

# OpenTheo

## Toward a Radically Christian Counter - Culture (Part 3)



### Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the concept of creating a radically Christian counter-culture. He argues that the early Christians had a unique culture, and that modern society needs to return to these roots in order to truly follow Christ. Gregg believes that the church needs to focus on making disciples and following Jesus' instructions, rather than simply trying to fill pews. He encourages believers to define themselves by their relationship with Jesus rather than by societal labels such as gender or race.

### Transcript

We are seeking to explore a topic which has the general over-umbrella called Toward a Radically Christian Counter-Culture. Toward a Radically Christian Counter-Culture. And in the first lecture I was talking about how Christians have to have some kind of connection with culture.

But not all Christians, especially in our time, understand what that connection should be. The early Christians knew that they could not be part of the dominant culture. They were a marginalized group wherever they lived.

The early Christians were always in the minority, either in a pagan culture in Rome or in a Jewish culture in Israel, especially in Jerusalem where the church began. And the Jewish culture is not the same as a radically Christian culture. It has some overlapping, of course.

And the pagan culture had even less in common with the Christian way of doing things. So the early Christians had to have a culture of their own. They couldn't just fit in with the Jewish or the pagan culture around them.

They had to have their own culture, a counter-culture of their own. And they became a community, a society, apart. Not apart in the sense that they went off into some cloistered group like a monastery and lived separately from everyone that way or into some compound or often some part of some region like the Amish and separate themselves.

The early Christians, as far as we know, didn't do that. They lived and worked and so forth among the ordinary people of their society who were not Christians. But among themselves, they observed certain norms, certain values, certain customs, certain beliefs they all shared and a certain standard that they have held, which they all had.

And which, therefore, was a culture under themselves, just like the Amish today have a culture under themselves. But the early Christians weren't off somewhere dressing differently and wearing their beards differently than everybody else and, you know, living off alone. But nonetheless, they did have their own cultural ways that were different from the dominant culture around them.

Now, that changed to a large degree when Constantine, the emperor, professed to become a Christian. And maybe he did become a Christian. I'm not here to judge his the genuineness of his conversion.

I don't know. He may have become a Christian. All we know for sure is that he professed to become a Christian.

And when he did, Christianity's role in the dominant society changed because the dominant society became officially Christian. Not really Christian because not everybody in the Roman Empire became born again. Not everybody really came to be true followers of Jesus Christ, but.

At least. Officially, the Roman Empire was now Christian, the church in the state had been merged, and that condition, what is sometimes called the Constantinian synthesis, prevailed for hundreds and hundreds of years. On through what we call the Middle Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church fairly dominated Western Europe.

And then through the Reformation, where, again, Europe was still Christian, but now they were changing loyally. Some were remaining loyal to the papacy and some were moving in the direction of the Reformation. But they were still states and societies that were officially Christian.

Every country in Europe had a state church and every country in Europe was officially a Christian country. And so when this country was founded by people who left Europe and came over here and established this country, they started something that had never existed before. And that was a pluralistic society where, although all the founders had values that were very much informed by the Bible and very much informed by Christian, not all of them were Christians and they weren't going to require anyone to be a Christian when they founded this country.

They didn't want there to be a state church or at least an official church that everyone had to be a part of. They wanted there to be a separation so that people could be Christians if they wanted to be. And if they didn't want to be, they weren't going to be

forced to pretend.

And so this society was the beginning of something really radically different than what Europe had been for hundreds and hundreds of years. This country was not officially Christian, but it was de facto Christian to a very large extent. That is to say, almost everybody who was here thought of themselves as Christians, went to church and so forth.

It was part of the culture of America because most of the people who came here were from Europe, who were from Christian nations. When they came to this country, most of them brought their Christian inclinations with them. And so although no one had to be a Christian in this country, most people just were.

And because of that, since the country was governed by the consensus of the people and the voters and so forth, and legislators and executives were elected from among them to a very large extent for the first couple of hundred years. The country remained very Christian like. And it retained, therefore, much of what Europe had been, though not officially, just sort of by default.

By default, the culture in this country was pretty much Christian. But there is nothing in our founding documents that mentioned Jesus Christ, unlike the founding documents of the European countries. Almost all the charters of the European countries mentioned Jesus Christ as the Lord because they're officially Christian countries.

This country mentioned the creator who endowed rights on people in the Declaration of Independence. But he wasn't mentioned in the Constitution. And Jesus Christ was not mentioned anywhere in our founding documents because this country did not require people to be Christian.

It was not officially a Christian country is officially pluralistic. But as I said, it was by default, largely Christian. And so people my age and my parents age were largely born into and raised in an America that was shot through with Christian values and Christian like culture.

But that's obviously began to change. And the reason it's changed is because more and more people in the country simply aren't Christians by default anymore. Lots of Christians have failed to raise their children in the faith.

Lots of immigrants from other countries have brought their religions with them from other countries, Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism and so forth. And then, of course, my generation in the teens thought it was kind of cool to experiment with Eastern religion and so forth. And and while many of the people my age, you know, they they tinkered with Eastern religion and didn't stay in it.

Yet they kind of came up with a synthesis of kind of Eastern religion, kind of Western

ideas. It what we call the New Age movement. So that so we've got a lot of different spiritual influence of our culture.

And suddenly those of us who are still evangelical Christians were going to say, wait a minute, the country isn't very Christian anymore. Now, we look at our dominant culture. I would say this is not friendly to us anymore.

What happened in the last 40 years when I was growing up, the culture was friendly to Christians. They weren't all Christians out there, but they were friendly to Christians. Suddenly, the culture has become unfriendly to Christians.

And so the church that has almost been caught by surprise in America and found itself not on the same page with the dominant culture has had to decide, what are we going to do with reference to the culture? And as I don't go over all this again, I know some of you were not here, but I've been over it in the previous lectures. There's been different approaches. Some churches try to accommodate the culture and try to imitate the culture, try to not stand out like a sore thumb, try to have Christians become more or less like everybody else, not seem too holy, not seem to set apart, have our church services not seem too different than ordinary venues of entertainment that worldly people might go to, because we don't want people to have culture shock because we now know that the dominant culture is very.

It doesn't hold the views and values that Christianity does. We don't want them to come into the church and feel like they've they've jumped into an icy cold pool, you know, and they and they don't feel comfortable there. So some churches want to accommodate the culture and be very much as much as possible anyway, like the dominant culture.

Other churches feel it's time to take back the dominant culture. We used to run this place. We Christians, you know, we used to have our people in the government.

They were in the Congress. They were in the presence, even as far as we could tell. And in the Supreme Court, and they're not there anymore.

