

The Dynamics Behind Doctrinal Development, Part 3

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[0 : 00] The title of this passage is the dynamics behind doctrinal development. And the passage we're looking at today is in the Gospel of Matthew.

Please turn to Matthew chapter 12. And in Matthew 12, we'll be looking at verses 1 through 15.

At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, Look, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.

But he said to them, Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread?

[1 : 30] Which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone. Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?

But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion and not a sacrifice.

You would not have condemned the innocent. And they said to them, How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep?

So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal like the other. But the Pharisees went out, and conspired against him, as to how they might destroy him.

[3 : 22] But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed him, and he healed them all. This was just one of the many encounters that our Lord had with the religious establishment when he was here for that brief three-year period of ministry.

It was probably the most single event that caused conflict between Jesus and that religious establishment.

And it had to do with the Sabbath and the observation of it. God had instituted the Sabbath originally because on the seventh day, he rested from all that he had created and made.

And that simply means he ceased. And the reason he ceased was not because he was tired from a long week of work. But he ceased because he was finished. The job was over.

And on the seventh day, he ceased. And that's a much better word than the word rested because it makes it look like God was tired and had to take a break. But nothing of the kind. He simply finished his creative work, and he stopped what he had been doing.

[4 : 41] And that day was instituted as a day of rest. And by the way, it is still on the calendar all over the world in virtually every culture. There's still seven days to the week.

And in many, there is a particular observation of the Sabbath. But that's a subject we don't particularly want to get into now, except to see how it was bearing upon the issue that Jesus is talking about.

And what we are in the throes of discussing right now has to do with the origin of doctrine. How did doctrine develop? Well, why is it that we here at Grace Bible Church believe as we do?

And I'm sure it is no surprise to you to recognize that there are many other churches, many other places that believe similar to us, almost identical to us.

And then there are those that are wildly different from us. So how is it that all of these came to the conclusions that they did, adopted the doctrines that they did, when everybody supposedly gets their information from the same source?

[5 : 53] We all have the same Bible, essentially. Granted, there are translations and so on. But essentially, the content is basically the same. And yet there are so many different conclusions that are reached.

And the reasons that conclusions are so important is because that's what formulates your doctrine. And out of your doctrine comes your practice.

Because we tend to put in practice that which we believe. So believing right means you're going to practice right. Believing wrong tends to mean that you're going to practice wrong.

It's rather axiomatic. And the situation that surfaced here with our Lord was one that was occupying his time for virtually the whole three to three and a half years that he was here on earth.

They had regular clashes. And the Sabbath seemed to be at the focus of it. So if you will look back at the chapter, chapter 12. Jesus went through the Sabbath through the greenfields.

[6 : 57] And his disciples became hungry. And his disciples began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.

What they were doing was simply satisfying their hunger. Because in the law of Moses, there was provision made for everyone in the Jewish constituency and the family of Israel.

That they automatically had permission to go into the grain fields or the vineyards of any of their neighbors that did not belong to them.

And satisfy their hunger by picking the grapes and by picking the grain. And the grain at a particular time of year was at a tender spot where it was not fully developed.

And it was called farik. But it had a delicious taste to it, even though it wasn't fully matured. And they could pick a stalk of grain and strip it and take the little beads of farik and eat them.

[8 : 07] And they were nutritious and they satisfied hunger. It was maybe kind of like a seed that you would eat. And a handful of those could stave off hunger.

You were allowed to do that if you were going anywhere, walking about on a journey or something. You could go through the field of a perfect stranger. And you were entitled to pick those grains or to pick grapes or to pick figs from the tree or whatever.

There was one other provision, however. No carry out. You had to eat it right there. And that's what the disciples were doing.

And it was looked upon as no big deal. A rather common thing. But the Pharisees. And these were the professional nitpickers. These were always looking for a way to slice something thinner.

These were so preoccupied with details. On one occasion, Jesus said, you people are really something. You tithe.

[9 : 14] That is, you give 10% of the mint and the anise and the cumin. Well, what were those? Those were spices.

