

The Testimony of Hugh Latimer

Reformation Month 2010

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Bible Text: 1 Timothy 1:15
Preached on: Sunday, October 10, 2010

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I want to express my personal appreciation to your pastor, Mr. Mercer, and the session for inviting me to be a part of this Reformation Month with you this year. I appreciate a congregation that is interested in commemorating the Reformation of the 16th century as many congregations are not. And I have a debt of gratitude also to your minister emeritus, Dr. Alan Cairns, who more than a quarter century ago now suggested this approach to the Reformers which God has used over these years. Some of you who are here tonight who were here for those first presentations all those years ago, we have matured together. I prefer that to growing old.

"Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still.
His kingdom is forever."

That is very well the testimony of the man whom we present tonight as for so many others of the Reformation era.

My name tonight, with your imagination, is Hugh Latimer. I want you to suspend reality to the extent of believing that I am he and I have come to tell you the story of my life.

Born in the end of the 15th century about the time of the sailing of the man whom you will remember in a couple of days here now. Around 1492 I was born. A little town of Thurcaston in Lancastershire. Not an important town but in an important family. We had been important. Back in the 11th century, we were one of the 25 families in this little town of Thurcaston, noted by name in the Domesday Survey, which William the Conqueror, having conquered England, took as a kind of census of the nation. A few of you remember the Domesday Survey from history studies. Very few, perhaps.

We had been a noble family but my father was not of the firstborn of the family and did not inherit titles, and over the centuries since then, four centuries since then before I was born, as far away from my time as you are from my time now. My father was an honorable man. He was not noble in title but he was noble in character. He was a godly yeoman. He had in those days what was called walk enough for 60 sheep, that was the way land was measured. And my mother milked 30 cows. My mother milked 30 cows.

We had a number of children, my parents. There were six sisters who survived childhood. I was the only brother. I will pause while you make observation as to which, then, is the weaker sex. Six sisters and my father was able through his industry on the farm to provide a dowry for each of these six daughters. No little accomplishment. I had brothers but all of them died in childhood. I, alone, lived to be an adult. I hope you very young children appreciate what has become a normal lifespan for most of us; the conquest of childhood diseases which is relatively recent in your history.

I was sent to university at Cambridge. Cambridge was to be my home for the next almost 25 years. It didn't take me that long to complete my degrees, you understand, but I became a part of the staff, a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Master of Arts degree, and then lengthy preparation of almost 10 years then for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. The completion of the Bachelor of Divinity degree involved the preparation and public presentation of a 90 minutes disputation, public disputation, defending a thesis, as it were. I chose as my subject Melanchthon who was emerging across the water as a co-leader of the Reformation in Germany. The Reformation had just begun in Germany. This was in the early 1520s now and I proceeded to describe all the errors of Philip Melanchthon. I was a good Romanist after the manner of the times. I upheld the teachings of the Church of Rome, the only one I knew. The Reformation had not yet come to England. I was to be a witness to its beginnings.

I proceeded, I say, to tear down in public Philip Melanchthon. In my hearing in the gathered assembly of scholars, was a man who became a very good friend, old Thomas Bilney was his name. Thomas Bilney preceded me there in the university at Cambridge. He had not studied Greek, though Erasmus was then teaching Greek at the university, but Erasmus in 1516, as many of you know, had published for the first time a copy of the New Testament in Greek. He had prepared in alternate pages the Greek alongside a corrected Latin version of the New Testament. He had corrected it with the Greek and my soon to be good friend, Thomas Bilney, read the Latin, the corrected Latin of Erasmus' text and his testimony was what he presented to me after the hearing of my disputation attacking Melanchthon, he came up to me and I expecting his compliment, asked simply if I would permit him to give his confession to me. Now, I'm a young priest. I was ordained at 23. I was ordained a bishop at 43 and I was ordained to heaven at 63. A young priest, eager to receive the private confession of an older man.

He came to my rooms. He proceeded to tell me his confession of the grace of God, his confession of the redemption in Jesus. It was not what I had expected to hear. He said he read in that text of Erasmus from Paul's letter to Timothy, "This is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am principal and chief," and Bilney said, "That one word to my soul, so elated my heart, so long grieved by the guilt of my sin, that I felt a sudden quietness and the Scripture became to me relief sweeter than honey in the honeycomb and ever since, I have sought it eagerly. I have found it food for a troubled soul."