They're not on the school boards anymore. They're not the governors and so forth. And so lots of Christians feel like it's time for the church to take back the culture, the dominant culture.

Now, frankly, I don't believe either of these approaches is necessarily the right approach. But I can understand how the church could be confused because we're in a very new situation, at least one that we have not been in since the days of Constantine. And that was 1500 years ago.

So we really are kind of finding our way in a situation that the church has not had to be in for a long time. Before Constantine, the church was marginalized by the dominant culture, and they expected to be. They knew they weren't pagans.

They knew the culture was. The Roman Empire was a pagan culture. They had decided by becoming Christians to go against the grain, to go against the tide, to swim upstream against the current of culture.

They didn't expect the dominant culture to embrace them. They expected the dominant culture to feed them to lions and the culture accommodated them. They were persecuted because they did not share the values of the pagan culture, nor were they surprised about that.

Rome had never been a Christian country, and they didn't expect it to be. Now, of course, what changed with the Constantinian synthesis is that almost all Western people, Europeans and people like us, mostly from European stock. We we kind of came to expect the culture to call us to say yes to our values, to to to agree with us, even though we knew not everyone's a Christian.

We just thought they should act like Christians. They should think like Christians and they should, you know, let Christians be honored and let Christian values be dominant in the culture, even if they are not themselves Christians. And that's what the culture did allow for a little while, but they're not doing that anymore.

And now we find ourselves in a situation much more like what the early church was in. We haven't quite grasped that that's the situation we're in, but we're learning. We're seeing it, you know, we're shocked to hear that any significant number of people in this country would want to vote in favor of changing the definition of marriage.

Why would anyone want to do that? What's wrong with the old definition? Well, the old definition is a Christian definition. Well, it's even even most pagan countries had it, too, although a lot of them allowed different variations like polygamy and things like that. But but I mean, we have been assuming that everybody's going to think like a Christian, but they don't, if they're not, especially if they're not Christians.

What used to be the case is non-Christians in America were living in a culture that was dominated by Christian thinking. So they kept their mouth shut a lot of the time and just told the line. But somewhere in the last 40 years, it's dawned on the non-Christians that, hey, the Christians aren't in the majority here anymore.

More and more, the culture isn't thinking like Christians, and they're coming up more boldly and saying, we don't have to go along with these Christian ways because we're not Christians. And you know what? They're right. They're right, they're not Christians, and no one in the Bible ever commanded non-Christians to behave like Christians.

Remember when Paul was talking about problems in the church with a man in immorality in first Corinthians five. There was a man living sinfully with his father's wife. And Paul said, I've judged this man already.

You need to put him out of the church. He said, Paul said, for what do I have to do with judging those who are outside the church? He said, God judges them. We are to judge those who are inside the church.

That is, Paul considered the body of Christ was a society unto itself. It had values that had to be maintained and enforced within its community. But it wasn't our place to go judging pagans.

They don't even claim to be following Christ. In that same chapter, Paul said, I wrote you a letter not to keep company with fornicators, but I didn't mean non-Christian fornicators. You can't go out of the world.

If you're going to avoid all fornicators, you have to leave the world. I'm not calling you to do that. Even Jesus said, Father, I pray that you will not take them out of the world.

But that you'll keep them from the wicked one in John 17, 15. So Paul said, I'm not saying you should go out of the world and never associate with sinners. But he says that if anyone calls himself a brother, if anyone's part of our community, if it is part of the body of Christ and he's living in fornication or drunkenness or list, he gave a long list of sins.

He said that person, you shouldn't even eat with them. In other words, the church should enforce its own values on its own community, but not plan to enforce them on unbelievers. Paul seemed to think, what do you think? You can make unbelievers behave like Christians.

Well, we have thought that. Paul knew better. Paul knew that unbelievers, you know, the great commission that Jesus gave the church is not go, therefore, and civilize the pagans with Christian values.

That's not the great commission. The great commission is go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them. That means they come into the church.

That's what baptism is for, to bring people into the body of Christ. And then he says, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. So what's the commission? We go out to the unbelievers and we don't get in their face about their sinful life.

We get in their face about the fact that there's a God who commands their total allegiance and who has sent his son and enthroned him at the right hand of God and commands all men. I want to come into submission him. And if you do, you come into a community of people, a colony of the king on this planet where everybody is committed to submitting to him.

Now, once you're in that society, now you've got rules, not legalistic rules, standards. There is a sense in which if somebody is in the body of Christ and they're just ignoring what Jesus said and they're living in scandalous ways. Paul said, you got to remove that

person because they don't want to really be a Christian.

They don't want to follow Jesus. The church is for Christians. Now, those who have tried to accommodate the culture in the church have forgotten that the church is for Christians.

They want the church to be a comfortable place for non-Christians so that maybe the non-Christians will come regularly here. The government may be get saved somewhere down the line. And so we have a seeker sensitive kind of a meeting where the unbelievers who might be seekers come and they don't feel like they're confronted very much.

They feel like they're comfortable. Why? Because we think of the church meeting is for unbelievers. Well, what is it then? The church is then structured in a way that accommodates the unbeliever and hopes to evangelize the unbeliever.

And the Christians who go week after week, year after year after year, they never get any discipleship because you dare not say anything controversial in a seeker sensitive service. And if you're going to teach disciples to observe everything Jesus commanded, some of those, let's face it, Jesus got himself crucified teaching those things. They're not uncontroversial things.

If you're going to keep the service sensitive to the seekers who aren't saved so that maybe you can eventually save some of them, then what you're going to be doing is presenting nothing of value but pabulum for the saints. The saints are remaining continually babies. They're getting milk all the time and never meat because the meat is too, I don't know, robust.

The meat is too controversial. You don't want the preacher up there giving serious sermons about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, about taking up a cross, about denying yourself, about maybe even dying for Jesus. That's not the sermons that keep the seekers coming.

So the church that seeks to accommodate the culture for the sake of the seekers has forgotten the church is for Christians. The church is the body of Christ. In the early days when Christians got together, there were gifts.

There were there's teaching. There was not evangelism in the church. We never read of any evangelism taking place in the church.

Why? Everyone's there. A Christian already. You don't evangelize Christians.

You go out to the world. You evangelize them out there. When they get saved, they come into the church and then you disciple them.

That's what the church is for. Discipling Christians, not in America anymore. For the most part.

In America, churches usually just hope to get a lot of the neighbors to come in and see if we can get them saved. And we structure a service that doesn't really ever provide anything very needy for the saints who have been sitting there dutifully paying their tithes for 20 and 30 years. They're paying to evangelize their neighbors.

You don't have to pay to evangelize. You can evangelize them yourself. You don't have to pay a preacher to do that.