How big are spices? It's like saying, you have 100 grains of salt. And you meticulously separate 10 grains from the 100.

So you can use that for the tithe. That's how nitpicky and detailed they were. But then our Lord went on to say, you tithe the mint, the anise and the cumin.

But you ignore the weightier issues. You completely ignore the things that really matter. And you get all hung up on these nitpicking little details.

And here was another case where they had done exactly that. Your disciples are working on the Sabbath. Because the law of Moses did forbid work on the Sabbath.

[10 : 15] That meant if you had a field of grain, you were not allowed to go out on the Sabbath day and harvest that field of grain. Bring it to the winnowing and winnow it and prepare it.

You weren't allowed to do that on the Sabbath. So what they were saying was, when the disciples pick this grain and then they rub it like that in their hands, they're winnowing.

And when they go like that and blow the chaff away from the grains of wheat, that's working on the Sabbath.

That's how nitpicky and detailed they were. All under the guise of bending over backwards to please God and the demands of the law.

And here he puts things in perspective when he says to them in verse 3, Have you not read what David did when he became hungry? He and his companions, how he entered the house of God and they ate the consecrated bread.

[11 : 17] No. Why would they do that? Well, they were legitimately hungry. But that bread was not provided for them.

It was provided for the priests and they're carrying out their function in the priestly role. But they weren't there and it wasn't needed at the time. And these fellows were hungry and they satisfied they're hungry.

And do you know what God would be saying about that? Hey, no big deal. Yeah, it was intended for the priests. That's the normal use of it. But this was an extenuating circumstance. In other words, God was always ready to cut slack for any Israelite who had the right heart attitude toward the Sabbath.

God wasn't nitpicky and detailed and waiting for looking down there for somebody possibly observing. I gotcha. That's not the God of heaven.

And yet that's the God they were portraying him to be. Have you not read? In verse 9, departing from there, there was a man who went into their synagogue with a withered hand and they questioned him saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

[12 : 33] Now, of course, this is a trap. And the text makes it quite clear. They said this in order that they might accuse him. And Jesus said to them, and here he's talking about perspective.

All right? The law of Moses was never intended to be rigid, inflexible, overly demanding. It was intended to be reasonable, logical.

It was intended to serve the people, not to bind the people. You know, the laws of God have always been instituted for the benefit, the welfare, and the blessing of humanity.

Never were they intended just to rain on somebody's parade and make sure that nobody had a good time. That was never the intent of the law. God gave the law because of his love for his people.

In the same way that today we have laws in the land. We have local and state and federal laws. And what are they for? They are for people's protection, for their blessing, for their benefit, to assure their perpetuity, to assure safety and everything that goes with it.

[13 : 45] They aren't given to just agitate and irritate. Granted, some laws may do that. And some laws are, you know, far from perfect because they're made by imperfect people.

But by and large, the law is a good thing. And without it, it would be complete chaos. So, he puts it in perspective. Here is this poor man with a withered hand.

I don't know exactly what the condition was, but I think we could probably safely say that he suffered from something like a paralysis of his hand or of his arm.

Just unable to function. And we've all seen folks with this kind of difficulty. And it happens all the time, especially if someone were to have a stroke or something like that.

It might be a whole side of their body is paralyzed and is just unable to respond. Well, this poor man had a withered hand and it was just worthless. And the whole thing is a setup.

[14 : 44] And they're trying to spring a trap and make Jesus look bad. And he said to them, when they ask, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

Now, this is a kind of a challenge. And he said to them, what man shall there be among you who shall have one sheep? And if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?

Well, of course he will. Why? Well, you can't do that on the Sabbath. That's work. You're expending labor and effort. That's work. The law forbids that. No, no, no, no, no.

There is a law of logic and a law of compassion and a law of common sense that comes to the rescue in a case like this.

