeah.

And you get that sense. But in England, because of an established church, which is so dominant, the Church of England, and because liberal rationalism through the German universities came into England in the mid 19th century, we have had 150 years now. Is that what you say 150 years? I would say we've had 150 years.

So I said, you know, somebody's never heard of Abraham. You know, I'll be talking to people reading John's Gospel with them. And, you know, they have not the first clue about Jesus.

They know nothing, nothing. So we've had 150 years. Whereas I feel if you come to America, even if you go to New York or Seattle on the east or west coast, the person probably has had a grandparent who was in touch with authentic Christianity.

And so I think some people don't realize just how rich, you know, even your mainline denominations, they could be maybe all off the piece now. And also you've not just got one dominant Church of England. You've got Baptists and you've got... It's easy for people to conservative Christians at times to disparage, oh, the Bible Belt and all of

that's true, of course, there's nominalism.

But what a heritage. And we still have quite a bit of it in Charlotte. Charlotte's changing too.

But what a heritage to be lots of non-Christians. But as you said, usually they're not 150 years distant from authentic Christianity. There's a parent or there's a grandparent and there's, you know, 15 good PCA churches in town and many other good Baptist churches and all sorts of other churches.

And I think we just... Sometimes we almost wish it away like, oh, it would be just so good. Really, it wouldn't. I mean, let's make sure the churches are really authentic and the people are really Christian.

But there's something very rich about that heritage. Once you lose it, it is very hard to get back. So you're here talking about evangelism and we have so much to learn from you.

I'm glad you're speaking three times tomorrow. But talk about this resource. You just alluded to it.

The word one to one, this is a guided read through John's Gospel chapter one. The first thing you pick up about William is in St. Helens. It really is all about the word.

It is about reading the Bible. It is. So you actually... Okay, different context.

And maybe if you do this here in Charlotte, people say, I already know all that. But you actually... And people, they go... You talk to neighbors and say, would you like to read the Bible with me? And sometimes they say yes. That's right.

Wow. So I do actually believe that the Word of God is the key to all ministry. If you want a silver bullet, that is the silver bullet.

Not anything else. If you want to train for gospel ministry, it's the Bible. And if you want to train... If you want to grow up as a disciple in Christ, it's the Bible.

And if you want to evangelize, it is the Word of God, the Bible. Now, that is not... I mean, it seems such a basic thing to say. But then what does it look like in practice? So in all my personal evangelism, I have read through the John's gospel with people inquiring.

And I've done it with endless people. A businessman came to me and said, I want to do what you're doing. Will you teach me? And he did it because he'd taken his colleagues to kind of apologetics things.

And eventually one of them said to me, why don't you just tell us what Jesus actually said? And they'd been to endless other things. So he said, will you teach me? I thought I



was going to give him three sessions on how to read the Bible one to one with somebody. After the third session, he said, when are we meeting next? And then next, and next, and next.

And it then transpired that he was going home and writing up what we've been doing it, doing. And then he was going to his colleagues as if he were having a business meeting and presenting them with two sheets. And then he said, I have one, they would have the other.

And working through it as if it was a contract. And saying, here's the text, let's work through it. And using the stuff.

So eventually I ended up dictating this to him. And then gradually gradually worked up. Now what you've got here, and Jonathan I'm sure will say something about this, but you've got the text on one side, questions on the other.

So you don't have to be a Bible teacher. You can be a Bible sharer. And you have more of these, this is John 1. Yeah, yeah, it goes right the way through to John 21.

Because we think, I think, this is the tract. One of the tracts God has given us, I think it is John the theologian actually who is teaching us. And I think this will train you both to become a Christian and it will train you in discipleship.

And so what Richard did was simply lay it out, it's done beautifully. And you both have a copy and you say to that, people are doing this all over the world in Starbucks, wherever in their offices, after school, you know, mum's going out and so forth, all over the place. And it's been translated into Chinese and Mandarin and so forth.

But you sit down, you say, right, read the page and you read the page and then have you got any further questions? Did you understand what it said here? Okay, let's turn the page. It's extraordinary. Reading through John's gospel, I suddenly find halfway through.

