

JOIN US FOR AN 8-WEEK STUDY OF HTPC'S

First Principles

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a central dot and two pointed ends extending outwards.

SUNDAYS

5:45 - 7:00 PM

SEPTEMBER 13 - NOVEMBER 15

in the fellowship hall

Abide With Me

1. Abide with me; falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers, fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, abide with me.

Abide With Me

2. Thou on my head, in early youth didst smile;
And, though rebellious, and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, though I oft left Thee,
On to the close Lord, abide with me.

Abide With Me

3. I need Thy presence, every passing hour.
What but Thy grace, can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, abide with me.

Abide With Me

4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless

Ills have no weight, tears lose their bitterness

Where is thy sting death? Where grave thy victory?

I triumph still, abide with me.

Abide With Me

5. Hold Thou Thy cross, before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, Lord, abide with me.

Biography of J. Gresham Machen

- Born, 1881 in Baltimore, MD. Godly home. Father a Ruling Elder in Presbyterian Church. Johns Hopkins. Studied under Warfield and Vos at PTS.
- Trained in Scripture and catechism: *I knew history of Israel and kings better as a young child than most ministers in today's church because my parents took the time to teach these things to me.*
- Lifelong friendship with mother. Letters.
- Lifelong bachelor.
- Life of **extraordinary** sacrificial service to the church.
- Founded Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929 after liberal takeover of Princeton Theological Seminary. Started Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936 after he was defrocked from ministry by tyrannical machinery of church.
- This sermon. 1929. John Frame's derogatory name for Machen's followers.

Calvin

- “There is back of all that Calvin wrote a deep **joy** because of **sins forgiven**. He knew that through Christ he had been reconciled to God...He therefore looked with deep **compassion upon the multitudes** of men about him who knew not this reconciliation with God. These multitudes of men had **no one to point them to the Christ** and to what he wrought for sinners on Calvary’s cross. Instead of leading men to Christ through the Scriptures, the **Church of Rome usurped the place of Christ**. Forbidding men to rest secure on the promises of Christ, the Church held them suspended over the abyss of hell.”
- For the Lord hath appointed us ministers of his doctrine with this proviso, that we are to be as firm in **defending** as faithful in **delivering** it.
- Calvin knew that **Satan** was back of all the **opposition** to the pure preaching and teaching of Christ

Calvin

- The true servants of Christ must **protect the sheep** from themselves, from false shepherds, and from Satan. Throughout his life, Calvin followed the straight-forward course which he set for himself when first he defended the benighted Protestants in France. Always his basic interest was the **building up of God's people in the faith. But** always too he **kept watch** lest, in one way or another, this building process was **obstructed by Satan.** MEMBER OF FORMER PRESBYTERY TOLD US "NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE WOLVES. GOD WILL WORRY ABOUT THE WOLVES."

Calvin

- **Open Confession:** One of Satan's subtlest schemes was that of keeping believers from openly confessing their faith, "holding it enough to worship Christ in mind, while they gave outward attendance on Popish rites.
[REVOICE, MODERN MISSIONS SYNCRETISM!!!]
- **Timid Colleagues:** But "most of his colleagues, from timidity, keeping aloof from the contest, and some of them (this gave Calvin the greatest uneasiness) even secretly impeding his work" sorely tried Calvin's courage. His courage was rewarded and Satan was defeated, for "the senate and people of Geneva solemnly declared their adherence to the leading doctrines and discipline of the Christian religion."
- **Discipline:** Calvin's whole approach to the Reformation of the church was existential because it was scriptural. Table of the Lord must not be defiled. For their bold stand Calvin and his colleagues were ordered to leave the city.

Calvin

- **Cunning Of The “Mother Church”:** Would the church at Geneva be able to continue its brave corporate witness to Christ after Calvin was banished? Wouldn't it die out for lack of fearless leadership? Satan took no chances. He clothed himself in the cloak of piety in order to lead the Genevan people back into bondage.
- **The Holy Spirit:** “I am compelled,” says Calvin, “whether I will or not, to withstand you [Cardinal Sadolet] openly. For then only do pastors edify the Church, when, besides leading docile souls to Christ, placidly, as with the hand, they are also armed to repel the machinations of those who strive to impede the work of God.” Spirit annexed to the **Word**. [Rome and Anabaptists]
- **Subjectivism:** They charged me with two of the worst of crimes—heresy and schism. And the heresy was, that I dared protest against dogmas which they received. But what could I have done? I heard from thy mouth that there was no other light of truth which could direct our souls into the way of life, than that which was kindled by thy Word.