Here you've got a poor innocent animal that has fallen into a ditch and is in pain. Have you no compassion? Have you no sympathy for an animal? Are you going to say, well, you're just going to have to stay there and writhe in anguish and pain until, let me see, the Sabbath will be over in about seven hours, eight minutes, and 11 seconds.

[15 : 52] And then I can get you out of there. How stupid. How utterly puerile. You know, this is the kind of attitude that people are capable of going to when man becomes an authority.

And what we're dealing with here is the abuse of authority. There has never been an issue that man is incapable of abusing when it comes to authority.

This must have been something. Our Lord was never one to walk away from a challenge, and he doesn't hear.

And he turns to this man and says, stretch out your hand. And I can see these critics on the sidelines salivating and saying, we got him now.

We got him. Stretch out your hand. And he stretched out his hand. And I'm sure he was the first one that looked at it because it was just like his other arm.

[17 : 02] And he's just overwhelmed. He's just amazed. Why couldn't they have been equally amazed?

Why couldn't they have said, wow, who is this that could do that? Nope.

Nope. They're not going to ask those questions. Why do you suppose that is? Because their hearts were driven by hatred and resentment.

They would not allow themselves to rejoice in the presence of a miracle they beheld with their own eyes. This just goes to show you the depths of the depravity of the human heart.

These are people who are absolutely turned away from the truth. There isn't anything Jesus could say or do that could possibly win their approval.

[18 : 09] Tempted as I am to make some present day illustrations of that. I will resist the temptation.

And let's move on with the context, shall we? But, verse 14, but the Pharisees went out and counseled together against him as to how they might destroy him.

Listen, this is totally irrational. When hatred takes over a human heart, irrationality sets in.

There isn't much that they do out of logic or common sense. It just becomes over the top, radical, ridiculous. That's precisely what's happening here in the first century.

And I don't know that all that much has changed between it and the 21st century. Hate still commandeers human hearts and makes people do irrational things.

[19 : 18] But the Pharisees went out and counseled together against him as to how they might destroy him. And I want to point out to you, because this is very, very important.

These people who constituted the establishment, the religious establishment, the Pharisees. And you've got to remember that the Pharisees were not actually, as much as they may look like it, they were not actually the religious professionals.

These were lay people. The Pharisees were lay folk. An elevated kind of lay folk. But the ones who really had the clout and were really in positions of power and influence, more than the Pharisees, it was the Sadducees.

And one reason that they didn't get along was because there was always the jockeying for power and influence. That, too, is part of the human element. Because people love to be in positions of power and authority, because then they are able to push their agenda.

And sometimes it's a good agenda, and sometimes it isn't. But the scribes and the Pharisees, or the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were always going at each other this way. The Pharisees were what you would call, I guess we would liken them to, maybe the extreme fundamentalists.

[20 : 35] And the Sadducees would be compared to the extreme liberals. The Pharisees believed, of course, in the resurrection of the body and in many of the traditional things of Judaism.

The Sadducees were the real liberals of their day, and they denied that there was a resurrection of the body, and they denied that there were such things as angelic spirits. So that gave enough for them to be at odds one with another.

And the only time in all of Scripture that the Pharisees and the Sadducees ever got together on anything was when they came up against Jesus.

Isn't that interesting? Kind of like, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. And that's the thing that brought them together on at least one occasion.

And what they are talking about, of course, here is doctrine and how that developed, because the Pharisees were in Moses' seat. That is, they had authority and power and influence with the people, as did the Sadducees.

[21 : 42] And people tended to submit to their authority. And this is a good thing and a bad thing, because you need somebody who has knowledge and understanding to be in a position of authority.

But if you have somebody who has nothing but an elevated ego, and he's in a position of authority, that's not going to bode well for the people who are under him. And in this world of fallen humanity, we've got all kinds all over the map.

So what we are going to be discussing for the few moments that are left to us is how it is that the doctrines that we have come to embrace today have come into being. And granted, it has been a very lengthy journey, but it has been one that is well documented and one that we have referred to in our previous session from this Handbook of Denominations.

