

# Gisbertus Voetius, Presbyterianism, and Smart Phones

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I'm going to open this evening to 1 Timothy 6. This is now how I ordinarily preach, not just because of the bright red robes and dropping microphones, but because of what I'm actually doing. I'm rarely nervous preaching but I have been a little bit nervous doing this tonight partly because, as Dr. Pipa mentioned earlier, I feel that I'm standing in a long tradition of what men in this position have been doing to serve the church of Jesus Christ for many centuries and it is a weighty responsibility that I and my brothers share and we do covet your prayers. Also what I intend to bring to you after I read this text is not so much a sermon but as I have in the bulletin, an outline or platform for systematic theology and typically an inaugural address for hundreds of years has been designed to explain what a particular Professor desires to emphasize in his teaching and that's what I hope to do and show, by the grace of God, how this platform can serve the church, Lord willing.

So with that in view, let's turn our attention briefly to 1 Timothy 6, beginning in verse 3 and then reading through verse 10.

3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Thus far the reading of God's word together this evening as we've already prayed together for God's blessing. You may be seated.

The first place I need to begin this evening is to say something about my title because this is where I've either gained your interest to come or lost you. "Gisbertus Voetius," I'm saying Voetius because I speak Latin and not Dutch, "and Presbyterianism, and Smart Phones." Well, probably when you got through the first part of that you began to wonder what in the world I was going to talk about and maybe your eyes started to gloss over. When you read the second part, perhaps you began to scratch your head and maybe when you read the third part, you laughed, smart phones. Well, basically as I mentioned, when a Professor has stood in the place that I'm standing now for many centuries, he would use this as an opportunity to explain what was most important, what summarized him and what made him tick in terms of what he did. The theologian, Hermann Witsius, for example, in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century chose as his inaugural address, "The Character of a True Theologian," and addressed the idea that personal piety and godliness is at the heart and soul of what it means to be a pastor and a theologian and in his context, a Professor. That is not far off from what I'm attempting to do this evening with these headings of "Voetius, Presbyterianism and Smart Phones."

Basically what I want to do is use each of those strange headings as a springboard into a general topic that pushes forward this address. So here they go, Gisbertus Voetius is a model for wedding theology and piety. Presbyterianism is doing things through the church and for the church. Smart phones is contemporary application. So as a Professor of Systematic Theology, what I believe the church of Jesus Christ and students of theology in particular need today is to wed doctrine and practice, faith and practice, faith and piety, to labor through the church and for the church, and to learn to apply classic Reformed theology to a contemporary context. Now, keep in mind what I would normally be doing is preaching a sermon and aiming directly at your hearts; what I'm doing tonight is somewhat indirect, I'm speaking about the work of the seminary and in speaking about the work of the seminary, trying to describe how my work and how the seminary in general relates to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. So this is why I said I am aiming at your hearts eventually but indirectly and not as I normally would in preaching a sermon. So with that before us, we have this idea of doctrine and piety, Gisbertus Voetius; laboring through the church for the church, Presbyterianism; with contemporary application, smart phones.

Let's take one piece at a time. First, Gisbertus Voetius. We need ministers in our age who are able to wed doctrine and piety and I'll say more about Voetius in just a moment, but the text that I just read in the classic Reformed period from the 1560s up through the 1800s tended to appeal to passages like the one I just read to describe the character of theology and it came down to something like this: theology is the doctrine of living to God or living to God specifically through Christ. "No one comes to the Father except by me." Or filling out the picture, the doctrine of living to God through Christ by the Spirit. So whether in the pew or in the classroom or in the pulpit, the idea was that all of God's people teaching and listening were to walk in fellowship with the Triune God. Theology was doctrinal, it was something we learned, something we teach, but it was also something personal and something that applied to our souls.

Notice what Paul says, that the people who profess to be Christian teachers, who stir up strife, envy, dissension and all kinds of ungodly practices, he actually says know nothing. Now, this is an older model for theology. I think this is one of the great needs of the hour. We polarize, don't we? On the one hand, people are concerned with zeal and evangelism and love for Christ and the idea is that if we study careful distinctions and doctrine and theology, then we will stifle our zeal and stifle our faith. Then on the other side, there are those who are so concerned about doctrine that you sometimes feel like you can sit under a Reformed sermon and even as one who is interested, find difficulty not sleeping because there is no passion, there is no zeal, there is no love for Christ being communicated.