You can talk to your neighbors yourself. They live in your neighborhood, presumably, if they're your neighbors. The pastor is not going to come visit the neighbors.

You don't hire a professional to go reach your neighbors. You reach your neighbors. Once they're reached and they come to Christ, then the pastor is there to pastor.

That means shepherd. And what shepherds? Shepherds are sheep, not goats, not wolves. The church is supposed to be full of sheep, Christians, the flock of Jesus Christ.

And the shepherd, the pastor is there to shepherd the flock. Not to evangelize the wolves. So, the mentality of the modern American church is so strange compared to the early church.

And what Jesus set the church up to be, I think. That it's no surprise that Christianity is going down, down, down, down in influence because the church itself isn't distinctly Christian. The church is deliberately full of people who are not Christians.

So, where's the corporate witness of the body of Christ to the world? Who knows who's in it and who's not? Who knows who's part of the body of Christ? The church is full of people that we've tried to bring in who weren't saved. And people then, God forbid, these people keep coming to the church because then people mistake them for Christians. And when these people go out and they get drunk on weekends, they go out and they're fornicating and they're living in sin.

And yet people go, oh, they go to church, oh, that must be a Christian. Then, of course, the whole witness of the Christian faith is, well, frankly, people who call themselves Christians and live disobediently in Christ. They're taking the name of Christ in vain.

They're taking the name of the Lord in vain. That's what they're doing. And God will not hold one guiltless who takes the name of the Lord in vain, the Bible says.

And the church, I think, sometimes encourages that by not preaching like Jesus did. And Jesus, the way he preached, drove people away. Imagine a mega church today.

Candidating for a new pastor. And here comes Jesus. And they say, OK, let's see what we



can do.

We got 5,000 people in the congregation. Jesus gives one sermon. The next week, 12 show up.

That's what happened in his ministry. In John chapter 6, you can read about it. 5,000 people.

He preaches one sermon. There's 12 left. They all leave.

Don't come back. It says from that point, many of the disciples didn't follow him anymore. They forsook him because his sermons were not pleasing to their ears.

Imagine a pastor doing that or candidate. Do you think he'd get the job? Do you think he'd be hired? Of course he wouldn't. Neither would Jesus, because Jesus wouldn't take the job.

Jesus never hired himself out. He was not a hired hand. He was a servant of God, as was the Messiah and the Christ and the Son of God.

But the point is. Jesus' philosophy was not the church's philosophy. And that's a bad thing, because Jesus is supposed to be the head and the head does the thinking for the body.

Right. Isn't that what the head does? The body is supposed to do what the head thinks it should do. And Jesus is the head, but the body doesn't do what Jesus would have done.

They don't do what he thinks should be done. We know what he thinks should be done, because he did what he thought should be done. It was different than what the church does.

We are very far removed. Now, what about this other idea of, you know, we should maybe reclaim the culture. We need to vote more Christians into Christian laws and Christian standards and so forth.

Well, if we can do that the right way, I'm not opposed to it. It's just that that never was the strategy Jesus gave either. Jesus never really told the church to go out and civilize the pagans through the legal system.

That's exactly what did happen when Constantine became a Christian. The legal system became Christianized. And you know what the result of the church was? The Roman Catholic Church.

What had it been before? Before Constantine, the church was the martyrs' church. Made of people who really put their money where their mouth was. They came to Christ and their neck was on the block.

They'd be burned at the stake. They'd be fed to the lions. They'd be tortured and so forth because they meant it when they became Christians.

Well, when Constantine made it official and the politics were officially Christian, then people who never were converted became part of the church just by automatic, you know. They're in because they're Romans. They're in because they're part of the Roman Empire and the Roman Empire is Christian.

So everybody's in the church now. You start baptizing babies as soon as they're born because they're in the church by being there. Just by being there.

They're Christians supposedly. And so what you have is within a few generations, most of the people who grew up in the Roman Empire have never had anything like a relationship with God. They never had a conversion.

They were baptized as babies. They think of themselves as Christians from birth. Maybe some of them repent of their sins, some down the line meet God somewhere in their lifetime, but the majority not.

And that's what the church is. The church becomes worldly. The church becomes the same thing as the world.

That's what it would be if we had all Christian laws in this country. There'd be still as many non-Christians. There'd be as many, believe it or not, there'd be as many homosexuals.

And I'm not trying to pick them out, except to think that most Christians think, well, this homosexual thing, this is the real problem we've got in this country. Homosexuals. I mean, obviously the homosexuals have been more bold to come out and press their interests legally and so forth.

And if Christians could somehow get back and outlaw what these people are doing, do you think there'd be fewer homosexuals in this country? No, they just have to be in the closet again. And most people say, well, that's good. Keep them in the closet.

Why? Isn't it better to know who they are so we can reach them? Why is it, you know, we want a comfortable society where the state makes everyone behave like Christians, so we'll never know who isn't one. That's what it was like in Europe for a thousand years. Arguably the worst thousand years of the church.

Turning a government into a Christian enforcement agency upon citizens who themselves are not Christians is not the Great Commission. The Great Commission has turned those people into disciples. Then you can teach them to obey.

Well, what about those people out there who are what about the pagans who are running

the country? Let God judge those who are outside the church. The church needs to be the church. The church needs to be an alternative.

You see, right now, the church is not an alternative because we're not used to being one. We're accustomed to being the dominant culture in America, but it's not there. Wake up.

We're not. We're not. So do we try to recover dominance in the secular culture? Or do we go back and do what the church was supposed to do from the very beginning and be the church and be the alternative? Jesus offered people an alternative.

The kingdom of God, His kingdom, His movement was the alternative. He said people should be born again and come into His kingdom. Paul said when we're converted in Colossians 1, 13, he says we've been translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His own dear son.

That's where we are. We're in a new society and a new king. We live in America.

America is not following that king. Now, I'm not saying they won't ever. But the way to get America to follow Jesus is not by enforcing it by law because you know what? That just makes people more resentful toward Christianity.

If you want to be a sinner and the Christians are dominating the government, you can't sin. You're just going to be more hateful toward Christians. You're going to be more resentful.

Jesus never lived in a way that made the sinners resent Him. You know who resented Him? The religious people. It wasn't the sinners who crucified Him.

It wasn't the sinners that plotted against Him. It wasn't the sinners that gnashed at Him and mocked Him when He was on the cross. It was the religious leaders.

The religious leaders resented Him because He was starting an alternative movement to theirs. He was starting a kingdom under Himself, the king. And He was starting, in other words, an alternative society with its own culture.