Calvin

- **Election:** Finally, in order to protect Christ's little ones from a church that takes their Christ away Calvin traces their salvation back to their election. But this election is in Christ.
- **Truth and Peace:** It is therefore not “from a love of disputation” or because “we will not allow anything to be passed over that does not altogether please us” that we must undertake to show that in Romanism we have the interweaving of the doctrine of justification with a pagan system of thought.

Calvin

- “...valiant for truth. And for him Christ was the truth. Calvin truly counted all things but loss for the knowledge of Christ. Only if Christ speaks to his people and if his people speak to Christ will the triune God be glorified.”
- “I also testify and declare, that, in all the contentions and disputations in which I have been engaged with the enemies of the Gospel, I have used no impostures, no wicked and sophistical devices, but have acted candidly and sincerely in defending the truth.’ Would that we might be able to speak likewise in our day.” “He honored his God and left the results to his God.”

Consider the Apostle Paul

(Paragraphs 3-4)

- Paul a fighter. 1 Timothy 6:12! Fought **external enemies and hardships**. He engaged in the unpopular business of turning the world upside down.
- Internal enemies (enemies in **his own camp**).
 - ...**all-engulfing paganism** or...a perverted Judaism that had missed the real purpose of the Old Testament law... we see [Paul] in conflict for the preservation of the church...**not for one moment** did Paul have **peace**; **always** he was called upon to **fight**.

Consider the Apostle Paul (cont.)

(Paragraphs 5-6)

- Error always has appeal in the church! Even in the early church. NEVER FORGET THIS.
- Paul may have seemed to have lost in the face of so much error.
- But all the Epistles **remained** in the New Testament as LIFE for the people of God. Augustine depended upon them versus Pelagianism. Reformers depended upon them versus Rome. after centuries of compromise. After the darkness, light! OUR DAY AS WELL.
- “So it has always been with Paul. Just when he seems to be defeated, his greatest triumphs, by God’s grace, are in store.”

God's True Instruments

(Paragraphs 7-8)

- Must fight. No to “considerers of consequences.” No to “tribe of compromisers.” “The real companions of Paul are the great heroes of the faith.” Church history. Fight inward sin and doubt and despair. Think of John Bunyan - *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War*. Use the means of grace: Word, sacraments, prayer.

Church's Present Conflict

(Paragraph 9)

- “The church is now [1929] in a period of deadly conflict. The redemptive religion known as Christianity is contending, in our own Presbyterian Church and in all the larger churches in the world, against a totally alien type of religion. As always, the **enemy conceals his most dangerous assaults under pious phrases and half truths.**
- Nice people preaching nice things. “Let us propagate Christianity,” the he adversary says, ‘but let us not always be engaged in arguing in defense of it; let us make our preaching positive, and not negative; let us avoid controversy; let us hold to a Person and not to dogma; let us sink small doctrinal differences and seek the unity of the church of Christ...”
- They **deceive** some of God's people some of the time...heard sometimes **from the lips of good Christian people**, who have not the slightest inkling of what they mean.
- **Decide whether he is going to stand or not to stand for the Lord Jesus Christ as he is presented to us in the Word of God.** (^cf. CVT article “Calvin as a Controversialist)

The Minister's Call to Fight (cont.)

(Paragraph 10)

Not have an easy life in the ministry...you may try to evade the conflict. All men will speak well of you if, after preaching no matter how unpopular a Gospel on Sunday, you will only vote against that Gospel in the councils of the church the next day... **if you will only make common cause with its opponents...** will win the favor of the church. **A man may believe what he pleases, provided he does not believe anything strongly enough to risk his life on it and fight for it.”**

The Minister's Call to Fight (cont.)