One radical example of the problem we face today came to me several years ago when a friend told me serving on a credentials committee in California, not where I just came from, somewhere else, that he asked a candidate if he could recite the Ten Commandments and the candidate laughed and said, "No, I can't and I don't need to." And this was in committee and he said, "When you come to the floor of presbytery, you will recite the Ten Commandments." And he came to the presbytery and the same thing happened and my friend spoke against the exam and said this was atrocious and sinful and the presbytery, at least members of it, stood up and said, "I think our brother owes this candidate an apology for being rude." And he stood up and said, "No, I think that this man owes the church of the Lord Jesus Christ an apology."

But, you see, where are we that we can actually have an example like that arise in a conservative Presbyterian denomination at present? What have we lost? I think what we've lost is this classic theological tradition of wedding doctrine and piety and this is where I've thrown out Voetius. Now, if you've actually looked up Voetius to try to find out who he is as some of you have, you might be a bit disappointed that I'm not going to say a lot about him. You also might be a bit relieved. I chose Voetius as a window into the classic period of Reformed theology to bring out some of its characteristics. His dates are 1589-1676 in the Netherlands and you can see that's a long period. He lived to be almost 90. He spent most of that time as what we would call a seminary Professor, mostly in Utrecht in the Netherlands. He trained ministers who went all throughout the Netherlands and other parts of the world and to many other countries. In fact, even in South Africa there was a man named El Capitaine who went and studied under Voetius and went back to plant Reformed churches in South Africa back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. So this man's influence is widespread but what I think he gives us most of all is a different way of doing things, a different way of approaching things that fits a need in the church in the present day and that is wedding a sound doctrine and piety.

I want to explain that a little bit. What about doctrine? I'm standing here inaugurated as a Professor of Systematic Theology and what does that mean? Today it often means something different depending on the institution that one teaches at and the methods change, the contents change, and often we lose sight of the fact that as Reformed people when we take the name Reformed upon ourselves, we're not simply making a statement of what we think the Bible says but we're making a statement about history. There is a certain group of Christians that appeared historically on the scene that had certain

doctrines that tied them together, a certain way of understanding Scripture, and we cannot take the name Reformed without having some historical content. Yes, we are subject to Scripture and Scripture alone, but the term has to mean something historically or it means nothing, and I'll come back to that in just a moment.

Well, what happened during this classic period of Reformed theology? What about men like Voetius? Typically as man began his role as a Professor of Theology in a university, he would begin as a Bible commentator and most often, and Dr. Shaw will appreciate this, he had to serve as a Professor of Hebrew before he could actually teach systematic theology, and part of the idea was that most of the Bible was written in Hebrew and also, at least in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Hebraic studies were a lot newer and it was common for these men to do all of their education in Latin and Greek and later to build the skill of Hebrew, and if a man wanted to teach systematic theology, he had to know his Bible, he had to know is Bible in the languages in which it was written. Why? Because it was essential to love and know the word of God.

But there were other steps. Many Professors would go and after this write a system of doctrine out of the church fathers and he would go and study the church fathers and see all the historic precedent for Reformed thought. One man named Polanus wrote a *Symphonia Catholica* taking all the church fathers and showing all the precedence for Reformed thought before he too wrote his own system of theology, and then only later would they begin to tie the pieces together and put them together in the context of a theological system. But here's the question: what are they doing? They're not waking up one morning and saying, "How can I as a Professor make my mark on the world? How can I solve the unsolved theological questions that are in the church today? But how can I be conversant with the entire tradition of the Christian church?" You realize that many times today people will say that, "We take the Bible seriously and we only want to believe the Bible and we just don't care about church history or historical theology or especially Creeds and Confessions." But we realize if we take that attitude which our forefathers didn't, we don't take the Bible seriously because Christ gave pastors and teachers as well as apostles and prophets. He gave people to teach his church to prevent us from being tossed about by every wind of doctrine, and these men recognized rightly that if we're going to maintain unity with the church in every age and have something to say to the church in our day, we have to be in conversation with what Christ has said to his church. This is vital if we're going to respect Scripture. We need to listen to historic authors.