Now, right now, if an unbeliever wants to become a solid follower of Jesus Christ, what can they do? Well, they can become a Christian. They can lay their life in God's hands, repent of their sins, put their faith in Christ and become a Christian. But where will they be disciplined? Well, there are places to be disciplined, fortunately.

But unfortunately, the majority of churches have not made it their business to make disciples. They haven't made it their goal to make disciples. It's their goal to fill seats with as many warm bodies as they can, because then when the bag is passed around, there's more in it at the end of the row.

Not to be too cynical, but I've been in church since I was a child. I've been in church

leadership in many churches when I was younger. I wouldn't do that again.

But I've been in church all my life, many churches. I'm not making this up. There's an awful lot of business in the church.

And the church business is good when there's a lot of people in the pews. When there's not a lot of people in the pews, business is bad. And so keep as many people in the pews as possible is the business model.

That wasn't Jesus' business model. Jesus would have come into a modern church and cleaned house as quick as he could. He said, let me give a few sermons here.

You'll need a smaller building next week. That's right. If he is the same Jesus now as he was in the Bible, that's what he'd do.

That's what he did. He came into the church of the day, the Jewish synagogue, and he did that kind of stuff. And even his own congregation that were following him, he cleaned that up.

You know, he drove off the majority of them because they were not there on his terms. Where can a person today get converted and disciplined? In a society that is uniformly agreed to follow Jesus radically. Where can they find a culture of Christ? Here in this country, no longer unless the church becomes that if the church becomes a radically Christian.

That means following Jesus' instructions, making disciples, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded, like he said to do. Church started doing that, starts enforcing the lordship of Christ on the membership. When I say enforcing it, I'm talking about church discipline.

Hardly hear of that anymore in churches, but that's Paul. Paul commanded it. Jesus commanded it.

I mean, if both Jesus and Paul commanded it repeatedly, it seems like it's one of the things the church is supposed to be doing. But church discipline, what's that? Well, that's when somebody is living in sin. Members of the church confront that.

If he repents, you've won your brother, Jesus said. If he doesn't repent, he's got to be confronted somewhat less privately. If he doesn't repent, he's got to take it further.

Eventually, it comes to a public announcement to the church. Jesus said, you take it to the church. Because the guy has had three opportunities before that to repent, and he hasn't used them.

He doesn't want to repent. So if he doesn't hear the church, he said, let him be like a pagan. Let him be like a heathen to you.

He's not part of the church. He's not wanting to follow Jesus. Now, some might say, well, isn't that legalistic? No, it's called lordship.

It's called Jesus is Lord. We have forgotten that that's what the message of Christianity is, is Jesus is Lord. That's not the message we get preached when we're evangelized often.

Many times when we're evangelized, we're told that Jesus is the Savior. But the fact that he's Lord is either downplayed or simply not explained. No one in this country knows what a lord is unless they've learned it from the Bible.

Because we don't have lords anymore. But every society before ours had lords. They were called slave owners.

And if you were, if you had a lord, you were a slave, not just in this country, not in the South or whatever it is. All countries, the world, every country in the world had slaves and slave owners. And when the Bible says Jesus is Lord, it came to a society where everyone knew what a lord was.

A lord was someone who owned slaves. If he's my lord, I'm his slave. That's not what we're telling people when we evangelize them.

And therefore, they don't come with that understanding. And they don't plan to be told what to do. They don't plan to obey.

They're not even aware that they have to. They're just told you have to believe, say a sinner's prayer, jump through this hoop that the Bible never mentions. The Bible never mentions saying a sinner's prayer.

The Bible never mentions accept Jesus into your heart. It's not in there. No verse in Scripture mentions it.

What it does say, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. How do you get saved? By acknowledging Jesus as your lord. Now, if people are evangelized with that message, which is the biblical message, what's going to happen? Well, if they respond and say, okay, I'll come on those terms.

That means they're going to say, I'll be Jesus' slave. I'll die to myself. I'll say no to myself.

I'll deny myself and take up my cross and follow Jesus. Okay, then you're ready to be a Christian for the first time. Until you're there, you're not a Christian yet.

What are you then? You're an American churchgoer who responded to an American message, not a biblical message. If you have never embraced Jesus Christ as the Lord, which is what God has made him. Not you.

You don't make him Lord. God made him Lord. You just stop resisting that fact.

And you start acting like he's the Lord, because he is. When that happens, the Bible says, then you'll be saved. You confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and you have to mean it, of course.

Then you'll be saved, Paul said. Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost. He gave the story of Jesus and his death and resurrection.

And then here's how he ended his sermon in Acts chapter 3. He said, therefore, let the house of Israel assuredly know that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Christ means anointed one. King.

So the announcement of Peter in his sermon was, God made Jesus Lord and King. End of sermon. That was the end of the sermon.

And then they came and said, well, what must we do? He said, oh, well, glad you asked, because you really need to do something. You need to repent and be baptized, which was the public way of saying, I'm now coming into Christ's kingdom instead of the kingdom of Rome or the kingdom of the Sanhedrin or the kingdom of some other society. I'm coming into the kingdom of this man, Jesus, who's the king.

And that's how people became saved. No one was admitted into the church unless they acknowledged Jesus was Lord. And the word Lord was a word that had some teeth in it in those days.

Today, the word Lord we use as just kind of a, it's just another label. Just another sort of a, another nickname for Jesus, the Lord. We never think of what a Lord is or we seldom do because we don't have any in our society.

Every society before American society had Lords galore. Caesar was Lord. The master of a slave lord in the Roman Empire, more than half the population were slaves.

And by the way, when we think of slavery, we think of kind of a racial kind of a thing where, unfortunately, in this country, slaves were kidnapped from Africa and brought here and made slaves of white people. That's sinful slavery. That's evil.

That's kidnapping. Under the Law of Moses, the slave owners would have been killed for kidnapping. But, nonetheless, throughout the Roman Empire and every kingdom, there were slaves, many of whom sold themselves into slavery because their economic situation was bad and it was more secure to have a master who would take care of things.

It wasn't racial. In the Law of Moses, it was assumed that most of the slaves the Jews had would be other Jews. Their own countrymen who sold themselves into slavery because of

economic problems.

Having a slave owner, we need to not just associate that with the kind of slavery we had in this country, which is not what the Bible describes or what the Bible thinks of. Every society had people who fell into economic hardship, couldn't pay their own bills, got into debt, couldn't get out of debt, so they sold themselves to someone who could pay off their debts for them and they would serve that person then. It's not much different than what we have now if you're working for a minimum wage.

The difference is, if you're working for a minimum wage, you don't have your housing and medical and clothing guaranteed. You'll probably still go without. If you sold yourself into slavery, you'd have all those things taken care of.