And I just want to offer clarification about this. But I shared this with you in our session last week. This contains 250 descriptions of religious bodies in the United States, their historical background, doctrines, main teachings, etc.

It's called Handbook of Denominations in the United States by Frank Mead. It includes everything from Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, the whole nine yards, everything.

[23 : 02] Large and small groups. And it depicts what their doctrines are. It does not critique any of them. It isn't saying that any of them are right or wrong.

It isn't giving approval or disapproval or anything. It is just quoting from these sources their own documents and their own positions regarding doctrine.

And they are just absolutely all over the map. And as I mentioned earlier, how can this be when reasonable people all get together and we come to essentially the same Bible and we come out with all of these different kinds of interpretations?

Because interpretation is really what this is all about. And that's why we spent the time that we did with hermeneutics.

And if you're interested in pursuing this, I would suggest that you obtain from Christianity Clarified, that's back there, starting with volume 26.

[24 : 00] And you will get a lowdown on the science and art of interpreting the Bible and the principles that are used and why they are used and how they are explained, defined, and et cetera.

And you will be enriched by it. I can promise you that. What this is all about is, as I mentioned earlier, in the Bible, there is that which God said.

And there is that which man says God said. And they may be poles apart, as we will see as we move on. Problem is, how can we be certain that the correct meaning of Scripture is arrived at?

Now, I hope you will be able to follow me closely here, because this is somewhat detailed, but I cannot overemphasize how important it is.

Here we have a book that we insist is infallible and inerrant. That means it is accurate in all that it sets forth and affirms.

[25 : 08] That means that it is a book that contains only a record of truth. That means it is a record that is utterly dependable in all that it affirms.

It is the very Word of God Himself. And because we have an accurate, infallible, inerrant Bible, who has the task of determining its meaning?

Here is where, at least in my estimation, one of the earliest faulty assumptions occurs.

Now, follow me. And I want to admit, right up front, I do not have any documentation to this at all. This is purely conjecture on my part. So, if you think it is too far off the mark, you are welcome to disagree or to even say so.

But this, I think, is a line of reasoning that was used by people in the first century when once the Bible was represented as a completed canon.

[26 : 26] In other words, the Bible was finished. When John the Apostle, exile on the Isle of Patmos, probably in the last decade of the first century, as best we can tell, when he laid down his pen, having written under inspiration the last book of the Bible, the book of the Revelation, that completed the canon of Scripture.

That meant the Bible was finished. It was a completed document. Now that that completed document is available, you can read it, and those of the first century could read it.

It was in Greek, and a huge contingency of people spoke Greek in that day. You could read it in the Greek, and everybody could read it and understand what it said.

No issue there. The issue is in what does it mean by what it says. That is the interpretation.

Now what I think, and this again, this is just a Wiseman opinion, okay? What I think transpired in these very early years when what we call the church fathers were in influence, and by church fathers, I mean people like Justin Martyr and Polycarp, and Polycarp was a disciple of John, who wrote the Revelation, by the way.

[28 : 04] It was a personal acquaintance of his, and he lived at that same time. And all of these men that we call the church fathers, these were those individuals who were believers, who lived during that first century into the second and third century and fourth century, because as time rolled on, these generations came up anew, and they were indoctrinated in the scriptures and in the teaching that was available then.

And what my thinking is, and like I said, if you think this is too far afield, but it makes common sense to me, we've got a Bible that is infallible and inerrant and inspired as the Word of God.

So, doesn't it only make sense that there is also going to be needed an interpreter who is infallible and inerrant and can precisely arrive at what the proper interpretation is.

Is that a stretch or does that make sense? I kind of think it makes sense. Once you recognize that the Bible is the Word of God, that it is perfect, you need some vehicle of equal inspiration or perfection to reveal its meaning, its interpretation.

Because anybody who reads the Bible for understanding knows, and you don't get far in reading it until this comes to the surface, that just reading it isn't enough.

[29 : 56] You've got to be able to understand what you're reading. Because there is no such thing as an intelligent response if the meaning is not there and understood.