Reformed theology at this time is also what we can call very scholastic. For some of you who just took my class, you may love the term; others of you, I just used a curse word. In my mind, the value of scholasticism is clarity and simplicity, the ability to make distinctions. Think about what happens in modern theology. There are debates raging at the present day over whether Jesus Christ as the Son of God was eternally subordinated to his Father because people don't know how to make a distinction between Christ having all judgment committed to him, Christ revealing the Father as the eternal Word of God as the second person of the Trinity, because of how the persons relate to one another from eternity, there's an order, versus Christ Incarnate and Christ submitting to the law and

suffering death for sinners. And there's a difference and these scholastic distinctions from the Middle Ages and into the Reformation, post-Reformation period, help us avoid falling into heresy. Better yet, they help us teach the truth clearly and powerfully from Scripture and make sense of what the word of God says and Voetius et al, that's what that means, is "all the others," had this model of theology.

Perhaps the thing that strikes me the most is if you look at our forefathers and the Reformed faith, one of the things that they wanted to inculcate in systematic theology was preaching and piety. Many of these systems were actually written to teach men how to preach better and many people read systems today and wonder how they can have anything to do with my preaching at all. You see, there's a different model, an integration of Scripture, an integration of history, an integration of scholastic distinctions, an integration of piety, an aim at the hearts of men who are going to aim at the hearts of God's people in the church; a wedding together of things that ought not to be separated, in other words, in these historical models.

They were also designed to inculcate personal godliness. The idea was that theology, even scholastic theology, should not be dry and sterile. It ought to cause us to love Jesus Christ more clearly and because more clearly, more fervently and zealously, and so these men always aimed at the heart.

One of the things that I think is most significant is theology was not simply a discourse concerning God or the science of God but the doctrine of living to God through Christ by the Spirit. And what does that do and what difference does that make? Well, I think it means this: that in the systematic theology curriculum, everything ought to be tied together. I borrow, in a sense, from all of my brothers without having the expertise of any of them, drawing in the biblical languages, drawing in the exegetical and biblical theological tools, drawing in the practical theology, drawing in the system of doctrine, connecting the dots in the Bible, all as tools to enable men to understand Scripture better and to preach Jesus Christ more powerfully, clearly and fervently for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the saints.

I can say many more things and probably one of the reasons why I was nervous about doing this topic tonight is not only am I not preaching a sermon, not only is my application to you indirect, but also I run the risk of doing everything I do elsewhere poorly in terms of summary. But here is this first point to tie together: we need learned and godly men in the ministry and we not only need learned and godly men as Professors but we need learned and godly men who have a learned and godly method of teaching. That's the basic point from Gisbertus Voetius.

What about Presbyterianism, coming to my second point? We need godly and learned men, learned and godly men but we also need men who serve through the church and who serve Christ in the church, who serve the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and in my mind, the term "Presbyterianism" encapsulates this the best way. Basically if everything I've just said about historic Reformed theology promotes a unity and a catholicity with the entire Christian tradition and interacting with the best that Jesus Christ has revealed

through the church, well, Presbyterianism builds upon that theme by creating a catholicity and unity now. You see, we recognize that the individual congregation is not the only sense that the New Testament uses the term "church." There was the church in Antioch in the book of Acts. There are the churches in Galatia or sometimes the church in Galatia encompassing the entire region. When men were ordained to the ministry, whether an apostle in Acts 1 or a deacon in Acts 6 or an elder in Acts 14, we see the same pattern. The people in the congregation vote and approve of the men who come and we also see the group of men called presbyters, elders in a broader church connection laying on hands and approving men. And why is this significant to what I've said about Voetius and systematic theology and doctrine and piety and what I'm doing here? Well, basically what it means is this: that in a Presbyterian seminary in particular, we want to reflect the structures that Jesus Christ has put in the church himself. We want to labor through the church, we want to labor for the church. Historically, say in the days of Voetius, there was a transition back and forth many times between the pastorate and the university, the pastorate, or as we would call it now, the seminary. And the idea was that the Professor was a minister of the Gospel and his job was not simply to be an academic but to train pastors; to wed doctrine and piety himself but also to know how to shepherd the church of God.

Now think about a contemporary analogy. If you have students going to medical school to prepare to be surgeons, we have at least one surgeon in this room tonight, do you want to be trained by people who have never operated on patients? And so with the ministry. Would we want to send men out into the church who have been trained by men who have no interest in the pastorate?