Your master feeds you, houses you, takes care of your medical, does all those things for you. It's actually, in some ways, although I wouldn't want to be a slave, I have to admit, who wants to? We're Americans. We think like Americans.

We don't want to be slaves. But before, there were people who thought like Americans. A lot of people thought being a slave was a lot better than being hungry and watching your kids starve.

It's a lot nicer to have some guy, especially if he's a nice guy, take on your family as part of his household. And now you serve him and he takes care of everything for you. That's what a lord did.

Unfortunately, because of the power that a lord had and because people are evil, many lords were very cruel. Many slave owners were cruel. That's not OK.

The Bible forbids that kind of cruelty. But it doesn't forbid that people sell themselves into slavery for economic stability. And when they said Jesus is Lord, people knew that meant, OK, I can't pay my debts to God.

I can't even pay my debt to society. You know, I'm a sinner, but I can get out of this situation by surrendering to this man, Jesus, and he becomes my owner. He paid the price for me and he owns me.

That's what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6. You've been bought with a price. You're not your own. That's what Christians knew then.

We don't know that now. In America, that message just doesn't sell. People don't want to be bought.

They don't want to be owned. They want to be independent. And if Jesus wants to come alongside and give us some salvation, they'll take it.

As long as there's no strings attached. But there are, and you can't have any salvation if

you don't have a Lord. Because there's only one person who's both Savior and Lord.

You can't get a Savior without getting the Lord, too. He's the same guy. If you have a Savior, you have a Lord.

If you have a Lord, you have a Savior. Jesus is Savior and Lord. If you have Jesus, you have both.

If you don't have Jesus, you don't have either. Salvation comes as part of the package of being sold out to Jesus. Now, one reason we don't see a radically Christian counterculture in the church like they did in the early days is because we don't have any radically converted people.

And in your notes, somewhere in there, that point is made. Not the first point on it, but I want to just read these points in sequence for you. It says, in order for the church today to become as much a radically Christian counterculture as was the early church, certain conditions that existed in the early church must again be in place.

For such a counterculture to emerge, there must first be, one, the consensus of a radically Christian alternative society. Two, which requires the existence of radically Christian community. Three, which requires radical Christians.

You can't have a community of radical Christians without radical Christians. You can't have a radically Christian community until you have some Christians who are radical. Now, when I say radical, I don't mean wild eyed and freaky haired.

When I talk about radical, the word radical means going to the root. That's the literal meaning of the word radical from the Latin root. It means going to the root, going to the roots of Christianity.

Instead of like an awful lot of people nowadays, especially reformed people, they say, you know, we need to get back to the theology of the Reformation. We need to get back to the Christianity of those who are the founders of our Protestant movement. I say, why? Why go back four and a half hundred years when the movement goes back two thousand years? Why go back to them? Now, I'm not saying that I'm not happy for the Reformation.

I am. And I agree with Martin Luther about much of what he disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church about. I'm certainly a Protestant.

But he's not like the guy who wrote the Bible. He's not the Lord. Luther wasn't perfect.

If Paul knew in part and prophesied part, I'm not going to think that Luther knew completely. You know, Luther was just another guy who saw some things more clearly than others of his generation. We didn't see everything.



Going back to the Reformation, say that's what we want to define ourselves by. That's not going to the root. That's not radical.

And there were people after Luther, just a few years after, who were called the Anabaptists. And their movement was actually called in history, historians call it the radical Reformation. Why? Luther's Reformation was already afoot.

But there were some within it who said, you know, we're not going back far enough. You know, we got one doctrine or two doctrines we've recovered from antiquity, but we're still mostly like the Roman Catholic Church. Still baptizing our babies.

We're still, you know, have Christian states and so forth. And, you know, a merger of church and state. This is not the way the early church was.

And so these people wanted to go back to the Sermon on the Mount to define their behavior rather than whatever Luther had said. And history calls them the radical Reformation. Why? Because, not because they were wild.

We might think of radical as really bizarre and wild. But radical means going back to the roots of it. Let's go back.

Who's the roots of the church? Christ is the root of David and the one from whom the church grows out. And so the radical Reformation wanted to go back to the root. Now, I'm not an Anabaptist to my theology in many respects, but not completely.

I'm not part of that movement because they weren't perfect either. Nobody's perfect. I'm not perfect.

You're not perfect. And so for us to say, well, I like that moment. So I'm going to just kind of define myself by this movement here in history.

The Reformation? No. How about the radical Reformation? No. How about Jesus? He's what we define ourselves by, not by some subsequent development in the thinking of Christians, but going back to the roots.

Because arguably, that's where the stream became polluted. You know, if you've got a spring coming out of the ground of fresh water, but you're living downstream somewhere and there's pollution in it. You know, you get giardia every time you drink from it.

You know, there's a dead animal in the water somewhere or some animals been defecating upstream or something, you know, and you're drinking. It's junk. You know what you need to do? You say, I need to find out where that fouling came in and get my water from before that, because it was pure before that.

But if you say, no, I'll just go a few feet upstream here and I'll just be happy with water there. What's that going to do? You're still getting the fouling that that that was entered the stream. If you want the pure water from the stream, you go to where it come out of the ground.

And if you want pure Christianity, you have to go back to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and read what Jesus said, because he's the Lord. Because he's the spring. He's the root.

So when I talk about radical Christians, I don't mean some kind of weird, fringy, you know, bizarre kind of people. I'm talking about people who might seem fringe if they actually began to follow Jesus, because. Uncompromised Christians always do seem a little a little strange compared to other people, but not as weird as some Christians do.

I mean, some Christians seem more strange than they need to. But but what what should be strange about it is not how we dress and what you don't think. What should be strange is that we're better people than people are accustomed to meeting, generally speaking, you know, that when they meet us, they're surprised.

They're almost shocked because we won't lie. Because we won't, you know, you know, entertain ourselves with with with sinful jokes, because we because we won't flirt with people who aren't our spouses. Because we won't do things that other people do.

That's that's what should be surprising. Not that we the women who wear head coverings and long dresses. That's not what that's not what is radically Christian.

I don't think Mary Magdalene and the people following Jesus dress like Mennonite women. And I, you know, I'm sure the women in those days did cover their heads because everyone did. But the point is.

They did dress like everyone else did. That's just the point. They didn't have some kind of a dress code that made them look like a strange club off to one side from culture.

But they did seem different because they didn't get divorced. And other people did, because they didn't cheat. And other people did, because they didn't get drunk.

And other people that they didn't do a lot of things, other people do. And Peter said in first Peter four to the Christians as your old friends. They think it's strange that you don't run with them in the same flood of dissipation.