You've got to know what it means so that you can intelligently respond to it. And as I said before, you have to know what it means before you can even intelligently disobey it.

You have to know what it means. So interpretation is everything. Now where can an infallible, inerrant interpreter be found?

There isn't one. There isn't one. Well, what then does that mean? In so far as arriving at an understanding, a meaning of Scripture, what does that mean?

It means the meaning is determined by the individual. Now, it may not be an accurate meaning.

[31 : 11] It may not be a true meaning. It may not be what the Scripture actually means at all. But it is incumbent upon the individual to face that responsibility.

And when God gave the Word of God through the prophets of God and the apostles and the teachers in the Old and the New Testament, it was with the intent that that book should be not only for the world, but for the individual.

Now, for many years, the Bible that was translated and that was available wasn't even produced in the language that would allow most people to read it.

In the original, it was Greek and Hebrew in the Old Testament. And those who didn't speak those languages were at the mercy of those who did so far as the meaning was concerned.

So, where and how are we going to come up with some kind of an infallible interpretation that is also equally inerrant to the Bible? And my contention is such a thing does not exist.

[32 : 26] But wouldn't it greatly simplify things if it did? If someone could arise on the surface who was able to say with complete confidence that they and they alone know and reveal the precise inerrant infallible interpretation of the Scripture and this is something that you can absolutely count on and you are duty bound to believe their finding and to act upon it.

That became the basis for the Roman Catholic Church. and it was centered in one person whom they believed to be the successor of Peter.

Our Roman Catholic friends believed that Peter was actually the first Pope and that all the Popes who succeeded Peter are in his train and they occupy his chair with his authority.

And when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* that is referring to when he speaks from the chair of Peter that is when he speaks in an official capacity everything the Pope says regarding faith and morals is incumbent upon the faithful to adhere to because the Pope is the vicar of Christ.

what that means is the Pope is Jesus Christ's personal representative in the flesh on the earth.

[34 : 11] And when you obey the Pope you are obeying Jesus Christ. And when you disobey the Pope you are disobeying Jesus Christ.

now we Protestants look upon that with complete rejection because we have a different authority and we appeal to the scriptures alone as our authority.

And by the way as I mentioned to the group at nine o'clock I'm not interested in ridiculing in any way or beating up on the Roman Catholic Church because while we are going to be looking at what I call the fallacies or the perceived ideas of the Roman Catholic Church that have led them to the positions that they are the Protestant Church has some of its own.

So we are far from being what you would call lily white. We too have a number of concepts that we have adopted that we have assumed to be true that aren't that do not comply with scripture at all.

So in this regard the Protestants are just as guilty as the Roman Catholics and it's the pot calling the kettle black and we'll see some examples of both of those.

[35 : 31] But I want you to consider this faulty assumption premise and I am confident that that is the basis for the faulty assumption at least with the Roman Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope.

And that is they made a faulty assumption that an infallible inerrant book needs an infallible inerrant interpreter.

And that is the Pope and the councils that he convenes and presides over. I want to give you and I've lifted this from the internet.

You may obtain it yourself. It's there for the whole world to see. It's the ecumenical councils and their chief doctrines. And it talks about this is an official publication from the Roman Catholic Church.

And it says the first council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 was held in order to bring out the true teaching of the church as opposed to the heresy of Arius.

[36 : 32] And Arius the Iranian heresy was that Christ was not eternal and that he was not immortal that he was a creation of God.

Arian theology is the same as what Jehovah's witnesses claim today for the person of Christ. And that shows you how old it is. It goes all the way back to there. It formally presented the teaching of the church declaring the divinity of God the Son to be one substance and one nature with that of God the Father.

There were twenty canons drawn up in which the time of celebrating Easter was clarified and a denunciation of the Meletian heresy made. Also various matters of discipline of law were dealt with and several decisions advanced.

From this particular council we have developed the Nicene Creed, which is a rather outstanding creed. I'm going to skip these other councils, but I do want to take a brief moment with the twelfth, which is the fourth council of the Lateran.