This was his confession to me, my first hearing of the Gospel of saving grace in Jesus Christ. He said, "I learned," Bilney said, "I learned that all my confessions, all my

fastings, my penances and Masses being done without faith in Jesus Christ who alone saveth his people from their sins, are a swift and powerful moving out of the way, not in it." I came to Christ through the testimony of Bilney and Bilney gathered around him and we eagerly around the word of God, a little group that met at the White Horse Inn in Cambridge town, and we would discuss the writings and teachings of the Lutheran Reformers just beginning, I say. We were called Little Germany and a group of budding heretics, to be sure. Among this group, Bilney and I, Nicholas Ridley, Fisher, Tyndale eventually, several others, all but one of whom was to seal his testimony with his blood in the days that were to follow.

On the staff of the university in Clare Hall, the college within the university in which I had matriculated, I became one of the 12 chaplains, preachers in the university, sharing messages in the chapel, for example. I began to preach. Preaching became my ministry. Preaching became that for which I came to be remembered. I married no wife. I built no institution. I wrote no books. Others collected some of my sermons and published them under the title, "Fruitful Sermons." God was pleased to make them fruitful, but I was a preacher. In addition, I held the office of cross-keeper. That's strange to you. Cross-keeper, a 336 ounce silver crucifix that's about 30-some pounds. I carried it in all public processions and after five miles, it was heavy. It was with the crucified Christ affixed to the cross. If you have crosses, you do not have Christ upon them. The ultimate message is the risen tomb. He was delivered for our offenses. He was raised again for our justification. On one occasion, the king, Henry VIII, came and participated in a procession in which I was honored to carry the cross. Well, I also was the keeper of the books in the small library at Clare Hall, not the university library, and it was my duty to receive the rents from the lands which had been willed to the college.

I preached, I say, and that was essentially my life and ministry there until after these many years at Cambridge, I was given a country parish at West Kington, and there had contact with the common man. After all these years in the university, I was able now to communicate the message of the Gospel increasingly. I had come to know Christ but I had not yet sloughed off all of the trappings of Rome. You wonder at that. I must ask your indulgence in the realization that this was all so new, so new after in my land centuries of Roman ignorance and corruption, and while I had knowledge of sins forgiven, I was still burdened with practices which gradually the Spirit of God sloughed away.

I soon was made of some notice to the king. I lived under four kings of England. Was born under the first, that is Henry VII; ministered to the next two, Henry VIII and Edward VI; and was translated under Bloody Mary. Four monarchs. It was under Henry VIII that the Reformation was beginning in England, though politically motivated and vacillating and incomplete.

Henry VIII thought himself something of a theologian. Some of you remember he was preparing for the church before his older brother died and he, Henry, was forced to take up the succession. He styled himself something of a theological scholar. Somebody wrote a work which was attributed to him, "The Defense of the Seven Sacraments," for which

he was granted an important papal title. He enjoyed hearing preachers, Henry VIII did. He enjoyed hearing them, evaluating them, discussing with them, exchanging views with them. He rather enjoyed that posture.

Now, because he was in the process of seeking legitimacy for divorcing his first wife, as some of you remember, he desired some of the support of these budding Protestants, the German Protestants, against the pope. He invited a number of college faculty to investigate and conclude whether or not he was legitimate in divorcing his wife, Catherine. While still at Cambridge, I was part of that panel and we concurred in the king's desire. In that context, he soon appointed four of us young members of what had been Little Germany, the White Horse Inn crowd of Bilney and company, bishops. I became Bishop of Worcester. Did not think it a high honor. Within four years, I was asked to resign the bishopric as the king's will had changed. Becoming a bishop, it was Anne who was to become the second wife of King Henry who took more than a common interest in my preaching. I preached at court and she made me a loan of the 200 pounds required for the payment of the first year's income of the office of bishop to the one who had appointed it, the idea of a gift in return for a title.