I was traveling one time and I won't tell you what denomination but I spoke to the pastor afterward and, by the way, he didn't really preach a sermon, he read us J. C. Ryle's sermon because he thought it was better than his, and I knew we were already going downhill, and speaking to him afterward he said, "I really didn't want to be a pastor, I wanted to be a seminary Professor and the Lord never opened the door so please pray for me." And I wish I had said it at the time and I wasn't quick-witted enough but what I was thinking was, "Brother, I pray the Lord never grants you your desire."

Historically, especially in a Presbyterian context, for example in the Scottish Second Book of Discipline, the so-called Doctor of the Church, the minister of the Gospel that labor in the seminaries, had two duties primarily. What were they? He was to teach in the theological schools, that's obvious, and he was to catechize the youth in the church. That's striking, isn't it, because what's the idea? Well, in the New Testament, Paul tells Timothy as a minister to, "Take what you've learned and pass them down to faithful men," if I can paraphrase, "who are going to do the same thing, who are going to pass the same things down not only in their doctrine, in their sound confessional theology and their memorizing a shorter catechism and all the other good things we can do, but in their life, in their godliness, pass them down from one minister to the next." And the Scots had it right, the Doctor was to teach the church on every level, whether he is discipling men to be pastors or training the youngest child in the church, and if a man cannot do that on some level, then it's my opinion he has no business stepping into a theological seminary. I

believe by the grace of God all my brothers exemplify these qualities with our own personalities, our own bents in life, but this is the goal and this is the aim, to labor through the church and for the church. In other words, as a seminary Professor and the goal of a theological seminary linked to this, a Professor is a minister of the Gospel and ought to be.

Maybe some of you young men in the seminary, it will likely cross your mind at some point, "Maybe I want to teach seminary," and that's not necessarily a bad thing, but I have to tell you one of the hardest things for my coming to Greenville Seminary was my deep love for the pastorate, especially my church in California, and that bleeds out of me and you know it. I'm looking around the room and I know most of you well and your my friends and you've heard me talk about these things and, in some sense, I think that's what it ought to be. There ought to be that tension, that longing, that love for the church, the desire, in all of us and not just men preparing for the ministry but ultimately our connection to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only permanent one that we have on earth. It is more binding than our friendships. It's more binding than our secular relationships. It may even be more binding than our family relationships in terms of earthly ties. And so we ought to labor through the church, we ought to labor for the church. We must pursue doctrine and piety, wedding together all the things that I've given to you a moment ago and we must labor through the church and for the church.

By the way, we covet the church to labor with us. I said my application is indirect, but if anything comes to you directly as believers tonight it's something like this: that when my brothers and I are laboring here at the seminary, we may be called to stand in the classroom and do the teaching but I'd love all of you to think of this as your work as well. When you're on your knees in prayer, you're laboring to spread the Gospel through Greenville Seminary. I hope you do so even more preeminently through your local churches, through your local pastors and sessions, for we must recognize that prayer is part of the labor of the kingdom in spreading the Gospel and we deeply covet your prayers, that we might do the things that I'm discussing here.

The last thing I want to throw at you is the nebulous smart phones. Well, what's left? Well, I've already told you contemporary application. We live in a contemporary world. I use smart phones here, since then I've got a smart watch hidden under my long shirt here, and we have all kinds of new things facing us in the new world. Where do we stand as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ? Where do we stand as a seminary in teaching theology?

Well, let me mention a few things. This is where we get into trouble and this thing causes me lots of trouble. In the present day and I confess I struggle to express some of what I want to say here because I don't want to sound negative, critical or pejorative in any way, but I think what we tend to have at the present day are a lot of good ideas and Reformed thoughts without any kind of unified method or Reformed system generally. Now, I realize that's vague. People embrace the Five Points of Calvinism but you perhaps know what happens out in the world and out in the seminaries today, virtually every Professor of Systematic Theology writes his own system and that, in itself, is not a bad thing. Voetius published his disputations, Polanus published his own system, Turretin is maybe

one you've heard of, Heidegger, all of these other men published their systems from their lectures but there is one significant difference. When I was teaching a class last week in the classic Reformed period and I described the nature and definitions of theology, someone asked me eventually, "Who are you quoting?" and my initial answer was, "Everybody." They're all basically doing the same thing. There are different nuances, there are different emphases, there are different personalities, there are different contributions that these men make but there's a basic continuity, a basic way of doing things that unified the church across national boundaries. Now we can't even unify the church across seminary boundaries or across denominational lines or within presbyteries and every theologian comes up with his own system.