I'm reading with a guy at the moment who's ex-special forces. He's just, you suddenly realize he is actually now a Christian. And what John says in chapter 20 verse 30 and 31, I've written this that you may believe, God's been at work.

I believe when you are studying the Bible with one other person, there are actually three people in the room. And it's electric. God is there at work.

Yeah, it's really wonderful. And let me ask a follow-up question. So you are a very strong personal evangelist besides preaching evangelism.

Some of the other ministers I know who are really good at personal evangelism, Mark Deaver, Max Stiles, Eric Russ, who we brought here and you all know Eric and get to know Eric. I've seen him. One of those things that all of you men have in common is in a

godly way, you're confident.

And I would say all of the, you're outgoing, energized by people, extroverted. So we don't want to let people off the hook and yet you must have people come up to you and say, well, I'm very quiet. I don't love to meet new people like you do, William.

What does it look like for someone who doesn't have your personality? Often. And I think people who are very quiet probably find me a pain in the neck. And so I say to somebody like that, God has made you the way he's made you.

And you will find that there are other people like you out there who don't want to meet with William. Who don't really, you know, the thought of meeting with me, they would rather. Well, I don't know what they would rather do.

You know, so, and some, funnily enough, some of the best evangelists at St Helens have been timid as a mouse, courageous as a lion. One of the guys said to me before I left, lovely guy, an Indian guy. I said, I'm speaking on this, you know, what should I say to them? And he said, be bold and leave the rest of God.

And I think, I can talk about Hannah tomorrow, you know, she went to levels as a lawyer with a big law firm. Timid, Timid, Timid. But actually she had the gospel.

And so there are three people in the room and she found she would find other people like her. And then we encourage people who haven't got friends in the same sort of way. Why did you join a club? One of our, one of the ladies on our staff is absolutely brilliant women work.

She works alongside us on the staff. She's fantastic. She joined the local gardening group that looked after the local area.

She's now evangelizing two people from that group. One of them is Professor Faith, I think. But she's saying, I find it hard to make friends, blah, blah, blah, blah.

So she joined the local. Another girl has joined a craft group, you know, just so, and you suddenly find actually there's somebody else who's a bit quiet like me. That's good.

I told this story before, I'm sure, but the pool that I swim at here, there's a woman. I mean, I have to go out. That's how I meet non-Christians and I'm not as good evangelist as you are, but this woman was next to me and someone said, "Oh, you're swimming next to Kevin, he's a pastor." She said, "I'm not religious." And I said, "That's okay." And she said, "No, I'm really not religious." And I said, "That's okay.

Can I still swim in the lane next to you?" She said, "Yes, but I just want you to know I'm really not religious." And I finally said, "I promise I won't baptize you here next to you. We'll just swim next to each other." It is harder, Mike, excuse us, it is harder to

evangelize under water. It is.

It is. It is. It is.

It is. Easier to baptize. Easier to baptize.

Yes. So you just crossed the threshold into 60. Yeah.

And you have been in ministry for three decades or more now. And what sort of reflections do you have on endurance, in ministry, or what sort of things would you have in ministry? Would you want young persons here to know? Maybe they're considering vocational ministry. Maybe it's a pastor, but it could be men or women thinking about counseling or campus ministry or simply they're working their job, but they want their life to count for the gospel.

What sort of things would you want those young people to know? I think one of the most important lessons for me early on in leadership at St Helens was working through two Corinthians. And those what I call the causal clauses, the so that's that God deliberately keeps in person weak in order that the glory will always be seen to be his. And you probably sit here and think, "Oh, Kevin, you know, see him on Sunday and all the rest of it." You can be sure that God will deliberately keep his gospel workers weak.

There are these three causal clauses. I almost despair of life itself, Paul says, "This happens so that he put this treasure in jars of clay so that the glory might be seen to be his." I will boast all the more in my weakness so that the power of God might rest upon me. And I think it's really just very helpful to know that.

I think if you don't know that, you look over your shoulder and think it's going to be easier somewhere else. So that's one thing. The second, the word of God really is sufficient.

It really is sufficient. And as you teach the word of God, God will train you and God will keep you. There's the wonderful verse in one Corinthians 4. If you put these things before the brothers, you will in one Timothy 4, verse 8. If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good workman.