Now, this degenerated, of course, in the Middle Ages to practical simony, the buying and selling of church offices. In that connection, I told of an account of a man who received or rather was petitioning to receive an appointment from a cardinal and he presented the cardinal with a silver tray of large red apples, and the cardinal was not pleased and said, "This is no apple matter," until he investigated the apples and discovered that within each was 10 gold pieces, and in commenting on that account, I said, "If you seek preferment from the church, hie thee to that orchard. Get thee graft of that tree. It will serve thee better than all the learning of St. Paul."

On one occasion, the Bishop of Ely came to hear me preach. He arrived late, I think designedly so. We had to pause while the bishop and his entourage settled themselves and he took his time doing so, arranged his robes, and settled himself. I had paused for this performance and then said, "The presence of so eminent a Bishop requires me to choose a new text," and I chose that description of the qualifications for a bishop which Paul presented in Timothy. I described them one at a time: husband of one wife; not given to much wine; no striker; apt to teach; governor of his own household. The bishop squirmed all through the message. I thought it an appropriate commendation and instruction to this high potentate.

He reported my performance to Cardinal Wolsey. Cardinal Wolsey invited me to a hearing on the basis of that report. I happily proceeded and told what I believed and what I was preaching, and the cardinal was not distressed at all, warned me against excess, and left me with his proclamation of a license to preach anywhere in the kingdom. This was shortly before Cardinal Wolsey was summoned to London to be put to death for the displeasure of the king. When friends heard that the cardinal had expired, they said, "Now what of your license to preach throughout the kingdom?" I said, "But of course, now I have the license of heaven unless the Cardinal has gone to the other place."

Preaching, and I invade against bishops who did not preach, against priests who did not preach. Preaching was my mission. Preaching was the responsibility of the preacher. A bishop once came to a country village and was expecting an appropriate episcopal welcome, but was displeased to hear no ring of the bell in the church tower. "Why is the bell..." And the sexton replied, "Your Eminence, the bell hath no clapper." No ball suspended inside the bell to ring. And the bishop was distressed until another parishioner standing by pointed to the pulpit and said, "Your Eminence, there is a bell that hath had no clapper these 20 years." I pause to say again how privileged you must know yourselves to be never to lack a clapper in the pulpit.

Continued to preach and this preaching led to notice and the king now was changing his tune and in a day when the crown and Parliament declared the theological basis of the church, a context that is alien to yours, from the former 10 Articles of Religion moderately Protestant leaning, the king now moved toward and had Parliament concur with the so-called 6 Articles of Religion thoroughly Romanist all the way. Now he was changing his tune, I say. He let it be known he would like my resignation. I concurred and it was soon given out that I had resigned in protest against the king which was not the occasion, and I was silenced for several years.

Held Bible studies. Privately communicated. Carried on a considerable correspondence but was denied the privilege of public preaching. But then in the providence of God, I preached a funeral sermon of Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII, the one with whom there was probably mutual love, who had presented him the son, the long sought son, Edward VI, to become, and under Edward VI, the boy, 9 years old, frail physically but precocious mentally and spiritually, nurtured by Thomas Cranmer, another member of that Little Germany at the White Horse Inn, another one who was to seal his testimony in blood, under Edward VI, I had freedom. He invited me to preach to the court, to preach in Westminster Hall, the original medieval hall around which, as in modern times in your times, has been built the halls of Westminster, the so-called Parliament. In this ancient hall, I preached a series of seven Friday sermons during Lent. Crowds exceeded the huge hall's capacity and in the Westminster Gardens surrounding, a wooden pulpit was set up and God was pleased to permit the message to go forth from the very capital of the land, the very head of the capital of the land, as the king listened and the people were blessed as God gave utterance.

But alas, his reign was brief and his years were few, and his succession was to his half-sister, the daughter of the original marriage, to Catherine of Aragon. Mary, Mary Tudor, whom you know as Bloody Mary. She earned the reputation. Three hundred put to death during her reign. A sad and tortured woman, was Mary. Unloved by a husband who had political motivation for the marriage. Denied a living child. Set forth to restore publicly what she had maintained privately, the Romanism that her brother had reversed. You see, the Reformation was vacillating very greatly. It could hardly have been called a spiritual movement yet until under Edward and now a reversal attempted by Blood Mary.