This was in 1215. Besides disciplinary action, the seventy decrees of this council answered prevailing heresies, gave pronouncements in favor of the Crusades.

[37 : 49] these are Crusades of the Middle Ages, early ages, 12th, 13th century, prescribed the duty of annual confession and Easter communion, offered additional definitions on the absolute unity of God, and presented definition of the doctrine of the church regarding sacraments, and in particular, that the bread and wine, by transubstantiation, became the body and blood of Christ.

Christ. This is the backbone of the Roman Catholic idea of communion, and it has to do with a very important sacrament, because when the priest consecrates the wine and the bread, it is believed that they become the actual physical body and the physical blood of Christ.

And all that is required to believe that is that you exercise faith, and it may taste like bread, and it may taste like wine, but it isn't.

And if you are of the right faith and the right frame of mind, you will accept that as being the literal body and blood of Christ. And there, by the way, is a faulty assumption.

And the faulty assumption is that when Jesus said, holding up the bread, this bread is representing my body.

[39 : 15] this is my body which is given for you. They took that literally. And in my estimation, that is a faulty assumption. They assumed that Jesus was talking about his real body.

And this cup is the new covenant in my blood. And they are assuming that he was talking about literality. And he wasn't talking about literality at all.

But they assumed that he was. And some might say, well, if you just had enough faith to believe what he said, you'd be able to accept that.

And that's the comeback. Then, of course, when you look at situations like Jesus saying, I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he should go in and out and find pasture.

Is Jesus talking about a literal door? Does he have a knob, hinges, or what? No, of course not. He's using a metaphor there, and he is saying that he is the way of access, just like a door is.

[40 : 23] He is the door of the sheepfold that positions himself across the sheepfold and protects the sheep going in and out. But a faulty assumption makes it literal, and it isn't intended to be taken literal.

Now, here's the problem, and here's where it really gets sticky. These faulty assumptions, I believe, were made in completely good faith.

I don't think they were trying to hoodwink anybody or trying to fool themselves or anyone else. I think they really believed that. In other words, their sincerity and their motivation was proper.

There was nothing wrong with that, not to be faulted, and I don't fault them for that. I think they were very sincere, and I think for the most part they had good intentions, and they really thought they were doing the right thing.

But here's the problem. No degree of sincerity is a guarantee for truth. We really need to understand that.

[41 : 29] It doesn't matter how well-intentioned you are, how earnest or how sincere you are, or how well-meaning you are, all of which is commendable, by the way.

But that's not a guarantee that the conclusion that you've reached is a truthful conclusion. And this is exactly what we are going to be facing in Protestant theology and in Roman Catholic theology, because the Protestants have made just as many erroneous assumptions as the Catholics have.

when Martin Luther broke from the Catholic Church, he brought a lot of baggage with him. And that still is part and parcel of the Lutheran Church today.

And it is just one of the things that separates the Lutherans from the Baptists, from the Presbyterians, from the Methodists, and so on. And all of these things go on. And where and how is it that all of this comes about and is perpetuated?

And I'll tell you, more than anything else, these teachings, whether they are Protestant or Catholic, these teachings are derived from conclusions that men reached, men who were in positions of power, authority, and influence, who were well-educated and well-trained, and they arrived at these conclusions, they assumed them to be true, and they gave them to the faithful, who were looked upon as their subjects, who were duty-bound to embrace them as truth.

[43 : 08] And this is a scary thing. And I mean it is a scary thing, because it means that man is in a perfect position to manipulate his fellow man.

And there is no better, smoother place for manipulation than right here in this pulpit. man. And that's what's scary.

And it has been done and is being done by Catholics and Protestants and Jews. The Jewish faith, they were into this whole concept of influence and manipulation of those masses that were under them.

And this is exactly what Jesus confronted during his earthly ministry. It was the corruption that had arisen from all of these people who were in positions of power and influence, who abused their power.