Now it then says, "Being trained." Paul doesn't say if you put these things before the brothers, you'll be a good workman, having been trained. So what Paul's understanding is, is that as you do ministry, God will train you. It doesn't mean we shouldn't go for specialist training and that sort of stuff, but actually doing the work, the word really is sufficient.

And at the heart of all the training we do, at SonHallelujah, we do a lot of training, it is that the word is sufficient. So get them into the word. And if you think, actually, I know all that, then you probably, then how can you say that about the Bible? I mean, it's just

an extraordinary thing to say.

No, if you think you know the Bible already, you clearly have not read it very carefully. And you need to go back to square one and start all over again, because you've just skimmed over it. I mean, anyway, sorry, I won't go off and run on that.

All right, we're coming up to our stop. I'm going to do lightning round with just some books. Oh, yeah.

So you can just mention one or two. Favorite books on evangelism? I still think evangelism is sovereignly God. It's brilliant.

It's out there. I ask for it to be there. Questioning evangelism, I think, is brilliant, because I am too quick to tell people what I think, rather than to ask them.

Very good. I told William before this whole talk. I said, "I want you to channel your inner American, and just be happy to talk about yourself." And he said, "Do I have to cry?" I said, "Not that kind of.

I'm Dutch after all." So no. Give us a couple of your books that people might want to look at that might be helpful. Well, I asked them to bring revolutionary work here because I do think one of the biggest spiritual battles for a Christian is to realize that God has put them in work first as a Christian before they are whatever they're doing.

God can raise up bankers to a penny. I mean, really. You know, bankers are so easy to find.

So, and God can raise up surgeons just like that. So you're not a surgeon who happens to be a Christian. God's put you there as a Christian to do his work, and his work is to save the lost.

So you're there first as a Christian, second as a surgeon, and if actually being Christian and evangelizing the lost in your hospital and so forth and helping the young guys coming in young women and so forth is not possible for you there, go and get a different job. Be a hairdresser. I think actually hairdresser is much easier evangelistic position than a surgeon.

So for goodness sake, if you can't do the work as a banker because you feel you can't do it, it's not right for you, well, you can get a better job where you can actually do the work of God. So that's the sort of revolutionary work. I'm not a Johnson's book.

I tried to write some very kind of topical books, but the other ones have been on handling the scriptures. So, yeah, you've got one there. So there's a series of Bible study, you know, meaty Bible study in Luke in Romans in John.

Yeah, so read Mark Learn, which is a line from the book of Common Prayer. It is a line

from the book of Common Prayer. It's just sneaking in some Anglican books.

But also read Mark Learn. Yes. Right.

Clever. So this is John, so it doesn't have your name on it, it's from St. Helens, but I know you worked on this. And people often ask me, yeah, what's a good commentary for helping me lead my Bible study for a layman? And, you know, the Stott series is often very good.

These are really good for that purpose. Thank you. I think, I mean, the thing is we never released one of those books before it's had two or three years in our small group system.

So it's really been, that's why I tend not to put my name on it because I want it has come out of the church. Right. So that's, and what I also try to do is produce stuff that is sermons written up because I think you go and preach and you're trying to help somebody understand preaching.

And you want them to see other models. So I just try and, but. All right.

We're hustling on one of your favorite books on explaining the gospel. I still think John Chapman's book, No and Tell the Gospel. If you can get hold of it.

I don't think we would be familiar with those people would. John Chapman was a very famous American Australian evangelist and he was absolutely brilliant. And no one told the gospel.

I still think is out there at the top. I also found Jim Peterson, the navigator. I didn't.

I found his book really helpful. This was 30 years ago, but he's still the, still the bad Jim Peterson, I believe. And his book on everyday evangelism is another, I think really helpful one in, in terms of just thinking about, you may not agree with it all its theology, but some of the stuff there on reading Bible one to one with people.

Give a book for a new Christian discipleship after you say, yes, we're going to study John's study mark. Is there, is there a secondary book that you give somebody that said, this is a great book to help you just learn and grow as a Christian? No. You don't.

No, no. There is. There is.