I and my friends were sent to the Tower of London, rather comfortably retained at first in separate rooms. Not really cells in the typical sense of the word. The Tower of London

has a variety of accommodations, not all of them are severe. There are moderate residences there. They are encompassed in a wall and maintained by guards, but it is not all always oppressive. Then because the numbers she was imprisoning grew, we three, Ridley and Cranmer and I, were housed together and what a blessing and joy this was, to enjoy fellowship together. We read together the New Testament seven times and could find nowhere therein either bone, marrow or sinew of the Mass of Rome. God was strengthening us by forcing us to a more sure foundation in his truth, preparing us for what was to come.

There were three elements to our prayer. 1. That God would strengthen Elizabeth, the eventual successor. 2. Restore harmony and peace in the land; that God would prosper the Gospel in the land, and that each of us would stand firm in the hour of our testimony. And God was in his good time to answer those prayers, each one.

The time passed and many months were to intervene. It was decided that we should be given formal hearing and opportunity for recantation. At a formal convocation at the other university, at Oxford University where we were transported and imprisoned far less comfortably in the Stinking Bocardo Prison, that's what it was called. We didn't give it that label but we attested to its appropriateness. The Bocardo Prison, there for a total of 18 months, required to write out and testify in detail our position on three questions: is in the Mass the reality of the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus; does that actuality of the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ remain after the Mass; and is the Mass a sufficient propitiation for man's sins? Now, we had already been prepared by the study at the Tower of London by seven times through the New Testament to answer these questions and had no difficulty doing so but our answer was never acceptable. "Come back next week and try again. Write out your responses and then defend them."

We were constantly told to throw ourselves on the mercy of the Catholic Church and we finally said, "Our Lord Jesus said that his church would suffer persecution. We are suffering persecution. We are the catholic church, the true church, the universal church. The persecutors cannot be." Our answers were unacceptable and finally in October of 1555, it was the 15th of October that the final condemnation was pronounced, almost with relief after all these months. We were formally defrocked which means we were presented with our clerical robes one at a time, and they were each snatched from our bodies one at a time. The chalice was thrust in our hands and then rudely grasped from them. They had placed on the table before us a silken carpet, a carpet then meant a table covering, and in deference to Ridley's being a Doctor of the Church, as I was not, but they proceeded to rudely defrock this good man. Then they removed the carpet and a common cloth symbolic of me, we wore simple Bristol gowns, as they were called.

I didn't tell you what I looked like. It's probably a little late to do so but you ought to know that I had ample black hair, a large beak-like nose. I will profile for illustration. A pointed beard. A strong voice. And an old evil back, I called it. In my youth, a tree limb had fallen on my back and it gave me trouble all my years, trouble that was aggravated in the stinking Bocardo Prison, but was soon to be alleviated permanently.

It was the next day after the formal condemnation on October, 1555, October 16th now. We were given breakfast in Mrs. Irish's home. Now, Mrs. Irish was the wife of the sheriff. My friend Ridley had been housed with the sheriff in these last few days, there was no concern about our escaping, and I with the bailiff and his wife. Mrs. Irish was the wife of the sheriff and Ridley said he was never so happy that he had not married when he saw who it was who must be obeyed. But Mrs. Irish gave us breakfast on the day of our promotion and I thought to say to my colleague, "What a thing is this? Today we breakfast on earth, and shall take supper in heaven."

We went to the stake that had been erected alongside a large stone, and in seeing the stone, I said, "He whose foundation is the Rock of Ages, need not fear the tempest." In the town records of Oxford were later found bills, copies of lists of expenditures: 19 shillings and 3 pence for wood; shillings and pence for kindling; shillings and pence for cartage; shillings and pence for labor for four men who had been hired to carry out this public burning.

One of the reasons it had taken so long for the day to arrive was that Parliament had to re-authorize the Act of the Burning of Heretics which had been established for the burning of the followers of John Wycliffe, the Lollards as they were called, and that had now been re-issued and they were able to proceed.

As we approached the stake and the stone beside it, Ridley said to me, "Take heart, brother, for God will either assuage the severity of the flame or give us grace to bear it." And I replied, "Ridley, Master Ridley, play the man. We shall this day by God's grace light up such a candle in England as I trust will never be put out."