Some of them abused their power innocently. In other words, they didn't realize what they were doing. And when they would make demands upon people, they could always justify it by saying, well, it's for their own good.

[44 : 20] It's for their own good. And this goes on all over the place. It has gone on from the very beginning. There is more doctrine that is conveyed by errant human beings who are persuasive, who are well-educated, who are articulate, who are charismatic in their personality, who have the ability to put it over and persuade.

And more people believe because of that than they do because it is truth that is actually being communicated. And this is a real big human problem.

No culture has ever escaped it. And none is escaping it today. it's a sad thing.

It's true. And you know it's true. It is people in positions of respected authority, power, influence, etc.

and when they crank out this stuff, people are influenced by them, by the way they say it, by their degrees, by their background, by the way they sound so sure of it.

[45 : 48] After all, he's an expert. He's studied this for years. He knows you can take it to the bank, whatever he tells you is true. And people just lap that up. And it's been that way from the first century on.

In fact, even before the first century. So what's the remedy? The remedy is for the individual to be independent, to be able to respect authority and to consider it, but you don't buy it wholesale because of the source from which it came.

And I'm talking about this pulpit as well. I wish there were some way to say that to say that we could guarantee the integrity and the findings of everyone who propagated doctrines so that you can believe it and be comfortable about it.

But I can't do that because I don't think it even exists. And this is why we keep coming back to this issue of the Bible. has to be read and interpreted by the individual.

And what do I want you to give me? Just one thing. That's consideration.

[47 : 22] All I want you to do with what I teach is say, well, I'll consider it. I'll think about it. I may buy it.

I may not. It just depends if I can make what Marv says square with Scripture. And that's the whole Berean concept. When Paul went to Thessalonica, they rejected his teachings because they did not believe that it comported with the Old Testament what the Old Testament taught.

Of course it did. So he went to Berea and he preached essentially the same thing there. We are told that the people of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they searched the Scriptures to see whether the things spoken by Paul were actually true.

Every one of you, every one of you ought to be a searcher of the Scriptures for what is coming forth from this pulpit. And the worst thing you can do is say, well, here is the authority.

If this is what he says the interpretation is, then I am obligated to believe it as true. No, you're not. No, you're not.

[48 : 49] Now, far be it from me, I'm not looking for ways to create differences and dissension and disagreement and everything else. But all I'm saying is, we do have an infallible inerrant Bible, but we do not have an infallible inerrant interpreter of the Bible.

neither your pastor, nor the Pope, nor Martin Luther, nor anyone else. This is why it all boils down to the individual. And I love the statement that John Wycliffe made.

John Wycliffe was a Roman Catholic priest. And he was greatly disturbed by the excesses and the things that were taking place. He was one of the reformers.

Well, what were they trying to reform? They were trying to reform the church. They didn't want to leave the church. They didn't want to abandon the church. They wanted to reform the church. And in the 1380s, John Wycliffe dedicated himself to the task of translating the scriptures into the language that people could read.

And he was roundly criticized for that because the officialdom of the Roman Catholic Church did not encourage, in fact, it even forbade the laity from reading the scriptures, saying that it would only confuse them.

[50 : 12] If you want to know what the Bible says, come to the priest. He will tell you what the Bible says and what it means. You're not to read it or study it for yourself. John Wycliffe began his extensive work of translating the scriptures and when he was criticized by it, some of the Roman Catholic authorities, who were his superiors, he said, by the will of God, I shall make the word of God more intelligible to the plowboy than it is to you in your robes.

That was his intent and he fulfilled it and he paid a dear price for it because he was martyred for his faith, as was William Tyndale.

Tyndale's only crime was the translation of the scriptures at a time when Roman Catholicism was reigning supreme in Great Britain and William Tyndale smuggled, and he too was a Roman Catholic priest, and he smuggled Bibles into England in barrels of flour.

Bibles in English, smuggled into England so the English people could read it, and he paid for it with his life, and they burned him at the stake as an heretic.

last words of Tyndale, as he cried out, the flames leaped around him and consumed his body, O God, open the eyes of the King of England.

[51 : 56] And in 1611, King James' eyes were opened, and we got the King James version of the Bible, the English language.

And this man was so hated by the authorities that after he was buried, they dug up his corpse and scattered his remains in the Avon River.

That's what the irrationality of hatred will do to people, and that's the way these men were viewed. it all comes down to this, authority.

What it's always been about, what it always will be about. I want to share this last thing with you. this is from the from the first Vatican Council under Pope Pius IX in 1869.

this general council was never closed officially, but was suspended. Technically, it continued until it was closed by Pope John XXIII.

[53 : 17] Of this council, the most important decree was that of the primacy of the Pope. Primacy of the Pope means the first or ultimate position of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and of papal infallibility.

So, what the Pope decrees and what the Pope rules is just the same as God ruling it and God decreeing it.

And if you are a Roman Catholic, you are duty bound to submit to the authority of the Pope and the councils and whatever their decrees are because it's just as if God himself were sitting on that throne.

That's the Roman Catholic position. It still is. And a group of people called the Protestants, now we call them Protestants, rose up against that and rebelled against that many years before that.

But this is where the issue is to this day. And you know what it's all based on? It is all based on faulty assumptions.

[54 : 40] People who read certain things in the Bible and assumed that thus and so was true when it wasn't. And they built a case upon it, a superstructure upon it, and it's called the Statement of Faith or Bible doctrine.

And you will see that whereas we have taken the historic Roman Catholic Church to task regarding this, we're also going to take the Protestant Church to task because we Protestants are guilty of doing the very same thing that we denounce the Roman Catholics for.

And that is building doctrines on faulty assumptions. assumptions. And I have got a list of faulty assumptions as long as your arm.

And we're going to start in on them next week. So we will give the Roman Catholics a rest and we will turn our attention to the Protestant brethren and our own.

You see, before you can throw stones at somebody else's house, you need to consider your own. And we've got enough error in Protestant theology to fill our own book, by the way.

[56 : 00] So, well, it's not an easy thing to be talking about because we're all, you know what I mean.

Or am I making a faulty assumption? Well, let me ask you this. This is a good note to close on. Well, Pastor Marv, what guarantee do we have that when you are teaching these things that you are not making some faulty assumptions of your own?

And the answer is you have no such guarantee. You see what this all comes down to? You know, this is an individual thing. And by the way, because this is such a highly individualistic thing, it gives even more play to the idea that each and every one of us possess this thing called a human volition, a will.

And let me tell you, the buck stops in your court, just like it does in mine. each of us has a responsibility to our maker.

And you cannot, you cannot outsource your faith and trust it to someone else.

[57 : 32] Because salvation is not institutional. It's personal. It's personal. Each of us will stand or fall before our own maker.

The buck stops with you. So would you stand please? Father, we recognize these are really important solemn things, difficult things that we're talking about.

But we, if we are going to be, if we are going to be responsive to the truth and to what is clearly available and revealed to everyone to see, we ought not to pull any punches, but we really need to speak the truth and allow people to see the truth and the error for themselves.

And our prayer right now regarding this matter of personal responsibility is for anyone who may be with us this morning, who perhaps has never really considered this, their own accountability before you.

Each of us has a will and each of us have been giving a mind so that we can process information. And each of us is responsible for the conclusions we reach and the actions we take thereon.

[58 : 55] And our prayer is that every one of us here today as individuals would recognize the solemn responsibility as well as the privilege of processing information and reaching conclusions and acting upon it.

And for any who are here searching and looking for answers and contemplating eternity and their own mortality, we simply pray that their minds and hearts will be open to your truth and that they will be able to recognize it when they hear it and that they will be able to make an intelligent decision of committing themselves to Jesus Christ who died on that cross for their sins 2,000 years ago to make them acceptable to you.

We pray that anyone considering this will weigh heavily on their heart until and unless they make that decision you'll give them no peace and no rest. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.