(Paragraph 10)

- **Tolerance:** Biblical versus unbiblical forms. (What are you tolerant and intolerant of?)
- Forbearance toward personal attacks, courtesy/patience/fairness dealing with errors of every kind, etc. But to pray for tolerance without **careful** definition of that of which you are to be tolerant, is just to pray for **the breakdown of the Christian religion; for the Christian religion is intolerant to the core.**”
- The exclusiveness of the Cross: offensive *and* powerful
- “The Gospel would have been received with favor by the world IF it had been presented merely as **one way** of salvation; the offense came because it was presented as the **only way**, and because it made relentless war upon **all other ways.**”
- **NO** to sin of making common cause with those who deny or ignore the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ!...consenting to those who lead Christ's little ones astray....we must present not our Word but Word of God. (RELEVANT?)

The Minister's Call to Fight (cont.)

(Paragraphs 10-12)

- This will bring opposition, not only of the world, but increasingly...**of the Church**. Academic preferments, libraries, society of cultured people, respectable reputation.
- Where should we find **courage**? **NOT** by a mere love of conflict — this is a **battle of LOVE** for Christ and his truth. Illustration of bayonets and screaming. Battle of love; nothing ruins a man's service in it so much as a spirit of hate. (Are you an agreeable person? What do you fight about?)

The Secret of This Warfare

(Paragraphs 13-14)

- How did Paul learn to fight?

“The answer is paradoxical; but it is very simple. **Paul was a great fighter because he was at peace...**He fought against the enemies that were *without* because he was at **peace *within***; there was an inner sanctuary in his life that no enemy could disturb ...**unless when you fight against those enemies there is One with whom you are at peace.**”

The Secret of This Warfare

(Paragraph 15)

- But if you are at **peace with that One**, then you can **care little what men may do**. You can say with the **apostles**, “We must obey God rather than men”; you can say with **Luther**, “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me... **Without that peace of God in your hearts, you will strike little terror into the enemies of the Gospel of Christ**. You may amass **mighty resources** for the conflict; you may be **great masters of ecclesiastical strategy**; you may be very **clever**, and very **zealous** too; but I fear that it will be **of little avail**.

CHRIST

(Paragraphs 16-18)

- How shall we be at peace with him? GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.
- **“Do you have this peace?** If you have, you will not be deceived by the propaganda of any disloyal church. If you have the peace of God in your hearts, you will never shrink from controversy; you will never be afraid to contend earnestly for the Faith. Talk of peace in the present deadly peril of the Church, and you show, unless you be strangely ignorant of the conditions that exist, that you have little inkling of the true peace of God. Those who have been at the foot of the Cross will not be afraid to go forth under the banner of the Cross to a holy war of love.”
- Stand for Christ even when you know you have room to grow.

Will You Stand?

(Paragraph 21)

•“...curry favor with the world by standing aloof...“conservative liberals”...“liberal conservatives”... “Christians who do not believe in controversy,”...anything else so self-contradictory and absurd? Are you going to be Christians, but not Christians overmuch?...stand coldly aloof when God’s people fight against ecclesiastical tyranny at home and abroad? excuse yourselves by pointing out personal defects in those who contend for the faith today? disloyal to Christ in external testimony until you can make all well within your own soul?

“Witness bravely to the truth that you already understand, and more will be given you; but make common cause with those who deny or ignore the gospel of Christ, and the enemy will forever run riot in your life.”

My Hopes for You

(Paragraphs 22-24)

- Gifted preachers; happy lives; adequate support for self and family; “but something for you far more than all that...**true witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ**; I hope that there may never be any doubt where *you* stand, but that **always you may stand squarely for Jesus Christ, as he is offered to us, not in the experiences of men, but in the blessed written Word of God.**”
- Courage.** “It will not be easy. Many have been swept from their moorings by
- the current of the age; a church grown worldly often tyrannizes over those who look for
- guidance to God’s Word alone.” Far **easier** is it to curry favor with the world by abusing those whom the world abuses, by **speaking against controversy**, by taking a **balcony view** of the struggle in which God’s servants are engaged. **But God save you from such a neutrality as that! ...But how cruel it is to burdened souls; how heartless it is to those little ones who are looking to the Church for some clear message from God!** God save you from being so heartless and so unloving and so cold! PEACE AND WAR!!