Master Shipperside was the name of the brother-in-law of my friend Nicholas Ridley. Shipperside had received permission to prepare for each of us around our neck a small packet of gunpowder, tied around our neck so that as soon as sufficient flame reached it, it would do its work and hasten our going. That was successful. Ridley gave to him, Master Shipperside, his fur trimmed gown. I divested my simple gown. The fires were lighted and quickly by the grace of God, those who observed said it was almost as if we stroked our cheeks with the flame, either fainting or the gunpowder did its work, and we were dispatched, lighting up a flame in England which has never been put out, although it is often very dim in the centuries since. That flame was to spread to your land and to other continents as the missions movement of the 19th century from Britain. God was pleased to prosper his work and to use his servants in doing it.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Amen.

Speaker. We thank Dr. Panosian. We appreciate him coming tonight. I want to in the last few minutes of this service turn your attention to the text that he mentioned at the very commencement of his presentation, 1 Timothy 1:15. It is my intention each night just to draw your attention to one text of Scripture. We appreciate our brother. We thank him for

his labors. We have been thrilled tonight to hear of the life and the labors of Hugh Latimer. I was struck by the fact that men were put to death simply because they loved the Lord and because they refused to accept that teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. God raised up men, and as he said, that light has been lit in England, though at times, even tonight, it burns very dimly. But our God is still on the throne and though that light burns dimly, it still burns.

He mentioned the text, 1 Timothy 1:15. Latimer was a Reformer. He was a martyr. A friend of godly men. A man who loved the Lord. But first and foremost, he was a sinner saved by grace and as he met with Thomas Bilney, Bilney brought this text to his attention, the Lord opened his heart and saved him by his grace. It's recorded by Wiley in his classic history of Protestantism that when Bilney brought this text to Latimer's attention, Latimer felt the darkness within breaking up. He saw a new world rising around him. He felt the hardness of his heart passing away. There came a sense of sin and with it a feeling of horror, and then a burst of tears. Now the despair was gone, the free forgiveness of the Gospel had been suddenly revealed to him.

The text had had such a dramatic impact and used by the Spirit of God to have such a dramatic impact reads like this, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." We admire the Reformers. We admire their work for God. As I say, they were sinners saved by grace. They were men, as we've heard tonight, who loved to preach and that was Latimer's ministry. He loved to preach and I think it would be remiss of us if we didn't take some time tonight to look at this little text and consider what God says to our hearts, perhaps some here who are not saved, and I trust as we consider this for a few minutes, and I don't intend being very long tonight at all, but I pray that God will touch your heart and speak to your heart through these very same words.

As I look at Paul's testimony here, and that's what you have, it's a word of testimony, I discover three very simple things. I discover, first of all, that sinners need to be saved. Paul makes a very honest, very personal confession of sin. He recognizes that he had been a guilty man. He recognizes he had broken the law of God. He recognizes and acknowledges his own wrongdoing, his own wicked and despicable past. When he speaks of sinners in verse 15, he describes himself as "the chief of sinners," but alongside that personal, honest, open confession of his sin, Paul also speaks of salvation, "that Christ has come into the world to save sinners." He brings the thought of his sinfulness and he brings it into connection with the salvation that is in Christ. What he stresses by bringing these two thoughts together is that sinners need to be saved. Why did Christ come but to save sinners from their sin?

That's, of course, the message of the Bible. John 3:7 tells us we must be born again. Acts 3:19, the apostles preached, "Repent ye therefore and be converted." Matthew 18:3, the Savior testifies, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And the entire theme of the Scriptures is the theme of salvation from sin. That's the greatest need that men and women have. That's the greatest need that Hugh Latimer had, the greatest need that Martin Luther had, the greatest need

that Nicholas Ridley had, John Knox and John Calvin. Name any of those Reformers, it was their greatest need that they might be saved from their sin. Tonight, my friend, that's your greatest need also if you're not saved in this meeting.