So what do we do? We need to be up-to-date, don't we? We need to address a new generation. I don't believe that we should dress like Voetius. I don't believe that I should simply start lecturing in Latin as Voetius did, though I and Michael Spangler might enjoy it. I don't believe that I should simply regurgitate his system of theology or any of these other men and push it upon a present generation. I believe we need to learn. We need to apply. We need to adapt and adopt, but at the same time, there's also a danger of running far afield. There are men who rework the system of theology in terms of biblical theology instead of systematics. And it sounds great, who doesn't want to study the Bible, and this is wonderful, let's go through the Bible historically and a few of my brothers here do that and do it well, but what happens is the system ends up being blurred, the distinctions are lost. So, for example, if you ask one of these men, "How do you define God? What is the doctrine of God?" they almost have to say, "Read Genesis through Revelation," and there's one book that basically does that, instead of saying, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." That's a system.

Or people try to incorporate modern philosophy and the idea of being contemporary so they incorporate things like post-modern speech-act theory. No, I'm not going to explain that because I lost some of you by saying it and if I try to explain it, then you'll be drooling on your shoulders by the time I'm done. But the idea is that there is a pagan philosophy, a faulty philosophy with theology superimposed and it distorts the whole system.

Other men come up with multi-perspectives and you know who I'm talking about, some of you, to try to explain different doctrines and, again, change virtually every part of the entire system. Perhaps one of the most intriguing things that I read recently was "The Cambridge Companion to Reformed Theology" and it really puts a finger on this particular problem: how do we define what it means to be Reformed? How do we as a seminary, how do you as church members define what you mean when you say you're Reformed? It's actually a harder question than you might realize. You realize that the Catholics have a certain set of documents that they are bound to regardless of what Catholic church you go to. The Lutherans have their "Book of Concord" and the documents that, again, transcend all Lutheran denominations, but in Reformed churches we have the Westminster Standards, the Three Forms of Unity, the London Baptist Confession, we have the Second Helvetic Confession still being used in some parts of



Europe, and the question becomes a little more difficult. It's not simply one set of standards. Well, the answer that this book gave was very enlightening. One set of authors basically said that you define Reformed theology in a Reformed church in light of a set of Reformed confessions in some ways, and then they try to summarize what the heart of those confessions are, what ties them together. The other one is whatever church is attached to Reformed theology or Reformed thought or have the name at some point in its history is Reformed and so a Reformed church in that light in its extremist form, in the book at least, is concerned with homophobia and feminism and rejecting the authority of Scripture and not even knowing what the Reformed confessions say. Well, obviously I think in this context I can take it for granted you know I'd choose the first option and not the second. We have to go back to the Reformed confessions and what it means.

Well, what do we do? Smart phones, ministering to people in a contemporary world. I'm not going to talk here about how to use technology though I do that. I'm not going to talk about how to reach the contemporary man, particularly what I am going to talk about is this: in a contemporary context we need to do several things, we need to learn to apply the past without simply repristinating the past. What I mean by that is, in other words, to give a concrete example. I want you brothers who are students to learn from John Owen, not preach like John Owen. I don't want you to have 14 point sermons. There are things that are useful, I want you to develop the content and the theology into your own hearts through Scripture at the feet of Christ and make it your own, but to present it as you; to apply the past, to learn from the past without just repristinating it. We're not Puritans. We don't live in that day and age. We learn from them, we should love them, but we're here now and that doesn't mean we need a new system of theology or a new confession of faith and you won't find from me a quest to come up with a new method of organizing the system taught in the Bible, but what we need to do is go back to our forefathers. We need earlier models. We need to realize that it's possible to have a doctrine that accords with godliness; that it's possible to have a precise and careful Reformed theology that is historically informed, that is still relevant to people, that you can teach to children in your congregation. But we need to know what it is and we need to step out of our context perhaps in order to minister to our context and learn from the past and minister to the present.