And then they end up speaking evil of you get persecuted because you're good. Modern Christians are not persecuted because they're good. They're persecuted because they're vapid.

They're persecuted. They're not really any different than the non-Christians are, except they're just more judgmental and more hypocritical. At least they are perceived as

being.

Now, I don't think that's a true assessment of all Christians. I just think that's how the world has come to think that Christians are. And there's reasons.

They have met some. And that's the problem. They haven't met enough.

If they met as many Christians as I've met, they'd realize what Christians on balance are better people than non-Christians. At least the ones I've met. I know a lot of wonderful Christians.

Let me just back it up. I don't know as many non-Christians or Christians in the past decades. My ministry has been among Christians, so I have to say I've gotten to know many Christians intimately.

I haven't gotten to know that many non-Christians as intimately. But I will say that when I see in the media and stuff what non-Christians say and do and how they act and how they think. Certainly most of the Christians I've known have been better people, more conscientious people, more honest people than many.

But not all Christians are. And that's the problem. Of course, not all Christians are Christians.

That's the problem. That's the problem. You know, when people meet a Christian where they work or go to school and that person is not honest or that person is not chaste or that person is not sober or that person's got other areas of compromise in life.

The problem is the unbeliever thinks that person is a Christian or that it may well be if their life is really examined. We'd have to conclude that, man, I don't think they are. You know, they don't really have any evidence of being a real Christian.

But the world doesn't know that because the church is full of people who aren't Christians as well as Christians. So our problem is we don't have when we say Christian in this world, we're almost embarrassed by it anymore. I don't know if you are.

Sometimes I am. I've always looked for another word to use, like a follower of Jesus or something like that. But just say, well, what religion are you? I don't really have a religion.

I just follow Jesus. I, in some circles, I don't mind saying I'm a Christian because that is true. But the problem is the word Christian in our society.

There's so many people who aren't Christians who have that label on them and the world has met them and it's been a bad experience for them. What needs to be as like in the early years of the church, when people met a Christian, they met someone who was part of a community of people who were Christians who had certain standards that they lived

up to. And if they didn't, they were out.

They weren't allowed to stay in there if they wouldn't repent of their of their sinfulness. That's the early church. That's the only one you read about in the Bible.

And if someone says, well, but we can't expect people to be perfect. We can't be kicking everyone out of the church. Everyone sins.

That's not the point. In the early church, they didn't kick everyone out who sinned. They kicked the people out who sinned and wouldn't repent.

You see, if you say, well, the standard is too high. I can't live without sin. Well, there's a sense in which you're like everybody else.

No one else can live without sin either, but you can repent. Everyone can do that if they will. So, you know, you might decide to live a holy life and not be able to live an entirely holy life.

It's a good aim and you should aim at it and you should do all you can to do so. But but when you fail to be holy, you can repent. There's no one forbidding you to do that.

There's nothing in you except your own pride that would prevent you from doing that. So if you find someone who's sinning and sinning and confronted, they won't repent. They're not a believer because, you know why? Believers want to follow Jesus.

That's what makes them believers. They have decided to follow Jesus. If you haven't decided to follow Jesus, you're not converted yet.

Because deciding to follow Jesus is what conversion is. It's becoming a disciple. The word Christian, disciple are synonyms in the Bible.

You don't find any kind of Christian that's not a disciple in the Bible. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. And that's the only way the term Christian was ever used.

So what we need is radically converted people. Now, most of what I've said here, I've broken it down into quite a few different points. I don't have to go through all the scriptures since you have the notes.

If you wish, you can look up the scriptures I've put there under each point. But the points are, you need to have a consensus of a radically Christian alternative society, which requires a radically Christian community, which requires radical Christians who must have been radically converted through radical evangelism, followed up by radical discipleship, which occurs in a self-disciplining community. If the community doesn't discipline its own members, it's like a family doesn't discipline their own children.

It's a reproach to the family. Kids go wild. It makes the father look bad.

The church has a father and a Lord. And if his children are not behaving, it makes the father look bad. It makes Jesus look like he's nothing.

And so Christians are supposed to look like Christians are supposed to be followers of Jesus. Now, I mentioned being radically converted. I just want to end with this tonight because it's gotten late.

What does it mean to be radically converted? It means that you have come out of darkness into light. You have chosen to give up one life and to embrace another. The life you've chosen to give up is one where you were in charge, where you were making the decisions, where you were the Lord.

You were the ruler. You know, it's a typical American life. You see, before America was founded, and God bless America, I'm sure glad to be here instead of in the places before America was founded, but before America was founded in Europe, no one thought they were their own ruler.

No one was, except the king. Every country had a king, and every person was under that king. No one was his own ruler.

But America is a country that's governed by the people, for the people, and so forth, it's a different concept. And therefore, being raised in America means that you get the impression that you are your own ruler. And as pleasant as that is, and as advantageous as that can be, it can have a negative effect too.

Because when we think that we're the ruler, we think of all governing officials as our servants, public servants. And that's the way it is. That's the way our country is set up.

The rulers are the public servants. But then when we hear that Jesus is the ruler, we think, he's our servant too. He's a public servant too.

We can vote him out of office. We can disagree with him. We can say, just sit in, or vote, or we can just ignore him.

Because we're the rulers, and he's just a public servant. Isn't that what government officials are? In this country, it's the only country we've ever known. We've never known kings here.

So, when people come to Christ, so to speak, in our evangelistic meetings, sometimes they really do, but sometimes they're not. Sometimes God has worked a radical work in their life that really transforms them. Other times he hasn't, but they come forward anyway because they've been told it's good for them.

They've been told that they'll get a ticket to heaven that way instead of going to hell.

Who doesn't want that? As long as it doesn't cost anything. And that's largely what they were told.

It doesn't cost anything. It's a free gift. Just come down here, say the prayer, except Jesus isn't your honey.

Painless. And then you've got eternal life, and you can't lose that, we're told. And so, man, who wouldn't take that? You don't have to come on anyone's terms but your own.

It's just a come and get it kind of a message. And we have evangelized people and gotten responses of this kind from people, and many of them have never been converted. They don't know it.

Because if they go to church long enough, they learn the songs by heart. So they think they're like everyone else. As far as they know, they're just like everyone else in the church.

Everyone knows a lot of songs. Well, not anymore. They keep introducing too many new songs, and they don't ever learn any of them.

But the point is, you learn the lingo. If you happen to go to a Bible study, you learn some of the verses. You learn some theology, maybe.

And, you know, Jesus said, this is eternal life. John 17, 3. Jesus said, this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you've sent. And so we know that having eternal life means you have to know God and know Jesus.

Now, most of the people in church, if you ask them, do you know God? They say, yes. Really? What do you know about God? Well, he's the creator of the universe. He's a trinity.