Sinners need to be saved because they are condemned and condemned by God. The Bible tells us in John 3:18 that those that believe not are condemned already. The wrath of God abides upon them. Man has a very poor view of God, a very poor view of sin in the 21st century. The idea is that God overlooks our sin and sin is not that important. Our unbelief is not that big an issue when it comes to our relationship to God. Our despising of the Gospel, our refusing of salvation, what does it count for? That's how many view these spiritual truths and these spiritual issues, but the Bible tells us that he that believeth not is condemned already. In other words, the sentence has been passed, the verdict has been given. Those who are not saved are condemned. Condemned as sinners bound for a lost eternity, and their sin has brought them under a sentence of everlasting wrath. Someone says, "Well, I haven't sins those others have." But in your unbelief, in your unbelief, in your unsaved state, you are condemned already and that's why you need to be saved. And Hugh Latimer realized that as Bilney spoke to him. Despite all that he had, he needed to be saved and God used that word to speak to his heart.

Sinners need to be saved also because their sin is destroying them. Sin not only dishonors God, it ruins the sinner. It's King Solomon who said, "The soul, he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul, and all they that hate me love death." He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. Those are solemn words, those who are continuing in their sin, and this is what Solomon is stressing, those who continue in their sin are being led to eternal death. They are robbing themselves of life and joy and peace and hope and glory. Sin doesn't bring the happiness that it promises. It doesn't bring the fulfillment but it suggests it does. It destroys.

We're familiar with the story of the prodigal down there in the far country not only wasting his substance but his own strength, his own life, his talents, his future, his everything, and at one time, that young man loved death more than he loved life, and no man yet in his sin, no young person yet in their sin knows anything of real joy. The pleasures of sin are but for a season but that pleasure and that happiness that sin supposedly presents is nothing in comparison to the joy a saint of God experiences in life and in death.

Sin is a destroyer. That's why you need to be saved. You need to be saved also from sin because without salvation you will be lost eternally. Paul describes himself here as the "sinners; of whom I am chief." I read in Revelation 21:8 of the eternal destiny of those who die in their sin. Christ said those who die in their sin could not be where he is and never imagine that you will be the exception to that rule. The soul that sinneth, it shall die, and when your sin is finished, it brings forth death, it brings forth eternal death, and that's a fearful thing. I think that's why when you read the life story of Hugh Latimer, discover when this text is brought to his attention, he bursts forth in tears. He understands something of the severity of his sin. He understands something of the message of the

Gospel, that he was a sinner, a sinner destined should he remain in that state, to die without Christ and be lost forever.

The wages of sin is death. There is a payday. What a man sows, that's what he reaps. You sow in sin, you live for the world, you go on without Christ, you continue you as you are and your sin will seal your eternal destiny in a lost sinner's hell. My friend, that's why salvation is so important and that single phrase in verse 15, "to save sinners," indicates your greatest need, the salvation of your soul.

But I see in the second place in verse 15, that Christ Jesus has come to save sinners from their sin. This is a statement of personal testimony. Paul was writing to Timothy and he tells him, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." He's giving a word of testimony and in that testimony he makes a solemn confession. You have really a sinner's confession here, "I am the chief of sinners," but he also mentions the Savior's condescension. Christ has come. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Remember the message of the angel to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." The words of Christ in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost." Jesus Christ has come not to be a mere example or a mere model, he has come to be the Savior of sinners and what a glorious truth that is. He came to save because man has no means of saving himself.

Hugh Latimer was earnest in his religion, very gentle in his manner, very sincere in his beliefs, very faithful in his work, very courteous to his friends. He was very learned in his mind. A man with all these qualities but none of those things could save him from his sin. In the midst of all his religious work, you've heard tonight how he was a priest, but in the midst of all his religious work, he was still in spiritual darkness. Latimer could never have saved himself. His religion was not enough and what was true of him is true of every sinner. There is nothing in this world that you can do by way of human work, by way of religious exercise, by way of religious ceremony, there is nothing you can do to save yourself from the penalty of sin, to remove the guilt in your heart, to give you peace with God, to make you fit for him. That's why Christ has come. The Ethiopian, Jeremiah tells us, cannot change his skin and the leopard cannot change his spots and you cannot save your soul, but Christ has come to save sinners.

Christ came to save and does so by his atoning death. You can't read this verse or this entire chapter indeed in 1 Timothy 1, and not understand that salvation is by the cross work of Jesus Christ. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15 of what is the Gospel. Christ died according to the Scriptures. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He rose again according to the Scriptures. And there you have the Gospel in a nutshell, Christ dying, Christ rising, Christ living in the power of an endless life for sinners.