I actually think the gospels are written with, I mean, if you want to use seminary language with modules and I think the gospels train us in discipleship and I don't think we realize that's what's going on in the gospels is whole. No. The discussion, but I think the gospels are training as they're presenting Christ, but they're also training us in discipleship.

So I think it's very important to realize that I would always give someone knowing God by

Jim. No, I still think that's up there. And the chapters are so short.

Right. And often when I'm reading with a Christian one to one, say, have you read this? Why don't you read this? And then we'll chat about it just at the beginning while having coffee and then get into the Bible. So one time when I was there, I think you said this.

I think you were talking about maybe what is the mission of the church or something. At that point you had said something like, this is maybe the second best book I've had my staff read. Yeah, it's a great book.

I know, I wrote it. But I'm getting to the other one. You said second.

So I was like, of course, I'm vain. Second best. So I think, oh, oh.

Another one of mine. What was first? Just do something? No, it wasn't. It was the book True Devotion, I think you said.

Tell us about that book. We read it as a staff, Alan Heppler. Alan Heppler.

Of Alan Chapel. But it was really eye-opening and we really enjoyed it. Great theologians.

I think Broughton Knox at More College is one of the great theologians. He's unsung, but he was principal. He then, he trained a whole group of people, the Jensen brothers, John Woodhouse, Alan Chapel, David Seckham.

They are all radical Bible thinkers. So they don't think, what was I taught to think, they don't even, I'm shocking to say, don't even think, what did they think in the 16th century? I'm sorry, they don't think that. They think, what does the Bible say? And Alan Chapel, very quiet, understated guy, wrote this book True Devotion and I found it magnificent.

It's really good Alan Chapel. And I met him and I said, you owe me a lot of money because all of your royalties, you know, really, most of them are as well to me advertising your book. And he said, he said this, you just need to know William.

It's a lot harder to do than to write about. I thought what a grace. That gives you a measure of the guy.

And why should people read PG Woodhouse? PG Woodhouse, I think will give you an insight into the Europe, the English. These are not Christian books, someone's pieces. This is my Bible study now.

PG Woodhouse is a comic, Jeeves and was to give you an insight into a very tiny segment. A very tiny segment of eccentric English society from 40 years ago. So it's very funny.

It's very funny. It's very clever. It's very clever.

All right, last question. What is one truth or habit that the Lord has helped you secure or impressed upon you that continues to be motivation for you in sharing the gospel? I think what we were talking about just earlier. You know when Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, the love of Christ controls me for I have concluded that one died for all and therefore the all have died that those who trust live.

And I think as you meditate on the cross of Christ on his love. And then in just a few verses later he says, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so I seek to persuade men." And I think those two things, I went to the Billy Graham Library today and you just think, "There is a man." You know, we must all appear before the thing of the reality of judgment and think of the beauty of the love of Christ. And I think those two things.

And you notice Paul says, "I have concluded," which means he's meditated on it. So if you're feeling dry in evangelism, meditate on the cross and on the reality of judgment. Yeah, the line that I've heard and repeated many times is we are all natural evangelists for the things and the people we love most.

You love your grandkids. Would you look at this picture of my grandkids? You get a Krispy Kreme donut. You have to, you know, Tim Hawkins.

It's like a baby angel melting in your mouth. You have to try these things. We talk about the things we love, and if we don't speak of Christ, we wonder what's going on in our hearts.

Yeah. All right. The Patriots.

The what? The Patriots. Aren't they the guy? Who are the guy? Who was your team called? The Patriots just beat the Panthers. Yeah, but your team.

Oh, the Bears. They also lost. They're useless.

Yeah, that was a very bad call at the end of the game. You would be an evangelist for that. But it's absolutely right.

You know, if we meditate on Christ, I'll talk about this tomorrow morning as we meditate on the gospel. Then how can you not? That's right. Wonderful.

All right. We will be back here. Hopefully you can join us nine o'clock and you are dismissed.

Not nine o'clock tonight, nine o'clock tomorrow morning. We will be here. God bless.

I hope that you enjoyed that conversation. I love to be able to interview people that I

count as friends and know that I have a lot to learn from. That's certainly the case with William.

So until next time, hope you will glorify God. Enjoy him forever and read a good book.

[music] [ Silence ]