He sent Jesus down here. He's omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Anything else you need to know? Yeah.

Do you know him? You've just told me a lot that you know about him. But have you ever met him? Do you know him? It's not even have you met him. Because lots of people have met him.

If you ask me, do you know, who do I know? I could apply this to somebody. Do you know Ray Comfort? Who's Ray Comfort? He's an evangelist. He's on the radio.

He's kind of well-known in some circles. And a friend of mine, of sorts. If someone said, do you know Ray Comfort? I'd say, yeah, we've met a couple of times.

I know him. Would he recognize me if he saw me? Probably not. We've seen each other a few times over a period of 30 years.

He might recognize me. I'm not sure. But is that knowing somebody? That you've met him a few times? That they might recognize you? They might know you? That's not knowing somebody.

Paul certainly had become acquainted with Jesus. Yet he said in Philippians chapter 2, I forsake all that I have, I renounce it as done, so that I might know him. Well, Paul, listen, you've been an apostle for 30 years now.

Don't you know him yet? I want to know him more. I want to be in a relationship with him. You see, if you can rattle off a whole bunch of doctrinal propositions about God, that doesn't tell me whether you know him or not.

And that I knew, I learned very, very starkly when I first came to Orange County and in 1970 became part of the Jesus movement because I was raised a Baptist and I knew the doctrines. I preached the gospel. I'd led people to the Lord.

I certainly wasn't evangelical. I had all the doctrines down. I was much more biblically literate than anyone else in our youth group.

In fact, if I'm to believe what my youth pastor said, I was more biblically literate than him because he told me I was. But I don't know if that's true or not. He was a master's student at the seminary in town.

But the truth is, I knew a lot. But when I came to Calvary Chapel, there was a hippie that sat next to me on the floor there because there were no pews available. And he said, brother, do you know the Lord? I knew the expression, know the Lord.

Sure, I know the Lord. He said, well, what's the Lord been doing in your life? I didn't know that expression. In my church, no one ever talked about God doing anything in your life.

He doesn't. Does he do things? I thought he was, you know, a combination of theological propositions that you had to agree to. And then if you agreed to the right ones, when you die, you go to heaven.

The idea that God was somebody that interpersonally interacting with me and doing things in my life that I could recognize and tell you about. It was just absolutely foreign to me. The concept was absolutely.

He might as well have spoken it in tongues without an interpretation, as far as I could understand the meaning of it. And I think he could have done that possibly. But I couldn't have because I was a Baptist.

But the point is, this man's question. Now, he'd only been saved for two weeks, as I recall. I think it was two weeks he'd been saved.

I could tell he knew God. He could tell me all kinds of things God was doing in his life.

He'd been delivered from drugs.

He'd led his folks to the Lord. You know, he'd been witnessing to people over. He'd seen God's hand at work.

He knew God. And he'd only been on for two weeks. I'd been a Christian for over 12 years at that time as a believer.

And like I said, I'd won people to Christ. I'd been evangelistic. But when he said, do you know the Lord? I didn't understand that expression as he meant it.

It was easy for me to say, yes, I know the Lord, because I knew all about the Lord. It's like I've read many books about George Mueller. I've read at least five biographies of George Mueller.

If you said, do you know George Mueller? Well, he died before I was born. I guess I don't know him. But I know a lot about him.

I can tell you most of the things you want to know about him. Most of what his biographers know, I know. But some of them knew him, and I never knew him.

It's different to know about somebody than to know somebody. And Jesus said, this is eternal life, that you know God, that you know Christ. That's what you know about him.

And so you can only know him by being in the relationship with him that the Bible defines as the normative relationship of having come to him and surrendering to his claims as Lord. And denying yourself and taking up your cross and being committed, sold out. You've been bought with a price.

You're not your own. Now you know him. Because you can't know him if you're in a wrong relationship.

Any relationship other than submission to the king is a wrong relationship with that king. Knowing is a relationship word, not an intellectual word. Knowing, in this sense, is not talking about do you intellectually know the right doctrines about God.

The question is, do you have a relationship with him? What kind? The kind that is the only right kind. If you have a wrong kind, that doesn't count. Everybody has a relation with God.

Some people are his enemies. That's a relationship. It's not a good one.

But the only right one is submission to him, surrender to him, selling out to him, handing over the title of you to him. So that from that moment on, he owns you and you wouldn't have it any other way. You wouldn't prefer it to be otherwise.



You love him. You love him and you keep his commandments. Because he said, if you love me, you keep my commandments.

Because he's your lord. That's how a person in the biblical times became a Christian. And that's how people become real Christians now.

And many people do. But many don't and yet think they're Christians because the gospel has not preached them in a radically biblical way in many cases. And that failure to preach a radical gospel has prevented many people from having radical conversions.

Conversion means change. Like if you convert AC to DC or something, that's change. That's what convert means, change.

If you have a conversion, you should be changed. Born again. Have a new nature.

A new spirit. You're on a new path. You live differently.

If that didn't happen when a person came forward and accepted Jesus into their heart through some kind of a sinner's prayer. Well, then what's happened is somebody evangelized you through something that's not even mentioned in the Bible. And you didn't have the experience that the Bible mentions.

You didn't have a conversion. Now, I don't judge anybody about that. That's not my business.

But I believe that we and I don't know that what I have to say applies to anybody in this room because I just don't know anyone wants to think that about them. But I do know this without assigning, you know, status to individuals. I don't do that.

I know that through the evangelistic methods we've had in modern America. Which have deviated from the biblical presentation of the gospel. We definitely have gotten a lot of people in the churches who think they've done the thing.

They think they've jumped through the hoop. They think they've signed on the dotted line and now they're in. They've learned how to speak the Christianese language, to sing the Christian songs.

They know some of the doctrine. And the more of it they learn, the more they are convinced that they really know God. But I know from my own experience, raised as a Christian, raised in evangelical, learning the Bible better than most in my early youth.

You can do all of that and not have anything like the relationship with God that makes normative conversion and normative discipleship. So, having a radically Christian counterculture requires that there be a community of people who've all had that experience of conversion. Who are all disciples.

Who are all, they define themselves as followers of Jesus. There's nothing else they define themselves as. They're not defining themselves by their gender, by their race, by their nationality.

They're defining themselves by their loyalty to Jesus Christ. That's what defines them, makes them who they are and that's what dictates how they live. Now you find one person like that today and he's lonely.

I meet them because frankly I became a disciple probably when I was 16. And it was lonely. Not initially.

The Jesus movement, there were a whole bunch of people who acted like disciples. A bunch of hippies who kind of were radicals anyway. But some of them fell away, others of them mellowed out and some of them stayed radical but dispersed and became pastors of different churches and things in different places.