He is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. He is the sinner's substitute. He is the sacrifice who offers himself to God without spot by the Spirit to save

us from our sins, and our sins were laid upon him and Christ bore that burden to Calvary and there he suffered and died. He was made sin for us. He died the just for the unjust that he would bring us to God, and that's how we are saved, through the blood that washes whiter than snow.

There is no other sacrifice. That's why Latimer and Ridley and the men who were with him, though they searched through the Scripture could find nothing of the Roman Mass because Christ has offered one sacrifice for sin forever and then he sat down. The way of the cross leads home and a man is saved when he receives Christ who died on the cross for sinners as his Savior.

When I look at this verse, I see that Christ came to save and has the power to save the very worst of sinners. He saved Saul of Tarsus. He speaks in verse 13 of being a persecutor and a blasphemer, but he obtained mercy. Saul persecuted the church. He kicked against the pricks. He fought against the people of God but God had mercy upon him and Christ saved him because Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.

Christ alone is the Savior. There is no other Savior of men but Jesus Christ, and I think as Latimer heard that truth, the dawn, the light of that Gospel fact dawned on his soul and as he listened, he came to receive Christ as his Savior.

Verse 15 speaks, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." We must receive what Christ has said and more than that, receive Christ as our Savior. By faith. Luther discovered that, the just shall live by faith. That was a great issue for Latimer. He had tried to earn favor with God, no doubt by his works and by his religion, all of those things, but he discovered as Bilney testified to him, it was not by penance, it was not by Mass, it was not by confession, it was by faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it's the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.

Tonight as we commemorate the Protestant Reformation, I think it's a terrible thing that we can know the history of these men, rejoice in what they have done, and yet there are some who do not know their Savior as their Savior. They do not know Latimer's God as their own God. They have never trusted Christ as Latimer trusted Christ, and I pray tonight as we have listened to this presentation and when something of the Lord's presence amongst us here and that in a mighty way, as we've looked at this little text very briefly, that God will write these words upon your heart and you will realize tonight if you have never realized it before, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And if you will come and acknowledge your sin and repent of that sin and trust Christ as your Savior, then he will pardon you and you, too, will have peace with God.

Latimer faced death with a calm assurance that he would eat breakfast on earth and supper in glory. He was ready to depart. He was ready to go. Death held no fear for him and those who know Christ as Savior can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." I pray tonight that that will be your testimony,

that you will be able to say before you leave this meeting, "Christ Jesus has come to save sinners and thank God he has saved me and, therefore, I do not fear when death comes, but I know to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

May the Lord bless our time together tonight. May he bless his word to our hearts. And I pray that God will write these words upon your soul tonight if you're not saved and you'll come to know Christ as your Savior.

Let's bow our hearts and our heads together in prayer. Bow our heads together as we seek the Lord.

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy presence. We thank thee for thy servant who has been amongst us tonight. Lord, we pray thou wilt encourage him and continue to bless him and use him mightily in thy service. We thank thee, Lord, for what we have heard. We thank thee for that day when thou didst open Hugh Latimer's heart to the Gospel, that hast called him out of darkness unto the glorious light of the liberty of Christ, the salvation of his soul. We thank thee, Lord, for his faithful testimony, faithful unto death. And Lord, we thank thee for that candle that was lit in England and we pray, Lord, for that land tonight that thou wouldst cause that candle to burn brightly again. Turn the hearts of the people from their sin unto Christ. We think of this glorious text tonight. We thank thee for a Savior who came, who left heaven's glory, come down to this world and went to Calvary's cross, and laid down his life as a ransom for sinners. Lord, I pray if there are those in this service who are not saved, that thou wouldst speak to them and save them by thy grace that, Lord, they too might rejoice in the fact that they are complete in Christ. Answer prayer tonight and part us now with thy blessing. We give our thanks, O God, for thy presence with us and that it would do us good in the days to come. Bring us back to thy house again in the days to come throughout this month, Lord. Come and meet with us we pray for Jesus' sake. Part us now, we pray. May thy blessing abide with us we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.