The other danger is to apply the past without transforming it. We need to learn to benefit from classic biblical doctrine expressed through the Reformed faith and to communicate with people that don't have a Latin theological vocabulary and that aren't reading Charles Hodge, let alone Gisbertus Voetius. But at the same time, we need to learn to apply, sometimes expand, our description of biblical teaching without transforming it. That's a problem. That's what we often see. Everyone that is going out trying to solve new problems in the world ends up coming up with something new or, "Nobody has ever said anything about A, B or C. Nobody has said anything about Christ's resurrection in the life of the believer. It's all apologetics." Probably when people say things like that, they're not reading back far enough and they're not going deep enough into the history of the church and have found all of these things. And there is a danger sometimes to think that we've solved the present problems and applied the past while we're really transforming it into something else.

We're not here to preach Voetius, we're not here to preach John Owen or Jonathan Edwards or anyone else, we're here to preach Christ and him crucified from the word of God in demonstration of the Spirit and of power but we need tools to do it and this is why a place like Greenville Seminary exists and this should go without saying, we also need to apply the past without replacing Scripture. I use what I read. I use our confession and catechisms unashamedly but I've also been in Reformed churches where people have said in Sunday schools, "Why do our elders always quote the confession and catechisms and never quote the Bible?" And I think that the criticism was just. These were sound men teaching sound doctrine but what good is it if we don't go back to the foundation? In other words, if these things and all the things that I've been describing to you really in somewhat vague generalities are not helpful in enabling us to better understand and apply Scripture and glorify Christ in dependence of the Spirit, then what's the point? We could do something else more usefully probably than waste our time here. We can't replace Scripture with the past.

The other thing is that we need to apply these things with fresh affection in a new generation. We need to love the truths of God's word. We need to humble ourselves and lay aside our arrogance in acting as though the truth began with us and people do this in presbyteries all the time. The man comes and disagrees with our doctrinal standard, the first question to ask is, "What have you read in favor of it?" And almost every time the answer is, "Nothing." Now, what does that communicate? That, "I'm fresh. I'm up-to-date. I have all that I need and I don't need anyone else to inform me and I can tell on the surface of the matter that this is wrong." Do we believe that Jesus Christ has spoken to the church and through the church? We don't believe the church is infallible. We don't place our faith in the church but we also dishonor Christ if we ignore what the church has to say, but it also means, especially in men preparing for the ministry and my brothers in the ministry, that we need to learn these truths with fresh affection.

I just preached a conference, I was just telling my brothers this today, this last month in California and an interesting thing happened. I've got this model of wedding doctrine and piety, a classic Reformed model, a classic Reformed theology laboring through the church, for the church, making contemporary application, and I was attempting to preach on how beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ is central to the Christian life and I had a woman come up to me saying that she was from a broader evangelical background and they were so excited there about Jesus and then she came to the Reformed faith and learned all these doctrines that she just didn't know anything before and yet she said the zeal and the vigor began to die, and at the conference she told me, "What you showed me this week was that we can be Reformed Christians and be excited about Jesus."

Well, I'm mentioning history, I'm mentioning scholastic terms, I'm talking about Greek and Hebrew, I'm talking about Presbyterianism, I'm talking about smart phones and contemporary application but really what that woman was grasping and what she was saying is what I'm getting at and I didn't know whether to rejoice or weep when she said it; to rejoice that she's getting it and to weep that she hadn't been. But what is missing at

the present time? Do we not desperately need men in the seminary, in the pulpit, in the pew, who approach the knowledge of God as the truth that accords with godliness? Do we not need men who are well educated, not for the sake of being well educated, but to be well informed, to be discerning and to have the tools they need to be more fervent lovers of Christ and preachers of him, and who know how to take these things and then to translate them and apply them and to preach them to people today? My dear friends, that is what I'm praying for for myself as a Professor here at Greenville seminary, what I'm studying to do, that's what I'm praying for for all of you students who are here and those who are not, for my brothers on the faculty, for every board member we have, for all the pastors here and for every church member in every church that I've ever been in. May the Lord grant that he would send such men through this institution and not only through us, but through others, even until Jesus Christ returns in glory.

Let us pray.

*Almighty God, we thank you for your kindness, your love in giving us your word and your Spirit to apply your word to our hearts. We pray, Lord, that you would help us grow in our affection for Christ and that we would honor you as our loving Father by walking according to your commandments and the spirit of adoption would work mightily in us that we would bear the family likeness in all that we do. We pray now that you would pardon all of our iniquities, that you would bless Greenville Seminary to attain to these things we have considered tonight and beyond. And also, Lord, that you would stir us up in service through the church and for the church in all that we do. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.*