But the point is that about 10 years after the Jesus movement, it was a lonely thing to be a sold out disciple. And if you found another one, you really wanted to hang on to them, you know. I've been really blessed in that God has given me something that maybe I don't have and that's a microphone.

I have a radio show and through that radio show, reaching a lot of different places, I've had the privilege of meeting some of these lonely people. So I'm not as lonely as I would have been. Some of these people I meet, some of them may be here.

But it's a lonely thing, but it's not supposed to be. It should be that everyone who names the name of Christ should be the same kind of Christian. Not some rubber stamp, you know, automaton or some kind of a, you know, non-individual.

But they should have one thing in common, that's a passion to just obey Jesus Christ and to not have anything else matter. That Christ is our life, that to live is Christ and to die is gain. That's just normal Christianity.

We meet someone like that today, most people say, well, he's an on fire Christian. On fire? That's just normal. That's Christian.

That's being a Christian. We're used to so much less and calling that Christian. I don't think Paul or Peter or Jesus sadly, if he came to one of our churches, would recognize as many Christians there as we think we know there.

But that's not our concern as much as whether he would recognize us. But I'm saying that when you if you're going to have a radically Christian counterculture, which is what the church was in the early days and is supposed to be, and presumably could become again with difficulty, it would require some radical change of conception. I'm not thinking of the church as a place to gather as many non-Christians as possible.

So we have warm bodies in the seats and dollar bills going into the bag and we need a bigger building. So people be impressed by what good preachers we are because we have a lot of people warming our pews. That's not the mentality that's going to lead to this.

What's going to lead to this is people saying, listen, we need to stop giving people the impression they're Christians when they're not. When you start the church and start disciplining its members who will not conform to Christ. And we need to start evangelizing people biblically in such a way that people don't come forward unless they really are ready to surrender to Jesus Christ and to be converted.

Until those things are done, we're going to have churches that aren't churches. And we're going to have Christians who aren't Christians. And when someone really is a Christian, they're going to look at it across.

And is there one of my brothers here somewhere? I've crowded church. You know, can I find somebody here who who who loves Jesus and doesn't? I mean, you know, I say, well, I see all these people raise their hands and sing in the song about how much they love Jesus. Yeah, but follow them outside.

What are they doing at home when they go home? I don't know what they're doing. But I know what some of them are doing. And because I've been in some of their homes and I think, well, weren't you in church this morning? Weren't you like singing these songs that have these words here about Jesus? And this is what you do when you come home.

You know, I mean, if you happen to be one of those people who just sing songs that you can go home is something else than a Christian. You might just think, well, isn't that normal? No, believe me, there are people who follow Jesus all 24 seven and they don't do it perfectly. But they don't they don't approve of anything else than that is normal.

You know, they're not going to settle for saying, oh, well, nobody's perfect. I might as well be carnal and displease God for a little while. I can go back to church and say a prayer, give a tithe and he'll, you know, he'll he'll recognize me as one of his.

There are people who are sold out to God. I think probably I'm looking at them, you know, I mean, I know some of you. I don't know all of you.

My guess is that the people who are here are among the people I'm talking about. Not not the fakes, but the real thing. But well, I just need to I just need to clarify that I'm not trying to be critical or judgmental of anybody.

I'm just trying to say it's not good for someone to live under the delusion that they're a Christian when they're not. Because Jesus said, Matthew seven, many will say to me that they Lord, Lord, did we not cast out demons in your name and prophesy in your name and do mighty works in your name? I'll say I never knew you. Now, that's a scary, scary,

scary verse.

Because there's a lot of people think they're Christians and even have some pretty impressive credentials. But it's not enough. Jesus, you're not one of mine.

And so we need to make sure that we're not just cruising in the religious theme and thinking, I'm in. I'm in. Does Jesus think you are? Does Jesus recognize you as a disciple? Hope so.

I hope so. And I hope I actually am optimistic that that is so with this particular group. But I don't know.

Only God knows. And you. So my point is not really to make anyone feel particularly convicted as to communicate the idea that the gospel needs to be communicated in a radically biblical way rather than a modern American evangelical way.

The American evangelical culture is not a radically Christian culture. And if ever such a culture should arise, it will be a counterculture because it's never going to be the dominant culture in all likelihood. And so when I talk about the radically Christian counterculture, there are certain prerequisites to this.

And certainly one is that Christians have to become radically, genuinely authentic Christians. And that means being disciples. And that means they've surrendered to Jesus.

Jesus said, if you continue in my words, you are my disciples. Indeed. That word indeed is very important because it suggests there are people who are disciples in name only or in appearance only, but not indeed, not in fact.

And so how do I know if I'm the real deal or not? Well, do you continue in Jesus words? Is that the environment you're living in? Lord, tell me what you want. Speak, Lord, your servant hears. I just want to know your word because that's where I want to live in your word.

Then you're a true disciple. But you see, if you get a few people like that in one town or in one area and they know each other, there begins to be kind of a culture among them. They don't have to move into a community or a monastery or something like that.

They just they just begin to encourage each other in the ways that they all know they're supposed to be going. But no one is encouraging them to do before. And eventually.

God, if the gospel is rightly preached, God will increase their numbers. And it will not just be numbers. It'll be increase of.

The phenomenon of the kingdom of God lived out in a community of people and there'll be a colony of Christ's kingdom. A countercultural phenomenon in the worldly culture, in

contrast to it, as an alternative to it. Then when we call people to Christ, we can call them to something as an alternative to what they already are doing, like Jesus did.

So those are the thoughts I wanted to share. I didn't go through my outline, but all the points I made, I think, are in there. And I think I covered that enough that we won't have to cover it again next time.

Hopefully. Father, I pray that you'll cause your word to sink into our hearts. And father, more importantly, that you will reveal Jesus to us, that your spirit will reveal Jesus to us.

And especially any of us who have known about him and known about you, but have not yet really encountered you in a life changing way. Never quite been reborn and blasted out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. And received that change that your spirit brings when he comes to dwell inside of us and to fill us and to guide us day by day.

Father, I pray that each of these people here will not only know you in that way, but that they will find others who know you in that way. And that together, they may become a somewhat more visible phenomenon in their neighborhoods or in their towns. So that people will begin to meet these people and say, well, they're different.

These people, they're not just like everybody else. They're not hypocrites. They're not a bunch of judgmental people.

They're just, they're better people and they're better because they're following this person named Jesus. Maybe Jesus is true after all. I pray father that you'll help us to be collectively a community who make Jesus seem more real to the world.

Because we are more real and more genuinely yours. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen.